

Vitae

Melvin H. Steals
18 Lamplighter Lane
Baden, PA 15005
(412) 869-5096 Home
(727) 776-1325 Work

Born: Aliquippa, Pennsylvania
Married: Adrena Steals
Children: Melvin, Jr.; Chelsea; Brandy

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (1989)
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Major: Curriculum and Supervision

Masters of Education (1984)
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Major: Reading and Language Arts

Pursued Masters in Education in English (1970-1972)
Slippery Rock State University
Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania

Bachelor of Science (1968)
Cheyney State University
Cheyney, Pennsylvania
Major: English

Certificate of Achievement (June 26—29, 2005)
Yale Child Study Center
School Development Program (SDP)
New Haven, Connecticut
Field of Inquiry: SDP Adolescent Literacy Institute

CERTIFICATION

- Comprehensive English Teacher, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Reading Specialist Certification, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Secondary Principal Certification, Pennsylvania Department of Education

- Elementary Principal Certification, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Superintendent's Letter of Eligibility, Pennsylvania Department of Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

October 2006 to June 2008

LAMP Program
Victory Family Church
21150 Route 19
Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania
Mentor for Inner-City Youth

- Attended training sessions provided by Family Guidance, Inc. to learn how to mentor inner-city middle school students bused from the Pittsburgh Public School's Lincoln Middle School, which is located in the Homewood section of the city, to Victory's church complex in Butler County on Monday afternoons.
- Served as one of the counselors who supervised and tutored these youngsters during the periods of time when they are on church grounds.

March 2000 – June 2004

Seneca Valley School District
124 Seneca School Road
Harmony, Pennsylvania
Middle School Principal

- Directed and supervised 55 teachers and support staff at Haine Middle School (HMS) who were responsible for meeting the interests, needs, and abilities of the 700 fifth- and sixth-grade students who attended HMS.
- Put to use a shared decision making process that enabled stakeholders to give HMS the benefit of their collective and individual knowledge and expertise.
- Initiated the policy of administering practice PSSA tests in the fall to (1) ascertain where each student stood in relationship to mastery of skills and concepts to be tested in the spring and to (2) design an appropriate instructional plan for each youngster.
- Raised the percentage of fifth-grade students scoring at or above the **Proficient Level** in the **Reading** section of the **PSSA** from **65.6%** in 2001 to **77.8%** in 2004 for a School Performance Grade of "**B**" and a Trend Rating of **Increasing** from the **PENNSYLVANIA Economy League**.
- Raised the percentage of fifth-grade students scoring at or above the **Proficient Level** in the **Math** section of the **PSSA** from **62.7%** in 2001 to **65.0%** in 2004 for a **School Performance Grade** of "**C**" and a No Trend rating from the **PENNSYLVANIA**

Economy League. (NOTE: curricular changes are in the works for this vitally important content area.)

- Received a *Service Above Self Award in Education* from the Cranberry Township Rotary Club in the Spring of 2002.
- Introduced the award-winning *Caring Habit of the Month Adventure* program at Haine Middle School.
- Enhanced and enriched the school climate and feeling tone within Seneca Valley's largest 5-6 middle school.
- Formulated an action plan during the 2002-03 school year that contributed to HMS's fifth-grade students' highest PSSA scaled score (1390) in reading and highest PSSA scaled score (1370) in math since it first opened its doors in August 1997.
- Initiated a *Student of the Month* program in conjunction with the Cranberry Township Rotary Club for Haine Middle School students

June 1996 – March 2000

Aliquippa School District
100 Harding Avenue
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania
Middle School Principal

- Directed and supervised 50 teachers and support staff at Aliquippa Middle School (AMS) who were responsible for meeting the interests, needs, and abilities of the 560 students who attend AMS.
- Accepted an award and \$5,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health on May 3, 2000 in the Governor's mansion in recognition of AMS' *Caring Habits Program* being selected as the statewide winner of that bureau's *Violence Free Youth Challenge*.
- Established building, team, and personal goals for Aliquippa Middle School teachers. The resulting portfolios were used as part of teachers' evaluations.
- Formulated and implemented an action plan that generated significant gains in the performance of AMS students on the 1997 administration of the PSSA in Eighth-Grade Reading (+60), Eighth-Grade Math (+120), and Fifth-Grade Math (+60). Efforts to increase the performance of Fifth-Grade students in Reading resulted in a modest gain of 20 points. AMS received a \$10,116 award from the state for the performance of its eighth-grade students.
- Chose an exceptional member of the staff to take on the responsibility of designing a technology curriculum, teaching it to AMS students, and supervising the current and soon-to-be-completed computer lab.

- Used the \$10,116 award to purchase the Accelerated Reader program and its diagnostic Star system to assess Aliquippa Middle School students' reading skills and increase their performance upon standardized measures.
- Created a sustained-silent-reading period at the beginning of the school day so that seventh- and eighth-grade students could select Accelerated Reader novels at their reading level and then go to the computer lab to take computer-generated tests for which they will a grade upon their report cards.
- Conducted award assemblies at the end of each grading period to give public recognition and a certificate to each Aliquippa Middle School student who made the Honor or Distinguish Honor Rolls.
- Initiated a *National Honor Society* chapter for Aliquippa Middle School. The first honorees were inducted in the spring of 1998.
- Formed a partnership with HIGH MARK Blue Cross Blue Shield to bring the *Caring Habit of the Month Adventure* program into AMS. The only one of its kind operating within the Commonwealth, this innovative school-wide program was used to develop the social skills for which employers will be looking in their 21st century workforce.
- Assured that all the programs, which operated under the auspices of the Title I school-wide project, were in accordance with guidelines, standards, etc.
- Used Title I funds to acquire the consulting services of math expert Dr. Brad Seager, a retired professor from the University of Pittsburgh.
- Created Title I classes that developed sixth- and eight-grade students' math problem solving skills and ability to complete performance tasks successfully.
- Changed the math curriculum to offer Honors Math courses to bright fifth- and sixth-grade students, Pre-Algebra to bright seventh-grade students, Algebra I to bright eighth-grade students, and Pre-Algebra to the remaining eighth-graders.
- Succeeded in making the highly regarded *Success For All* (SFA) reading program available to school district's fifth-grade students. SFA followed these youngsters from the elementary school and expanded to the sixth-grade when they moved up the next school year. The Cross-grade grouping that occurred in the ensuing school year was intended to enhance the quality and effectiveness of this new initiative. Fifth-grade students achieved a one-year (+1.0) gain on the 1999 California Achievement Test as a result of this program.
- Used SFA's common reading time and ability grouping model to create eight fifth-grade math classes. Students assigned to these classes receive math instruction that is

commensurate to their rates of acquisition and retention. Periodic assessments determine which students would benefit from being reassigned to a more appropriate learning environment. Cross-grade grouping is again expected to have a positive long-term impact upon the cognitive development of AMS students. Fifth-grade students made a one-year, six-month (+1.6) gain.

- Used Title I School Wide monies to create a computer class for seventh-grade students.
- Obtained monies from former student, Mr. Mark Lay, to purchase 30 Algebra I books for the eighth-grade Honors Math class.
- Secured grants from Duquesne Light and Nova Chemicals to purchase 30 copies of *Junior Great Books* for each of the four grade levels in AMS, 100 Pre-Algebra books for eighth-grade students not taking Algebra I, 75 textbooks for the fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-grade Honors Math classes, and teacher training and modules for ASSET, an inquiry hands-on science program, specifically designed for students in grades K-6.
- Recruited Mr. Stan Rideout, the retired Chief and founder of the Pittsburgh Public School's security force, to establish and maintain a safe and orderly learning environment within AMS. He organized and trained a parent patrol. Strategically placed around the building, these dedicated individuals gave me a view and level of control within this building none of my predecessors had ever had. Plans were also in the works to start a student patrol.
- Improved the school climate by mandating that all teachers escort their students whenever their charges are moving collectively anywhere in the building, adding a breakfast period to reduce the overcrowding in the cafeteria, creating a lunch period for each grade level, reducing the size of seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms, and letting the students know in a variety of ways that their principal loved and cared for them.
- Assisted with the development of the budget as it pertains to instructional programs, curriculum, staff development, and daily operations of Aliquippa Middle School.

July 1995 – June 1996

Quaker Valley School District
Sewickley, Pennsylvania
Acting Principal
Osborne Elementary School

- Designated the areas within the building to be used for and closely monitored the construction of Osborne's computer lab, resource room for learning support students, classroom for gifted and high-end learners, and the librarian's new office space.
- Attended a weeklong conference at Hidden Valley to become familiar with ASSET, Allegheny County's hands-on science curriculum.

- Supervised teachers, interns, paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, support staff, janitors, and parent volunteers.
- Assured the direction and supervision of the D. T. Watson staff that operated a program specifically designed to meet the needs of students with exceptional mental, physical, and/or emotional disabilities.
- Formulated and implemented an action plan that generated significant gains in the performance of Osborne students on the 1996 administration of the PSSA in Fifth-Grade Reading (+ 90), Fifth-Grade Math (+ 60), and Sixth-Grade Writing (+ 60).
- Improved the school climate by greeting students as they entered the building each day, dealing firmly and fairly with students who violated school rules, being an omnipresent administrator who was constantly moving within the building and entering classrooms on a daily basis, reading stories to primary students, and letting the students know in a variety of ways that their acting principal loved and cared for them.
- Established and maintained positive lines of communications with parents by phoning a parent a day to ascertain his/her perceptions of how the school year was going thus far, writing an insightful column in the quarterly newsletter published by the parents' *Home and School* organization, and regularly attending and making presentations at its monthly meetings.
- Organized and conducted regularly scheduled grade level, departmental, and building meetings with the Osborne staff.
- Facilitated the selection process that identified the new reading series currently being used in grades K through five.

June 1993 – June 1995

Quaker Valley School District
Sewickley, Pennsylvania
Assistant/Acting Principal
Quaker Valley Junior High School

- Served as the acting principal of the junior high during the month of October 1993 as the district conducted interviews and related activities to identify the candidate who would become the new building principal.
- Created a safe and orderly learning environment which caused parents who in the past would not have hesitated from withdrawing their children from the junior high--for fear their sons' and daughters' cognitive and social development would have been adversely affected by the conditions that had previously existed within this building—to leave their children in the district. (It is significant to note here that

during the 1994-95 school year several students who had been attending Sewickley Academy enrolled in the junior high.)

- Attended a five-day training session at La Roche College along with the other members of the Quaker Valley CORE team.
- Established and maintained positive lines of communications with students by consistently handling pupil-management issues in a firm but fair manner, with teachers by addressing their concerns in a prompt and efficient manner, with parents by listening attentively and resolving problems in ways that strengthened the home and school connection.

January 1994 – February 1995 Pennsylvania Department of Education
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Member of State-wide Committee of Principals
Secondary Instructional Support (SIS) Project

- Served as one of nine secondary principals selected by Program Director, Mr. Charles Wall, to work collaboratively with his staff to identify the “best practices” that would enable secondary teachers within the Commonwealth to meet the instructional needs of the growing number of students at that level with major gaps in their knowledge of the basic learning skills and concepts.
- Made presentations at teleconferences and workshop convened for SIS teams at various sites across the state before the project was terminated in the winter of 1995.

August 1992 – June 1993 Quaker Valley School District
Sewickley, Pennsylvania
English Teacher
Quaker Valley Junior High School

- Implemented the district’s new Vanguard Curriculum for seventh-grade students. This innovative, cutting-edge initiative combined reading and English in a highly stimulating two-period instructional block each school day. Process writing assignments and thematic units provided numerous opportunities to develop students’ reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
- Taught the district’s traditional English curriculums to two eighth-grade and one ninth-grade English class.
- Collaborated in the writing of the theme-oriented curriculums of the junior high’s seventh- and eighth-grade Vanguard Programs.

August 1990 – June 1992 Freedom Area School District
Freedom, Pennsylvania
Developmental Reading Teacher

Freedom Area Middle School

- Integrated cooperative learning strategies developed by educational researchers at Johns Hopkins with traditional approaches for teaching reading and writing.
- Used a proven process-writing approach to develop seventh-grade students' writing skills.
- Designed thought-provoking reading guides (Treasure Hunts) that made silent and oral reading assignments purposeful and fun.
- Used his Personal Research Paper process to develop novice and reluctant writers' ability to compose clear, concise, and coherent six-paragraph research papers.
- Generated a significant increase in the performance of seventh-grade students on standardized reading and writing tests.

August 1990 – May 1996

Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Adjunct Professor
Teaching Reading in the Secondary Schools

- Taught undergraduate education majors a variety of innovative techniques for developing effective reading and writing skills at the secondary level.
- Required each student to demonstrate the facility to teach a directed reading lesson (DRL) that actively engaged learners in the pre-, during-, and post-reading stages of the DRL.
- Designed and implemented age-appropriate learning activities and modeled behaviors similar to those that these practitioners might use with their future charges.

September 1989 – May 1990

Board of Education
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
English/Language Arts Teacher, Grade Seven
Knoxville Middle School

- Taught Pittsburgh's researched-based reading and writing/language arts curriculum to seventh-grade students at Knoxville Middle School.
- Coordinated Knoxville's Partnership in Education Program with the Pittsburgh Post Gazette.
- Co-sponsored the College Club.
- Served as a member of the planning committee for Knoxville's mentoring program.

1989 – 1992

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Federal Programs Monitor

- Monitored Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Title II programs of local educational agencies (LEA) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- Interviewed program coordinators, professional staff members, and building principals.
- Recorded resulting data on proper forms.
- Evaluated the quality/effectiveness of each program.
- Conducted exit interview with each LEA's superintendent and program coordinator and made recommendations based upon a careful analysis of available data.

August 1968 – September 1989

Aliquippa School District
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania
English Teacher
Aliquippa Jr. High, Middle, and Sr. High Schools

- Taught English to students in grades 7 through 12.
- Wrote the English/Language Arts components of the 9th, 10th, and 11th - grade curriculum guides for the district's exemplary Chapter I Option 4 Reading English/Language Arts Pairing (RELAP) Program.
- Served as an active member of the Chapter I Parent Council.
- Spent one year as the assistant track coach.

June – August 1988

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Special Assistant to the Secretary of Education

- Delivered a presentation entitled "Cooperative Learning: A Researched-Based Option for Creating More Effective Schools," during a weeklong training session for Pennsylvania educators at Shippensburg State University.
- Wrote communiqué describing salient features of popular cooperative learning programs for PDE.

- Communicated with Dr. Rodger Johnson, Director of the Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota, about establishing several training sites within the Commonwealth.

1987 – 1988

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Member of Task Force on Educating Students Who
Have Disabilities

- Worked on the Quality Committee.
- Helped identify existing programs that have successfully introduced learning disabled students into the mainstream as well as distinguishing noteworthy characteristics of such programs.

Winter Term 1984

Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Clinician

- Used case-study data to design individualized instructional programs for students enrolled in Duquesne University's Reading Clinic under direction of Dr. Joe Brennan.

1987 to Present

Public Speaker/ Workshop Presenter

- Deliver speeches at churches, schools, conferences, and adult and youth regional correctional facilities on a variety of topics (i.e., commencement speeches, Black History Month talks, teen pregnancy, achievement motivation).
- Conduct workshops in which participants learn a cooperative learning strategy for teaching novice and reluctant writers how to compose a six-paragraph research paper.
- Assisted in making a presentation about the *Caring Habit of the Month* program at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri along with its creator Elaine Park and University of Pittsburgh professor Dr. Judy Kaufman in October 2004.
- Gave a power point presentation entitled *Discover the Hidden Power of the Diagnostic Teaching Method* at the *Supporting Student Success Conference* sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education at the Hilton Harrisburg in Harrisburg, PA on May 20, 2008.

1987 – 1989

Educational Experimenter

- Conducted formal and informal studies to ascertain the efficacy of using an adapted cooperative learning strategy to teach reading and writing to students in a small-urban western Pennsylvania high school.

- Received training from educational researchers at Johns Hopkins' Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.
- Became familiar with the then current literature about cooperative learning strategies as well as the most effective instructional approaches for teaching reading and writing.

Documents Developed or Published

- Steals, Melvin H. (1992). *The Personal Paper: Research Writing Made Easy*. Interlocking Visions.
- Development of an Adapted Cooperative Learning Strategy in a Secondary Chapter I Option 4 Reading Program (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1989).
- The Advantages of an Athletic Counselor in a High School Sports Program (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Duquesne University, 1984).
- Curriculum Guide: Option 4 RELAP (Reading English Language Arts Pairing) Program, Aliquippa High School, 1983.
- Steals, Melvin H., & Steals, Mervin H. (1972). "*Could It Be I'm Falling In Love,*" the American classic first recorded by the Spinners on the Atlantic recording label in 1972. (This recording reached the plateau of having been performed over two million times on the national and international airways in the fall of 1997).

Major Accomplishments/Awards

- Recipient of the *Service Above Self Award in Education* presented by the Cranberry Township Rotary Club in the spring of 2002.
- Member of the 1999 Gold Board chosen by Congressman Ron Klink's office to interview and select candidates for West Point, the Naval Academy, Airforce Academy, and Merchant Marine Academy from Mr. Klink's congressional district.
- Member of the committee of nine principals chosen from across the state to serve on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's *Secondary Instructional Support (SIS) Project* (1994-95).
- Special Assistant to Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Thomas K. Gilhool: one of twelve Pennsylvania teachers from across the state chosen to work at the Pennsylvania Department of Education in Harrisburg during the summer of 1988.

- Member of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Task Force on Educating Students Who Have Disabilities (1987-88).
- Aliquippa Business and Professional Women's Club's Man of the Year (May, 1987).
- Inductee of Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) Millionaires: a group of songwriters whose compositions have been performed on public airways over one million times (1985): "*Could It Be I'm Falling In Love.*"
- Teacher of the Year, Aliquippa School District (May, 1984).
- Recipient of the Leotta C. Hawthorne Reading Association's Literacy Award (May, 1984).

Professional Memberships, Organizations, Affiliations, and Boards

- International Reading Association (IRA)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals (PASSP)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (Past)
- Pennsylvania Association of Elementary School Principals (Past)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Mid-Atlantic Association for Cooperation in Education (MAACIE)
- International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education (IASCE)
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI).
- Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development
- Teacher Excellence Center

REFERENCES

Available upon request.