Taking Wallace Research to Practice:
Creating a Climate Hospitable to Education

National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Wallace Foundation Webinar Series

November 12, 2013
The School Principal As Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning 2013

Since 2000, the Wallace Foundation has published more that 70 reports on leadership.
Five Key Practices

Shaping a vision of academic success for all students.

Creating a climate hospitable to education.

Cultivating leadership in others.

Improving instruction.

Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.
In comparing teacher ratings identifying the most effective principals which element ranks number one in developing an atmosphere of caring and trust in a school?

1. Principals who set standards for highly instructional-focused conversations

2. Principals who hire and retain great teachers

3. Principals who focus on managing and balancing a leader’s responsibilities

4. Principals who are visionaries and share leadership
Moderator, Carol Riley  
Director, National Mentor Program, VA

Susan Holiday  
Gladys Noon Spellman Elementary School  
Prince George’s County Schools  
Maryland

Kirk Downing  
Brown Elementary School  
Nantick School District  
Massachusetts

Peter Carpenter  
Emmorton Elementary School  
Harford County Schools  
Maryland
Kirk Downing
Brown Elementary School
Nantick School District
Massachusetts

A Climate of Academic Success for All Students
Cultivating a Climate Focused on Student Achievement

The principal’s role in creating conditions that motivate educators to strive for excellence.
### Brown Elementary Demographics
#### 2012-2013

- **458 Students**: 223 male, 235 female
- **African American**: 3.5%
- **Asian**: 18.6%
- **Hispanic**: 7.4%
- **White**: 65.7%
- **Multi-race**: 4.8%
- **ELL Population (22% English as second language)**: 10.0%
- **Free and Reduced Lunch**: 11.6%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 9.2%
## Brown School Performance

**MCAS Rank (Massachusetts State Assessment)**

Special education rate and ELL Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ranked</th>
<th>ELL Rank</th>
<th>ELL Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>55th/903</td>
<td>10.6% Sped, 2.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>67th/895</td>
<td>9.6% Sped, 6.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>49th/890</td>
<td>8.6% Sped, 7.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>65th/886</td>
<td>9.2% Sped, 10%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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• 2014: Ranked 3rd/886, 7.8% Sped, 10%
Creating a Climate Hospitable to Education

(Feedback from Brown School Faculty and Staff)

- Serves others
- **Project calm and kindness**
- Presume positive intent
- Lead with consistency
- Support the needs of the faculty
- **Define values and beliefs**
- Transparent agenda
- Build leadership capacity in others
- Acknowledge the expertise of others
- Remain humble and give away credit
- Show your humanity (We do have lives outside of school.)
- **Be the change you expect to see in others**
- Build partnerships with your most challenging parents
- **Engage others when they are calm**
- Follow up on decisions to measure effectiveness and show you care
Trust Begins with the Principal

• Have an Entry Plan
  – Measure the current conditions before you institute change
  – Listen actively/empathetically
  – Gather as much information as you can possibly consume, then gather more.

• Establish purposeful channels of communication
• Treat people with the degree of professionalism you believe you deserve
• Be reasonable
• Eliminate fear
• Use Good Judgment
• Own your mistakes
What specific behaviors can principals employ in creating a climate hospitable to education?
Take the First Step

- Project calm and kindness
- Identify the positive qualities and contributions of every staff member
- Complement others
- Keep your promises! People will measure you on whether you keep your promises
- Walk the school daily – establish systems
Establish **Purposeful** Channels of Communication

- Principal’s Advisory with the Teacher’s Association *Monthly*
- Admin/Mental Health Team *Weekly*
- Special Education Faculty Meeting *Weekly*
- Literacy Meeting *Weekly*
- PTO Leadership *Monthly*
- School Council *Monthly*
- Daily Meeting with the secretary
- Child Study and ACT (Assist Children and Teachers)
Build Systems Dependent on a Team

• Executive Functioning support for every classroom
  – First twenty minutes and last fifteen minutes of each day
  – All hands on deck

• Child Study Process
  – Consultancy Protocol (Critical Friends)
  – Build expertise among the staff
  – Back the talk of the meeting with action in the classroom
THANK YOU

Kirk Downing

A Climate of Academic Success for All Students
Deliberate Actions that Lead to a Positive Climate

Susan Holiday
Gladys Noon Spellman Elementary School
Prince George’s County Schools
Maryland
Demographics and School Information

- K-6 School
- Free or reduced lunch 85%
- ESOL Students: 33%
  - 4 ESOL Teachers
- Self Contained - K-2
- Departmentalized - Grades 3-6
- School-Wide Title I Program

500 Students
How have we created a climate hospitable to all stakeholders?
Leadership Skills and Practices

• Transparency
• Deliberate Behaviors
• Feedback
• Receptiveness
Transparency

• Be **explicit** with what you are going to do and why you are going to do it.

• **Inform** all stakeholders about your methods of communication.
Deliberate Behaviors

Be strategic with your actions when you speak with stakeholders.

Each stakeholder has a different need. Find that ‘need’!
Feedback

• After key events in school, ask for feedback from stakeholders.
• Be receptive to the feedback. *Don’t take it personally.*
• Make use of their feedback-Be deliberate!
Receptiveness

• Stakeholders will always share their thoughts. Just listen!

• The majority of people want to make their school a great place. People want their voices heard.
THANK YOU

Susan Holiday

Be Open and Honest and Accepting of All
Peter Carpenter

Emmorton Elementary School
Harford County Schools
Maryland

It is All About Learning!
Time is made…

…for what is valued.

What is valued by you as the principal becomes valued by the staff.

What is valued by the staff is transferred to students.
Our primary value should be LEARNING...

Where is the focus for learning in your school?

– Students?
– Teachers?
– Families?
– Leadership?
Emmorton School in a Nutshell

- 555 students in Grades K-5
- Located in suburban Bel Air, Maryland
- Free and reduced lunch 15%
- ESOL Students 10%
- Special Education Students 12%
Soaring with the Eagles

From 2010 → 2013

- **Grade 3:** 91% of students proficient and advanced on Maryland School Assessment (MSA)
  - →97% of students proficient and advanced

- **Grade 4:** 94% of students proficient and advanced on Maryland School Assessment (MSA)
  - →98% of students proficient and advanced

- **Grade 5:** 91% of students proficient and advanced on Maryland School Assessment (MSA)
  - →100% of students proficient and advanced
• How can I show that student learning is a priority in our school?
  – From every venue, share the learning for which you’re most proud - *from the stage, Twitter, Facebook, etc.*
  – Student work displayed around the school: in the office…in the main hallways…outside of classrooms.
  *Hint: Administrators can use post-it notes to help provide feedback to kids on their work.*
Student Learning

- Faculty Meeting Shout Outs

- WALK AROUND…every day in some way.
  - Make a point to tell parents via email, phone calls, or in the car rider line at the end of the day what you see their children doing.

- Bottom Line: In everything, ask
  - Are we doing what is in the best interest of students?
Teacher Learning

• Align the school mission to ensure that learning is at the heart of the mission.

• Provide layered opportunities for teacher learning, such as
  – Build healthy team Professional Learning Communities
  – Make Faculty Meetings professional development instead of information sharing.
  – Create Professional Learning Network in Twitter
  – Implement Wonderful Wednesdays
  – Align Professional Development Plans to focus on learning.
  – Demonstrate Lessons… BY YOU!!
Anchor Charts
Teacher Learning

- Constantly ask teachers what they need and get it for them!
- Post Observation Conferences focus on 5 questions:
  1. What did you want students to know and be able to do?
  2. Why is that important?
  3. What was successful?
  4. What could have been modified to help meet the needs of your learners?
  5. What is something that you learned that you will now apply to your practice?

Hint: Make a wall in your office with post-it notes. Once your teacher makes a goal, add it to your post-it note wall. Take the post it note off the wall a few weeks later and go have a follow-up conversation with the teacher about how it went.
Community Learning

Less formal evenings that look like they’re for fun but have strong learning elements in them.

Family Nights - A time for parents to learn

- Family Math Nights
- Family Reading Nights
- Family STEM nights
Community Learning

- Establish a Professional Learning Network with parents on Twitter where you ask questions of parents monthly and access feedback from the community at large.
- Make contacts with people during the car rider line and let them know the good things their children did.
- Invite community input on your School Improvement Team.
Leadership Learning

• Schedule time to allow teachers to meet, plan, and share.

• Reading together: - “Book Study” style.

• Expecting all members to be part of all things instructional…
  – Scoring benchmark assessments with teachers.
  – Planning
  – Participating in weekly PLC meetings (not facilitating: being a part of the team)
Leadership Learning

• Virtual meetings such as Twitter Chats.
• Twitter has become my “morning professional journal reading.”
  – more information than reading a traditional newspaper.
• Conference attendance—
  – Bring TEACHERS!
THANK YOU
Peter Carpenter

A vision for leadership success!
CREATING A CLIMATE HOSPITABLE TO EDUCATION

*Great teachers are retained and successful in schools with great principals!*

Teachers perform their best in schools that have a climate established by principals, like Susan, Kirk, and Peter, who will:

- support the development of their skills.
- promote professional learning communities.
- clearly acknowledge their contributions leading to student achievement.
Creating a Climate Hospitable to Education

Q & A

Write your questions for the presenters in the chat box.
Future Webinars
Taking Wallace Research to Practice

Tuesday, December 10, 2013
Cultivating leadership in others.

January 14, 2014
Improving instruction.

February 11, 2014
Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.
Resources

- **Learning From Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning**, Wallace Foundation, July 2010
- **Central Office Transformation for District-Wide Teaching and Learning Improvement**, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (University of Washington), 2010
- **Improving School Leadership: The Promise of Cohesive Leadership Systems**, RAND Corporation, 2009
- **How Leadership Influences Student Learning**, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (University of Minnesota) and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), 2004
National Association of Elementary School Principals

THANK YOU!

Carol Riley
Susan Holiday
Peter Carpenter
Kirk Downing