

Instructional Leadership

How often do you look at the school's data? What do you do with data on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis?

- I research which teachers are writing the most referrals – looking for equitability. It helps me speak to teachers
- Focused on report card reviews my first year. – Look at every report card -- Speak to teachers before report cards are distributed
- Important to understand Principal instructional priorities are to define what to look for in data. – It helps build yourself as an instructional leader

Tell us about a time when you determined an instructional need and acted upon it. Specifically, what need did you see?

What did you do about it? To what extent were your actions successful?

- Met with grade level teams. Had them bring work samples. – Important to talk in detail with teacher during report card reviews. – Principals with a lot of experience as Principals have found ways to point out the problems at a school quickly.
- Change in our demographics led to instructional practice changes.— Brought in “backwards design” to focus on objectives and tasks. – Difficult working with teachers that do not see the need to make personal changes. – Allows use data to guide with purpose! – You can't be afraid to go against the grain and speak out what you believe as an instructional leader.

How do you create a professional development plan for your school?

- Allow teachers to create their personal individual plan. – Taking our teachers through a teacher data retreat to reflect on their own class and evaluations. Then we will meet with teachers individually to decide on personal professional development plans. PD will come from the plans that we make together with the teachers.

- Follow Up is the biggest part of PD. – Identify student responses and trends based on the provided PD. – This will give you data on what works and what does not work.
- Speak to the teachers about what they want and we use data to determine what we think teachers need. Teachers are then able to choose the PD they would like to attend.

First 90 Days

What did your on boarding process look like when you became an AP at your school? What was effective about the process and what could have been done better?

- Learned that you should always have your keys and walkie-talkie! – You learn the job on the job! – I had to rely on peers because my Principal was so busy. Communicate with people to learn how to do certain tasks and responsibilities. – Have to build relationships with people!!!
- Our district has an AP onboarding process district wide and at your school. – Had to learn what things need to be done my first year (scheduling, field trips, little things, etc.) – Found myself so busy I didn't get to know anyone. – Principal helped me prioritize and demonstrated how he could help. – The “onboarding” process worked for me because my Principal realized I needed help and was there to help guide me. – I had to learn not to take things personally!! Many times decisions are made under heavy stress.
- My Principal provided me with a list of my responsibilities. – Onboarding to me was making friends on campus like the Custodians. – I would learn how to do things around campus by talking to people. You have to be comfortable admitting when you do not know something.
- It was important to have a Principal that has trust in you and that is willing to work with you on reflecting on your work. – There is some transition time for people to realize that you are not the last person and that you do things and expect things to be done differently.

What did you research about your school before you applied for it?

- You will most likely only be allowed to “select” your first AP job. After that they will move you wherever and whenever they want. Make sure if you apply for a job that you are willing to take it. Don't turn down a job.

- While working at the District, I was able to spend time at schools so that I would have a good idea where I would “want” to work and where I would “not want” to work.
- I spent time researching the data and demographics. – Know what you are comfortable with and what your skills are. – It is difficult to transition from urban to rural and vice versa. – Be strategic and methodical when applying for jobs (research the Principal and ask questions!)

How did you get to know your new staff? What tips would you give us?

- Spend time walking the school. Don’t be in your office all of the time. – I have a form that I fill out in teacher’s rooms. It’s non evaluative. It just says something positive. – I had to work from the ground up due to bad ethics on the part of the previous AP. – Faculty likes transparency and honesty! – LISTEN to the FACULTY!!
- My first year was overwhelming and busy so I learned the most about the staff my second year. – My Principal’s advice was to let them see you serve them and see your skill set.
- I had to prove that I actually know what I am talking about – I like to leave helpful feedback in the classrooms. – If you say you are going to do something than do it!!!
- I put candy in the teachers’ mailboxes with a note asking them to come by my conference room on a specific day so that we could get to know one another personally. – Here’s to a sweet beginning theme with pastry treats. Take notes on what the different grade levels were like.

Have you encountered an individual who did not view you as a leader? If so, how did you work through that?

- An exceptionally talented woman who use to be an AP of curriculum.... I struggled to her to respect me due to her personal relationship with the Principal. I had to tell her that no matter how bright you are my title is Assistant Principal, please come to me before you visit the Principal.
- You will be challenged by teachers most on student discipline.
- People assumed that because I was new I didn’t know anything. They would try to stand up to my decisions on discipline with certain students. – Build relationships as much as possible. If you have a relationship with them and they disagree with you on something they are less likely to challenge you.

How do you maintain a healthy work/life balance?

- Communicate with your Principal when there are family things that you have to do in the afternoons. If I'm spending my time with my family, then I am better at my job. – You have to balance family and work life!!
- Positive phone calls and messages to parents is motivating to you. It will cheer you up and build positive relations.
- Seeing students and teachers helps me stay motivated. – Watching kids learn can lift your spirits on the bad days and remind you why you started doing what you do.

Where do you draw the line between personal and professional relationships? Why?

- The only way to maintain balance is to just do it!! - Be who you need to be at home and at work. – No one can create your balance for you. – NEVER observe a teacher if you are good friends with that person prior to your roll as administrator.
- Always remember that friend and boss are two separate things. Bottom line is that at the end of the day you are the one that is their evaluator! Don't buddy buddy with them in a restaurant and then turn around and mark them down on their evaluations.
- I realized that I was eating lunch with the same teachers every day. I started to worry how that was looking to the rest of the staff. I then started eating at different time. This also helped me get to know other people better. When invited out by other teachers sometimes I go and sometimes I don't go!

Thinking back to your first 90 days as an AP at your school, what do you wish you would have focused more on? Why?

- I would focus more on the teachers. It's easy to forget that you need to be in the classrooms if you are to lead them. Now I won't let the daily tasks get in my way of that.
- It's helpful to spend time after work getting stuff done. – You really need to be exposed to the teachers during the day.