

**Sherwood Middle Academic Magnet School
East Baton Rouge, Louisiana**



TRANSCRIPT: "HIRE WELL"

PHYLLIS CRAWFORD, PRINCIPAL: We hire well, which is key. This school does that better than anything else we do. We hire well and we hire well together—and we support who we hire.

JAMIE NOEL, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: We interview as a team, a group. There's never been a situation in the last 11 years where just administrative team has interviewed and hired someone. [Principal Crawford] has—let's say it's for a social studies position—she has all of the social studies teachers, the administrators, the guidance counselors, the magnet lead teacher. As a group, we interview all of the candidates and we pick the person who the team, and of course us, thinks would be the best fit at the school.

SIMONE GUILLOT, TEACHER: So they set up an interview immediately. I came in on Friday morning to seven people in the interview. It was slightly intimidating knowing that there were seven people there but then, I remember thinking if they're going to have seven people that care about what I'm saying, they only want the best of the best in the school.

WAYNE TALBOT, DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF FINE ARTS: Phyllis hires fantastic staff. Also, her gift is to make everyone own up to responsibility and accountability and doing their job and the amazing thing about Sherwood's faculty is, like Kirk said, the team mentality and the family mentality. It's not like, "well, I came up with this idea so I need to get credit." The math teachers all collaborate, plan together, share their flip charts for the white interactive boards, their lesson plans so that they're working as a team instead of, "I'm doing this myself in my classroom," and it just benefits the children tremendously.

PHYLLIS CRAWFORD, PRINCIPAL: First of all, you've got to really like kids. They've got to be willing to share with each other, plan with each other, and we look for—I call it the leadership gene. We look for the leadership gene because it's just important. This whole school has the leadership gene. You can tell they all have leadership pieces and it might not be in the same place this one is or this one, but you put them all together and it just kind of goes together like a puzzle.

AVIS SAMPSON, TITLE I COORDINATOR, FEDERAL PROGRAMS: She doesn't have one solitary, stationary team. Every member of this faculty and staff, they're viable members. Everyone gets trained to become a member of the school improvement team. She makes the decisions as a team, so having a great team is key to building on that team—to seeing what works. It's not an overnight process but time and time again, she would tell you "Hire well, don't make decisions in solitary. Make sure every voice is heard constantly and always." And once you do that, you have yourself the makings of a great system, of a great school.

CHAD SEGURA, TEACHER: [Principal] Crawford has high expectations of the students, of the teachers, of herself. Really, it starts from the top down; it really does and she keeps our focus constant: student achievement, student achievement. And that's what all of our energy should be directed towards.

MISSY FRYE, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR: But she doesn't expect any more of us than she expects of herself. And that's the reason why I drive from the Mississippi line and she drives from the French Quarter.

PHYLLIS CRAWFORD, PRINCIPAL: I articulate it; I model it; I hold myself accountable. And if I'm supposed to do it, I do it. School culture, planning together, trusting each other, trust is so important.

AVIS SAMPSON, TITLE I COORDINATOR, FEDERAL PROGRAMS: Hire well, don't make decisions in solitary. Make sure every voice is heard constantly and always and once you do that you have the makings of a great system—a great school.