

David M. Brown – Leadership Statement

I love teaching music. My heart is full and my soul is rich when children make music with me and for me. I decided to go into leadership to make a difference for even more children. I didn't leave music education, but I enhanced my ability to effect music education at a larger and more global level. As leaders we have an opportunity to change many lives including the adults we lead. Being a leader is understanding the needs of the people you are leading, and to impact the lives of the children they are teaching. We leaders ARE teachers each and every day. We have the power to create systems where teachers are happy, encouraged to grow, and empowered to change the lives of children. Therefore, we leaders are changing the lives of children.

As a Leader I embrace the work of *Love Works* (Manby, 2012) which guides one's leadership through the lens of love. Not love as an emotion, but love as a verb of action. This is divided into five components which guide my decisions and *day to day* processes. Leadership can be difficult and lonely but can also be extremely rewarding and impactful. One must be **patient** when leading. This is described as having self-control in difficult situations. Having a level-head, breathing, and taking a moment to think before we react can be the difference between success and failure. A person also needs to be **kind**. While we are not befriending our employees we can treat them with kindness showing them encouragement and enthusiasm. The smallest act of kindness can change a person's day. I continually send handwritten notes to show kindness and that I care about someone. It is amazing how infectious this is. **Trust** is one of the most important aspects of good leadership. If your team does not believe you or believe *in* you there will be hard times ahead for your organization. Furthermore, the trust you place in others is paramount in your leadership. Good leaders will delegate and trust others to lead and one of my fundamental duties as a leader, is grooming future leaders.

This work can be lonely, as I stated before, but a good leader puts others first and is **unselfish** in their acts and deeds. This is not just about thinking about others but empowering others more. I consider myself a Socratic leader. The best leaders are those that admit they do not know something, research and learn what they do not know, and getting the brightest minds in the room. A Socratic leader casts themselves as a fellow learner, asks questions, and engages in discussion rather than issuing orders and directions.

Finally, a good leader is **forgiving**. When you are leading one person or hundreds of people there are some who will not see through the same lens from which you lead. There are times you will be making difficult decisions where others do not understand or agree with you, and in many instances, will work against you. Holding a grudge will only slow or stop the progress you have been striving to achieve. The best way to consider this guidance is understanding that if something was done to you personally, or to your organization, how you respond, react, troubleshoot, and come to a final response *does* matter. This is a good concluding aspect to my Leadership Statement. I believe the best leaders are those that listen, build trust, collaborate, forgive, and are Socratic. There are times a leader has to make a quick, difficult, and autocratic decision, but the work you do before and after defines who you are as a leader. I want to be remembered as the latter.