

Creating A High Performance Learning Culture

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Good to Great Activity (10 minutes)

- What is the purpose of your campus?
 - Discuss the purpose of your campus with a partner or two. Why does your system exist? Be very specific.
 - Yes, there is a right answer!

Good to Great

- One answer in Texas public schools...
 - To assure student mastery of the required state curriculum as measured by the TAKS
- Hedgehog Concept=Do one thing, do it well!
 - Everything else matters as it contributes to that end

Culture of Trust and Accountability on your Campus Team

- **Scrutiny is king**
 - Team must be allowed to question, challenge, debate, argue, etc. in a professional manner
 - Discretion must be authentic
 - If you know the answer, don't ask

Scrutiny

- Share and learn from each other's mistakes
- If it's your office exclusively, that's not good
 - This can be shocking, but most will learn to value the approach
- Office is an open door, but exit as a unified front

Scrutiny

- All decisions that come from your process of scrutiny and feedback, whether you like it or not, belong to the team...
 - This only works if your process has integrity
 - “Burns says” or “from the Whitehouse” will get you smoked

The Principal

- The principal is the single most important hire a superintendent will make
 - Selecting a right candidate = student success, happy community, high morale, and an ulcerless superintendent
 - Selecting the wrong candidate = unrest, dissatisfaction, general indefinable tension (often known as the time bomb), and lots of sickness/sleepless nights as a superintendent

The Principal

- You are who I love most...
- You are where the accountability rubber meets the road...
- Every director and supervisor are at your beck & call
- I am your evaluator & interested in how you spend your day
 - Lot of questions and scrutiny
 - You will be loved if you perform
 - You will be smoked quickly should you fail to perform
 - Children will not suffer

Principal Chief Responsibility Activity (10 Minutes)

- In one simple sentence, describe your chief responsibility.
- In short, what do you do for a living?

Principals tell Themselves...

- If I just take care of school management and provide structure, 'professionals' will perform
- Discipline is my primary responsibility
- I am just part of the team and an equal partner in the decision-making process, I will rely on the experts
- Teachers make the difference, I am here to support



LIES! Lies! Lies!

Principal's Job

- To elicit desired behaviors in order to create a desired outcome ...
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Other stakeholders

How do you do it? (10 minutes)

- With your partners create a general statement about the most efficient and effective tool(s) you have to elicit desired behaviors.

1 Tool, your only tool

- Carrot and the Stick
 - People respond to pressure and urgency
 - People respond to reward
- Comfort and discomfort are not inherently good or bad
 - Comfort and discomfort are the tools of your profession
 - If you are not using them, you are not doing your job

2 True Paths to Improvement

- Get better teachers
 - “Experience is not the best teacher”
 - “The best teacher is the best teacher”
- Improve the ones you have

Teacher Types Activity (10 Minutes)

- What percent of your teachers are clearly outstanding, irreplaceable?
- What percent of your teachers are good, but replaceable?
- What percent of your teachers are in need of huge intervention or change of address immediately?

Three Types of Teachers

- Superstars-irreplaceable
 - 3%-10% Most likely
 - 8%-10% in outstanding schools
- Backbones-good but replaceable
 - 80%-90%
- Mediocre-non-producers
 - The rest of them
 - Improve now or go

Comfort and discomfort

- Both are inevitable
 - The principal's job is to identify who should be comfortable and who should not be comfortable
- The worst principal is the one that strives for comfort for everyone

The Principal

- There is much attention on places that are most important
 - Leave little errors alone, or don't weigh them heavily
- There is much attention on places where I have concerns
 - Don't wonder about your stead, ask
 - You won't have to

2 keys to your success

- Know who you love (teachers), and they better love you back
 - Rely on those that you value most for input and guidance
 - Those you value most should be fiercely loyal
 - Create a winning team
- Don't wound anybody
 - Heal 'em or show 'em the door
 - Mediocrity will not be tolerated

Direct and Indirect Impactors

- Accountability teams (10 minutes)...
 - Identify two indirect impactors
 - Identify two direct impactors
- Which makes the most profound difference in student performance?
Why?

Indirect versus Direct

- Tie

- We must have outstanding curriculum, instructional methodologies, resources, and a specific map of how we will be successful
- Relevance, Rigor, Relationship must be the foundation on which our direct impactors rest...
 - “All you need is love...”
 - Not quite, but it is a damn fine start

Who do we serve?

- This is where we fail!
 - We often sell out to our peers, our school board, to teachers, to parent, and others.
 - Our only focus must be the service of children. Everyone else is a far, far second.
 - In most schools, children are last. It is a popular and very easy position to take. Blaming students and parents for lack of success lets us, teachers and administrators, off of the hook.
 - Such approach is anti-accountability.

Campus Principal is the Key!

- A campus principal...
 - Makes mediocre teachers backbones or makes backbone teachers mediocre
 - Is the primary influencer of school culture
 - Is responsible for the success or failure of a campus. Your campus is great because of you, or it is bad because of you!

Role of a Principal

- High on the list, arguably #1, is making people do stuff.
 - Inspire them
 - Listen to them
 - Lead them
 - Facilitate them
 - Force them
 - Scare them
 - Motivate them, whatever
- You are paid to elicit certain behaviors from employees and students. That is basically all.

Think Small!

- How do you eat an elephant?
 - One bite at a time.
 - School performance can only be improved with...
 - very narrow focus
 - clear direction and monitoring
 - never wait and see, never think you are on the right path

Ambiguity

- Ambiguity allows for hiding.
- Large, broad, non-specific goals allow for hiding.
- Specific goals and focus on individual tasks=accountability .

Think Small!

- Reach 2 or 3 specific goals on your campus and make tremendous impact.
- Improve the 2 or 3 worst performing teachers on your campus and make a tremendous impact.
- Think much larger than this and you will fail. You will fail this year and you will fail as an administrator.

Accountability Partners

- 2-3 campus or program goals...
- 2-3 employees, preferably TINA's, in need of remediation
 - 2 hours per month with a partner regarding the goals
 - Formal report to the superintendent on a monthly basis

Accountability...

- It is all that matters!
 - Clarity/communication of expectations
 - “I didn’t know”
 - “What about _____”
 - “This isn’t fair”
 - Measures to assure progress
 - Means, as well as urgency
 - Remediation and opportunities for success, as well as consequences for failure
 - Clarity/communication of expectations

Documentation

- Purpose...
 - Communicate expectation
 - Set timelines for changing a behavior
 - Outlines consequences
 - Prepare for adverse contract action
 - Create discomfort
 - Most important for many employees

Types of documentation

- Qualitative

- Serious event, could be just one time--1st mistake.
 - Cursing, kicking, gross insubordination, etc.

- Quantitative

- Multiple small errors
 - Tardiness, missing meetings, minor insubordination, etc.

Still, but when...

- In small groups, discuss when it is appropriate to create documentation, adverse or otherwise (10 minutes or less).
 - Subjective in nature.
 - I have never regretted creating documentation
 - I have often regretted my failure to do so
 - When in doubt, document
 - When you are confident you don't need to, document

What do you write?

- **Specific concerns**
 - What you don't/didn't like and what has to change
 - Your job is to make value statements
 - **Details, details, details**
 - Be exact as possible. Time. Wordage. Who said what. Names when possible.
 - **Directives**
 - What is to happen and what is not to happen

What do you write?

- Timeline and follow through
 - What happens next? Monitoring? For how long?
- Consequences for noncompliance
- General statement of possible consequences already earned

Post Conference Documentation

- Investigate before you start writing
 - Conferences with very careful note taking
 - Begin general and let the employee tell the story. Add specificity strategically
 - More times than not they tell all
 - Understand everything possible before you start writing or take a position, even before you send them home!

Mistakes, bad ones...

- Don't pile it on. Deal with one issue at a time when possible. If necessary, create multiple documents at one time.
- Be timely and be specific.
- Be calm and don't escalate.

Floor Documentation

- Always fair
- Can point out individual or institutional deficiency
- Creates an expectation and clear direction
- The floor is the place from which progress is measured

Communication is the KEY

- Vast majority of adverse action I have taken is a result of poor communication
 - Not related to competence or skill
- Communication is the foundation of remediation and adverse action
 - Creates appropriate and defensible history
 - Clarity and opportunity for improvement

Strong Communication

- Written and verbal
 - Tools of communication in your arsenal
 - Both often misused

Verbal

- Less Formal
- Used when comprehension and compliance is a likelihood or when institutional memory is not required
- Dangerous
 - Opportunities for misinterpretation or manipulation
- Rapport between participants are requisite
- Good way to praise a non performer that got lucky

Written

- Formal
- Used when comprehension or compliance is in doubt or when institutional memory is important
 - Provides clarity/opportunity for remediation or foundation for movement (generally adverse)
- Well constructed written documentation is most safe

Common Mistakes Overall

- Be nice!
- Be courteous!
- Be professional!

Common Mistakes-Written

- Failure to do it
 - Over reliance on informal or verbal 1st, then over reaction
- Failure to assure employee acknowledgement/understanding
- Imperfect in grammar/style
- We must combat desire to be liked versus desire to be respected and to do our job

Common Mistakes-Verbal

- Over reliance and liberal usage
 - Be aware of reward and risk (again, rapport & likeability)
- Terseness, sarcasm, and anger
 - A quick response is often ill-advised and off-target

Common to both Verbal and Written

- Focus on behavior, offer direction, and consequences
 - Never on person and rarely on personal attributes
- Be fair and consistent, never arbitrary
 - There should be a reason for your decision
- Be prepared to be lonesome

General Advice

- Customer Service-Don't Win, sometimes losing is the best thing you can do
 - Don't have a need to be smarter, help a parent make a case
- Validate, validate, validate
- Loyalty is important, if it is appropriately directed
 - Must know your hedgehog concept, Jim Collins *Good to Great*

Future of Accountability (10 Minutes)...

- Identify the student group most positively impacted by status quo accountability...
- Identify the group that is most negatively impacted by status quo accountability...
- Can a school where most students performance plummets meet the exemplary marker in the status quo...
- Implications of this phenomenon K-12

Value Added Accountability

- 2100 is now the be all, end all
- Student growth over time, a year or longer, will be the ultimate measure of success
- Accountability for the growth of all students is very, very good medicine

Value Added Accountability

- Best chance of truly no child left behind
- Status quo = scrambling and attacking kids on the bubble
 - Exhausting, inefficient, and ultimately ineffective
- Elementary school success will be totally redefined
 - Some SQ high performing schools will be low performers
 - Some SQ low performers will become cream of the crop

Value Added Accountability

- How to prepare...
 - Learning has to be about meeting the needs of each individual student, period
 - Teaching has to be measured by outcomes, not by inputs
 - The bar can and will be met, but there must be big changes!

Value Added Accountability

- Should call for examination of two primary influencers of poor student performance
 - Instructional
 - Psycho Social

Transparency

- One of the most important words in leadership
- Stakeholder guessing is a bad thing
- Appropriate directness and honesty is a bad thing
- The more serious, the less casual your approach should be

Conclusion and Q & A

- You are the difference! Your school will be excellent, average, or low performing based on your performance. Make it happen.

Documentation Exercise

- Joan shows up late for work everyday. She is an outstanding science teacher, and the department head. When you broach it with her, she reminds you that she has first period off and that she has to get her kids to day care. She says she'll try to do better...
- Interview starts now...

Documentation Exercise...

- Alex is an excellent history teacher at the 9th grade level. His evaluations are excellent and he is never trouble. A student reports to you that Alex told his 6th period class that he smoked dope in college and that he wish he hadn't, but most people do. You already have parent calls, and they are fuming...
- Interview starts now...