

Resignation from Inter-American

As the school community begins the process of deciding about renewing my contract, I feel an obligation to be transparent in that I am not seeking to renew my contract. I will complete my contract at the end of this school year and I will do everything possible to support the work to identify a new principal for Inter-American.

My decision to not renew my contract has not been an easy decision. As a strong advocate for quality education and excellence in dual language education, Inter-American is the perfect setting for my professional goals as an instructional leader.

When I came to Inter-American, I communicated my vision about student achievement. Four years ago I wrote in my letter of introduction: *“In order for students to be prepared to be leaders for the world of tomorrow, they must be knowledgeable, expressive, organized, responsible, resilient, reflective and competent. Therefore, a culture of excellence must be integrated into every part of a student’s day. Teachers expect students to come to school every day with their homework complete and their daily reading recorded. Classes are productive and interesting so that students work to not lose valuable learning and thinking time. In a results-driven culture, teachers continually analyze student data to make instructional decisions and to identify students who need targeted skill instruction.”*

It is because of my vision about student achievement that I have expected more of teachers. In the first year, you updated our dual language model to apply best practices and current research. You aligned thematic units and strategies with this new philosophy and with Illinois state standards (and now again with Common Core). You articulated curriculum across the grade levels, designed quarterly syllabi, collaborated weekly on lesson plans, moved to project-based specials and restructured our middle school and 5th grade program. It takes excellent teachers working together to do all of this.

It is because of my vision about student achievement that I have expected more of parents and students. I am proud to see students using the language of instruction consistently and even using their developing language outside of the classroom with each other. I am proud of the collective work to build a more positive community around peaceful and inclusive values. I have seen parents work together to organize Dia del Nino, Fiesta Cultural and Dia de Campo. Students are working together in ways that respect our community rights and responsibilities, solving problems using peace place and tutoring students during Socios.

In my vision about student achievement, a principal needs to be proactive and have autonomy in making decisions that work with her school and vision. In my four years at Inter-American, I have had four CEO’s. Each CEO has had a drastically different agenda. In all of these changes, principals have been left out of the dialogue about the work that they want us to do in our school and often left me with reacting to rapid changes and misguided directives. Even when principals are given full responsibility to impact student achievement in our schools, I have been unable to:

- protect our students from excessive testing,
- impose school-based expectations on attendance,
- adequately protect children with severe allergies in our school,

- meet with all of my teachers on a regular basis to connect with each other about our work and to provide staff development, and
- focus my time and attention on the core practice of supervising instructional work due to district and parent issues that are not critical to student achievement.

Leadership is about uniting around a vision. In the support of the next principal, I would like to challenge all adults to look for ways to support leadership in our school. The school community will need to look for new ways to support the principal in the advocacy work to protect instructional time for students and time for collaboration and professional development for teachers. The school community can work to support the principal in the advocacy work to set expectations for parents and students that support a strong academic culture: student attendance, positive school culture, equity and respect for teachers and administration.

I want to apologize to every person who is disappointed in me and in my decision today. It is not without a heavy burden that I carry this reality in the delivery of this message to you today. I believe that we have gathered a group of talented and passionate teachers and staff that together make up this school. I am just one part, not a bigger part nor a smaller part.