



LEADER & LEARNER PROFILE

Joe Jezierski

CLIMATE & CULTURE CHANGE EXPERT

- Reflect.
- Connect.
- Grow.



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Every interaction can
communicate: I see you. You
matter.

— JOE JEZIERSKI

ABOUT JOE

Joe Jezierski is a Minnesota-based leader focused on climate, culture, and the conditions that help schools become places where people belong, connect, learn, and grow together.

His work centers on strengthening relationships, creating human-centered spaces, and leading simple conversations that enable students and adults to do great things together.

THE VALUES THAT DRIVE HIS WORK

- **CONNECTION**
Relationships are the starting point.
- **HELPING OTHERS**
Invest in people and they will move forward together.
- **GROWTH**
Always learning. Always becoming better.

Moments That Shape. Values That Guide. Impact That Lasts.

Joe didn't enter education expecting to stay. He planned to be an attorney, attending law school at night while working in a school district during the day. But as a Level III EBD paraprofessional, he discovered his passion—connecting with students. He returned for his teaching license and became an English teacher. Instruction wasn't always his strength. Relationships were.

Joe noticed what others didn't. After a student of color was attacked, he paused instruction and spent a day talking with his class. No one told him to—he sensed the unspoken tension and addressed it. He didn't call it climate work then, but looking back, he was always focused on the conditions around learning.

From assistant principal to director, that instinct followed him. He interviewed for superintendent roles, believing that was the next step. Then two cousins—both just a little older—passed away. In the quiet of the night, he woke worrying about budgets and asked, 'This is the work I want to be doing?' The answer was clear: he wanted to help schools improve, not just move up.

When an opportunity opened in school climate, a mentor told him, "This is what you've been building toward." Years of seemingly disconnected experiences suddenly made sense. Even as a Director of Teaching and Learning, Joe realized his greatest impact wasn't in curriculum—it was in creating spaces where people knew they belonged. Connection, helping others, and growth became his core values. His grounding belief is simple but powerful: people need to feel belonging before they can fully succeed.

That belief shows up in small moments. When his administrative assistant lost her home in a tornado, Joe responded immediately—she was a person first. Staff rallied to replace what was lost. The same care extended to custodians, cooks, bus drivers, teachers, and families. Every interaction could communicate: I see you. You matter.

Joe also learned to trust his strengths. For years, he tried to compensate for areas that didn't come naturally—organization, sequencing, planning. He now wonders how much faster progress might have come if he had leaned into relationships first.

Through difficult leadership seasons, including times when product and practice were prioritized over people, Joe saw the cost: trust erodes, institutional knowledge was lost, and people leave. After nearly two decades chasing one idea, he recognized the signs of misalignment, prepared, and left with clarity—not anger.

Today, Joe focuses on climate and culture work. He helps schools create simple conversations that build belonging, clarity, and connection—so students and adults can do great things together. His journey reminds us: leadership isn't about climbing higher. It's about building conditions where people can grow.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF LASTING CHANGE



CONDITIONS



RELATIONSHIPS



PRACTICES



CAPACITY



SUSTAINABILITY