



Letter from Stevens Elementary School Principal TJ McManus

In the spring of 2017, I was hired into my dream job in a community I adore. Since then, I have worked alongside an innovative, dedicated, and caring team, consisting of both staff and community members, that is leading the way as we embark on new adventures at Stevens Elementary. Our 2017-2018 team has worked diligently on relationships, re-envisioning possibilities and the implementation of new concepts and authentic learning experiences.

My experience in a variety of schools has deepened my understanding of the unique and diverse needs of students that can only be met when we come together as a community to work towards and embrace positive change. What I have come to understand at a deep level is that authentic and loving learning environments are at the center of success for each and every scholar in the Stevens community. As both a principal and a Jeffco parent, I understand both the distinctive needs of students and the innovative thinking that is necessary for engaging and supportive learning environments.

Relationships matter. In fact, relationships are at the heart of every endeavor we undergo at Stevens. We build relationships in order to create a distributed leadership team that puts students at the center of all decision making processes. We build relationships so that our students know and feel sincerely that the educators at Stevens love them and will always advocate for their well-being. Trusting relationships allow the most reserved of students to thrive, and ultimately to achieve at their best. We build relationships so that we can challenge each other, grow from new understandings, and dream big together. We build relationships with our families and our community because together we are shaping our future leaders. Positive relationships result in a community that leans on each other, that builds each other up and is not afraid to have the hard conversations that are necessary to re-envision the future for our scholars.

Re-envisioning the way in which we engage our scholars on a daily basis matters. We must embrace change and look to instructional programming that embraces student empowerment. Re-envisioning means that the academic and social emotional needs of our students are met daily in a way that challenges them to imagine, to create, and to design authentic learning experiences.

Authentic learning experiences matter. All students deserve to be deeply engaged in learning experiences that bring not only joy and laughter, but also a passion for learning and the ability to think critically. Since August, we have paved the pathway for a community garden, the first of two Scholar Design Labs, comprehensive social emotional learning program and we're piloting a tablet-based, adaptive math curriculum in our GT classrooms that allows students to work at their own level and pace.

Through positive relationships, the re-envisioning of possibilities, and the implementation of authentic learning experiences, great change will happen. I can hardly believe that I have been graced with the amazing gift of serving as Principal of Stevens Elementary. I look forward to working alongside this community.

Sincerely,
TJ McManus
Principal Stevens Elementary School
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