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Reflection Paper

Internship Reflection

 As I have began my journey into educational leadership, I have continued to learn and grow as an educator and a future leader. This year I started my hours with several observations and some participation time. My mentor, Niyoka Wright, the principal of the elementary school that I work at, has given me the opportunity to observe several different types of meetings. She has given me tons of insight that I was not exposed to before starting this program. It has given me a chance to really dive deep into the world that is principalship.

Activities

 As the year started, I have slowly been able to participate in different activities with my mentor. Several of the activities that I have participated in align with standard 1. To begin, I have observed and participated in several meetings about data both school wide and 3rd grade. Continuing with standard 1 activities, I have interviewed both another principal outside of my mentor and the executive curriculum director of Chippewa Valley to learn about their roles and their responsibilities. I have been able to observe my mentor leading these collaborative team meetings. I have joined Chippewa Valley’s Math Curriculum Council that is district wide. This council meets every month to work on curriculum specifically in math. This activity aligns with standard 2. I was able to observe a technology meeting that was for new technology district wide. It was being implemented as a new resource for teachers. I also helped with bus duty and lunch duty. This aligned with standard 3. I was able to observe and participate in a collaborative team meeting. This was a meeting where the faculty was able to voice their ideas and opinions. This aligned with standard 4. I have participated in several meetings with my mentor to talk about school improvement, data, finances, and other duties of the principal. Last, I was able to attend the Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education meeting. This meeting aligned with standard 6.

My Learning Experiences

 These past few months working with my mentor have been a great learning experience. I have learned more than I ever thought I would in such a short amount of time. Working with my mentor these past few months, I have learned about a School Improvement Plan. This is a document that is required by all schools throughout Michigan. It is a plan that my mentor and two other teachers have worked on for this school year. Working with my mentor, I was able to see all the time and effort that goes into creating one of these plans. She has gone to several meetings about the School Improvement Plan, and for the first time I was able to see all that went into this plan.

 Along with our focus on school improvement, I have learned all about data. This year, my mentor’s focus is on our school data, so we have had several conversations and meetings about data. I have learned how important it is to progress monitor and use this data to help each student achieve academic success. While working together, I was able to see our school’s data in each grade and discuss what is working for the students and what is not. It is still a focus, and we are planning to continue our data reviews as the year goes on.

 One other learning experience I have had since working with my mentor is dealing with behavior issues. My mentor uses restorative practices to handle behavior problems. I have witnessed students sitting in circles and discussing their behavior with the students. Restorative practices are a practice that my mentor would like to train all teachers in but has not had the opportunity to yet, so it has been great to watch and learn from her. I have learned that the students get to talk about their problems and explain the reasoning for their behavior. In these circles, the students are usually able to work it out themselves and come to a conclusion or even a consequence without the principal having to reprimand often.

Reflection

 My mentor and I communicate very well and overall, the communication has been great. She has been so supportive and excited to help mentor me through this journey of becoming an educational leader. We have had some great discussions about topics such as school improvement, for our school and district-wide, data, and about little things that principals must worry about that the rest of the staff does not even realize. It has given me a great insight into all that it takes to be the leader of the building. It has been quite eye opening.

 My mentor and I communicate through text, email, and talking often at school. She is available every Tuesday morning, and we have set that time to be our time to work together. She has been extremely flexible and has allowed me to participate in principal duties. We plan to continue working together throughout the rest of this year. We will meet often throughout the week, and I will be attending meetings when I can to observe. Next year, I hope to begin leading meetings and discussions with the team. Throughout the summer, we plan to work together as well.