



Mentor Meeting Notes - 1.21.10 Elementary & Middle Schools

Purpose of meeting – Discuss the role of the mentor. It is a leadership position that has both its challenging and gratifying moments.

Notes:

- Facilitator posed the thought – “Reflect about a time you felt and knew you were effective.”
- Outcome – What was shared is below. Many commented throughout the meeting how great it was to hear what others are doing and that they looked forward to bringing some of these ideas back to their own teams and schools. Because this is a free flowing meeting, we weren’t always on topic and that was o.k. They were all helping each other and discussing what was on their minds.
- One mentor recognized her mentor partner for doing a great job discussing the highlights of this initiative with the entire staff. The audience was engaged and the feedback positive.
- This same mentor reflected on her help in getting a new member on their committee and feeling good about that.
- When a mentor felt the team was losing momentum, she called up her coach. The coach and the 2 mentors met to discuss what they could do to rebuild the fire. They feel they were successful.
- At one school, an opportunity fair was created. This provided all staff opportunities with how they could get involved in this work. All committee members helped to create this and all staff was requested to come after an afternoon early release. Almost everyone signed up for at least one opportunity.
 - There was a quick “kick off” by a staff member.
 - There were 7 stations and all were asked to go to each.
 - A celebration/assembly committee
 - Book group
 - Healthy body/healthy minds
 - Knitting group (called “The Twisted Sisters”)
 - Hot chocolate/Hot topics
 - Service Learning
 - Class meetings
 - Each station gave out freebies, bright table cloths, signs, candy etc.
 - Dates for all of the actual events are staggered. Many of these activities are before the school day begins.

- This mentor is very proud of having brought this idea back from a conference, sharing it with other committee members, getting buy in, creating sub committees to support and help make the event happen and to now see that these opportunities are going to be taking place and so many are and will continue to be involved.
- One school spoke of how they will be working with their students on a fundraiser. It is called “Empty bowls”. The kids make ceramic bowls. The school then invites people to this “soup event”. Each pays \$10 for a bowl of soup which they get to enjoy there and they get to take home their bowl.
- One mentor shared with the group that many times she is so busy in the moment that she forgets to reflect and celebrate. She does not want to lose sight of this. Her defining moment came when another committee member said to her, “we are not doing anything”. This caused her to reflect. She realized they really were doing many things. She was able to share this with the other person who agreed. The other person even began pointing out things the committee had accomplished to others.
- At one school a janitor passed away after having a heart attack at the school itself. This affected the staff and the students. They all came together to help his family and they now celebrate each other more.
- During the evening of one snow storm, a mentor went out & purchased candy. They next day when all were at school, she packaged the candy and put it into staff mailboxes to thank them for their effort of getting to school in the bad conditions.
- At one school where kindness is a core value, they held an all school assembly. A first grade class did a dramatization of kindness by reading a story and doing a quick activity to demonstrate kindness. A school wide Pennies for Patients drive was explained and kicked off (www.schoolandyouth.org.) The school mentors collaborated and executed this assembly.
- Also at this school, students and teachers will be recognizing acts of kindness preformed by their peers/colleagues by presenting a red heart with a story of an act of kindness that the student/staff member has witnessed. This heart is placed on posters in the classrooms, faculty lounge as students/staff make a point to observe acts of kindness in school, in the village and at home.
- There was discussion around the traveling trophy. What do you do if same people keep getting it?
 - One person suggested passing it at the meeting itself.
 - Another spoke of something she had been a part of in the past:
 - Anyone could email their recognition to a specified person(s).
 - At the next staff meeting, all recognitions were read. (The author was anonymous.)
 - All recognitions were then put into a bowl and one would be picked to win the traveling trophy.
 - Noise makers were even used to celebrate the announcements.
 - This was found to be a fun and effective event in itself.

- There was a question brought up around this. It is great to receive appreciation from others. ...What about intrinsic motivation? All were challenged to think about ways to create intrinsic motivation. (This will be discussed at the next mentor meeting.)
- In one community a couple of schools are partnering up with another organization.
 - Together they are offering a series of workshops.
 - One has already occurred and with the marketing of these workshops through the schools and the organization, the turnout was high and positive.
 - This workshop is also available via internet for those who couldn't come.
 - Homework will be given to parents at each.
- One mentor knew they were effective when there was a district meeting with committee members and other community members. Each meeting starts with celebrating all that people are doing and their successes. Parents in attendance commented that they were floored to hear how much staff was doing. Parents emailed letting them know their appreciation – one shared that she can feel the difference in her home.
- Service learning is now incorporated in a 4th grade teachers' writing curriculum. So students are now writing and researching about it.
- While one school was going through a particularly hard time, they began to take care of each other. In December they distributed care packages with vitamin c and a hot breakfast.
- After results from a survey were received, which talked about the climate and culture of the school, "golden nuggets" from that report were pulled out. Each week one of these is shared via email with the entire staff. It is also posted to be viewed when the staff gets their coffee each day.
- Imagine what would be happening if you weren't doing what you are doing?
- It was shared that being a mentor is great AND frustrating. ...While many are positively reactive to suggestions we come up with, how do we get others to be proactive and get involved? ... (It was then discussed the opportunities fair mentioned above may be the answer.)
- One of the final comments before we ran out of time was that what is hardest for staff is reflection. They want guidance to know how to do this.