

Checking Off What I Need in Order to Be Super-Principal, Super-Dad, Super-Husband...aka Super-Man!

As a principal, each day brings new challenges, unexpected tasks, and moments of reflection on time management. To improve productivity, I track my daily to-do list, analyze task completion patterns, and evaluate interruptions. By collecting this data, I aim to refine my time management strategies to be fully present for students, staff, and my family. This project is a commitment to intentional leadership and sustainable balance, focusing on maximizing productivity while minimizing stress. My goal is to develop strategies that enhance focus, accomplish meaningful goals, and model effective time management for staff. Ultimately, success is not about doing everything, it's about doing what truly matters, well.



CHECKING OFF WHAT I NEED IN ORDER TO BE SUPER-PRINCIPAL, SUPER-DAD, SUPER-HUSBAND...AKA SUPER-MAN!



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Background Leading to this Inquiry

In my first year as principal at Union Township Middle School, I immersed myself in understanding the building, staff, students, and broader community.

Daily surprises and challenges made time management a constant struggle. This reflection led me to explore how I spend my time and how it impacts my professional effectiveness and personal presence at home.

Purpose of this Inquiry

To refine my time management strategies so I can be fully present at school and at home.

By tracking and analyzing how I spend my time, I aim to increase productivity, reduce stress, and model intentional leadership.

My Wondering

How can I balance the demands of leadership while being present for my family and maintaining personal well-being?



My Actions: Part One

Initial Reflection

I began by journaling about my daily challenges as a new principal. I noticed I often felt unproductive, despite staying busy all day. This prompted a deeper reflection on where my time was going.

Recognizing the Problem

I realized that many of my tasks were reactive — driven by interruptions or unexpected issues — rather than aligned with intentional goals. I needed a simple system to monitor how I actually spent my time.

Developing a Strategy

I decided to collect daily data to gain clarity. I wanted something practical, quick to use, and easy to reflect on — which led me to the idea of a checklist.

My Actions: Part Two

● IPLI - Cohort 12

Why a Checklist

A checklist let me:

- Track tasks I intended to complete
- Capture tasks that popped up unexpectedly
- Note time-wasting events or interruptions
- Reflect on how productive I felt that day

Daily Use

Each day, I filled in the checklist:

- What I planned to do vs. what I actually did
- How much time I felt I wasted
- What new tasks emerged
- How I would rate my own productivity

Spent January & February collecting data on a daily basis.

2 Months of Data Collection

This hands-on method kept me mindful and accountable — helping me move from reactionary to intentional leadership



Google Forms

Data Collection



IP1 - Chort 12

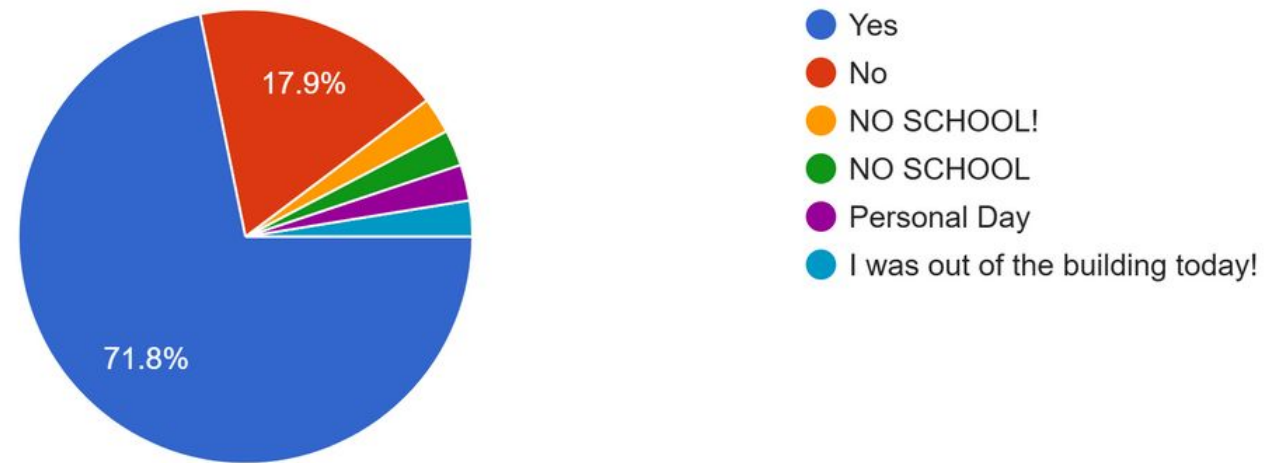
Questions I asked:

1. Did I complete a To Do List this morning when I arrived?
2. As the day progressed, did I add items to my To Do List?
3. If yes, how many did I add?
4. Did I complete all of the items on my To Do List?
5. Was there any time during the day I felt my time was wasted?
6. Do I feel I accomplished what I wanted to to get accomplished today?

My Data #1

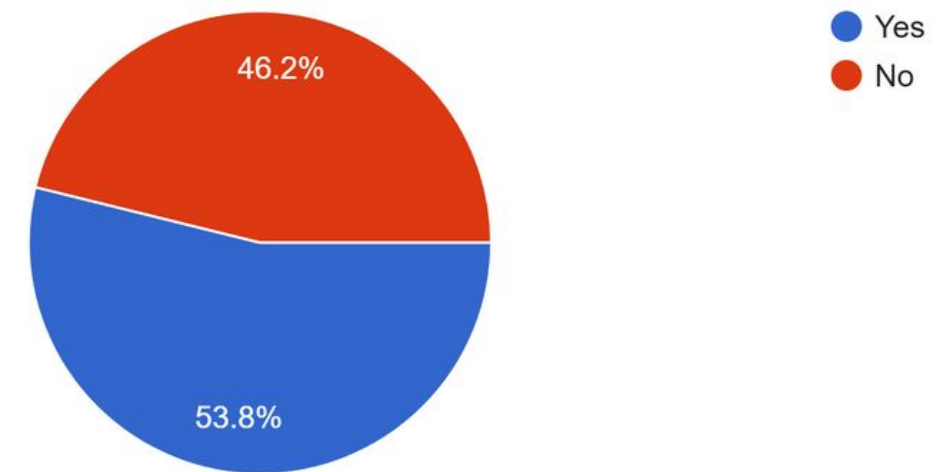
Did you complete a To Do List this morning when you arrived?

39 responses



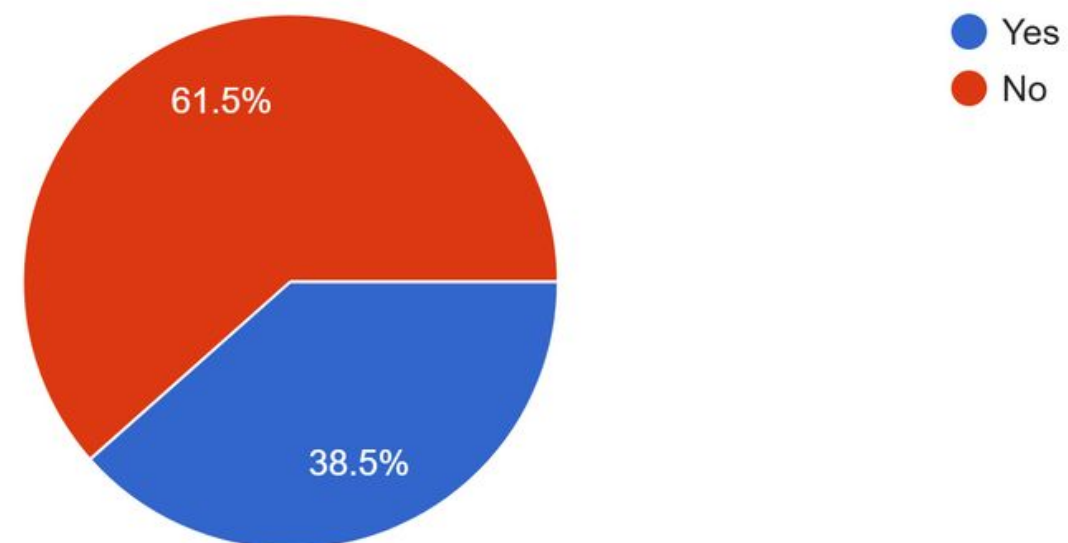
As the day progressed, did you add items to your To Do List?

39 responses



Did you complete all of your items for today's To Do List?

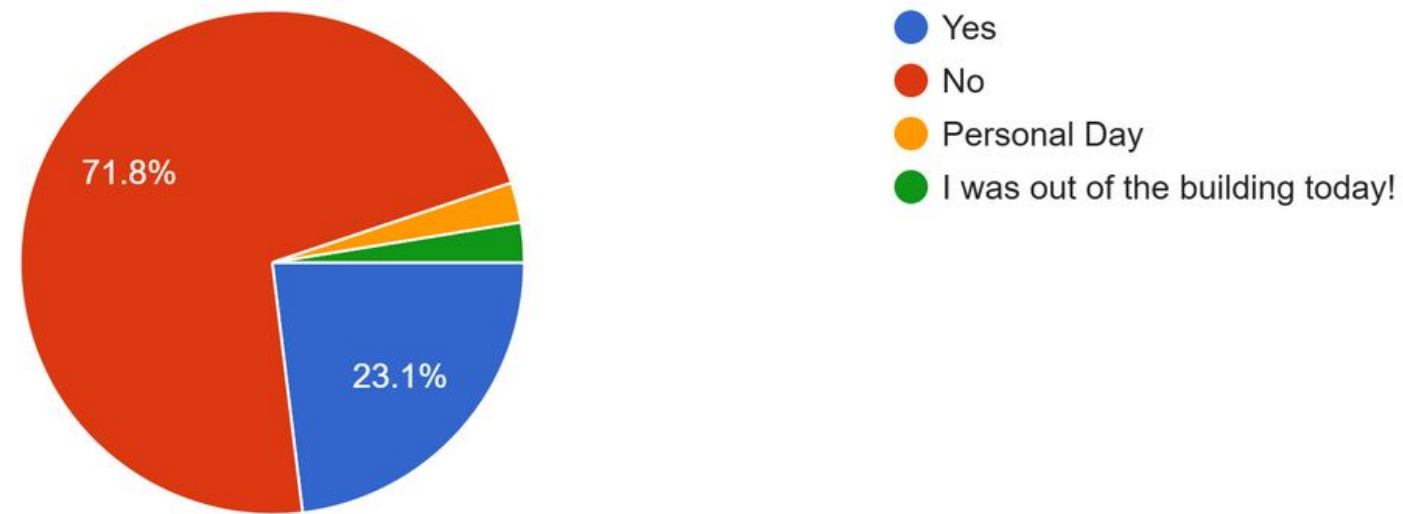
39 responses



My Data #2

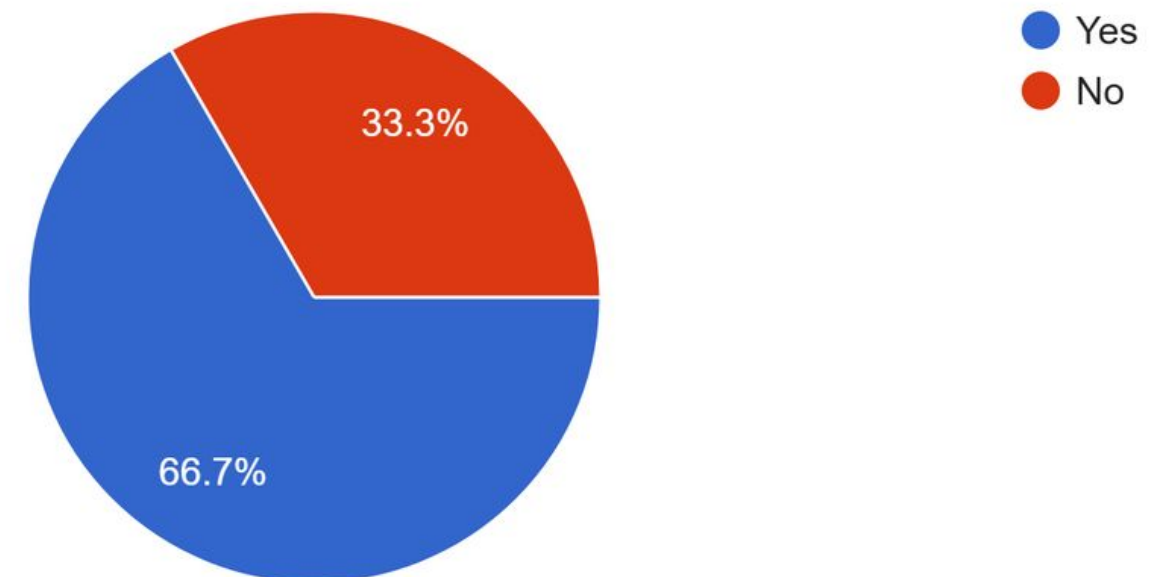
Was there any time during the day, you felt your time was wasted?

39 responses



Do you feel you accomplished what you wanted to get accomplished today?

39 responses



My Data #3

1. Emotional Landscape:

- I experienced a rollercoaster of emotions, ranging from deep stress, frustration, and anxiety to joy, pride, and accomplishment.
- There were days I felt like quitting, followed by days where I felt reenergized and empowered.

2. Time & Productivity:

- Time management was a recurring challenge—many entries express a need for “just a few more hours” or feeling like time was wasted.
- On productive days, you noted using to-do lists, prioritization strategies, and time blocking, which helped me stay focused.

3. Interruptions & Crisis Management:

- Several entries centered around crisis situations (threats & parent concerns), which hijacked my day and derailed my plans.
- These days left me drained and sometimes questioning my purpose or effectiveness.

4. Reconnecting & Relationships:

- I value staff relationships, using slower days to reconnect and check in.
- “GSDD” days (Get Stuff Done Days) also included delegation to the Dean of Students and a growing comfort with not doing it all alone.

5. Self-Awareness & Growth:

- I am actively reflecting, adjusting, and learning from mydays.
- I’ve begun to see what works for me (prioritizing large tasks, observing classrooms, scheduling time for focus).
- I am becoming more intentional about delegation and less reactive with my time.

My Discoveries

Learning Statement #1

“Intentionality transforms leadership.”

I learned that by taking time each day to plan, track, and reflect on my actions, I shifted from reacting to situations to leading with purpose. This small habit created clarity, reduced stress, and helped me align my work with my values.

Learning Statement #2

“Balance doesn’t happen by chance — it’s built through awareness.”

Through collecting and analyzing my own time management data, I discovered that presence — at work and at home — requires constant awareness. By naming distractions and celebrating accomplishments, I began building the balance I once thought was unattainable.

Learning Statement #1

“Intentionality transforms leadership.”

- On the days when I set clear goals in the morning, my checklist showed a notable increase in tasks completed (e.g., 8–9 tasks completed vs. 4–5 on less structured days).
- Myself-reported productivity ratings were consistently higher on the days I followed a goal-focused approach.
- Fewer interruptions were noted when I began the day with a plan, showing that intentionality helped create boundaries and structure in a chaotic environment.

What it means:

- Setting daily intentions helped me stay grounded in your priorities, increased task follow-through, and allowed me to lead more confidently — rather than just “putting out fires.”
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Learning Statement #2

“Balance doesn’t happen by chance — it’s built through awareness.”

- My checklist tracked not just what I accomplished, but also how often new tasks or interruptions pulled me off track — revealing how frequently my time was hijacked.
- On average, over 30 minutes per day were self-identified as ‘wasted,’ often due to unplanned meetings or avoidable interruptions.
- Logging and reviewing these patterns made me more aware of where my time was slipping, leading to deliberate adjustments like blocking focus time or delegating, when appropriate

What it means:

- Simply by becoming more aware of how my time was used — and misused — I began taking control of it. This awareness was the first step in creating healthier balance between my work and personal life.
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Where am I Heading Next

This journey has taught me that being “Super-Principal” doesn’t mean doing everything — it means doing the right things with intention.

Through daily data tracking, I discovered how easily my time was consumed by interruptions, unplanned tasks, and reactive decision-making. By slowing down and using a simple checklist, I brought clarity and structure to my days. More importantly, I learned that presence — at school and at home — begins with awareness and choice.

As a principal, this research will help me:

- Lead more intentionally, setting clearer goals for myself and my team.
- Delegate effectively and protect my focus for high-impact work.
- Model mindful time management for staff and students.

Where am I Heading Next

Impact on My School, Staff, and Community

This experience is already shaping how I:

- Support teachers in managing their own workload and wellness
- Build a culture where productivity doesn't mean overwork, but purposeful action
- Encourage self-reflection as a tool for professional and personal growth
- Create space for student well-being by leading through balance and empathy

Where am I Heading Next

Changes I Will Make:

- Continue daily goal-setting and reflection
- Limit and control interruptions during key work blocks
- Use my own story to inspire staff development conversations
- Make time management and mindfulness a leadership priority
- Protect space for home life with the same commitment I give school

As a husband and dad, it reminded me that my family deserves the same presence and care I give my school. I now prioritize disconnecting at home and being mentally available — not just physically.

THANK YOU

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