

# Welcome to the FAMILY!

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LEBANON MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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# Background – What led us to this wondering?

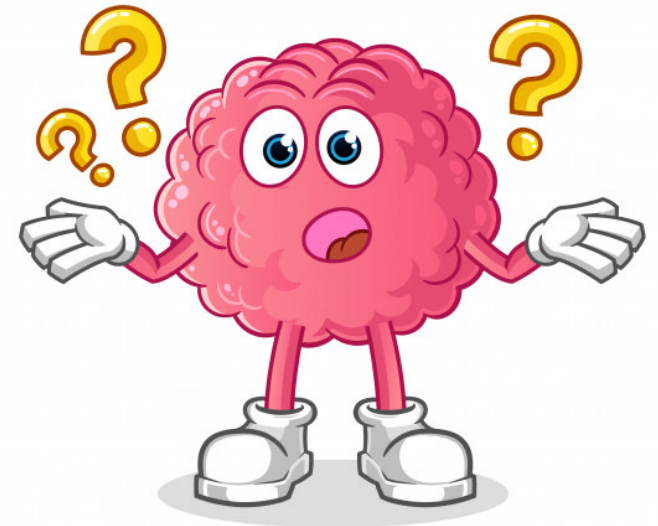
- ▶ Our school district experienced the highest turnover in teachers in over 2 decades?
- ▶ Covid has made connecting with others difficult.
- ▶ Connections with students begins with a staff that has a culture of connectivity.

# PURPOSE--

Lebanon Middle School rarely has turnover in staff, but this year we had 11 new teachers (approximately 20% of our teaching staff). Our project centered around monitoring growth and success of our first year teachers by infusing them into the LMS family. We also worked with them to make that connected feeling part of their classroom culture.

# WONDERING

Will the modeling of culture building activities during faculty meetings make teachers feel more connected and help them foster a connected classroom?





# Action Research

- ▶ Discussions began with teacher leaders about what new teachers would need in the way of support to become connected.
- ▶ Faculty meeting activities to engage veteran staff and new teachers.
- ▶ Timeframe for future faculty meeting activities established.
- ▶ Round table discussion with new teachers on their pre and post activity perceptions.
- ▶ Data collected
- ▶ Next steps/future thinking steps created

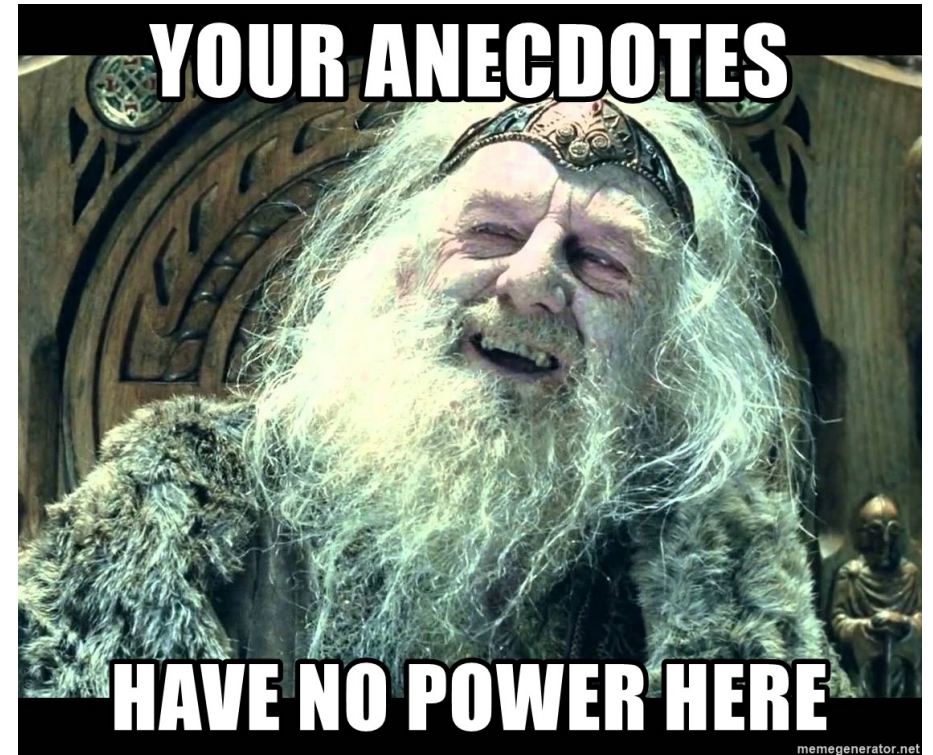






# Findings: Anecdotal Data

- ▶ New teacher comments emphasized the power of the connections they created during activities.
- ▶ Connections with students were a priority.
- ▶ New teacher who started late was brought in, but it felt different than those who had been in from the beginning.





# Moving Forward

- ▶ Formalize the mentorship and roles.
- ▶ Continue fostering current mentor relationships.
- ▶ Expand the culture building activities and have new teachers be part of the leadership.
- ▶ Check with students on the connections to LMS and the role of the teacher.



## Welcome to the Family!

**Principal Name:** Doyle Dunshee

**School Name:** Lebanon Middle School

**Team Members' Names:** Leah Cavanagh and Kathy Dunshee

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### **Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)**

Three factors played into the creating of our Wondering.

- LMS had the highest turnover due to retirements that we have experienced in 2 decades.
- COVID has made connecting with others... both staff and students, more difficult.
- Staff has emphasized connections with students as a priority.

### **The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)**

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to monitor growth of our new teachers. This growth would be represented in their connections to each other and to students.

### **Our Wondering (Slide 4)**

With this purpose, we wondered will the modeling of culture building activities during faculty meetings make teachers feel more connected and help them foster a connected classroom?

### **Our Actions (Slide 5)**

Our actions were set to coincide with our teacher PD days and faculty meetings. Discussions with teacher leaders were held before the school year to plan activities to engage our new teachers in our faculty activities. Each PD day had a specific activity that promoted connections among veteran staff and new teachers. Each faculty meeting also had some form of connections activity. We then set out a timeframe to meet with new teachers throughout the first semester and monitor their needs and help them feel supported in taking these team building activities to their seminar class (homeroom on steroids). We continued this process into the second semester and had a final meeting to discuss how the year had progressed and noted their "take-aways, struggles and a-ha's". We collected these anecdotal comments and combined them into word graphics that showed the common threads expressed by the new staff. Our teacher leader group then met with administration to refine our next steps for following years and how to continue to support this staff in year 2.

### **Data Collection (Slide 5)**

We collected data during debriefing sessions following PD days. All data collected was qualitative and centered around feelings and perceptions of our new teachers.

### **Our Data (Slides 6-7)**

The qualitative data showed the following strong teacher perceptions:

- Supported
- Welcomed
- Engaged
- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- Encouragement

They were glad they didn't experience:

- Being isolated on an island on their own

Outgrowths from the experiences:

- Relationships formed creating spaces for veteran staff to serve as mentors
- Connections with staff created an atmosphere that fostered connections with students

### **Our Discoveries (Slide 8)**

- New teacher comments emphasized the power of the connections they created during activities.
- Teachers felt emerged in the school culture.
  - As an entire staff, connections with students was a priority.
  - New teachers had no difficulty buying into this and created connections with students just as they were connected with staff.
- One new teacher who started later in the semester expressed the difficulty in creating this atmosphere on her own after missing the activities her peers had been engaged in.
  - We saw first-hand the need to be intentional with every staff member to get them engaged with their peers immediately... regardless of when they join the staff.

### **Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 9)**

Moving forward, we see the need to work in the following areas:

- Formalize the mentorship and roles.
  - While this was organic and effective, there were still some times when a formal process would have expedited the growth of the new staff.



- This will allow us to continue the mentoring in a more formal way for year 2. Staff often feel they are drinking out of the fire hose year 1 and can better see the big picture in year 2.
- Expand the culture building activities.
  - Bring on more teacher leaders to lead/create/discuss activities at PD and faculty meetings to foster those connections to staff.
  - Find more creative ways to connect to students as well.
- Check with students to see if they feel connected.
  - The culture of the school lives within the students. There is a need to foster a connected community of students along with the connections among staff. Student/staff connections is the main goal of the Seminar class.