Got time? Making Time to get into Classrooms

Name of School: Pettit Park Elementary

Principal's Name: Kelly Wright
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Background Leading to this Inquiry

- The importance of being visible in classrooms:
    - "visiting classrooms and getting involved in teaching and learning has a far greater influence than almost any other responsibility." (The Coach Approach to School Leadership, pg 31)
    - "highly effective principals understand their importance as role models." (What Great Princpals do Differently, pg 44)

- Despite my understanding of the importance of getting in classrooms and my desire to do so, I was finding myself getting trapped in my office more and more. Days and weeks were going by without me being a consistent presence in the classrooms and I was feeling more and more disconnected to certain grades/classes.

- I became aware that there were a few classrooms I spent a lot of time in, usually for support, but I was neglecting the rest of the building.

Purpose of This Inquiry

- My purpose was to examine what impact consistent increased presence in the classroom could have on my overall leadership and school culture.

My Wondering

- I wonder how can I be more intentional about designating time to be in the classrooms.

- I wonder how my being in classrooms more might affect overall culture, and ultimately student learning.

My Actions

Baseline Data

Outlook Calendar

Morning Walks

Planning Time

Feedback tool

PD & Support Changes

Reflection

My Actions

Baseline Data

Outlook Calendar

1st— I looked at baseline data of time spent in classroom with non-formal walk-throughs.

2nd—I made some changes to my Outlook Calendar in order to color code time spent in classrooms. I also starting filling in outlook more to see where my time was going.
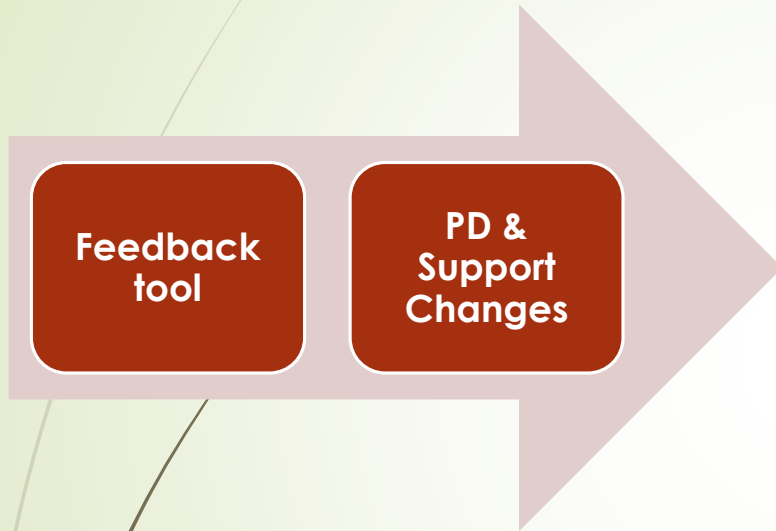
My Actions

Morning Walks

Planning Time

3rd-Set routine of visiting every classroom, every morning for a quick check-in.

4th—Outlook for record and for planning.

My Actions

Feedback tool

PD & Support Changes

5th- Changes to feedback form. This allowed me to give more focused feedback to teachers.

6th- As a result of getting in rooms more often, I was able to gear our weekly PD more to the needs of teachers. This led to a handful of differentiated PD sessions where teachers had voice and choice in their PD.

My Actions

Reflection

Throughout the AR project, it was important to take time to reflect on what was working or not. I tried to reflect at the end of each week on how much time was spent in the week and at the start of each week on a plan.

Data Collection

- Survey Data
- Outlook Calendar
- Number of Walk-through

My Data-Survey

- End of year IDOE teacher survey showed 0% of my teachers felt they received feedback "frequently" or "almost always." 57% felt they received feedback "sometimes." 36% reported only receiving feedback "once in a while."

- In a December 2018 Survey asking teachers about feedback:

  - 90% of teachers reported wanting written feedback on observed areas of strength or areas of needed growth. Others noted wanting a mix of face-to-face and written.

  - 75% of teachers reported wanting feedback on instruction a minimum of every couple weeks.

My Data-Outlook

Pink = Time in Classrooms

My Data-Number of Walkthroughs

Non-Evaluative Walk-throughs

Line graph showing Non-Evaluative Walk-throughs by month:
- September: 0
- October: 8
- November: 7
- December: 6
- January: 13
- February: 23
- March: 25

Legend: Non-Evaluative Walk-throughs

My Discoveries

- **Learning Statement One:** Scheduling time for classroom visits allows them to happen more frequently.

- **Learning Statement Two:** Increased presence in the classroom allows me to be more aware of what is happening in the school.

- **Learning Statement Three:** By being more aware of what is happening in classrooms, I am able to better support teachers and students.

Scheduling time for classroom visits allows them to happen more frequently.

- By blocking out 20-30 minutes right after arrival time (see outlook data sample), I'm able to make sure I see each teacher and classroom of kids each day. Now that this is more routine, sometime I now get invites to comeback at certain time to catch some awesome learning experience. This also gives me time to check-in with some of our students who need that little extra attention throughout the day.

- I found that trying to block out the majority of a whole day just didn't work, but block out smaller sections throughout the week to total the time of at least one full day, works much better. This is shown in the time blocks planned out it Outlook. As the blocks increase in Feb/March, so the frequency of classroom visits.

Increased presence in the classroom allows me to be more aware of what is happening in the school.

- During time in classrooms, I'm constantly observing and making observations about student engagement and student learning, as well as looking for evidence of our school-wide initiatives and expectations.

- Being more aware has helped a lot with conversations with teachers about certain students or practices.

- Being in rooms more has allowed me to "catch the learning happening" more and I'm able to share great things out with staff as well as our community.

- Being in rooms more has also helped with some parent meetings, as I'm able to share first hand what observations I've made about their child.

By being more aware of what is happening in classrooms, I am able to better support teachers and students.

- Walk-through observations and data have led to:
  - Coaching conversations
  - Connecting teachers with instructional coach
  - Building-wide PD
  - Differentiated PD for Literacy
  - Reflection conversations with staff

Where Am I Heading Next

- Lessons Learned:
  - Making time for what's important is IMPORTANT!
  - Increased visibility leads to more positive interactions with staff, which helps overall culture.
  - Many of my teachers are doing amazing things in their rooms—need to find more ways to share.
  - Teachers, like students, are all in different places in terms of mindset, understanding, strengths, and potential to grow.
  - Never assume I think I know what's happening in rooms---better to get in and see it.
  - Feedback is important!

Where Am I Heading Next

- What's Next?
  - Continue to keep this a focus
  - Work in progress, still lots of room to improve
  - Gather data from teachers at end of year
  - Look at walk-through data more and use to drive PD and other supports
  - I wonder how continued presence in classrooms can impact student academic and behavioral growth…
  - I wonder how this can lead to more teacher collaboration and peer walk-throughs…

Bibliography

Johnson, J., Leibowitz, S., & Perret, K. (2017). *The coach approach to school leadership: Leading teachers to higher levels of effectiveness*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Whitaker, T. (2012). What great principals do differently. New York, NY: Routledge.

[Got Time? Making time to get in to Classrooms]

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

- ➥ The importance of being visible in classrooms:
- ➥ Despite my understanding of the importance of getting in classrooms and my desire to do so, I was finding myself getting trapped in my office more and more. Days and weeks were going by without me being a consistent presence in the classrooms and I was feeling more and more disconnected to certain grades/classes.
- ➥ I became aware that there were a few classrooms I spent a lot of time in, usually for support, but I was neglecting the rest of the building.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to examine what impact consistent increased presence in classrooms could have on my overall leadership and school culture.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered how I could be more intentional about getting in classrooms. I then wondered how my being in classrooms might affect overall culture, and ultimately student learning.

My Actions (Slide 5-9)

Baseline Data
- Frequency of walk-throughs
- Perceptions of staff around feedback

Outlook Calendar
- Color coded to track where time is being spent
- Started scheduling out time for classrooms

Morning Walks
- Made commitment to do a quick pop in on every classroom, every morning.

Planning Time
- I began to look at what time blocks were most realistic to be in the rooms. Goal of every class getting feedback every week.   Had to find what worked best---full day, partial days, hour a day, etc.

Feedback tool

- I made changes to my feedback tool.
- Created on Jotfom originally, now using Google Forms
- Looking at Feedback piece
- Two main questions---I notice and I wonder.

PD and Support Changes
- Data to drive PD
- Led to opportunities for differentiated PD focused on Literacy
- Increased coaching opportunities

Reflection
- Took time to reflect on time spend in rooms by the end of the week
- Took time to reflect and plan time at the beginning of the week
- Increased reflective conversations with teachers.

Data Collection (Slides 10)
Data Sources
- Survey Data
- Number of Walk-throughs
- Reflection on Results

My Data (Slides 11-13)

Data Sources
- Surveys—Looked at end of the year survey data from last year, as well as teacher feedback on mid-year survey
- Outlook Calendar—Looked at better ways to track how time was being spent and to block out time for being in classrooms.
- Frequency of Walk-throughs—compiled data from jotform and google to see frequency of visits in rooms

My Discoveries (Slide 14-17)

Learning Statement One: Scheduling time for classroom visits allows them to happen more frequently.

- By blocking out 20-30 minutes right after arrival time (see outlook data sample), I'm able to make sure I see each teacher and classroom of kids each day. Now that this is more routine, sometime I now get invites to comeback at certain time to catch some awesome learning experience. This also gives me time to check-in with some of our students who need that little extra attention throughout the day.
- I found that trying to block out the majority of a whole day just didn't work, but block out smaller sections throughout the week to total the time of at least one full day, works much better. This is shown in the time blocks planned out it Outlook. As the blocks increase in Feb/March, so the frequency of classroom visits.

Learning Statement Two: Increased presence in the classroom allows me to be more aware of what is happening in the school.

- During time in classrooms, I'm constantly observing and making observations about student engagement and student learning, as well as looking for evidence of our school-wide initiatives and expectations.
- Being more aware has helped a lot with conversations with teachers about certain students or practices.
- Being in rooms more has allowed me to "catch the learning happening" more and I'm able to share great things out with staff as well as our community.
- Being in rooms more has also helped with some parent meetings, as I'm able to share first hand what observations I've made about their child.

Learning Statement Three: By being more aware of what is happening in classrooms, I am able to better support teachers and students. Walk-through observations and data have led to:

- Coaching conversations
- Connecting teachers with instructional coach
- Building-wide PD
- Differentiated PD for Literacy
- Reflection conversations with staff

Where I Am Heading Next (Slides 18-19)

- Lessons Learned:
  - Making time for what's important is IMPORTANT!
  - Increased visibility leads to more positive interactions with staff, which helps overall culture.
  - Many of my teachers are doing amazing things in their rooms—need to find more ways to share.
  - Teachers, like students, are all in different places in terms of mindset, understanding, strengths, and potential to grow.
  - Never assume I think I know what's happening in rooms---better to get in and see it.
  - Feedback is important!

- What's Next?
  - Continue to keep this a focus
  - Work in progress, still lots of room to improve

- Gather data from teachers at end of year
- Look at walk-through data more and use to drive PD and other supports
- I wonder how continued presence in classrooms can impact student academic and behavioral growth…
- I wonder how this can lead to more teacher collaboration and peer walk-throughs…

Bibliography (Slide 20)

Johnson, J., Leibowitz, S., & Perret, K. (2017). *The coach approach to school leadership: Leading teachers to higher levels of effectiveness*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.