

A New Man in a Mess

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A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

Standard 1:

Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2:

Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard 4:

Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Scenario

Bill Smith had recently been hired as the new principal of Jimmie Cricket Middle School. The school was the result of a restructuring effort of a major intercity districts effort to address a trend of declining enrollment and eroding economic conditions in the intercity. The new school represented the consolidation of three older buildings and a staff of veteran teachers.

One of the schools had enjoyed a long running reputation for excellence and had active involvement from parents and small businesses in the area. Test scores administered by the district showed that the students did well in comparison to other children in the rest of the state. The curriculum was considered traditional and emphasis was placed on the very basic skills. Technology amounted to one computer in each classroom. That was used mainly for SIS.

The two other schools involved in the new school project were very similar in that they were in the very poorest part of the city and children were historically very poor performers on state level assessments. Parent involvement was very limited and little effort was made on the part of the school to interact with parents. Teacher morale could be described as poor. The perceived reason held by central office was these two areas of the district needed the consolidation effort to "start fresh" with new leadership and a new sense of direction. Unfortunately the three areas involved in the move did not support this direction.

The new principal followed the three principals who were well established in the district. Two of the principals chose to retire rather than deal with the change. One of those principals, specifically the principal from the high performing school was very outspoken about the change. He publicly fought the change and had the support of his tradition labeled faculty. The remaining principal chose to move to central office to become the director of middle schools.

The new building was state of the art with technology in every room with Internet technology and ready access to multiple labs. None of the schools personnel had been involved nor had input into the design and building layout of the new facility.

Many of the teachers who were of low seniority had been displaced because of the move. This had caused significant anxiety among the staff that was expected to make the transition into the new facility.

To compound the difficulty to the challenge facing Mr. Williams, the local newspaper had openly criticized the decision of the board to consolidate the three schools. The PTA's of the buildings were supportive to the move but concerned about such things as mixing faculty, children and the obvious loss of their respective neighborhood schools. They all had voiced the concern of safety concerning the distance their children would have to walk or be transported.

Assignment

As the new principal, reflect on the specific challenges you will face in molding the new school an effective learning community.

After listing these challenges develop a course of action defining the problem and how you would approach the various solutions, make sure to develop your action plan by stating what issue should be addressed first and proceed from that point in order of your perception of when in the change process each problem should be addressed.

Instructor's Notes and Scoring Guide

For

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Instructors Notes:

Have students identify ISLLC standards to include what they perceive as knowledge, dispositions and performances that are involved in this study.

Have students develop a plan of action that would address the initial identified need to restructure the cities schools and continue from that point. Include in that plan an analysis of conditions, factors involved in any decision, groups to be involved and the development of a plan of action to ensure a smooth transition that is supported by all communities involved

Have students identify mistakes that have made in how this initiative was developed and ask students to use the literature to support their findings

Scoring Guide:

Exemplary Performance - responses include the following components:

1. Clearly articulates several specific challenges facing the principal including ALL of the following -
 - Poor student performance
 - Need for teacher training related to technology
 - Lack of trust by teachers, parents and students
 - The need to create a new identity for the school
2. Develops a course of action that is specific, detailed, and sequential
3. Course of action includes ALL of the following –
 - Actions geared toward building positive relationships with teachers, students, parents and community members
 - Actions that address staff development needs of teachers in the areas of both teaching and learning and technology
 - Actions geared toward increasing parental and community involvement
 - Actions geared toward collaborative planning (involving all stakeholder groups) toward the development of school improvement plan

Proficient Performance – responses include:

1. Clearly articulates several specific challenges facing the principal including AT LEAST TWO of the following -
 - Poor student performance
 - Need for teacher training related to technology
 - Lack of trust by teachers, parents and students
 - The need to create a new identity for the school
2. Develops a course of action that is specific, detailed, and sequential

3. Course of action includes –

- Actions geared toward building positive relationships with teachers, students, parents and community members
- Actions geared toward increasing parental and community involvement
- Actions geared toward collaborative planning (involving all stakeholder groups) toward the development of school improvement plan