**Reflection on the Standard**

“Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being (*Professional-standards-for-educational- leaders\_2015*, 2017, p. 17).” Since traditional schools are brick and mortar, meaningly, they are buildings. It is the responsibility of the school leader to ensure the safety of the building. While doing so, they must ensure that there a systems and processes in place that occur in the physical building that promote student success.

Standard 9 directly addresses the operation and management of the school building. When not always valued as highly as the other standards, it is just as important to ensure safety. As with the other standards, a school leader must design, implement, and monitor operations and administrative systems. All operations and systems must align with the mission, vision, and core values of the school. A school leader must be prepared to make staffing and scheduling decisions about teachers and staff that optimize the professional capacity to promote student success.

As the school leader, it is also your responsibility to allocate funds, physical space, and other resources to support academic instruction, assessment, and student learning. Beyond budgetary decisions, the school leader must also make space for family and community involvement programs to ensure engagement. While daunting, the school leaders have an ethical responsibility to safeguard the school’s monetary and nonmonetary resources judicially. An effective leader is also the first line of defense for teachers and staff. They ensure that limited disruption of instruction occurs throughout the day.

More recently, technology has been used to limit disruptions and streamline communication. They are accountable for all communication that delivers actionable information. The school leader always maintains the narrative at their school. It is their responsibility to know local, state, and federal laws that affect a student’s educational journey. Standard 9 has been essential for me as a future school leader. Running a large school can be intimidating but rewarding. Having standards gives interns like me guidelines to follow to pave the way.

**Summaries of the Activities**

**Activity 1: Transportation Surveys and Data Chats**

In my internship at both locations, I used the school climate surveys to conduct data chats. Data chats are conversations that provide an excellent way to analyze student performance. We look for patterns or trends in stakeholder trust that may show areas of strength or areas of improvement in the data—meaningful conversation to disaggregate with the sole purpose of uncovering any biases existing at the schools.

At Hutchison High School, there was evidence that parents were not overly concerned with anything regarding school culture. They were overall please with the direction for school safety and student support. In conversation with teachers, we began to think about possible ways to maximize our success with our stakeholders. In the beginning, our data team brought together multiple sources of data and perspectives. We gathered anything valuable to further improve a seemingly successful category on the school climate survey. We also wanted to look at the conditions that were contributing to that performance. We develop a plan of action to include parents in future data chats to ensure that they had a place at the table. It was concluded that if we engaged teachers and community stakeholders in the conversation, they feel empowered. This empowerment builds morale (See Appendices C and D).

**Activity 2: IEP Meeting**

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. It is our belief that a team approach best serves the whole child. In our district, the team approach is required. 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 totally invest in the importance of standards. 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 E through G).

**Activity 3: Teacher Assessment**

Going into my internship, I believe that the current evaluation practices used to assess teacher effectiveness simply do not work. Currently, my school district uses the Danielson framework for Teacher evaluations. At the same time, the Danielson framework is an excellent tool; it was designed for teachers to self-reflect on their practices and to be able to make improvements through self-reflection. Unfortunately, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District’s format is complicated and never reinforced with training or coaching.

There has also been growing concern with how student achievement data has been used as a weapon against teacher evaluations. Teachers are often held accountable for things beyond their control about student achievement. Student achievement, whether good or bad, has many variables. Many of those variables’ teachers or schools themselves do not control. Also, education has become so politically polarized those mandates have made it very difficult to tackle education in the 21st century. We may disagree with the tools used for teacher evaluation; we cannot argue that evaluation systems are crucial to ensuring that teachers are using best practices that allow students the opportunity to achieve. An evaluation system must be meaningful add benefit teachers and their students. Recent research indicates that instructional coaching is the most effective strategy for improving instructional practice (Kraft et al., 2018).

So going into this activity, my mentors and I looked at what could make the biggest impact for students and teachers. When addressing our current Danielson rubric, we determined the rubric itself was just too considerable or complex for it to be meaningful for teachers as a tool to guide instruction. As a school leader getting into the classroom going through a lengthy rubric eliminates the immediate feedback, a teacher needs the evaluation process to be effective. The week established that whether it was an informal or formal observation, we went limited to free selected indicators that realistically could be accomplished in a 30-minute observation. This allowed us to focus on needs individually and for the teacher to get immediate feedback after the observation.

Next, we had to tackle how teachers received feedback. Historically, evaluations have been seen as a “gotcha” moment. For the teacher, it appears that evaluations only occur because the district and state mandate them. They lack any connectivity to teacher Improvement or empowerment. They certainly have not been tied into student achievement. With that in mind, we discussed how to use evaluations to help teachers change how teachers view evaluations. We wanted it to be formative, ongoing, and valuable.

In addition to school leaders getting in the classroom and observing teachers, we implemented giving teachers time to go and observe other teachers and providing feedback. We changed how often teachers saw us in the classroom for formal and informal observations. Whether it was a casual or formal observation, teachers always received feedback. I carried with me a Post-It note to drop feedback on their desk upon my exit from the room. The teachers at both sites reacted positively and or more welcoming into their classrooms. I believe that having meaningful feedback will allow for teachers to grow and students to achieve.

Through this process, it was clear that we wanted teachers to get more involved with the evaluation process. to get them involved, we also wanted to use them as tools for other teachers. So, we supported the idea that teachers are the best coaches for other teachers. Depending on a school leader’s training, they may not be qualified to provide the coaching for all teachers. So having effective teachers coach other teachers can you build a rewarding result. We allowed our teachers to do classroom walkthroughs, one-on-one coaching, and professional development design. We found that getting more people involved in the evaluation process allowed more lenses with different perspectives. We found that our teachers were happier and more supportive of the evaluation process when they were allowed to provide and receive feedback. It also allowed teachers to be in a safe environment to receive coaching. Overall, implementing the small but significant changes allowed for a more effective tool evaluation in our schools. A strong teacher evaluation system is central to improving teacher quality. It provides the means to recognize and reward great teachers for learning from and replicating their success. It also helps identify those who need help to get the extra training they need to be effective (Sedlis, 2015, para. 3)(See Appendices H through M).

**Impact on Student Achievement**

“Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being (*Professional-standards-for-educational- leaders\_2015*, 2017, p. 17).” We must remember that operations and management matter. While schools can function in the absence of many roles, they cannot function without teachers. Teachers are an essential component of the education process. All schools include supporting the instructional capacity of teachers in their site improvement plans. The school leader is the driving force in nurturing that capacity. The school leader must use their skills to ensure that the capacity meets student needs. An effective teacher will maximize their teacher’s strength when placing them and completing school schedules. This will ensure that teachers are placed in the right position and have enough instructional time to provide students with an opportunity to succeed. “The collective capacity of a school-based professional community is contingent on the quality of the staff recruited into the school” and that “recruiting capable teachers is critical to the breadth and depth of expertise needed to undertake school improvement (Baldanza, 2017, para. 8).”

As the school leader, they will need to think of the large picture. Staffing does not only consist of hiring. It includes recruitment, selection, assigning, transferring, and, unfortunately, dismissing. Influential school leaders have themselves in the process from start to finish. Student achievement starts when the right teacher is in the right place teaching the right content to a special group of “good fit” students.

**Reflections on Personal Growth**

While working on my internship. I realized how important standard 9 was for any school leader. My mentor and I discussed that overlooking the importance of this standard could be a career ending mistake. During my internship, I developed a way to organize the tasks that are essential in the day-to-day function of the school. I focused on improving, increasing, and supporting staff while maintaining a safe educational environment for students and staff.

**Reflections on Mastery**

As I reflect on the standards, specifically standard 9, it is clear that the school leader is ultimately responsible for everything that occurs on the school campus. This includes extracurricular when they are school-sponsored events. I have demonstrated mastery in the 4 artifacts that I submitted to remove this standard. I feel confident that I could evaluate teachers and staff to ensure student achievement and promote teacher growth. Which basically, standard 9 requires a school leader. Standard 9 demands a school leader to run their buildings to promote learning and ensure student safety.

The four activities that I chose to represent standard 9 demonstrate my knowledge, understanding, and performance. In addition, these activities show my ability and understanding of what it takes to be an effective school leader. Effective school leaders take responsibility for the daily operations of the school building. They manage the school and the campus, lead faculty and support staff, and manage their resources.

**Conclusion**

Standard 9: Operations and Management indicate that an effective school leader will manage school operations and school resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being. For the school to work, students and staff need to be safe; it is the school leader’s role to ensure the safety of everyone and make it a priority. From birth to death, all children perform at their highest potential when they are safe and comfortable. Therefore, safety is an all- encompassing aspect. Safety is not a physical aspect. Students are not safe just because the building is secure. Students must feel valued and respected by teachers and other students. Therefore, it is the school leader’s responsibility to maintain teacher integrity and student behavior.

The standard stresses the importance of ethical decision-making related to managing the school's resources School leaders should engage with parents, staff, and community members for input and feedback. While ultimately all decisions are the school leader's responsibilities, the school leaders should not be making all unilateral decisions. Instead, the school leader should constantly increase the capacity of their teachers and staff so that they can utilize their input to make shared decisions.

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