

Time Management...Don't Get Trapped In Your Office!

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

I am in my second year as principal in my building. I have a vast array of teachers who have been teaching from 30+ years to several who are in their first five years of teaching. Educational backgrounds also vary from several teachers with their Building Level Administrator Licenses down to recent Bachelor's Degrees or Transition to Teaching Licenses. In the past two years, the district has replaced over 1/3 of of the Middle/High School staff with new teachers. This has created somewhat of a disconnect between the older staff and those who are not familiar with the corporation and students.

As a new administrator, I want to make the most of my time spent with staff to help support them and help them be the most effective teachers they can be. In order to do that, I know that I have to take the time to learn about them and identify the most effective resources to help strengthen our district.

Therefore the purpose of my action research was to increase the amount of time that I spent with staff and students and decrease the time spent on logistics in the office to help improve my effectiveness as a building level administrator.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered, how can I make the most of my time with teachers in and outside of the classroom? Also, what strategies can I use to increase my intentional time in the classroom and how will spending more time in the classroom with teachers and students positively impact my leadership abilities?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insight into my wonderings, there were several things that I did to help improve my intentional time outside of the office. First, I completed a 10-minute analysis of my day for a week to identify how I am spending my time. Then, based on this information, I created a weekly calendar that I gave to my secretaries and AD to help them better understand where I would be each day. On this document, I specifically wrote walkthrough and evaluations to block out time to spend out of the office in the classrooms. I also printed out my evaluation documentation of the number of times that I have completed walkthroughs and evaluations in each classroom to identify which rooms I need to spend additional time in.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, I confirmed that I was spending a large portion of my day in the office on logistical and managerial items. I also determined that there were days when I was not spending any time in classrooms with teachers and students which was negatively impacting my effectiveness as a building level administrator.

By spending a majority of my time in the office working on logistical items, I began to lose touch with the needs in my building with my staff and student population. As I began to increase the time spent in classrooms, teachers would discuss with me concerns that had not previously been documented. Also, I found that students wanted to show me what they were working on and needed the affirmation from the principal to encourage them in their academic achievements. As a building principal, I found that this gave me a greater understanding of my building level needs and also provided a platform for students to have a voice in their academics.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

I have learned that as an administrator I need to intentionally get out into my building to spend time with my staff and students. I know that I have a great staff, but they need to know that I care about what is going on and the accountability is crucial to drive them to their fullest potential. I also learned that students enjoy having the principal in their classrooms and are excited to share what they are working on. In the future, I plan to continue using my weekly calendar that I share with my secretaries and AD and also monitor the number of walkthroughs and evaluations I am completing in classrooms to ensure that I do not fall back into the trap of spending too much time in the office working on logistical items.

References:

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