

Making Time for What Matters

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

I knew the great importance of having Principal's in the classrooms daily to help increase teacher performance and student performance. I also knew that I needed to support my teachers by doing walk-through's on some of the new curriculum initiatives we were exploring this year. As a school, we identified that we needed to vertically align our curriculum from Kindergarten to Fifth Grade. We also determined as a school that we needed to collaborate in grade level team meetings and data meetings. However, I didn't feel that I was able to support them as much with curriculum because I was in the office working through behavior situations, what felt like all day every day.

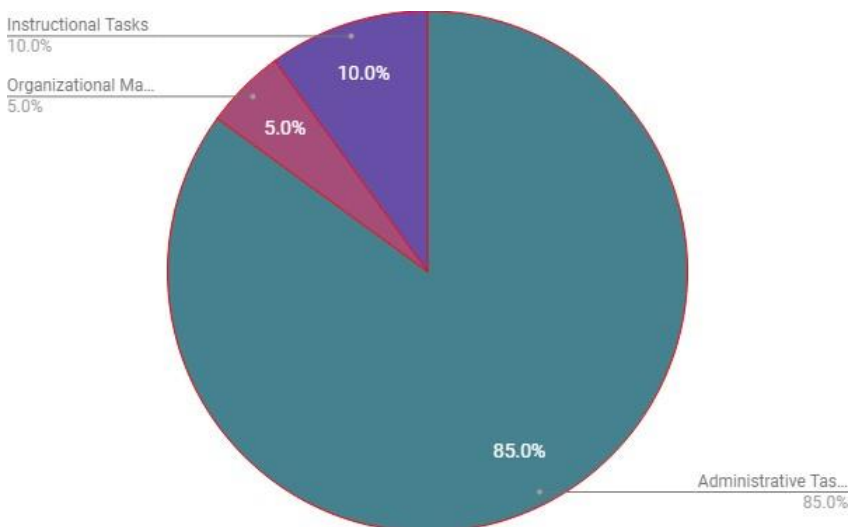
Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to collect data on the amount of time I am able to focus on instructional tasks versus the amount of time I was spending on administrative tasks.

Statement of Your Wondering:

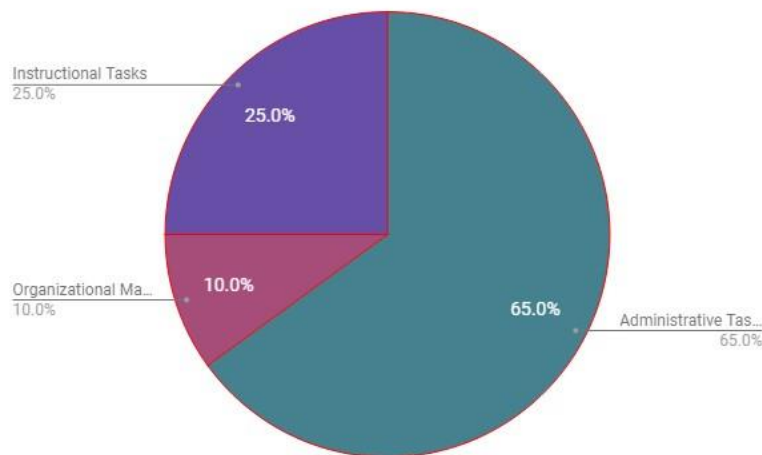
With this purpose, I wondered how can I spend more time in classrooms and less time with discipline?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wonderings, I collected data on the amount of time I was spending to focus on instructional tasks versus the amount of time I was spending on administrative tasks. I collected this data everyday for a week on two different occasions. The first occasion was at the beginning and the second was at the end of my inquiry. I graphed the data and found that at the beginning of my inquiry project, over 85% of my week was spent on discipline or administrative tasks. Only 10% of my week was spent on instructional tasks or things that help to improve the schools academic scores. I also collected qualitative data from teacher led discussions during our PBIS team and Leadership Team meetings.



After I collected the data and graphed it, I looked into many different resources to help me shift things in my day so I can do what I feel is best for me as the Principal of Rockport Elementary School. I watched webinars, I listened to Podcasts, I conducted school visits, and I led book studies. I took webinar courses from Becky Bailey on trauma and how the brain works. Some of the podcasts I listened to were about trauma and classroom behaviors. I went on a couple of school visits, one to Slate Run Elementary School. They are trying a new program called Conscious Discipline by Becky Bailey. I also attended Tell City Elementary School where I visited some classrooms to gain a better insight on classroom management to help support my teachers. I led two book studies. The first book is called, Creating the School Family. The second book is called, Conscious Discipline. Both of these books are by Becky Bailey. I knew that I needed to learn more about trauma and what works with helping kids with trauma before I could help teachers understand.



In addition to those things, I made some immediate changes in my day so that I could try to get into classrooms more. I designated different staff members to be the first call, if I was doing walkthroughs or observations in classrooms. I also created a PBIS challenge for staff to voluntarily participate in. These challenges were things related to what was going on currently in the building. These challenges would empower teachers and staff to try different approaches when dealing with student behavior.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned that I needed more information on how to teach students with trauma induced behaviors. I learned that I needed to designate a staff member to handle situations when I was scheduled to be in classrooms or conducting walk-through's. In addition, I learned that I needed to educate my staff and help them with different approaches to dealing with student behavior and mindsets on dealing with student behavior.

First, I learned that I needed to be more informed on how to teach students with trauma induced behaviors. The majority of the administrative tasks 85% was spent helping students with trauma and trying to help self regulate their emotions. I knew in order to be more successful with this, I needed to learn more research about it and how kids learn with trauma is involved. Next, I learned that I needed to empower other staff members to take a role in talking with students if I am scheduled to be somewhere. I had my Special Education Teacher, Secretary, Title Teacher, and Counselor working with students who are sent to the office when I was in a classroom observation. By doing this, it helped free up a lot of my time so I could get into classrooms. Lastly, I learned that I needed to provide more supports and strategies to teachers on how to teach students who are struggling with behaviors in the classroom.

By doing these things, at the end of my inquiry, my data showed the only 65% of my week was spent on administrative tasks and 25% of my week was spent on instructional tasks. In addition, qualitative data from a follow up meeting from staff was more positive in some of the efforts that were being done to help increase the amount of time I was in the classrooms.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

In conclusion, I have learned a lot about myself as an administrator. I have learned there are some simple things that can be done that make the biggest difference. One example of that is when my mentor, Rhonda Roos, suggested to me to have a schedule where different staff members may be available to handle some of the discipline while I was in classrooms. I learned that I need to make time for everything and especially for what drives our data. I have learned that the teachers understand if I am not always the one available to handle every classroom concern. I also learned that the school functions well no matter who is the one handling the discipline, as long as you have strong communication between all parties.

There are several changes that I will make for the following school year. I will be adding into the schedule time for social emotional curriculum and self regulation strategies. I will empower teachers and staff members to handle and problem solve as much as possible before trying to get others involved. I will make sure that I continue to inform myself and teachers/staff about the behaviors and what to do in the classroom to help with the behaviors we face on a daily basis. Some of my new wonderings for next year are now geared more towards curriculum and instructional alignment, which was my original goal for this year.

References:

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