



Self-Preservation: Leading with Integrity

Principal Name: LaFonda Morris

School Name: Clifford Pierce Middle School

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

Outline what led you to this particular inquiry. Include the following:

- Staff not welcoming (19-20 was my first year as Principal and in this building)
- Staff divided
- No structure/rules for staff or students
- Union heavy - no loyalty
- Unrealistic expectations of administration
- No trust/faith
- Toxic Environment

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to prepare myself to improve the culture of the building and move the building towards reform.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, we wondered can I, as the principal, change the culture of the building by modeling core values.

My Actions (Slide 5-6)

In this step, begin by outlining how you gained insights into your wondering. Then, simply share exactly what you did to conduct this AR cycle.

In this section, provide the following:

Things that were already in place:

- Team Leader meetings
- Department Head meetings
- CIC meetings
- PBIS meetings
- Building Rep meetings
- Support Staff meetings (Social workers/Counselors)

Things I tried not to do unless needed

- Faculty meetings
- Prep period meetings

Based on my interactions with the building reps, it was clear that I was not to be trusted. Therefore, I focused on modeling core values by:

- Leading positive Team meetings
- Implementing an open door policy
- Leading bonding activities - personal questionnaire
- Holding raffles for meeting expectations

- Modeling flexibility
- Practicing soft skills usage
- Celebrating staff
- Meeting in a non threatening environment
- Demonstrating transparency

Data Collection (Slide 7)

- Building Rep Meetings
- PD surveys
- Other surveys
- Talking to those who accepted me and were willing to have those hard conversations with me

My Data (Slides 8-11)

Building Rep Meetings:

- October 14, 2020 - iReady, Re-entry plan
- November 11, 2020 - confronted about not being supportive of staff w/ iReady, etc.
- 1. 2 building reps resign; apology
- December 9, 2020 - re-entry plan
- January 13, 2021 - cancelled by reps
- February 10, 2021 - complained about staying past contracted hours when in-person
- March 10, 2021 - cancelled by reps; nothing specific to building

Professional Development Surveys (9/3 - 3/25):

- Tech Cadre led - 61% - 75% ; avg. 51 staff
- iReady - 49% - 80% - 93% - 97%; avg. 57 staff
- Depart. Meetings - 96% - 100%; avg. 46 staff
- Testing Integrity - 100%; 55 staff
- PBIS - 98%; 53 staff
- LGBTQ Youth, etc. - 100%; 53 staff
- Data - 92%; 50 staff
- SEL - 100%; 55 staff

Other Surveys:

- School-wide Cultural Competence Observation - Practices to ensure classroom and school safety for all are in place; 5
- Indiana Principal Leadership Institute - 3+

Talking to those who accepted me and were willing to have those hard conversations with me:

- People are afraid of you
- People think that you are mean and unfriendly
- People think that you are hiding information
- The Union and Google Classroom

My Discoveries (Slide 12-14)

Building Rep Meetings

1. Staff complaints are about things that aren't grievable offenses
2. Staff believes whatever their union leader states
3. **It is possible to have a healthy relationship with building reps**

Professional Development Surveys

1. Staff is more interested in things that they can't be held accountable for
2. They are extremely hard on their peers (complained about not being prepared)
3. They enjoy working with their department

Other Surveys

1. The building is moving in the right direction
2. The staff at least feels safe under my leadership

Talking to those who accepted me and were willing to have those hard conversations with me

1. Talking about "nothing" changed opinions about fear/unfriendly/mean
2. Agreeing with the staff and sharing the fight w/ them showed support
3. Dispelling rumors immediately built trust
4. Laughing at myself showed humanistic side of me

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 15)

School: I've learned that there are many hidden layers to the culture of my building.

Teachers: Many of the teachers are loyal/fearful to each other and this makes it harder to get buy-in.

Learned: The road may be long but there isn't a fork in it.

Book study: Mindset by Carol Dweck

- Mindset Survey
 - Weekly Professional Development
1. staff will present each chapter
 2. staff will participate in activities
 3. staff will report out weekly about changes in their classrooms
- Activities and discussions

New wondering: How can understanding your mindset increase the student's and staff's level of academic and personal success?

Bibliography (Slide 16)

- Dana, N.F. (2009). *Leading with Passion and Knowledge*. California: Corwin.
- Peterson, K.D. & Deal, T.E. (1998). How Leaders Influence the Culture of Schools. *Educational Leadership, Volume (56)*, p28-30.
- Eller, J.F. & Eller, S.A. (2013). Working with difficult Staff. *Educational Leadership, Volume (70)*.
- Patterson, J. & Paterson, J. (2004). Sharing the Lead. *Educational Leadership, Volume (61)*, p74-78.

Self-Preservation: Leading with Integrity

Clifford Pierce Middle School

LaFonda Morris
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Background Leading to this Inquiry

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- Staff divided
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Purpose of This Inquiry

The purpose of my action inquiry was to prepare myself to improve the culture of the building and move the building towards reform.

My Wondering

I wondered can I, as the principal, change the culture of the building by modeling core values.

My Actions

Things that were already being done:

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- Department Head meetings
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- PBIS meetings
- Building Rep meetings
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- Other surveys
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 1. The building is moving in the right direction
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