

Principal Lisa Leethem with Keiko Davidson students, Josie and Mathias Pitzel

Lisa Leethem



Keiko Davidson Elementary

Principal Lisa Leethem sets out to ignite the fire for learning within her new students

Written by Taylor McLaughlin | Photography by Anetrius Wallace

In 2014 Davidson Elementary School (KDE), the home of the Dragons, opened with nearly 1,000 students. They brought a fresh staff of teachers, administrators, and Lisa Leethem to serve as the first acting principal for one of the newest schools in Katy ISD.

With 25 years of experience in education, Leethem has served alongside a diverse group of educators, including KDE's very own namesake, Keiko Davidson.

With an empty canvas to work with, Leethem is preparing for the best academic years to come - years filled with high-quality education, leadership opportunities, and fun.

Throughout the hiring process, Leethem made sure to hire a strong, empathetic group of mentors for her future dragons. She shares that she would often ask if applicants "ever tell students that [they] like them," searching for staff members who would reply, "Yes, I tell them I love them."

Establishing and Maintaining Community

An old proverb claims it takes a village to raise a child, which is what you find at KDE - a village of teachers and administrators, PTA members, and community parents eager to create the best environment for their children. Before joining the new school, Leethem felt an outpouring of love

and support from the school's community. She shares that from the beginning, her PTA was working to make sure volunteers were ready, school supplies were ordered, and spirit wear was created.

As principal, Leethem feels establishing and maintaining positive and consistent relationships among the staff, the students, and their families is her responsibility. By doing so, KDE becomes a safe environment where students are eager to learn and staff members enthusiastically show up to work each day. "I am very visible, and spend a great deal of time in the classrooms and hallways at school," Leethem adds.

In order to establish a presence amongst her students, she leads the morning announcements and I Love Monday meetings with students to celebrate important events, successes, and activities. For Leethem, her school is an extension of her family, which pushes her to learn the names of her students, share in the achievements around her, and maintain a positive environment.

Growing and Giving Back

With more than a handful of students joining the school from different states and countries, the Dragons are a diverse group of students. "We plan to celebrate our diversity with an international festival and [serve as] an inclusive school community that welcomes everyone. I feel strongly that part of great education is service to others," Leethem says. "Kids are amazing. They usually find a way for us to give back and pay it forward."

KDE is already creating special programs and activities for each grade level. On top of those programs, the school can be classified as a high-tech school, providing learners with an opportunity to use their technological devices in



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different aspects of curriculum. Depending on their grade, students are permitted to bring their technology device to KDE. The school focuses on “promoting high academic achievement and good citizenship,” she adds.

The Best is Yet to Come

In her short amount of time as the principal at KDE, Leethem is proud of her staff and thankful for the amazing students and families she gets the privilege of working with each day. With another year in the works, Leethem truly feels the best is yet to come. “Every year brings new challenges and accomplishments,” she says. “I’m so excited to be on a new journey.”

In order to be a principal, it is important to embody commitment and passion for your school community. Leethem says, “You really have to believe in what you do and love people.” Between the staff, students, and community at KDE, a difference is being made within the community. The school will continue to establish a culture of excellence. **KM**



TAYLOR MCLAUGHLIN is inspired by the Dragon community and looks forward to hearing more about the school in the future.



Former principal of Bear Creek Elementary, Leethem is excited to open Keiko Davidson Elementary