

Andrew Arcello

EDU 706: School and Community Relations – Proposal

University of New England

My name is Andrew Arcello and I am a native of Rhode Island. Currently, I am the school-wide music teacher at Lisbon Central School in Lisbon, NY. Previously, I taught at Dubai American Academy in Dubai, UAE. I served as specialist subject coordinator (ICT, Music, Art, Drama, PE) and chairperson of the faculty advisory council. Previously, I taught K-8 music at MEF International School in Istanbul, Turkey. My first teaching post was at Somerset Berkley Regional High School in Somerset, MA. My wife and I met teaching in Istanbul (she is Canadian) and we found ourselves settled into her childhood home in Ottawa, ON, Canada. Living abroad has provided us with some amazing opportunities for travel and exploration. We have made a hobbies of traveling, photography, and cooking together. Overall, the experience of working in different cultures, schools, and bureaucracies has made me a flexible educator, constantly focused on improving practice and adjusting to new systems.

Working as a subject coordinator in such a large school has been a great opportunity for me to grow as a professional. The experience has also prompted me to further my education in the leadership field. I hope to develop a concise philosophy of leadership and begin to build a strategies toolbox for a career in leadership. Last year, I attended a workshop presented by the Council of International Schools. One of the presenters (an administrator) stated the he felt his job was to "make teachers' lives easier and more supported, not more difficult and stressful." This really stuck with me as I'm sure we have all worked with many different types of administrators. I hope to expand my knowledge of this field and be on the track to making teachers' lives easier.

My administrative aspirations change frequently. While I am not ready to leave the classroom yet, I do feel a calling to work in a role that has greater power to improve school, our

district, and our education system, as a whole. Ideally, I would serve as principal in a small school setting, affording me the opportunity to have a direct impact on the most students.

Having built a career as a respected, creative educator and teacher leader, I am confident that I can offer a positive perspective in the administration realm of school and continue to grow alongside other great educators. Having taught all grade levels from PreSchool through Grade 12 in IB and American frameworks, I have a unique understanding of student development and learning. With extensive training/experience in the IB Programmes, I bring strategy and best practice with the desire for administrative experience. As a leader of 10 subject-area teachers in school communities, I have proven to be an effective communicator, who is both creative and responsible.

The inquiry-based teaching method of music education is one of my top priorities, as is bringing the inquiry approach to families and the surrounding community. Learning about how decisions are made, how those decisions effect our school, and what stands in the way of moving forward are several of the outstanding questions that remain of interest to me.

As a specialist teacher, I see every student in our elementary division and a large portion of students in our high school division. This position allows me to have open access for communication with nearly 400 students and families. As the music teacher in a small town's only school, it is easy to maintain a community presence and provide students with consistency throughout their day. However, the large number of students that I see also makes it difficult to create personal relationships with families and some students. As indicated in PSEL Standard 8, it is of paramount importance to engage in regular communication and develop the school as a

resource for families in our community. Ms. Vaughn, my mentor for this project has provided me with some feedback into this area through my formal observation that was conducted several weeks ago. I will be continuing to reference this feedback in context with our internship plan and goals.

As my proposal indicates a website-based community interaction resource, the ability to track the participation and interaction with the website is simple and will be easily available. Beyond website data and interaction collection, it is necessary to maintain a human component to the project. I will form and meet with a team of teachers, parents, and students to better understand what type of community arts hub would be most effective and useful in our school district. It is important to meet with the same team in the middle of the project in order to make sure that the direction of the project is in line with the community's needs. At the end of the project, community interaction in the form of a focus group will also be sought out, in order to gather data on the effectiveness, ease of use, and relevance of the project to the community.

Our school community serves as the central hub of a small town of less than 4,000 people in rural North Country, New York. As such, there is a great interest in the school events, schedule, and day-to-day happenings. As an arts teacher, I see a great opportunity to increase the community's awareness of arts in school, the community, and in their own home.

I will create an interactive Lisbon Central School Arts website that can be linked to the school district website and published on other local sites. It will be regularly updated with activities and lessons from school, but also provide a resource for families to bring the arts into their homes. There are many ways of providing students with a positive arts education outside of school through discussion, exposure to different styles, attendance at events, bringing school activities home, etc. Further, this resource site will provide parents and guardians with

information regarding misconceptions about arts education. For example, it is not a stand-alone subject area, but a cultural aspect of our lives that permeates many of our daily activities. For example, by looking ahead to the year overview curriculum document, our arts central portal will allow parents to see a connection between a science unit about vibrations and a music drumming unit. Simple experiments and reinforcement activities will be shared so that families can be involved in their child's learning. Before a concert, simple concert questions will be posted to assist parents in having a meaningful conversation with their child about the performance.

The overarching goal of this interactive portal is to help develop the school as a positive resource for students, families, and the community at large. This directly and indirectly advocates for education and student well-being throughout the school.

Throughout this project, computer skills, marketing skills, communication skills (written and oral), data collection, data analysis, design, research, and development skills will be necessary to create a functional school arts interactive web portal.

Proposal Timeline

Week	Activities
1	Meeting with mentor – 1 hour Meeting with focus group to discuss needs for portal Draft of resources plan/sitemap
2	Meeting with mentor – 1 hour Brief summary of project to community via email Request/invitation to provide feedback
3	Meeting with mentor – 1 hour Analysis of feedback and information Research into similar projects Revise sitemap/resource plan Update live document with plans
4	Meeting with mentor – 1 hour Begin building site pages Sourcing resources Student design component
5	Meeting with mentor – 1 hour Portal building/team updates Review with focus group panel
6	Meeting with mentor – 1 hour Analyze feedback and revise

	Community update with briefing
7	Meeting with mentor – 1hour Final focus group meetings Final revisions Test launch of portal within school
8	Meeting with mentor – 1hour Analyze, revise, test Link to school website Provide community-wide email with information on use and purpose