

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROCK STAR EDUCATORS

The school year is off and running, and the activity and energy are off the charts. Educators are relentlessly encouraging and instructing students in their classrooms. While I deeply respect those veteran teachers, who paved the way before retiring, I am seeing some incredibly talented instructors across the state in our schools today. I think we have more Rock Star Educators than ever before: teachers, administrators, and superintendents.

Hal Bowman writes: “The critical ingredient is getting off your butt and doing something. It’s as simple as that. A lot of people have ideas, but there are only a few who decide to do something about them now. Not tomorrow. Not next week. But today.” Bowman is correct. If you are going to wait until the state or local school system gets their act together, and the stars align you may be waiting a long time.

Perhaps the foremost expert on changing school culture in Tennessee is Dr. Ryan Jackson. People from across the country have taken notice of the amazing turn around he has done at [Mt. Pleasant High School](#) in Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. Changing the school culture has not just changed the school, but it has transformed the community. Jackson is a man on a mission.

Jackson made social media an integral part of the culture shift. He stated, “Social media is a high yield strategy that costs absolutely nothing financially, just a time investment. It gives everyone, but specifically the immediate community, the windows of insight into what’s going on at the school. It gives them a proud thing to hang their hat on that they didn’t have in the past. I wanted them to see the fact that we had seven different CTE programs. We had multiple forms of art being represented. I wanted the community to see some of the cool project-based learning experiences that we had for kids...things that they would not know if they weren’t here on a day to day basis. I wanted the community members to have access into the school day via the social media platform. By doing so, we are getting the attention of more than just the community, but also the state and the nation as well.”

Working with educators, we know there are a few who are resistant to change. When asking Jackson how he dealt with those who did not buy into his vision, he stated, “In any organization, there is always going to be the ‘toxic 2%.’ Annually, you’ve got to get rid of the toxic 2% because if you don’t, it can be like cancer and it will spread. Teachers/staff must grow or go. You will have that core group of people who will buy into your vision immediately.”

With all that being said, part of partaking in a cultural shift is to change things. Jackson declares, “Sometimes, you’ve got to disrupt the norm. Be comfortable in being a stimulus for change. Great leaders are comfortable with dissent. You have got to understand that not everybody is going to see things as they should right away. But it is our job as a leader to influence them. Leadership is the art of influencing and you cannot influence people from behind a computer screen. If you are sending emails that are fear-based, that may last for a little bit, but everything is built on relationships. You have to establish those kinds of ground level relationships first.”

Jackson concludes, “It is your job as an administrator to become your biggest evangelist. Share your story. Highlight your success. Don’t be afraid to share some of your struggles or setbacks, because we are all human and fallible. We are

SUMMARY

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looking to learn from our networks. So, you share within your networks- ideas, struggles, and celebrations- in an effort to get better together.”

His biggest piece of advice is to “get out of the office, get in the hallways, in the classrooms, in the community. Be present at games and events. Get to know your students on a first-name basis. Kids get excited when they know you know who they are and what they are passionate about. That stuff is life-changing; it’s psychological solutions. You can’t put a dollar amount on that.” No school in Tennessee has changed its culture more than ‘The Mount’. This school culture is an example of a strategy that other schools and districts can duplicate. Professional Educators of Tennessee wants to share more of these stories of our Rock Star Educators.

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