



Principals' Training Center

quality training for international educators

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“As a leader. Something I think our teams are often looking at us for is to see whether we can walk the talk. And so this morning what I wanted to share with you was a little bit about talking the walk. So one of the things I think all leaders struggle with to an extent is, letting the urgent get in the way of the important. And one area in which that has become like really patently evident for me was getting into classrooms. Like I know how important it is to be visible. I have been fully committed to be a learning leader, and I know that, I need to be in those classrooms on a regular basis and not just when I'm in some sort of evaluating sort of capacity. But as important as that was what I was finding is that so many things would often come up and these that would get bumped.

And so I found that, if I scheduled it, it was a lot more likely to happen, but still, things would come up and it would often get bumped. We need to look at it ourselves. And also that our staff and our students see that too because they know that when it's really important to us, we make a commitment, we make that appointment and we make it happen. And that perception matters too.

So, anyway, I decided to tackle like two goals at a time this year and I invited my staff to join me on schedule learning walks each week and really get into the classroom. And this really was great for me for two very important reasons. First of all, the learning walks happens, and then most importantly, and they were given their due importance. And after all, you know, you're not really about to cancel with, one of your teachers and stuff because there's, there's a social and professional price you're going to pay for that unless it's like something, really, really important, not urgent, but also what I found the added benefit, whether it was the talking that happened along those walks, there were so many, this was such a great opportunity to have just fantastic conversations and the kind of conversations that we really want to find a way to foster.

But it's really hard to find the time to do that. And it happened in a way that was much more organic. It was less prescriptive, it was less hierarchical, like there were, those kind of boundaries were taken away, but it was still very professional and driven by learning mock protocols that we had. I felt like this was a really good way to get a pulse on kind of what was going on. The



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learning in different areas of the school, bounce ideas, hear and understand what my staff was really passionate about, what they were struggling with, what they needed more support with. And often they had a lot of really good ideas on how I can tackle it and in ways that I wouldn't have thought about. And it really helped with violin on a lot of big initiatives that we were doing in a very high change here at our school.

So I felt like it was really, really beneficial. I also don't think I really did this consciously, but I also tried to talk the walk with students this year and I invited the student council members in September, in the beginning of the school year to kind of walk the track with me during lunch and share their ideas and thoughts. And it was a chance for me to have a one on one conversation with every single student council member, which I thought was important. And September was our learner profile trait of the month was balanced and there was this steps challenge going on in our school with all like staff and kids. So it was all so I wanted to get my step count up and that sort of thing. So I mean that's kind of what drove the idea of it.

But what I found was after September came and went, it was a great way to have one on one conversations with students, that weren't kind of awkward and weren't brought about by like a larger crisis and stuff. And so the chats around the track kind of continued throughout the year at different times. And it's something I want to really be even much more deliberate about this next year. And I found that when students had complaints or problems or if they wanted, to come and bring some sort of initiative or idea to that, I found myself, I often would schedule a lunch meeting cause I didn't want to and so I would, but I would give them the option. Do you want to walk the track with me? And nine times out of 10 that students would choose to kind of walk the track. And so that kind of has become a thing. Um, so anyway, so my Pearl of wisdom for you out there is sometimes the best way to walk the talk is just to talk the walk"