

Southern Utah University Educational Leadership Program

Applied Administrative Assignment Template

Revised November, 2018

Name of Educational Leadership Candidate:

Joseph Wright

Course Number: EDUC 6740

Course Name: School Law

Name: EDUC 6740-AAA #1: **Personal Code of Ethics**

Purpose:

This AAA Assignment is designed to have you as an Educational Leadership Candidate describe your own personal and professional code of ethics and values. What do you stand for? What are your core values and beliefs? Describe the techniques, methods, strategies, or processes you utilize to make decisions and frame, analyze and resolve problems or school related issues. To accomplish this you may have to review a variety of resources including an interview with a current administrator. The value of this AAA is to help you clarify how your philosophical base impacts how you make decisions and solve problems at school.

As you complete this AAA, please be sure to follow and complete each of the prompts that are included. It is important that in each of your responses that your writing includes specific details and pertinent information yet is done in a concise and succinct manner. This is not a creative writing assignment. It is designed to have you respond, summarize, and report in a professional and focused manner. (Remember, Bullet points are acceptable when deemed appropriate.)

Complete this document using this AAA template. [Include the template and prompts with your response.](#) When completed, save and upload your document in Microsoft Word, PDF, or compatible format by the due date that is listed.

Alignment to ISLLC Standards and Praxis Exam Categories:

It is very important that you have a good understanding of the new (2014) ISLLC Standards as well as the Praxis Educational Leadership Exam categories. As you begin this AAA Assignment, please respond briefly as to how you are addressing the ISLLC Standard and Praxis Exam category as it relates to your personal code of ethics in the spaces that are provided. (2-3 paragraphs each)

ISLLC Standard/Objectives:

Standard 9 – Ethical and Professional Norms - An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by adhering to ethical principles and professional norms.

- Nurtures the development of schools that place children at the heart of education
- Acts in an open and transparent manner
- Maintains a sense of self-awareness and attends to his or her own learning
- Works to create productive relationships with students, staff, parents, and members of the extended school community
- Maintains a sense of visibility and is approachable to all stakeholders
- Acts as a moral compass for the school or district
- Safeguards the values of democracy, equity, justice, community, and diversity

Response (No more than 2-3 paragraphs):

As I spoke with other admins that I work with on a frequent basis, I found that we have a great group of adults running things here at our school. They (myself included) work themselves ragged doing their best to promote the success and well-being of all of our students here. They know that they are not perfect, but they are always evaluating and working to be better.

I like how I get the feeling that I can approach most any of my admins at any time with any questions or concern that I may have, and that is a real gift, to be honest. Some of the other schools that I have worked at, I have not felt that way, and I felt isolated and alone. We at our school work very hard to make sure that our fellow teachers, parents, students and staff do not feel that way, and if I notice anything amiss, I work hard to help that individual again feel included, respected, and wanted.

Praxis Exam Category:

V – Ethics and Integrity

An education leader

1. Models personal and professional ethics, integrity, justice, and fairness, and expects the same of others
 - a. behaves in a trustworthy manner
 - b. recognizes when ethics have been breached and takes appropriate action
 - c. holds self and others accountable for ethical behavior
2. Ensures and monitors the use of appropriate systems and procedures to protect the rights and confidentiality of all students and staff
3. Uses the influence of the position to enhance education and the common good (e.g., social justice)
4. Reinforces transparent (open) decision-making practices by making data and rationales explicit
 - a. communicates reasons for decisions as appropriate
 - b. develops a plan to facilitate an open decision-making process
 - c. disseminates data in a transparent or open manner within legal constraints

Response (No more than 2-3 paragraphs):

As I have looked at myself and others I work with, I have seen many strengths in my schools' leadership. My own department head works hard to be fair, and assist me as much as she can, and

it is greatly appreciated. I know that we can talk openly and honestly, and it makes my work and effort much less stressful and worthwhile.

No one is perfect, and I have definitely found room for improvement in myself and in those I work with as well. However, the desire and willingness to improve is also there, and I know that all of us here at our school want what is best for those we serve and for each other. We are a forest, strengthened by each tree in our midst. If one struggles, we come to each other's aid, knowing they'd do the same for us. It is a blessing to be part of such a community, and for that I am grateful.

Please submit your response following the prompt heading that is listed. (The Heading should be italicized but your response should be in plain text, double spaced, and no larger than 12pt. type.)

1. AAA #2 Prompts:

- A. *What are your three most important core values? Why are these important to you and impact the decisions you make? (Examples: Integrity, Serving others, Humility)*

There are many values that are important to me personally. I would say that three of the **most important** qualities I am striving to develop would include **servant leadership, equality, and dialogue**, ideas that I am borrowing in part from Jim Knight in his book *Unmistakable Impact*.

Servant leadership is important to me because it exemplifies the way I want to lead. Most people I know have earned my respect by being willing to do the thing they are asking of me, and work with me on anything that they expect me to do. The Savior Jesus Christ did the same, and I hope to follow his great example. People will follow others out of fear, but they are much more loyal to those that they love and respect. I hope to become an admin that can both love and be loved by my staff and faculty.

By treating my fellow colleagues with **equity**, I believe that both they and I will be better served. Students, parents, stakeholders, etc., all want to be recognized and respected. People refuse to compromise when they feel that they are not listened to or respected, and I want all people I work with to know that I see them and their opinions as valid and deserving of my attention. We may not always agree, but we should at least respect each other.

In order to achieve such equity, a crucial part of developing it is **dialogue**. We need to have an open channel between ourselves as leaders and those we work with. The old adage “No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care” seems apt here. Making sure that no matter what, we have an open door with anyone that needs it is good, although we cannot let that eat up all of our time, by any means. Checking in with teachers, students, staff, etc. periodically, letting them know we thought about the great work they are doing, etc., will go a long way in developing healthy and productive relationships with others in a school setting.

B. How do you exercise discretion in making rational and legally defensible decisions that affect students and school personnel? What resources or people do you consult in the resolution process?

It is crucial that we gather as much information as possible. I believe that in order to be fully cognizant of the issue, we need to talk to the people involved of course, and get all of their perspectives (not just one or two biased ones), but also talk to others that may know the individuals involved better than we do. They can offer insight that we just don't have. Find out as much as we can about all of the people involved, but if the issue was a public one, we cannot just gather data forever. Ultimately, we will need to act, and so it is best to act quickly, but also in an informed way.

C. How do you implement critical thinking, problem solving, and self-reflection? How do you organize and collect relevant information? How do you assess and evaluate this information?

I like to look at problems and issues from many different perspectives. It is important that we consider things in many ways, because we are just one person, with our own biases, etc., and we may be seeing things in a skewed light without realizing it. Talking to others, and getting their insight I've found is very helpful, and also, being charitable can go a **very** long way in helping calm tempers and letting cooler heads prevail. Writing things down, or typing them, can be helpful and cathartic, and we can use it as a way to record feelings and perceptions more accurately. It allows us to rethink about things, see them in a different way, and then help us empathize with differing perspectives from our own.

D. How do you develop attitudes and habits of mind that support sound decision-making and problem solving concerning legal issues in the public schools?

I work really hard to read lots of good books, be friends with good, honest people, and always working on improving myself. Talking with people, and getting their perspectives is often quite helpful, and finding similar situations with colleagues or on the news can shed light on possible solutions to my own concerns and questions. I think I would like to become better acquainted with someone who is more familiar with Educational Law, and make sure that they are comfortable with being a resource I can access if needed.

E. How do you apply motivation and management principles to promote the resolution of legal conflicts in the public schools?

It's important that everyone in such a conflict feel respected, and **equity** factors into that, along with dialogue. Additionally, if we can effectively communicate, and explain our perspectives to each other, hopefully we can avoid most if not all litigation, and find more amenable ways to resolve our issue(s). If the people involved know that I care about and respect them, no matter our difference of opinion, they ought to be willing to make things right. I too have to demonstrate that I am willing to change and compromise if need be in order to right a wrong, and hopefully we will have enough of a rapport that this would be understood.

F. How do you demonstrate respect, confidentiality, and privacy of faculty, staff, student and parental rights?

As mentioned previously, by following those three guiding principles, I am positive that there will be a healthy relationship between myself and those I work with, including all shareholders in our school. They will know that I respect and honor their rights, and if a misunderstanding has occurred, by having open dialogue, treating others with equity and service, we should be able to resolve any such disagreement quickly.

G. How do you express appreciation of human diversity, respect of individual rights, and sensitivity to community and cultural norms. (No more than 2 pages)

Having experienced multiple times a lack of such appreciation in my own life, I can empathize with those on the reverse side of that coin. Nothing hurts more than being disrespected or vilified for just trying to do the best you can. Since I have that experience, especially having lived in various and sundry places all over the

country and the globe, I feel that I do have a level of discernment and empathy that allows me to better deal with others and their differing cultural norms and diversity of thought.

2. **Internship Hour Component:** Please spend at least 2.5 hours gathering data, information, or research, observing school conditions, and interviewing and discussing with a current school administrator the main focus of this AAA Assignment. Report on your findings and conclusions in 3-4 paragraphs.
(Do not include the name of the school or administrator in your response.)

I spent most of my time talking with our **concurrent enrollment** director here at our school, as well as briefly talking with our director and assistant director about these issues. I also referred to a favorite book of mine about educational leadership, Jim Knight's *Unmistakable Impact*, and used that as a resource as well. I found that most every admin I spoke with understands the need for respect, privacy, and compassion when dealing with others, especially disgruntled parents or students.

I also found it interesting how we all have different ways of showing that we care. For some, it is tough love, showing that there are truly consequences for poor mistakes, and that sheltering people from those consequences is a mistake. At the same time, another teacher or admin may take the softer approach, and help the other person feel that they are understood, and that they want to work with them to make things better.

The irony is that all of these are right, just in the proper context. There is nothing wrong with cutting a student some slack for a late assignment, especially if there are extenuating circumstances (for example, a close family member unexpectedly passes away). However, for the student that has been caught plagiarizing for the second time, the decision to give them a zero on the assignment, especially after a more lenient first punishment, would certainly be appropriate.

What I learned is that everyone wants to feel respected and listened to. People want validation for their thoughts, even if they may have been skewed. Keeping an **open dialogue**, treating others with

respect at **equality**, and also earning their respect through **example** and **service** (i.e. servant leadership) will allow me as a future admin to do exactly that.

3. **Personal Reflection:** In completing this AAA, please describe any feelings, perceptions, new insights or other learning you may have gained or experienced? (1-2 paragraphs)

I was reminded about that idea that most people have a “love language”, or how they show that they care to other people. It can be manifested in different ways, and as I work towards becoming a well-rounded admin, I want to be able to relate and work with others, and also show them that respect in appropriate ways. I’m glad for this assignment that helped me reflect on others and my own ways to do just that.

4. **Citations in APA format, as appropriate:**

Knight, J. (2011). *Unmistakable impact: A partnership approach for dramatically improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

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Include any supporting documents here: