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# Racing for Time

HARRIS ELEMENTARY

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# Background Leading to this inquiry

- ▶ Why are there days I feel like a hamster on a wheel racing for more time?
- ▶ Principals are pulled in many different directions and have many responsibilities and demands on their time.



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## Purpose of this inquiry

- ▶ Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to show that while I can't slow down time, I can show how I became more intentional in building relationships and being present in classrooms more often.

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# My wondering

- ▶ With this purpose, I wondered how I can make an intentional effort to prioritize my responsibilities in order to be present in more classroom learning.

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## My actions

- ❖ Keep a daily journal for at least 7 days of what currently takes place during my work day.
- ❖ Quantify the minutes being in classrooms and the number of minutes being in “office mode”.
- ❖ Take more photos of being actively present in classrooms.

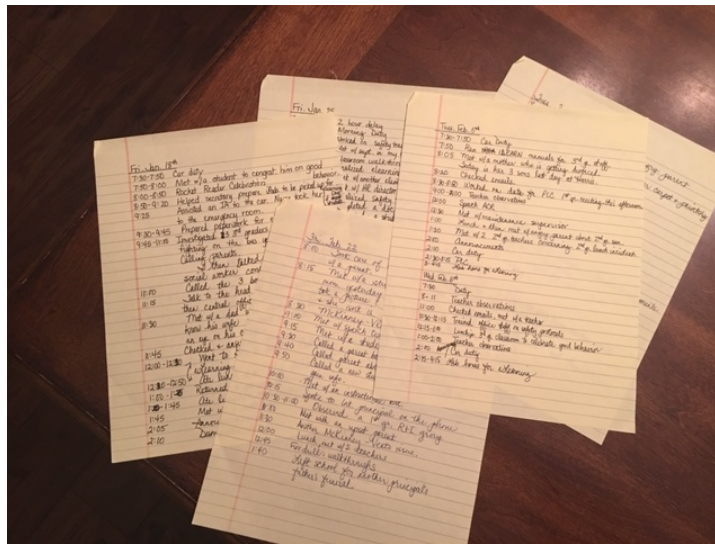
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# Data collection

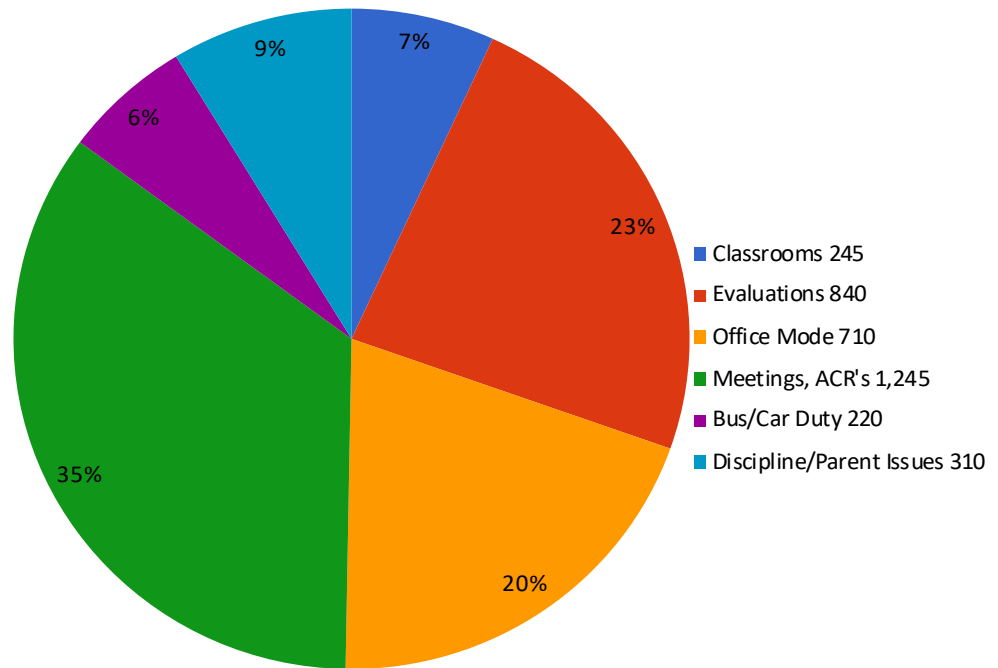
- ▶ Daily Journal
- ▶ Quantify Minutes
- ▶ Photos

# My data



# My data

Minutes for 8 Days





# My discoveries

- ❖ My students and teachers need me to be in classrooms more in order to observe instruction and learning and be a hands on building leader. I found I only spent 7% of my time in classrooms during the study.
- ❖ I did not realize the large amount of time (35%) I spent in meetings. My superintendent sees great value in meeting. Thus, I will find other areas where I can gain additional time to spend in classrooms.
- ❖ I learned as a principal, there are several areas I can improve upon in order to spend more time in classrooms. These include 9% in discipline/parent issues and 20% in office mode.

# Where I am heading next

- ▶ It was eye opening to see where my time was being spent. I will begin with small changes in order to make a bigger impact.
- ▶ The first change will be to rethink the open door policy. My secretary will schedule meetings with parents, as needed, instead of me trying to be ready to put out fires at a minutes notice.
- ▶ The second change will be to get out of my office. Setting goals such as walking through the school at least 4 times a day and actually scheduling time on my calendar to be in classrooms.
- ▶ The third change will be to follow the people during the day, paperwork at night policy. One can become consumed with answering emails, returning phone calls, completing report deadlines and completing teacher evaluations. Instead, I will prioritize classroom visits during the day and the office mode criteria after school and in the evening.

- ▶ *All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.*

*~Gandalf, from The Lord of the Rings*

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# Bibliography

- Dana, N.F. (2009). *Leading with passion and knowledge: The principal as action researcher*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.
- Johnson, J., Shira, L. & Perret, K. (2017). *The coach approach to school leadership: Leading teachers to higher levels of effectiveness*. ASCD.