NEW PRINCIPAL CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2020

THIS ISSUE

Build culture

FEEDBACK
TOP 3 RESULTS CAPTURED

How do you articulate vision and mission?

- **30%** Other (School does not have a vision; work in progress; rewriting or revising mission)
- **23%** Throughout school on posters, murals, etc.
- **21%** Embed within an agenda

Voice for teachers in decision-making

- **74%** Teachers on key committees
- **11%** Other (Personalize PL, staff evaluations as two-way conversations; key committees; regular surveys)
- **9%** Staff evaluations as two-way conversations

5 STRATEGIES TO CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR STAFF

NAESP *COMMUNICATOR*

Principals have always been responsible for ensuring student safety. Enter 2020, and principals have the new obligation of ensuring safety during a pandemic. After completing the longest summer break ever (March through September), our students returned to school a little before Labor Day. Both teachers and students were eager to get started. While cautious about safety measures put in place, parents were excited that their children would return to a life of learning in real life, real time. But I had concerns about safety. I had to acknowledge the pressures we all were under. Some of the staff members have had family members who lost jobs. Some have had housing issues. Unfortunately, some have had family members to be diagnosed with—or even died from—COVID-19.

Read more

TRIALS OF A FIRST-YEAR PRINCIPAL: THE CHANGE PROCESS

BY CHRISTOPHER BAILEY, ED.D.
NAESP *COMMUNICATOR*

Change is inevitable when taking on a new position. As principal, I am ultimately responsible for the learning outcomes and daily operations within our learning community. The journey, however, is not one that I can go alone if I hope to be successful in implementing change. Building capacity for change can be a slow and arduous task for any leader, but it's necessary to foster growth in staff efficacy and student learning.

Read more

Celebration of different cultures

- **35%** Other (Social media; themed events; celebrations throughout the year; sharing anti-racist curriculum; libraries)
- **23%** School assemblies
- **21%** Community meetings

Parental engagement

- **35%** PTA/PTO
- **19%** Other (Family nights; limited parental engagement due to COVID)
- **15%** Supporting at-home learning

Promote student voice

- **28%** Offer opportunities for students to plan and lead events
- **20%** Establish a student council
- **20%** Designated discussion time to explore and develop ideas with students or problem solve

Build relationships with staff

- **34%** Collaborative, inclusive learning environments
- **34%** Multiple channels of communication and accessibility
- **14%** Other (Servent leadership; encourage collaboration, reflection, and communication)

What systems/protocols do you have in place to help restore relationships after a conflict is resolved?

- Conscious discipline models of conflict resolution.
- Restorative circles/restorative justice practices.
- Peer mediation and self reflection.
- Direct conversations with staff members involved, frequent check-ins, follow up conversations.
- Open-door policy and morning sessions.

What community activities do you attend or lead?

- Food market, board meetings, materials distribution, chat & chews.
- In a typical year, we host family nights each month such as restaurant nights, movie under the stars, and skate night. These have been canceled due to the pandemic. We're partnering with the PTO to plan some fun virtual events. We have had a virtual family movie night and virtual autumn party in which we played games and had a dance party.
- Monthly coffee and conversations.
- Reading night, book fair, intermural sports.
- Trunk or treat, turkey trot, academic parent teacher teams.
- Church, civic events, social/fundraising events, children's events.

Describe any innovative and effective instructional initiatives you are doing or have done this year.

- Our focus has definitely been on improving our remote instruction. Every teacher is now using the same platform (SeeSaw) and we are tailoring our PD around remote instruction.
- Professional development has been set up like a conference where teachers get to pick which webinar, live virtual session or self discovery sessions they attend.
- Including teachers in planning across the entire campus, including Early Head Start Licensed Daycare Facility, including parents virtually or with send home material because of mandates from COVID not allowing them to visit campus, working with all staff (custodial, cafeteria, etc.) to provide cross curricular instruction for our small campus, this instruction includes songs, dances, and morning meetings that help with learning going on in the class room.

- This year we have been able to put our PBIS SOAR Matrix into practice at our school. Our leadership team, which consists of teachers from each grade level, department and admin, worked and planned all last year to prepare the next matrix and PBIS plan. We got feedback from teachers, students, and parents, created a plan to implement, and then created posters, videos, and lesson plans for teachers to use and parents to view at home with their children. So far it's been successful and we're seeing students looking for ways to earn SOAR cards and follow the SOAR expectations at our school!
- Our building follows the principles of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Kids. We not only teach these habits, but we do our best to model them. We hold monthly staff meetings, where everyone has the opportunity to voice their issues, concerns, or ideas. Many times they come up with ideas that they are interested in trying and I tell them to roll with it. In the midst of the pandemic, we have implemented standards based grading with proficiency scales, rewritten our ELA curriculum to better meet student needs and we are just now getting started our Daily Squawk. This will be a group that helps with our school announcements. My staff had the idea that it would be more engaging for students to be a part of it, so we had students apply for positions. We are starting with our oldest 3rd grade and working our way down.

Resources:

- Center for Innovative Leadership: Share Your Strategies

- NAESP *Communicator*

- *Project Implicit*

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us most. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and famous?' Actually, who are you not to be?...And when we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

-Marianne Williamson