



The Richardson School

BOBCAT BEAT

Winter 2024

Commit | Respond | Educate

Introducing TRS Executive Director, Derek Goodman

On January 1, 2023, Derek Goodman became only the second person to hold the title 'Executive Director' in The Richardson School's history. Now, with a year under his belt, there's a lot to share about his past, present and future at TRS.

Q: What was your work history before becoming the Executive Director at TRS?

I've been with MyPath since January 2014. I started as a Program Director for Prader-Willi Homes, then moved to the Executive Director role for Paragon Community Services in 2015. Prior to MyPath, I worked as an Associate Director for Easter Seals Southeast WI for four years. I've worked in a variety of roles within disability services, including within residential programs, adult day programs, and employment programs.

Q: What attracted you to MyPath and the TRS position?

I came to MyPath because I felt I had hit a ceiling with my previous employer, and I was ready to take on more and have a greater impact. The variety of programs offered by MyPath was appealing to me, and led me to believe there would be opportunities for me to grow, which turned out to be true. TRS specifically offered a new challenge for me, in that I had never worked in the educational field before. I knew there would be a steep learning curve, but the challenge excited me. It was an opportunity for me to test my leadership skills in a new arena, and a chance to bring something new to a well-established company. I felt my fresh perspective and approach could benefit the growth prospects for TRS.

Q: Do you have a goal or vision for TRS? What excites you about the future of TRS?

I spent much of my first year observing and trying to identify the growth areas for TRS as well as the strengths to ensure we accentuated those. Going forward, I would like to see a stronger balance between our educational and therapeutic offerings; I believe we can do both exceptionally well. I'll work to build both of those teams to ensure we have the resources needed to secure a strong foundation that will lead to further geographical growth for TRS. Our ability to increase achievement of academic goals and reduce length of stay for our students, as well as build on their ability to self-regulate and decrease physical interventions will be the measurements by which we gauge our success. TRS is a special company led by amazing people, and the Bobcat Way is a source of pride for all of us that should be shared throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Q: Can you comment about anything you have learned since becoming the Executive Director?

As I mentioned before, educational services is a new realm for me, so it's really all been a learning experience. I've learned so much about how we approach crises with our students and how to best support them. I've learned about the many regulations associated with education as far as licensing, IEP's, and so much more. It really has been a year of learning for me.



Q: Can you tell us about your life outside of TRS?

I have three children ages 22, 9, & 4 (big gap, I know 😊), and a grandson age 2. In our home we have four dogs, two guinea pigs, and a cat. No, I am not some amazing animal lover, but my wife is, so that's how that goes. We love to travel and we do a lot of camping during the summer. Being a father and husband are the greatest jobs I've ever had, and my goal is to give them all of the experiences that I didn't have growing up. I'm also into sports. Basketball is my first love, but I love football and soccer as well. Lastly, I enjoy smoking meats. I make my own sausages and bacon and love to be outdoors at my smoker throughout much of the year.

We're excited to have Derek as a part of our TRS family!

We ask for feedback every year from families and districts, and wanted to share some results.



THE ROLE OF ART IN

Interdisciplinary learning bridges multiple subjects around a common theme or topic. This overlapping method of learning provides students with multiple avenues of grasping a topic, thus opening up the topic to varied learning styles. At TRS, our students have been recently exploring some of their other subjects through art class by utilizing an interdisciplinary method to learning.

What does an interdisciplinary approach to learning look like at TRS?

Each of the TRS art therapists has taken their own unique approach to collaborating with academic and physical education teachers. For example, Mr. Hasse and Miss Sasha at TRS Beloit collaborate during health class each year and explore how art can benefit mental and physical well-being. Miss Emily in TRS Appleton has had her students create papyrus paper with hieroglyphic writing during her students' ancient Egypt unit in another class. Miss Kailey has invited students to create visual representations of U.S. presidents for Presidents' Day and sugar skull cats for Day of the Dead.

How does it work?

First, we collaborate with our academic counterparts and find out where we can overlap our teaching or where we can add to the lessons of another subject. Then, we devise our respective lessons around an overarching theme, for example maps or topics such as ancient Egypt.

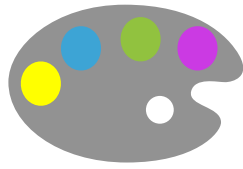


"TRS consistently partners with [our district] to serve students who have not found success in district. This partnership is invaluable."

"The student is well supported and understood at The Richardson School. Because of this, he feels safe and secure which has decreased his behaviors."

"The student on my caseload has significantly increased his positive interactions with both peers and adults. TRS also met his academic needs by moving him up to a higher reading group so the work was more appropriate and at his level."

LEARNING AT TRS



Our Motto:

Be the change

Our Mission:

Be the change for students, their families and districts

Our Vision:

For all students to develop skills for academic and behavioral growth, allowing them to return to their home school settings.

Spring Bobcat Camp Dates:

March 25-29

April 1



The Richardson School

A MyPath Company

How does art-making and creative thinking further learning?

We believe that art-making activates the entire brain and enables students to utilize different learning styles. Some learners learn through listening and reading while others need kinaesthetic action and visuals. The visual representations and physical actions of creating art may even help commit a topic or idea to memory. For learners who can learn through lectures or worksheets, art-making can expand topics for them and increase their understanding.

Furthermore, physical action and the ability to utilize the body and mind simultaneously could assist students who struggle to focus to remain on task and thus retain information. Think of your most memorable classes as a young student– which do you remember the most? Which held your attention the longest?

Additionally, art can allow topics such as math and science to become hands-on, fun, and tangible. Many theories of science can find real world application in art class, making the topics accessible and engaging to young students. Students can practice their math skills in a physical way that might enhance their comprehension.

The art room is a safe place to apply learning and to increase understanding. Students who have had a negative experience with schooling due to learning delays or other difficulties may respond positively to learning through art-making than through more traditional learning methods. Learning through play and experimentation in the art room is a method of learning accessible to all individuals no matter their intelligence, disability,



Meet the MyPath Board of Directors:



Jim Balestrieri



Dorothy Buckhanan Wilson

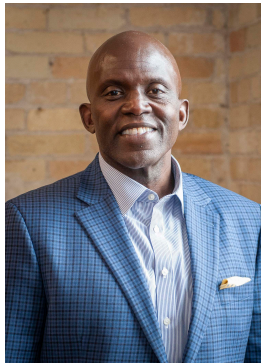


Guy Smith

The MyPath Board of Directors is composed of Seven members that are both internal and external to MyPath; dedicating their time, talent and expertise to MyPath companies, providing expert knowledge and experience. Members currently hold or have held positions as Presidents/Vice Presidents, CEO's, advocates, adjunct professors, attorneys, and authors just to name a few and have left lasting impressions in their respective fields and eventually MyPath. Members of the Board carry many accolades before joining the Board of Directors and we are extremely lucky to have a passionate, professional and expert team overseeing operations and continuing to steer us in the direction of growth, innovation and success while serving over 2,000 individuals and families.



Jim Janz



Vincent Lyles



Ron Pace



Rock Pledl

We will begin highlighting one Board Member in every Bobcat Beat moving forward, so keep your eyes out for the next issue!

APPLETON

2331 E. Lourdes Dr.
Appleton, WI 54915
920-944-9996

BELOIT

321 Olympian Blvd.
Beloit, WI 53511
608-473-3244

BROOKFIELD

175 S. Barker Rd.
Brookfield, WI 53045
262-468-0700

MADISON

2802 International Ln.
Madison, WI 53704
608-421-5267

WEST ALLIS

6753 W. Rogers St.
West Allis, WI 53219
414-540-8500

