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### **Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)**

For many people, perfectionism is a double-edged sword. While it may drive ambition and high standards, it often comes at a steep cost—stifling personal growth and diminishing well-being. The constant pursuit of flawlessness can lead to unrealistic expectations. For those caught in its grip, the belief becomes internalized: *“I must be perfect to be worthwhile.”*

### **The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)**

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to search for another way forward. By intentionally focusing on and capturing the positive aspects of my daily work, I can begin to shift that mindset. This simple yet powerful practice fosters a more balanced and compassionate view of ourselves. In doing so, it builds self-confidence and encourages growth that is not only sustainable, but genuinely fulfilling—both personally and professionally.

### **My Wondering (Slide 4)**

With this purpose, I wonder if by capturing positive aspects of daily work I could foster a healthier mindset, promote self-confidence, and encourage sustainable personal and professional development.

### **My Actions (Slide 5)**

As part of my action research, I began documenting my daily achievements to intentionally highlight the positives in my work. Using a spreadsheet, I recorded each task, provided a brief description, rated my level of satisfaction, and included a dedicated space to reflect on the positives—regardless of how satisfied I felt with the outcome.

My goal was to identify patterns over time, particularly in how my satisfaction shifted as I focused more on progress than perfection. By consistently shining a light on what's working, even in imperfect moments, I hoped to quiet the voice of negative self-talk and allow recognition and encouragement to take center stage.

### **Data Collection (Slide 6)**

My AR included documenting achievements to capture the positives in my daily work.

1. I used a spreadsheet to document each task, a description of the task, my level of satisfaction, and finally a column to reflect on positives regardless of the satisfaction level.
2. This qualitative data was collected every Friday afternoon for three months.

3. I documented items that required at least one hour of time to complete. Examples include testing schedules, difficult staff conversations, family night planning, and Title I audit.

### **My Data (Slides 7 and 8)**

Once all the data had been collected, I began analyzing it for recurring themes and patterns—an exploration that revealed many powerful insights. The data was organized into categories based on emerging themes and patterns, such as external praise versus self-reflection, preferred versus non-preferred tasks, and tasks completed collaboratively versus independently.

A clear trend emerged from the data: preferred tasks were consistently rated higher in terms of satisfaction. Interestingly, while comments reflecting self-pride remained steady over time, the actual ratings for those entries increased, suggesting a growing sense of appreciation for personal effort. Collaboration also stood out as a positive factor: 8 out of 10 tasks completed with others were rated a 4, suggesting that working with peers often enhanced the overall experience.

### **My Discoveries (Slide 9)**

- Learning Statement One: Plan for preferred and collaborative tasks
  - Throughout this process, I found that I was most energized and effective when engaged in planning, organizing, and executing tasks. I also discovered a particular strength in problem-solving. I also realized that I must lean more intentionally into collaborative opportunities with both the teacher leadership team and the administrative team.
- Learning Statement Two: Intentionally reflect on positives
  - Over time, I began to shift my mindset—from instinctively focusing on the negative to intentionally seeking out the positive first. I also made a commitment to focus more on what I can control—my attitude, my effort, and the way I choose to see myself.
- Learning Statement Three: Continue to document accomplishments
  - I've come to realize that I thrive on achievement—there's something deeply motivating about seeing tasks completed and progress made. Documenting my work allowed me to visibly track that progress, which in turn fueled my sense of purpose and productivity. I also place a high value on structured use of time. For me, it's important to feel that my efforts are contributing to meaningful, intentional work rather than constantly reacting to the unexpected. That's a challenge in the principalship, where the day can often feel like a series of fires to put out. Having a system in place to reflect on what is getting done helped me reclaim a sense of direction amid the chaos.

### **Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 10)**

Throughout this process, I've learned that sustaining meaningful work in schools—and avoiding burnout—requires a commitment to self-care. For me, that means identifying the sources of stress and proactively planning tasks that align with how I naturally operate as a base and phase thinker. When I prioritize what recharges and grounds me, I create the foundation I need to lead effectively. Taking care of myself isn't just a personal necessity; it's

a professional responsibility. When I am centered and well-supported, I'm better equipped to support my teachers, staff, and students with the clarity and energy they deserve.

### **Bibliography**

- Regier, Nate (2020). *Seeing People Through: Unleash your leadership potential with Process Communication Model*. Oakland, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.



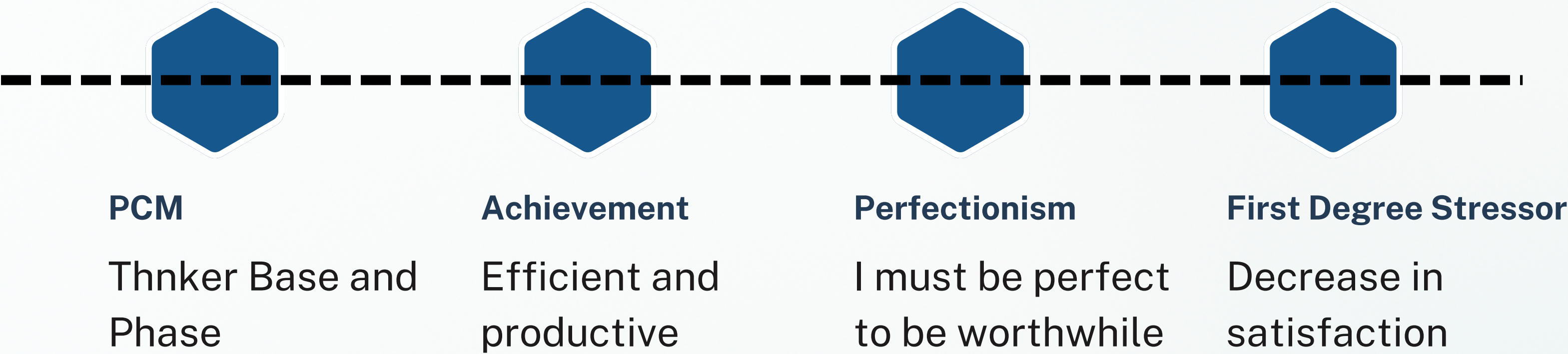
# **Be GREAT, Not Perfect**

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# INQUIRY BACKGROUND

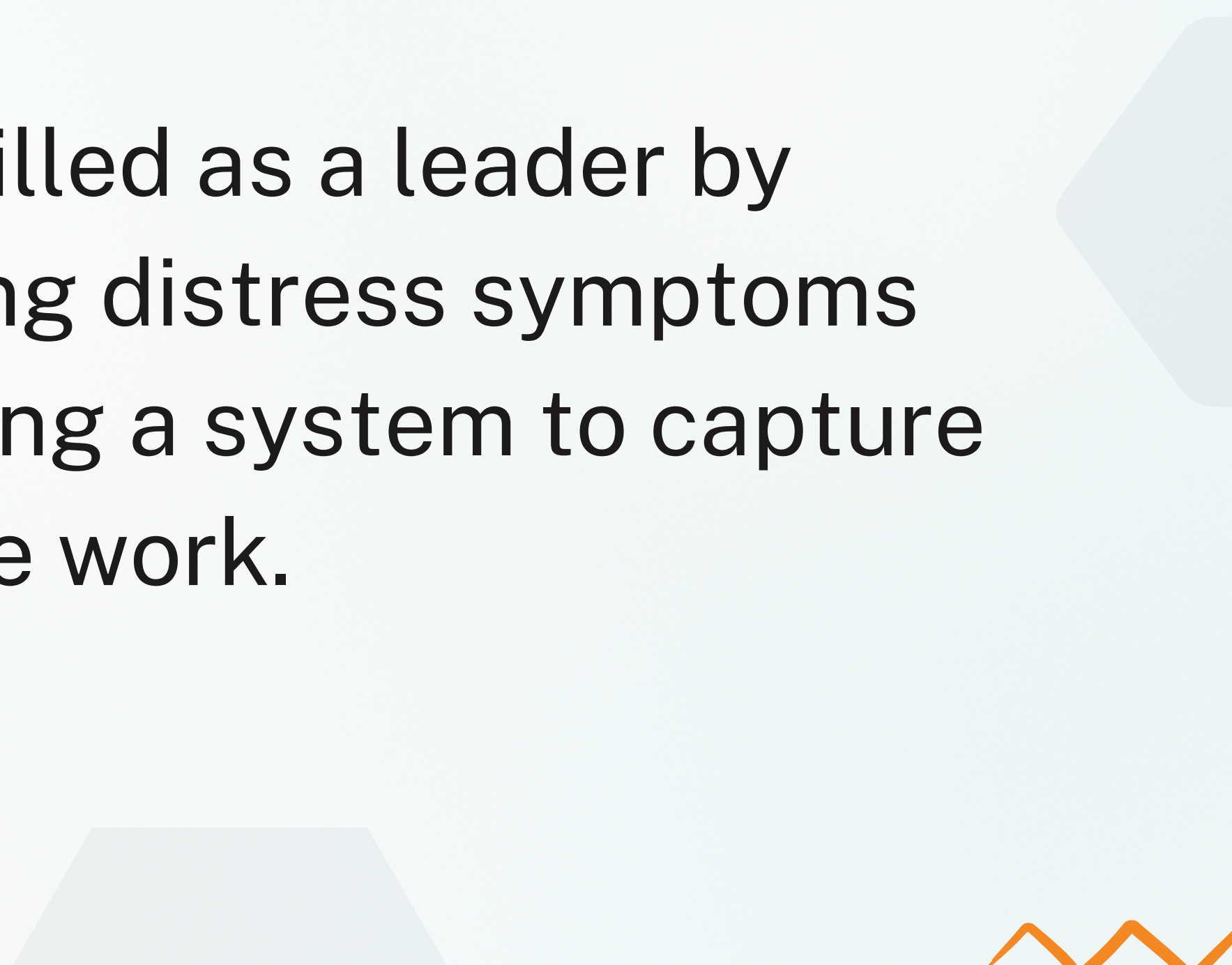
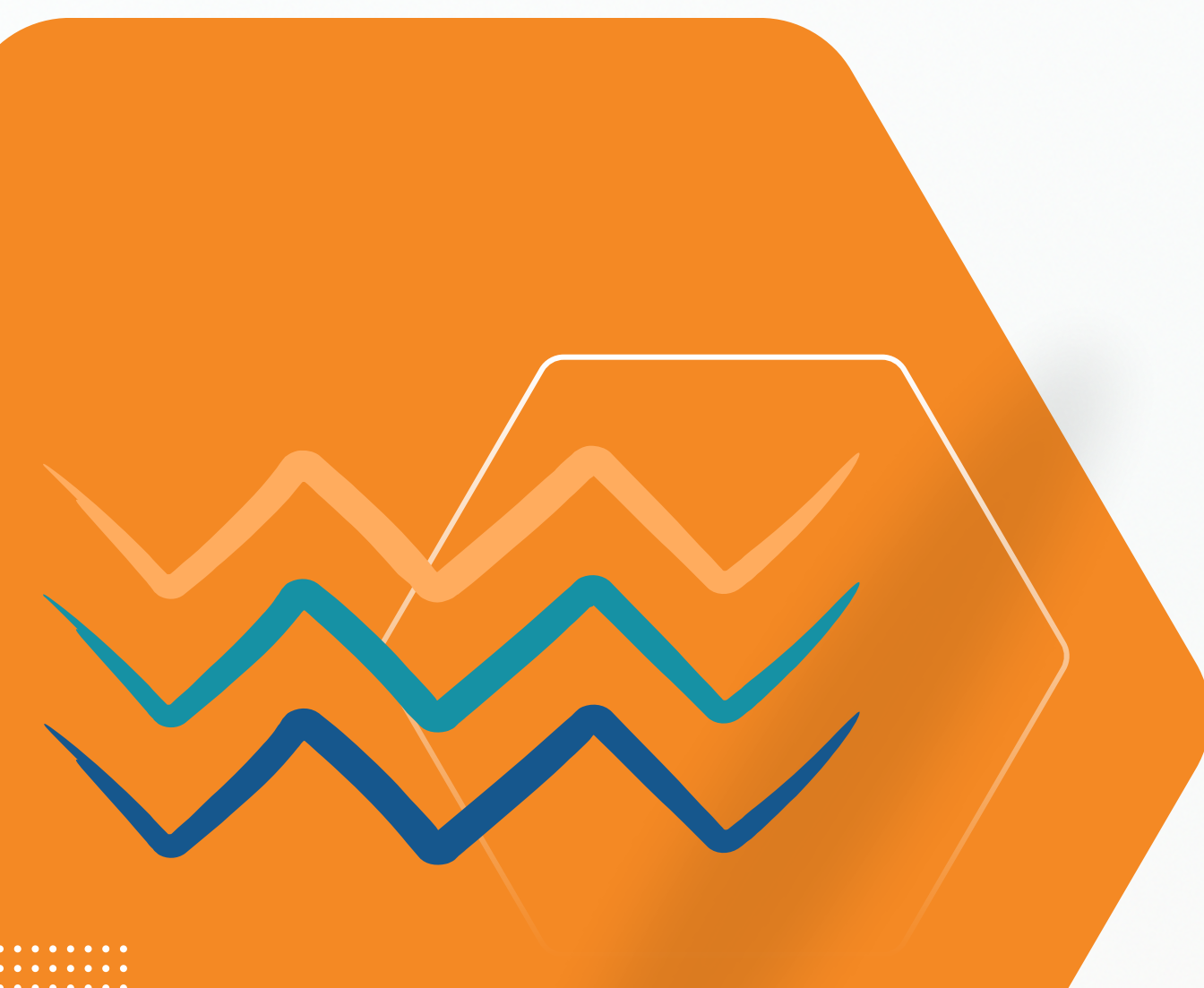






# PURPOSE OF INQUIRY

To be fulfilled as a leader by recognizing distress symptoms and building a system to capture productive work.





# MY WONDERING

I wonder if by capturing positive aspects of daily work I could foster a healthier mindset, promote self-confidence, and encourage sustainable personal and professional development.



# MY ACTIONS



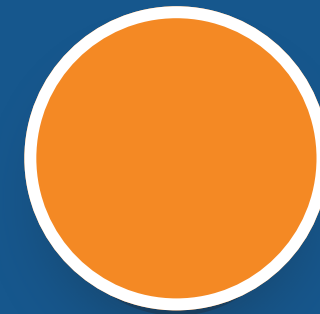
**Document**

Capture work



**Spreadsheet**

Include  
description and  
reflections



**Analyze**

Search for  
positives



# DATA COLLECTION



> Date of Task

> Satisfaction Level

> Context

> Reflection

Qualitative data collected for three months



# DATA BREAKDOWN

|   | A        | B                  | C                  | D   | E  |
|---|----------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| 1 |          |                    |                    | Don't let PERFECT get in the way of GREAT!  |  |
| 2 | Date     | Task               | Satisfaction Level | Overall Context   | Reflection for Great   |
| 3 | 12-1-24  | Staff Recognition  | 3                  | In previous months, I've done much better at giving individual recognition to staff members. (notes, quotes, emails) This past month I've had less motivation to do these things. In the last month, I've made an apple nacho bar for the entire staff.   | I recognized staff whole group this month by the nacho bar, hosting party, and gift.   |
| 4 | 12-3-24  | Difficult Conversa | 2                  | One concern over "friendly" behavior with students. I believe innocent but did have convo with teacher. Gave directive to limit physical contact for safety of him and his career. Other teachers are gossiping as opposed to discussing with me. One teacher discussed at a personal event with a parent. I need to discuss with this teacher but don't have the energy. She has been difficult in the past when addressing lack of professionalism. I need to discuss with my superintendent to get advice on moving forward. | I did have a very difficult conversation with a teacher. Leadership matters. It's difficult but essential. Not all admin takes on the hard parts.  |
| 5 | 12-4-24  | Math Planning      | 3                  | After concerns over math scores across district, two meetings have been set for adding systems to address. My coach and I have targeted SWARM to focus on math due to the type of checkpoint feedback. We have decided to look into multiplication charts and facts throughout the building. We have also initiated fact fluency in all three grade levels. We are seeing an increase in scores with last year's math textbook adoption prior to this study.  | I am "in the know" and taking steps towards improvement. I trust my coach to take steps to move forward. (And I'm waiting on products bc I wanted to give our student company a chance to produce the graphic.)  |
| 6 | 12-5-24  | Christmas Party    | 4                  | Teachers/staff commented on how personal the party was and how they enjoyed getting to interact with colleagues on a personal level. They said it felt better than being in public at a restaurant or in library after school.  | My assistant superintendent said I was a "rockstar" for hosting at my personal home. I hope that my staff sees my level of commitment to them by the effort I put forth and time I devote. I also hope for them to see me as human                               |
| 7 | 12-10-24 | Observations       | 4                  | Proud of getting two observations in during the first semester. I also have several mid-year checkins scheduled for teachers. Support staff misunderstood and signed up as well. I'm going to keep them just as good practice of formally checking in with all staff. I plan to organize my thoughts and mention some improvements I'd like to see. We'll see if the level of satisfaction decreases after my meetings.   | I'm proud of being ahead of the game. I've found scheduling the observations on my calendar makes it easier to commit to the time. I also feel scheduling multiple ones in a day kept me focused and on target. It was easier to get in the zone and stay there. |
|   |          |                    |                    |   | The positive is that by having this initial conversation maybe follow up conversations that will/could   |

## Categories (based on themes and patterns)

Outside Praise

Self-Reflected

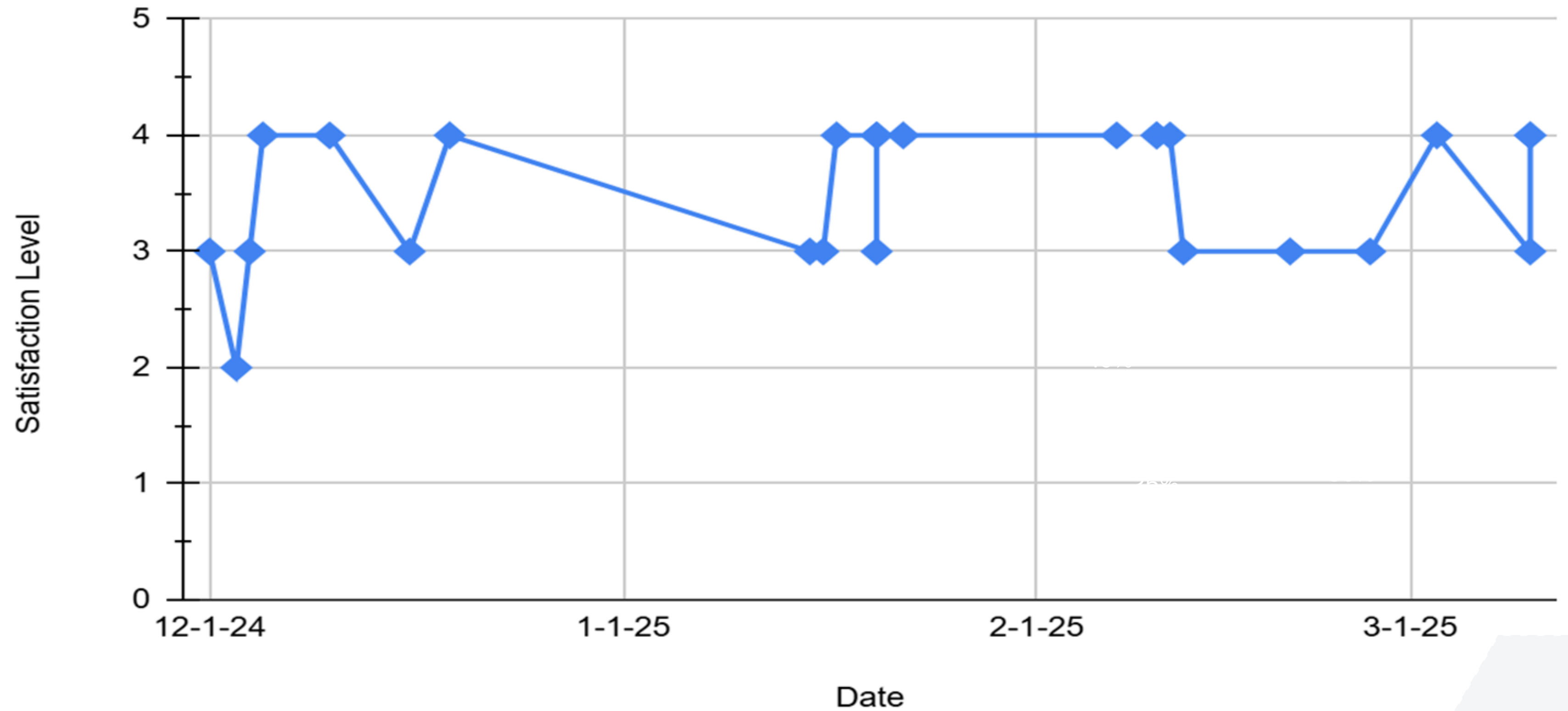
Preferred Tasks

Non-Preferred

Collaborative

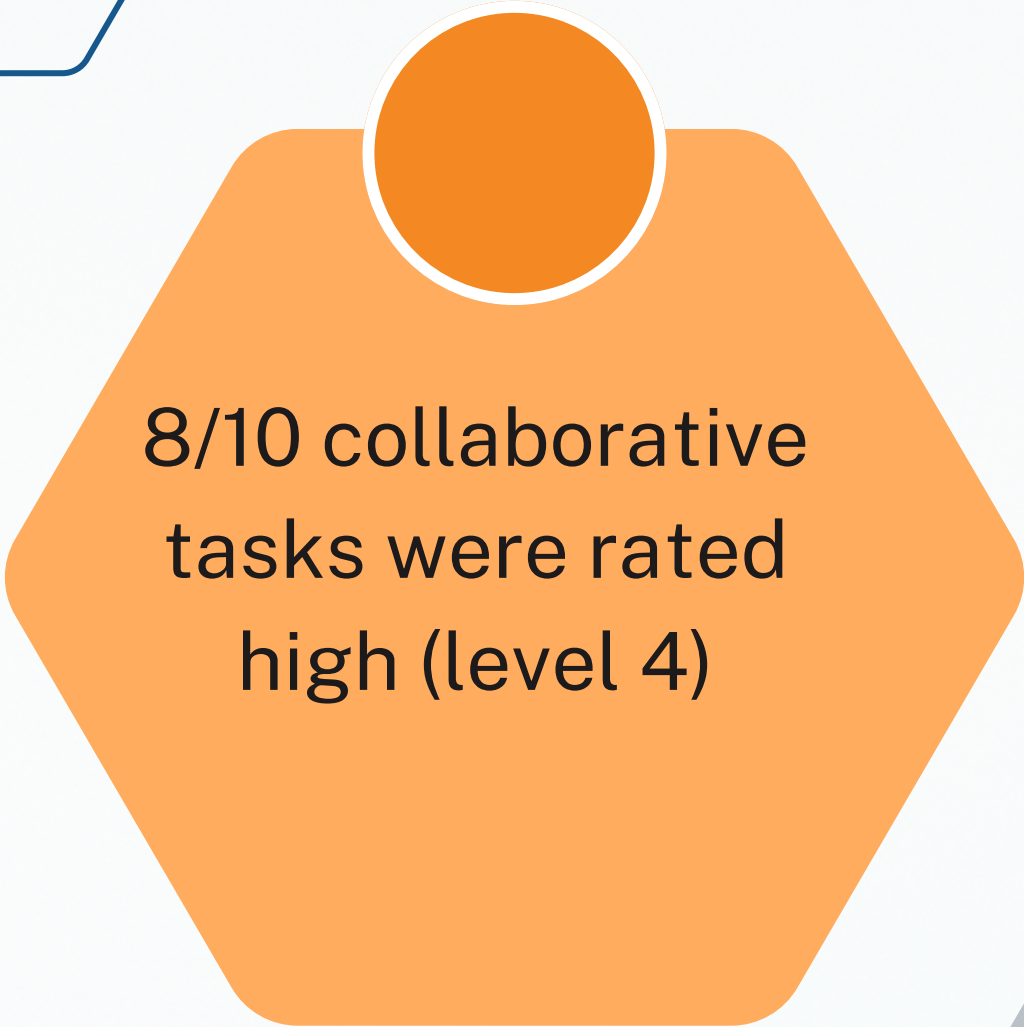
Independent

## Satisfaction Level vs. Date







# Data Analysis



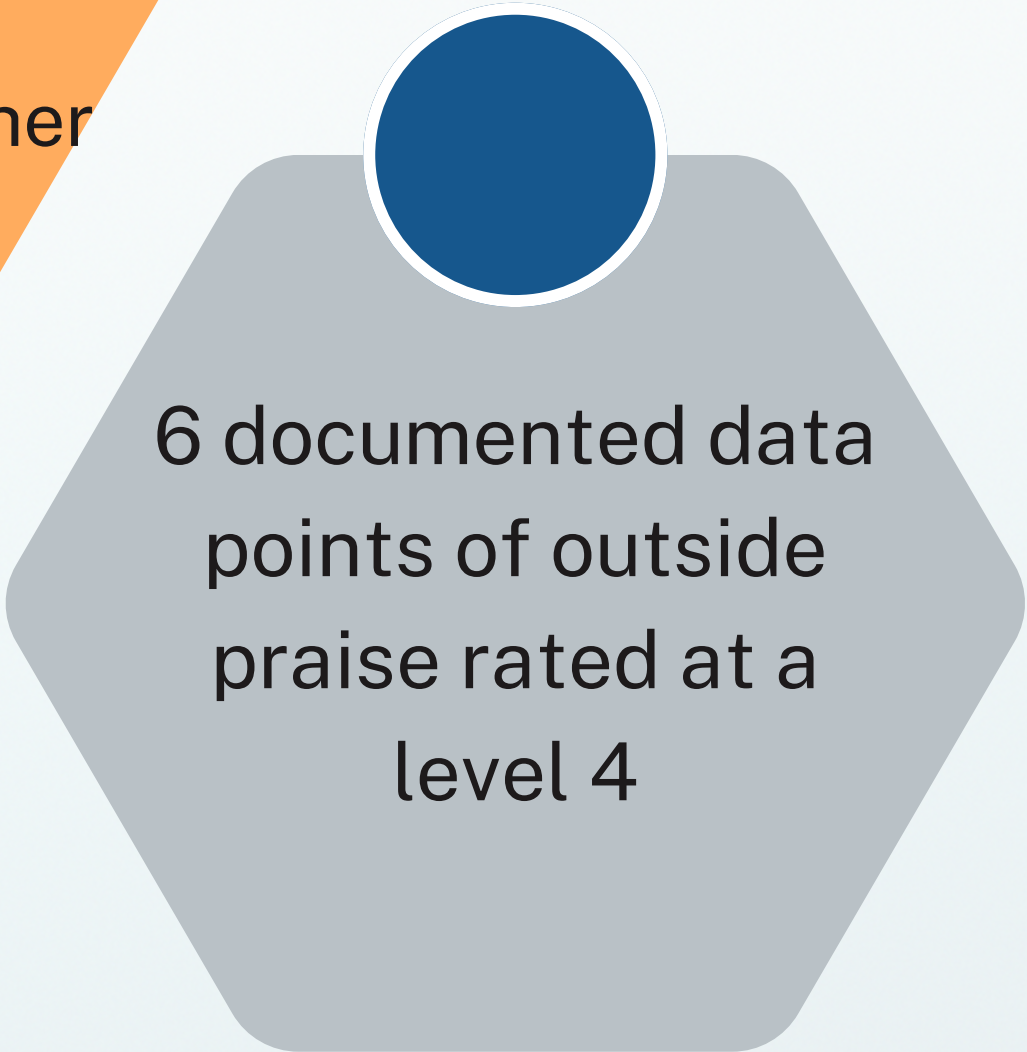
8/10 collaborative  
tasks were rated  
high (level 4)



10/14 preferred rated at  
level 4  
6/14 non-preferred rated  
at level 4  
\*Preferred rated higher



Satisfaction levels  
were consistently  
higher during  
second half of  
collection



6 documented data  
points of outside  
praise rated at a  
level 4



# MY DISCOVERIES

| 01 | Plan for preferred tasks.                                   |
|----|---|
| 02 | Look for opportunities for collaboration                    |
| 03 | Good enough is good enough.                                 |
| 04 | Shift from listening to negative to highlighting positives. |
| 05 | Continue to plan for time structure and productive work     |