

“NEW BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE SERIES”

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Comfort Inn- Deforest, WI

Session: “Prioritization for Principals”

Ground Rules – there are no ground rules, please ask questions at any time. I would like this to be a discussion. Please share your thoughts, ideas, input, and fears. We are here to learn from each other.

1. Protect your personal life
 - a. This job is important, but it is not your entire life.
 - b. Family – friends – hobbies – exercise – other interests (all work makes for a very dull...person. Many things define you; in fact make you what you are. Sharing some of these interests with staff and students allow you to become a real person in their eyes. (Scuba diving-example).
 - c. Balance your schedule – learn to prioritize and especially to “Just Say NO!” To staff – students – parents – community.
 - d. Do not allow yourself to be taken advantage of.
“Leadership is needed for problems that do not have easy answers.”- Michael Fullan
 - e. Delegate!! – How to use your support staff – your secretary!
 - f. Paper work may not cause you to lose job – people skills – temper will
“Single factor to every successful change initiative is-relationships improve.”- Michael Fullan
 - g. Vacation time/take breaks: Let’s talk about vacation time-understand the expectation of your district. Paid out if not used? Expected to be taken during summer? Use anytime, as needed? Pay out unused? Carry days over to next year?

2. Set Goals – focus on goals!
 - a. Review often
“Change can be managed, it can be understood and perhaps led, but it can not be controlled.”- Michael Fullan
 - b. Use goals – what is important to you – then share this! Keeps you on track. What is your platform, do your teachers know this. (Ex.; retakes – ave. grades)
 - c. Use to manage time – Goal to be in each room everyday-then plan for this. (Calendar? Electronic??)

“I have never been fond of distinguishing between management and leadership: they overlap and you need both qualities.”- Michael Fullan

3. Stay away from... There is a time to be honest and ask for more time. Time to research, ask questions of mentor- before you respond and are sorry.
- a. 1000 decisions a day. I would rather think about it, and get back to someone, than be sorry later. It takes a lot more time to be sorry!

“The essence of intelligence would seem to be in knowing when to think and act quickly, and knowing when to think and act slowly.”- Robert Steinberg

- b. Promises you cannot keep – better to be straight up.
- c. Rash, off the cuff, emotional decision. Heat of the moment is a job killer, as far as decisions go. (Discipline – example)
- d. E-mail – blessing/devil’s work. (Mail box example – being out of building) Stay up – stay short with response – be careful – **monitored???** **Yes it is!!** – Public Record! (open record law)
- e. Return ALL calls!!!- Leadership is about developing relationships.
- f. Stay focused on board policy – not a time to get too creative.
- g. Defend staff – **AS LONG AS THE ACT IS DEFENDABLE!** It may not be – then fix it. I tell staff I will defend them if I can do so – but teachers do funky things sometimes. I will never lie or cover a mistake.

“One must focus on people and relationships to achieve sustained results.”- Michael Fullan

- h. Careful with confidentiality – Ex. Parent complained – they want a chunk of that teacher, how did you handle or what did you do to staff person x? What can and do you share?
- i. Prepare what you can be prepared for: Drills – you are watched (Fire Drills- listed in Post-Cresent!!) Programs – events – meetings. Public sees this- not you working at 10:00 p.m. at your desk!
- j. Try to keep meetings focused on learning – many of the items you think are vital can be shared via e-mail or staff notes. Do not waste teacher’s time. Get staff involved in presentations- share as a team one of the best learning activities they have found since the last meeting. (We start out with a comment- what is the best thing going on in your classroom/ life/school?
- k. Praise your staff often. – **NEVER** take credit for something that you can give the credit to someone else
- l. Staff need to be involved.- relationships
- m. Data – is your friend.- but this is another entire presentation!!!
- n. If you do not know – **NEVER** try to fake it. It is rude and demeaning.
- o. Define FAIR? (Is treating everyone the same fair?)

4. Complaint – may be opportunity.
 - a. Rude phone call – you should? Tell office staff to?
 - b. Listen- you learn much from those that do not agree.
 - c. Leverage complaint into an opportunity.
 - d. Honor chain of command! (Discuss this in detail)
 - e. No surprise motto
 - f. Assessments – how often? Communication is vital
 - g. Your evaluation by staff? (Signed?)
 - h. Grievance – know the procedures. Must be specific. Your first question- show me exactly in the contract what I/we violated. Face it- this is headed for an interpretation.

5. Relationship with superintendent/board? With staff. Is this defined, or a work in progress.

6. Keeping New Teachers:

Research consistently supports the importance of your relationship with your staff- especially new teachers. Your Leadership- or lack there of, which includes your ability to develop strong, healthy, and positive working relationships with your staff- is the number one reason teachers leave the profession. Successful teaching depends on strong relationships- with students, colleagues, and administration. Allow teachers to have input and control over key decisions that affect their daily lives. (Decisions made closest to the site of implementation or delivery hold the greatest potential for impact.)

Knadle note: You will be making hundreds of decisions a day- think about how you have developed impressions about administrators that you have worked for...either they jump too quickly and do not put a lot of thought into it, they make up some lame excuse or reason that you want to laugh at and you lose respect, or they say one thing and come back after they thought about it and change their decision.

How do you want to be thought of???? If you do not know, or need some time to think before responding, be honest and tell the person that you will get back to them. * Allow people to have input, be sure that they understand with decisions comes responsibility. I used a building Team to assist me plan staff meetings and to run a variety of topics by. I then ask them to then go back and discuss with their teams. It prevents many surprises at staff meetings and allows the staff to have input on areas I feel they need to have input on.

Remember- if they help make a decision, it is much harder to complain!!!

Behavior management is cited always in the top five reasons for job dissatisfaction and teacher leaving the profession. If teachers do not feel confident in classroom management skills, quality teaching is not going to happen. School leaders must provide the structure and support necessary for teachers to operate effectively in the classroom. Teachers must feel you support them in this area- they look to you to provide leadership. (I am very

clear with staff- do not do something that I can not support- do not put me in that position. I will support and defend you, as long as the act is defensible!)

With new staff- do you think about which students are being placed in the room? Another thought- Do you allow parents to select teachers for their child?

New teachers that have made it a year or two site their second biggest need in the classroom is help in developing further and more effective skills in delivering the curriculum. With new teaching strategies and methods, as well as new curriculum being introduced, veteran teachers need support in this area too.

Provide time for professional collaboration and reflection for your teachers.

Statistically- only 17% of new staff that participated in a full mentoring/induction program with trained mentors left the field of education as compared to 40% of those teachers that had no mentoring opportunity.

Remember- Change is happening. Is it for the better or taking you backward?

1. The goal is not to innovate the most. (This is what has gotten districts in trouble long ago- every new idea or innovation was jumped on! You then are all over the place and getting nowhere fast!)
2. It is not enough to have the best ideas. (What good is the greatest idea if you are not able to get people on board? Communication/ able to share the idea- moral purpose: means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, students, and society in general- critical to long term success of all organizations.)
3. Appreciate the implementation dip. Plan for it, be ready. It takes energy, hope, perseverance to get through this period where people lose momentum.
4. Redefine resistance. (Remember- we learn more from those with differing ideas.)
5. Re-culturing is the name of the game. (Changing the way things are done around here. Getting people to act and think differently.)
6. Change- never a checklist, ALWAYS complexity.
(There is no ONE recipe for change.)

As a school leader, my job is to be a lifelong learner on the topic of student learning, and to be able to share and motivate my teachers to be the same!!!

Questions?

AWSA Center for New Leaders
August 6, 2008

Effective Communication

- People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- Listen more than you talk/never saw a fish mounted on wall with mouth shut/each of us has two ears and one mouth
- Understand your audience.
 - Parents/community/staff news media.
 - Objectives of communications.
 - What are their expectations?
 - Shape message to match expectations.
- How we form opinions.
 - First hand experiences.
 - First hand experiences of someone we trust.
 - Opinions of someone we trust.
 - Experiences with people we respect.
- Principles of communication.
 - Advantage goes to the first one who communicates.
 - Second communicator must present overwhelming evidence.
 - First communicator able to frame discussion.
 - Negative is countered with seven positives.
 - In the absence of information, negative attitudes and behaviors occur.
- Most persuasive communication.
 - One-to-one conversation.
 - Small group discussion.
 - Speaking before large group.
 - Telephone conversation.
 - Hand written note.
 - Computer generated personal letter.
 - Mass produced non-personal letter.
 - Brochure through direct mail.
 - Article in institutional newsletter.
 - News carried by news media.
- Mass media.
 - Does not change opinions.
 - Reinforces existing behaviors and attitudes.
 - Creates awareness.
 - Reminds people.
 - Activates opposition as well as supporters.
- Tips for working with news media.
 - Anticipate questions news media are likely to ask.
 - Related local and national current events.
 - Anniversary of events.

AWSA Center for New Leaders

August 6, 2008

Getting Acquainted: The People, The Place, The Culture (Top Ten List)

10. The school building
9. Fellow administrators
8. Custodians and secretaries
7. Teachers
6. Successes and goals
5. Traditions and special events
4. Morale and climate
3. Parents
2. Students
1. Yourself— leadership style

Kathleen M. Cooke, Ph.D., Superintendent, Hamilton School
District Robert Knadle, Ed.D., Superintendent, Viroqua School District

AWSA Center for New Leaders
Leadership Practices That Pay Off in the Real World
August 6, 2008

- Character is doing what's right when nobody is looking.
 - Live by the highest standards of honesty and integrity.
 - Never violate information shared to you in confidence.
 - When you make a mistake, accept responsibility for your actions.
 - Never hint at a possible reward to sugar coat an unpleasant decision.
- People don't care what you know until they know that you care.
- Eat that frog. (Do the difficult things first.)
 - If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first.
 - If you have to eat a live frog, it doesn't pay to sit and look at it for very long.
- One of the highest callings of leadership is to develop and grow people.
 - Your success as a leader will be dependent on how well your staff performs.
 - The great leader is one who develops personnel to the point that they surpass him or her in knowledge and ability.
 - Encourage to try new things/take risks.
- Through the courage of one the spines of others are stiffened.
 - Be able to say no and take positions on important issues.
 - Look at failure as an opportunity to learn.
 - Embrace conflict openly and head-on.
 - Bear burdens with a positive attitude.
- Optimism is a force multiplier.
 - People who whine and blame engender those same behaviors among others.
 - Ripple effect of leader's enthusiasm and optimism is force multiplier.
- Elephants don't bite — it's the mosquitoes that will get you.
 - Attend to details: return phone calls promptly, acknowledge gestures and kindnesses.
- • Good is the enemy of great.
 - Set high expectations for yourself and others.
 - Lead by example.
 - Insist on high expectations for all children.
- Leaders are charged with recognizing events to leverage change.
- Seek balance.
 - Being on top is lonely.
 - Find support.
 - Utilize your mentors.
 - Opportunities for reflection.

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