

District Name: Orange

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Principal Nominee Information

Sharyn C. Gabriel
Principal, Ocoee Middle School
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Ocoee, Florida, 34761
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Sharyn Gabriel has been a principal for less than three years, but what she has done in this short time can only be attributed to hard work and a clear vision for technology as a way to engage and prepare children for the future. Ocoee middle school has long been on the FETC tour schedule, known for its unique design and cutting edge technology. Over ten years ago, Ocoee was one of the first model technology schools in the state, and boasted ceiling mounted projectors, audio enhancement, and document cameras. This was indeed amazing technology eleven years ago, but these devices are regarded as standard equipment by today's standards. If you visit Ocoee you will still see this technology, but what is most impressive is what is happening in the classrooms.

Sharyn embraces the digital native and sees technology as a way to engage students in their own learning. She firmly believes that students need to be creators of content as a way to demonstrate learning, rather than just being consumers of information. To this end, every one of her 550 6th grade students is enrolled in a digital media class. These classrooms formerly held typing / keyboarding classes, but not under Sharyn's watch. She challenged the business ed teachers to learn new skills, and retool themselves to engage students. The skills that the students learn in this class serve as a foundation for later years where it is expected that the students will be creating digital projects in lieu of more traditional activities.

Once students move to the 7th and 8th grades, many more technology options are available. A digital arts class was instituted, and inside of two years became so popular that a second full time instructor had to be added. Students are creating murals, and replacing the dated artwork in the school with up-to-date graphics. The students in the class are also commissioned to create T-shirt designs, banners, and the artwork for the yearbook and student planners were all student created.

Sharyn also instituted a video game design class where students learn math, reading, and writing skills within the framework of the design process. Students also learn to effectively communicate through the use of music, color, and game ergonomics. This program has grown to the point where there are now two full time instructors. During the development of this course, the school partnered with GameInformer magazine to allow their articles and assets to be posted on the class moodle site, where students are reading technical documents related to their work, helping to challenge the students to read higher level reading passages.

In 2009, Sharyn gained international attention when she partnered with Full Sail University to produce a video promoting reading and literacy. The video called "Gotta keep reading" involved the entire school, and took the form of a flashmob dance patterned after a Black eyed peas performance on the Oprah Winfrey show. This process allowed students to learn about music video production, choreography, and the importance of gaining copyright permissions to use the melody and perform the piece. This video went viral and has been posted on Youtube, teachertube, the school website, and several other outlets, where collectively it has been seen over a million times. When Oprah got wind of this project, she featured the school on her show, involving the entire student body via a remote satellite broadcast. The result was that Oprah arranged for Target and the Heart of America Foundation to renovate her library, The library received several thousand new books, new

computers, furniture, flooring and paint. Each student also received 7 books to keep. As a result, Sharyn has received calls from all over the world, inquiring about the process.

Ocoee receives no additional funding for technology, but Sharyn makes it a priority in the budgeting process. Over the last 2 years, she has added 300 macbooks and iMacs, 50 iPads, and numerous HP machines. Ocoee Middle was just named an Apple Distinguished School, no small feat when you consider we are a PC district. It is Sharyn's planning, goal setting, and execution that caused our IT department to approve the mac purchases for her school, despite the fact that it is outside the standard. She has also recently purchased over 450 iPod touch units for a 1 to 1 project for ELL students and selected core areas. A podcasting studio was set up as well to give students a space to create their audio recordings.

All of this has happened in less than 3 years, and her work has not gone unnoticed. She has recently been asked to speak at a number of events where participants are eager to hear from visionary principals. Besides her appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show, Sharyn was the keynote speaker for the Apple Distinguished Educator Summer Institute this past year. She has also been featured at the New Media Consortium, the Brevard Educational Technology Conference, and the Florida School Board Association. In addition to being sought after as a speaker, several companies have chosen her school to test products, knowing that technologies at Ocoee Middle will be implemented with fidelity. Currently, she is working with Texas Instruments piloting the 3D projectors, and with Turning Technologies response systems.

Not only are students and classrooms being transformed, but also the faculty has been challenged to rethink their teaching methods. This past summer, forty of Ocoee's teachers participated in summer professional development to learn strategies and activities to implement challenge-based learning. This was so successful that Ocoee was one of 15 schools selected worldwide to participate in a research study sponsored by Apple and the New Media Consortium to study student achievement using challenge-based learning strategies. Teaching under Sharyn's leadership requires commitment, creativity, and a willingness to try new and innovative activities. Ocoee teachers who are reluctant have student mentors available to help them with technology concepts. At Ocoee, attitude is more important aptitude, and nobody has a better attitude than the principal. When visiting the campus, you would never guess that this has all happened in two and a half years under the leadership of a first-time principal.

Sharyn C. Gabriel

Ocoee Middle School

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SUMMARY

A student advocate who is conscientious, passionate and focused on improving student learning. Relentless in the pursuit of creating a flexible digital learning environment that allows teachers to reach today's learners in ways that are current, relevant and meaningful to them. Committed to letting students flow continuously from one personal computing or mobile technology device to another to not only build understanding, but learning to adapt new knowledge to create unique solutions to real-world and unpredictable problems.

- Partnered with Apple to provide summer professional development on utilizing iPod Touches in mathematics for 15 instructors
- Partnered with Full Sail University to provide summer and ongoing professional development on Challenge Based Learning for over 40 instructors
- Provided summer professional development on implementing Moodle for over 60 instructors with ongoing follow-up trainings
- Provided class sets of iPod Touches for 15 mathematics and 10 reading teachers
- Implementing 1:1 iPod Touch initiative for our 175 English Language Learners to provide engaging reading practice
- Provided an additional 50 iPads and 150 MacBooks and iMacs to allow for a flexible digital learning environment in core academic classes
- Provided professional development to implement Safari Montage into all classrooms.
- Piloting the Biometrics (finger scanning) Program through the Food and Nutrition Program for OCPS to maximize security and increase efficiency
- Created Pod Cast studio for student and faculty use in all digital elective classes
- Provided Vinyl Plotter to transfer student created designs from the computer to various surfaces to create innovative projects
- Provided digital art students with Bamboo Digital Tablet as a design tool
- Established extensive digital elective curriculum with 8 full time instructors (with the purchase of over 150 Macs and Macbooks) – 2 Video Game Design, 2 Digital Art, 3 Digital Media, 1 Video Production
- Partnered with Texas Instruments to pilot the use of 3D projectors in various mathematics and science classrooms
- Partnered with GameInformer magazine to provide in-field reading investigations for students
- Partnered with Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) IT Department to allow WIFI capabilities campus-wide
- Collaborated with Full Sail University to create music video to promote teenage literacy
- Initiated the use of Scholastic System 44 in the intensive reading classrooms for our most struggling readers
- Hosted Dr. Mark Benno (Curriculum Evangelist, Apple Inc.) to reinforce for faculty the importance of technology integration for today's learners
- Continue to focus on use of software tools such as Read 180, BrainPop, ExploreLearning, Gizmos, Tabula Digital and Accelerated Math
- Provided student response systems to reading, science, language arts and mathematics teachers (Turning Technologies, Promethean, Renaissance Learning, eInstruction)
- Enable students to collaborate with peers and experts world-wide through Skype
- Continue to partner with Florida Educational Technology Conference, providing campus-wide tours to demonstrate implementation of technology throughout the school
- Provided Google in Education classroom application training

• **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Ocoee Middle School, Principal	2008 to present
Whispering Oak Elementary School, Assistant Principal	2006 to 2008
MetroWest Elementary School, Assistant Principal	2003 to 2006
Ocoee Middle School, Assistant Principal of Instruction	2000 to 2003
Ocoee Middle School, Administrative Dean and Learning Resource Specialist	1997 to 2000
West Orange High School, Mathematics Instructor	1994 to 1997
Wymore Career Education Center, Mathematics Instructor	1989 to 1994

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education: Rapid Fire Presenter, Big Ideas Fest	December 2010
OCPS Summer Leadership Institute: How to Effectively Use A Reading Coach	August 2010
Apple Distinguished Educator Summer Institute: Keynote Speaker	July 2010
New Media Consortium, 5 Minutes of Fame Speaker: Partnering for a 21 st Century Education	June 2010
Florida School Board Association Presenter: Creating Successful Digital Learning Environments	June 2010
Webinar Presenter for Turning Technologies: Impact EVERY Student	April 2010
The Oprah Show: Featured Guest	March 2010
Brevard Educational Technology Conference: Did You Know...Serious Games Produce Serious Results	February 2009

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Apple Distinguished School
 Apple’s Challenge Based Learning implementation project, Participant
 District Instructional Technology and Library Media Strategic Planning Team, Member
 District Technology Grant Compliance Committee, Member
 District Digital Device Evaluation Committee, Member
 Awarded Heart of America Foundation and Target Grant from Oprah Winfrey
 Full Sail University Education: Media Design and Technology Advisory Board, Member
 Texas Instruments R & D Advisory Panel, Member
 Apple Summer Principal Leadership Institute, Participant

EDUCATION

<u>Nova Southeastern University</u>	1992
Master of Science, Educational Leadership	
<u>University of Minnesota</u>	1990
Certification as Cooperative Learning Consultant	
<u>University of Central Florida</u>	1989
Bachelor of Science, Mathematics Education	