



Mentor Meeting Notes - 3.09 Elementary & Middle Schools

Having a couple of new mentors at the table, the meeting began with a sharing of what all have learned so far and what they feel is needed to be a mentor. The new members were happy to be there and looking forward to learning. Here is what was shared:

- Have patience and to stand up for what you do.
- The concept of this work may need to be re-taught to the staff, just like we do with the students.
- Realizing that the passion, you, as a mentor feels may not be shared by all. Since we are working to create a community, we need them. This means we need to step back and accept where people are and understand their perceptions.
- Need to work with the framework and make it come alive based on where all are at.
- We can't do this work alone. We need others staff members to take ownership as well. To do this, having small intimate conversations has worked well.
- To be a mentor needs a lot of organizational skills. (This came up a couple of times)
- With this initiative – the process IS the product. Those are the celebrations to have.
- As mentors, our passion needs to show through or people won't believe what we are saying. Surround yourself with people who will support you. At first this may only be your steering committee. That is o.k. Rely heavily on them. The more people you have the more people will help it grow.
- At one school, there is a feeling of a lack of momentum. The initiative seems to be on the back burner. At first excitement was there – now not necessarily. They are relying on their coach to help move them along.

The group was then asked what guidance and help would they like to see from this initiative. Three ideas were given.

- Help with the marketing of this initiative.
The beginning of the year is THE opportunity to have this be a living organism.
- Organization
- Learning a problem solving processes they can learn for themselves and then teach to the students.).
- Remind the group of the activities that they have done in our workshops so that they may share these with their larger staff group.

Comments/suggestions from Lynn Moore, a teach, empower AND model coach:

- The CEP source book is a great tool for each school to rely on for ideas.
 - The first year is so much about building infrastructure. As you learn you talk about it with other staff. You, as the steering committee are still learning.
 - Have realistic expectations. If you don't, you will find yourself disappointed.
 - The second year is about engaging staff and understanding what skills need to be brought in.
 - You need to be looking at building your team. Is it strategic?
 - Next year there will be another Leadership Institute. This will be another opportunity to have others understand what this work is about.
 - Think about the accomplishments this year and share those accomplishments with staff.
 - “Go as far as you can see and you will see farther”
 - Pay attention to the rhythms of the school year. Sometimes of the year offer more opportunities to do this and sometimes they do not, (i.e. Feb/mar more intense academically and tests, report cards and conferences etc.)
 - Realize there will be set backs along the way. You may feel like you have lost ground.
THIS IS NORMAL!
- Throughout the work, it will be important to remind yourself of successes and begin to expect setbacks.

Activities happening in different schools were then shared.

One school created a time before school for teachers to come in and discuss a “hot topic”. Food and coffee were served. The goal was to get staff together to talk and build relationships. The group was hoping for 10 – 12 people. 28 people showed up! The topic was comparing “how life is now vs. when we were growing up.”

This school will be offering more of these hot topic meetings. There feeling is when we present opportunities for people to get involved – they will more likely get involved. And we won't know unless we ask them. By giving people a choice and offering informal opportunities to work together, this initiative – and the buy in – will grow as it touches more people.

To make this happen, they did a lot of publicity.

- In their marketing, they promoted staff to “invite a friend” to join them.
- Nice colorful paper was used to promote this.
- This was also videotaped.

At another school they will be starting a focus group with the staff. The goal is to create more comfort for the staff around this initiative and to get direction. They are struggling a bit with the questions. Another school commented that they have done focus groups in the past. They offered the thoughts that if you don't talk too much, the things that need to come out will – even if the questions are not right.

A concern was brought up – “How do you balance other initiatives that are also important?” The thought that came up was that this initiative should be able to offer an envelope of support to the staff in helping them do their job in all other initiatives they focus on, (If they can problem solve, actively listen, respecting everyone's input etc. their initiatives will be even more successful.)

The climate survey was discussed. All schools will be doing a climate survey of staff, parents and students at their schools. This will provide a lot of base line information that can be used to help with the school annual action plan.

-this is an on line CREE (Collective Responsibility in Excellence and Ethics) survey.

-The coaches along with the administrators at the schools have chosen either the long form, (35 – 40 minutes) or the short form (25 – 30 minutes).

-This will be given to students in 4th – 8th grade.

-Marketing for parent involvement

-Cree will provide report and compare to national results as well.

-One of the schools is in the middle of this survey now.

- All had staff bring laptops to faculty meeting and take it there.

-As students take it, an email will go out to parents that they can take it too!

The Jefferson Conference was brought up. It was mentioned that this brings in top quality speakers. It is held in June. The Charrm'd Foundation will fund 1 person per district if the schools sends one. Information on this conference can be found on the internet.