

1. Natalie Lett: Well, thank you for agreeing to meet with me today.
2. Cole Sandlin: Of course.
3. Natalie Lett: I am Natalie Lett. It is 2:05 on February 26th 2021. I am with Cole Sandlin in Rosalind's Coffee Shop in downtown Garland, Texas. And I just wanna clarify that I am going to record this interview and it will be uploaded to the UD Oral History Repository. Is that all right with you?
4. Cole Sandlin: It's great.
5. Natalie Lett: All right. So I was wondering if you could just sort of describe your own education?
6. Cole Sandlin: My own education. Um, I guess just kind of a background of-
7. Natalie Lett: Yeah.
8. Cole Sandlin: Okay.
9. Natalie Lett: What would you say was s- were some of the high points in elementary and in middle school in ...
10. Cole Sandlin: Um, so I was one that was very much, um, like, school was a necessary evil, like, I didn't enjoy school.
11. Natalie Lett: (laugh) Yeah.
12. Cole Sandlin: Um, I went to school so I could play basketball, so that was pretty much all the way through high school.
13. Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
14. Cole Sandlin: Um, did fine. I got A's and B's mostly s-, you know, and C's. I struggled with math. That's my area. That was bad. But probably my sophomore year in college is when I started to get more serious and realize that, "Oh, wait, this actually is important," and really started ... I started really getting into, you know, my education courses and, you know, more specialized courses. I, I enjoyed it a lot more.
15. Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
16. Cole Sandlin: Um, so I went to college, graduated, continued, got my masters, um, and then kept going and finished my doctorate, so ...

- 17.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative), interesting. So what would you say is a similarity between education presently and back when you were in school, whether it be, like, a program, the teachers or just any overall changes that you've noticed.
- 18.Cole Sandlin: Um, I don't know. I think it's, you know, I think there's been changes too, but I think similarities, um, you know, one thing I still see, one thing that really discouraged me when I was-
- 19.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 20.Cole Sandlin: ... especially in middle school, high school-
- 21.Natalie Lett: Yeah?
- 22.Cole Sandlin: ... um, was that a lot of our education system is very focused on testing.
- 23.Natalie Lett: Yes, definitely.
- 24.Cole Sandlin: Which, testing is not in itself a bad thing-
- 25.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 26.Cole Sandlin: ... um, but I don't think if you rely solely on testing, you're not gonna get a complete picture of what's going on. There's other data points that you could pull from to get, uh, a whole, like-
- 27.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 28.Cole Sandlin: ... holistic approach to what's actually going on with a student.
- 29.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 30.Cole Sandlin: Um, I think that's similar, so I don't think that's really changed a lot. I think you're seeing in certain areas and certain pockets of the country and different, um, you know, in different, different ways in which that's kinda shifting more.
- 31.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 32.Cole Sandlin: Um, but yeah, I think that's one similarity that still hasn't changed is, there's still ... you know, we're still heavily involved, especially in Texas with, you know, y- your STAAR test and things like that and, um, you know, I don't, I always don't, I just don't always think that gives you a real clear representation always-
- 33.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- 34.Cole Sandlin: ... of really, what's going on with the student. Um-
- 35.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 36.Cole Sandlin: ... because at the end of the day, it's just numbers on a paper. Um, you know, me being with i- It didn't show me always a clear picture of, you know, where a student maybe have started or-
- 37.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 38.Cole Sandlin: ... [crosstalk 00:03:12] that they've made.
- 39.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 40.Cole Sandlin: Um, so yeah, I mean, testing is important, but I, I think sometimes we, we put too big of an emphasis on testing.
- 41.Natalie Lett: Would you say, like, as a student, whether it be middle school, high school-
- 42.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 43.Natalie Lett: ... or even elementary, that you were aware of testing? Like, did you see school as ... You said you weren't as interested, so was that just all the academics or was it, like, intimidating having all these tests and just sort of, like-
- 44.Cole Sandlin: Um-
- 45.Natalie Lett: ... having to blow them off or ... Could you explain more on that part?
- 46.Cole Sandlin: Yeah. I think it, for me, it was more, I wouldn't say intimidating by testing-
- 47.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 48.Cole Sandlin: ... um, but it wasn't something that I really put a lot of thought into. It was like, "Okay, you just [crosstalk 00:03:58] to get the grade to pass and I'm fine."
- 49.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 50.Cole Sandlin: Um, now, what did discourage me, I'll be ... especially in math because there, I struggled-
- 51.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- 52.Cole Sandlin: ... is when I would put in effort and then I would still not do well, and so that became very discouraging. And w- kind of what shifted my focus was when I was in college, I had a math teacher, math professor, and the math professor, um, you know, after the first couple of tests, I had not done well in college algebra and things like that, and he was, you know, made it very clear, like, "I'm not really worried about your tests." Like, "I'm worried about the improvement, I'm worried about, you know, not just looking at the score on the test."
- 53.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 54.Cole Sandlin: So that, that alleviated, I think, a lot of that, "Oh, well tests is important, but it's not the be-all, end-all of where-"
- 55.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 56.Cole Sandlin: "... a student is necessarily." Um, I don't think it was necessarily intimidating for me though, it was just more of a high schooler who's more of a, just did it, you know, you didn't really put much thought or time into it.
- 57.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 58.Cole Sandlin: Um, and as I got older, obviously that changed, and as I matured.
- 59.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 60.Cole Sandlin: [crosstalk 00:04:57]-
- 61.Natalie Lett: Very typical for-
- 62.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.
- 63.Natalie Lett: ... just a typical high school student.
- 64.Cole Sandlin: Yeah, especially a male (laughing).
- 65.Natalie Lett: Yeah, sports and all that. Um, what is an educational experience, whether it be positive or negative, that sort of influenced you to go down the route of teaching and getting the masters and furthering all that?
- 66.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I think a couple things. I think one, what originally got me into teaching was two teachers. Um, my high school history teacher gave me a love for history. Um, he made history fun, he made it enjoyable. He, he's the one that kind of gave me the approach how I took to teaching was like, "Listen, if, if it's not

enjoyable, if we're not having fun, you're not gonna learn as effectively."

- 67.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 68.Cole Sandlin: So in order for you to learn effectively, I think, let's have fun, let's laugh, let's, let's enjoy our time together. If we're gonna be in a room together for an hour-
- 69.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 70.Cole Sandlin: ... let's enjoy it.
- 71.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 72.Cole Sandlin: Um, so that in- influenced me with a love of history and a want to originally go into teaching-
- 73.Natalie Lett: Right.
- 74.Cole Sandlin: ... and then as I got into it and got into teaching ... Well, I think back to the other teacher too, was, um, my high school basketball coach, who also was the PE teacher, and he just spent so much time building relationships with me, and that impacted me, um, because I'm big on, one of the foundations of education is relationships, um-
- 75.Natalie Lett: Yes.
- 76.Cole Sandlin: ... and building trust.
- 77.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 78.Cole Sandlin: And if I ... You know, I could have all the information in the world and I can give that information to you, but if we haven't built that relationship and that trust, that's only gonna go so far. So he showed me the value of investing in students.
- 79.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 80.Cole Sandlin: Um, and then as I got into college and started teaching, um, you know, I loved it, but I just always felt like, you know, I wanted to move into ... I, I really enjoy, like, the administrative side of it, I guess you could say. I enjoy, I enjoy working with teachers a lot.
- 81.Natalie Lett: Okay.

- 82.Cole Sandlin: Um, so, like, now, I still love teaching, when I get a chance, you know, to cover a class and all that kind of stuff, I still enjoy it, but what I love to do is work with our staff in, like, professional development and, you know, getting ... mentoring, talking to them-
- 83.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 84.Cole Sandlin: ... just kind of meeting their needs, because ultimately, like, I feel like as a principal, ultimately, that's my job. Like, my job is, yes, to take care of students, but my, my job is first and foremost, to take care of my staff, and then their job is taking care of our students.
- 85.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 86.Cole Sandlin: Um, and so I think that's my primary responsibility is to take care of that. So I think those two, those two kind of things really shaped me. I think, um, my current boss, Cathy [Ondrusek 00:07:38], she, she kinda showed me the same thing my high school basketball coach did, and PE coach-
- 87.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 88.Cole Sandlin: ... about relationships, with how well she values her staff-
- 89.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 90.Cole Sandlin: ... and so that influenced me a lot to see ... Like, I always know, like, I could go to Cathy and we could talk about anything-
- 91.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 92.Cole Sandlin: ... and she's gonna support me. She may tell me, "You're wrong and here's what you need to change-"
- 93.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 94.Cole Sandlin: ... but it's never, it's always done in a way that I feel valued, and I think that's, that really has, has shaped me into kinda my philosophy on a leader, on leading, is, I want my staff to always feel that and feel valued.
- 95.Natalie Lett: Yeah, that makes sense.
- 96.Cole Sandlin: Um, because if they don't feel valued, they're not gonna perform-
- 97.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- 98.Cole Sandlin: ... as well as they could. And ultimately, if they don't feel valued, they're eventually gonna leave.
- 99.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 100.Cole Sandlin: They're gonna look for somewhere where they are valued.
- 101.Natalie Lett: Did you do clinical teaching [crosstalk 00:08:32]?
- 102.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 103.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 104.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.
- 105.Natalie Lett: During that time, did you notice the same sort of, just trust and the same sort of, I guess, welcoming atmosphere that you do with Cathy as you did with, like, your mentor teacher or the school you're in or is that something in building relationships that you find, like, specific to where you're at right now?
- 106.Cole Sandlin: Um, I don't think it's just specific to where I am. I think it, I think it's rare.
- 107.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 108.Cole Sandlin: I don't think it, it's the norm.
- 109.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 110.Cole Sandlin: Um, and I don't think that's just education, I think that's just in organizations in general is-
- 111.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 112.Cole Sandlin: ... I think sometimes we can have a tendency to focus on that, the bottom line-
- 113.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 114.Cole Sandlin: ... um, and that we lose sight of, "My employees are human beings with families and worries and concerns-"
- 115.Natalie Lett: Definitely.
- 116.Cole Sandlin: "... and, and ..." So I don't think it's ... I mean, when I was clinical when I was teaching my ... I knew the teacher I was teaching with beforehand ...

- 117.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 118.Cole Sandlin: ... and so we ... and he was great, but when I was there, I will say, like, I, I d- I don't think I'd think their administration neglected their staff, by any means, at all ...
- 119.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 120.Cole Sandlin: ... but the time I was there, I didn't feel like it was overly abundant, and other schools I've been in too. Um, you know, when I was in another school in another state, um, it was very much similar to how it is here. Like, it was very a- it was very heavy ... it was a very hairy, heavy influence on me as a person rather than an individual in building those relationships.
- 121.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 122.Cole Sandlin: And so I think, you know, I did, in college you need to want ... at that point, I was just teaching-
- 123.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 124.Cole Sandlin: ... and in college, it made me, like, I enjoyed going to work-
- 125.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 126.Cole Sandlin: ... knowing that, that I felt comfortable. If something happened, I could go there and be like, "Hey, here's what's going on," and know that, "Okay. Well, they're gonna support me and ..." Um, so no, I don't think it's necessarily, you know, confined to where I'm at now, but I do say, I, I do believe it's, it's where I've, you know, know other schools and other individuals in education, that it's definitely, uh, you know, i- i- it definitely can be a, an exception to the rule rather than the norm.
- 127.Natalie Lett: Yeah. So with the relationships of the teachers, is ... and building relationships with the students initially, before you went into administration-
- 128.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 129.Natalie Lett: ... what made you want to go into secondary teaching rather than middle school or elementary? Is it, would you say, the age or-
- 130.Cole Sandlin: Um, so when I first started teaching-
- 131.Natalie Lett: ... that ability to build relationships?

- 132.Cole Sandlin: So when I first started teaching, I taught middle school ...
- 133.Natalie Lett: Oh wow.
- 134.Cole Sandlin: ... and I enjoyed it.
- 135.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 136.Cole Sandlin: Um, and then I taught that one year-
- 137.Natalie Lett: (laughs)
- 138.Cole Sandlin: ... and then I moved to high school, and what I enjoyed ... M- well, I always kind of wanted to go into high school.
- 139.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 140.Cole Sandlin: Um, I don't know if there's, I don't think there's anything specific, I just had a, kind of a passion for that age group ...
- 141.Natalie Lett: Yeah, definable.
- 142.Cole Sandlin: ... and I felt like my personality meshed well with that age group.
- 143.Natalie Lett: Totally (laughs) understandable.
- 144.Cole Sandlin: Um, which, I mean, sometimes with middle school, I felt like it was a, for lack of a better term, a lot of more babysitting ...
- 145.Natalie Lett: Yeah (laughs).
- 146.Cole Sandlin: ... type things. So, and that's just not ... My personality is not to be, like, real ...
- 147.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 148.Cole Sandlin: ... sympathetic towards that (laughs).
- 149.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 150.Cole Sandlin: If a kid's like, "Oh, they called me stupid." "Are you stupid?" "No." "Then move on with your life." Like-
- 151.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 152.Cole Sandlin: ... that's, that's ... we're okay. Um, and so high school, I just felt like my personality kind of fit better with that group.
- 153.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- 154.Cole Sandlin: Um, and I feel like, you know, that age group is, that age group ... You know, I can't ... All age groups I could say, but specifically, I feel like that age group is getting ... what's the best way to say it? ... is getting really, a lot of things thrown at them in a lot of directions. Um-
- 155.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 156.Cole Sandlin: ... you know, w- that they're living in a, you know, an age where they have access to any information they wanna have access to, whether it's-
- 157.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 158.Cole Sandlin: ... true, whether it's not true, a- and, and so I always had a, and still do have, like, a passion to play a role in kind of guiding them to what's true and what's not, you know, what's important rather than just, you know ... I, I just think that there's so many things being thrown ...
- 159.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 160.Cole Sandlin: ... at students today that challenges that, even 15 years or 20 years ago when I was in high school-
- 161.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 162.Cole Sandlin: ... I didn't have to worry about. So ...
- 163.Natalie Lett: Yeah. Would you say that, like, teaching the students through just that, going to whether you're teaching a specific curriculum, like, a little, idea of liberal arts, would you say that's where the students get that or would you say that's from that relationship of their teacher who's invested in them?
- 164.Cole Sandlin: Oh, I think it's ... I think it's both, but I think it's ... I would say it's more heavily on relationships. I think ... I do, I am a firm believer that's, relationships are the key-
- 165.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 166.Cole Sandlin: ... to everything. It's a key, uh, it's the key to student engagement. If I walk into a class and the kid knows that I care about them-
- 167.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- 168.Cole Sandlin: ... and I've already built that relationship, well, they're gonna care about what I have to say. If I walk into a class and a student

thinks I don't like them or I don't even know them, um, well yeah, it, it's, they're not gonna be nearly as ... they may, you know, pick up things here and there-

169.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

170.Cole Sandlin: ... but they're not gonna be really engaged on what's going on. Um, and, you know, one of the things that I did my dissertation on was kinda that whole topic, was, um, e- I looked at a teacher's personality, how it impacts student engagement and-

171. PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:14:04]

172.Cole Sandlin: I looked at a teacher's personality, how it impacts student engagement and after all my interviews with a lot of students, um, the one thing that kept coming up is we want to our teachers to be real. Like, we want as, we want them to be real people.

173.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

174.Cole Sandlin: I think sometimes teachers can lose that, and, which I'm not ... I mean, we have to be separated to an extent.

175.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

176.Cole Sandlin: But at the same time, I think it's good when they realize that you know, we're normal people.

177.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

178.Cole Sandlin: Um, that have normal problems and uh ...

179.Natalie Lett: Yeah. (laughs)

180.Cole Sandlin: We don't have the answer for everything.

181.Natalie Lett: Uh-huh (affirmative).

182.Cole Sandlin: Um, you may ask me a question and it's ... And I think teachers, important for teachers to understand too, that when we get questions, it's okay to say, "I don't know the answer to that."

183.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

184.Cole Sandlin: Um, but I don't think we ... I don't think is good is for us to try to fabricate or come up with some witty answer, then be like, "Oh, I hope I made sense."

- 185.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 186.Cole Sandlin: But ...
- 187.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 188.Cole Sandlin: It's way off the, way off the mark. I think it's better just to say, "I don't know and that's okay. Let me go find out for you." Or, "Hey, why don't, you know, let's look that up together." Or something like that. But yeah, I, I definitely think relationships are, I think relationships are way heavy into that.
- 189.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So, with that first year of teaching in middle school, obviously it kind of opened your eyes to move you to want to teach high school. Would you say, as you were teaching there were any like, roadblocks that came that you hadn't been prepared for, like, in clinical teaching or ...
- 190.Cole Sandlin: Oh, yeah. Um ...
- 191.Natalie Lett: What was your attitude when you approached like, your first year of teaching?
- 192.Cole Sandlin: Oh, I thought, "Well this is, I've got this." Like, it's not a ... I mean, it just, I've been trained for it.
- 193.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 194.Cole Sandlin: This is what I want to do. I'm gonna jump in, it's gonna be great! And then, first week I'm like, "I have no clue what I'm doing."
- 195.Natalie Lett: (laughs)
- 196.Cole Sandlin: Um, and there's nothing like, obviously the training's important and going to school and getting all that.
- 197.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 198.Cole Sandlin: Like, highly valuable.
- 199.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 200.Cole Sandlin: But at the same time, I learned more in my first year in the classroom, things that I never would have learned in a, in, as a student being trained.
- 201.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

- 202.Cole Sandlin: Than I did as a teacher.
- 203.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 204.Cole Sandlin: Um, I think probably one is, one of the things that you're not really trained for is dealing with parents.
- 205.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 206.Cole Sandlin: Um, I think that, you know, because every parent's different and some parents, no matter what you do, you can never make them happy and it just is what it is, and there's really no way to, to train for that.
- 207.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 208.Cole Sandlin: I mean, you can read books and you can prepare all you want. But until you actually get in that experience, um, it's ... Yeah, I think that's an area where I, it was kind of a culture shock for me, like, oh, what, what, how can you be mad about something.
- 209.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 210.Cole Sandlin: I thought it was great. Um ...
- 211.Natalie Lett: So, how do you respond to that from parents? Was it, did you like, try to take it on by yourself, or was this something you discussed with faculty and other teachers or was it just kind of like ...
- 212.Cole Sandlin: Yeah. Um, no, I definitely talked to other teachers who were more experienced than me.
- 213.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 214.Cole Sandlin: I'm like, "Hey, I have this situation, what do you think?" And I think that's, that's vitally important for new teachers.
- 215.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 216.Cole Sandlin: Um, what, one of the things that drives new teachers out of teaching, and there's multiple things, but one of them is a lack of collaboration and a lack of comraderies.
- 217.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 218.Cole Sandlin: And so, I, I think it's important for new teachers to come in and realize that, like, there's someone else I can go to and you know, if I have a problem or if I just don't know where I'm, you know, I'm

not gonna feel like they'll think I'm an idiot because I don't know this.

- 219.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 220.Cole Sandlin: It's like, "No, trust me, we were all there. It's okay."
- 221.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 222.Cole Sandlin: Um, and there's still things now. I mean, this is my tenth year, but there are still things that come up every year that I'm like, "I have never done this before. Like, I've never faced this situation."
- 223.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 224.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I definitely thing there are things, yeah. Relying on other teachers is, is highly important in that.
- 225.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 226.Cole Sandlin: I think as far as dealing with it, I mean, I think ultimately you have to, what always helped me, especially with upset parents ...
- 227.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 228.Cole Sandlin: Was understanding ... Getting them to understand that we're on the same team. Like, I'm on the same page as you.
- 229.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 230.Cole Sandlin: Like, we may think about the situation differently. But our end goal is the same. Like, we both want to help your student.
- 231.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 232.Cole Sandlin: Um, and I, I think one thing that I think some, that I've seen other tea-, that I've seen teachers do either as a administrator or just being an, on other teams, is we get so focused on sometimes I think being right.
- 233.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 234.Cole Sandlin: That we miss a really important opportunity to, to really jump into the life of a family and help them.
- 235.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 236.Cole Sandlin: Like, it's, it's not about me being right.

- 237.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 238.Cole Sandlin: Like if, me admitting I'm wrong is better for the student, well then, I need to do that for the student.
- 239.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 240.Cole Sandlin: Um, and it's o-, it's okay to ... There are times where I've had to look at parents like, "Yeah, I messed up. I was wrong on this." And one thing I've found, that if you, with parents and students too, if you admit when you mess up ...
- 241.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 242.Cole Sandlin: There, the next time it happens, it's not nearly as big of a deal.
- 243.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 244.Cole Sandlin: Um, but it's when you mess up and you try to defend yourself and make excuses that I think sometimes you gonna get pushback from parents, a lot of pushback from students um, the next time you do it.
- 245.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 246.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I think just being honest and open, and realizing letting parents know, like, "Listen, we want the same thing."
- 247.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 248.Cole Sandlin: Um, and we just have different perspectives sometimes on how to get there. And I think just to understand that we're on the same page ...
- 249.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 250.Cole Sandlin: Um, on the same team is, I think is important.
- 251.Natalie Lett: Yeah. How would say being a parent has now effected how you view the teacher education? Would you say you feel like you could eventually be one of those parents who has to contact a teacher? Or do you think that it just, for parents that intervene in education, what do you think is like, a driving factor?
- 252.Cole Sandlin: Um ...
- 253.Natalie Lett: Is it like, it's out in the teachers, or is it just ...

- 254.Cole Sandlin: I think ...
- 255.Natalie Lett: A control factor?
- 256.Cole Sandlin: I think we have created a culture where ... Well, so, so, when I was growing up, and even before that, it was very much, the teacher's always right.
- 257.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 258.Cole Sandlin: Um, and I don't believe that's, that's the case. I think teachers can be wrong.
- 259.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 260.Cole Sandlin: But I think what we've sometimes done in our culture, is now we've flipped the whole opposite extreme to say, "Well, if little Johnny said this happened, it happened." Well, that may not always be the case. And so, I, I've, and I've noticed some parents, I've had parents who have done that. Who, they're like, "Well, the teacher did this." I'm like, "You weren't like ... I understand your student's saying that. Let's, let's talk to the teacher, let's investigate."
- 261.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 262.Cole Sandlin: And see what's going on, rather than just automatically jump to my kid's 100% right. 'Cause I mean, at the end of the day, like, I would never blatantly just come out and say, "Your kid's lying." But at the end of the day, kids have different perspectives as opposed to teachers have different perspectives and I have a different perspective. And so, sometimes perspectives may be different, which could cause a lot of that tension.
- 263.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 264.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I think that's part it, 'cause I think we have created a culture where we, parents don't want things to be different for their kids.
- 265.Natalie Lett: Yeah, I agree with that.
- 266.Cole Sandlin: Um, of course, now in teaching they call it lawnmower ... They used to be helicopter parents. Now, they're lawnmower parents, and they mow down every obstacle in their kid's way.
- 267.Natalie Lett: (laughs)
- 268.Cole Sandlin: Um, which that's not good for the kids.

- 269.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 270.Cole Sandlin: Like it's good sometimes to let your kid fail.
- 271.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 272.Cole Sandlin: That's, that's an okay thing.
- 273.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 274.Cole Sandlin: They're gonna learn from it. Um, one thing I, I ... So, you ask me about my kids. I, I could see if a situation arises where I would get involved as a parent.
- 275.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 276.Cole Sandlin: Um, but at the same time, it's one of those situations where I may go to a teacher and address something, but I'm not gonna let my kid know. Because if I demean a teacher or a authority figure in front of my kid ...
- 277.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 278.Cole Sandlin: What do I expect them to do? They're gonna do the same type thing.
- 279.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 280.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I think it, it's important whether a teacher is right or wrong um, and they will be wrong at times, to still as a, as a parent, still uphold their authority.
- 281.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 282.Cole Sandlin: Um, but to an extent, obviously you get to a point where, you know ...
- 283.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 284.Cole Sandlin: You're looking at severe issues.
- 285.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 286.Cole Sandlin: But just day to day type things? Um, I think it's important to still, don't run down authority in front of your kid.
- 287.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 288.Cole Sandlin: 'Cause then they're gonna do the, the exact same thing.

- 289.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So, within administration and just how you are looking out for teachers now that you're not in the role directly as a teacher anymore.
- 290.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 291.Natalie Lett: What would you say is like, a teacher's strategy or some sort of philosophy that you really want to promote within your teachers, to I guess like, better that classroom relationship, or what's something that ...
- 292.Cole Sandlin: So ...
- 293.Natalie Lett: You wish you would have maybe had from your administrator, or something that you've ...
- 294.Cole Sandlin: I have two. I told my [inaudible 00:22:30] this. And of course, this is, if you, we had time we could unpack all this. But, the two main goals I have for my faculty and what I want, the goals I want for our kids, yes, I want them to achieve you know, academic success. I want them to score well. I want them to improve. I want them to learn the concepts. Those things are really important.
- 295.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 296.Cole Sandlin: I said, "But I want our teachers to love our kids. I want our, our ... And I want school to be fun. I want learning to be fun."
- 297.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 298.Cole Sandlin: Um, I, like I said earlier, I'm a firm believer in school being fun. You still have to have the rules. You have to have the procedures, all those you have to have that stuff.
- 299.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 300.Cole Sandlin: But at the same time, you know, if I'm trying to teach a, a third grade student math, okay well, me just getting up and working problems on a board are gonna, is gonna bore a nine year old to death.
- 301.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 302.Cole Sandlin: Um, making it interactive, making it, you know, use of technology I think, that's just the direction we're going. You can't get away from technology now.

- 303.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 304.Cole Sandlin: Um, I mean, those are the two things I think, and there's a variety, a variety of ways to do that, but I think for me and my staff, I want, yes, I want them to learn their stuff. But, I want our teachers to love our kids, and love our families well.
- 305.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 306.Cole Sandlin: And I want our kids to love school. Um, because if they love school, they're gonna learn. I think we sometimes can ... I think we can sometimes get to the attitude where school is so rigid and structured that we lose sight of the fact that I'm dealing with kids.
- 307.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 308.Cole Sandlin: And as an adult, you know, if I go and listen to somebody talk for an hour, I'm bored.
- 309.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 310.Cole Sandlin: So, definitely, I mean, there's a time and a place for lecturing.
- 311.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 312.Cole Sandlin: But at the same time, that's just not how most kids learn.
- 313.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 314.Cole Sandlin: Most kids need interaction. They need um, you know, any of the visual ...
- 315.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 316.Cole Sandlin: Stimulants. They need all those things. So, um, I think there's, I think just using a variety of methodologies, using a variety of you know, of, of teaching ideas in concept really ...
- 317.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 318.Cole Sandlin: I think bringing those together are really what helps, kind of, accomplish those, those two things, if that makes any sense at all.
- 319.Natalie Lett: Yeah, definitely.
- 320.Cole Sandlin: (laughs)

- 321.Natalie Lett: So, you said that technology is kind of, obviously the way it's going. So would you say like, with all of the progressive movements of incorporating like, smart boards into the classroom in different ways. Are you for technology in the classroom or what are your ... How do you feel about that, compared to looking back when you were in high school and you definitely did not have the same sort of uh ...
- 322.Cole Sandlin: Right. Uh, yes.
- 323.Natalie Lett: Accessibility.
- 324.Cole Sandlin: I am all for technology, to a s-, to an extent. Um, I don't think it's always also a great idea to give a fifth grader an iPad. Um, but times of that, having iPad stations, like, in libraries and things like that.
- 325.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 326.Cole Sandlin: Or even like, I know, the library carts that go from room to room and they have certain specific time where they're using that technology.
- 327.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 328.Cole Sandlin: And integrating it. Um, at the same time, you know, it, it is just what it is. I mean, it's not, you know, I work with a, wonderful teachers. They're fantastic.
- 329.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 330.Cole Sandlin: But a lot of them have been doing it a long time.
- 331.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 332.Cole Sandlin: So, technology is not their comfort zone.
- 333.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 334.Cole Sandlin: Um, but one thing I tell them, it's like, it's not going away.
- 335.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 336.Cole Sandlin: Like, it just is what it is.
- 337.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

- 338.Cole Sandlin: And so, you either gotta get on board or you're gonna get left behind. And so, um, and the challenging thing we're I'm at, at private school is that you know, we don't necessarily have all the funding to where we can get all that.
- 339.Natalie Lett: Definitely.
- 340.Cole Sandlin: So obviously that brings in fundraising and things you have to do. But, no, yeah, I think technology is, technology is essential for education now.
- 341.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 342.Cole Sandlin: Um, but at the same time, you have to do it smart. You can't just ... I was in a school where they just decided to give every high school student iPads and it was a complete disaster.
- 343.Natalie Lett: Yeah. (laughs)
- 344.Cole Sandlin: So.
- 345.Natalie Lett: Yeah. Would you say within like, elementary specifically now, have, do any of your students have trouble accessing technology? Like, would you say, across the board most like, from K through fifth, that it's something that they have access to at home, or ...
- 346.Cole Sandlin: Um ...
- 347.Natalie Lett: Is that something more, that you notice more happening at school?
- 348.Cole Sandlin: I think, for the most part they do. Um, and you know, and I'm not in a normal situation.
- 349.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 350.Cole Sandlin: I'm in a private school.
- 351.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 352.Cole Sandlin: So, I'm not dealing with, a majority of our students don't come from low sessy-, socioeconomic backgrounds.
- 353.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 354.Cole Sandlin: So, um, the students I'm dealing with most of them ...
- 355.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

- 356.Cole Sandlin: We have a few that I know of that, they just don't.
- 357.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 358.Cole Sandlin: Um, but there are, most of them do have access to the technology both at home and at school.
- 359.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative). When ... The idea of online learning. Did y'all, did your classes and teachers have to go online for any period of time?
- 360.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 361.Natalie Lett: How was that? Was that ...
- 362.Cole Sandlin: So, they transitioned obviously online when everybody did, back in, a year ago in March when everything hit. Um, but they currently, we still offer online. We have some students who either you know, they live with high risk individuals, they're high risk.
- 363.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 364.Cole Sandlin: Um, they live with their grandparents. Things like that. Um, so we have allowed them to stay online.
- 365.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 366.Cole Sandlin: Um, it has gone as well as it could go. It's, it, it's, and what I hear not only from our school but public schools, other private schools is it's killing faculty. It's killing teachers.
- 367.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 368.Cole Sandlin: Um, and to really, really do it justice and do it right, 'cause I, I don't think it's going anywhere. I think a-
369. PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:28:04]
- 370.Cole Sandlin: ... do it just as you do it right. Cause I, I don't think it's going anywhere. I think online education, I mean, it's been in universities and colleges for a decade or more-
- 371.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 372.Cole Sandlin: ... and now it's really widespread, and it's just gonna trickle down, I mean, you have public online high schools now-

- 373.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 374.Cole Sandlin: ... um, and, that are 100% online. And so it's not going anywhere, it's t- it's, it is where education is going, even for middle school, high school, even in elementary.
- 375.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 376.Cole Sandlin: And so, but it's one of those things where if we, schools continue to do it, and I get budget's an issue, but if schools continue to do it the way they're doing it and utilizing a lot of the same teachers-
- 377.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 378.Cole Sandlin: ... like, we're having to utilize classroom teachers who also teach online.
- 379.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 380.Cole Sandlin: And so that is putting a massive strain on our teaching staff.
- 381.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 382.Cole Sandlin: Which we, we realize that and, and we can't let it continue-
- 383.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 384.Cole Sandlin: ... because it's j- cause it's just gonna create burnout.
- 385.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 386.Cole Sandlin: So we have to find out how we continue, that's one of the challenges we have, how to find out how we continue offering online, but at the same time, finding ways to basically bring new staff members on who handle all the online education.
- 387.Natalie Lett: Hmm.
- 388.Cole Sandlin: Um, and so it's just finding that balance. But yeah, it's not going anywhere, it is the trajectory of education. I think online education, schools will offer it from now on.
- 389.Natalie Lett: Do you think it's possible to still make the online education learning fun and for that teacher student relationship to exist th- not necessarily in the same way as in a classroom, but-
- 390.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.

- 391.Natalie Lett: ... to at least have that, sort of, connection?
- 392.Cole Sandlin: Yeah. I think it's... possible to build relationships, not the same.
- 393.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 394.Cole Sandlin: I don't think, and what y- now that, you know, we're kind of a year into this, you're starting to see studies come out about the effects of online education, especially for kids.
- 395.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 396.Cole Sandlin: And, um, you know, it's one thing for an adult taking online courses, it's different when you have a ten year old taking an online course.
- 397.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 398.Cole Sandlin: You know, they're still learning a lot of those social cues, they're still learning the soc- like, how to socialize with other students, how to, how to get along with other adult, with adults, and, and so, I think, I think it's possible, but not, like you said, not to the extent that you're gonna have it in face to face interaction-
- 399.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 400.Cole Sandlin: ... face to face classrooms. Um, I think you can have it still, u- but I, I n- you know, you, you, I think [inaudible 00:30:20] especially through things like, you know, Google Meets and all those, but it's j- just still, it's still not the same.
- 401.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 402.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I think you're always gonna lose some of that relationship-
- 403.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.
- 404.Cole Sandlin: ... because you're, you're still through a barrier of a screen.
- 405.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 406.Cole Sandlin: If that makes sense.
- 407.Natalie Lett: Yeah. In one of my classes, we have been discussing this one quote, and it's basically, it says, "The more things change, the more things stay the same." Would you say that's, that you see that in education, whether it be, like, looking back in, like, 1850's, looking at, like, you have the dame school and you have one

room classrooms and progressing into, like, classrooms and, like, all the facilities actually having-

408.Cole Sandlin: Hmm.

409.Natalie Lett: ... and you have the [inaudible 00:31:03]. And schools creating programs for those with special needs, would you say, what, I guess, what would your take on that quote be? Would you agree with that? Or how would you see the change in education?

410.Cole Sandlin: I think, yeah, I think, ye- I mean, I think... I think yes, in the fact that I would agree, because the needs are the same. So what I mean by that is, for example, there's students like, in the last decade, there's just seems to be an ex- explosion in things like ADD, ADHD, um, dyslexia, autism, all these, these, you know, these learning differences.

411.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

412.Cole Sandlin: And I'm not convinced, I haven't researched them myself, but I'm not convinced that we're seeing explosion in it, I think it's just more aware of it.

413.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

414.Cole Sandlin: So, I, I, I think the needs have always been there. So I don't, in that aspect I think it's the same as it's always been.

415.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

416.Cole Sandlin: I think the methods we use to meet those needs have changed-

417.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

418.Cole Sandlin: ... in a lot of ways.

419.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

420.Cole Sandlin: Um, which they should, I mean, the way I am gonna educate someone who has severe dyslexia is clearly different than I would someone who doesn't.

421.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

422.Cole Sandlin: So, you know, we have to look at, you know, this idea of mainstreaming kids, where it's just, put kids in a classroom and teach.

- 423.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 424.Cole Sandlin: Well, that's not what's gonna be best for the kid, every kid's different. Every kid learns differently.
- 425.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 426.Cole Sandlin: So what may work for this kid, may not work for this kid.
- 427.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 428.Cole Sandlin: And, so in, in one sense, I f- I agree, I think, yeah, I think we do stay the same in that the needs are the same. I, I think, you know, I hear a lot that, you know, people say, well sh- kids these days, you know, they're so-
- 429.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 430.Cole Sandlin: ... they're so different than they used to be.
- 431.Natalie Lett: Uh-huh (affirmative) (laughs)
- 432.Cole Sandlin: And I don't really believe that. Like, I think kids are kids, they're the same.
- 433.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 434.Cole Sandlin: Um, now how they manifest the things, you know, how they manifest things may be different or the access to what they have is different.
- 435.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 436.Cole Sandlin: Um, you know, if I had social media on my fingertips on my smartphone, [inaudible 00:33:15] dumb stuff I would have posted when I was 15 and 14 years old.
- 437.Natalie Lett: (laughs) Yeah.
- 438.Cole Sandlin: Um, and so yeah, I think, so yeah, I ag- I kind of agree with it-
- 439.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 440.Cole Sandlin: ... that, I think, yeah, in a lot of ways, it is the same. But how we, how we address those needs now, I think we have a better handle on it.
- 441.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

- 442.Cole Sandlin: Which I, and I, and I, yeah. And I think, you know, the things that are always gonna change too, with that. I mean, the more we learn about, you know, various differences, the more strategies change all the time, so...
- 443.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 444.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.
- 445.Natalie Lett: What would you say most schools or, I guess, specifically, being in a private school, would you say is the stance on, like, looking at incorporating equal opportunity and, like, multicultural experiences for the classroom? Cause it tends to be, in a private school, obviously, it's a different-
- 446.Cole Sandlin: Mmm.
- 447.Natalie Lett: ... sort of, socioeconomic background as you mentioned earlier-
- 448.Cole Sandlin: Right.
- 449.Natalie Lett: ... compared to a public school.
- 450.Cole Sandlin: It's very homogenous.
- 451.Natalie Lett: Yes.
- 452.Cole Sandlin: Um, I'm all for it, and I'm all for it because of what you just said, a- and is that in a private school we can tend to be very homogenous, we can tend to have very similar perspectives-
- 453.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 454.Cole Sandlin: ... and having diversity and different perspectives is a wonderful thing.
- 455.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 456.Cole Sandlin: It's okay that we disagree.
- 457.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 458.Cole Sandlin: Um, and let's have a conversation about it and, you know, because, you know, I had a conversation with somebody not too long ago about an issue and it opened up my eyes to a lot of things, because he had a complete different perspective than I had on the issue.

- 459.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 460.Cole Sandlin: And it completely changed how I viewed it.
- 461.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 462.Cole Sandlin: And I think, no matter what school you're in, whether it's private school, public school, whatever-
- 463.Natalie Lett: Mmm.
- 464.Cole Sandlin: ... I, I think it's vitally important. Um, you know, being in a private school, obviously, we have, especially being in a religious private school-
- 465.Natalie Lett: Yes.
- 466.Cole Sandlin: ... we have certain, you know, guidelines and, and conduct policies that we have to have-
- 467.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 468.Cole Sandlin: ... and that we choose to have.
- 469.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 470.Cole Sandlin: Um, but at the same time, I think being exposed to those things is not necessarily a bad thing.
- 471.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 472.Cole Sandlin: Especially for our kids, because our kids, I think what happens is they get in their bubble of, "This is what my private school world looks like."
- 473.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 474.Cole Sandlin: And they don't realize that there's a whole big world outside of them.
- 475.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 476.Cole Sandlin: And I think if we just hold them in that bubble and don't allow them to benefit diversity and multicultural multiethnic experiences, I think we're doing th- a- doing them a disservice, because I don't think they're fully prepared when they go to college or when they go to get a job.

- 477.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 478.Cole Sandlin: Or when they go to the military or whatever-
- 479.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 480.Cole Sandlin: ... path they choose once they're out of, out of our school.
- 481.Natalie Lett: Yeah. Where would you say that exposure happens specifically in your school? Or how... how would you approach that in, I guess, any private school setting, or, just, any school setting in general of that level that always seems to, like, kind of form-
- 482.Cole Sandlin: Right.
- 483.Natalie Lett: ... especially in middle school and high school students. You have social groups and cliques and everything, whereas in elementary-
- 484.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.
- 485.Natalie Lett: ... it's, they're a lot more influential.
- 486.Cole Sandlin: I think it starts earlier. I think the earlier you can start, um, again, to an extent, you know, what you can expose an 18 year old high school senior to, you can't expose to an 8 year old-
- 487.Natalie Lett: Yeah, (laughs) definitely.
- 488.Cole Sandlin: ... you know, second grader.
- 489.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 490.Cole Sandlin: Um, but just giving them the understanding of, like, this is what people in other countries live like, this is how their schools function, this is how their culture works.
- 491.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 492.Cole Sandlin: Um, this is how people, other people in Garland function.
- 493.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 494.Cole Sandlin: You know, Garland's very multicultural, multiethnic.
- 495.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 496.Cole Sandlin: And, but I think getting, getting it early is really really important because the longer you wait, like you said, I think we tend to,

human beings tend to gravitate towards people who are, like, themselves.

497.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

498.Cole Sandlin: People just do.

499.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

500.Cole Sandlin: Um, you know, if I walk into a room and there's 30 other people in there, naturally I wanna go to the people that look like me.

501.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

502.Cole Sandlin: That's just human nature.

503.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

504.Cole Sandlin: Um, and I think the earlier we can expose our students to that, [inaudible 00:37:26] in a private school it- it's difficult. I will say, we have, especially in our elementary, we do have a wide variety of different ethnicities, different socioeconomic backgrounds-

505.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

506.Cole Sandlin: ... um, and so I- I- I- it's, it's hard. I think it's something that even in public schools you have to make a concerted effort to do.

507.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

508.Cole Sandlin: Because like you said, they're gonna, kids tend to gravitate towards those that are like themselves.

509.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

510.Cole Sandlin: And so, I don't know. I think, I'm not sure I have a, you know, I don't think the answer's black and white.

511.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

512.Cole Sandlin: I think it's, it's, it's an ongoing conversation, but I thumthi-

513.Natalie Lett: Definitely.

514.Cole Sandlin: ... I will say it's something that I think needs to happen sooner rather than later. I think the later you wait, the more difficult it's going to be.

515.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

- 516.Cole Sandlin: Cause I think, you know, whether we like it or not, like I s- you know, like we've said, you group with people who are like you who have the same views and that's only gonna reinforce your perse- your, the perspectives that you have.
- 517.Natalie Lett: Hmm.
- 518.Cole Sandlin: Um, rather than getting with somebody who may have a different perspective and understanding that they're not wrong for that perspective, that's just their life experiences and their background led them to this perspective.
- 519.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 520.Cole Sandlin: [crosstalk 00:38:34] so yeah.
- 521.Natalie Lett: Yeah. That's, that really does answer the question even though, like you said, it's very black and white and still ever growing.
- 522.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 523.Natalie Lett: I guess of how mentioned it's something you need to be exposed to when you're younger, what would you say or where would you say, like, fundamental learning happens? Would you say it happens in the classroom? Or is that independently, um, with the student?
- 524.Cole Sandlin: I think it's mixed. I think learning and education... I, I think there's three facets. So you have, obviously, the student-
- 525.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- 526.Cole Sandlin: ... and obviously there has to be some student accountability-
- 527.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 528.Cole Sandlin: ... [crosstalk 00:39:13] learn. Then you have the teacher, obviously, but you'll, you, I think... parents are massively important.
- 529.Natalie Lett: Yep.
- 530.Cole Sandlin: Um, if you look at, you know, all the studies that have been done about parent involvement and student success, like, when parents are involved, students have a higher rate of success academically.
- 531.Natalie Lett: Yes.

532.Cole Sandlin: When parents aren't, students tend to suffer.

533.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

534.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I don't think it's, I don't think it's, they're all intertwined.

535.Natalie Lett: Okay.

536.Cole Sandlin: I think it's all, yeah, I don't think it's, yes, fundamental learning takes place in the classroom-

537.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

538.Cole Sandlin: ... you know, we're gonna teach concepts that they're only gonna use [inaudible 00:39:50] probably get there.

539.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

540.Cole Sandlin: But at the same time, you have the student accountability-

541.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

542.Cole Sandlin: ... that they've gotta participate in the learning, no- learning is not a- a- it's not a passive thing.

543.Natalie Lett: Hmm.

544.Cole Sandlin: Learning is an active process.

545.Natalie Lett: Definitely.

546.Cole Sandlin: So they have to be active in the learning process at the same time-

547.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

548.Cole Sandlin: ... and then you also have to have families and parents coming along and supporting what's going on at the school-

549.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

550.Cole Sandlin: ... and then picking up and running. You know, I, I, I believe that education is primarily the responsibility of the parents.

551.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

552.Cole Sandlin: And then schools come along beside the parents-

553.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

554.Cole Sandlin: ... and say, okay, now let's focus on, you know, I- I just think-

555.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

556.Cole Sandlin: ... I always, I air on the side of, as parent, you're the ultimate authority on your kid's education. You are.

557.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

558.Cole Sandlin: Not me, I don't think, you know, um, I have friends who, and acquaintances that I know that I talked to regularly who are in public school that, um, and private school both that have very different opinions on that-

559.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

560.Cole Sandlin: ... and think that parents should not be involved in it at all. And it's, we're the ones that are trained, we're the ones that should be, which I disagree with completely.

561.Natalie Lett: Yeah. (laughs)

562.Cole Sandlin: Um, you're the parent, you know what's best for your kid, not me, um, in the long run.

563.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

564.Cole Sandlin: So...

565.Natalie Lett: In the setting where there's not that parent involvement, whether it be just, like, I guess this would probably not necessarily apply to private school, but just thinking about those lower socioeconomic backgrounds-

566.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

567.Natalie Lett: ... where the family is, is just a messed up background. Would you say the school or is that something, like, a teacher comes alongside for, is that, just, kind of one of, not necessarily an exception where nothing can be done-

568.Cole Sandlin: Right.

569.Natalie Lett: ... but I don't know.

570.Cole Sandlin: Yeah, I think that's where your teachers and your administration and your support staff come along and have to fill in those gaps.

571.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

572.Cole Sandlin: Um, because what can't happen is they can't say, oh, well this student's struggling. Well, let's write him off.

573.Natalie Lett: Hmm. Yeah.

574.Cole Sandlin: It just is what it is, we'll just keep pushing him along.

575.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

576.Cole Sandlin: Um, you know, we have to step back and look at it and say, okay, there isn't parent involvement here, here's, here's your struggling, how can we come along and support that student and help that student?

577.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

578.Cole Sandlin: Um, cause at the end of the day, education is more than K-12th grade.

579.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

580.Cole Sandlin: Like...

581. PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [00:42:04]

582.Cole Sandlin: ... is more than K-12th grade.

583.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

584.Cole Sandlin: Like, education is about their life.

585.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

586.Cole Sandlin: So, we are ... you know, it's important for us to train those, not only the educational skills, but the life skills.

587.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

588.Cole Sandlin: That a lot of kids, even, I mean, even our- in our private school, we have kids that the parents, they're not involved. They will sign a check, send their kid to school, but-

589.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

- 590.Cole Sandlin: Their attitude is very much like, "All right, from 8-4, he's your problem." And those are the kids that we consistently see behavior issues, we consistently see academic issues ...
- 591.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 592.Cole Sandlin: ... attendance issues. Um, so, it's not ... like at our school, it's obviously not as, I would say it's not as pervasive at our school.
- 593.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 594.Cole Sandlin: But, you know, we still see the same issues.
- 595.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 596.Cole Sandlin: Um, and I think it's just one where your teachers and your faculty and your support staff have to come alongside that student ...
- 597.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 598.Cole Sandlin: ... and fill in those gaps.
- 599.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 600.Cole Sandlin: Um, 'cause there's some parents, some that are ... no matter how many meetings you have, no matter how many times we talk about it ...
- 601.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 602.Cole Sandlin: ... their attitude doesn't change. "It's your job to teach them, it's not my job."
- 603.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 604.Cole Sandlin: Um, which, ultimately is to the detriment of- of the student.
- 605.Natalie Lett: Yeah. I definitely agree with what you were saying about education preparing them for all of life and developing all those skills. What would your take, I guess, be on college? Obviously, you have to teach to that child and some may just go into trade school or directly work ...
- 606.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 607.Natalie Lett: ... after getting their high school diploma. But, if you could, I guess, talk to a classroom of juniors or seniors, what would- would you

want to promote college to them, or is it one of those where it's like, follow what you want to do?

- 608.Cole Sandlin: My advice would be find out what you love and do it. If it's working on cars, go be a mechanic.
- 609.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 610.Cole Sandlin: If it's, "I love medicine, I want to be a doctor," go to college.
- 611.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 612.Cole Sandlin: Um, I- I- I think we do a disservice to some. I say to the majority of people, college is to track, you need to go.
- 613.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 614.Cole Sandlin: But I think we do do a disservice to some students when we try to force college down their throat.
- 615.Natalie Lett: Yes.
- 616.Cole Sandlin: Um, because I don't think college- I don't think college is for everybody.
- 617.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 618.Cole Sandlin: There's no reason why if you want to be an electrician, you need to go get a four-year degree necessarily. Well, go to trade school, learn your trade.
- 619.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 620.Cole Sandlin: Go start your career.
- 621.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 622.Cole Sandlin: Um, so yeah, I think my advice would be find what you love, find what your passion is ...
- 623.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 624.Cole Sandlin: ... and go after it.
- 625.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 626.Cole Sandlin: If that leads you to college, great. If it leads you to trade school or military or whatever it is, great.

- 627.Natalie Lett: Yeah. I guess, also, just continuing on that question of looking at it, would you say ... I know for me, personally, having teachers or a specific setting where there were teachers where it was written off as, if you don't go to college, there's this idea of being unsuccessful- unsuccessful. But also looking at various people I know who have graduated and who haven't specifically used their degree for that means.
- 628.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 629.Natalie Lett: I guess, what would your response be to that of, if you graduate college is it, like ...
- 630.Cole Sandlin: Right.
- 631.Natalie Lett: ... a success or failure?
- 632.Cole Sandlin: No.
- 633.Natalie Lett: Or is it continuing that idea of education as rounding a personality and a whole human person?
- 634.Cole Sandlin: Yeah, I think, you know, if you look at the statistics, you know ... in the past several decades, me growing up, you know, even before the 80s ... 90s, 80s ... it was very much looked at, especially moving into the 90s where if you don't get a college degree ...
- 635.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 636.Cole Sandlin: ... you're not going to be successful.
- 637.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 638.Cole Sandlin: You have to go to college. You have to go to college.
- 639.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 640.Cole Sandlin: And that's just changing.
- 641.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 642.Cole Sandlin: Like, that view ... it- it's shifting. And I think that's for a lot of reasons.
- 643.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

- 644.Cole Sandlin: I think the- I think internet is a huge ... I mean, you see younger and younger people starting companies online and who are massively successful.
- 645.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 646.Cole Sandlin: And they've never needed to go college. And that's great, don't go to college.
- 647.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 648.Cole Sandlin: Um ... So, I think there's just a- there's just been a shift ...
- 649.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 650.Cole Sandlin: ... in how commerce is done. There's been a shift on the perception of colleges.
- 651.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 652.Cole Sandlin: And I think, my opinion ... I'm a ...
- 653.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 654.Cole Sandlin: ... college chancellor.
- 655.Natalie Lett: (Laughs)
- 656.Cole Sandlin: But in my opinion, I think college has done a disservice in a lot of ways. I'm not saying that there's not fabulous professors and fabulous teachers and fabulous administrators in colleges that love what they do and love their kids.
- 657.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 658.Cole Sandlin: But at the end of the day, well, at the end of the day, unfortunately education, whether it's elementary, middle school, high school, or college, is a business.
- 659.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 660.Cole Sandlin: And that's unfortunate. I think sometimes we lose sight of ... why sometimes why we got into this in the first place.
- 661.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 662.Cole Sandlin: And I think- I'm not talking about individual teachers.
- 663.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

- 664.Cole Sandlin: I'm talking institutional-wide. I think most [inaudible 00:46:49] teachers and professors that get into this understand why they get into it.
- 665.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 666.Cole Sandlin: Um, if they get into it to make a lot of money, that- they have the wrong business.
- 667.Natalie Lett: (Laughs)
- 668.Cole Sandlin: But I'm talking like, skyrocketing costs of colleges and universities and how much it costs.
- 669.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 670.Cole Sandlin: I mean, I know people that graduate with 4-year degrees who have \$100,000 of student loan debt.
- 671.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 672.Cole Sandlin: And ... it's just- so yeah, because of things, those things, the risk of going into massive amounts of debt ...
- 673.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 674.Cole Sandlin: ... people just think I would rather go to two-year trade school and graduate with no debt and start my career.
- 675.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 676.Cole Sandlin: And so there's just been a shift I think in ... for a variety of reasons. Um, as to why, I think we're kind of seeing ... a shift in college might not be as important as it used to for people.
- 677.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Yeah. I had been reading an article and it mentioned just that teachers ... looking back in ... I don't quite remember the years, but I want to say it was between 1980 and possibly through current of just how a lot of teachers are trained in a subject.
- 678.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 679.Natalie Lett: But not necessarily in how to teach in the classroom.
- 680.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

- 681.Natalie Lett: And, I guess, from working with administration, would you say that's almost like an ongoing process where you're always having ... I mean, obviously you're always developing how you teach in the classroom.
- 682.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 683.Natalie Lett: But just looking at how you have the disservice of teachers who ...
- 684.Cole Sandlin: Right.
- 685.Natalie Lett: ... are getting into teaching because, oh, it might be easier.
- 686.Cole Sandlin: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 687.Natalie Lett: It's just the first whim of what they want to do.
- 688.Cole Sandlin: Right.
- 689.Cole Sandlin: Um, so I guess are you asking ...
- 690.Natalie Lett: Would you say-
- 691.Cole Sandlin: ... do I see more of a value on actually being a trained educator or knowing your subject matter?
- 692.Natalie Lett: Yes. Which would you lean more towards? Being trained in that subj-
- 693.Cole Sandlin: I think they're both important.
- 694.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 695.Cole Sandlin: I think you have to know your subject matter, obviously.
- 696.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 697.Cole Sandlin: Um, but I know a lot of people who, from my experience ...
- 698.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 699.Cole Sandlin: ... I know a lot of teachers who know their subject matter really, really well.
- 700.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 701.Cole Sandlin: But they lack tools they really need to be a great teacher. They're a good teacher.

- 702.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 703.Cole Sandlin: But if they had the background of education and teaching and how to know the student- the learning differences and differentiate instruction and all those kinds of things ...
- 704.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 705.Cole Sandlin: I think, I think that could propel them to being, you know, a better teacher.
- 706.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 707.Cole Sandlin: Um, one thing that I- I have also noticed is ... this is not across the board, but a trend I would say in my career is I've seen when-when teachers have a lot of subject knowledge ...
- 708.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 709.Cole Sandlin: ... they may be, like, get an A-plus in that area.
- 710.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 711.Cole Sandlin: But a lot of times I've noticed like the passion for what they do ...
- 712.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 713.Cole Sandlin: ... like, working with students every day ...
- 714.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 715.Cole Sandlin: ... may be a B.
- 716.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 717.Cole Sandlin: But then I may have people who have got the educational background and they're passion is A-plus ...
- 718.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 719.Cole Sandlin: ... but their content might be a B.
- 720.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 721.Cole Sandlin: And I would much rather have a teacher who's passion is an A-plus.
- 722.Natalie Lett: Okay, yeah.
- 723.Cole Sandlin: And a B on content. Because I can work with this.

- 724.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 725.Cole Sandlin: We can improve and we can grow, but if you don't have passion for it, that's hard to make up that gap.
- 726.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 727.Cole Sandlin: Um, usually what's going to happen is your passion's gonna get you to decrease ...
- 728.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 729.Cole Sandlin: ... rather than actually increase.
- 730.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 731.Cole Sandlin: Um, so yeah, I would always rather have a good teacher who's extremely passionate than a great teacher who is not passionate about what they do.
- 732.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 733.Cole Sandlin: And not passionate about students.
- 734.Natalie Lett: Yeah. So I guess, would you agree that probably just looking at it without necessarily having all the research, but across the board it seems ... I guess in the United States, do teachers, to you, as a generally whole seem to be more passionate or would they just seem to be more of that subject area of how ... specifically in Texas, like you have star tests and [inaudible 00:50:42] and how they're teaching for a subject or ...
- 735.Cole Sandlin: Yeah. I mean, I don't know if I can ... I mean, I don't wanna ... in my experience, I've kind of seen both.
- 736.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 737.Cole Sandlin: Um, I think most of the teachers who get into education love what they do and have a passion for it.
- 738.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 739.Cole Sandlin: Love kids and love students. But I think- I think there are some that they've been doing it awhile ...
- 740.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 741.Cole Sandlin: ... or they just got disillusioned, or whatever it is.

- 742.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 743.Cole Sandlin: Um, but that, you know, that's affected their love for what they do.
- 744.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 745.Cole Sandlin: Or they just lost that passion they used to have, which, I've been there.
- 746.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 747.Cole Sandlin: I mean, not for a long period of time, but there are times where, you know, you just get in the ... education, you know, you get in a rut and you just kind of like you go through a season where it's just hard.
- 748.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 749.Cole Sandlin: And you're like, okay, I'm working on these lessons and these things and- and these strategies and none of them seem to be working.
- 750.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 751.Cole Sandlin: And so after awhile you kind of, you can't- It's easy to get discouraged.
- 752.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 753.Cole Sandlin: Um, and it's easy to lose sight sometimes of why you got into it. Um, and you know, there's seasons of that. But- So I don't mean- I think ... I mean, I don't know if it's across the board.
- 754.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 755.Cole Sandlin: Um, I would say my experience, most- most teacher's that I've worked with or have supervised, um, most of them love what they do and love students, still have a passion for it. But, there are some ...
- 756.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 757.Cole Sandlin: ... that I think have lost that.
- 758.Natalie Lett: Yeah. Thanks. I just kind of wanted to pick your brain and see, like, if you would- what you-
- 759.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.

- 760.Natalie Lett: ... what you would say about that.
- 761.Cole Sandlin: Yeah.
- 762.Natalie Lett: But yeah, it's definitely interesting just looking at all the basic research of teachers and what drives them to teach, 'cause, obviously you look at the income and that's ... (laughs)
- 763.Cole Sandlin: Right.
- 764.Natalie Lett: ... not necessarily what you would expect for those people to choose. Um, I guess do you have anything else you want to add just about administration or teaching or any roles ... the parents ...
- 765.Cole Sandlin: Um, I would say, as you look at trying to get into education ... I'll say a couple things. I would say, one, it's hard. There are times when you're gonna, especially the first couple years ...
- 766.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 767.Cole Sandlin: ... where you're gonna look at it and be like, "I don't want to do this."
- 768.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Yeah.
- 769.Cole Sandlin: Um, that's normal. That's okay. There are times where I went through that as well. Like, am I sure this is really what I want to do?
- 770.Natalie Lett: Uh-huh.
- 771.Cole Sandlin: And it took me probably until year three ...
- 772.Natalie Lett: Okay.
- 773.Cole Sandlin: ... when I felt like, okay, I've got this.
- 774.Natalie Lett: (Laughs)
- 775.Cole Sandlin: Like, something could happen in the day and throw a wrench into my lesson plan where I could basically go off the lesson plan if I needed to and I'm like, no problem, I've got it, we'll do great.
- 776.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 777.Cole Sandlin: We'll still do what we need to get done.
- 778.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

- 779.Cole Sandlin: But that took, you know, three years probably for me to really get to that point where I felt really comfortable.
- 780.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 781.Cole Sandlin: Um, so it takes time. Don't expect to go into a classroom your first time and think you should have all the answers, 'cause you're not. Nor will you 10 years down the road ...
- 782.Natalie Lett: (Laugh)
- 783.Cole Sandlin: ... you're not going to know the answers.
- 784.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 785.Cole Sandlin: Um, but I would just encourage you not to ever forget why you do it.
- 786.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 787.Cole Sandlin: Um, because there's gonna be times when it's gonna be, like I said, it's gonna be hard. But if you can remember, okay, I'm doing this because I love the kids, it's not about today, it's about 10 years from now.
- 788.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 789.Cole Sandlin: Where are they going to be in 10 years? Where are they going to be in 15 years?
- 790.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 791.Cole Sandlin: And to know that you had a small part in getting them- in being a part of where they're at ...
- 792.Natalie Lett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- 793.Cole Sandlin: Um, it- it's something that you can't really ... can't really even explain.
- 794.Natalie Lett: Yeah.
- 795.Cole Sandlin: I know that sounds really corny.
- 796.Natalie Lett: No that, thinking about it-
- 797.Cole Sandlin: But, like, but getting to sit here with you knowing that I started teaching, you were in seventh grade.
- 798.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

799.Cole Sandlin: And then all through high school. Then I coached you that it was very much, like, getting to see now that you're interviewing me on ... as you're training to be an educator ...

800.Natalie Lett: Yeah.

801.Cole Sandlin: It, you know, it's- it's rewarding. So, it's- there's difficult times but it's always, there's always rewarding times, so.

802.Natalie Lett: Yeah. Well, thank you very much for letting me interview you.

803.Cole Sandlin: Yeah, of course. Any time.

804.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [00:54:51]