



OnPoint Prize for Excellence in Education
Educator of the Year
Statement of Educational Philosophy Samples

Statement of Educational Philosophy: A statement of educational philosophy is a self-reflective narrative of your beliefs about teaching and learning. It conveys your core ideas about being an effective teacher in your subject area and develops these ideas with examples of what the teacher and learners will do to achieve those goals.

Congratulations on your nomination for the Educator of the Year award! The purpose of requesting a statement from you, the nominee, is to give you a voice in the nomination process and help the OnPoint Prize Selection Committee get to know your guiding principles, factors of influence and growth as an educator. The statement is meant to be open-ended; please share what you choose. The statement should be no more than one page typed.

Need help writing your statement? This document provides tips and sample statements. Please note the sample statements are the work of other educators whose authorship has been cited.

Thank you for your participation in the OnPoint Prize and for all you do to support your students. We look forward to learning more about you!

Tips to get started from ThoughtCo.com:

- **Brainstorm** about your educational philosophy and your views of education, making notes on those principles you value most. This can help you articulate your philosophy as you organize your statement.
- **Demonstrate** how you have put your educational philosophy into practice in the classroom by citing specific examples and outcomes with students, parents, or fellow teachers and administrators.
- **Reflect** on your experience over your career. Most likely, your teaching philosophy has changed over time. Reflect on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, and how you intend to meet them.
- **Connect** with others and talk to your peers in the field, as well as mentors. Having people who know you and your teaching style well review your work can help you craft a truly representative statement.
- **Review** sample essays to help you as you begin writing your own.

SAMPLE STATEMENT #1: The Power of Relationships

Josh Carroll: Teacher, South River High School | Maryland State 2017-2018 Teacher of the Year

I believe that great teaching begins with forming positive, meaningful relationships with students. Purposefully, I create time to get to know my students and let them know me. We share life experiences ranging from favorite books and genres of music to our most challenging academic courses. I want my students to see me as trustworthy, caring, and dedicated to their success. More importantly, I want them to be dedicated to their own success while growing into compassionate, trustworthy men and women.

Building successful relationships can motivate students to develop high expectations for themselves and to excel beyond the classroom. Ensuring students are consistently held to realistic, rigorous, high expectations for me has taken time to develop. Years ago, I focused solely on classroom performance; but, with experience as a cross-country and track and field coach, I have learned that setting high expectations for students in and out of the classroom leads to students setting high expectations in life. Many of my students are involved in extracurricular activities, community service and other endeavors. I believe my role is not only to help teach them the importance of being well rounded, but also the importance of being fully committed to the activities in which they engage. The classroom, wherever it is, is a powerful platform to help students practice setting goals, and how to practice achieving them. Outstanding teaching is so much more than executing a daily lesson plan.

An outstanding teacher energizes students to excel inside and outside of the classroom. Regardless of how their paths intersect or the means by which they interact, a great teacher not only teaches, but guides students toward shaping their overall character. Building strong relationships and promoting high expectations are the two most important fundamental beliefs of my teaching philosophy.

SAMPLE STATEMENT #2

Kim Mason: AACPS: Teacher, *Windsor Farm Elementary School* | 2015 AACPS Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist

“I believe summer nears its end sooner for those of us who participate in the yearly growth and process of education, as students, parents and teachers. For teachers, summer is always a time we should expect to reflect, renew and prepare to re-engage through each of our roles in the educational system.”

Reflect: I arrived at my call to teach much later in life. I came with more “world” experiences than most new teachers, and with a perspective that remains engaged through each new day. I teach young students, through the Visual Art mediums, the processes and considerations for their visual world. I have been an Elementary Art Educator for 11 years. There is one thing for certain, and that is that change is a constant in education as it should be.

While many large educational decisions are implemented from current political opinions of the time, there is an overall societal influence in the way our new students learn. It is a far different cultural environment than for the same age group just five years ago. Our young learners are essentially digital learners long before they will walk through their first classroom door, and maybe before they have learned some of the most basic essential life skills expected in their early development. They are most often familiar with the manipulation of many technologies, as well as the visual dialog that occupies their attentions through tech devices. I have witnessed this developmental change over recent years, beginning with my own children who were born when technology was gaining a foothold in a world of readily available “public” information in our homes.

Technology is a strongly visual medium, to say the least. Today, capturing young attentions can be a challenge to many who still feel that the systems that have been in place for the past few years will remain effective in stimulating student engagement in current curriculums. They often don't. I have witnessed this in my “Art Lab”, a place where there is freedom of choice through materials, and where project “seeds” based on artists, art history and multicultural expressions are designed for response and problem solving through individual interpretation and personal expression. It presents a challenge for most learners who want the answer fast and not who are not always equipped with the patience or the time to investigate options and different perspectives to form their own visual solution. These are much needed critical skills for their work-bound futures.

Renew: It is at this time each year that I make my plan of action to add to existing technologies used in my instruction in new ways. In the recent past, video demos and a student showcase blog were implemented. This year's goal to allow the learners to take charge of their own digital mark through self-editing and reflection of their visual work through student maintained digital portfolios. The goal is to engage learners in a visual vocabulary that emphasizes the importance of integrity of effort and craftsmanship considerations. Skills all learners should have experience with to navigate our world with success.

Re-Engage: It is time to learn from the learners. Recently my “Art Lab” has been supplied with a set of iPads won through a contest sponsored by a strong community supporter of technology advancements in early education. I am grateful for the opportunity to have access to these tools as a means to engage the hands and minds of our future. I am thankfully charged and mostly updated. Time to power on!