Meghan Radoicic

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Reflection Paper #4

Internship Reflection

 Reflecting on my progress that I have made over the past two years as an educational leadership student at Oakland University, I am amazed with how much I have learned and grown. When I first began this program, I did not know exactly what I wanted to do after teaching, but I knew that I wanted to make a change in education. I now realize that being an educational leader is exactly what I am meant to do after teaching. I feel more confident with the roles of a principal at an elementary school level. I understand the financial aspects that are a big part of the job. I know how to build a positive culture within the school that allows all teachers to feel heard and cared about. I have learned about data, curriculum changes, observations, board meetings, parent meetings, behaviors and so much more. This is just the beginning of my learning, as I will continue to learn every single day as an educational leader.

Activities

 For the last trimester during school, I focused on three different areas with my mentor. They were curriculum development, behavior and education support team, and school culture. First, I participated and observed several meetings about our new program, SIPPS, which is a shift in the way we teach literacy. I was able to attend many data review meetings and discuss the route our school still needs to go in for next year. I was able to celebrate our accomplishes this year by reflecting on the data and seeing how many students throughout the school are getting closer to being proficient readers.

 Next, I was appointed the teacher leader for our behavior and education support team for the school. This gave me a chance to really step out as an educational leader in front of other teachers in my building. I facilitated meetings with the school social worker, school psychologist, speech pathologist, special education teachers, parents, and my mentor. As a team, we worked to help high-risk students and develop a plan to assist the student in academic areas. I was able to offer other teachers ideas and support for their high-risk students as well as look at their data to make decisions on their next steps.

 The last area of focus for this year that I worked on with my mentor was establishing a positive culture. During the past year, we had some huge changes happen to our school building. We had changes happening all year long to our curriculum and building schedule as well as protocols and behavior management. All these changes weighed heavily on many teachers, so with the help of my mentor, we worked together to keep the building culture positive. I was able to help with budgeting for teacher appreciation week, extra treats, and simply just being there to talk with other teachers. I created a safe space for other teachers to come to me and discuss their feelings about these changes and work to keep our school positive.

My Learning Experiences

 Over the last two years, I have had so many learning experiences. It is hard to put them all into this paper because I was learning something new almost every single day. ​I have learned all about data. I have learned how important it is to progress monitor and use this data to help each student achieve academic success. I was able to see our school’s data in each grade and discuss what is working for the students and what is not. I learned how to deal with behavior issues and how to implement restorative practices to handle behavior problems. I was able to change my mindset from teacher to educational leader. I learned more about creating a building culture with the staff to make it a comfortable space to voice opinions and talk with one another. I learned how important it is for the leader of the building to establish a relationship with the community and families of students that attend the school. I learned so much about building culture within the school especially when you are trying to make a big change. Many teachers are not always on board, but as the leader, it is my job to get them on board. I have learned about what it takes to create a school budget and how the money is divided between the schools and throughout the district. I learned how important it is to make sure that all teachers are meeting expectations and using the curriculum as intended. I have tools on how to have conversations with teachers who disagree or are having a tough time. I have learned resources to use when it comes to hard conversations with staff. I have also been able to really understand the observation process.

Reflection

 Overall, I am so proud of the educational leader that I have become over these last two years. I am beyond excited to see where my career takes me after graduating with my Master of Education in Educational Leadership. It is my hopes that one day I will get a job as a curriculum leader and work on curriculum K-12. Then after a few years, I intend to apply for assistant principal positions at the elementary level. Hopefully, then working my way up to an elementary principal. I would like to stay in the current district that I work for, but I am willing to expand my horizons if necessary. After all this hard work, I am excited and ready to see it pay off as I take a step into my next journey as an educational leader.