

# Stacey L. Benz

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# SLB

July 9, 2021

Dear Dr. Jett & Crosslake Community School hiring committee:

The mission of Crosslake Community School, “Growing environmentally literate, community impacting learners of excellence” speaks volumes to me as an educator. After a year and a half in a global pandemic, I believe this mission statement has more power than ever to enrich the minds, bodies and hearts of students - and staff - and to make a positive impact on our communities! As an educational leader with nearly twenty years of experience, I recognize the careful consideration the hiring committee must take in finding the right candidate for the *Director of Online Learning*. It is with great pride that I offer this letter of interest with Crosslake Community Online School. I am confident you will appreciate my experiences, knowledge and leadership.

## Your Needs:

- Licensed School Administrator, Minnesota Licensed Teacher and experience with online learning and leading online programs.
- Ability to understand state educational standards and to evaluate curricula and educational programs.
- Strong listening skills and ability to balance the input of various individuals, such as teachers, other staff, community leaders, students and parents/guardians.
- Ability to assess student and teacher performance and provide feedback.
- Proven experience as an innovative leader who possesses strong written and verbal communication, critical thinking, decision-making, detail-orientation, organizational, and problem-solving skills.

## My Skills and Beliefs:

- Three years of elementary school administration, one year as a middle school dean of students, over ten years as a classroom teacher, lead teacher and instructional coach. During the pandemic, as the Elementary TLS Supervisor, collaborated and supported the online learning of the Virtual Learning Academy (VLA). Currently partnering with district staff to create the 2021-22 programming for the K-6 VLA.
- Currently serving as Elementary TLS Supervisor, with knowledge in best practices in curricular areas, including evaluating curriculum resources and alignment to Minnesota state standards.
- As an elementary principal supporting a community through a difficult transition with school closures, it was an important skill to be an empathetic listener. Personally, I value the voices of all stakeholders and understand the need to balance those voices when making decisions.
- Four years of experience of evaluating teacher performance, including online teaching. Additional experience in supporting teachers through an instructional coaching model, providing feedback and encouraging reflective practices. Using assessment data to determine student performance as an individual, grade level and the school was critical in determining professional development and site goals.
- Often recognized for innovation in educational programming amongst colleagues, using current reality and data to think critically and make informed decisions. Effectively uses technology to maintain organization of documents, spreadsheets, emails and files. Ability to communicate and work with people in a variety of scenarios.

For the past two decades, I have held multiple educational leadership positions in the Twin Cities metro area. As a big-picture thinker, I understand the impact through the system lens. Assets I will bring to Crosslake Community School include:

- \* Creating a positive school community for students, families and staff by encouraging and building meaningful relationships.
- \* Increasing student engagement and staff success through virtual instructional walk-throughs, effective coaching, and evaluation feedback.
- \* Innovation and creativity in considering the impact of change for student achievement and school programs
- \* Understanding curriculum and assessment value through data-driven decision making and systems such as MTSS.

Educators across our state have learned to transition and pivot their teaching in the past eighteen months. Students have adapted to new environments, adjusting to learning management systems, and persevering through unknowns. Families have engaged in their children's education to levels we haven't experienced before. The opportunity we have as educators *now* to impact the return to school in the 2021-22 school year, and beyond, is remarkable. It is an opportunity I feel passionate about and ready to lead - and would be honored to do so as the *Director of Online Learning* for Crosslake Community School. I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss my experiences with you further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Stacey L. Benz*