Ep.25 New Principals Kim Graves and Heidi Smith

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:09:24 - 00:01:07:14

Hello and welcome to episode number 25 of the What's Up, APS? podcast. I'm your host Frank Bellavia. And thanks for sticking with us through 25 episodes of our podcast. We started about a year and a half ago and here we are. And I want to thank all of our listeners for for supporting us through the 25 episodes. And today we're starting like we did last year a three part series on our new principles. We have several new principles this year so we wanted to take time to get to know each of those new principles talk about their backgrounds their philosophies and their schools and things like that. So today on our episode we've got Heidi Smith the new principal of Hoffman Boston elementary school and Kimberly Graves the principal of Drew model school. So I want to thank you both for joining us on the podcast. I know you've been you've been on before. So make it easy on Heidi. I'll start off with you first about our wonderful wonderful. So just talk to our listeners about your background where you're from the college you went to and and how you came to.

00:01:07:15 - 00:01:59:23

Yes sure. Thanks again Frank for inviting me to participate in this opportunity to talk about my work here in Arlington County. My background I'm an educator. I have been teaching for over 20 years. I started my career in Williamsburg Virginia. I attended the College of William and Mary and fell in love with the area and stayed there and taught high school and I moved here to the Northern Virginia area shortly after and began working at an alternative program at T.C. Williams in Alexandria. And I would say the rest is history. From there I went on to become an assistant principal and then later to my principal ship. And so one of the reasons I came to Arlington County is just wanting to be a part of some of the awesome things that were going on here.

00:01:59:27 - 00:02:23:23

Having the experience of working in a neighboring district and really always hearing about the great things that were going on in Arlington and really wanted to be a part of that great and we're lucky to have you know you were previously at heart from Boston from where Heidi is now and I Heidi thank you for joining us and just talk about your background where you're from and and how you came to U.P.S. in college as you went to and and things like that.

00:02:23:23 - 00:03:20:23

Sure. I I also am very happy to be here today. Thank you for having me. I grew up locally. I grew up in Vienna Virginia and I went to college locally I was a University of Maryland and then George Washington and also George Mason and so I have been in northern Virginia at Virginia and are my whole life. And I chose a P.S. Actually as a career switcher. I was working for the Government Accountability Office and I realized that I really wanted to do something different. And so when I looked around and possibilities I liked the size of Arlington Fairfax seem way too big. And I liked the idea of being in a progressive county like Arlington is. And so I came to actually half in Boston 15 years ago where I started as a second grade teacher and the majority of my teaching career was second and third at half in Boston. And then last year as a bar craft as assistant principal. And I'm thrilled to now be at half in Boston as the principal.

00:03:21:06 - 00:03:26:26

How was the transition from government to education and what made you decide to go that route.

00:03:27:01 - 00:04:25:10

Yeah I I know I did it. I always I actually my undergraduate was elementary ed and then my life took me in a different direction and I I didn't love working in a corporate environment I know is government but it was definitely it wasn't very fulfilling and it was very routine and I thought I should at least give it a chance to go back and see what the elementary Ralph Ralph should have done. And so I went back and immediately fell in love and I knew that it was definitely the right move for me financially it was a struggle that I sold my car. And it was it was actually it was such a great fit for me. And I realized that that was my calling. And then I had the opportunity to do the admin program through AP and George Mason. And I'm just thrilled that I can get to continue in education but I also continue to learn new things.

00:04:25:17 - 00:04:30:06

So you found me education more a lot more rewarding and being in the government.

00:04:30:15 - 00:04:52:08

Yeah I just I didn't know what how I was effecting change when I was in the government but I do see especially when you're in the classroom and you see students learning how to read or learning how to get along with a friend. Those are the kind of that's why I wanted to spend my energy and sitting in a desk was not affect and ask you the same question.

00:04:52:13 - 00:05:00:16

What led you from teaching part of it to the administration. How did you go along that path.

00:05:00:16 - 00:06:28:08

You know for me you know it was probably a student situation that occurred teach in high school. And you know I wanted to be in a position that I could have a larger impact on what's happening with kids. I loved teaching. I mean even to this day I refer to administration as the dark side. Not literally but the dark side being. It takes you further away from the direct interaction with students. If you choose to be but you know you don't have that daily interaction with kids and that would feed my spirit. That's what I love. And I had an incident with the student that was a very unfortunate incident that occurred in my career. And I remember sitting with my principal saying what in the world happened. How can I make sure something like this never happens to any other of my students. And she said you need to be in a position to make those decisions for all kids and not just the kids that are in your classroom. So that was really for me that catalyst. I think that really struck me wanted to pursue administration. It wasn't for more money it wasn't for longer hours. It was really being able to be in a position to ensure that all students whether they were in my class or not we're going to be afforded with opportunities to be successful and to live at their best and have the skills that they need to to be a successful and a contributing citizen to our country.

00:06:28:09 - 00:06:29:19

That was for me.

00:06:29:26 - 00:07:46:06

It's for me it's funny because this person next to me is probably one of the reasons that I did this because I was the instructional a teacher as the teacher at half in Boston and I had the good fortune of having opportunity to do leadership and be in the classrooms as kind of the best of both for the dark side and the bright side. But one of the things that came definitely did is she opened up opportunities for me to kind of

look bigger than just my classroom and I realized how much I liked looking bigger than just my classroom and kind of what Tim said about really effecting change where I could affect change for the twenty two students in my room. But as an administrator I had I had many places to go and it's such as the students in the classroom it's the families it's the staff that's in the building and really being able to kind of work with them and make things better for whatever the situation is. So I think because I got leadership opportunities as a teacher that's what made me go Oh wait a minute I'll be honest I don't know that I said oh I want to be a principal I just want to continue the path of leadership and being more involved in really making changes for a community that's great.

00:07:46:07 - 00:07:53:05

You mentioned a couple times no stranger to hop from Boston. What is your first few months back at the school been like surreal.

00:07:53:20 - 00:08:43:25

It's interesting because about half the staff was there when I was I was gone for two years so a very long time. But about half to three quarters half knew me and then the other quarter is just getting to know me and so it's really comfortable. And then I knew the environment and I've told many people it's kind of like when you lose a classroom you know the kids use on the curriculum. And so this role for me has very much for that. I know I know the kids meaning the adults in the building but I'm still learning the position and I think for me that's been very valuable in that I have one comfort there. I know the people and I'm learning all the processes that go into the job but it's a great staff and they're very warm and welcoming and it's it's kind of hard to think about the two years that I wasn't there.

00:08:43:29 - 00:08:47:02

And there's just it almost seems like it seems like you never left.

00:08:47:02 - 00:09:10:00

Yeah. And when I had chosen to go they originally left to go to title one in the Department of teaching and learning and I was very Kim remembers. I struggle with that decision. I don't want to leave what I know and love so much. And she encouraged me to really think about it. I want to progress my career. What do I need to do. And so I feel very fortunate that I got to come back.

00:09:10:03 - 00:09:16:15

One of the things you did while you were in Boston was being involved in the STEM initiative. Talk about that and what that entails.

00:09:16:21 - 00:10:46:22

Yeah that was I believe the year before Campbell we actually started exploring it has several spokes folks from central office who come over and ask for a team of teachers to come together what do we want it to look like. We then went and explored a couple programs down actually in Richmond and really got to spend some time seeing what is STEM how could we do it here what do we want to do different. I think one of the benefits of course is the project based learning and especially with a large second language population. How can we make the curriculum more accessible in a lot of times that project based learning is the way you do it. So we spend a lot of time we spent that whole year kind of exploring what should Sam look like. How does all this make it our school. What training do we need. And then the following summer is when we actually did training as a staff we would understand the site in the process of a project and then one of the things came then brought on STEM coordinator and from

there we'll try to figure out what's the best way we can really bring stem to life and that's something that we're continuing to deal with. Boston is not just because we can have it as a special or we can have it where the stem coach goes and pushes in the way we do so the kids really start to embrace it. So we're continuing the work that has been started to really put a focus on project based learning and having kids kind of think outside of the box and explore.

00:10:46:29 - 00:10:57:07

That was part of the visioning process about a year and a half ago was coming up with a new vision for the future of drilling and stem was part of that you're kind of continuing that along. Absolutely.

00:10:57:09 - 00:11:49:18

As at school we're in our second year I believe of the PBL implementation and looking at steam as being that core component. So building upon some of the work that the visioning committee they spent some time they spent a lot of time very meaningful time meeting with community members having staff from the Department of teaching and learning teachers in the building to really work collaboratively to develop this plan in this model for Drew so absolutely. We're still very much in the initial stages and really getting the opportunity to provide teachers with professional development creating. We have a PBL or steam coordinator at Drew who's taking a strong role in really being available to meet with teachers a system with planning helping to provide the resources that they all need to truly engage in the PBL units.

00:11:49:23 - 00:11:56:09

Now how are your first few months been drawing historic neighborhood school. Talk about that.

00:11:56:12 - 00:12:21:26

You know I was thinking about that in preparation for our discussion today and it's exciting it's almost I liken it to you know purchasing and buying a new home where you are learning all the different quirks and isms about the home whether you love. Whether you absolutely want to change one of the things that make it a home your house and I kind of feel that way.

00:12:22:03 - 00:13:02:03

Being at Drew it's an amazing community. Some of the most awesomely resilient and strong students that I've had the pleasure of working with and a staff that is dedicated and committed to meeting the diverse needs of the students that are there. I feel very humbled to be a part of that work that's going to happen and I'm looking forward to it. But the first few months very busy lots of questions lots of getting to know the movers and shakers getting to know the culture trying to really unpack that and become a part of that. It's really exciting.

00:13:02:03 - 00:13:21:21

When we talked last spring I asked you about challenges that you would perceive going into to Drew. And you said you don't look at him as challenge and you look at him as learning opportunities post Montessori program coming out of there and a new group of neighborhood kids coming in. What do you look at those opportunities for the future.

00:13:21:24 - 00:14:23:22

You know Frank that's a great question. I think for me those opportunities right now Drew is in in a very interesting position because we're looking we'll be opening up as a new school next year neighborhood school potentially and really excited about the opportunity to engage with the community that is currently

a part of Drew and also engaging with those families and communities that will become a part of truth so that we can really get to square one of developing a neighborhood in a culture and a community that is there for the kids. And right now Drew doesn't have that perception it doesn't have that that community feel because of just different things that have occurred in the past. And so I think the challenge or opportunity that is available is to really take that I guess the division that has been intended or unintended that's there and really bringing everyone together so that we can function and be one of the best schools in Arlington.

00:14:23:23 - 00:14:28:12

Are you given much thought about how what type of things you can do to welcoming those new families.

00:14:28:16 - 00:15:37:00

Oh absolutely we plan to hold invite families to the school we'll have a series of probably meet and greets where parents can have an opportunity to meet with administration meet with some of the staff that will be there. But not only just that meet and greet but opportunities to really engage in community dialogue and discourse about here's some of the plans that we have in place. How can you be a part of this or what are your thoughts about this. How can we really ensure that the needs of your child are being met while we're also ensuring that this whole school community develops into a place that we all want to be a part of. You know in terms of really having the opportunity to reach out to the various civic associations that will be filtering into through meeting with the PTA from those schools that will potentially be coming into Drew created may be activities over the summer that are going to allow families to be able to really come into the school and be a part of that planning to make sure that the school is reflective of the community that it serves. And it is available to meet the needs of the kids who will be coming there.

00:15:37:03 - 00:15:43:19

You're going to be welcoming potentially some new families to as well. Have you given much thought to how that's going to work in Boston.

00:15:43:20 - 00:17:00:27

I just got a really great eye and I also one thing that we actually started this year through face is the AP Titi the academic parent teacher teams and as Kim was talking I was thinking that that might be another great way to welcome ideas that the parents come in and they actually kind of learn how to work for their child. We're doing it with our little guys this year but that would be something that we would want to move into the families feel connected and engaged with the school the different things that Kevin. Kim had mentioned about meeting grades and reaching out to the PTA is really making families feel welcome. I think is very important. We also want to make sure that that is an open door policy for families that they know that they're allowed to come in and ask questions and explore and see what the school is about. The great thing about Arlington there is that a bad school to go to in Arlington and it really we have different things that we have available at our school that they all have really great teachers have a great solid curriculum and we want families to know that even if they are moving to our school their child is going to receive an excellent education and we want them to be a part of it and be a member of our community.

00:17:01:06 - 00:17:07:19

Talk about community work. I know you've been there before so you got to know the community. What is the community like.

00:17:07:21 - 00:17:20:16

You know it's a very warm wonderful community. I know Kim was was sad to say goodbye as they were very sad to see her go. They are the kind of community that shows up regularly. How

00:17:20:10 - 00:18:17:06

How can we help. We have a church across the street that is always looking for ways to be a part to help things out in a lot of community partners. And Kim had established in her time there and are willing to continue on now that I am there which is wonderful and really I recently attended the civic association meeting and they were all about what can we do. How can we be here to help. We want to continue working with the school. So it is a really warm wonderful diverse community. We have a large Mongolian population a large Hispanic population so we have many languages spoken within the school and we have resources within the school too. So Kim has hired a full time bilingual resource assistant for Mongolian and Spanish so that we have that resources right there and of course the county has other resources to the families can always feel they can come in and be a part of our community and we'll have the resources there to help them communicate.

00:18:17:14 - 00:19:33:06

This really is really organic because when you even think about when you're first entering into a new place this assignment in the new house you know you have to kind of get a pulse and a sense of what is needed and what are the things that people need to be able to actively engage in their school or make certain that they have the skills that they need to support their students. So spending that time when you talk about engagement and getting to know the community that is there in the community is coming but really having that conversation having that discourse and not just yeah I'm here to listen to you but no really I'm asking because those are questions and information that I want to know. So then as we're building this community that's going to be Drew what are going to be those things that we need to be able to have here. They're going to support our students whether it's students who are learning English for the first time whether it's our students with disabilities who may require alternative settings or systems of support or even that child who's reading significantly above grade level in needing accelerated work. We're going to be those different nuances that we work together to kind of build. Really it has to be organic because if it's mine it's really not designed to kind of really meet with that community needs.

00:19:33:18 - 00:19:54:01

You look at principals and just the role of a principal you talk about being able to listen is that something that's really a necessity for principals both established principals who are are moving to different schools for new principals or this is the first time leading a schools. Is that one of the main things that you can reach in your toolbox.

00:19:54:01 - 00:21:31:08

Oh absolutely should always reach into that toolbox because whether you're listening to to seek understanding for why something is the way that it is or what drives you know the decisions that are being made your parents resistance or parents concerns you have to kind of start from that. I think as leaders principals particularly you have to be transformational you have to kind of have lots of different skills in your tool box to kind of meet people and individuals where they are. And I never want to be in a position that unwilling to listen really listen to what people need because you can make a lot of wrong assumptions you can make a lot of wrong decisions when you're not truly listening. You know a parent may come into your office and they're outraged by a decision that you've made or something that's happened. Whether it's an interaction with the teacher and if I'm just addressing or looking at that as the you know the only interaction that we have instead of taking a step back and maybe asking some

questions to allow me to understand what is driving this right here what is the purpose behind this. The parents will not valued do they feel that their child has been injured. And if you can get to what those issues are then I think that that's half of the battle to seeking some solution or some type of change of course or trying to address whatever that concern is. But yes I think that listening is probably one of the most most effective maybe not highly utilized but most effective skill that we have in our tool box that allows us really to be able to make some of the changes that need to be made.

00:21:31:11 - 00:22:40:05

I would agree with Kim I know that in my short tenure being an assistant principal last chirping and principal this year is that it means a lot to people when you're willing to listen to them. And I found that every angry situation that may present itself whether it's with a 7 year old or a 50 year old is when you take the time to listen. And last year I worked with Judy a b Starcraft principal and one of the things I know as soon as she takes notes when people are talking to her and I think that's a great way to really show I'm paying attention to what is going on here and I am considering what you're saying and that's something that I've adopted. Even with seven year olds as they are explaining what they may have. Secondly done. But I think it's such a value to people when you feel like they feel like they have been heard and then they make it de-escalate as you said and then all of a sudden you understand why everyone is upset and then change can actually happen. It's when I love e-mail communication because it's very one sided where a parent can come in and the child can come in it's face to face.

00:22:40:11 - 00:23:02:17

And I think for real change can happen and there's an understanding the why piece that we've always talking about in the last couple of years in the atheist communities and the why the superintendent said that you understand the importance of focusing on the whole child. How important is that and how does that fit into your overall education philosophy.

00:23:03:06 - 00:24:46:11

Well you know I didn't realize how important it was until several years ago when I was in Boston I had developed the after school program and I realized the benefit that was coming because we didn't have a lot of our families and had the income to pay for programs at that time. And so we were able to kind of cobble together a lot of wonderful things for students. But I realized that that's where that's where we really needed to focus. In addition to the academics and the addition to making sure that teachers are prepared and know what they're teaching that whole child piece of really making sure that social emotional pieces they are in a lot of that comes some come through apps for programming but it's really those relationships that they build. Kim had brought PBS into high school in Boston several years ago and it's something that we're really focused on continue to focus on this year. And it's that idea of teaching children that they are valued and that we have things that we believe in together we respect ourselves we respect our community. But it's really about making sure that we are living together in the school community really protecting each other and that whole piece of safety. And those kids if they come to school and they had a bad day at home but they know that there is still a safe environment that they have that I think I think that half of our job is really that social emotional learning piece and the other is through math and reading curriculum. But if we don't spend the time on that then we haven't done service to those students and they are not prepared to then go navigate middle and high school by themselves or even just spend the day learning. Yeah yeah yeah absolutely yeah.

Came on to ask you about you we talked about how you walk in those new families that are coming. How do you prepare your current families for these changes that are coming.

00:24:57:04 - 00:25:06:01

My grocery program is leaving. You've got new families from different areas of the County coming in now. How do you prepare them. Have you given much thought to that.

00:25:06:23 - 00:29:06:01

Well I think in the same way the same actions and steps that I'm going to take to engage with the communities that are going to be you know rooted to attend. Drew is the same for my current families. Not losing sight of the fact that I'm still new to them as well. So while you know I mentioned those engagement opportunities for the communities that are becoming those same types of opportunities are being made available for our families right now that are currently there making certain that I have an open door policy so that they are aware that you know are there any questions concerns that you have to make certain that you know I'm available to meet with them interacting with their kids talking to their students making certain that they know that they have a principal in the building who is there for them and who can take the time to have lunch or to walk in a classroom are going to the gym and do dance hip hop dance with them as they're going around the gym. So you know for me the families that are currently there are just as equally if not more important than the families. Not so much that not to equate equated between being equal or not equal but they hold just as much of an important role in the changes that are going to happen at Drew because they are part of that community currently they with all of the changes that have happened in the history of Drew whether it's the acting out of the school or taking opportunities to transfer to other neighboring Arlington schools there is a core group of families that have remained in that community and have remained a part of that school. So honoring the legacy and the commitment that they've had and engaging with the new communities to be a part of that work as well. So they're just as important to me are meeting with them making certain they're aware of the plans that we're making and having opportunities to have PTA meetings have parent meetings where they can come in and talk meeting with civic associations that are currently in the community particularly the not community reaching out to those local churches trying to build those business partnerships and community relations just so that if you really want a school to function well it has to be a reflection of the community that it serves. And you do that best by reaching out you know one of the things that we we we didn't talk about but what I think is really important is that there is a whole wealth of people in Arlington and I think just human nature that are interested and want to do good. Often times they may not have direction on how that best should be done. You know you have businesses and churches that have so many resources that they can give the school. If you don't ask for this help or you don't tell us that there is a need or you're not informing us informing us of what you need because there aren't you're not really able to engage with them to the best of your ability. So spending a lot of time I think this year for me is like starting at square one of getting to know you know the community getting to know those business partnerships engaging with the communities that are currently there while also making plans to welcome the families that will becoming. So we'll have some will I think we're going to have to be very creative and very open and flexible about the different activities and opportunities that we provide. I do not believe we should just be kind of one meeting that we hope in like hey you can invite everybody but having multiple opportunities so that families see that more as part of our culture and not just something we're doing for this year because new families are coming but we recognize there are things we need to work on here. Right. And how can we best do that if we don't tap into the collective body of people that are going to be here to service the school the most.

00:29:06:06 - 00:29:31:23

So switching gears a little when we talk about STEM at both schools and a part of your background a master's in educational technology or educational technology. So what are your thoughts on education in the classroom. Education in general or technology involved in education. I know there's a lot of talk about iPods and stuff like that in the classroom especially for the younger kids.

00:29:32:06 - 00:31:52:10

Yeah. You know it's interesting. My was back in 2002 I lost her education technology and technology has changed some hearsay. I was thinking about how different programs probably is today but I think with the core of that program was how can educated as a matter of which technology but how can technology really benefit education. And I think that idea of providing a different way for students to learn and access information I think is very fortunate with their iPod initiative as well as I think middle and high school they have the laptops they get but it really allows students to access learning differently. And I think for example flipping the classroom where the teacher may teach the night before in a video that the kids watch on their iPod and then when they come in the next day they've been exposed to this information and they're able to access it or they can go on the other side and watch it after the fact they're not getting it. I think there is a lot of things with being in some school we've done a lot of stuff of coding and that kind of thing. Kids really just being able to think more as a puzzle and how do things fit together and being more creative in that aside a traditional Well you're not any good at writing so you're not a good student. But I'm really good at coding or I'm really good at thinking outside of the box and this technology allows me to deliver that medium in some way. And so I think it's important that we have our core curriculum and we don't use the technology as a bonus after the fact. But how are we using that technology to actually enhance it. The second grade at Huffman bass and previously got very involved with their iPods and making sure that it was able to really be a teaching tool for them through different applications that they use as well as just even using the Internet in order to research something in an idea that students need to have that technology savvy in order to be successful in their learning environment. And so I think just all the opportunities that we can provide just making sure that it has a purpose as to why we're using it.

00:31:52:18 - 00:32:01:17

So you also feel that there's there's a balance between incorporating technology too much or not using it enough right now.

00:32:01:18 - 00:32:49:15

I think in the beginning I know for me as a classroom teacher I I've had I'm like OK what do we do. And I'm sure they're saying you know they didn't really understand how I could use it as a tool. And so I think because it's been kind of commonplace now that I've had people to stay alive has I think we've been able to use it better as a tool now than as much of a novelty. And I think when it makes sense if it makes sense for you to make an AI movies to show your learning then great that's a way you can do it where Kim's a much better writer so she's more to write about it and just giving students that opportunity because that's how that's how your real life at the end of the day really you do it as a grown up. You have different ways that you present your what you know about things that technology is a great resource for that.

00:32:50:21 - 00:32:56:07

And we have some principals that have been around the district for a while.

00:32:56:22 - 00:33:01:07

Do you are using those as mentors to help you. Yes yes

00:33:01:28 - 00:34:01:12

Yes. I will say. That Arlington is a credibly supportive County and whether its principals here I have been assigned one principal who is literally on speed dial for me. She's going to the daily question but I have people like him who originally served as my mentor who is very willing to pick up my phone call at any time multiple people around the county including senior staff. They are willing to help out when I like I don't know how and I think that's been the best part of this is there's been many things I don't know but there's never been a time they couldn't find the answer quickly. So that makes me feel much more confident. OK I can. I just need to know how to do this. And there's always people who are willing to help fill us in with him both for a while.

00:34:01:22 - 00:35:21:09

Absolutely I think that you never if you ever get to a place where you feel like you don't need you know to reach out to give support or to get assistance. You have some long hard days because I think part of our profession society is saying is just constantly being a learner. And despite the years that I've had as a principal in each new setting that I am it's like day. Day one because you're working in a new environment new dynamics new team getting to develop relationships with people. You have to have a team of support whether it be for me it is my colleagues my fellow principals it is members from the EMT and senior leadership that are readily available to say hey you know am I crazy. Is this how how can I work through navigating this particular situation because I know I've had this experience before but right now it's not coming to me so I may need some some help and support with this. So I think that that's a tremendous asset about Arlington is just as Heidi said there hasn't been an even in my first few years in the county not having having the support and resources available to ensure that you have all the tools that you need to be able to effectively lead the change that's going to happen.

00:35:21:13 - 00:39:12:08

One of the things that I think that I've had the pleasure of working with Heidi as well that is very helpful is that knowing that you know the position that you hold as principal is not all powerful in terms of that's the only way that you're able to able to yield any type of influence or leverage any influence in your building is because I'm the principal so that's the way it has to be. Well that's only going to be a short lived type of experience or position because you're working with the docs and you're working with people and there's no way that you can work with people and forget some of those skills listening and developing relationships. How do you implement change how do you ensure that you're engaging with the right stakeholders or that everyone has a voice or that there is opportunity for people to provide feedback. There's clarity on what expectations are. So I think all of those things come into play and particularly when you're in a new environment whether you think you've got it all together or not you'll learn real quickly you're somewhere new like OK. You know I forgot that piece but let's take a few steps back and give it. Let me remember why and what my purpose is and what changes I want to make. Do you have a couple principles to be there. Oh absolutely. I mean she'll get there too. She just hasn't built them all. But you absolutely you know who to call when you want to have an answer about human resources you know who you need to call. There's a question about facilities. And I think that that's part of that synergy that helps the work that we do on those long days and even your best days. You know some days I go home and I'm like yeah one and then some days I go home and I'm like no one today. And but throughout that for continuum still what makes these experiences meaningful for me is that you don't feel alone. You know I don't feel alone. I don't ever feel that I'm on this island by myself in this new place with you know rewarding and challenging experiences aside OK today wasn't the best day. How am I going to

ensure that tomorrow's a better day. And how can I equip myself with either reaching out to people or you know having a conversation to engage and listening to kind of address what was a real issue or just finding some happy find places. You know one of the things I enjoy about our position in particular is as a principle you do have the opportunity to be around kids you know as much as possible when our schedules permit it and we all have those classrooms that we go to for me to for me that you go to when you need to feel recharged rejuvenated. And this is why I do what I do and this is why that silent voice that is enabled to fight for him or herself in this meeting. That's why I'm here to do that. And so I enjoy it. You know I couldn't see myself doing anything differently. I mean saying I think that is overrated at this point but it's all for a light at the end of it. So it's not just done in vain but it's done because there is nothing more rewarding than making a difference in the life of a child. And people say it but I believe many of us feel it. That's why we do what we do. You know that's why we deal with the politics of different changes that are happening across our country. That's why we fight for our kids because at the end of the day we you know that youth turn on a light in a child or you've helped a child accomplish a goal. Man it's like gold. I mean you can't you can't take that back yourself.

00:39:12:21 - 00:40:10:03

I think all school communities are in excellent hands. Hoffman-Boston to continue the upward trend that has seen in recent years and Andrew with all the changes coming down the pipe over the next year or so I think schools are excellent. Thank you very much for joining us on this episode. Have a great rest of the year. Everything is failing in your wine. Thank you Frank. Thank you very much. And I thank everybody for taking time to listen to this episode of what's up podcast. You can find us on Apple podcast Google Play Stitcher and tune in wherever you get your podcast from if you have any thoughts about future episodes please e-mail us at apsnews@apsva.us or send us a tweet @APSVirginia and let us know your thoughts. Again thanks for joining us. And we'll see you next episode with two more of our new principals