

Filling Your Team's Buckets

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

Lakeview Middle School is a very close group of teachers. Time and time again, you will hear them refer to our school as a family. One thing I have realized during my time at Lakeview is that everybody is cheerleader for everyone! I am not a touchy-feely person so I struggle with be "cheerleader" for my teachers. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to be a more intentional cheerleader for my teachers and staff.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered how could I go about "cheering" for my teachers and staff. I had originally planned to do things like birthday shout outs--family-type things. But then I remembered what a colleague of mine once said, "Schools should be teams--working toward the same thing. Schools should not be families--some families are dysfunctional." So, I changed my wondering to how could I cheer for my teachers that are going above and beyond for our TEAM?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wondering, I decided to give handwritten thank you notes to teachers and staff that went above and beyond the expected. This would be tracked for four weeks. My original plan was to do this on Friday. After two weeks, I realized that it wasn't on my calendar so it was slipping by. I revised my plan, put it on my calendar as a recurring event on Friday.

For the next two weeks, on Friday at 3:00 p.m., I wrote our 2-5 cards to place in mailboxes or sent e-mails. As I did these, I compiled a list of those that received the cards and e-mails and the reason why.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned that by writing notes about positive things that my teachers and staff were doing made me more positive. It helped me to see more of the good. This in turn helped me pinpoint those things that teachers and staff were doing to celebrate.

Below are the goals and actual results for cards/e-mails to teachers and staff:

- Goal for 4 weeks: 20 cards/e-mails
- Actual for 4 weeks: 34 cards/e-mails
- Teachers: 25 cards/e-mails
- Staff Members: 9 cards/e-mails

As I went through the process, I learned that celebrating my staff helped me feel more positive. This was evident in my data when I realized that 13 of the 34 cards/e-mails were during the last week. This project helped me see all the great things that teachers and staff are doing--things that I previously had a hard time seeing because I was so entrenched in the day-to-day minutiae of a building. By doing this on Friday, I left for the weekend with a very positive mindset.

In the the future, I must be intentional about recognizing the positive things my teachers are doing. To do this, it must be on my calendar. When it was not on my calendar, I let it slip. I also need to work to find something positive about EVERY staff member.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

As I worked through the AR Project, I learned that by focusing on the positive it put me into a more positive mindset. I have learned that it is important to recognize the hard work of our teachers and staff and that a simple note goes a long way. Teachers were very thankful when they received one of these notes.

One big take away for me was the concept of being intentional. I stated earlier that I am not a touchy-feely person. I am not one that is swinging from the rafters, shouting out all the good things that my teachers are doing. I need to work to be better at this and this project gave me a simple way to do just that.

A change for the future would be to include students. I need to spend time letting students know that I recognize the good things they are doing. Just like my teachers and staff, I know they will appreciate it. It will also encourage them to continue to do these good things.

References:

N/A