

James Swanson

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Education/Certification:

- National Board Certified Teacher
- Principal Certification, Washington State University May 2010
- Masters in Teaching, Grand Canyon University Feb 2001
- BS in Mathematics, Washington State University May 1997
- Teaching Certification for state of Washington (4-12) May 1997

Leadership Experience:

- Migrant Summer School Principal Wenatchee School District April 2016 - present
- Substitute Principal: Orchard Middle School, Pioneer Middle School, Columbia Elementary, and Wenatchee High School Aug 2015 - present
- Secondary Mathematics Facilitator Wenatchee School District Aug 2015 - present
- High School Mathematics Instructor Wenatchee High School Jan 2015 - Aug 2015
- Administrative Intern: Tonasket High School, Tonasket WA Aug 2013 - May 2015
Mentors: Jeff Hardesty, Tonasket High School Principal
Jay Tyus, Tonasket Middle School Principal
Dr. Jeanine Butler, WSU, Advisor and Professor
- High School Mathematics Instructor Tonasket High School Aug 1997 - Jan 2015

Instructional Leadership:

Support for Staff:

- Used observation to assist teachers in evaluating instructional goals through district instructional framework, Marzano
- Schedule, plan, and conduct "walkthroughs" with teachers to deepen knowledge of Marzano rubrics and engage in peer observations
- Observations of all secondary mathematics teachers to ensure and gauge curriculum/program implementation and engagement teaching strategies
- Developed "New Teacher Handbook" for Tonasket High School: a guide for incoming teachers to quickly acclimate to school protocols
- Facilitate department goals for improvement of math performance for students

Curriculum and Assessment Design and Implementation:

- Developed district-wide data driven placement criteria for mathematics in grades 6-9
- Co-lead math adoption, general mathematics through Algebra II, grades 6-12
- Developed and implemented observation rubric for new curriculum
- Coordinator for implementation of TI-Inspire calculator program for all high school math classes

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- Analyzed and assigned placement of grades 6-12 students (almost 1800 students) into appropriate math pathway. Collaborated with all middle schools' placement teams to confirm all students are placed correctly

Intervention Systems:

- Lead in developing Tier 2 in-class interventions for struggling students
- Development and revised High School Improvement Plan
- Coordinate implementation of intervention programs for 3 middle schools and 2 high schools (Math 180 and Intensified Algebra)
- Developed "New Teacher Handbook" for Tonasket High School: a guide for incoming teachers to quickly acclimate to school protocols

Building Management

- All facets of building management for summer school, approx.. 200 students, including but not limited to: Budget, daily operations, discipline, staff observations, progress monitoring
- Work on site as substitute principal for various buildings, managing discipline, lunch, bus duty, parent concerns

Strengths/Characteristics:

- Dedicated to see that ALL students are successful
 - Distinguished in data collection and analysis
 - Advocate for building healthy environments for both students and staff
 - Great sense of humor and dedicated team member
 - Building of relationships with respect, care, and empathy
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STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY : Especially focused upon the needs of children and schools at the middle school level.

It is all about the kids. We have the opportunity to impact young people's lives in a profound and positive manner if we choose to. As educators, it is our responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing, and positive learning environment for our students. We want our students to leave our building having grown emotionally and socially, ready to tackle the rigor of high school academics.

School Climate and Culture

A positive school climate is the foundation for the successes we experience with our students and staff. Our norms and values as a collective group, demonstrate our belief in interpersonal relationships and best practices in teaching and learning. Brain research tells us that a brain under stress does not learn. Middle school students are in a unique period of their lives. They must deal with pressures from society, home, school, and their own biological changes, all of which have the potential to create and sustain ample stress for the body and brain. Middle school students need a learning environment where they feel emotionally safe, valued, and respected. School wide models such as PBIS or Leader in Me, support this culture and belief system, forming a great sense of community. Staff feel valued, respected, and have a voice in shared decision making.

Teaching Practices and Evaluations

I believe in building trusting and positive relationships with staff. My role as a building leader is to help teachers reflect and offer as much support as possible in helping them achieve their instructional goals, growth goals, and fullest potential. By creating genuine PLC groups that follow the four questions and use the cycle of inquiry, teachers will help each other advance in their practice and collaborate on what is best for students. This allows learning for all school community members. Growth and learning can take place in various formats such as book studies, learning labs, and peer walkthroughs. My ultimate goal is to support a culture of collegiality and collaboration where we learn from each other's expertise and experience. We are all learning, setting goals, and meeting or revising them every day. Instructional frameworks, evaluation tools, and PLCs help focus our learning and measurement of goals.

School Improvement and Closing the Gap

We expect teachers to reflect and respond to their own teaching so they can continuously grow in their practice. The building as a whole should be doing the same thing. Information from such data points as surveys to students, teachers, and community members, assessment data, progress monitoring data, and discipline data is readily available for data analysis and identifying areas of growth. It also offers opportunities for identifying school wide needs. Using the cycle of inquiry, as a collective group, we identify what our problem of practice is, plan to address it, act on it, and re-evaluate to see what gains have been made. We will repeat the process consistently to keep moving our building forward.

The culture of the school should be focused on data driven decision making in all areas of student achievement. A close look at curriculum and its alignment to state standards, a method for tracking the progress of student growth, and a collaborative plan of improvement are all key components in closing the achievement gap. Identification of areas of improvement is not enough. Once these are identified, it is crucial to provide support systems for teachers to discover and implement best practices in the classroom.

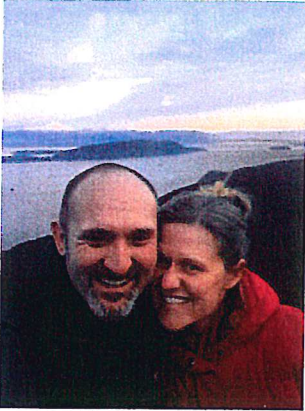
Student Needs and Discipline

While I entered administration to become an instructional leader, instruction cannot take place if safety and security are jeopardized. A strong PBIS program, where we teach and model the behaviors we want our students to display, is where empathy, compassion, reflection, and kindness bloom in our students. When discipline issues arise, fair and appropriate responses are needed. Shared values help communicate to students and parents what is expected from our school community. Core values like integrity, respect, courage, and patience should be posted and visible in our building. Expectations of participation and contribution as members of our community must be believed by all. If we are asking students to be a positive part of our community, we also need to hold them accountable when the community's expectations are not upheld. There will be fair, equitable, and appropriate consequences for students to learn from mistakes. Students will reflect on the behavior and have guidance in choosing alternate reactions and behaviors. Discipline is a learning opportunity for all parties involved.

Community Involvement

The education of our students is not solely contained inside the walls of the school. School offers the chance to educate students in academic disciplines but also social and emotional learning. Educating our young people is the responsibility of the community as a whole. Having shared values; the school and community will work together to serve the needs of our students. I believe in seeking community partnerships that will strengthen our system and benefit both the community and our students. Communication between school, parents, and community leaders should be expected regularly. I believe we should celebrate the successes of our students through newsletters, community evenings, phone calls, social media, and any other method to showcase our community to the world. Community volunteers add so much to the growth and development of students. They enrich the school environment and provide mentorship that is so desperately needed for some students.

I believe education is something more inclusive than just reading, writing, and arithmetic. It goes beyond the classroom and just connecting students with teachers. It is my life and passion to ensure ALL students grow, achieve, and feel success while contributing to a larger community around them. Working together and with the district as a whole, we can ensure the transition into middle school as well as exiting to high school can be smooth, seamless, and healthy.



The task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there.
– John Buchan, novelist, historian and politician

James Swanson is an educator passionate about the well-being of all students and staff. With twenty years experience as classroom teacher, building leader, and mentor, James creates positive change in the districts where he works. Relationships are the foundation of his belief system, and he understands that with positive relations built on trust, genuine conversations can and will take place. Open dialogue and a collective decision-making model are cornerstones of his leadership philosophy. James believes ALL students can learn and strives to help those individuals he works with to reach their highest potential. As educators, if we are utilizing our greatest gifts, the students benefit and will be on track in recognizing their own.

James has worked to ensure all students are given opportunity to learn and grow by developing and implementing programs at all ability levels, from Intervention programs to Advanced Placement courses. He is passionate about growth in his personal and professional life. Two current professional interests are the effect of stress on the brain and how that stress affects our ability to learn, as well as how engagement increases student achievement.

James holds a BS in Mathematics and a Master's degree in Teaching. He holds certificates in teaching, administration, and is a National Board Certified Teacher.

When he is not at school, James can be found mountain biking, trail running, and enjoying the outdoor activities of the Northwest. He and his fiancé currently live in Leavenworth. His son Hunter will be a freshman at Western Washington University this fall. His daughter Alexis is currently a freshman in high school. James is excited for the possibility of joining the Administration of South Whidbey Island School District and becoming a part of the Whidbey Island community.