Date: Sunday, March 11  
Journal Entry 1Rachel O'Donnell  
Issue addressed: Student Discipline  
Colorado Principal Standard addressed: Standard III: Principals Demonstrate School Cultural and Equity Leadership

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| **What did I learn/observe?** A week ago, I was met in my office by a grandparent and their first grade grandson who asked to meet with me unannounced. When we got into my office, the grandparent gave me an iPod that the student had brought home, but it did not belong to him. The child gave me a great story about how another student had handed it to him and told him to put it in his pocket, etc, etc. Long story short, after investigating, the child confessed that he had taken the iPod from the music room and that it belonged to the school. I thanked the child for telling me the truth, and asked him if he knew what was going to happen next. He said, "Yes, I'm going to be "disspelled." I took his hand and told him that he wasn't going to be expelled, but that there were going to be large consequences for this action. Then I had a short initial panic, because I knew that the consequence for this according to our grid was a three day out of school suspension. I didn't want to suspend this little first grader who had never been to the office before - for three days out of school. I spoke to other administrators at our school to gain some balance in my own mind. Here was my solution: Through the investigation, the child had been out of the classroom for quite a while and I had him stay in the office for the balance of the afternoon doing school work, so I counted that time. I gave him one day as an out of school suspension and then deferred the third day for when the class was going to have a curriculum day. So when his class is dressing up for Colonial Day, he will spend that day in the office working instead of being with his classmates. | **How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice?** This experience impacts my leadership practice by reminding me that I always work with people who are affected by policies. It's not too dissimilar to remembering that you don't teach a lesson or a curriculum, but as a teacher you teach children. |
| **What new knowledge did I gain through my observations/ actions?** It is important to be faithful to guidelines that have been set up by the school to insure fair practices to all members of the school community. It is equally important to exercise common sense when working with people and not be ruled by the letter of the law whenever possible. | **How will this impact those I lead?** This situation impacts those I lead by letting them know that I am faithful to follow through with difficult decisions, but that I will always strive to see them as people who are individuals first. |
| ***Critical Issues*** An administrator can't simply ignore policies and procedures that are in place regarding discipline, but must balance following those procedures and policies with the person you are working with in the moment. Consistency in practice provides a foundation for trust with the school community. *Rachel, the outcome of this behavioral issue is wonderful! Consistency in behavior is essential in your school. You will always have parents believe what their cherub says. :-) It is really difficult for some students to "tell the truth." A strong administrator will assist the student in telling what really happened in an incident. This strategy is called shaping behavior. I liked the way you fit his "crime" with an appropriate consequesnce. Good for you! Coyla* | |