

Data-Driven Discussions

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

My leadership capacity is very important to me as the an educator. One reason why the IPLI program has been important to me is because it has allowed me to acquire constructive feedback from my teachers about my leadership capabilities.

My staff was very generous in their assessment of my work with them over the past four years and I can say that I have learned a great amount from them. One particular conversation that I felt I was not having on a consistent level revolved around our school wide data. This was confirmed when analyzing survey results from my staff. We have many tools at our disposal to analyze school data, but I always felt that I was not a part of the conversation. My dilemma was to become more involved in those discussions and to become someone that teachers felt comfortable coming to when student data was being discussed.

Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to begin to increase my leadership capacity by leading data-driven discussions that teachers felt were meaningful and purposeful for them in the classroom.

Statement of Your Wondering:

How do I begin leading data-driven discussions that are important and meaningful to the staff?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wondering, I started to reflect on all of the data that we currently use and how that information is disseminated to teachers. I also thought about all of the different ways that I communicate with teachers, whether daily, weekly or monthly. It was also important to make sure data was in an easy to use format so that they can utilize the information immediately in their classrooms.

Our teachers are using Google Classroom to push content and information out to students, so I started by using a format that teachers were comfortable with in Google Classroom. Teachers joined a Google Classroom where data was shared and able to be accessed. A weekly email that was sent out with much of the weekly agenda highlighted certain data points. Articles were able to be shared and discussed through this process as well. We were also to begin having more discussions about our school wide data during PLC's through this sharing format. Four months of data discussions occurred through various communication tools, meetings and professional development.

I finished my data collection with a survey that I titled "The Principal's Report Card" which was an idea that I acquired through the IPLI program and the book "The Ten-Minute Inservice." The "Report Card" allowed teachers to give me feedback on my leadership capacity and utilized many of the same questions from the survey they took before starting the IPLI program.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data two important things that learned include:

Learning Statement 1

1. The increase in the overall mean from the Spring of 2016 to the Fall of 2017 suggests that teachers feel that data discussions are becoming useful and purposeful.

The mean score in survey results from the Spring of 2016 to Fall of 2017 show an increase of 0.78 on the question regarding collecting and analyzing data that is pertinent to the educational environment. 10 of 14 teachers surveyed also said that these data driven discussions are useful and proper use of time.

Learning Statement 2

2. The focus on communication tools that we were already using, is another reason I believe the overall mean rose significantly.

Survey results also showed favorable results with a mean score of 4.38/5 through the use of Google Classroom as a data sharing tool. Teachers also communicated positive results in weekly emails and PLC discussions as it pertains to data-driven discussions.

The following quotes come directly from teachers:

“Instead of giving us the data and telling us, as teachers, to figure it out, Mr. Brooks’ leadership style is to provide us with thought-provoking initiatives and insights based off the data. We in turn, take this data back to our classroom and base our daily instruction off of it, all while Mr. Brooks provides support should questions arise.” 8th Grade Teacher

“Mr. Brooks utilizes our time wisely while helping me understand what I can do to better support students in my classroom. The Google Classroom Data Sharing Page has helped me tremendously with my low achieving students.” 7th Grade Teacher

“I have had many useful discussions with Mr. Brooks this year. He has the ability to communicate strengths and weaknesses in our data which has purpose.” 6th Grade Teacher

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

Reflecting on this process has helped me tremendously as an educator. I have been able to get feedback from my staff to help myself grow as an administrator. They have been very honest, professional and compassionate in helping me learn. The "Principal's Report Card" is a tool that I will continue to use as I continue with my career. I appreciated the feedback I received and will use it only to help myself become a better educator.

I am pleased with being able to utilize the communication tools that teachers are accustomed to and finding ways to disseminate information that purposeful. I was able to learn much more about my school and my abilities through this research project as well.

Finally, I will continue to be mindful of the time that teachers put in on a daily basis. The emphasis on purposeful and meaningful discussions was important to me and results showed teachers appreciated this.

References:

Whitaker, T., & Breaux, A. L. (2013). The ten-minute inservice: 40 quick training sessions that build teacher effectiveness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.