Date: Sunday, March 25  
Journal Entry 3Rachel O'Donnell  
Issue addressed: Dismissal of Teacher Conversations  
Colorado Principal Standard addressed:  Standard IV: Principals Demonstrate Human Resource Leadership

b. Recruiting, Hiring, Placing, Mentoring, and Recommendations for Dismissal of Staff

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| **What did I learn/observe?** This was a challenging week because I knew what was coming on the last day before break. I had planned two conversations with teachers. In one conversation, I had a teacher who had started back with us mid- year after a several year break who had difficulty working with her class and teaching as effectively as she could. In that conversation I shared with her that as a condition of her returning to school in the fall, she would need to agree to attend training that had been designed for new teachers. In the other conversation, I was letting a teacher in our mentorship program know that she was not returning. I had much sleeplessness over these conversations as I didn’t really know how they would go. Both conversations surprised me. In the first conversation, the teacher became defensive and blamed the students for the difficulty she was experiencing. I still don’t know if she will accept the ideas that I presented. In the second conversation, the teacher thanked us for the experiences she has had at our school and for letting her know early enough to start out on this new phase of her life. I believe that the second teacher will end the year well and will move on very well. I still don’t know how the year will end for the first teacher, or if there will be a next year for her at this point. She may come back from break and quit or rather let me know she doesn’t want to come back next year. It’s all very interesting. I will say that my concerns for the experiences were larger in my head than what actually transpired even though neither conversation went as I assumed. | **How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice?** Keep pushing forward. Remember that what I can conjure in my mind will almost always be more scary and daunting than reality. Do what needs to be done. |
| **What new knowledge did I gain through my observations/ actions?**  I was reminded that people are unpredictable so it is very important that I know what I’m doing and be confident in my decisions. It doesn’t mean that I can’t make a wrong decision or that with new insight I can make another choice, but I must have a clear sense of my direction in my own mind. | **How will this impact those I lead?** The impact on those that I lead is in helping them know that I will try to be as gently honest as I can. Sometimes a decision is difficult to hear, but when it is in the best interest of the children in my care and ultimately also in the best interest of the staff, I will speak what needs to be spoken. |
| ***Critical Issues*** Telling a teacher they aren’t going to be teaching at your school is one of the most difficult conversations. It might be easier in the short run to ignore this and just hope that teacher gets better through an improvement plan, but when a principal knows the improvement is not possible it is actually more loving to everyone to let that teacher go to find a different profession or a different school where they might be a better fit. | |