

## Justyna McMillan, Dean of Academics- Participant of PTC Assessment 2019



“Some of you in this room were there with me, with Julie Ryan and Barry DeQuane at the leading effective schools, uh, PTC, a workshop. And uh, one of the things that we talked about was obviously how to become an effective school. And Barry happened to mention this one anecdote of looking to the business world for good models that may be you can then bring into schools. And he mentioned a CEO of Alcoa, Paul O'Neil, who based his entire business model on safety and you can look him up on YouTube. You know, he was an incredibly successful CEO and run a very successful business. And the whole thing was basically premised on the idea of safety first. And I already started to think about that and how that can be applied in a school setting.

And he really wasn't just talking about the physical safety and in a school, I'm not talking about, you know, risk management or is the building safe. Uh, but it's really about psychological safety as well. And I started to ask myself questions, what am I doing as a leader to help make sure that my teachers feel safe, to be able to share ideas, to be able to feel valued and respected and make sure that they're not going to feel like they're being shot down or there's going to be fear of reprisal. That we're really sort of honing a really positive learning atmosphere and learning culture for them. And that whole idea of psychological safety really started to resonate with me. And, um, last year when I came back at the PTC, we also started to look at, um, uh, supervision and evaluation and using some tools for that.

And, uh, a rubric came up that I was actually familiar with, but I completely forgot about it, uh, developed by Kim Marshall, which is called So tell, which is an acronym. And some of you might be familiar with it. And the very first letter of that S is safety. And I started to do my learning walks with that in mind, going into a classroom. And it's not just is the classroom safe? Is the atmosphere conducive to students being able to share? Do they have somebody they can ask for help? Do they have peers that they can feel like they really resonate with? And really, for me, the whole aspect of psychological safety took a whole new meaning to be able to maximize the learning that we're all here to help to emphasize and grow. So my pearl of wisdom is yes, it is about learning, but I would also argue that making sure that you're providing a psychologically safe atmosphere for everyone involved is also really important.”



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