



BEYOND THE BOARDROOM

Editor Jeff D'Alessio's weekly chat with a local boss about leadership, management style and more

Growing up, **DeANDRE HENDERSON** didn't have to look far for a professional role model. She went by "mom." ¶ "She retired from Western Illinois University having moved up the ranks from secretary to director," he says. "She received her master's degree after dropping out of her undergraduate studies to have me. In her retirement, she runs a non-profit free lunch program and is the city treasurer, among many other volunteer positions." ¶ These days, Andrea Henderson's son is making his own mark as director of alternative programs for the Rantoul City Schools District. So boasts his boss, whose nomination letter for his five-year employee earning a spot on this year's Central Illinois Business Magazine Forty Under 40 team included phrases like "visionary leader" and "unwavering commitment to equity." ¶ Added RCS Superintendent Scott Woods: "DeAndre is not just leading change — he's redefining what is possible in public education." ¶ Born in Charleston, S.C., raised in Macomb and now living in Champaign, Henderson attended Knox College and worked in Bloomington-Normal schools before landing in Rantoul. ¶ Henderson, who'll be honored on Oct. 30 as part of our 18th Forty Under 40 class, took time out to answer questions from **Editor Jeff D'Alessio** in the 298th installment of our weekly speed read spotlighting leaders of organizations big and small.

The three adjectives I hope my staff would use to describe me are ... kind, fair and passionate.

My philosophy on meetings is ... If it could have been an email, it should be an email.

I can't live without my iPhone. Keeps me organized and up to date.

When it comes to my one unbreakable rule of the workplace ... one of our values is "every student every day." This means we show up the best we can for every student all of the time.

There is no room for not treating students with respect, no matter who they are or what they have done.

The hardest thing about being a leader is ... the emotional toll you can feel from the weight of showing up for the people that rely on you.

My single favorite moment of all-time in this job is ... hard to pick, but if I had to choose one, I would choose being able to have my vision come to life in creating RISE Academy.

On my office walls, you'll find ... a sign with a quote that reads: "If a cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind, of what then is an empty desk a sign?"

Plus pictures of students and a flag from my alma mater, Knox College. You will also find a white board with different ideas, to-do lists and goals written on it.

I'm frugal in that ... I look for deals everywhere I shop.

If I could trade places for a week with any other business person in town, I wouldn't mind switching with ... any wedding



Robin Schulz/The News-Gazette

event venue owner. I think I would enjoy planning and celebrating people's special day.

The single-most important question I ask job candidates during interviews is ... what makes you passionate about working with kids?

Most people have stories about why they like kids, but the best candidates are the ones who tell stories about their own life and why they want to be the

person in someone's life that could have helped them when they were young.

The last luxury in which I indulged was ... buying a new motorcycle over the summer. I was able to take a couple of longer trips.

The first thing I do when I get to work most days is ... check my email.

For lunch ... lunch? What is that? I work through

lunch most days.

I wind down after work by ... watching TV, riding my motorcycle or exercising.

The most beneficial college class I took was ... Culturally Responsive Teaching, taught by Jim Jacobs. This class allowed us to do ethnographic research in the community surrounding the college in order to learn about how the community's experi-

ence should influence our teaching practices.

I'm up and at 'em every day by ... 5:45 a.m. That's when I am up. I don't know about at 'em.

My exercise routine consists of ... trying to work out three times a week. I go to the YMCA, walk in my neighborhood or use the gym at home.

The worst job I ever had was as ... a pizza delivery

driver. It was terribly boring.

The first job I ever had was as ... a stocker at Hy-Vee Grocery Store. I was 14 years old. Also very boring.

I knew this is what I wanted to do for a living at age ... 20, during college. Most educators know they want to be a teacher from a young age. I wanted to be a lawyer, and then a college class inspired me to go into the field of education.



The unlimited value of the right team.

YOU LIVE HERE. WE LEND HERE.

Investing in the Champaign area one home at a time.

HICKORYPOINTBANK.COM

Equal Opportunity Lender Member FDIC

HICKORY POINT BANK Invested.

CHAMPAIGN DECATUR SPRINGFIELD

Saturday, 09/13/2023

A: Main

Daybook

Nation / World

Our Community

Obituaries

Weather

B: Sports

Preps

Sports

University of

News

C: Weekend Edition

Business

Commentary

Opinions

D: Big 10

At Home

A&E

