



Name

Current School District and Location

INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm Dr. Will Darter, Superintendent of Everton R-III School District. Since assuming this role, we've achieved significant milestones across various domains. Since serving my community, I have been honored to be recognized as one of the 2025 Southwest MASA Emerging Superintendents, acknowledged for my leadership and impact on my school community as a new superintendent. In my district, we have made significant improvements to support students' success. Operationally, we've streamlined processes to enhance efficiency and responsiveness. Our facilities have undergone substantial upgrades, creating safer and more conducive learning environments. Through prudent financial management, we've balanced our budget and built strong reserves while reallocating resources to prioritize classroom instruction. Community engagement has been strengthened via regular forums and partnerships, fostering a collaborative educational ecosystem. Most importantly, these collective efforts have led to measurable improvements in student academic performance, reflecting our unwavering commitment to educational excellence.

Education

Will has a Bachelor of Arts in English Education from MidAmerica Nazarene University, a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership from Emporia State University - where he earned the Outstanding Administrator Award within the top 2.5% of all students at the university, a Specialist from Missouri State University, and a Doctorate in District Educational Leadership from Saint Louis University.

Experience

Will's experience spans a wide range of leadership roles that have enabled him to make a significant impact on students, their learning, and their success. From a teacher, coach, professional development designer and presenter, writer, administrator, superintendent, and many other roles, Will has been able to serve countless students and families from urban, suburban, and rural districts. Will's experience has allowed him to be recognized with numerous awards, but more importantly, it has enabled him to impart the love of learning, leadership influence, and a passion for contributing to one's community with sincerity and integrity. In Will's more recent role as Superintendent of Everton R-III School District, a small district in Missouri, Will has been able to empower staff and students to accomplish incredible things, from operations, learning, and strategic planning for the future.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

Will has a long list of accomplishments and awards including, but not limited to the Outstanding Administrator Award at Emporia State University, the SWMASA Emerging Superintendent Award, Kansas Board of Regents Horizon Award Nomination for New Teacher Excellence in Practice, Champion of Character Student-Athletic Coaching Award for building successful programs focused on Integrity and Character, the Inspirational School Leadership Award from the Ministerial Alliance, and the Outstanding Educator Award during his time serving orphans and widows in Uganda, Africa. While there are many things Will's colleagues have recognized as par excellence, Will's mission remains the same - to focus on

building strong teams that empower communities to support students and their success in school, beyond school, and in life!

AN INTERVIEW

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

Today's superintendent is a visionary leader who unites communities, empowers educators, and inspires students to reach their fullest potential. They navigate complex challenges with resilience and adaptability, ensuring that every decision centers on student success. By fostering transparent communication and collaborative relationships, superintendents build trust and drive meaningful progress. A superintendent must have an unwavering commitment to equity and excellence to transform schools into thriving environments where all learners can flourish.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

After three years as a superintendent, I've gained a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of educational leadership. While I entered the role with a strong foundation in curriculum and instruction, leadership, and how schools operate, I quickly realized that the superintendent's responsibilities extend far beyond academic oversight. Building authentic relationships with all teachers, parents, students, and community members has been paramount and something I have deeply enjoyed! Engaging in transparent communication and active listening has allowed me to understand diverse perspectives and make informed decisions that reflect our community's values.

Navigating the complexities of school finance, particularly in an evolving legislative landscape, has underscored the importance of strategic resource allocation to support both operational efficiency and student achievement. Additionally, fostering a culture of adaptability has been crucial, as unforeseen challenges often require swift and thoughtful responses. These experiences have reinforced my belief that effective leadership is rooted in collaboration, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to equity and excellence in education.

It is often a colloquial expression to say "it is all about the kids", but I have learned the importance of keeping that phrase at the center of the work. It is easy to get distracted, but whenever I need to center myself on what is important, I take a moment to open the milk box of a kindergartener, to pick up the mop with my custodians, to give a teacher a break, call a parent, or just take a moment to practice gratitude that this is the best job not because of the tasks I do, but because to the lives I get to change and impact.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

One of the most transformative lessons I've learned as a superintendent is the profound impact of fostering a culture where every voice is valued and every individual feels empowered to contribute. By cultivating an environment of trust and collaboration, we've witnessed firsthand how students, teachers, and community members can come together to drive meaningful change. This collective approach has not only enhanced academic outcomes but has also instilled a sense of ownership and pride across our district. It's a powerful reminder that when we lead with empathy and vision, we don't just educate—we inspire and transform lives.

Submitted by:

Dr. Will Darter / *Will Darter* *6.3.2025*
Name/Signature Date