

Principal, Joshua Eaton Elementary Schoo...

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Dear Ms. Saunders,

Please accept this letter as my expression of interest for the Elementary Principal position within the Reading Public Schools. I believe that my desire for success and educational background will make me an extremely competitive candidate for this position. I am a strong candidate for this position because of the passion I have and the skills and experiences I possess. I have worked with many excellent educators through my experiences in Hammond, IN, and will continue to build on those partnerships as I advance in my career moving from the Midwest to New England, to be closer to family.

I greet students daily at the front door and welcome them by name (640 of them!). I promote the positive in every situation and find ways to excite students and staff about learning. I integrate literacy projects in all school initiatives to promote engagement and learning. I would be a tremendous addition to the Eaton Elementary Community. I have proven that I will work hard for the students, families and members of the district in which I work.

The key strengths that I possess for success in this position include the following:

- Proven educational leader, able to motivate colleagues, teachers
- Extremely organized in all areas of work
- Effectively communicate and demonstrate conflict resolutions
- Motivated to work towards and exceed goals for myself and all students and staff
- Driven to strive for excellence in school improvement efforts
- Patience and understanding for differences in all students

Previous and current employers and colleagues find me to be trustworthy, personable, hard-working, well-spoken, organized and confident—the type of person on whom you can rely. A district should be built with constant contact from various members of the community and I believe that my experiences will qualify me to add leadership and guidance to the Reading Public Schools.

Through my experiences in Hammond, I have had the opportunity to serve in many roles. Most recently as Principal of Lincoln Elementary School, I have focused on improving the school climate along with student achievement. In only two years, Lincoln Elementary has improved from a “D” school to an “A” school under my leadership. I have worked closely with the Instructional Coach and our teachers to refine and reinforce teaching methods and practices in every classroom. Together, our staff has redefined an atmosphere of respect in which all students and teachers strive for success in all that they do. In addition to my administration duties, I spend time working with the school and district literacy teams to coordinate curriculum and analyze assessment data to drive instruction. Additionally, I have devoted a great deal of time to learning about PBIS and implementing successful programs in two elementary schools. I feel as though my experiences have fully prepared me for another step in education. The opportunity as Elementary Principal with the Reading Public Schools excites the educator that I have always been.

It is my goal to combine my range of experience with my ability to be a compassionate, enthusiastic, and intelligent administrator who will make positive contributions to the Reading Public Schools. I would welcome an interview and hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryan C. Eckart

Ryan Eckart

Ryan Eckart

Education

Purdue University Calumet

Hammond, Indiana

Master of Science

Major: Educational Administration

GPA: 4.000

Credit Hours: 31

Attended September 2009 to May 2012

Degree conferred May 2012

Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

Master of Science

Major: Curriculum & Instruction

GPA: 3.900

Credit Hours: 30

Attended January 2006 to May 2008

Degree conferred May 2008

Valparaiso University

Valparaiso, Indiana

Bachelor of Science

Major: Elementary Education

GPA: 3.390

Credit Hours: 120

Attended January 2001 to December 2003

Degree conferred December 2003

Experience

School City of Hammond

Aug 2012 - Present

Principal

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School

- Instructional Leader of 650 student Pre-K – 5 Elementary School in urban district
- Raised School Grade from “D” to “A” in two years
- Provide Bi-weekly professional development for staff of 38 certified teachers
- Lead school Leadership team through School Improvement planning and development
- Coach teachers on instruction based on daily classroom walk throughs and formal evaluations
- Coordinate and lead data discussions with Instructional Coach, Leadership team and teachers
- Inspire students through integration of Book Trailers, book commercials, Geek Squad
- Oversee PBIS implementation, organize monthly all school “celebrations”
- Manage aspects of Title I, including overseeing budget of \$400,000.00+, and staff
- Supervise staff providing support to 300+ students qualifying for Language Development (EL) services
- Communicate with parents and community through active twitter and facebook accounts
- Serve as testing Coordinator for ISTEP+, IREAD3

Reason for leaving: Current position. I have had a great experience at Lincoln and have accomplished many things. I am looking to move my young family to Massachusetts to be closer to family.

Supervisor: Staci Bennett (219-933-2475)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time
It is **OK** to contact this employer

School City of Hammond

Jan 2010 - Aug 2012

Assistant to the Principal

Hammond, Indiana

- Improve school culture/atmosphere
- Supervise and coordinate breakfast program for 300+ students
- Manage office discipline referrals
- Communicate with parents through meetings, phone conversations and casual visits
- Active member of school Literacy team, Plan team
- Met with DOE reading specialists concerning upcoming reading framework implementation
- Active member of planning team for full implementation of school wide 90 minute guided reading
- Coordinate college student placements for field experiences/student teaching
- Coordinate test prep tutoring before, during and after school
- Supervise after school bus waiting/loading
- Visit classrooms on daily basis to build rapport with all students
- Collaborate with grade levels on a biweekly basis and provide professional development
- Attend district trainings pertaining to Reading programs
- Recruit volunteers for school functions
- Create special area schedule for school (gym, art, music) 29 classrooms
- Create school lunch and recess schedules
- Facilitate management of five lunch periods a day with up to 120 students in one sitting
- Initiated lunch mentor program
- Coordinate student 504 plans and monitor implementation
- Assist in RTI meetings with teachers and monthly tracking of student progress
- Schedule ISTEP+ testing, accommodation groups; grade level checkpoint meetings and monthly RTI teacher meetings
- Participate as a member of interview committees for long term substitutes, teachers and principals for district schools

Reason for leaving: I am currently completing my second Masters degree in education. As I complete this degree in Educational Administration, I am looking forward to taking on a position of leadership in my own school. I have worked to develop relationships with students, parents and educators where trust and honesty are very important. I have been working towards another step in my educational career.

Supervisor: Catherine Danko (219-989-7360)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time
It is **OK** to contact this employer

School City of Hammond

Aug 2008 - Jan 2010

Reading Intervention Coordinator

Hammond, IN

- Organized intervention program for grades kindergarten through third grade
- Collaborated with teachers, administration, and consultants regarding intervention
- Engaged teachers in professional development while promoting a professional community
- Provided workshops on intervention/reading framework
- Collected data, analyze results and report findings
- Supervised reading instructional aides, provide development and evaluations

- Managed the reading intervention program to ensure the highest level of quality

Reason for leaving: I began working toward my Educational Administration degree and accepted a position at a larger elementary school in my district with more opportunities for advancement.

Supervisor: Sandi Hillan (219-933-2479)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

School City of Hammond

Aug 2004 - Aug 2008

3rd grade teacher

Hammond, IN

- Instruct and adapt curriculum to fit needs of individual student learning styles
- Collaborate with grade level team members on weekly curriculum
- Leader of grade level and Differentiated Instruction training
- Interact with parents on a daily and weekly basis
- Prepare and present to staff on various topics, including Information Technology
- Analyze state standardized testing data and implement strategies to achieve goals
- Participate as an active member of School Improvement Teams for Math and Attendance

Reason for leaving: Position became available at my school with greater responsibility.

Supervisor: Tom Wisch (219-933-2479)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

Score! Educational Center

Feb 2004 - Aug 2004

Assistant Director

Naperville, IL

- Worked directly with children ages 4-17 in supplemental education center
- Helped students set and achieve attainable goals
- Recruited students for program by conducting visits and parent conferences
- Assisted in business activities including marketing, payroll, sales and operations
- Supervised and trained four-six tutors of small groups of students

Reason for leaving: Teaching position became available.

Supervisor: Nicole Lanute (630-533-3345)

Experience Type: Other, Full-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

Professional Presentations

- oNorthwest Indiana Reading Coalition 2014
 - oIndiana EL conference 2013, 2014
 - oInternational Reading Association (IRA) conference 2014
 - oIllinois Reading conference 2014
 - oIndiana eLearning conferences 2014
 - oNational TitleI conference 2015
-

Achievements as Principal

- Raised DOE School Grade from D in 2012 to B in 2013 to A in 2014
- Presented school success with Book Trailers at:
 - oNorthwest Indiana Reading Coalition 2014
 - oIndiana EL conference 2013, 2014
 - oInternational Reading Association (IRA) conference 2014
 - oIllinois Reading conference 2014
 - oIndiana eLearning conferences 2014
 - oNational TitleI conference 2015
- Implemented One School, One Book initiatives
- Initiated new clubs: ROARSome News show, Geek Squad
- Began iPad implementation
- Established Social Media presence on twitter and facebook #mylincolnlion
- Organized grade level learning blocks by subject
- Planned dedicated grade level collaboration time during the day once a week
- Increased PBIS initiatives to support all students and teachers
- Decreased office referrals with implementation of PBIS and behavior rubric
- Built community and collaboration with ISTEP+ music videos
- Built positive presence on youtube with channel MyLincolnLion and over 50,000 views

Jeri Hammond
Pelham, NH 03076

Micheala Saunders
82 Oakland Road
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Ms. Saunders,

It is with a sense of enthusiasm and with full knowledge of the incredible privilege and responsibility entailed, that I write to express an interest in the position of principal for the Joshua Eaton Elementary School.

Our schools and our teachers face increasing challenges. It seems every day there is something new we are asked to accomplish. Now, more than ever, if parents are to continue to trust us to educate their children, if teachers are to embrace new learning, and, most importantly, if our children are to be given the rich and innovative learning experiences they so deserve, our schools need leaders who invite collaboration and creativity and who lead with a clear sense of shared purpose and hopefulness. I would be that leader.

I bring with me more than twenty years experience teaching in elementary classrooms and a deep-seated passion for teaching and learning. The first few years of a child's educational life are to me the most precious. It is here that they whet a lifelong appetite for learning.

Increasingly over the last five to ten years, I have been drawn to leadership opportunities, which have allowed me to make a contribution in a larger community of learners. I have found that I not only love nurturing a learner's spirit in the young students I teach, but in teachers and parents as well.

My principal internship has afforded me a rich opportunity to participate in all aspects of school leadership from crafting a school improvement plan, scheduling, student support, working with families, teacher supervision and professional development. At the school level, I have been part of our Educational Leadership team, school site council and have facilitated numerous professional learning opportunities: leading a math data team, coaching Critical Friends Groups, mentoring new teachers, peer supervision, action research groups, parent workshops, facilitating faculty meetings and most recently leading a faculty book group to explore the essential habits of mind that will help our students succeed not only in school but in life.

At the system level, I have developed curricula, facilitated in an innovative second and third year teacher mentoring program, acted as a science and math teacher leader and participated in a system-wide program review of our Enrichment and Challenge Program as a fierce advocate for enriching and challenging learning experiences for all learners.

My research focus during my educational leadership program was on educational equity and math instruction, allowing me to dive deep into implications of the common core as well as the role of mindset in math achievement. As part of this, I have facilitated the math data team, led instructional math rounds, initiated math and mindset work for students, faculty and parents, and inspired school wide conversations about meeting the needs of all math learners.

Jeri Hammond

Another deeply held belief of mine is in the value of the arts in education. With more than two decades of work in theatre education and arts integration, I have seen first hand the power of the arts to enrich, challenge and deepen learning while also celebrating the diversity and resilience of the human spirit.

I am fortunate to have been part of an incredible school community. I feel deeply connected to students, families and colleagues and it is only the prospect of becoming a principal at just the right school that would draw me away. Your description of the qualities you are looking for in an educational leader spoke to me. Yes, I thought, that sounds like somewhere I would love to be. As someone who believes in continuous growth and learning and who thrives in situations where I am learning something new, especially in collaboration with others, I feel prepared and eager to take this leap to becoming a school leader. I will bring to this work the same passion, creativity and commitment that have been the hallmark of my teaching for decades.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeri Hammond

Jeri Hammond

Education

EDCO Leadership Institute/ Endicott College

Bedford, Massachusetts

Master of Science in Administration

Major: Organizational Leadership

GPA: 4.000

Credit Hours: 24

Attended January 2014 to June 2015 (*expected completion*)

Degree conferred June 2015

Wheelock College

Boston, Massachusetts

Master of Education

Major: Consulting Teacher of Reading

GPA: 4.000

Attended September 1991 to May 1992

Degree conferred May 1992

Wheelock College

Boston, Massachusetts

Bachelor of Science

Major: Elementary Education and Special Education, **Minor:** Theatre Arts

Attended September 1982 to May 1986

Degree conferred May 1986

Experience

Michael Driscoll School

Sep 2004 - Present

Teacher Leader

Brookline, MA

- Member of Educational Leadership Team, Driscoll School
- Member of School Site Council, Driscoll School
- Facilitated professional development on such topics such as differentiated instruction, arts integration, and interdisciplinary curriculum, Public Schools of Brookline, Wheelock Family Theatre Educational Program
- Facilitated monthly Critical Friends Group for teachers in their second and third year of teaching as part of a comprehensive system-wide mentoring program. Public Schools of Brookline
- Received Brookline Foundation grant to participate in a teacher action research with a research focus on the development of growth mindset and habits of mind such as resilience, curiosity and critical and creative thinking.
- Facilitated math data team and instructional rounds focused on high level math teaching and learning.
- Acted as science and math teacher leader.
- Co-developed integrated inquiry science and literacy curricula adopted by Brookline Public Schools
- Member of Equity Team
- Facilitated series of faculty meetings, Driscoll School
- Led parent workshops related to Responsive Classroom, child development, and other educational topics

- Participated in system wide program review of Enrichment and Challenge program and presented to School Committee.
- Directed theatrical productions at school, college and professional levels.
- Author of study guides for school groups, Wheelock Family Theatre

Supervisor: Heidi Cook ((617) 879-4250)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

Michael Driscoll School

Sep 1993 - Present

Teacher

Brookline, MA

Create vibrant and inclusive learning community for first and second grade students in a two-year loop. Design and implement engaging differentiated instruction rooted in building competency of national, state and system standards. Promote a growth mindset and the development of twenty first century skills. Cultivate a caring classroom culture supported by Responsive Classroom principles. Innovate using the arts and technology to inspire learners. Open doors to visiting teachers and mentor teacher interns. Work collaboratively with colleagues and in partnership with parents to provide students with a rich and memorable learning experience. Hold high expectations for all learners and an unwavering faith in each child's capacity to learn. Celebrate effort and improvement. Contribute to a culture of continuous learning in the school community.

Supervisor: Heidi Cook ((617) 879-4250)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

Wheelock Family Theatre/ Wheelock College

Sep 1986 - Present

Theatre Education Teacher/ Consultant/ Director

Boston, MA

Design and implement creative theatre arts curriculum integrating acting, movement, voice and scenic arts. Work in collaboration with other theatre artists. Direct students in demonstration performances. Provide professional development for new theatre educators and for classroom teachers integrating arts into the curriculum. Author study guides for school groups attending main stage performances. Provide inclusive theatre experience for all students.

Supervisor: John Bay ((617) 879-2250)

Experience Type: Other, Part-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

Beacon Hill Nursery School

Sep 1988 - Jun 1993

Kindergarten Teacher

Boston, MA

Created and implemented rich, interdisciplinary curricula in full day kindergarten at independent school. Received grant to study in Reggio Emilia, Italy and incorporated learning in teaching practices. Launched school-wide art show. Participated in shared decision-making as member of parent/teacher cooperative school board.

Supervisor: Muriel Florent ((617)227-0822)

Experience Type: Independent School, Full-time

It is **OK** to contact this employer

Lexington Public Schools

Jul 1992 - Aug 1992

Graduate Intern/Reading Consultant
Lexington, MA

Designed and implemented literacy curriculum for first graders in Summer Language Arts program.
Presented workshop on use of story dramatizations and choral reading for increased reading comprehension and fluency.

Supervisor: Dr. Kathy Reed ((617) 734-5200)

Experience Type: Student Teaching, Summer
It is **OK** to contact this employer

Italian Home For Children

Jun 1992 - Jul 1992

Graduate Intern/Reading Consultant
Brookline, MA

Acted as reading consultant, administered formal and informal reading assessments. Wrote evaluations and developed and implemented individualized reading programs for 1st-3rd grade struggling readers.

Supervisor: Dr. Kathy Reed ((617) 734-5200)

Experience Type: Student Teaching, Summer
It is **OK** to contact this employer

Carlisle Public Schools

Sep 1987 - Jun 1989

Kindergarten Teacher
Carlisle, MA

Developed and implemented inquiry based kindergarten curricula. Engaged students in creative learning experiences such as a kindergarten circus. Participated in professional learning community with kindergarten educators from area schools.

Supervisor: Dr. Matthew King ((508) 443-9961)

Experience Type: Public School, Full-time
It is **OK** to contact this employer

Lincoln School

Jan 1986 - Jun 1986

Special Education Practicum
Brookline, MA

Completed special education practicum in self-contained classroom for emotionally disabled 4th-6th graders.

Supervisor: Sally Katzen ((617) 879-4250)

Experience Type: Student Teaching, Full-time
It is **OK** to contact this employer

Pierce School

Jan 1985 - Jun 1985

Elementary Education Practicum
Brookline, MA

Completed elementary education practicum in a combined 2nd and 3rd grade classroom.

Supervisor: Debbie D'Amico ((617) 87-4250)
Experience Type: Student Teaching, Full-time
It is **OK** to contact this employer

Statement of Educational Philosophy

I am awed over and over again by the strength of the human spirit and the capacity of individuals to create and contribute to the world in unique and powerful ways. In turn, I am deeply saddened when artificial limits are placed on an individual's potential. Human potential is not defined by a zip code, a color, or a language. Living in a diverse society means that some children will undoubtedly come to school with differences in opportunities, resources or support. The crucial role of our schools is to embrace each learner and hold an unwavering belief in that child's capacity to learn, grow and contribute. How to turn on a mind, ignite curiosity, foster courage in the face of challenges, and expose students to multiple points of view so that they might come to view others with empathy and the belief that we each have something to learn from the other? This is the work of the school. If there is to be hope of equity in the world then we must strive each and every day for educational equity in our schools.

My vision for learners is closely aligned with what Tomlinson and Javrus (2012) refer to as "teaching up for excellence." They write, "Classrooms that teach up function from the premise that student potential is like an iceberg—most of it is obscured from view—and that high trust, high expectations, and a high-support environment will reveal in time what's hidden." Influenced greatly by the work of Carol Dweck (2007) on Mindset alongside current research about the malleability of the brain, I believe that there is convincing evidence that individuals can nearly always outperform our expectations. How then can we justify low expectations? "In her provocative book, *Wounded by School*, Kirsten Olson (2009) concludes that perhaps the deepest wounds schools inflict on students are wounds of underestimation. I believe in holding a growth mindset for all learners in the school community: students, teachers and parents.

I have the highest regard for teachers and believe that it is the relationship between teacher and student that has the greatest impact on student learning. The following quote by Haim G. Ginott says it best:

"I've come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized."

I believe that one of the keys to excellence in teaching lies in opening our doors—both literally and symbolically. Teaching is incredibly complex and challenging work. We know more together than any one of us can possibly know alone. Daniel Pink, author of *Drive* (2009) connects motivation to three key ideas: mastery, autonomy and purpose. I believe that when teachers are at their best all three of these are in place—teachers are learning and continually improving, teachers are empowered to make instructional decisions and the work teachers are asked to do is tied to a compelling shared sense of purpose. I fear the cookie cutter classrooms where all joy and that special synergy between learners gives way to lockstep procedures. Hargreaves & Fink (2006) advocate for a "cohesive diversity"—where teachers and students are free to learn in rich and varied ways but there is a cohesive set of learning outcomes and expectations. Deep learning and thoughtful, responsive teaching take time. Leaders must build in uninterrupted blocks of time for teachers to teach and learners to learn. Teachers, as learners themselves, need time for

reflection and collaboration in order to do their best work on behalf of their students.

That parents send their children to our schools each and every day is a tremendous leap of faith. If we can communicate in all we do that we have their child's best interests at heart, parents can be our most passionate allies. We must do the, sometimes difficult, work of building trust. We must communicate early and often—and as often as possible, communicate the positive things we see in their child. When we take the time to build this trust and open the door to communication we create relationships that are strong enough to weather the difficult conversations we must sometimes have with parents. We must not ever lose sight of the fact that this student we are discussing may be one of many for us but it is their child. Listening with empathy goes a long way to creating a bridge. We only know the one small part of the child that we see at school, parents can provide us with a richer, fuller picture of the child that can help us connect on a deeper level. Most of all, we need to remember that standing between the teacher and the parent is the child and a positive trusting relationship between home and school tells children that school is a safe and wonderful place to be, to grow and to learn. When children feel that the important adults in their life, both at home and at school, believe in them, it can make all the difference.

“Every organization has a culture, that history and underlying set of unwritten expectations that shape everything about the school. A school culture influences the way people think, feel, and act. Being able to understand and shape the culture is key to a school's success in promoting staff and student learning.” (Peterson, 2002) Perhaps the most important job of an educational leader is to cultivate a school culture founded on collective commitments. Eaker & Keating (2008) describe it this way: “We can think of the collective commitments as a series of “if-then” statements. For example: If we are to be a school that ensures high levels of learning for all students, then we must commit to monitor each student's learning on a timely basis... and support as soon as they experience difficulty in learning. If we are to create a collaborative culture, then we must commit to be positive, contributing members of our collaborative teams and accept collective responsibility for the success of our colleagues and our students.”

Every culture has its stories, its rites and rituals. The stories we tell and what we celebrate says much about who we are, what we value, and who belongs. Why not craft stories then in our schools that connect to our deepest hopes and aspirations, include all our learners as main characters, and join us together in a shared adventure?