

Balancing Act: How to Provide Transparent Feedback and Maintain a Positive Climate.

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Based upon our High Reliability School Survey Data, staff members did not feel that the administration was examining data regarding team's progress toward their goals. In addition, information from the survey showed that not all staff members felt that this data was shared in a transparent manner. Survey data also revealed that not all staff members felt that school leaders regularly celebrated successes of individuals or acknowledged accomplishments through celebrations, announcements and other communications.

The staff is competitive amongst each other and with other schools within the district. People are not always collaborative and are not always comfortable to take risks due to the competitive nature and an inner fear of failing. Some staff members who are struggling to reach new goals or take initiative may feel isolated. Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to improve the climate at our school so that staff members would be more collaborative as well as provide transparent feedback and celebrate our progress along the way.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered if providing transparent school wide and grade level feedback would increase implementation of consistent practices and initiatives. We also wondered if celebrating progress and increasing opportunities to share fun experiences would improve our climate to therefore improve collaboration.

Methods/Procedures:

We began our wondering journey with planning a brief celebration at the beginning or end of every meeting. We shared the survey data with the staff and discussed why the action research project was selected. We reviewed where to find the expectations of consistent practices. We also sought input from the staff on how they wanted to receive the transparent feedback through a google survey. The staff members shared through the google survey that they would prefer to receive the transparent data through the staff newsletter. We discussed instructional practices that should be seen every day and described as a team what those should look like and what they do not look like.

We created a calendar of walkthroughs with a practice in focus for each week. As I spent time in each classroom 3-5 times weekly, I made tallies by grade level of the observed instructional strategy selected. I then recorded the number of times I observed each practice through creation of a visual chart in my office. On weeks when I was not observing the strategies as frequently as desired, at times I maintained watching for the same specific instructional strategy for the following week.

The team met to analyze the data over time by reviewing the number of observations, grade level tallies and school wide percentages. After grade levels were tallied, we calculated an overall school percentage and

noted to the staff that the practice may be occurring more than I observed. We gave encouragement and celebration of what was observed in the staff weekly newsletter. The chart in my office was available for those who would like to see the results in a visual manner.

We also conducted a brief survey to see how staff felt about the celebrations at the end of the school year. The staff responded favorably on the survey. In addition, impromptu positive team collaboration in hallways before and after school reportedly increased.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data we learned that staff implementation of instructional strategies in focus increased over time when in focus for over a longer period of time. We also learned that celebrating progress frequently in smaller ways provided encouragement and assisted with increasing collaboration.

Over a 9 week period, we noticed that implementation of best practice increased and was more consistently observable over time. Despite the fact that the strategy changed, staff appeared to put more energy toward focusing on the list we generated.

In addition, based on staff reports and observations of collaboration, the climate in the building improved and became less competitive and more focused on the development of all.

Click here to view data tables: [DATA TABLES](#)

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

Our team learned that our teachers care deeply about their effectiveness in the classroom and will do anything to help kids be successful. We learned that providing clarity and narrowing the focus on key instructional strategies empowered teachers to narrow their focus and improve their teaching. The team learned that providing transparent feedback is not always fun and easy. They were also able to identify some of the challenges with the responsibilities of administrators and being present as much as possible in classrooms to help be an instructional leader.

While our team understood the importance of celebrating growth and achievement, the impact became quite clear as we celebrated teams as well as individuals and watched our family grow.

We continue to seek to do what is best for students and wonder what strategies will be most important to focus on next to continue our growth.

References:

N/A