**Reflections on the Standard**

I was raised in a community that believes that it takes a village to raise a child. In essence, those support systems apply as a life preserver throughout the child's educational journey to succeed in school. In addition, Family-school-community partnerships foster family and community involvement in the education process. For example, it has been crucial during the covid-19 pandemic for school districts to depend on parental engagement. School Districts have promoted family and community involvement to help keep our children on track. Our school district had to reach out and encourage parents to help their students with homework and provide opportunities that we no longer could provide. We used resources that typically we would not partner with to help educate our students. For example, we used community partners to offer internet hotspots for parents and lunches for kids who typically would be in a classroom all day for the last two years.

Ultimately, we found that students improve their academic performance when you get families and community members involved in the student education process. They also develop bonds or connections with a supporting cast of community members that root them towards success. This makes them feel more confident, especially when their courses get tough.

**Summary of Activity 1: Analyze PRACC Data**

**This was the first activity I completed for my internship. My administrator mentioned that our scores had gone down on the PRACC, and she wanted to see what the data looked like if we compared the past two years. I set up a spreadsheet that analyzed data from the test in 2018 and 2019 (Appendix C). This activity took six hours. I started by going to the PRACC website and finding my school; I took the data from both years, including grade level, and set up the spreadsheet to show the difference between them. The spreadsheet was sent to all teachers, and we were asked to brainstorm ideas on increasing our test scores. Next, I went to the board meeting, where the school administrative assistant outlined all the data. After she showed the data, the board voted on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) that was created using the PRACC data and then put onto the Maryland Dashboard, which makes the SIP a public document.**

**Activity 2: IEP Meeting with Behavior Plan**

During my internship, I had the opportunity to serve as the ELA during many IEP meetings. In our IEP meetings, we use the team approach. We believe that a team approach best suits the whole child. In our district, the team approach is required. For example, in one particular IEP meeting, a student was placed on a behavior contract. This is a student that had never attended school before this school year. The student was placed on the behavior contract for some time. At this point in the school year, the team leaned toward an alternative placement for the next year with a fresh start.

The team had exhausted all usual avenues for the student and his IEP accommodations to facilitate him being successful in an inclusive classroom. In the meeting with all stakeholders, we decided that if the student continued to regress and did not meet minimum progression and manifestation hearing would be scheduled. A manifestation hearing would include the team, parents, special education teachers, regular education teachers, and ELA. In this meeting, the group makes one last attempt to accommodate the needs of this student at this site. With input from all stakeholders, the special education teachers designed an action plan with extrinsic incentives to encourage and support the student. In this process, we ensured a system of responsibility, modeled self-awareness and responsibility while maintaining morale and legal guidelines.

Secondly, as the school leader, we promoted the success of all students by making decisions with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. Part of my job is also advocating for the best interest of my students and to offer non-bias support. I started with getting my teachers and staff to invest in the importance of standard 5. Often, teachers struggle, for many reasons, being able to offer differentiated instruction across the board. This becomes very evident when participating in the IEP or 504 processes. So, getting the tools can only help you realize what their responsibility to all students is. Thus, it was essential to design preparation time to collaborate with the special education department to ensure students' needs were met in all environments. I prioritized attending these PLCs and model teachers how collaborative planning could fill the gaps that special education students desperately need (See Appendices C-E).

**Summary of Activity #3: Plan a Professional Development**

This standard includes professional development for staff to learn collaboratively. For this activity, we started by planning an in-person professional development to go over curriculum mapping and make sure we were ready for report cards. Unfortunately, the pandemic began, and we were sent home to shelter in place. We were home for almost two weeks when the professional development was scheduled. The week before the professional development, my administrator asked me if I still wanted to run the day. This was a great time to learn about flexibility. We decided to do a short survey to see what teachers wanted to know about that day. They had been teaching distance learning for about a week when they got the survey. The survey showed that most teachers wanted to get more training on Google Classroom and Zoom.

I spent six hours on this activity, including working on the initial professional development planning. The survey showed that most teachers wanted to learn about Zoom and Google Classroom. For the Zoom training, my administrator had just attended a professional development from Zoom, so she decided to run the Zoom question and answer session. Two of my colleagues and I had become familiar enough with Google Classroom to run a question and answer session and a quick how- to enter assignments, return assignments, and how to use the review list and the grade book. We also shared how to make PDFs into slides the students can type into. This shows that we could work as a team to create a continuous learning environment and help each other get through learning in a pandemic.

The second half of the professional development was more specific to our school and not losing track of our mission to provide hands-on developmentally appropriate lessons to students. Since we were all new to distance learning, she wanted us to work in our grade-level teams to create hands-on lessons and a project for project- based learning. Once all the groups had a project, we shared them with other teachers to use the parts of the projects that were useful for our grade levels. This activity showed commitment to the standard by staying true to our mission, having teachers running the professional development, and collaboration to create lessons for hands-on learning.

**Impact on Student Achievement**

According to standard 8, “Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and wellbeing (*Professional-standards-for-educational-leaders\_2015*, 2017, p. 16).” “Involving parents in the education of their children is associated not only with students but also with teachers, schools, and districts (Becker and Epstein, 1982b; Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1991a) (*Chapter 3*, 1995, The Impact of Parent and Community Involvement Programs section).” Research supports that parents and community involvement programs have a direct correlation between student outcomes. Studies are abundant that associate parent and community involvement programs to positive student outcomes. Overall, student achievement is increased.

Parents acquire new skills or improve skills to become more actively involved in their student’s schoolwork while at home. At the same time, teachers develop more positive opinions about families and community members. As a result, the teacher will engage more frequently with parents and community members, improving the school climate. While there is no concrete way to attach outcomes to parent and community involvement. It has been noticed that when a parent is actively engaged, There has been a reduction in school dropouts, delinquency, and pregnancy rates. These outcomes are positive, but we still need to research and pinpoint how engagement correlates to student achievement.

**Reflections on Personal Growth**

During my internship, previous evaluations from a prior supervisor came to mind often. Previously, my supervisors had addressed that a concern that I was not approachable. Throughout my internship, I realized that it was necessary to make families and community members trust that I was available and cared about their concerns. Also, just like a well-tended garden, a well- tended relationship will produce a better harvest. If I want my stakeholders to help work towards our common goal, it takes me tending to the relationship and prioritizing it. In addition, I understand what a presence in outside community events does to the school culture; You become relatable and vested in all aspects that affect your school. Overall, I walked away knowing that your walls extend beyond the traditional brick and mortar and right into the community as a school leader.

**Reflections on Mastery**

Standard 8 supports that the community and the school create a partnership designed to promote student achievement. Students will be able to continue their achievements beyond the school walls where partnerships are established. I worked to master this standard by working with teams of teachers to design activities that would promote parent awareness of student success and work on committees that affect student achievement. Frequently, we found that our parents were not aware of what they could do to be more involved in their student's educational journey.

We found that by inviting parents, students, and community members to work on various committees, they were eager to participate. In addition, many parents and community members word thankful and pleased to be invited to the decision-making process. I measured my mastery of this skill based on feedback received by stakeholders of the events that they attended. I also noticed end increase end parental and community volunteering when the school phase is back in session.

**Conclusion**

Effective school leaders promote engaging families and community members in meaningful ways. A meaningful relationship can be mutually beneficial and advantageous to student achievement and wellbeing. As a principal internship at two different settings, I worked hard to build and maintain trusting relationships with school staff and families. I see my relationships with my parents as an asset. When looking at students, we must acknowledge that their first teachers were their parents. So, naturally, getting them engaged to continue the influence that they have on their children is crucial. An effective school leader who can get parents and community members actively involved has unlocked the key to success in their school.

The basic design of schools is to support communities that surround them. Effective school leaders engage with families and community members to ensure that the community's needs are addressed. In addition, they engage in a way that will help families and communities get on board to support students on their educational journey. Standard 8 focuses on family and community engagement. After full implementation of standard 8, the standard can be extended to focus on the learning community. An effective school leader will continually promote making connections with all stakeholders, even those that extend beyond the surrounding community.

There is a clear need for open, clear, and safe interactions between families and community members. While we will not always agree with the direction of the school, we will always need to work closely together to help our students succeed. An effective school leader will always act fairly and with integrity while advocating for the wellbeing of their students. Other perspectives must be heard and recognized. Keep in mind that if opinions or suggestions align with the school's vision, mission, and core values, it is in the best interest of the school culture to welcome implementing community involvement programs. This will build morale with all stakeholders.

It is important as school leaders that we understand the perspective of others and how diverse perspectives help build a strong relationship to help increase student success. School leaders are always working to ensure that their schools do not perform poorly and are ensuring equal opportunities for success for their students. Ultimately, as school leaders, if we remember that our ultimate goals ensure student achievement and safety of our students, we must make decisions accordingly. Being student-centered does not mean that you cater to them; it means you do what it takes to help them become good citizens (Lynch, 2020, para. 3).

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