



## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Amy Sharpe  
Director of Community Relations  
asharpe@amphi.com  
Office: 520-696-5215  
Cell: 520-460-6610

701 W. Wetmore Road · Tucson, AZ 85705 · (520) 696-5000 · TDD (520) 696-5055

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April 20, 2016

## McConnell Named Principal of Amphi's New STEM Elementary School

**Tucson, AZ** - Michael McConnell has been named principal of the new Amphitheater Public Schools elementary school being built in Oro Valley. The K-5 school will have a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and weave the sciences into all aspects of learning. It is slated to open for the 2017-18 school year.

"I am excited about the opportunity to open and lead a school that will provide students with hands-on and highly-engaging learning opportunities using a STEM focus," said McConnell. "As a teacher, I used an integrated thematic approach to instruction and that is the one of the approaches we will use at this new STEM school. It will be amazing to see our students engage in learning that excites and inspires them towards endless possibilities."

Students at the new school will engage in "hands-on" and "minds-on" relevant curriculum and instruction that will utilize technology and the arts to enrich and encourage learning. The school will have collaborative project spaces, state-of-the-art media center, music, art and PE facilities, and performance and presentation spaces that enhance the learning experience.

McConnell has spent his entire 21-year career in the Amphitheater school district. For the past five years, he has been the principal at Lulu Walker Elementary, which has been recognized by the Southern Arizona Research, Science and Engineering Foundation (SARSEF) as the "Top Science Elementary School" in both 2015 and 2016.

He began his career in the classroom and taught kindergarten for 11 years at E.C. Nash Elementary School before being drawn to administration. In 2006, he joined the administrative team at Prince Elementary School, serving as an Instructional Support Assistant (ISA) before becoming the assistant principal at Coronado K-8 School – a post he held for three years.

"Throughout his administrative career, Mr. McConnell has not only demonstrated the characteristics that we highly value, but those that will be critical in the establishment of a brand new school," said Mr. Patrick Nelson, superintendent of Amphitheater Public Schools. "He has shown a prowess in construction, hiring high quality staff, building a strong school culture, moving the school trend line forward, and focusing on STEM content while also improving other areas of the curriculum. He has built effective relationships with the community, staff, parents and students and we are excited, as is he, for his next challenge."

McConnell is currently in the process of earning a STEM Leadership Certificate from the Teachers College, Columbia University. He earned a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University and received his undergraduate degree in Elementary Education with a focus on Early Childhood from the University of Arizona.

He is also well-known throughout the Tucson community as a strong supporter of Ben's Bells and has served on the board of directors for the organization for two years. He also is a member of the Amphi Foundation board of directors. His hiring was officially approved at the April 19 meeting of the Amphitheater Public Schools Governing Board.