

Testimonies...In Progress LDJ

1) She is one of the most important people in my life. She has helped me even when I didn't want it and even when I did. She has opened my mind to encouragement, faith and also her astounding ability to emphasize, and understand has really helped me see how much I mattered to others. She works hard even when it is not asked of her, she puts others first and most importantly strongly cares and takes a huge responsibility for her students and staff. She showed me I have the potential and if I strive hard enough I can reach my dreams.

2) Ms J has helped me out in ways I didn't believe I could be helped in the past 2 years. When I was ready to give up, she pushed me to keep going forward. She's been my mentor, my guide.

3) Thank you for taking over our school so well and for creating the Principal Advisory Committee to give students more voice in our school. We as Leadership Academy students hope you continue making positive changes in our school.

Students

Laurie is a passionate instructional leader focused on improving both student and professional learning that is exemplified through her pursuit of higher education. She values relationship building with students and staff while simultaneously fostering the capacity of those she works with. On a personal level, she supported my shifting assessment practices focused on increasing student achievement and encouraged growing my leadership capacity within our school.

Teacher, New Master's Student and in System Leadership Training

I have been made to feel welcome. Laurie has a really keen sense of how to move the education of students forward at a pace that makes learning fun and exciting, but also challenging and fulfilling. I really appreciate Laurie's ability to stop and ask questions about how changes will affect learning. Laurie is an advocate for staff and students and is very much interested in searching out the best way to enrich the learning environment of all she comes in contact with. *School Council Member*

Laurie is amazing to work with. Her sense of humor and infectious laughter are wonderful. She is easy going and searches for solutions that are logical and effective. Laurie is collaborative, decisive, and enables a team approach within our learning community. She embodies the spirit of School Pride! *Support Staff Member*

The changes to our school can be a bit daunting, even to staff that had been part of the conversation of change. It is a relief to many that Ms. Johnston joins in on the conversation of change and she reflects upon the outcomes. As a result of her direction, the changes that occur within the school come about more smoothly. Ms. Johnston has clarity, an attribute, which is a necessity in a position such as hers. In a very short time she became a part of these halls and her presence is truly felt. Her insight, enthusiasm and demeanour, have made a positive contribution to our school.
Teacher

In my experience with High School Redesign, successful implementation of redesign principals is directly related to the strength of an administrator. In working with High School Administrators around the province, few have demonstrated the passion and drive to improve the educational experience for students to the level that Laurie has. In my work with Laurie, I have been continually impressed with her commitment to the principles of High School Redesign and 21st century learning, perhaps best demonstrated through her dedication to refocus her school's Moving Forward With High School Redesign Plan to ensure all stakeholders were engaged and united in a common vision of High School Redesign in her building. Laurie has taken her MFWHSR programs to such a high level in such a short amount of time, that this Phase 3 school is now ready to begin mentoring others in the process of redesign. This is truly a testament to her leadership abilities. *Former Consultant, Central Alberta Regional Consortia, Moving Forward with High School Redesign*

Laurie leads by example. Her incredible work ethic and commitment to both her staff and students shines brightly on all of those who are fortunate to know her. She is kind, caring and compassionate and fiercely dedicated to the needs of her students. Laurie has the unique combination of both the "soft touch" and commitment to do the tough work. She is a visionary, transformational leader and any school would flourish under her guidance. *Administrative colleague*

Working with Laurie has been an experience that has changed my views on the teaching and working with students. Her positive and compassionate leadership has been invaluable to me. Very few people are capable of giving unconditional support and understanding, but Laurie is able to do this daily, despite demands of being an administrator. She always listens and reacts rationally, to any situation that is brought forward to her. I know that if I have any issues in my classroom, she will lead with her amazing strength of character, honesty, and integrity. *Teacher*

Laurie is a passionate and committed educator. She brings to her work a strong focus on meeting the needs of individual learners. As we move toward the objectives contained in Inspiring Education, I have no doubt she will lead the way with a balance of wisdom, research and boundless energy. She is a leader. *Former Administrative Colleague & Current Superintendent in Southeastern Alberta*

Laurie, you are very special to my daughter. She brought up your name last week. You did make her feel like there was understanding out there. I know that what you did for her did make difference. You absolutely, genuinely, went outside the box for my girl, when she really needed compassion. The time you put aside for her in a school of 1000+ kids was a act of kindness that continues to carry a lesson that cannot be taught in any classroom. Keep going Laurie. All 1000 of them do watch and listen, even if they say they don't. *Parent*

Laurie's leadership style is a wonderful mix of firm and consistent expectations, along with trust in her team and other professionals she works with. Her clear expectations ensure there is little room for miscommunication and help increase action and productivity by ensuring outcomes are understood by all those involved. The trust she holds for other professionals allows them to work to the best of their ability, while always knowing Laurie is available for support or guidance when needed. Laurie also possesses the ability to be open minded while maintaining her strong critical thinking skills. This allows her to be supportive of new ideas, while never being afraid to point out challenges, and possible roadblocks, and encourage improvement of those ideas. *School Success Coach*

To sum up her qualities in a short paragraph will not even begin to scratch the surface of her character. Laurie brings leadership qualities that have enriched our school. Her passion for students goes beyond mention as I often see her in her office after hours making sure that the best interest of the student is placed forward. She is a wonderful ear, when there are issues that need attention and looks for the best possible solutions for all parties involved. *Support Staff Member*

Laurie is an educator that truly knows what it takes to engage students and take them beyond their expectations. She has the ability to get those around her excited about the educational journey in a way that draws out strength and determination for student success. Relationships have always been a high priority, both with students and those she works with. Laurie's sense of integrity and professionalism spills out into every aspect of her leadership and she *makes us all sit back and reflect on the real reason we're here.... the students. Trustee*

As an administrative partner, I have valued Laurie's willingness to openly share her ideas and opinions. She endeavours to include staff input into the decision making process, is an active listener to parent, student, and teacher issues, and is quick to apply progressive solutions. Laurie is always a positive team player who recognizes the importance of vision and values. She is reliable, has a strong work ethic and is not afraid to tackle new leadership challenges. I have found her to be a loyal supporter of the difficult administrative decisions that need to be made. Her excellent communication skills allow her to effectively act as a liaison, often balancing the divergent needs of students, parents, and staff. One critical difference between Laurie

and many vice-principals I have worked with is that she understands and accepts responsibility for all aspects of her assignment. She believes it is her responsibility to make the school the best it can be. *Administrative colleague*

In my own words...Laurie's leadership style is solving problems. She deals in hope. She knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. She does not find fault; she finds a remedy. This one is by Deepak Chopra...it has her name written all over it: Laurie's leadership is spiritual not as some kind of religious dogma or ideology but as the domain of awareness where we experience values like truth, goodness, beauty, love and compassion, and also intuition, creativity, insight and focussed attention. *Administrative colleague*

You inspired me to continue my pursuit of a leadership role in administration after I had given up hope. Through our discussion of my portfolio and you sharing your portfolio with me you helped me to realize the need for reflection. I had always done reflection, but I found it worthwhile to do the formal reflection that you suggested.

To use the models of parenting – authoritarian, democratic or permissive – I would say you had a democratic style of leadership – seeking input from staff, but also able to make an executive decision and stick with it when necessary.

You were approachable, knowledgeable, firm but fair with students, and a starter and a finisher (in other words "you got things done"). *Former teacher & now retired Principal*

It has been rare during my years on the road, years that have taken me from coast to coast to coast, that I have encountered an administrator with such a clear perspective on education – and the ability to turn that vision into reality! *David Bouchard, Canadian author, literacy advocate, former school administrator & partner in Gift of Reading Project*

Laurie aided in my development of assessment and classroom management but moreover in my professional growth in the areas of leadership, professionalism and student and staff rapport. I quickly learned from Laurie that teaching was an investment in people, whether students, parents or staff; success was built and measured on a person's ability to build and foster healthy professional and personal relationships. She believes in my skills as a teacher and my competence as an administrator. Laurie's impact on my teaching and administrative philosophies has been monumental in guiding me into a role that at twenty-four years of age, would never have pictured myself being in at thirty. It really is about an investment in people, as she has invested in me. *Former teacher & now administrator*