**Reflection Journal**

**EDLS 695: Principal Internship**

**‍‍Date: Sunday, April 22, 2012**

**‍‍Journal Entry # 7 Debbie Womack**

**‍‍Issue addressed (e.g. Student Discipline):**

**Standard V: Principals Demonstrate Managerial Leadership**

**b. Conflict Management and Resolution:** Principals effectively and efficiently manage the complexity of human interactions and relationships, including those among and between parents/guardians, students and staff.

**d. School--‐wide Expectations for Students and Staff:** Principals understand the importance of clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff.

**e. Supporting Policies and Agreements:** Principals familiarize themselves with federal and state laws, and district and

board policies, including negotiated agreements, and establish processes to ensure that they are consistently met.

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| **‍‍Instructions: Please take time to reflect on your learning during the week or collectively over the course. The two-sided reflection template provides you the prompts for this introspection. Save this electronically and submit in accordance with the guidelines provided by your facilitator.** | |
| **What did I learn/observe:**  This week, I had the opportunity to shadow the assistant principal for ½ day at the high school and the principal for ½ day at the middle school. During both shadowing opportunities, I observed conversations with parents and with students in the area of discipline.  At the high school there were two issues that I watched and was given opportunities in which to participate. The first was with a student who was in the office with a grandparent. This student had supposedly been observed by as staff member smoking outside the building with another student. According to the story, this student’s parent had received a call from this staff member the evening before telling of the incident. The student arrived early with the grandparent. The student was extremely upset and wanted this problem resolved as according to the student the incident never occurred. After listening to the student and grandparent, the assistant principal told them that this was the first that he had head of this issue. He called the parent to get further information. The parent could not remember the staff member’s name, but said that the action was supposedly observed from the staff lounge window (Interesting to note, there is no window in this room). The assistant principal told the family that had this occurred, the staff member would have reported it to him or the principal. Neither had been given any information, but that he would investigate and get back with them later in the day. We never did find the staff member who supposedly saw this action, nor did anyone else report anything. The bottom line is that the family felt respected and validated. Right afterward we dealt with an ongoing conflict between two students that has been going on for several weeks. Lots of trash talking back and forth and now involved threats of violence. The bottom line is that both received disciplinary measures, others were called in for verification of stories, and the SRO officer will now be involved (he was at a training for the day). Each student was informed that the continued behavior was a concern and that once the SRO officer became involved, that there could be legal action. Parents were contacted about the situation, that there disciplinary action was given, and that the SRO officer would now be involved and that there could be legal consequences. I actually was given the opportunity to handle parts of this situation and participate in the questioning of the witnesses. This process took almost 2.5 hours from start to finish.  At the middle school, I assisted with at least 5 behavioral write-ups and administered disciplinary action as required by the student code of conduct. I listened to the phone conversations between the parents and the principal about what discipline the students would receive. Mostly, these situations dealt with student to student conflict, mouthing off to a staff member, and misbehavior on the bus. | **How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice:**  I will know the law and the district’s policies and procedures and enforce them, but I will also treat each situation as unique so that each person that visits my office feels that they are given equitable attention to the problem (this could be very challenging). |
| **What new knowledge did I gain in my observations and interactions?**   * What really struck me were the different levels of discipline instances between the middle and high school and how much smaller the problems are at the middle school compared to the high school. * That it was critical to listen, validate, and investigate. * That by asking open-ended questions, students were more forthcoming with their responses. * My mediation skills are very helpful. * These issues cannot and should not be treated as cattle calls and they take time to do effectively.   **How will this impact how I make decisions regarding students, staff, and/or parents?**   * Always be willing to listen to both sides and have as many of the facts as possible when determining the best course of action for discipline. * Neutrality is the key. * Contact the parent with the student in the room, which makes them accountability and part of the process. | **How will this impact those I lead? What will I need to supervise closely and what can be delegated?**   * As an instructional leader, I want to support the staff, parents, and students when dealing with discipline issues. The bottom line is to keep students and staff safe while they are on school grounds and until they arrive home. * Know the law, school policy, and discipline procedures and to be as equitable as possible.   **How will this impact my leadership processes?**   * I will get the information and facts, give time for cool-down periods, especially when the conflict is heated and then make sure to always do a follow-up conference after the disciplinary actions have been me. |
| **‍‍*Critical Issues* to remember as I make decisions regarding students, employees, and/or parents and the law:** Know the law, policies, procedures, and listen, clarify, validate concerns, and follow the course of action that best meets the stipulations as are provided by the district’s policies and procedures. | |