

## **Michael A. Wilson, EdS**

### **Educational Philosophy (with NELP Standards)**

Education has always been more than a career for me—it is a calling to cultivate environments where all children, especially those historically underserved, can thrive. Over the course of my academic journey and years of practical leadership experience, I have come to view the role of an educational leader not only as an administrator of systems, but as a builder of equity, culture, and opportunity. My philosophy centers on unlocking every student's potential by creating school environments that are innovative, inclusive, and purpose-driven. (*NELP 1.1, 1.2*)

Throughout my professional development and hands-on experiences in school leadership, I have deepened my focus on the power of vision and mission as cornerstones for school improvement. I've seen firsthand how collaboration among stakeholders—teachers, families, and community leaders—can guide the use of data, shape programming, and sustain a school's core values. Working alongside mentor principals, dedicated teachers, and aspiring leaders, I've had the opportunity to plan, assess, and implement various projects that are grounded in both research and practice. (*NELP 1.2, 2.1, 2.2*)

A key component of my growth as a leader has come from critically examining how schools can support the unique learning pathways of each student. I believe students come to us with inherent talents, and it is our responsibility to create multiple access points for meaningful engagement throughout the school day. Leadership, then, is about designing systems and moments where students not only learn, but discover how they learn best. (*NELP 4.2, 4.3, 6.1*)

My work has focused significantly on addressing the achievement gap that persists for African American students, especially African American boys. I've studied how systemic barriers, inequitable resources, and unmet emotional needs impact learning. Through this lens, I've sought to build adaptive leadership skills and reimagine schools as places where those barriers are removed—where motivation, self-regulation, and student agency are intentionally cultivated. (*NELP 3.1, 4.3, 6.2*)

Much of this exploration required an inward look at my own leadership style, my beliefs, and the structures I support. I've led and participated in studies involving students with special needs, budgeting for equity, culturally responsive practices, and the use of data to drive instruction. All of this has been in service of a singular goal: to close the

opportunity gap and build schools where all children, regardless of background, can thrive. (*NELP 3.1, 4.2, 6.1*)

My commitment to continuous learning, reflection, and service shapes my philosophy. I believe leadership is not a destination, but a journey of building better systems, strengthening people, and inspiring change. Whether through strategic planning, instructional leadership, or policy development, I am dedicated to transforming not only individual schools but entire districts and communities. (*NELP 7.1*)

I still envision schools as places where children engage in deep thinking—where they solve real-world problems, embrace the rigor of timeless disciplines, and see their potential as contributors to a larger world. A strong school leader creates a fortified environment where students build confidence, experience joy in learning, and carry with them intrinsic values that shape their future. (*NELP 2.3, 4.3*)

I am committed to leading schools that inspire academic excellence and personal growth, that remove barriers to achievement, and that prepare young people to live with purpose. My journey in educational leadership is far from over. It has only just begun. My mission is to continue developing school leaders who will carry this work forward, so that thousands, even millions of students, especially African American boys, are empowered for a lifetime. (*NELP 1.1, 3.1, 7.1*)