How Much Information is Enough?

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

The staff at South Central Elementary like to feel that they know what is going on in their school and at the state level. Through the IPLI survey, it was obvious that teachers did not feel well informed about the state of our school. The more informed the staff is, the more they feel that they have ownership in the school.

As a leader, I have not given as much focus to informing the staff on all of the details that are happening behind the scenes. The survey helped me to see that this is an area of weakness in my leadership and I began wondering how to improve this. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to ensure that, as a leader, I am keeping my team of teachers well informed and engaged in what is happening at the school and state level.

Statement of Your Wondering:

How will a well-informed staff contribute to a positive climate within the school?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wondering, an initial survey (Survey Monkey) was given to focus on climate and communicating information. A follow up was given during the first week of April.

Based upon the data collected in the initial survey:

Areas of concern:

- The principal communicates well and informs teachers of new developments, ideas, and issues (average rating 2.95)
- I am informed about what is happening in education at the state level. (average rating 2.52)
- Though a Weekly Focus I provided to teachers, I added a section called Week In Preview (WIP). This included:
  - School happenings
  - Community Events that are school applicable
  - IDOE information
  - Assessment Updates
  - Kudos to recognize staff (contributed to by staff themselves)
Three staff members provided information to help contribute to understanding of the importance of a well-informed staff. They shared that by staying informed, they are less stressed and confused about:

- Assessment changes
- Teacher evaluations
- School letter grades

The results of the survey and interviews were used to determine the most effective way to deliver information to staff. The Weekly Focus was already given every Friday to share the schedule for the next week. This would be the vehicle to deliver up-to-date information to staff.

I researched formats and templates that are used at other districts.

**Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:**

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned that the two areas of focus each had positive increases after the WIP was in place for several months. The two areas were:

- The principal communicates well and informs teachers of new developments, ideas, and issues (.87 increase)
- I am informed about what is happening in education at the state level. (1.25 increase)

**Providing Concluding Thoughts:**

In response to this action research project, I learned that keeping your staff informed and up to date can help alleviate some of the stress and concern caused by the unknown. However, it is important to manage the amount of information provided in order to not cause an undue burden when the information may incite stress. Based on the positive results this research found, the Week In Preview will continue to be used weekly to keep staff informed. Teachers can be given an opportunity to provide information that they have gathered. I will also consider if a daily email be a more effective method of delivery. This may be too overwhelming. I would like to make it possible for teachers to request more information on subjects/issues that they want to know more about as well. This will allow teachers to drive the information they are receiving and they will in turn be more receptive to what is shared.

New Wondering: How will climate be increased if teachers feel ownership of the information given and requested?

**References:**

N/A