



Principal of the Year application form

Created: 01/03/2017 • Last updated: 05/27/2017

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the Department, in partnership with Louisiana Association of Principals, honors the state's most exceptional leaders through the Principal of the Year program.

The Louisiana Principal of the Year awards program recognizes and honors outstanding school leaders who are making exceptional gains with students, pushing them to achieve at the highest levels in the state. Honorees' commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.



Principal of the Year - basic information

Basic information *2018 Louisiana State Principal of the Year*

Are you part of a district or a charter?	District
Division level	High School
Candidate's first name	Thomas
Candidate's last name	Byler
Candidate's title	Mr.
Candidate's (year-round) email	tommybyler@unsh...
Candidate's phone number (cell is best)	7773388888
Ethnicity	White
School address	11609 LA Hwy 699



Reflection Question #1

Created: 01/03/2017

Last updated: 01/17/2017

Page 1



Student Data and Reflection

What were your goals for students last year? What were the most important things you did to achieve these goals? Did students achieve your goals? If so, what led to students meeting the goal? If not, what would you have done differently?

Response is limited to two pages or less (up to 1,400 words.) Only include text in your response. Visuals will not display correctly in this text box. If you must include a visual to accompany your essay response (not preferable), please upload as a separate document using the Optional file upload feature below. Be sure and label the document accordingly.

When I took over as the principal of North Vermilion High School we had a SPS score of 102.5 as a combination school. The high school component of that score was 92.9. That same year our school was transitioning from a 7-12 combination school to a 9-12 High School. It was as that time that

we truly began to look at all of the components of our school performance score and begin a long term plan on becoming the high achieving school that so many of us thought we could become. With that in mind, it was a perfect time to start approaching things from a team concept and we are proud today, that as a result of these efforts, to have reached the goals we set for ourselves and have steadily increased our SPS from 92.9 to 119.0 in three years time.

Our specific goals for the 2015 school year were to achieve an SPS of 105.1 without bonus points. We were able to score a 111.2 without bonus and a 119 with bonus points added in. Our second school goal was the ACT component of our SPS score. Again this was a four year plan that has seen our index rise from 66.8 to 108.2 in four years time. With the addition of work keys added to this formula the numbers are slightly skewed, but even with the removal of work keys our ACT index was over 92.5.

So, how did we get to this point? Many times when you are dealing with students and teachers who have experienced success, the idea that changes need to be made for continual growth is difficult to grasp. As a principal it was important that students and teachers begin to understand the components that make up our school performance score and create programs that could strengthen all areas.

Leadership teams were created to address all components and new programs put in place to help students and teachers increase in all components every year.

Our committee felt that the sophomore class had the biggest impact on EOC assessment with three test. Because of this we began a sophomore mentoring program to address all of our students who had previously struggled with state assessments. We also knew that sophomores taking the plan test had an opportunity to show growth and help in earning bonus points for our school. The plan put into place included monthly advisory homerooms, weekly RITE intervention mini courses for EOC remediation and finally PLAN test family nights in which our students and parents were offered opportunities for testing strategies for the PLAN and the ACT test. As a result, our EOC index has steadily increased from 92.1 to 102.3 in a four year period. Most impressively is the effect that these efforts have had on our bonus points going from 0 bonus points to 8 points the last two years.

As a leadership group we also looked for new and innovative ways to increase our ACT Index and our Strength of Diploma Index. School-wide ACT initiatives were put into place using our intervention period, offering parent and student evening events, and increasing the amount of reading for information required in every course. We saw jumps of 2 to 3 points individually for students and saw reading scores on the ACT soar.

Strength of diploma was strengthened as we made dual enrollment and CLEP examinations a priority. Having two teachers on staff who were willing to make the commitment to get DE certified has created opportunities for our students that many students statewide do not have. Our

students now have opportunities to leave our school with 24 college credits. While this is happening in many places, it is not very common in a rural school of 650 students. We have also made CLEP test preparation a part of our English III programs and have gone from 5 CLEP examinations passed for last years cohort, 24 for this years' cohort and already have 46 CLEP exams banked for next years' cohort.

Getting our students and faculty to buy in to these programs has strengthened all our the SPS components and has resulted in North Vermilion earning Top Gains honors for the past three years. While many of our efforts of focus were specifically on testing, the day to day happenings in our classrooms is what is driving the successful performance on these test.

As the instructional leader, I have spent most of my efforts to provide the necessary resources for my teachers and have let them take their expertise and run with it. But making sure we are providing all of the necessary resources for our students is still the number one priority for our entire school. We have an intervention period that students are pulled on a weekly basis based on formative assessments by the teachers. This program is run through a google docs format and is put together by me every Sunday evening. This allows me as the principal an opportunity to stay informed with our students and to intervene on a daily basis with these struggling students. In addition, each nine week I sign each individual report card and leave hand written comments so that students understand that my expectations are never in doubt. I also meet with each grade level at the beginning of each nine weeks to give them data, set upcoming goals, and lay out our school-wide expectations for the nine week.

I feel like we have come up with a plan that takes the strengths from previous administrations and have gotten results as a function of teachers and students buying into our plan, raising their expectations and realizing that failing is not an option. As a school that goes by NV, we have adopted the saying that we want to be the "eNVy" of Vermilion Parish and as a school community we have worked hard every day to make this a reality.

Optional file upload

(No response)



Reflection Question #2

Created: 01/03/2017

Last updated: 01/17/2017

Page 1



Instructional Practice and Reflection

Summarize how you support teachers as they plan, instruct, and assess in a way that aligns to higher academic standards. Include the processes you have in place for providing timely, meaningful feedback and professional development opportunities to teachers as needed. Explain how you support teachers who are struggling, and challenge those who are excelling, while maintaining high standards for all.

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As a football coach for 22 years, I have always understood the importance of teamwork, planning,

and execution. As an avid reader of coaching leadership books, I also quickly learned the importance of getting coaching staffs to work as a cohesive unit for ultimate success. While these things are obviously common sense norms that most understand, I don't think people realize how closely it resembles the position that principals and teachers play in ensuring the ultimate success of school and more importantly the successes of the students in our schools.

With that in mind, I find myself as an administrator doing the exact same things as I did as a coach to help support my teachers in their efforts to plan, instruct, and assess in a way that aligns to higher academic standards.

On a day to day basis, my teachers will see me in and around their classrooms knowing that I am not there to try and catch them doing something wrong, but rather looking for opportunities that I can help strengthen what they do on a daily basis. Many times these quick observations lead to reflective email questions, suggestions of books or videos to help with a certain strategy or a reflective piece of how what I observed fits into the Compass rubric. Good teachers want informative feedback to make them better teachers and professionals and it is vital that I, as the instructional leader, provide this for them.

In addition to ongoing feedback and reflective questioning, I feel like it is very important that teachers get the opportunity to hone their craft by watching what others do. We have a program in place that offers teachers an opportunity to do peer observations. We allow teachers to peer observe in their subject area, in a subject area that most closely relates to theirs and finally all teachers observe a career and technical education teacher. We feel that this gives teachers a chance to see the big picture and how not only our university diploma students are being taught, but also our jump start students. In addition, we are currently implementing a new program that allows our teachers to pair up with a teacher from our junior high feeder school to do these same type of peer observations. We feel that this will benefit our teachers in our methodology and scaffolding efforts to ensure a smoother transition from 8th to 9th grade.

Another important component that we have in place to help our teachers get better as individuals, is the creation of a google classroom for our faculty. This has become a resource center for our teachers. This classroom has not only provided resources, but has helped with communication among teachers as to individual needs for specific teachers.

While working with individual teachers is a must as the instructional leader of our campus, I feel like we must have some team goals that keep everyone in line with my vision. Each May, I send a survey out to my faculty using a google forms survey with many questions concerning strategies, compass rubric concerns, and other general teaching questions. The results of these surveys are discussed with the faculty and then are brought to my administrative team to create two instructional goals for our faculty in the upcoming year. These clear cut goals become the driving force of all professional learning communities that take place twice a month. During this past

school year our instructional goals were based on engagement strategies and standards based formative assessment. These two ideas were the things that I looked for in lesson plans, in walk through observations and formal observations. This method is no different than what I expected out of my players and coaches as a football coach. Here is the plan, now go out and practice this plan and try to execute it perfectly.

The effectiveness of our PLC's last year also helped to define what we were doing for our students. In previous years, PLC groups were only based on common planning periods. This past year we did use common planning periods but we also got creative in scheduling and were able to have grade level and subject level meetings as part of our on-going PLC plan. This created opportunities for better conversation and helped our teachers grow and faculty become better communicators with one another.

In addition to how I support our teachers in school, is the opportunities outside of school that I encourage teachers to attend. This past year I was fortunate to have three teachers begin work in a educational leadership advanced degree program and this has been beneficial to them as well as our school. I have been able to mentor and then use these teachers to help carry out the vision and plans that I have set.

Finally as the educational leader I must ensure that my teachers, just like my students, are given every opportunity to be successful. They have to execute my vision. All of my new teachers are put into our school based mentor program and are partnered up with more experienced teachers to help in ways needed. This is crucial in helping new teachers feel comfortable and its important that we protect our profession by creating master teachers of the future.

In summary, my faculty is my team. Together we share one vision that is created under my leadership. In my mind the success of any administrator comes down to being fair, firm, and clear in your vision and expectations. The teachers that are part of my team want the same successes for our students that I do. Therefore, we must reach everyone of our students in whatever way possible.

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(No response)



Reflection Question #3

Created: 01/03/2017

Last updated: 01/19/2017

Page 1



Personal Impact Reflection

Please describe how you have demonstrated leadership qualities that contribute to the work of the profession. Also include how you have invested and inspired colleagues, families, students and the community in efforts which lead to student success.

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My entire career leading up to my role as a principal has always been centered around leadership skills. As a coach, campus ministry leader, student council adviser and mentor, the opportunity to learn, teach and put in to action leadership skills have no doubt made me into the leader of my

school campus today.

Not a day goes by that a teacher, coach, or student is not challenged by me to use leadership skills to fulfill their true ability levels. As successful as our school SPS has been, we are always looking to improve in any way possible and true leadership is vital in getting this vision across our school campus.

From the administrative standpoint, I have have contributed to our profession by leading the Vermilion Parish Principals association as its' president. This has given me the opportunity to learn the inner workings of our central office and have engage in discussions on how to strengthen our parish leadership. I have been able to go back to my colleagues and share the parish vision. By leading a monthly administrator meeting and helping to lead our principals in our own PLC study group I have used the leadership skills I have learned throughout my career to foster positive communication among our school level administrators and our central office staff.

On a school level with my teachers, my ability to bring our faculty together and work towards a common vision is one of the things that I am most proud of as the instructional leader. Faculty members are willing to go above and beyond without any hesitation to do what we need to do for our students. Our faculty hears daily that "we are in the business of kids" and that all of our decision making process is centered around that concept. The use of google classroom among our faculty has helped to open lines of communication that many thought could never happen.

On the level of families, students and communities I have made it a personal goal that no one will out work me. The old coaching adage that I won't make my team do anything that I am not willing to do is effeminately in place as the leadership philosophy that I live on a daily basis. No one will be more visible than me from the classroom, the athletic fields, the band and chorus rooms and the after school tutoring sessions. I truly believe that if you live your vision for your school it will catch on among students and you have a great chance to be successful.

Each Sunday evening, our entire school community receives an inspirational message about expectations before receiving the school schedule for the week. This call out allows me to share my leadership vision on a weekly basis to all of the stakeholders that play a role in North Vermillion High School.

Among the community events that have been created under my leadership include: Parent Testing night,, Scheduling Seminars, Financial Aid Night, and ACT Preparation. All of these programs have brought more people into our school and the message of "failure not being an option" has made its way to all involved. Again, the idea that we are in the kid business drives all of these leadership events that we host.

My leadership style of always being accessible and willing to go the extra mile is probably not a style that fits everyone. For me it is the only way that I truly know how to do business.

As long as the beliefs that we "are in the kid business" and my personal belief that I will be the

hardest worker on my campus continue to drive my decision making process, my leadership qualities will always be out front and help to complete the vision of our school. This ultimately will lead to the academic, athletic and leadership success for all those involved in North Vermillion High School

Optional file upload

(No response)



NORTH VERMILION HIGH SCHOOL

4065 La. Hwy 800

887-636-1404

Maurice, LA 70555

827-699-0004

Thomas Byler, Principal

Denise Lotz, Assistant Principal

January 17, 2017

Dear Louisiana High School Principal of the Year Selection Committee:

My name is Lisa Lynch, and I am writing to tout my principal, Mr. Thomas Byler of North Vermilion High School. As a twenty-year educator across three states, I can assure you that you will find no other principal who is more deserving of being named the Louisiana High School Principal of the Year. He commands the greatest respect from his faculty, his community, and his students.

From a teacher's perspective, Coach Byler is the quintessential principal. My colleagues and I have often remarked how incredibly blessed we are to work for such a man. Teachers wait their entire teaching careers to be afforded such an opportunity. He is a leader unlike any I've witnessed. In the three years that he has been principal of NVHS, he has completely altered the morale of his faculty and staff. Before Coach Byler took the helm, we were a group of people who worked in the same location. Because of his leadership and team-building abilities, the faculty and staff have become a family, who now cohesively work toward common goals that he has set for us to attain. Under his guidance, our School Performance Score has steadily risen; North Vermilion High School has maintained its "A" status, and it has become the number three traditional high school in the state of Louisiana. In terms of instructional support, Coach Byler has an open-door policy. Teachers feel free to seek out his assistance in matters of curriculum, discipline, and instruction. As an instructional leader, not a manager, Coach Byler's educational vision is evident on any given day. One can walk into a classroom at any time and see his educational plan in action. In terms of instructional goals, Coach Byler's high standards attribute to our school's continued growth. He is data-driven and uses that data in combination with professional development to foster greater achievement amongst all sectors on campus.

The community of Maurice has rallied behind Coach Byler. Parents desire for their children to attend North Vermilion High School, not only because of its reputation and commitment to high academic standards, but also because they want their children to attend a school at which the principal believes in educating the whole child. When Coach Byler was named the Vermilion Parish High School Principal of the Year, the outpouring from the community was heartfelt. He was flooded with messages of congratulation for a job well done. People throughout the community heralded how deserving he is of such a distinction, for they know there is no more devoted principal, nor one who cares more deeply for his students. It is because of this sincere admiration that on any given day parents and community members can be seen on campus, freely giving of their time.

"We are in the business of kids." I cannot express to you how many times I have heard Coach Byler utter that phrase. It is the mantra by which he lives and runs North Vermilion High School. He is not the type of principal who sits behind a desk. He is visible everywhere on campus—in the halls, in the classrooms, in the

cafeteria, in the chorus room, in the gym. It is because of his visibility and constant interaction with students that I can say without hesitation that no principal has a better rapport with his students. Coach Byler is the father-figure many of our students need. He is a counselor, a confidant, and a disciplinarian, and it because of this that students at NVHS respect and adore him. Coach Byler leads by example and encouragement and disciplines through disappointment. He sets lofty goals and challenges his students, and every time they rise to the occasion. Students feel an intense obligation to perform to the best of their abilities. They know he is the hardest-working man on campus, and they refuse to let him down.

I wish I could find the proper words to convey what an exemplary principal and human being Mr. Thomas Byler is and how deep my respect and admiration are for him. He is the kind of principal I have longed to work for, and he is most definitely the kind of principal I want to lead my child through his high school years. Coach Byler has devoted twenty-six years to education--as a teacher, a coach, and now as a principal. He *is* the Louisiana High School Principal of the Year, and I hope, with all of my heart, that you choose to honor him with this much-deserved award.

Sincerely,



NVHS English Department Head

NVHS is committed to developing lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

Colin Faulk

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

My principal, Thomas Byler, better known as Coach Byler, is a man who is truly a second father to me and all of his students. He takes his job very seriously, from his devotion to the betterment of education for his students, to his style of keeping the school running smoothly. With Coach Byler as principal, our school has made huge strides towards greatness, leaving us now as the number 3 public school in the state of Louisiana. This would not be possible without the encouragement and devotion given by our principal. We, the student body, feel as though it is our responsibility to do our part in seeing how much he truly does for us. Coach Byler truly inspires me through his hard work and devotion to what he believes in.

Coach Byler truly goes through everyday with one thing on his mind...to make his school, students, and himself better. Through this, his success has truly come. He makes it his responsibility to attend all sporting events and talk to all of his students. He truly cares for all of us, and there is no other person that we would rather have as our principal. Coach Byler's interest in student involvement is truly what brought the two of us together.

When I got into high school, I was very confused and dazed by how different it was from middle school. I played football, and this is when I first met Coach Byler. Let's just say he was truly unlike anyone I had ever met before; his work ethic and drive for success were truly amazing. As the season went on, I began to see how he handled adversity and how he responded to it. It was truly inspirational the way he did things, and from that moment on I have truly looked up to him. As the year ended, and people moved on, Coach Byler moved up. He went from being my football coach and athletic director, to being the school principal. Although there were many challenges that came with this new job, he truly came at it full force and has been nothing short of amazing at his job. Every principal has that one thing that they are truly passionate about; Coach Byler's is student involvement. Up until my sophomore year, our school student council was nothing short of a joke. He took it upon himself to change that, and from that moment on, it has truly become quite amazing. His hard work has truly paid off and will never go unnoticed. His actions and his words truly reach out and touch the hearts of the students, leading to unification. With this unification comes true involvement and school spirit; everything that he strives for. This is truly our way of paying him back for what he does. On top of involvement, Coach Byler has always had a vision to do more than what has been done in the past. His idea of something successful is something that goes above and beyond, and this is what makes the student body, along with myself truly look up to him.

When it comes down to it, I feel as though Coach Byler is an amazing principal, mentor, and last but not least, friend. In knowing everything that he has done for me, my school, and my community, I feel as though he is more than qualified for State Principal of the Year. Please give careful consideration to Mr. Thomas Byler, and thank you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

North Vermilion High School

*Striving to be
responsible, respectful, and prepared
learners.*

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NVHS is committed to developing lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

January 19, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write to you in regard to Mr. Tommy Byler. I have been fortunate to work with Mr. Byler at North Vermilion High School for the past two and a half years, as his assistant principal.

As part of his administrative team, I have been able to witness leadership at its finest. He is a vital component in the success of both the teachers and students of North Vermilion High School. Each morning, Coach Byler reminds students of his expectations to be respectful, responsible and prepared. More important than his morning announcements is his constant example of what being respectful, responsible and prepared look like. Through his leadership, students and teachers alike strive each day to meet the expectations he has both set and demonstrated for us.

North Vermilion has remained an "A" school under his leadership. In addition to the high academic standards he has set and achieved here at North Vermilion, he has created an environment of trust and community. Each year, he has created a challenge for students to carry out the values of being respectful, responsible and prepared into the community. He has been at the forefront of each of these challenges whether it is educating students about the homeless population or working with flood recovery. He has demonstrated to students that being a part of North Vermilion High School is more to attending classes.

With 25 years of educational experience, I can assure you that Tommy Byler deserves without a doubt to represent Louisiana as its principal of the year.

Sincerely,

Denise [REDACTED]
North Vermilion High School

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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Created: 01/26/2016

Last updated: 01/29/2016

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Page 1



Charter
candidate

Principal of the Year - basic information

Basic information

2017 Louisiana High School Principal of the Year

Are you a part of a district or a charter?	Charter
Are you part of a single site charter or a CMO?	CMO
Enter the name of your school	KIPP Renaissance High School
Enter the name of your CMO	KIPP New Orleans Schools
Division level	High School
Candidate's first name	Joey
Candidate's last name	LaRoche
Candidate's title	Mr.
Candidate's (year-round) email	[REDACTED]
Candidate's phone number	[REDACTED]
Ethnicity	Black or African American



Reflection Question #1

Created: 01/26/2016

Last updated: 01/30/2016

Page 1



Student Data and Reflection

What were your goals for students last year? What were the most important things you did to achieve these goals? Did students achieve your goals? If so, what led to students meeting the goal? If not, what would you have done differently?

Response is limited to 2 pages or less

Our school goals began with a firm commitment to get each student to and all the way through college as we believe that is the bar of excellence each of our students is capable of achieving and that they deserve the opportunity to pursue. In order to make sense of that goal, we started with understanding the current state of college completion. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, only 69% of all college students from all demographics and high school types persist into their second year of college, and that number is much lower for students from urban, low-income backgrounds like those of our students at KIPP Renaissance. I knew that was not good enough for my students. That was not aligned to the promise I made to so many of them on their parents' couches years ago as they enrolled in KIPP and as I taught them in middle school. We set a goal to get 75% of our KIPP Renaissance High School graduates to persist into their second year of college. I am proud to share that 83% of our 2014 alumni persisted into their second year of college in the fall of 2015 and are on track to maintain that rate for their third year.

Once we established our overarching goal of college completion, I then broke that goal down into aligned goals for 9th through 12th grade that would ultimately lead to long-term college persistence. We set quantitative academic goals around college matriculation, merit-based scholarship dollars earned, ACT scores, and state EOC scores. Many of our students had a long way to go during high school to be set-up for success in college, and our goals were therefore quite ambitious and served as motivation for students and staff to work tirelessly toward. We are excited that we have met many of these goals and will set higher ones for next year until we get to a true bar of excellence for our children, and hopefully, raise the bar for all students in New Orleans and around Louisiana.

For college matriculation, we set out to increase the rate of matriculation to at least 70%. We achieved 71% of our scholars enrolling in a 2- or 4-year university immediately after high school graduation, compared to around a 50% enrollment for other RSD high schools. For those students that did not immediately matriculate to college after graduation, I delegated one of our assistant principals to act as their alumni advisor and she has led the charge to get even more of our students enrolled in college. Adding those students takes our achievement of this metric way beyond our 70% goal and ensures that the vast majority of our KIPP Renaissance graduates are on track to college completion and success.

For scholarships, the Class of 2014 earned \$3.5 million in scholarships before TOPS. Given that, we set a goal for the Class of 2015 to earn \$4 million. They shattered that goal by earning \$4.6 million before TOPS and they proudly have 4 POSSE Foundation Scholars among them as well. This year, the Class of 2016 is working to beat \$5 million in scholarships since the Class of 2015 set a new bar for us all. Our college counselors' data suggests that the Class of 2016 is on track to reach that new milestone.

In terms of ACT and EOC goals, when I took over as the leader of KIPP Renaissance High School, I knew we needed a unifying academic goal for all teachers, regardless of their content or EOC test. If college matriculation and completion was truly our goal, then the ACT was the most logical marker for us. Without a high ACT score, our students were not positioned to get into selective colleges and universities and the selectivity of a students' post-secondary institution is shown to be directly correlated with student persistence through college. We needed our students to be able to compete and gain admission to the best colleges and universities possible if they were to be best set-up to persist and graduate. Whether my teachers taught 9th graders or 12th graders, I rallied my team and taught them how align their course objectives and assessments to the ACT so our students could have the keys to the gates of college. We are still working toward increasing our bar of excellence to a 21 ACT average for all students, but we are proud of the growth made to date. For the Class of 2015, we set our goal to be an ACT average of 19, which would have equaled around 1 point of growth for those students during their senior year. Our Class of 2015 students earned an average of 18.6 on the ACT by the time they graduated. While this is higher than the RSD average, it was humbling to not achieve our goal last year and we have put some changes in place to better support our students moving forward. Our current data shows that the Class of 2016 will achieve that 19 ACT average and we will continue to raise the bar in future years.

In terms of what I did to achieve these results, first and foremost, I built an adult culture at KIPP Renaissance High School that recognizes that our students' outcomes and our students themselves matter the most in this work, so we as adults have to put in the time and dedication needed to see that through. With that mindset, our teachers do not mind offering Saturday sessions to give our children more learning time. They do not think twice about celebrating student successes all over their classroom walls and in our hallways. They boldly hold student data conferences with our children so they know the reality of their current performance and feel inspired to achieve even more. And together, we relentlessly plan for student success because there is no other option for our kids.

In addition to shaping this culture, we have designed several unique aspects of our program that support achieving these goals. First, our college counselors teach a class daily to all seniors where they learn about the realities of college, research best-fit schools, analyze their own track records of academic success, plan for improvement, apply to many schools across selectivity bands, and apply for every scholarship they can find. This has been a game-changing structure that I will always have at KIPP Renaissance and that I believe has been integral to our success. As it relates to academic goals and achieving our ACT outcomes, we have shifted our interim tests to be ACT-aligned rather than fully EOC-aligned so we give students even more practice with ACT-level material. We eliminated ACT prep as a stand-alone class and revised our curriculum to infuse ACT skills and strategies in all of our core content classes. Several weeks before the ACT in 11th and 12th grade ACT subject classes, we administer a weekly 20-minute benchmark that serves as a proxy to the real test so we can plan targeted weekly remediation for our scholars during that time. With only a few weeks left until the ACT, we are excited to have our students sit for the March 1st exam this year. Their confidence is higher and so is ours thanks to the regular data and strong re-teaching plans we have been executing.

Over the course of my first two years as KIPP Renaissance's leader, I have led my team to be a place of smart-workers who adopt a

“whatever it takes” mentality to ensure our children are prepared to make it all the way through college graduation. We will not rest until that is our reality. We want to be responsible for bringing significantly more college graduates to the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.



Reflection Question #2

Created: 01/26/2016

Last updated: 01/30/2016

Page 1



Instructional Practice and Reflection

Summarize how you support teachers as they plan, instruct, and assess in a way that aligns to higher academic standards. Include the processes you have in place for providing timely, meaningful feedback and professional development opportunities to teachers as needed. Explain how you support teachers who are struggling, and challenge those who are excelling, while maintaining high standards for all.

Response is limited to 2 pages or less

When the KIPP Renaissance team set out to achieve the goals described in the previous response, we started digging into our instructional plans and designs 4 months before the start of the next school year. I worked to ensure that teachers entered the 2014-2015 school year with a clear instructional vision and the aligned plans to get there. This work started in May 2014. After long days of teaching at the end of the school year, our team stayed after school to unpack standards and analyze our end-of-year assessments. In some of our courses, we did not have rigorous end-of-year assessments so we looked to places like the Regents and Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The most powerful work came when teachers actually took those AP exams so they could get metacognitive about the skills and knowledge needed for success on the test and plan that into their course sequence. The team determined power standards – those that are most important for ACT success and for success in college – and we grouped them into units. Some of our more advanced teachers helped to create long-term plans over the month of June so that other teachers could begin working on unit or daily plans when they returned in July. We also commissioned several of our English and history teachers to write the full curricula for those subjects in grades 9-12 and our departments are executing those curricular plans today. This summer, we will revise them based on lessons learned throughout this year, and continue to update them annually.

When the school year began in 2014, and as we've continued this year, each KIPP Renaissance teacher had very strong long-term and unit-level plans to guide their work. From there, we started a series of teacher development strategies to improve their execution of those plans.

Sometimes that was concentrated in planning development, but usually teachers are in need of support with execution of the curriculum or in building classroom cultures of excellence. I structured and continue to structure my staffing so that each teacher has an instructional coach who has a small enough caseload to directly coach and support their teachers on a weekly basis, at least. Coaches employ the following methods: co-plan, observation-debrief, co-teach, model lessons, lesson plan review, “teachbacks” (the teacher practices teaching in front of the coach and the coach gives feedback on content or execution), and student work analysis protocols. Coaches are in teachers’ classrooms for extended periods at least weekly, but often more. They also ensure each teacher receives a timely debrief after the observation by having pre-scheduled recurring meeting times with teachers during their planning periods. They do not do all of this with each teacher; I help them determine the most appropriate method to efficiently get teachers to excellence in their craft.

I also adjusted the master schedule so that of the 7 periods in a student’s day, the teachers teach 5 of them, giving each teacher at least 2 hours of planning time daily. One of the hours is shared with other teachers of the same content so they can informally collaborate. Weekly, teachers engage in professional learning communities with their content teams which typically involves student work analysis, “teachbacks”, or benchmark assessment analysis and re-teach planning.

On Wednesdays, we dismiss students early so we can have shared staff time for professional development. This professional development is often differentiated. For example, in a recent differentiated series of professional development, I led a group of 6 teachers to vary the thinking type and increase thinking time to more reasoning, justification, and problem-solving rather than fluency, recall, and skill application only. For teachers who were struggling with classroom management, an assistant principal and the dean of culture led a series on the behavior management cycle, which decreased the amount of wasted time in those classrooms around the school. For our top tier of teachers, they formed their own group to further explore the impact and practices of aggressive monitoring as a means of giving more and better feedback to students in their classes.

As a school, we administer interim assessments 4 times per year and my leadership team and I lead our teachers through rigorous student performance analysis protocols to revise units until the next interim assessment. Through this and the aforementioned weekly benchmarking, we are able to stay strategically aligned to our end-of-year goals and teachers are supported in knowing exactly what to do in the classroom each day.

I believe that these structures, plans, and professional learning opportunities are foundational to the success of KIPP Renaissance High School and to the outstanding work of our teachers.



Reflection Question #3

Created: 01/26/2016

Last updated: 01/30/2016

Page 1



Personal Impact Reflection

Please describe how you've invested and inspired colleagues, families, students and the community in efforts that lead to student success.

Response is limited to 1 page or less

Just as a teacher has to have a truly compelling vision for his or her classroom that will invest students and families, a school leader has to do the same for that whole group plus the staff in the building and external partners. Then, the school leader has to tend that garden constantly so the fruits of success can grow. I never miss an opportunity to share our school mission that I revised when I started as the school leader: "KIPP Renaissance High School keeps the promise of college attainment so the children of New Orleans can lead a more choice-filled life. KIPP Renaissance students are academically prepared for the rigors of college, but we do not sacrifice their high school experience—one deeply rooted in the fabric of New Orleans where they can create numerous happy memories. We aim to prove that these dual intentions are not mutually exclusive for our students. This is a place where kids want to learn, parents want to send their kids, teachers want to teach, and leaders want to lead. KIPP Renaissance will be a place where students and their families can be proud to call their own for generations to come." Every system we design, every hire I make, and every action our team takes is based on this mission.

I know that to reach all of my students, families, and community members, others have to tell the story of KIPP Renaissance with me. After my modeling and sharing of our school vision, my teachers, then, are those storytellers. One ritual we have at KIPP Renaissance is our morning meeting, which we begin with a recitation of our mission. At least one teacher then shares how a colleague, student, parent, or partner is helping to live a part of our mission. I was once given the sage advice that as a principal who did not found and start KIPP Renaissance, I could never tell the story of who I am and where I want the school to go enough times or to enough people. Thus, our team reflects on our mission on a daily basis and we strive to implement it in every minute of every day.

I also take time to celebrate our successes with students and families and then remind them of those successes over time in whatever way I can. When we became the highest-growth school in the state, I shared the press and our performance report with families and explained what it meant. I did this by mail, in person, and through the informal interactions I had with them around campus or in the community. I did this repeatedly and continue this practice today. Through this practice and many others, I make sure our children know that they are kings and queens with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve our world. Through this, they too become the storytellers, armed with compelling data and a powerful narrative that makes them proud to be a KIPP Renaissance Bobcat!

I am also very honest about our shortcomings as I believe my students, staff, and families can be some of the best problem solvers to our greatest challenges. It is my belief that when you imbue people with their own intelligence they can be wonderfully rational and help you see solutions you had not thought of.

When this narrative and the vision of KIPP Renaissance has permeated our walls and community, it is much easier to focus attention on learning because students operate with purpose in class and hold each other to high standards for behavior, work ethic, and academics. They become stewards of our mission when faced with playful ribbing from other students around the city. They entice their friends to enroll in our school. We have had a number of transfer students that all say the same thing, "I came here because I want to get serious about going to college". When you hear a kid tell you that, you cannot help but work hard on his or her behalf, no matter the present reality. This then reinforces our vision to our staff and other students and provides another nugget and example of our KIPP Renaissance narrative in action. I am vigilant to ensure that this cycle and dissemination of our narrative and vision continues every day, and that is what I believe has been most critical to successfully inspiring colleagues, partners, students and parents over the past two years and will be into the future.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) recognizes that great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the LDOE honors the state's most exceptional educators through the Teacher and Principal of the Year program.

Part of the selection process allows educators, parents, and community members to provide recommendations for Teacher and Principal of the Year candidates using this form. The completed form is to be emailed to the candidate or as directed.

Below are some of the factors which will be considered as part of the Teacher and Principal of the Year selection process. You may choose to address one or more of these factors in your recommendation.

- Teaching skill and dedication;
- Respect for and rapport with students with parents and/or coworkers;
- Contributions to school and/or community groups and activities.

If you have questions or concerns, please email excellenteducators@la.gov.

TEACHER/PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR INFORMATION	
Indicate Teacher or Principal	Principal
Nominee's name	Joey LaRoche
School district	KIPP New Orleans Schools
School	KIPP Renaissance High School

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION	
Recommender name	Rhonda Kelly [REDACTED]
Recommender's relationship to nominee	Principal at KIPP Renaissance High School, New Orleans Schools to principal nominee
Recommender signature	[REDACTED]

Letter of Recommendation (please limit to 250 words)
<p>It is with excitement and pride that KIPP New Orleans Schools nominate Joey LaRoche, principal at KIPP Renaissance High School, for Louisiana Principal of the Year. We have known Joey for seven years since he returned to New Orleans after graduating from Vanderbilt to begin his teaching career at KIPP Central City Academy. From the moment he stepped into the classroom, Joey was magical with students. He created a classroom culture that was strong, positive, and warm, and he was able to hold students to high expectations in ways that are rarely, if ever, found in new teachers. During his time with KIPP, Joey continued to develop and grow, both as a teacher and then as a leader. His ability to connect with students and families is unmatched, and he serves as a model for all in the realms of classroom and school culture. In our tenure as administrators of one of the largest charter management organizations in New Orleans, we have come across many teachers and leaders; Joey brings a special, rare gift to this work. He connects with students individually, meeting them where they are and then coaching and guiding them to be their best selves. Joey also has a sharp vision for high academic results and stops at nothing to assure that his students and teachers are constantly moving toward that bar. Joey moved into the principal role at KIPP Renaissance during a transitional time at the</p>

school. He quickly stepped into the role with confidence and vision, urgently setting a much higher bar for student culture and achievement. Over the last two years, he has moved the school from a school performance score of a D to a B. Joey is a model for all of our leaders within the KIPP network and beyond. His contributions to this work and to the New Orleans community will be felt by many students and adults for years to come, and we can think of no greater way to honor him than with this award.



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TEACHER/PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR INFORMATION	
Indicate Teacher or Principal	Principal
Nominee's name	Joey LaRoche
School district	KIPP New Orleans Schools
School	KIPP Renaissance High School

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION	
Recommender name	Dana Peterson, Deputy Superintendent for Recovery School District
Recommender's relationship to nominee	Former colleague, Recovery School District
Recommender signature	[Redacted Signature]

Letter of Recommendation (please limit to 250 words)
<p>I'm writing to share my strong recommendation for Joey LaRoche as the Louisiana Public School Principal of the Year. Joey's unique dedication to students and their families, matched with his relentless drive for excellence at his school, make him an outstanding nominee for this honor.</p> <p>A native New Orleanian, Joey is an alumnus of Eleanor McMain High School in New Orleans, and has a deep love for this city and its students. As a first year teacher at KIPP Central City Academy, Joey developed deep relationships with students, and his stern but fair approach earned the love and respect of his school community. After serving as a teacher and assistant principal at KIPP, Joey joined the Recovery School District where he served as the Academics team leader for schools operated by the RSD. Joey employed the same approach to his work with our educators and families, exhibiting an uncanny ability build a deep connection with people while also pushing them to achieve at a higher level. He is by far one of the most talented, committed educators I've encountered.</p> <p>When he left the RSD, Joey told me that he was returning to KIPP as the principal of KIPP Renaissance because the same students</p>

he taught in middle school were now in high school. He felt a deep responsibility to continue the work he started as a middle school teacher, and he was determined to help those students succeed in college. When he stepped into the principal role, the school had faced unsteady leadership and middling results. Two years ago, the school earned a "D" letter grade and today it is a "B" – the most improved high school in Louisiana. I can think of no other school that has made such growth in so short a time. I am proud to call Joey a colleague and a friend, and it is my hope that you recognize his accomplishments with this honor.



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TEACHER/PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR INFORMATION	
Indicate Teacher or Principal	Principal
Nominee’s name	Joey LaRoche
School district	KIPP New Orleans Schools
School	KIPP Renaissance High School

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION	
Recommender name	[REDACTED]
Recommender’s relationship to nominee	[REDACTED] student and current senior at KIPP Renaissance High School
Recommender signature	[REDACTED]

Letter of Recommendation (please limit to 250 words)
<p>I have known Mr. LaRoche for about 5 years. I remember thinking he was mean and challenging when he taught me in 8th grade. Being in that class was different from every other I had experienced. From the first day, Mr. LaRoche made it clear that he controls the weather of his class. He made his expectations clear, and none of us tested him. I used to think that I wasn’t going to pass the class, but everyday Mr. LaRoche made me feel like I was capable, even when I asked to work with a partner and he said, “No.” I knew it was only because he saw the potential in me, telling me that I could figure things out on my own. After that class, I never thought that I would see him again. I was wrong.</p> <p>The scariest and most exciting moment in my life was when I heard that he would be my principal. There had been principals before him who came one year and left the next. But not Mr. LaRoche. He has stuck with KIPP Renaissance High School, improving it every year. To me, this shows how caring and dedicated he is, not only to the school as a whole, but to me personally. Now, he’s not only my principal but my Education I class teacher. I was not actually excited to be in the education class, but I was excited to be in a class with him. Mr. LaRoche’s teaching is so transformative that I am now thinking about becoming a teacher after college. One day, when I become a teacher for KIPP, I hope to be just like him – dedicated and strong.</p>



Principal of the Year application form

Last updated: 01/08/2016

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the Department, in partnership with Louisiana Association of Principals, honors the state's most exceptional leaders through the Principal of the Year program.

The Louisiana Principal of the Year awards program recognizes and honors outstanding school leaders who are making exceptional gains with students, pushing them to achieve at the highest levels in the state. Honorees' commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

Page 1



Principal of the Year - basic information

Basic information *2017 Louisiana State Principal of the Year*

Are you a part of a district or a charter?	District
District	DeSoto Parish
Enter the name of your school	Mansfield High School
Division level	High School
Candidate's first name	Sedric
Candidate's last name	Clark
Candidate's title	Mr.
Candidate's (year-round) email	[REDACTED]
Candidate's phone number	[REDACTED]
Ethnicity	Black or African American
School name	Mansfield High School
School address	401 Kings Hwy, Mansfield, LA 71052



Reflection Question #1

Last updated: 01/08/2016

Page 1



Student Data and Reflection

What were your goals for students last year? What were the most important things you did to achieve these goals? Did students achieve your goals? If so, what led to students meeting the goal? If not, what would you have done differently?

Response is limited to 2 pages or less

Our 2014-2015 goal was to improve our school's Student Performance Score of 67.3 to 77.3. During the 2014-2015 school year, students exceeded the targeted goal by attaining a School Performance Score of 93.8, compared to 67.3 during the 2013-2014 school year.

Our goal-setting process consisted of members the school's leadership team working during the summer to examine the previous year's data points and set purposeful school wide goals. As the instructional leader of the school, I actively participated in reviewing and disaggregating our school's data in order to develop rigorous performance targets. In addition, our school uses data as a part of the ongoing process of instructional improvement; our teachers and students are valuable stakeholders in this process.

A critical component of our goal-setting process involved setting and explicitly communicating rigorous goals for every student and teacher on campus. In calculating individual student goals, we used a formula to establish performance growth points for each student. In turn, teachers became familiar with the individual student goals and use this data to establish realistic and attainable goals for each of their classes. Goals for the school's ACT index, grad index, and CO-Hort graduation rate were also established. However, as a school struggling to just maintain a performance level of "D", I knew more than statistical test data was needed to set goals that would trigger sustainable growth. Therefore, we examined trends within student performance data. Beyond that, we examined teacher effectiveness data; attendance data of both students and teachers; discipline data, and engaged in conversations with student leaders, to explore and pinpoint some of the underlying causes of our lack of success. Trend data revealed an inconsistency in teacher effectiveness; therefore, within our Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) job-embedded clusters, we identified needs specific to our students and structured a plan to further empower and support teachers in implementing the best instructional practices that would lead to student achievement.

As importantly, data revealed a prevailing apathy among students; therefore, we scaffold a plan to create a healthy school culture for learning. A culture for learning that reflected the importance of work undertaken by both the students and teachers. A culture of Individual goal-setting structures that allow students to define their own criteria for success. A culture where teachers, students, and parents perceive the school as positive and well-functioning.

To sail forward, we concluded that there was a need to develop an understood, agreed-upon purpose and a plan that provided direction to reaching our goals. Thus, we needed wind in our sails to get to the desired harbor-improved student achievement. As a team, we built a common language of instruction for clarity and collaboration. This process launched the beginning of our "School Mission Plan." A plan that identified the kind of learning to be achieved and would serve as a filter to keep the school and the efforts of staff and students on target.

Since instructional rigor without a healthy culture for learning would result in a false positive, I promoted a culture of teachers and students working together as partners. They structured their work around individual student data, as well as class and school goals. This cooperative learning activity helped students realize that personal effort can contribute to group as well as individual goals. Teachers provided high quality academic feedback; progress-monitoring and teacher and student self-reflections. "Failure Is Not an Option" became the mantra for our teachers. Teachers engaged in outcome-based instruction and evaluation which made it possible for all students to experience success without having to compete with more advanced students. If a child did not perform well on an assignment, teachers provided extra help during WIN (Whatever I Need) or after school. Students were given the option to redo the assignment or test for a higher grade. Teachers fostered the "Growth Mindset" concept among students. They coached students to value effort and realize that even geniuses have to work hard to develop their abilities and make contributions. Thus, students started to view failure as a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability. Students started to believe in themselves and take ownership for their learning.

I worked to model learning, shape the conditions for all to learn, and clear the path for learning to place in demonstrable ways. For example, an EOC teacher was on paternity for a full semester leaving the school without a certified math teacher. With the support of teachers in the math department, I successfully taught the class.

After each 9 week grading period, all students meet with me to reflect and review progress on their data-story, and discuss and adjust their goals, as needed.

We start our day, each morning, with a 5 minute assembly where students and teachers are recognized and celebrated for their progress toward their individual, class, and school goals. It is not uncommon for district leaders, Board members, and civic-minded community members to drop by, celebrate with us, and encourage students and teachers.

The above activities coupled with my daily Leadership Learning Walks to ensure instructional consistency and teacher effectiveness allow me to communicate the value that I place on the quality of education, at MHS. Those collective efforts and the authentic commitment of each staff member prompted change, pride in achievement, momentum, and growth.

We have identified a blueprint to achieve sustainable success; however, we are a work in progress. Thus, we are not resting on our laurels. Reflecting and tweaking are as much a part of our daily practices as are all other purposeful, student-centered activities.



Reflection Question #2

Last updated: 01/08/2016

Page 1



Instructional Practice and Reflection

Summarize how you support teachers as they plan, instruct, and assess in a way that aligns to higher academic standards. Include the processes you have in place for providing timely, meaningful feedback and professional development opportunities to teachers as needed. Explain how you support teachers who are struggling, and challenge those who are excelling, while maintaining high standards for all.

Response is limited to 2 pages or less

With proven results and leadership in advancing teacher effectiveness, our Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) provides the platform for weekly job-embedded professional development, commonly known as cluster meetings: which are collaborative, student centered and led by expert teacher leaders (Master and Mentors.) Cluster focuses on identified needs based on instructional issues that specific teachers face with specific students. Teachers use data to target these areas of need, instead of trying to implement the latest fad in professional development. Teachers plan, prepare standard-based, rigorous lessons, and develop assessments that align to higher academic standards. Master teachers use the five steps of effective learning to frame all cluster work sessions: Identify the Need; Obtain New Learning; Develop; Apply, and Evaluate the impact of new learning, on student achievement. With an unwavering focus on improving student achievement, teachers meet within their specific content area to collaborate, gain knowledge of research-based strategies developed during field testing, while creating and monitoring goal setting for themselves and their students.

Prior to the opening of each new school year, the Leadership Team and I deconstruct student assessment data, identifying areas of need specific to each Standard and/or GLE within each content area. Aligned with student needs identified from assessment data points, selected strategies are researched, developed, and field-tested by the Master teachers before they are modeled, during cluster. I participate in field-testing and work alongside teachers to help develop the critical attributes of the selected strategies, and provide feedback, and refinement to Master teachers.

My presence and support are critical to the successful outcomes of our Cluster meetings. Cluster allows all school leaders and teachers an opportunity to focus together on the ultimate objective of improving student outcomes. My presence also subliminally communicates performance expectations and informs teachers of the value that I place on the quality of education: while giving voice to the high-quality work of the Master teachers.

The TAP Instructional Rubric along with TAP's Designing and Planning Rubric, and the Learning Environment Rubric collectively provide a comprehensive set of research-based best practices that we use to monitor the quality of instruction and observe the development of pedagogical skills among all teachers. Each teacher gets three formal evaluations: one from an administrator, one from a Master teacher, and one from a Mentor. Although these evaluations are weighted with the administrator carrying the most value, each evaluator is trained for inter-rater reliability; during which, we conduct work sessions on understanding the rubrics, understanding the essential practices of Standards-Based instruction and assessments, and share proven tools for building teachers' capacity over time to improve their performance and raise student achievement. Data trends obtained during evaluations, support visits, and Leadership Learning Walks, are used to adjust the type and frequency of support teachers may need to improve their effectiveness.

A Master or mentor teacher is assigned to each teacher whose charge is to provide consistent support. Weekly schedules are created to support teachers by either team teaching, modeling, watching a video of proven Standards-Based, teacher and student-centered lessons, or working directly with the students. This process allows teachers to not only receive real-time support, it does not leave them feeling isolated or frustrated when implementing new strategies. Rather, they feel supported by the leadership team and are able to better meet the needs of students.

In addition to consistent support from all administrators, as well as Master and Mentors, novice teachers attend quarterly, district-level meetings as an added measure to ensure their success. Guided by relevant, timely data, I meet with this group of teachers to review their Individual Growth Plan, examine their professional growth, and progress-monitor their individual and class goals, at the end of each 9 week grading period. Critical to their success is to help them understand that the development of their pedagogical skills is their most powerful tool in enhancing student learning. Those who are experiencing critical issues engage in observation of effective colleagues within the school or at one of our other district schools to ascertain a deeper perspective of performance expectations. Formal and informal feedback are given after each support visit. Novice teachers are paired with teachers who are excelling to provide an added layer of support.

I review sources of evidence and related data that identify ineffectiveness, when I meet with struggling teachers. Based on these sources, I coach teachers to reflect and articulate their individual areas of reinforcement and refinement. We collaborate on elements within their content that could generate professional growth and positively impact student growth. This is followed by the development of a plan-of-action to build capacity for improvement, inclusive of progress monitoring and supported by the Master teacher. My goal is to put an effective teacher in each classroom. Therefore, when all the support and encouragement do not inspire teachers to improve, I have the courage to take the formal route for dismissal, as defined by Desoto Parish School System.

Teachers who are excelling are often called upon to model or showcase those best practices that are leading to students' success in their classroom. Effective teachers can pursue a variety of positions throughout their careers — career, mentor and master teacher — depending upon their interests, abilities and accomplishments. Thus effective teachers are encouraged to advance professionally without having to leave the classroom. This creates expert teacher leaders within schools to provide support to other teachers. They become an expert voice for their content: as such they are recognized, showcased, and celebrated for their work.

The leadership team and I monitor progress of individualized teacher goals, as measured by students' progress monitoring data. During cluster, teachers showcase student work reflective of the implementation of selected strategies into their Standards-Based instructional practices. Student work is examined and the quality of the work is categorized as high, medium, or low. Each teacher charts the characteristics of each category for their students. This provides a visual of teacher performance as measured by student performance and

informs the team of areas in need of enhanced support. It also creates transparency, gives insightful overviews of the alignment of assessments to high standards, and generates powerful professional dialogue among teachers, giving them a sense of camaraderie and support from each other. Teacher support is individualized, highlighting the specific areas of growth for each student, and plans of actions are put in place to make adjustments, or reset goals, as needed to ensure success.

Concurrent with charting and monitoring of student growth, teacher growth is monitored and charted by the Leadership Team. Each week, in addition to providing work samples; during cluster, teachers are required to present their Individualized Growth Plan (IGP). This plan is compilation of artifacts reflective of each teacher's professional growth and serves as a tool to monitor their progress toward their individual class goal and identified areas in need of refinement on observations.

The IGP necessitates a time of reflection for teachers, as they monitor their area of refinement and the steps they have taken to develop their area of need. Teachers also note the level of support they received throughout the week and which members of the leadership team supported them either with modeling a lesson, team teaching, or simply going into the classroom as a method of support by working with students. Through this process, I am able to monitor the level of support received by each teacher on my staff, as well as keeping track of how students are performing through the work brought into cluster. Professional support is a circular process: teachers benefit through professional growth and support, students grow academically through learning.



Reflection Question #3

Created: 01/08/2016

Last updated: 01/11/2016

Page 1



Personal Impact Reflection

Please describe how you've invested and inspired colleagues, families, students and the community in efforts that lead to student success.

Response is limited to 1 page or less

Named Desoto Parish Principal of the Year, by my peers and district staff is one of the most notable accomplishments of my career. My selection as POY is a tribute to the work, dedication, and collaboration of many. Among those are my fellow principals who provide a safe venue for me to reflect, get information or simply vent and my administrative team, faculty, and staff who are relentless in their commitment to providing a quality education for every student. Most importantly, my selection would not be evident without my students who are "daring to achieve greatness." Coaching, support, and mentoring from district staff are also key in helping me implement those effective instructional leadership practices that have led to the success that I have achieved.

We all know that test scores are important, but they alone do not tell the whole story. There are many other factors that must be in place to achieve a high level of student performance. Which leads to my second most important accomplishment- our emerging, positive school culture. Students are taught to love challenges, to be resilient, and value their own improvement: which is leading to a culture for learning that reflects the importance of work undertaken by both the students and teachers. A culture of Individual goal-setting structures that allows students to define their own criteria for success. A culture where teachers, students, and parents perceive the school as positive and well-functioning. This cultural change has been the edifice upon which academic growth and leadership, in both the teachers and students, has been evidenced. Factor for this cultural change, for teachers, is our participation in TAP and the development of our School Mission Plan. TAP brings out the best in teachers while enabling them to constantly improve the quality of their instruction. It provides teachers with multiple career paths, instructional focused accountability, job-embedded professional development, and performance-based compensation for teacher effectiveness. Our school Mission Plan allows everyone in the building to have a voice in addressing issues critical to the optimal

functioning of the school.

Thirdly, but most importantly, I am proud of our school's academic growth. The actions and behaviors within this accomplishment are the result of a unified effort by teachers, teacher-leaders, administrator, and parents with our students as the cornerstone of this meritorious breakthrough. As a school, we are a kaleidoscope of many talents; however, we are school where learning is purposeful, meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active: resulting in remarkable academic growth. We have grown from a "D" school to a "B" school in the last academic school year. Additionally, we have increased our graduation rate from 66% to 95%. MHS was recently named one of the TOP GAIN schools in the state. That is especially significant not only for status but, more importantly, for the psyche of our students. They don't have to just believe that their dreams can become their realities. There realities are yesterday's dreams. This has not always been the case for students at our school. There is a pride in achievement and prevailing "new attitudes" toward learning.

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- Contributions to school and/or community groups and activities.

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TEACHER/PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR INFORMATION	
Indicate Teacher or <u>Principal</u>	Principal
Nominee's name	Sedric Clark
District	Desoto Parish School System
School	Mansfield High School

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION	
Recommender name	[REDACTED]
Recommender's relationship to nominee	Supervisor
Recommender signature	[REDACTED]

Letter of Recommendation (please limit to 250 words)
<p>It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend Sedric Clark as Principal of the Year. I have enjoyed the privilege of working with Principal Clark for the past 6 years-first as a fellow principal and currently as his Supervisor.</p> <p>Principal Clark is a reflective, ethical, servant-leader who does not settle for less than the best for students and teachers in his charge. His actions and beliefs communicate that he understands the awesome responsibility he has as the school's instructional leader.</p> <p>Principal Clark is a divergent thinker and has the ability to see things in many directions: always looking beyond that which is apparent. Leading change is a daunting task: requiring school leaders to strengthen their ability to confront tough questions and make purposeful decisions that lead to measurable, sustainable growth. With heartfelt advice, support from others, practical wisdom, and examples from the field, Principal Clark has learned to navigate the</p>

dynamics of change. To that end, he has identified the essential pillars to improve teacher effectiveness with a goal of increased student achievement - resulting in meritorious student performance, on his campus.

Principal Clark realizes that he must attend to his own professional growth and constantly work to build the capacity to develop effective teachers and improve student learning. This self-awareness led him to enter into the Doctoral program, at LA Tech, which further illustrates his commitment to the profession and clearly shows that he has accepted the challenge of becoming one of the best school leaders in the profession.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) recognizes that great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the LDOE honors the state's most exceptional educators through the Teacher and Principal of the Year program.

Part of the selection process allows educators, parents, and community members to provide recommendations for Teacher and Principal of the Year candidates using this form. The completed form is to be emailed to the candidate or as directed.

Below are some of the factors which will be considered as part of the Teacher and Principal of the Year selection process. You may choose to address one or more of these factors in your recommendation.

- Teaching skill and dedication;
- Respect for and rapport with students with parents and/or coworkers;
- Contributions to school and/or community groups and activities.

If you have questions or concerns, please email excellenteducators@la.gov.

TEACHER/PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR INFORMATION	
Indicate Teacher or Principal	PRINCIPAL
Nominee's name	MR. SEDRIC CLARK
School district	DESOTO PARISH
School	MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION	
Recommender name	[REDACTED]
Recommender's relationship to nominee	SUPERINTENDENT [REDACTED]
Recommender signature	[REDACTED]

Letter of Recommendation (please limit to 250 words)

This letter is to recommend Mansfield High School's Sedric Clark for the honor of Principal of the Year. I have worked alongside Mr. Clark for a period of six years, first as his immediate supervisor and now as his Superintendent. Over the course of that time, I've found Mr. Clark to be a good man, most interested in providing students with opportunities to advance them, successfully, into their next season of life.

As a principal, Mr. Clark has been a vital member of our DeSoto Parish team. He has been faithful with his duties, consistently growing stronger as a principal. An effective principal is invaluable and, thankfully, we have a strong principal in Mr. Clark for our students, employees, and school community. Over Mr. Clark's tenure, the school has grown academically from a Louisiana Department of Education letter grade of "D" to its current standing of "B" – this indicates improved learning outcomes for students. In terms of graduation rates, DeSoto Parish leads the State of Louisiana with 95% of our students graduating from high school on time; Mr. Clark's efforts at Mansfield have been vital to helping us grow our graduation statistics.

It has been my pleasure working with Mr. Clark and I believe his best days are ahead. He is a committed, passionate, intelligent, and capable educational leader. I've worked with him through good and bad times. As you serve with someone you grow closer together. Through our professional relationship, I'm also blessed to call him my friend.

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- Respect for and rapport with students with parents and/or coworkers;
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TEACHER/PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR INFORMATION	
Indicate Teacher or Principal	Principal
Nominee’s name	Sedric G. Clark
School district	Desoto
School	Mansfield High School

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION	
Recommender name	[REDACTED]
Recommender’s relationship to nominee	Teacher
Recommender signature	[REDACTED]

Letter of Recommendation (please limit to 250 words)
<p>I am extremely proud to recommend Sedric Clark as Principal of the Year. Mr. Clark has served as my principal for the past six years and during that time he has, without fail, demonstrated complete dedication and commitment to our school.</p> <p>Under Mr. Clark’s leadership, our school climate has been transformed from a culture of apathy and low expectations into a school where teachers now set high, rigorous student expectations and students set and monitor progress toward individual learning goals. A great sense of pride among faculty, students and our community is evident on our campus that was not here prior to his arrival.</p> <p>I believe Sedric Clark’s defining characteristic as an outstanding principal is his authentic caring. Mr. Clark has fostered a dynamic between all stakeholders where everyone understands the importance of caring for our students. He consistently inspires students and teachers to continually give their best effort and persevere, even in the face of great obstacles.</p>

Additionally, Mr. Clark has built capacity for leadership in our faculty by empowering teachers to make the best decisions for students. Mr. Clark's philosophy involves giving successful teachers the room to continue to be successful. He has created mentoring relationships to enable high capacity teachers to support developing teachers. Teachers at Mansfield High know that Mr. Clark will work tirelessly to ensure their success.

I have the utmost respect for Sedric Clark as a professional and as a person. I am tremendously grateful for what he has done for our school.