

Do You Have a Minute?

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

After my oldest child began high school and my youngest was born, I came to the realization that time goes by way too fast. After six years as an administrator, I have realized that I missed out on some of my daughter's experiences because of work. I need to find a balance between work and home.

In our corporation we have professional development at least three times a week. Preparing for this PD consumes a lot of my time after school hours. My goal is to develop professional development teams in the areas of literacy, math and PBIS. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to free up my time after school and build leadership capacity within my building.

Statement of Your Wondering:

Will the creation of professional development teams free up time to accomplish work during the school day that is currently being done after school hours? Will I be able to have a better work/home balance?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insight into my wondering, I developed professional development teams in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and PRIDE. All staff members were placed on a team and these teams were responsible for developing PD on a rotating schedule. I then started tracking the time I was leaving school. I simply kept a calendar at my desk and wrote down the time I left the building for the evening. I collected data prior to the implementation of the PD teams from October to December. Then after they were implemented from January to March.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data three important things I learned include: 1) I spent a lot of time after school preparing for the next day. 2) Implementing PD teams took a lot of time. 3) Dispersed leadership created more time for me and improved my PD sessions.

1) I spent a lot of time preparing for the next day.

In our corporation we have 45 minutes embedded daily for professional development. As a principal I am in charge of three of these days for PD. As I tracked my data I discovered that I was spending up to three hours a day planning for the next days PD session. Between the months of October and December my average time leaving school was 6:00.

2) Implementing PD teams took a lot of time.

After I developed my PD teams (November-December) my average time leaving school was 6:30. I found that I needed to work with my teams to develop my focus and to ensure the PD met the goals of our school. With three different teams we had several late evening making plans for our PD sessions.

3) Dispersed leadership created more time for me and improved my PD sessions.

Once my leadership teams began leading our PD sessions I found that I was able to leave school on an average by 5:00 each evening. Not only did this allow more time at home with my family it also improved our leadership within the building. I also noticed staff participating more in our sessions and the material presented became more relevant to teachers. There appeared to be an increase in "buy in".

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

As I reflect on my research, I have realized the importance of a home/work balance. I feel that the adjustments to my schedule and responsibilities have allowed me to become a better administrator as well as a better mother and wife. At times throughout this project, I wasn't sure I was doing either job to the best of my ability. After taking the time to slow down and look at my problem I feel I have improved on my roles as a Principal, Mother and Wife.

As an administrator, I believe the implementation of PD teams had a positive impact on my staff as well as on me as the building leader. This is a practice that I plan on keeping for the upcoming year. I believe the development of these teams earlier in the year will allow a stronger focus on our needs as well as create a sense of ownership within the building.

On a personal level, I believe I will continue to track my time. Tracking my time helps me step back and reflect on my time. I believe it helps me to keep a balance and reminds me when I need to step up my time as a mom. I believe that as teachers, we spend a lot of our time with our "school kids" and put our own to the side. Being able to reference my time can help me keep things in "check" with my family so I can make sure they are getting my time as well. This will also be helpful because as I found out even though my time creating PD was decreased, I was quick to find something else to fill that extra time.

References: