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We believe that teaching is a complex endeavor that requires *professionalism, leadership, understanding, and scholarship.*

Professionalism: Professionalism involves the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession.

Teachers possess dispositions that include deepening their own professional understanding, assuming shared responsibility for student learning, understanding the strengths and needs of all learners, advocating for the wellbeing of all students, and working collaboratively with colleagues, families and communities. Teachers engage in ongoing professional development and learning, reflect critically and constructively upon their practice, use various forms of authentic assessment to evaluate and improve their teaching, engage in ethical decision-making, and consider the impact of their choices on others.

Leadership: A leader is one who leads. Leadership is the quality, condition, or act of leading.

Teachers exercise leadership both formally and informally. Teachers can demonstrate leadership by striving for excellence in their everyday practice, sharing scholarship and action research, taking active roles on instructional teams, developing, and evaluating curricular materials, and assuming leadership positions within the school, the community, and professional organizations. Teacher leaders are committed to spreading excellence in education in the various settings in which it exists. They continually explore how to use discipline specific, interdisciplinary, and social, cultural, and developmental knowledge as a lens for exploring and addressing local and global issues.

Understanding: Understanding implies a mental grasp or the power of comprehending. It can also mean a friendly or harmonious relationship, an agreement of opinion or feeling, or an adjustment of differences.

Teachers understand and apply historical and contemporary knowledge appropriate to their teaching emphases, including understanding of relevant subject matter, pedagogical theories and practices, social conditions and relationships, and assessment approaches. In addition to developing content and instructional expertise, teachers must model social behavior and learning processes, manage school responsibilities and classroom environments, create learning conditions that help motivate students to learn and achieve, and promote habits of inquiry, deep content knowledge, and integrated understanding that will apply in real world contexts.

Scholarship: A scholar is a person who has studied a subject for a long time and knows a lot about it, an intelligent and well-educated person who knows a particular subject very well.

Teachers have significant knowledge of subject matter content, teaching strategies, social and cultural contexts and relationships, and assessment techniques, as well as the tools for acquiring this knowledge. Teachers continuously pursue scholarly depth and breadth through activities such as professional reading and writing, professional study, and active participation in professional organizations to ensure that their teaching is engaging, dynamic, imaginative, relevant, functional, and useful to students. While deepening their professional knowledge, they actively engage in continuous evaluation and refinement of their learning.