

DAN BUTLER

BY PAMELA BRANDT

With his enthusiastic embrace of technology, Dan Butler is a leader in collaboration and learning.

"Technology is very important to me," he said. "It makes my life easier. And some of it is just flat-out cool and fun. But it's about meeting our people where they are. If a hand-written note is what it takes to engage our parents or connect with them, then that's what we do."

Butler serves as principal of Epworth (Iowa) Elementary School, with an enrollment of nearly 300 students from preschool through fourth grade.

He earned a B.A. in elementary education, an M.A. in educational leadership, and an Advanced Studies Certificate (Superintendent) from the University of Northern Iowa. He is enrolled in the doctorate program at UNI.

The Iowa Educational Chat (#iaedchat) is Butler's most innovative tech-oriented endeavor.

"Iaedchat is an educational forum that we host every Sunday on Twitter," he said. "We use a hashtag to communicate. The goal is to bring people together and collaborate in a global network of people solving similar problems."

Each week, he and two co-hosts, who are also Iowa educators, formulate seven questions related to K-12 education. Anyone can log-in to Twitter and use the hashtag to give their input. After the session ends, they create an audio podcast that gives additional commentary.

Butler's goal is to build connections, and that means motivating others. He gives "Orange Frog"

workshops, based on positive psychology, to teachers and new employees.

"Positive relationships serve as the foundation for everything we do," he said. "We have invested a great deal of time, effort and energy to ensure our people are provided with the best possible experiences. Every day is a great day and some are better than others. I feel inspired at work when I see our students and staff members meet goals they have been striving to achieve. Contributing to an engaging workplace and school is my top priority each day."

Butler is involved with Edcamp-Iowa, a participant-driven "un-conference," which was hosted at Epworth last year. He has successfully applied his energies to raising educational funds through "Celebrate My Drive" and "Our Future Now."

He is on the Clarke University Education Advisory Board, the West Dubuque School Improvement Committee, and is a board member for the Epworth Athletic Club. He coaches Western Dubuque football as a defensive analyst.

"I'm passionate about making a difference in the lives of

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Dave Kettering





Age: 37.
Principal
of Epworth
Elementary
School in
the Western
Dubuque
Community
School District.

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others. Everyone has something amazing to contribute to enhance the school experience for students, their families, and the greater community. It does not matter the role people play or the positions they hold, each and every person in the school environment matters and is capable of creating an engaging experience. I strive to create the conditions to empower our people to step up and lead while finding their areas of passion.”

Volunteer activities: Epworth Athletic Club board member; volunteer football coach for Western Dubuque High School; co-moderator of Iowa Educational chat; youth baseball coach in Epworth; youth flag football coach in Western Dubuque League; Clarke University Education Advisory board member; organizer and promoter of Edcamp Iowa, organic professional learning opportunities for educators.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from University of Northern Iowa.; Master of Arts in educational leadership from University of Northern Iowa; Advanced Studies Certificate: Superintendent from University of Northern Iowa; Educational Doctorate of education from University of Northern Iowa (in progress).

Family: Wife: Johna; children Mason (7) and Nolan (5).

Person most inspirational to me and why: My mother and father have been the most inspirational and influential people in my life. They have modeled what it means to work hard, live with integrity while approaching each day as a gift. I do not have

enough space to mention all of the people that have had a tremendous impact on me; I am surrounded by greatness and that is the reason for my success.

Favorite thing to do outside of work: I love to coach my sons’ teams while working with kids in competitive environments on athletic fields.

One word to describe me: Passionate.

What’s one thing that most people would be surprised to know about you: About 10 years ago, I qualified for a national Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament complete with an all-expenses paid trip to Las Vegas. This experience was pretty hilarious.

Greatest fear: One of my greatest fears is feeling like I will not be enough for the people I serve.

What’s the one thing you are most passionate about in your life: Positively influencing the lives of others. As leaders, we have an obligation to see the potential in our people while guiding them along the path toward continual growth. It is my mission to value, grow and honor those around me.