



The many faces of GOAL High School

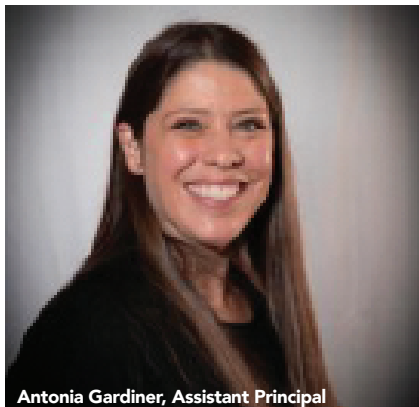
Serving more than 5,000 students statewide, GOAL High School has a broad appeal to an eclectic student body. Here are just a few examples:

- Students who receive top awards for college trigonometry and organic chemistry
- Students who can repair complex diesel motors, but would rather not read Chaucer
- Students with no place to call home
- Students who were bullied
- Students who are too socially anxious to attend a traditional high school
- Students who want to get started on college credits at no cost
- Students who have been expelled
- Students who have to work to support their families or their own children
- Students with learning disabilities who need one-on-one assistance
- Students who are just learning English and, the list goes on!

Validating and valuing students' struggles

BY JACOB DOYLE

What does it mean to validate a student's struggle? If there was an easy answer to this, everyone would be an educator. The answer to this question requires an intimate knowledge of the subject, something Antonia Gardiner, Assistant Principal of GOAL High School's Longmont, Loveland, and Fort Collins student drop-in centers, has tenfold.



Antonia Gardiner, Assistant Principal

With pure passion in her voice, she recounts, "My sister struggled in school. I didn't feel that the schools did enough to validate her struggle and authentically do everything to help. Supporting her through tears and anger cemented my conviction to support struggling students and help them succeed"

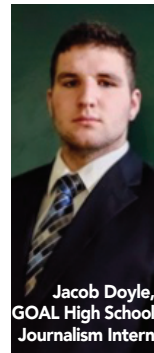
This led her to become a teacher of students with behavioral issues and apply what she had gone through with her sister, both valuing and validating them and their struggles.

Through her experience at GOAL High School, she has come to love the innovative community of Fort Collins, the bootstrap mentality of Longmont, and the art/theatrics of Loveland. It is this diversity that makes her love teaching, whether it is students with behavioral or academic issues or honors students.

What has made Ms. Gardiner's career so exceptional is that it doesn't matter who she is teaching, or where, or when. The goal always remained the same: to recognize students as young human beings taking on real-world problems. GOAL High School operates much the same way schoolwide—doing whatever it takes to provide education in a caring,

supportive, and personalized manner.

"I think fundamentally it's all the same, right? It's that we honor who they are and validate their struggles. Whether it was my students who struggled with behavior or others who haven't been able to figure out how to be successful in school or my previous AP students with the stress of taking say, 4 AP classes in a school year and applying to prestigious colleges in an exceptionally competitive environment. At the end of the day, both sets of those kids, need to be validated that their struggle is real, and that they are loved and supported."



Jacob Doyle, GOAL High School Journalism Intern

To learn more about GOAL and its mission to develop productive members of society call 1-877-PRO-GOAL (1-877-776-4625) or view goalac.org. Enrollment is open now. Jacob Doyle is a Journalism Intern and a Senior at GOAL High School.

