**Reflection Journal Template**

**EDLS 695: Principal Internship**

**AnchorDate March 10, 2012**

**AnchorJournal Entry #: Weldele- Week 1**

**AnchorIssue addressed: Communication**

**AnchorColorado Principal Standard addressed: V: Principals Demonstrate Managerial Leadership; b. Conflict Management and Resolution, c. Systematic Communication, e. Supporting Policies and Agreements**

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| **AnchorInstructions: Please take time to reflect on your learning during the week or collectively over the course. The two-sided reflection template provides you the prompts for this introspection. Save this electronically and submit in accordance with the guidelines provided by your facilitator.** | |
| **AnchorWhat I Observed/Learned: Rsponding to a variety of parent concerns** | **AnchorHow This Will Impact My Leadership Practice** |
| * Last week there was an unusually high volume of parent concerns requiring diverse types of responses. These concerns ranged from a student discipline incident, to a financial issue, to a complaint about an activity led by another parent. Though in some cases there is clear policy to direct my response, deciding the best way to communicate that response requires wisdom, judgment and experience (which I am quickly acquiring). Other matters do not fall to policy and rely even more heavily on judgment and experience. * The student discipline concern was related to a parent who was unsatisfied with the amount of information they had been given about how the conflict between their child and another student was resolved. In the absence of detail they assumed my response was inadequate and sent an email in which the handbook policy on harassment and bullying was quoted and implied that they expected the superintendent to be contacted. This was a first time report of the behavior and did not qualify as harassment or bullying (though it was definitely inappropriate and unacceptable). An initial email made it clear that this was going to require a face to face meeting to resolve. While it only took me about 30 minutes to deal with the student side of the discipline, the parent resolution took much longer. The final result is parents who are supportive and I believe have a better understanding of both the 'consequence/discipline' as well as 'teaching/redirecting' side of resolving student discipline issues. * The financial concern actually came up with two 8th grade parents over a letter that was sent about outstanding financial obligations. Both parents were inflamed and one went directly to the superintendent. Policy about financial responsibilities is clear but individual situations make this a very fragile issue. A personal phone call to one family was able to put things back on a positive track. The other family is currently unwilling to work for a resolution. In Catholic Schools, financial tension is frequent and can be highly emotional. Compassion but consistency are critical. * The final concern was a parent who was upset with another parent about an activity which fell through. The complaint was overly critical and the desired response was unacceptable. After developing a response that acknowledged that the event outcome was disappointing, I was firm in challenging the level of anger and expectation the parent had for the situation. Before I sent the reply I notified my pastor of my response since I expect the parent to take this to him next. | * In each of these instances my first instinct was to fire off a response immediately so they would know I had received their concern. Experience has taught me, however, to be thoughtful and to take some time to prepare my response and review it through the other person's lens. Communication takes time and I am working to be as efficient as possible. Sometimes, efficiency requires taking more time for a phone call or a face to face meeting in order to save time in the long run. * The concern with the 8th grade finances I actually saw coming ahead of time and made sure to review the policy and plans for notifying parents and enforcing the policy ahead of time with my pastor and business manager. This increased the level of support I had when the negative responses to my initial letter came in. It also short-circuited the parents’ plans to go over my head with their complaints. * Student discipline is a very emotional issue. I am discovering that parents need assurance that the issue was given the appropriate amount of time, investigation and response. Though I cannot give the details of discipline, I am learning how to communicate that the situation was handled promptly and appropriately. * The hardest concerns to handle are those where I feel a parent is completely out of line and I would really like to tell them so. Taking a step back from my own emotion allows me to form a response that is thoughtful and does not condone or indulge their unfounded complaint. |

*Critical Issues*

* Communication must be timely and in an appropriate manner for each individual situation.
* Policies must be upheld firmly, fairly and consistently.
* Creative problem-solving is critical to resolving conflicts.