**Reflection JournalEDLS 695: Principal Internship**

Date: **Sunday,** **April 1, 2012**

**Journal Entry 4 Rachel O'Donnell**

Issue addressed: **Parent Involvement**

Colorado Principal Standard addressed: **Standard VI: Principals Demonstrate External Development Leadership** a. Family and Community Involvement and Outreach: Principals design structures and processes which result in family and

Community engagement, support and ownership of the school.

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| **What did I learn/observe?**  During the week prior, I worked with a first grader who was sent to the office for pinching another student simply because he wanted to be in front of the line. The pinching was pretty hard and made the other student cry. When the student got to my office I asked him why he was there and he told me what I just conveyed to you. He took responsibility for his action and admitted what he had done. I told him that he would have to spend the rest of the day in the office and would miss all his specials classes. The student took it very well. My initial call to the parent was very quick as the parent didn’t talk much during the conversation. I ended the call by telling the parent that the student was going to get to start fresh the next day and that his consequence was in line with school policy. The next day, I had a phone message from the parent asking me to call because the parent had a couple of questions. It was early evening when I had an opportunity to call. The parent questioned whether the situation had happened as I had portrayed it and that the child had given a different story. The parent questioned how I got the information from the student and felt that the child could have been led to “confess.” I explained how I went through my process when talking to a student and then told the parent that I was sharing what the child said practically word for word with very little incentive from me. The parent insisted that he could pursue this if what I said was really true. Obviously, this was a challenging parent to speak with, but that was not what concerned me. What concerned me was how I could feel my patience leaving and consequently, I was not as calm and detached as I needed to be. I’m sure the parent felt this and so from my perspective, the conversation didn’t end in a way that was most beneficial for the student. Ultimately, the conversation isn’t about a challenging parent, it’s about a student who needs to make the choice not to hurt another student to satisfy his own desire. | **How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice?** It’s important to recognize when you are spent. You can’t be physically and emotionally available for anyone in your building if you let yourself get run down. Being a good leader is striving for that balance in your life to rest, play, and enrich so you can offer your best to those who rely on you. |
| **What new knowledge did I gain through my observations/ actions?** I was physically tired and I didn’t have to call this parent back right away. The time sensitive issue of the student spending time in the office had already been communicated and this part could have waited until morning. If you can wait to talk to a parent when you are rested, wait. | **How will this impact those I lead?** It will impact those I lead by remembering that when I have balance in my life I will be a better leader for those who rely on me. |
| ***Critical Issues*** An administrator must balance life in order to be a good leader. It is really important to know when you need to rest or simply go home. Some things at school are like laundry and dishes – they will always need to be done. Balance is vital. Remembering that one poor interaction with a parent can create a road block for connecting with a community. | |