

Statement of Educational Philosophy
W. Keith Bookwalter, Ph.D.
April 11, 2009

I have summarized my educational philosophy as follows:

The aim of education is to enable the learner to consciously and continually (1) discover, actualize, expand, and refine, at an optimum rate, her/his potentialities and special, God-given talents which are physical, social, psychological, and/or spiritual in nature; (2) acquire beneficial knowledge and skills; (3) place these talents, knowledge, and skills at the service of humankind; (4) know and love the Creator and His/Her creation; (5) actualize the potentialities of other people, social entities, and the world; that is, to strive to bring about the highest good for all people and all things everywhere; (6) carry forward an ever-advancing civilization toward ever-wider circles of unity and harmony; and (7) prepare her/his soul for the afterlife.

As a school director, the application of this philosophy would include the actualization of the potentialities of the entire school community: the students, teachers, administrators, board of directors, parents and the institution as a whole. My approach to administration is based on the etymology of the word itself, i.e., “to administer” means “to minister to or serve others.” Hence, my administrative style is more democratic, consultative and collegial than it is dictatorial, authoritarian and top-down. Before making decisions I prefer, when time and circumstances permit, to consult with those who have demonstrated expertise in the area under consideration and those who will be affected by the decision.

I believe that the potentialities of learners are actualized through their interaction with the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the environment. Hence, the role of the director is to help learners to attain the highest degree possible of health and well-being; to acquire, arrange, and maintain physical, social, psychological, and spiritual environments of the highest quality; and to also provide for interactions of the highest caliber between the learner and her/his environment, usually, but not always, under the guidance of a teacher or adult.

In relation to learning programs, I seek to balance the acquisition of content knowledge and symbol systems (math, language, and others) and skills with the development of processes (social, emotional, cognitive and others), values, ideals, and higher-order competencies, e.g., organizing an event or carrying out a research project. I seek out programs that enable teachers to personalize the educational process while maintaining high standards of academic achievement. Especially for younger students, due to the wide range in cognitive development, I prefer programs that do not expect all students to attain all of the desired outcomes or benchmarks at the same point in time, at the same rate, to the same extent, or in the same way.