

## **The Through Line**

Understanding the Impact of District Administration on Teaching and Learning

**Principal Name:** Javier Jimenez

**School Name:** South Bend Community School Corporation

Part 1a. Presentation of Inquiry work.

Written analysis. Please respond to all the questions below.

1. What was the specific principal area of focus and theory of action for the inquiry cycle?
  - The main area of focus was engaging his third-grade teachers in an instruction/feedback cycle effectively and using available resources to help himself and his third-grade team understand the need for students to express their thinking aloud
  - The principal having conversations with teachers but perhaps not at the level that they should be or with no specific actionable steps
  - The principal will be participating in PLCs, visiting classrooms during math instructional times, and being an active participant in the assessment of student work in order to improve teaching and learning

### **Theory of Action**

**If the principal supervisor...** models what having conversations with teachers regarding teaching and learning data/cycles and providing formative feedback to teachers looks like, and learns about resources available to support the principal

**If the principal ...** focuses on engaging his third-grade teachers in an instruction/feedback cycle effectively and using available resources to help himself and his third-grade team understand the need for students to express their thinking aloud

**then teachers will be able to ...**will provide students opportunities to share their thinking with one another and with the whole so they can justify the strategy used and their responses

**so that students will be able to ...** increase their confidence, stamina and use of strategies in math as they think aloud while solving multi-step problems and justify their responses

2. What were the specific learning activities the principal engaged in with the supervisor?
  - Calibrated around my practice of giving specific written feedback.
  - Explored a feedback process and helped Bill develop a system to give feedback to teachers and asking for the teachers to respond
  - Unpacked specific feedback given to Bill
  - Participated in a cycle of feedback with Bill and his third-grade team

- At the close of each 1:1 session, the principal supervisor and principal noted evidence of principal progress in this area

3. To what extent did student learning improve in the identified area of need? What is the evidence?

- Students started to share their thinking and process for solving multi-step problems with other student, the teacher, and the class verbally
- Students started using more of the air time during work and problem-solving times
- Talk posters were placed on the wall, defining mathematical terminology and providing concrete models

4. To what extent did teaching practice improve in the identified area of focus? What is the evidence?

- Teachers were doing most of the talking and providing little opportunities for students to think aloud and share their thoughts with others students and or the teacher
- Teachers have started to intentionally provide students opportunities to share their thinking with one another and with the whole
- Pre-Post Test like data collection during observations shows that teacher talk time was reduced and student talk time has greatly increased during work and problem-solving time.
- Teachers were spending on average 80% of the time providing instruction or allowing students to work independently
- Teachers are now spending 30% of the time providing instruction. This is allowing for students to have significantly more time to collaborate with others. Routines and procedures are being developed and adjusted

5. To what extent did the principal's practice improve in the identified area of focus? What is the evidence?

- Bill was having conversations with teacher but perhaps not at the level that they should be or with no specific actionable steps
- The principal started actively participating in PLCs, visiting classrooms during math instructional times, and being an active participant in the assessment of student work in order to improve teaching and learning
- Notes from PLC meetings reflect Bill participation in these conversations
- Calendar reflects observations in third grade math
- Observation of feedback cycle with third grade team by the principal supervisor

6. What promising leadership practices emerged that the principal should continue? What practices should be under consideration for elimination or minimizing?

Promising Practices

- We learned that if the principal focuses on a grade level team and an even smaller number of students for data collection purposes, then the likelihood of success for teachers' practice and student learning increases.
- Principals attendance and engagement in professional learning sessions as well as professional learning communities and an understanding of the coaching sessions are essential in order to provide feedback to teachers during their learning cycles
- Continually working on the communication and modeling of the school's vision for instruction is critical to help move teacher practice.
- Intentionally scheduling and planning feedback conversations
- We learned that the use of protocols and targeted agendas allow for more effective use of precious time with teachers
- Practices to eliminate
- Trying to change teacher practice for all teachers is not the most effective way to improve instruction.
- Not working closely with PLC's or even Teacher Leaders as they plan and lead their PLCs
- Not linking feedback to a vision of a high effective classroom or professional learning
- Not having agenda with a specific outcome for meetings or learning sessions

7. What ideas have arisen for future leadership cycles of inquiry?

- We are planning to have each grade level team engage in an inquiry process on their own with support from the principal.
- Bill will meet regularly with his Teacher Leadership Team to keep a pulse on each team's cycle and adjust as needed
- Additionally, each team will share their learning journey this year at an all staff meeting

8. What is a focus question that intrigued you during this cycle that the principal supervisor and/or colleagues can provide feedback on?

- How can we change the language of the cycle to not provide teachers and principals with such deficit mindset?

9. To what extent did the principal supervisor's support impact the outcome of this cycle on principal practice, teaching practice and student learning?

- Mr. Jimenez is a great thought partner. He was able to ask probing questions that helped me clarify my thinking. He has helped me understand my strengths and think through needed next steps in my growth as a leader. He has also suggested new strategies for approaching sometimes difficult conversations with my faculty and staff.

Part 2. Questions for reflection and analysis of your progress on your CCSSO goal and your CEL Time Tracker goal.

1. What practices allowed you to meet your goal(s)?

- Detailed Agendas (with all components of meetings)
  - Coaching sessions with other principal supervisors
  - Teaching and Learning Cycle/Inquiry Cycle
2. What practices do you want to continue?
    - Detailed agendas
    - Feedback sessions with principals
  3. How will you hold yourself accountable to continue to make progress on your goals?
    - Report to my supervisor
    - Collaboration with the other principal supervisors in the district
  4. What additional reflections do you have about your progress and your impact?
    - This process was very beneficial
    - Intentional Purpose
    - Decreased distractions
    - Co-constructing learning activities with principals
    - Increased my expertise in different areas of instructional leadership
    - “Coaching conversations v Managerial”
    - Collegiality to the profession

#### Books

Center for Educational Leadership (2017). *Supporting Instructional Leadership Through Inquiry: Resources to Support Principals as Instructional Leaders*. University of Washington

#### Presentation

Jimenez, J. (2022). The Trough Line. Presented at the annual Indiana Principal Leadership Institute Showcase of Schools, Indianapolis, IN.

#### Publication

Jimenez, J. (2022). The Through Line: Understanding the Impact of District Administration on Teaching and Learning .



# The Through Line

**Understanding the Impact of District  
Administrators on Teaching and Learning**

# Background

## AASA National Principal Supervisor Academy



CENTER *for*



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON • COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



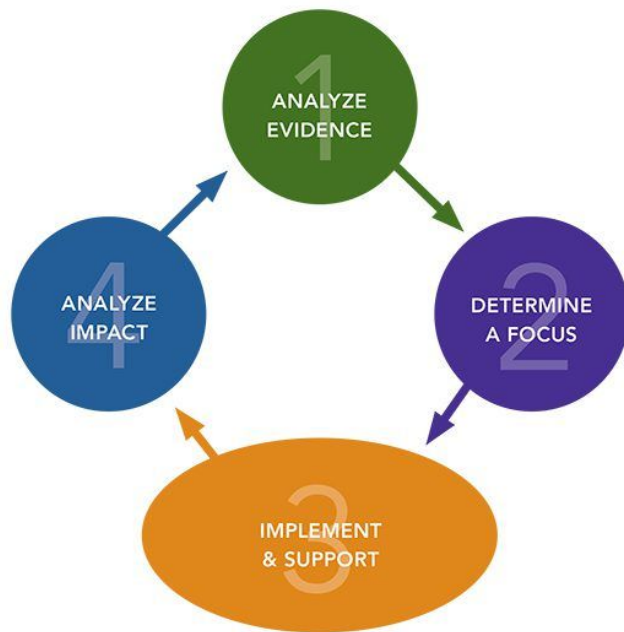
# Purpose

What is my impact on...

- Principals' Instructional Leadership
- Teachers Practice
- Student Learning



# How can I impact teaching and learning by focusing on a principal's practice?



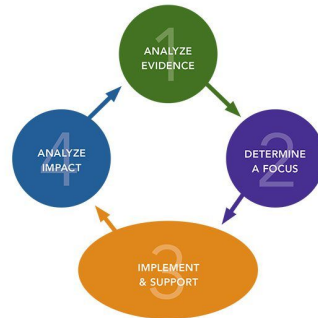
## Wondering





Together with the principal we started an inquiry cycle in order to identify:

- A student problem of learning
- A teacher problem of practice
- Principal leadership problem
- Principal supervisor support



## Actions

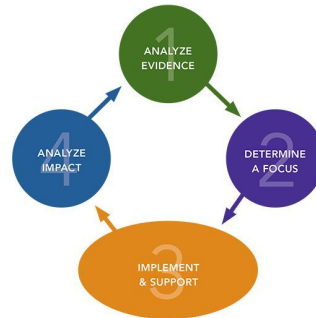


# Student Problem of Learning

- Quantitative Data
  - NWEA
  - Unit Assessments
  - ILearn (previous)
- Qualitative Data
  - Classroom Visits
  - Student Observation
  - Student Interviews

## Focus Area

Conceptual Understanding  
of math concepts



# Data

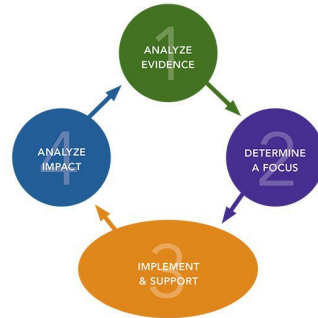


# Focus Area

Conceptual Understanding  
of math concepts

## What we found out

Students are not afforded enough  
opportunities to express their thinking  
aloud with other students and/or the  
teacher



# Data



- If the principal supervisor... models what having conversations with teachers regarding teaching and learning data/cycles and providing formative feedback to teachers looks like, and learns about resources available to support the principal
- If the principal ... focuses on engaging his third-grade teachers in an instruction/feedback cycle effectively and using available resources to help himself and his third-grade team understand the need for students to express their thinking aloud
- then teachers will be able to ...will provide students opportunities to share their thinking with one another and with the whole so they can justify the strategy used and their responses
- so that students will be able to ... so students will be able to increase their confidence, stamina and use of strategies in math as they think aloud while solving multi-step problems and justify their responses

# Theory of Action



# Our Work

## During our Meetings...

- **I model**
  - having conversations with teachers regarding teaching and learning data/cycles
  - providing formative feedback to teachers looks like
- **The principal**
  - focuses on engaging his third-grade teachers in an instruction/feedback cycle effectively and using available resources to help himself and his third-grade team understand the need for students to express their thinking aloud



# Our Findings

## Teaching Practice Changes

- Teachers have started to intentionally provide students opportunities to share their thinking with one another and with the whole
- Pre-Post Test like data collection during observations shows that teacher talk time was reduced and student talk time has greatly increased during work and problem-solving time.
- Teachers were spending on average 80% of the time providing instruction or allowing students to work independently
- Teachers are now spending 30% of the time providing instruction. This is allowing for students to have significantly more time to collaborate with others. Routines and procedures are being developed and adjusted



# Our Findings

## Student Learning

- Students started to share their thinking and process for solving multi-step problems with other student, the teacher, and the class verbally
- Students started using more of the “air time” during work and problem-solving times



# Next Steps

- We are planning to have each grade level team engage in an inquiry process on their own with support from the principal.
- The principal will meet regularly with his Teacher Leadership Team to keep a pulse on each team's cycle and adjust as needed
- Additionally, each team will share their learning journey this year at an all staff meeting





# Resources

Center for Educational Leadership (2017). Supporting Instructional Leadership Through Inquiry: Resources to Support Principals as Instructional Leaders. University of Washington

Hirsh, S. and Crow, T. (2018). Becoming a Learning Team: A guide to teacher-led cycle of continuous improvement. Learning Forward

