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Best Practices

1) As an instructional leader, one of my best practices is to insure the highest level of achievement for all students by guiding the development and implementation strategies for instructing the whole student—emotionally, socially, and academically. As an elementary school leader, I have been an advocate for teaching the "whole" student. Through our weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC), teachers along with administration designate time to review student data and explore which strategies and skills the students are mastering or struggling with. This sacred time is utilized to review data that identifies specific strengths and weaknesses of students and suggestions about strategies to assist students with reaching their highest potential. Through collaborative discussions, teachers are able to learn from their peers about successful practices and strategies which help to guide organizational decision-making for students at all levels of achievement and performance.

Deeply rooted in organizational decision-making, the School Building Level Committee (SBLC) serves to meet the needs of all students. As a member of the SBLC, I strive to implement the policies and procedures designed to identify students in need and provide the support required to assist students in developing into strong, confident students. Establishing trust with and between all team members including teachers, pupil appraisal staff, the school counselor, and parents is paramount to creating a decision-making process that confidently addresses student concerns. Whether a student's concerns are academic, social, or emotional, we are, as a committee, assigned to the task of making appropriate decisions and providing services required by students in order to insure student success.

As an educational leader, I have taken an active role in collaborating with all stakeholders to incorporate diverse perspectives and foster consensus regarding our school's vision, mission, and high expectations that are both attainable and challenging. Appropriate, solid decision-making by both students and teachers

provides a foundation in which we can all achieve, grow, and take risks. Being part of the decision-making process makes me proud to be an instructional leader.

2) As it is true in everyday life, most of us thrive when we feel safe and secure around those that are invested in our wellbeing and success. Schools should reflect the very nature of these concepts. As a former first grade teacher for 15 years and now an educational leader, I understand the importance of creating a positive school culture that fosters a sense of wellbeing and safety so that every student and staff member can learn and interact together in a productive manner. I believe that it is essential to understand the dynamics behind a school's structure and sense of community in order to develop a culture that is impactful and inviting for all stakeholders. When I began as an Assistant Principal three years ago, it was my goal to insure that every adult and child knew that they were important to me and that I cared about them. I knew as an educational leader that I would have to put in the work to accomplish this goal. I began doing so by walking the halls each morning and sharing positive, heartfelt comments to both students and teachers. Although simple, comments like "Happy Monday, I'm glad that you're here today," "Welcome back," or "Have a wonderful day!" have assisted me in establishing meaningful relationships with students and teachers alike. It was another goal of mine that teachers and students would pay it forward by engaging in the same behavior. It has made a difference! Today, these goals remain strong.

As the chairperson of the PBIS committee, I work alongside other committee members to build upon a school culture of fairness and consistency. Clear, concise classroom and school-wide rules and guidelines have been established and implemented which has aided in building trust. I often praise teachers for a decline in discipline referrals, and teachers praise students for promoting positive behavior. I work diligently with students who do not earn PBIS rewards to help identify areas that need improvement so that they can earn upcoming PBIS rewards. Each month, students and teachers are able to celebrate their successes at the PBIS bash.

As an educational leader, I believe that I have helped to create an environment where students and adults can both succeed and fail with confidence knowing that they are safe to do so because we all stand and work together.