Establishing School Culture

Will Lamb

The table below details the programs and initiatives that will be implemented at our school over the next three school years. It is essential that as a new principal at this school, I am open to the ideas and feedback of all the school stakeholders. My plan must be flexible, as it may be modified each year. This plan helps to further detail how I will introduce and execute the desired culture in this school.

Cultural Element	Program/Initiative	Timeline of Implementation
Shared Vision	Understanding of Vision - During the opening staff meetings, there will be extensive discussion about the school's current vision. If desired by staff members, it can be revised. The discussion will center around how the vision will play out on a day-to-day basis and what will be the benchmarks used to determine whether or not progress is being made.	August 2019
Demography and Community History	Home Visits - Although not required, home visits will be highly recommended, especially to those staff members new to the school community. These visits will start the year on a positive note and will allow teachers to meet and form partnerships with families. Classroom teachers will be partnered with a member of the admin team or a support staff member for these visits. They will occur during one of the opening workdays, if this time works for families.	August 2019
	Family Stories Activity - During the second semester, the school will seek out family photos and family traditions to display on a bulletin board at school. This will be the first step in a larger stories project in the next school year.	January 2019
	Story Garden - The school community will develop a "story" garden somewhere on the school grounds.	August 2020

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	This garden will be a spot for students to study, teachers to teach, and families to gather. It will be the location of a story sharing night event, when families will gather to share their own family stories.	
	School History Project - As a capstone-like project, fifth graders will investigate the history of our school, dating back to its founding decades ago. They will complete oral interviews and online research, and they will present their findings in the form of a photo documentary. We will partner with Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies for this project.	May 2021
Collaboration	PLCs at Opening Staff Meeting - Professional learning teams will meet during the opening staff meeting. During this time, they will complete the True Colors test to help learn how they can best work with one another. They will also develop norms for future PLC meetings.	August 2019
	Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) - PLC teams will meet two times per week during specials times (45 minutes). One day will be a discussion about math and the other about ELA. These meetings will be guided by the norms developed at the beginning of the school year and will answer the four guiding questions of PLCs (What do we want students to learn?, How will we know if they have learned?, What will we do if they don't learn?, and What will we do if they already know it?). The literacy coach and a member of the administrative team will attend these meetings.	August 2019
Collaborative Decision Making	One-on-One Staff Meetings - During the summer of my first year as principal, I will offer to all staff members the opportunity to meet with me on a one-on-one basis. This will give me the opportunity to get to know them, what they value, and for them to share their experience at the school	Summer 2019

	and anything else they desire to share. This is a huge first step toward building trust. Inclusive Leadership - One of the goals of the administrative team will be to develop inclusive leadership. When at all possible, other stakeholders will be involved in decision making. For example, instead of just the school leaders interviewing potential staff, parents, students, and other staff members will be invited into that process.	August 2019
Empowerment	School Improvement Leadership Team - The school improvement and leadership teams will be merged and will be comprised of school leaders, staff members, parents, students, and other communities. This will allow for more inclusive leadership, whereas all the decisions will not be made by school staff. Other stakeholders will be able to speak into decisions such as hiring staff, budgets, and curricula.	August 2019
	Staff-Led Professional Development - The school leaders recognize that staff are experts in their own fields. These staff members will be given the opportunity to lead professional development for the school, especially when they attend a conference or PD that is off-campus. Also, school leaders will ask staff to present "good things" that are happening in their classrooms.	August 2019
Performance Focused Rewards	Staff Shout Outs - All stakeholders in the school will be able to write a shout out for a staff member. This will include their name, position, and why they are awarding them a shout out this week. These will be posted on a bulletin board near the front office, along with the staff member's picture.	August 2019
	Student of the Week - Teachers will have the opportunity to recognize a student of the week from their	August 2019

classroom. The student's name will be announced on the intercom, and they will meet with the principal for a congratulatory conversation. If there are community partners that are restaurants, students will be awarded a coupon for a free dessert or something similar.

Volunteer of the Year

- A school cannot properly run without the help of parent and community volunteers. Each year, staff members will nominate and vote on a community volunteer of the year. All volunteers will be honored with a breakfast, where the winner will be announced and presented with flowers and a small present.

May 2020

Systematic Communication

Daily Email

- One of the school leaders will send out a daily email to staff notifying them of any staff who are absent and any other logistics, such a schedule change for the day.

August 2019

Weekly Staff Memo

- A weekly memo will be sent out to all staff on Friday mornings. It will contain pertinent information for the coming week, from both the school leader and the school district. The school leader will write this email throughout the week, as he receives information that needs to be included.

August 2019

Family Newsletters

- Grade levels will be required to send home biweekly newsletters to families, and they will also be translated into Spanish. The newsletters will contain what the students are learning, any upcoming events, and how the family can support their child's learning. The school leader will also send home a monthly newsletter to families.

August 2019

Twitter/Social Media

- The school staff will be encouraged to open classroom Twitter accounts, where they can post daily happenings in their classroom.

January 2020

	This will help with student recruitment and will keep parents abreast of what is happening. The school staff will vote on hashtags that represent the school and its vision, and all posts will be tagged with this hashtag.	
Diversity Consideration	Achievement/Opportunity Gap Working Group - The school has very large achievement gaps. There will be a group of staff members (open to all interested) who will study these gaps, do research on how to address these gaps, and introduce possible initiatives to the staff as a whole. This may include a book club, as well.	January 2020
	Equity Training - The school will partner with the district's Director of Equity Affairs as well as the Racial Equity Institute (in Greensboro, NC) for ongoing equity training. In order for the staff to serve each of our students, we must know our students, where they are coming from, and what impacts equity in our country and society.	January 2020
	Community Involvement Nights - The school will partner with the PTA to plan and execute several parent involvement nights, such as Latino Heritage Night, Black History Night, Math Night, and others, as requested by school community members.	September 2019
Conflict Resolution	Responsive Classroom - All staff members, certified and classified, will be trained in Responsive Classroom, an approach to teaching and learning. One component of this approach is conflict resolution, and its approach is very similar to restorative discipline. It includes steps of classroom breaks and breaks with a buddy classroom before the staff member would call the Dean of Students or a member of the admin team.	August 2019
	Peer Mediation - Fourth and fifth grade students will have the	January 2020

opportunity to be trained and serve as peer mediators, where they help younger students talk through minor issues they are having with their peers. This will decrease minor conflict in the classroom that interrupts the learning space.	
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