Reflection Journal

Date- March 9, 2012

Journal Entry- Dodson #1

Issue Addressed: School health and safety

Colorado Principal Standards-

Standard 5: Principals Demonstrate Managerial Leadership- b. Conflict Management and Resolution. Principals efficiently manage the complexity of human interactions and relationships including those among and between parents, students and staff.

What I Observed: Last week I filled in for our principal, Mr. Horras. I spent the day assisting our AP, Mrs. Slyter. The most interesting issue that came up that day revolved around some health issues at our school. Our secretary informed me and Mrs. Slyter that there were a large number of students out sick that day. An average day would have about 35 kids absent, and we had 69 kids out this day. She said there was a classroom with nine kids out and two classrooms with six kids out. Mrs. Slyter was concerned about this because a few weeks prior, there were many kids out and a parent had posted on the local news’ Facebook page that there was an epidemic going around or school. This parent posted that the secretary told her that “every second grader at Evans was out sick that day”. Mrs, Slyter was obviously concerned about this information getting out to the public the same way. She was also concerned because this was right before TCAP week. Mrs. Slyter was looking into the illnesses of these kids when she got a call from the district’s nurse saying she was very concerned about so many sick kids at our school, and asked Mrs. Slyter if she wanted her to call the health department to investigate. Mrs. Slyter was unsure what to do, but told the nurse that she wanted to check with Mr. Horras first, but she was pretty sure he would not want to get the health department involved and scare any more nervous parents. She went into action mode and called in the custodian to discuss cleaning the rooms. She instructed him to deep clean the rooms where there were a lot of kids out. During this time, there were more sick kids headed to the nurse’s office and a teacher had a fever and was needing to go home. When Mrs. Slyter finally got in touch with our principal, his response was “Maybe we should call the health department, then the district might decide that we so need more than one night custodian after all!” Mrs. Slyter discussed with me that she never can predict what Mr. Horras is going to say. He gave it the weekend to think about it, and by Monday most of the kids were back, but this could have created a he concern among parents and teachers (especially with 6 teachers pregnant).

How This Impacts My Leadership: I realized that Mrs. Slyter had to make important decisions on the spot. If she had called the health department, there could have been many upset parents, but she also had to ensure the health of teachers and kids. She was also trying to make decisions for the absent principal. I thought about the chain of command at a school with an AP and principal. Had Mrs. Slyter been the only administrator at the school, this decision would fall solely on her shoulders. I realize that this would be a tough decision for me to make on my own. I feel like I would really have to think about all stakeholders and assure the safety and health of the students first. I realized what a huge responsibility you have and the decisions you make can affect so many people.

Critical Issues:

* The chain of command in making decisions between AP and Principal
* The health of teachers students
* Public relations issues with new media and parents