

*Robert S. Stephens Jr.
1003 South Dakota Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33606
(813) 507-8795*

Dear Mr. DiCicco,

It is with great excitement that I submit my documentation for the position of Head of School at Episcopal Day School. I have known of EDS for some time, and was thrilled last summer to learn that my middle daughter, Chandler, would become an EDS Kindergarten assistant. EDS has been a bit of a dream job for me and I even have a clause in my current contract regarding a possible opening for Head of School there. Chandler attended UWF, and I have been coming to Pensacola regularly for the last five years. I was born in Birmingham and attended the University of Alabama.

Through my role as an FCIS board member, I have become more familiar with EDS. In fact, I recently chaired the Change of Program / Change of Head visit along with Mr. James Milton, head of Maclay School in Tallahassee and a fellow FCIS Trustee. I had the pleasure of spending time with Beckie Share and Steve Edele, and was most fortunate to have some extended conversation with Mr. Ed Costello, who shared his wisdom and observations about EDS.

As can be seen from my resume and Statement of Educational Philosophy, my education and experience meet the stated requirements for the Head of School position at Episcopal Day School. In addition, there is a great deal about EDS that mirrors my current Headship at St. John's Episcopal in Tampa. The relative size of the school, the PK-8 structure, and the multiple campuses are all similar to the school I have been leading in Tampa. I feel that the wide range of responsibilities I have experienced at various levels, combined with my similar experience at St. John's, make me an ideal candidate for the EDS job. Further, my love for the Pensacola area, my longtime desire to return to a Southern city, and being closer to family in Tuscaloosa, while retaining my role as the FCIS President and a trustee truly excite me about this opportunity.

However, I am sure many quality candidates share these criteria. One of my principle motivations in seeking this position is the careful awareness of where I would like to call home and retire. I have always been open to God's call and have felt so strongly about EDS, that, as mentioned, I requested this possibility to be included in my current contract. Therefore, it is with a sense of enthusiasm that I submit my documentation.

I am certainly aware of the long history of success that Episcopal Day School has experienced, as well as the stated challenges that lie ahead. Success is not a continuum. It must be constantly sought and achieved anew with each coming challenge. I would love to join with the faculty, parents, students, Board, Vestry, and Rector to lead EDS into a bright future for all EDS families. It is an honor to be considered for the position.

Respectfully yours,
Robert S. Stephens

Robert S. Stephens Jr.
1003 South Dakota Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33606

Mobile (813) 507-8795
Email: robertsstephens@hotmail.com

"Robert is one of the best. He knows education, is an effective leader, has great rapport with students, teachers and parents, and is a very capable communicator and a man I trust." George Lawrence, previous Head of School

OBJECTIVE

Head of School position at Episcopal Day School in Pensacola, FL

SUMMARY

An enthusiastic, energetic, and bilingual individual with extensive experience in school leadership, school finance, curriculum development, and instruction.

CERTIFICATION

Current and Valid Florida Professional Certificate: K-12 Educational Leadership, 6-12 Social Science, and Middle Grade Multiple Integrated Curriculum

EMPLOYMENT

ST JOHN'S EPISCOPAL PARISH DAY SCHOOL, Tampa, Florida 2014-current
Head of School Head of School responsibilities include supervising Division Heads in their campus managerial responsibilities, financial management and operations oversight, major gifts fundraising, community outreach, long range strategic planning, and Capital Campaign assistance.

Contact: Jeff Hunt, St. John's Board President, provided upon request

THE HERITAGE SCHOOL, Miami, Florida 2006 - 2014

Head of School Head of School responsibilities included supervising campus administrators in their managerial responsibilities, including the recruiting, hiring and evaluation of teachers as well as the ongoing development of curriculum, operations management, managing the Parent Teacher Organization, budgetary responsibilities, master schedule, and long range strategic planning. Also taught a daily eighth grade Social Studies class.

Contact: Denisse Lie-Nielsen, Principal, dlienelsen@hotmail.com

Contact: Pedro Rangel, Owner and Board Chair, prangel1@gmail.com

FLORIDA COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS - current

President, Board of Directors, Florida Council of Independent Schools

In addition to regular board meetings, responsibilities include chairing school accreditation teams throughout the state of Florida.

Contact: Barbara Hodges, bhodges@fcis.org, (813) 287-2820

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL, Miami, Florida 1997-2006

Multiple roles over nine years including Assistant Athletic Director, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator, Elementary Assistant Principal, and High School Principal

Administrative responsibilities included the recruiting, hiring and evaluation of teachers, student discipline, master schedule, and assisting the Superintendent in day to day operations of this private, independent college preparatory school of over 1200 students. Also instructed in the Social Sciences.
Contact: George Lawrence, geolawjr@gmail.com, (410) 940-9004

FLORIDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, Miami, Florida 1991-1992; 1993-1997

Assistant Dean of Students, Teacher Administrative responsibilities included K-12 student discipline and student activities. Teaching responsibilities included United States History, Economics, and American Government. Also served in multiple coaching capacities.

Contact: Scott Doan, sdoan@wcsmiami.org, (786) 223-6353

COLEGIO AMERICANO DE TORREON, Torreon, Mexico 1992-1993

Responsibilities included instruction in the areas of U.S. History, World History, World Geography, and Algebra I at this AdvancEd accredited American School.

Contact: John J. Ketterer, General Director, retired

BARRON COLLIER HIGH SCHOOL, Naples, Florida 1989-1991

Responsibilities included instruction in the areas of U.S. History as well as serving as assistant varsity coach for football and track and field.

Contact: Ermil Stohler, Social Studies Department Chair, retired

EDUCATION

B.S. Education

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, May 1989

M.S. Administration - Educational Leadership

Florida International University, Miami, Florida, December 1997

REFERENCES

Denisse Lie Nielsen, dlien Nielsen@hotmail.com (letter attached)

Scott Doan, sdoan@wcsmiami.org, (786) 223-6353 (letter attached)

George Lawrence, geolawjr@gmail.com, (410) 940-9004 (letter attached)

Tony Paulus, tonypaulus@gmail.com, (239) 462-9448

Monica Heras, MHeras@stakb.org, (305) 979-4208

Barbara Hodges, bhodges@fcis.org, (813) 287-2820

Pedro Rangel, prangel1@gmail, (786) 256-8333

Jeff Hunt, huntjm@yahoo.com, (813) 230-6401

Robert S Stephens Jr.

Professional References

Denisse Lie Nielsen, Former Principal at The Heritage School
dlienielsen@hotmail.com, resides London

Scott Doan, Former Dean at Florida Christian, current teacher at Westminster Christian
sdoan@wscmiami.org, (786) 223-6353

George Lawrence, Former Head of School at Westminster Christian, retired
geolawjr@gmail.com, (410) 940-9004

Tony Paulus, Former Head of School at The Canterbury School
tonypaulus@gmail.com, (239) 462-9448

Monica Heras, Former Principal at The Heritage School, Currently at St. Agnes School
MHeras@stakb.org, (305) 979-4208

Barbara Hodges, Executive Director, Florida Council of Independent Schools
bhodges@fcis.org, (813) 287-2820

Pedro Rangel, Former Board President and Owner at The Heritage School
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Jeff Hunt, Board President at St. John's Episcopal
huntjm@yahoo.com (813) 230-6401

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STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

The field of education, whether practical or theoretical, is one of dynamic evolution and multiple paradigms. In the scholarly sense, it is a field of fields with academic subject areas numbering far more than any one individual could hope to master. Developmentally, education is a multi-level discipline where the cognitive level of the student is of paramount importance to the methodology and instructional technique utilized. The professional educator is one who, in order to be successful, must possess or acquire tact, diligence, confidence, professionalism, expertise, and the ability to work both independently and as a member of a cohesive group. Further, the professional educator should demonstrate quality scholarship and the ability to consume and digest current empirical research literature.

Purpose

Education is more than mere acquisition of facts. Education should reflect the application of knowledge in a personal way. It should involve citizenship and character building and should lead to a better understanding of one's self. Accomplished education leads to the attainment of maximum potential in the development of what is referred to as the whole child. Schools are mission driven institutions where the articulated vision drives instruction, curriculum, and administrative style.

Instruction

Because of the information explosion that has resulted from the rapid technological advances in all areas of society, the ability of teachers to teach has expanded dramatically in recent years. Many instructional staples of years past are now merely supplements to the many other avenues available to today's teacher. New forms of assessment have also added to the methodologies that can be utilized. While it may be true that available resources could impose limits as to how much a particular institution can take advantage of the benefits of technology in the classroom, costs continue to come down in ways that are benefitting schools of all sizes, especially smaller schools. Cloud based technology is making opportunities available that were inaccessible only two or three years ago.

Beyond advancing technology and proven methodologies, however, much of what constitutes excellence in the classroom remains indefinable. Part of teaching, maybe the most important component, remains innate. There is no technique that will help a teacher portray a deep sense of caring for the students. It must be genuine and the students must feel it emotionally. Outstanding rapport between teacher and student is imperative to quality instruction. Indeed, in the absence of it, the best teaching cannot and will not occur.

Curriculum

Of all the issues surrounding education, the nature of the curriculum remains at the heart of what takes place in schools. The central question that will always be asked is: “What should be taught and how should we teach it?” Obviously there are wide ranging views revolving around this all important question. In fact, Diane Ravitch’s book, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, dates the curriculum wars to 1893. This debate now continues with the Common Core State Standards. Nevertheless, it would seem somewhat irreverent to deviate too dramatically from a proven core of academic subject areas that would include, but perhaps not be limited to, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Language Arts, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies. The exciting beauty of 21st Century education is that so much of what is done in the modern classroom is interconnected. Social Studies and English teachers work together on units that result in artistic presentations that involve technology, music, art, filmmaking, and public speaking. Science classes are taught “in the field” and then data is evaluated in the math setting. In fact, the word classroom itself is being redefined. The term “learning space” may be more appropriate. When proven instructional strategies are supported by collaboration and creativity, teachers inspire rather than teach, and all subject matter comes alive.

Organizational Management

While educational institutions are characteristically different from most other private and public entities, there are several basic principles of organizational effectiveness that certainly apply to schools as well. For an institution to show any degree of success, the employees must feel a sense of shared ownership as members of the organization. No employee, in this case teachers, administrators, staff, and support professionals, can perform at optimum levels without this all important feeling of belonging. A heavy-handed, top down decision making model, if applied without compassion, is one that breeds resentment and causes morale to suffer. Still, there are those occasions where the school administrator must make a difficult decision that is in the overall best interest of the institution, even though he or she realizes that the decision may well cause ill feelings.

A streamlined organizational chart goes a long way in assisting the school administrator faced with challenging issues each day on the job. Key administrators become a team that works well together and fosters trust among one another. A core group of individuals working in that environment of trust can offer ideas and comments freely and without fear of reprisal. Innovations that may further the goals of the institution characteristically meet with opposition, yet the team attitude to succeed minimizes whatever fear of opposition may be felt. From this nucleus, delegation can occur with confidence and the school can constantly challenge itself to improve.

Conclusion

The teaching and learning process encompasses a great many variables. Theoretical knowledge must be combined with the practical setting to ensure the optimum development of the whole child. Administrators must build a common sense of purpose that focuses the efforts of all employees, encourage faculty input, and then be decisive. Teachers must meet the difficult challenges of meeting each child where they are developmentally, and assisting

the administration in implementing innovative ideas. The acquisition and right combination of these variables are what separates schools that achieve from those that do not.

June 16, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing with great enthusiasm to recommend Robert Stephens to the position of School Head at your organization. I had the privilege of working under his direction for the past five years, and have known him for seven years, while working at The Heritage School in Miami, an FCIS school in South Florida. As his Lower School Principal, his leadership and mentorship allowed me to expand my skill set, learn about my potential, and also helped me challenge and support teachers with his guidance. For many reasons, he is an excellent candidate to lead a school, especially one that is faith based and centered on a strong academic curriculum.

Mr. Stephens's managerial style is very democratic and empowering to both his teachers and administrators, which fosters an environment of camaraderie, team work, and mutual trust. His open-door policy for all members of the school community, especially his staff, parents and students, allows for a work environment full of honest communication and problem-solving. Although kind and wanting to find solutions with input from all parties involved, he balances this by being determined and goal-oriented when strong decision-making is required of him.

Under his leadership, I was able to grow into the role of administrator for the first time, and he taught me not only the organizational skills needed to fulfill my duties, but was also able to see in me the potential necessary to challenge me with different roles within the school organization. He is able to do this with all his staff members, seeing their strengths and helping them set goals to reach together, with a plan of action and deadlines to meet in order to reach them.

An important quality that makes Mr. Stephens such a great leader is his thirst for knowledge and his ability to learn and be interested in all areas of education and in all the teachers he supervises. His intelligence and love of learning are most apparent when leading professional development meetings with his staff, and also when he teaches students, which he loves to do whenever he gets a chance to. As a member of the Board of the Florida Council of Independent Schools, he also brings a wealth of experience and helps all understand the accreditation process, governance, the importance of vision and mission in a school, and the latest trends in education to be considered, amongst other things.

Knowing Mr. Stephens for so many years, both professionally and as a friend, I have come to understand that what drives him the most to succeed, to create a positive workplace for others, and to have passion for education and love for students, is his strong faith in God and his strong Christian beliefs. I have had many wonderful talks with him regarding the importance of faith-based education and values, and I believe his experience in multicultural settings and with international students with varied cultural backgrounds, gives him an advantage in creating a school community that is a place of safety and tolerance, guided by faith and Christian principles.

I am confident that Mr. Stephens will continue being a great leader wherever he may go to next, and that he will once again enhance the quality of the educational environment he is assigned to improve or maintain. In addition to all the abilities and qualifications that make him perfect as a Head of school, the generosity, true concern for others, honesty, and personal belief system that guide him, make him the perfect candidate to lead your school.

Sincerely,
Denisse Lie-Nielsen

June 18, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider this letter formal recommendation for Mr. Robert S. Stephens as Head of School at St. John's Episcopal Parish Day School in Tampa, Florida. I believe Mr. Stephens' educational preparation, varied experience, and leadership skills make him a highly qualified candidate.

I first met Robert over twenty years ago when we were colleagues at Florida Christian School in Miami. He taught Social Studies, and served in an administrative capacity under my supervision as my Assistant Dean. He showed sound judgment dealing with faculty, students, and parents. In the late 1990's I followed Robert to Westminster Christian School where we served as administrative colleagues. Robert was an extremely effective administrator for many years at Westminster, and I was not surprised when he became a Head of School.

Robert is a dedicated school leader and sets clear expectations for teachers and students. He is supportive, demanding, and encouraging, and is always available to his teachers and administrators. His administrative style is one of collaboration, yet he does not shy away making tough decisions when necessary. I believe Robert to be one of the most intelligent and competent school leaders I have ever worked with or for, and I recommend him highly.

Sincerely,

Scott Doan

June 29, 2013

To Whom it May Concern,

I've headed five independent schools since 1976, and I've worked with many administrators. Robert is one of the best. He knows education, is an effective leader, has great rapport with teachers and parents, is a very capable communicator, and a man I trust.

Most school heads choose their career because they love teaching, learning and people. Now that I have begun to work with schools to enable them to reduce current outlays on overhead and convert them into resources available to advance their mission, I've been flabbergasted to see how many schools -- schools that may have academic rigor -- are still run as very ineffective businesses. Robert Stephens loves education and people, but he wisely understands that more schools fail because they are bad businesses than because they are bad schools. Successful schools need a leader who has a passion and vision for education as well as an astute, no-nonsense approach to the business of education. Robert brings both of these key understandings and the knowledge and skills to effectively act on them.

Hiring is probably the most important thing any school does. Schools do not rise above their people. So I wish you well in your search for your leader. But, I think you have probably found the person you need in Robert Stephens. Robert is seasoned and experienced, and he has the confidence to be comfortable asking questions and getting advice before acting. Confidence without hubris is a rare, but powerful combination of attributes. Robert has it. I highly recommend Robert Stephens to you.

Sincerely,

George J. W. Lawrence, Jr.