

Decisions, Delegation, and Dwight

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

In the last three years as principal, I found myself putting out various fires and being more reactive than proactive. I have always been concerned with my checklist, my schedule, and organization, and I found that I was spending a great deal of time outside the areas of focus that I needed to spend my time.

It became very aware when we cut our curriculum director and those duties were added to my plate in my second year that I could not continue working in a reactive manner. In working this way, I was causing myself to be less productive in the areas of need for our staff and students.

In my mini AR, I tracked my daily activity and placed it into categories. I found that I needed to make some changes in my schedule do impact our school. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to improve my daily decision-making and to improve my delegation.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered how I could create a weekly system to better improve my decision-making while building the capacity of other in my building through delegation.

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wondering, I used the tracking of my daily activities from my mini AR to begin looking at a system to improve my tasks and decision-making process.

In my research I came across a podcast which discussed Dwight Eisenhower and his skill in decision-making as a military general and president. After listening to the podcast and researched the Eisenhower Matrix online. I tweaked this matrix to fit the principals position and my needs, and began to write down the items and tasks that come up through my daily and weekly schedule.

During this process, I was able to go back at the end of the week and label each activity with four different categories. Those categories were: Leadership, Instruction, Management, and Personal. I then tracked this data for three months to see if I improve my decision-making, as well as, my delegation.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data important things I learned include:

- 1) I was spending far too much time on management tasks than on the leadership and instruction of my building.
- 2) I was not delegating enough tasks to utilize the skill and build capacity of my team.
- 3) I was putting too much onto my plate and was spinning my wheels most days and weeks.

1) I was spending far too much time on management tasks than on the leadership and instruction of my building. This was evident by the amount of time I was putting out fires and working in a reactive mode. This

led to my open door policy having to be reviewed and I had to have time to close the door to actually do the necessary deep work to drive our school performance in the right direction.

2) I was not delegating enough tasks to utilize the skill and build capacity of my team. This was shown in not only the data, but in the daily work of my team. My assistant principal was buried in attendance and discipline, and was not given the quality of work in the areas to help build his skill and capacity. I brought him more in the fold with instruction and curriculum by delegating him tasks of great responsibility which he completed very well.

3) I was putting too much onto my plate and was spinning my wheels most days and weeks. I never felt like I was getting to the deep work necessary to help our students and teachers as I ran from one fire to the other. I needed to gain a "hedgehog" focus and move the needle of performance in the right direction.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

My AR has led to a system I continue to use to this day. It has helped my in all aspects of decision-making, organization, and delegation. It has been a vital tool in my growth as a leader to become much more than an old school manager, and more of a true leader with a growth mindset.

My staff and students have adjusted well to those with which I have delegated, and my plate has become less full, with a healthy serving of the items of need and focus in the building.

My wondering with this system is how it will transition into my new role as superintendent for the district. It is my belief that it will continue to be a tool I use daily, weekly, and yearly to guide my decision-making and delegation at the district level.

References:

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Date Published: May 27, 2018

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