The Principal's Bulletin Board:

From Uninspiring to Awe-Inspiring!

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

I have a large bulletin board behind my desk that has been used as a storage place for all sorts of items - schedules, charts, information - that I may refer to on a daily basis. The problem is that it has been an eyesore and certainly doesn't give off the "vibe" that I want my office to have when others enter. In addition, there has not been a place in my office for me to visually see my goals and action steps I need to be taking to get there.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of this inquiry is to determine if my instructional leadership can be improved by changing the visual display in my office to reflect my current goals and action steps needed to achieve those and to provide inspiration.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered . . .

> In what ways could my bulletin board be used to create awareness about the "big ideas" surrounding my leadership?

> Would providing visual reminders of things that I deem to be most important to my daily work in our school help me focus on those and direct my actions toward achieving the steps that lead more directly to positive outcomes of these goals?

My Actions (Slides 5-20)

As I began to think more deeply about my wondering, I started making lists. Ideas popped quickly into my head at first. What would I want to include on this new board? What important elements could be showcased that would help me maintain focus on important aspects of my role as principal?

Some of the things that immediately came to mind were:
- Goals annual, current, and quarterly
- Action steps related to goals

- Mentor statements
- Quotes and phrases to remember
- Student work
- Our district/building mission
- Lists of students I wanted to check in with regularly

I had been exploring new ideas related to goals and goal-setting, so I continued looking for additional resources to help me refine my ideas and think about what would be the most productive way for me to monitor my goal progress. I watched a webinar with Dr. Justin Baeder of the Principal Center. Following that, I found additional articles related to this topic and made decisions about what direction I wanted to go with my goals and action steps.

I started looking to see if there was any research out there about using an inspiration/vision board in a leadership role. Interestingly, the information that I found went along perfectly with the ideas I'd seen related to goal-setting.

Next, I thought about how in the world I was going to put all of these ideas into creating one bulletin board. I knew I wanted it to be colorful and "fun" but also useful. While I am certainly no designer, I have always been intrigued by the "mood boards" designers use to create an initial "visual blush" at a new project. I love to see how those are curated and the interesting ways that textures, colors, and designs are put together. I started formulating a vision of that kind of "inspiration/mood board" in my head and how that might look.

I thought through different ways that might work to put my short and long-term goals on the board and how I could keep track of the action steps. I had something in mind but wasn't yet sure how, logistically, to put it up on the board. The same thoughts were crossing my mind about how to track my goal of making 500 visits to classrooms and how to ensure that I was checking in with some special students many times each week. I kept thinking about these different tasks I wanted the board to help me with and how to make it happen.

With some ideas in mind, I started searching for some different materials that would help me put the board together in a way that was bright and colorful, functional and fun. I was still in the "formation of ideas stage," so some things I found helped me solidify my ideas. I found several different products that I purchased.

I emptied my uninspiring bulletin board and prepared for the transformation!

I made some pieces that were going to go on the board (letters, phrases to glue onto other bulletin board pieces, a graph, a sticker chart, goal plan pages, etc. When those were done and all of the things that I purchased had arrived, I was ready to put it all together!

In the end, the dynamic "moving pieces" on the board were these:
- a sticker chart to track which students I'd connected with
- a chart to mark off all of my classroom visits
- places to include new weekly goals
- places to include action steps for long-term and short-term goals

In addition to those, there were many other pieces that reminded me why I love my job (student work, notes from kids), things I should keep in mind at all times (phrases that can be easily applied to many different situations, like, "Assume best intent"), our district values, our school mission, current initiatives, and some other random little things that make me smile. In the end, the board has done just that! I love its new look and am able to use it every day to assist me in my work.

Data Collection (Slide 23)

With this type of project, data was not easy to quantify. However, moving forward, there will be more data that will come from it. I will have a great graph of the visits I have made to classrooms. I'm thinking about changing that so I use a different color each week and can more easily look at my weekly average. The data I am collecting to track my visits with students with whom I want to be sure to connect has been very helpful. I look at that when I'm on my way to other places, and if I've missed someone, I make a point to stop by and see them as I'm out and about. I will continue to keep all of the Post-It notes containing goal action-steps, as well, which will allow my team to evaluate where we are at the end of the year, add things to our annual "to do" list that may repeat.

I also collected data through photographs throughout the transformation process.

My Data (Slide 24)

I wish that I had "before and after data" related to intentional classroom visits, connections with my group of students I want to check in with, and all of the steps tied directly to goals that have been accomplished. I did, however, have a "control group" in the form of my original board. While I can say honestly that it was useful at times, as it had many documents that I need in my work, it was certainly never inspiring! I very quickly found other, less "out there" locations for these documents, which has tidied up my office significantly. Our staff has not known anything about my redesign of the board, and I've already had no fewer than 8 people compliment how it looks and stop and ask me about some of the things on it. (I can say that my previous board never once inspired a single question.)

My Discoveries (Slide 25)

In this step, summarize your learning in two - three succinct statements that illustrate the most important and critical facets of what you learned:

- **Learning Statement One: As a visual learner, having visuals in my office has improved my daily focus and attention to important aspects of my work.** My eyes go to the board when I enter my office and as I'm leaving. I am quickly able to reset my priorities.
- **Learning Statement Two: The use of weekly goal statements has improved communication with my administrative team and allowed us to ensure that we maintain focus on important action steps needed to attain the goals.** Each Monday morning, we go over the long-term goals, establish weekly goals that support these, and add action steps that will help us get there.
- **Learning Statement Three: Marking off the boxes and filling up columns with my actions is extremely rewarding.** I have always been a "to do list" person who enjoys marking things off my list. Just as our students enjoy having sticker charts and rewards, the "reward" of adding a sticker to the board or marking off a spot on the graph I've created have been helpful in keeping me motivated to continue my actions.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 26)

In this action research cycle, I have learned some new things about the way that I work. I have known that I am someone who responds to positive praise, but I have learned that I can award this to myself in the form of filling in cells on a graph, using stickers to mark accomplishments, and the adding, removing, and tracking of action steps related to my goals. These new understandings can help me generate new ideas for ways to keep myself motivated and focused and will provide ideas for how teachers in our building may also be motivated.

Bibliography (Slide 27)

Websites
- Baeder, Justin, (January 6, 2020). The Best-Laid Plans: A Framework for Evaluating This Year's Goals. Retrieved from https://www.principalcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/The%20Best-Laid%20Plans%20-%20A%20Framework%20for%20Evaluating%20This%20Years%20Goals.pdf
- Baeder, Justin (July 14, 2016). How to Set Goals (Especially If You Hate Planning. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@achvco/how-to-set-goals-especially-if-you-hate-planning-28adc8b1da54
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- Morin, Amy, (Nov. 16, 2018). Why Vision Boards Don't Work (And What You Should Do Instead). Retrieved from https://www.inc.com/amy-morin/science-says-your-vision-board-actually-decreases-chances-of-living-your-dreams-heres-what-to-do-instead.html

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Background Leading to this Inquiry

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My Wondering

In what ways could my bulletin board be used to create awareness about the "big ideas" surrounding my leadership?

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My Actions

As I began to think more deeply about my wondering, I started making lists. Ideas popped quickly into my head at first. What would I want to include on this new board? What important elements could be showcased that would help me maintain focus on important aspects of my role as principal?

Some of the things that immediately came to mind were:
- Goals annual, current, and quarterly
- Action steps related to goals
- Mentor statements
- Quotes and phrases to remember
- Student work
- Our district/building mission
- Lists of students with whom I want to check in regularly

My Actions

I had been exploring new ideas related to goals and goal-setting, so I continued looking for additional resources to help me refine my ideas think about what would be the most productive way for me to monitor my goal progress. I watched a webinar with Dr. Justin Baeder of the Principal Center. Following that, I found additional articles related to this topic and made decisions about what direction I wanted to go with my goals and action steps.

I started looking to see if there was any research out there about using an inspiration/vision board in a leadership role. Interestingly, the information that I found went along perfectly with the ideas I'd seen related to goal-setting.

My Actions

Next, I thought about how in the world I was going to put all of these ideas into creating one bulletin board. I knew I wanted it to be colorful and "fun" but also useful. While I am certainly no designer, I have always been intrigued by the "mood boards" designers use to create an initial "visual blush" at a new project. I love to see how those are curated and the interesting ways that textures, colors, and designs are put together. I started formulating a vision of that kind of "inspiration/mood board" in my head and how that might look.
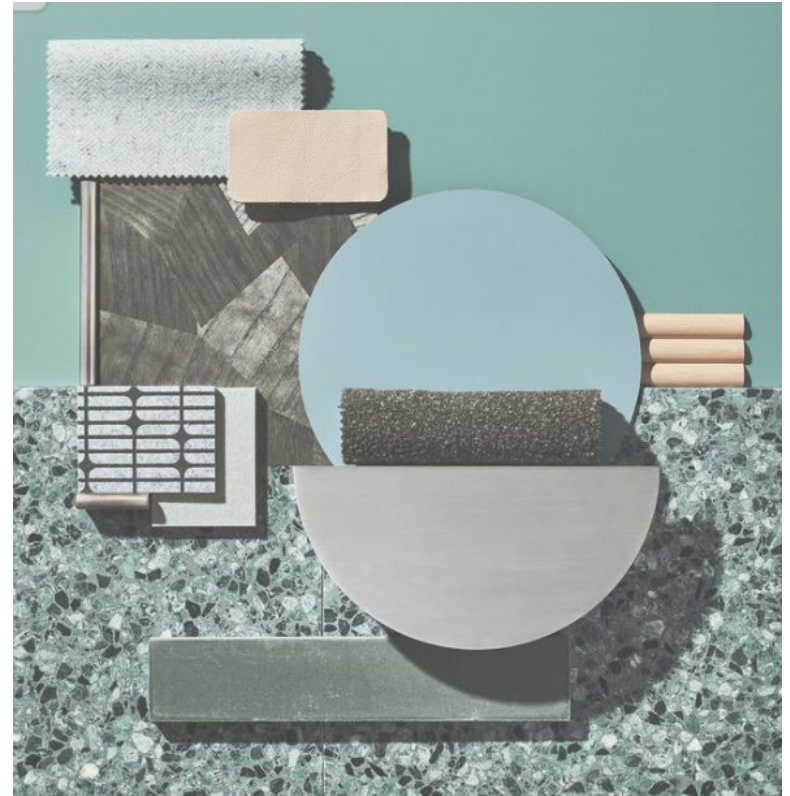
In the creative process, thinking about a "mood board" concept helped me try and piece my ideas together.

My Actions

Thinking Through What I Want the Board to Help Me Accomplish

- Tracking short and long-term goals
- Managing goal action steps
- Tracking my goal of making 500 visits to classrooms
- Ensuring that I was checking in with some special students many times each week.

I kept thinking about these different tasks I wanted the board to help me with and how to make it happen.

My Actions

Confetti Circles Die-Cut Border Trim
Sold by: Teach&Play
$7.01

8.5x11 Clear Acrylic Plexi Sign Holders with Tape, Wall Sign Memo Document Menu Holder for Office, Home, Store, Restaurant-No Drilling (12)
by gege
★★★★☆ 2 ratings
Price: **$33.99** ✓prime & FREE Returns
Get a $100 Amazon Gift Card instantly upon approval for the Amazon Prime Rewards Visa Card. No annual fee.
This item is returnable ˅
Color: **12**

12 Pack

Large Confetti L
Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
$9.09
[Buy it again] [View your item]

Finding & Purchasing

With some ideas in mind, I started searching for some different materials that would help me put the board together in a way that was bright and colorful, functional and fun. I was still in the "formation of ideas stage," so some things I found helped me solidify my ideas. I found several different products that I purchased.

Confetti Accents
Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
$7.75
[Buy it again] [View your item]

LOVENJOY 2 Rainbow Banners Felt Bunting Multicolor for Colorful Birthday Party Rainbow Decorations, Assembled
Sold by: LNJ Party Supplies
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
$11.99

DCWV Cardstock Stack, Match Makers Brights, 87 Sheets, 4-1/2 x 6-1/2 inches
Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
$8.35
[Buy it again] [View your item]

Hygloss Products 34412 24-Pack Bright Paper Frames Letter Size 24 Pieces, 12 Assorted Colors
Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
$9.99
[Buy it again] [View your item]

Teacher Created Resources (3602) Confetti Stars Mini Stickers
Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
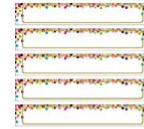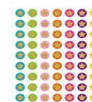$3.19
[Buy it again] [View your item]

Blue Panda Photo Booth Frame - 8-Pack Gold Glitter Picture Frame Party Supplies, Selfie Frame Cutouts, Party Favors for Wedding, Birthday Party, Bridal Shower, Bachelorette Party
Sold by: Juvo+
Return eligible through Mar 18, 2020
$15.99

Confetti Mini Accents
Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC
Return eligible through Mar 16, 2020
$4.47
[Buy it again] [View your item]
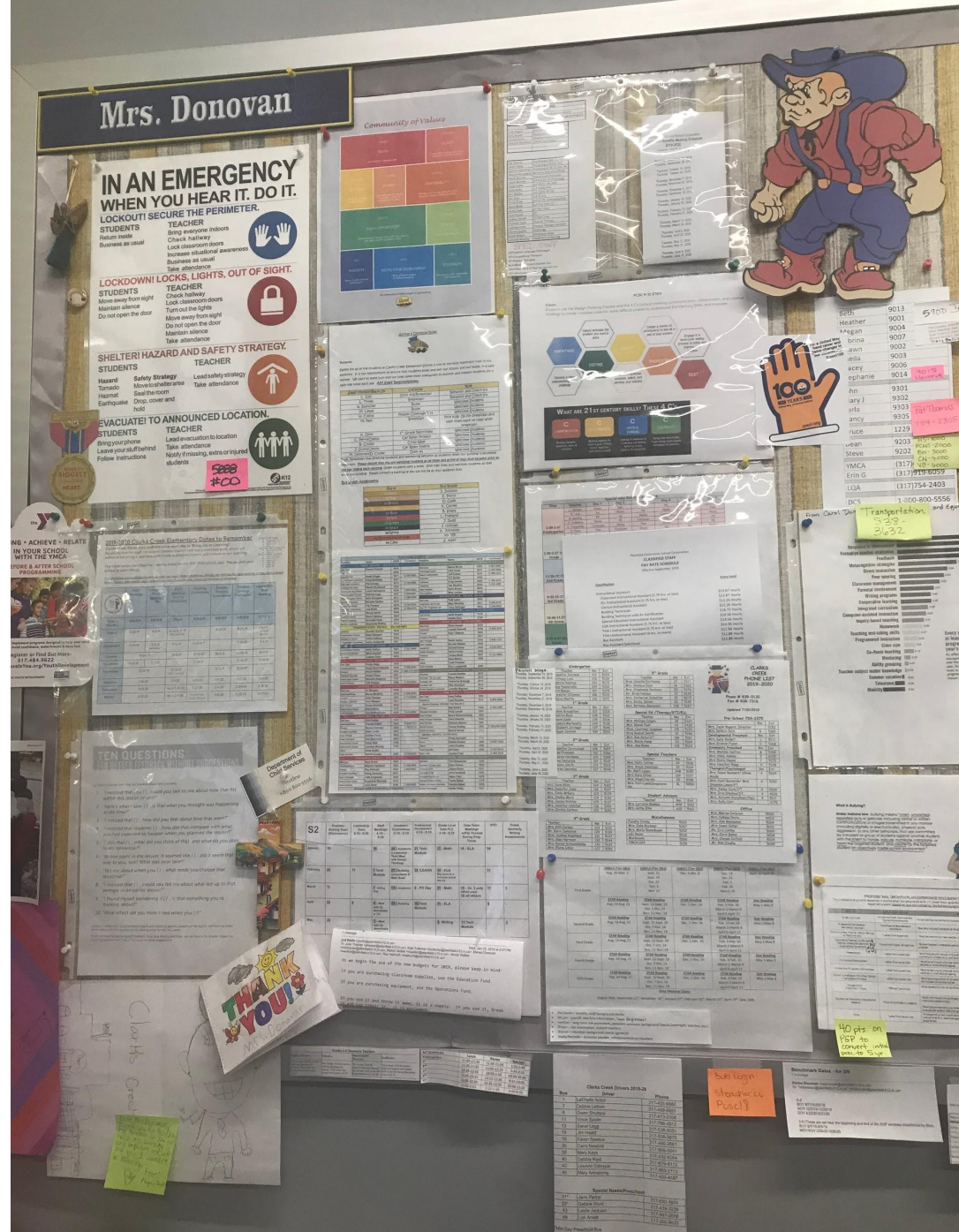
My Actions

I emptied my uninspiring bulletin board and prepared for the transformation!

My Actions

Demolition Day!

My Actions - Making Pieces

I made some pieces that were going to go on the board (letters, phrases to glue onto other bulletin board pieces, a graph, a sticker chart, goal plan pages, etc.

My Actions - Making Letters

My Actions - Made a Sticker Chart

and engineered a way to put it on the board for easy changes!
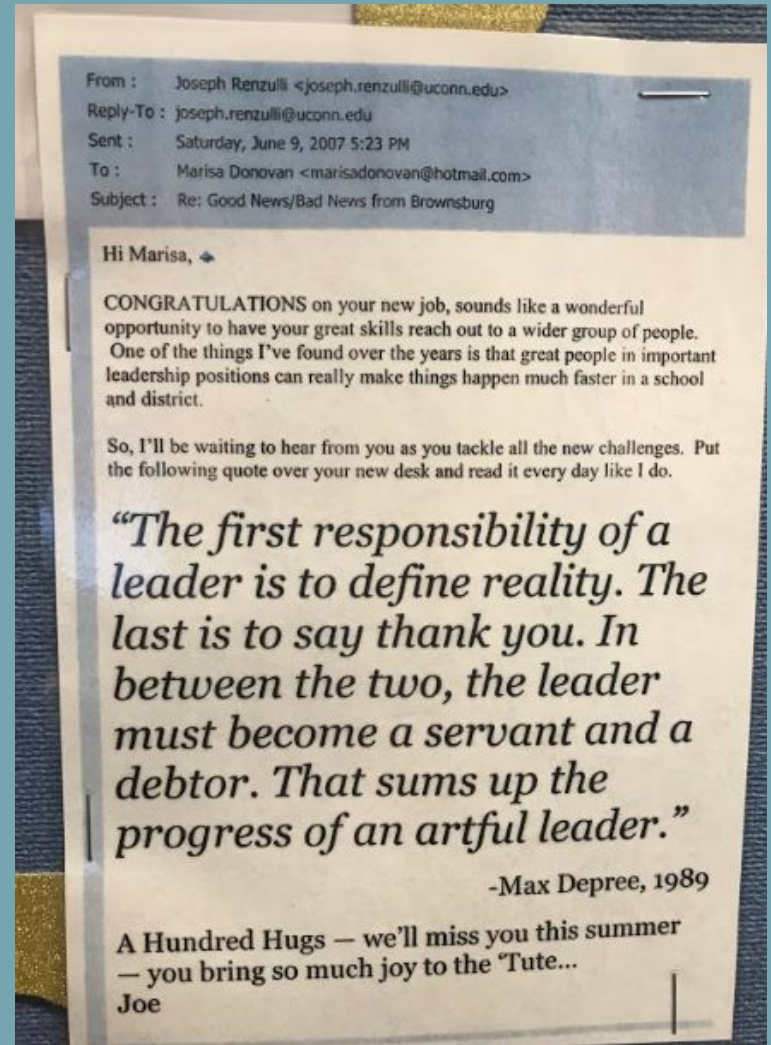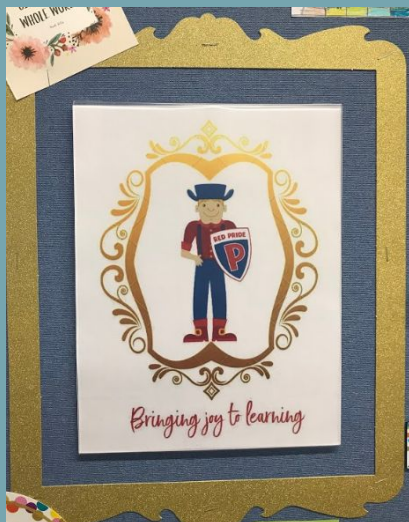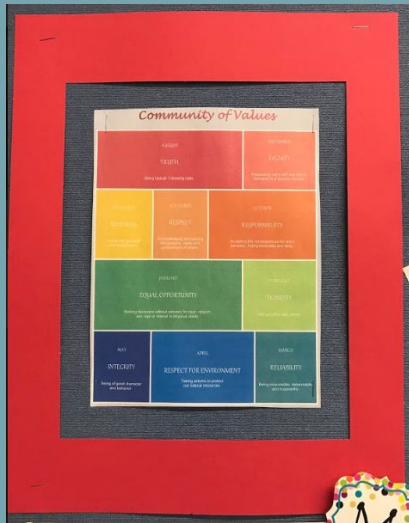
My Actions

I created annual and weekly goals boards and figured out how to both mount them and make them easily changeable.

My Actions

I created pieces for our mission statement and our district values and added mentor statements.

From : Joseph Renzulli <joseph.renzulli@uconn.edu>
Reply-To : joseph.renzulli@uconn.edu
Sent : Saturday, June 9, 2007 5:23 PM
To : Marisa Donovan <marisadonovan@hotmail.com>
Subject : Re: Good News/Bad News from Brownsburg

Hi Marisa,

CONGRATULATIONS on your new job, sounds like a wonderful opportunity to have your great skills reach out to a wider group of people. One of the things I've found over the years is that great people in important leadership positions can really make things happen much faster in a school and district.

So, I'll be waiting to hear from you as you tackle all the new challenges. Put the following quote over your new desk and read it every day like I do.

"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the progress of an artful leader."

-Max Depree, 1989

A Hundred Hugs — we'll miss you this summer — you bring so much joy to the 'Tute...
Joe

My Actions

When those were done and all of the things that I purchased had arrived, I was ready to put it all together!

In the end, the dynamic "moving pieces" on the board were these:

- a sticker chart to track which students I'd connected with
- a chart to mark off all of my classroom visits
- places to include new weekly goals
- places to include action steps for long-term and short-term goals

My Actions

Added Other Pieces

- pieces that reminded me why I love my job (student work, notes from kids)
- things I should keep in mind at all times (phrases that can be easily applied to many different situations, like, "Assume best intent")
- our district values
- our school mission
- current initiatives
- some other random little things that make me smile

In the end, the board has done just that! I love its new look and am able to use it every day to assist me in my work.

My Actions
Added Some Favorite Student Work
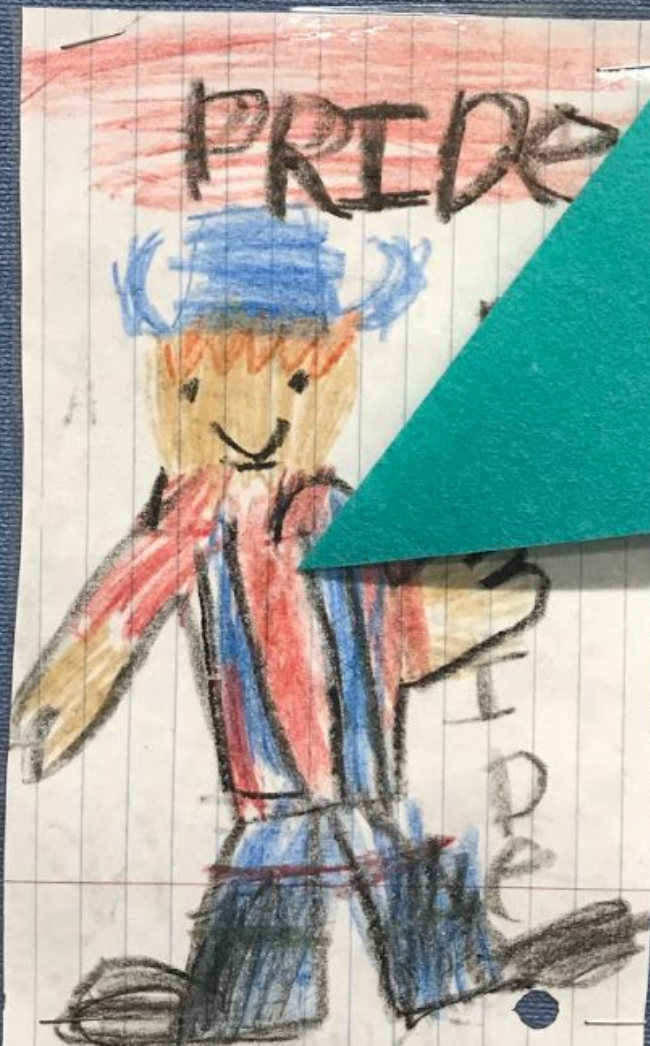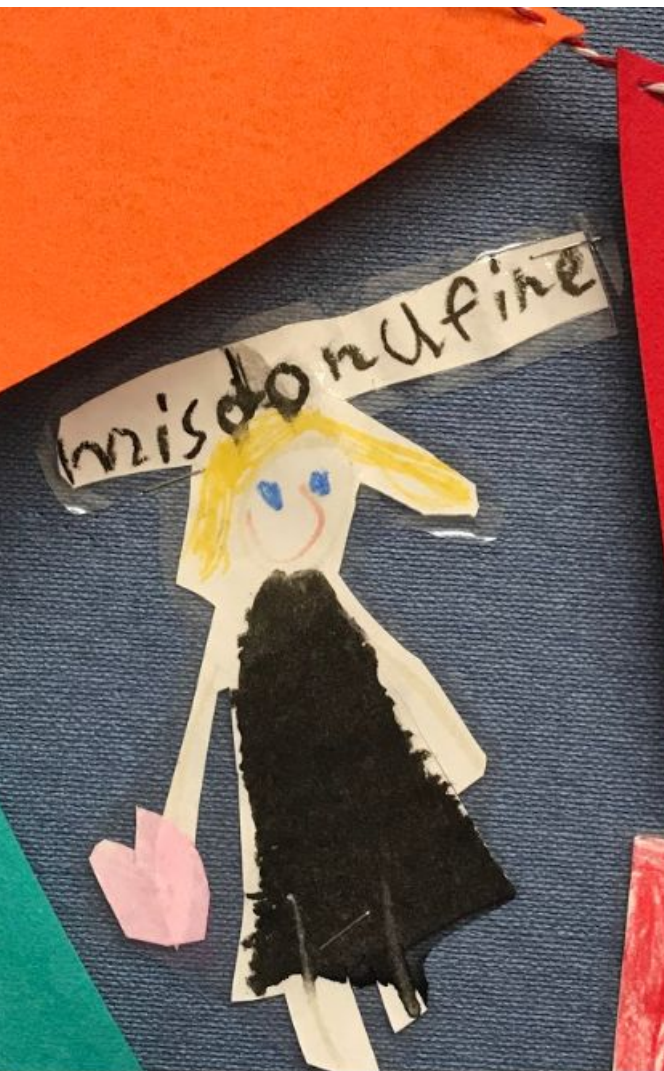
Finished!

BEFORE

AFTER

Data Collection

With this type of project, data was not easy to quantify. However, moving forward, there will be more data that will come from it. I will have a great graph of the visits I have made to classrooms. I'm thinking about changing that so I use a different color each week and can more easily look at my weekly average. The data I am collecting to track my visits with students with whom I want to be sure to connect has been very helpful.   I look at that when I'm on my way to other places, and if I've missed someone, I make a point to stop by and see them as I'm out and about. I will continue to keep all of the Post-It notes containing goal action-steps, as well, which will allow my team to evaluate where we are at the end of the year, add things to our annual "to do" list that may repeat.

I also captured data in the form of photographs throughout the transformation process.

My Data

I wish that I had "before and after data" related to intentional classroom visits, connections with my group of students I want to check in with, and all of the steps tied directly to goals that have been accomplished. I did, however, have a "control group" in the form of my original board. While I can say honestly that it was useful at times, as it had many documents that I need in my work, it was certainly never inspiring! I very quickly found other, less "out there" locations for these documents, which has tidied up my office significantly. Our staff has not known anything about my redesign of the board, and I've already had no fewer than 8 people compliment how it looks and stop and ask me about some of the things on it. (I can say that my previous board never once inspired a single question.)

My Discoveries

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Where Am I Heading Next

In this action research cycle, I have learned some new things about the way that I work. I have known that I am someone who responds to positive praise, but I have learned that I can award this to myself in the form of filling in cells on a graph, using stickers to mark accomplishments, and the adding, removing, and tracking of action steps related to my goals. These new understandings can help me generate new ideas for ways to keep myself motivated and focused and will provide ideas for how teachers in our building may also be motivated.

Bibliography

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