**Reflection JournalEDLS 695: Principal Internship**

Date: **Sunday,** **April 15, 2012**

**Journal Entry 6 Rachel O'Donnell**

Issue addressed: **SAC**

Colorado Principal Standard addressed:  **Standard I: Principals Demonstrate Strategic Leadership** d. Distributive Leadership: Principals create and utilize processes to distribute leadership and decision making throughout the school. Where appropriate, they involve staff, parent/guardians and students in decisions about school governance, curriculum and instruction.

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| **What did I learn/observe?**  When the events at TCA unfolded, parents had and still have very reasonable questions about how we follow procedures and if our procedures and policies are adequate – enter my SAC. By the nature of my school parent community, you can imagine that I have a very active and involved SAC. Even during the best of times, I have felt that my SAC meetings were like riding a bucking bronco. I show up with an agenda and the appropriate documents and I still have to work to keep them focused and on task. One of my SAC members requested we have an emergency meeting that I was somewhat agreeable to until the news of the president’s resignation and the transition meetings by the board. I told my SAC that I wanted to meet later this month and gave them two dates to choose from. There was some consternation from them, but I persisted knowing that the obvious topic would be safety and security and I wanted to be able to share a full and complete picture of our current situation. One of my most insistent members called the district lawyer asking her to basically make me schedule this emergency meeting. The lawyer called me before calling this parent back to understand the situation. The lawyer did say that it was interesting that this parent left out the part about my offering an alternative. The lawyer also cautioned me about empowering my SAC too much. She said that even though it was fine to share with them the current state of things, it is not part of their position to created policy for the school. When the lawyer returned the parent’s call, the parent was told that she needed to address it our campus level and that I was acting within my authority as principal to schedule the meetings. My next call was to our COO who has taken on some of the role of president. I told him my plan, and asked him to simply tell the parent that this is appropriate – should she call back. Thus far, the parent hasn’t called the school. I am in the process of preparing for the meeting which will be either on the 24th or 25th of this month. I genuinely want their thoughts and ideas and if they see a better way to make a mousetrap, I want to know that too. Mostly, I think parents are worried and are concerned that we are flying by the seat of our pants. Through this meeting, I want to show them that we have many excellent things in place, even if there is human error. I had never spoken to our lawyer since being at TCA and this week I spoke with the district lawyer four times and our school lawyer once. Can I say that I appreciate them both so much? I’m grateful they are there and available. | **How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice?** This standard may not completely apply to this situation, but I do want to empower parents to have a voice without forgetting that we are professionals who strive to do what is legal, moral, and ethical to keep students safe. When in legal procedure or policy doubt, remember that the district lawyer is your friend. |
| **What new knowledge did I gain through my observations/ actions?** When working with a parent group that does have certain legal powers, make certain that you know the extent and limitations of their power as a group and have a plan to follow. | **How will this impact those I lead?** This impacts those I lead in a positive way by being confident and knowledgeable when conducting meetings that cover higher stakes topics. |
| ***Critical Issues*** An administrator must know how to interact with parent groups who are charged with accountability for the principal of the school. Be transparent, inviting, and open. | |