

School District of BELOIT

Mr. Joe Vrydaghs | Principal, Aldrich Intermediate School

October 2021 – NASCAR, Rev Your Engines!

I Love My Job

I love my job! I'll repeat it. I love my job! Being an Intermediate School Principal is one of the best jobs anyone can have. Ever.

I know. I know. You might be thinking, What? Really? How is that even possible? I am here to tell you that it is possible, and I sincerely mean it. As the Principal of Aldrich Intermediate, I come to work every day enthused, excited, and eager. And that is my hope for each student in our building, too. I want them to come to school enthused, excited, and eager to learn.

First and foremost, as I shared in my opening, I love being the Principal of Aldrich because it's completely a NASCAR-type experience. Think Daytona 500. Imagine fast cars with monster engines traveling at speeds more than 200 miles per hour, inches from one another. Imagine each driver using their skills and smarts to work the clutch, gear shift, brake, accelerator, and steering wheel. Imagine all systems in perfect harmony maneuvering around and through a race track full of other lightning-fast cars, each with their uber-talented driver, all competing to cross the finish line first and to win the race.

Every Square Inch of that Racetrack

THAT is a perfect analogy for a typical day in my life as Principal of Aldrich Intermediate School. Who wouldn't love THAT?! Just like every square inch of that racetrack is filled with fast cars, each moment of my day is packed with events, people, experiences, challenges, decisions, creativity, adrenaline, and all the emotions and touchpoints you might expect to follow along the way; joy, sadness, hope, surprise, wonder, amazement, happiness, and more. Finding the best possible way in each moment of my day feels a lot like I would imagine a NASCAR driver feels using every ounce of skill, perception, and determination they possess to navigate their way through an incredibly competitive 500-mile race all with one goal in mind: Winning.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go

The Green Flag at the start of a NASCAR Race means to go. When a driver sees this flag, it signifies press down on that gas pedal and take-off. I like to begin each day as if I am at the starting line of a race, getting ready to press down that gas pedal and take off with positive momentum that I can share with others. I embrace each moment as an

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overwhelming opportunity to encourage others to have wins in their day. I make it a point to see the limitless potential and good in all my students, staff, families, and colleagues. I work hard to unlock and unleash every drop of explosive potential within each person I encounter, but even more so with my students.

As with any race, there are challenges. I constantly challenge myself to embrace every one of my daily interactions and moments with the best, most right, most universally helpful, most fair, most kind and loving, and most positively impactful approach possible. But, there is support to this challenge; I work with the best crew of teachers and colleagues at Aldrich. This team of professionals is passionate and dedicated to the success of our students.

Winning in School and Life

So, there you have it! All of this IS my world-class, supped-up, ridiculously fast race car. And I love getting in the driver's seat every day, knowing that I have a crew of teachers and colleagues who believe as I do that we are here to have our students win at school and in life.