**Principal Growth Plan and Reflections**

**Sample 3.3**

**Administrator: Mr. School Principal**

***Leadership Dimension Two: Embodying Visionary Leadership***—The principal collaboratively involves the school community in creating and sustaining shared school values, vision, mission and goals.

# Areas of Strength

• Establishing a relationship with staff, parents and students based on honest communication

• Clearly articulating the need for shared values, a common vision and a mission statement that is an active part of daily activity at the school

• Creating opportunities for staff, students and the community to have input into school operations

# Areas for Growth

• Sustaining the energy and enthusiasm to see the change process through to the next level. As change is constant, I need to develop skills that will empower others to at first assist and then assume the leadership role in this regard.

•  Satisfaction surveys routinely report student satisfaction with input into decisions as low at our school (below 70 per cent). I need to identify methods that will either encourage more student involvement or help students to understand the level of input they already enjoy.

• Parent input into school decision making is largely through various committees and associations that are connected to our many programs. Therefore, I need to ensure that current attendance at these committees is maintained or increased so that appropriate representation is reached on most issues affecting students.

# Action Strategies

1. Professional reading in the area of teacher leadership and motivation/team building. Authors include (but are not limited to)

*Winning With People*, John C Maxwell

*The Constructivist Leader*, Linda Lambert

*Credibility*, James M Kouzes and Barry Z Posner

2. Empower department liaisons to take a leadership role in the AISI project activities and school based PLCs working on school-identified needs. An example of this would be the current focus on junior high failure rates.

3. Meet with existing student and parent groups to discuss school issues as they arise and to receive feedback on school policies and decisions that occur during the year. The likely groups would include Student Council, SADD, the graduating class and the Music Parents’ Association.

4. Use school council meetings to discuss/debate topical issues in our community and around the province. Given the council’s mandate to act as an advisory body, they can be accessed for their input into potential change.

# Reflection/Outcomes

• With regard to the professional reading, the first two titles are complete and the third is in progress. Added to the list for this year is *Sustainable Leadership* by Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink. The whole concept of *building leadership capacity* has evolved over the past year and, unfortunately, the Leadership Series has not come to fruition as yet.

• The four academic liaisons, as well as the CTS liaison, took an active role in our school focus on junior high failure rates. The lead teachers for AISI at our school are two liaisons (Counselling and Math) and several respected staff; in addition, the committee structure is supported by several teaching assistants. There is an expectation that all staff participate in the focus on junior high success. Year one has been dedicated to arriving at common definitions and clearly articulating areas that can be addressed.

• Formal meetings (issue-based) have been held with the graduating class, the student council, the school council and the Grad Parents’ Association. This strategy was utilized to increase feelings of involvement in school decisions. Whether it will have that effect remains to be seen. Issues discussed include (but are not limited to) smoking policies, alcohol and drug policies, academic changes at postsecondary institutions, school appearance and course offerings.

• As mentioned above, the role of the school council changed this year. New membership brought some new topics to the forefront and parents seem eager to assist in the development of programs aimed at decreasing drug use in teens.

***Leadership Dimension Four: Providing Instructional Leadership***—The principal ensures that all students have ongoing access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to meet the provincial goals of education.

# Areas of Strength

• Timetabling the school so that teachers are working in their areas of strength and, where working in a minor teaching area, they have the support of mentors within the school and, where necessary, outside the division

• Through the course outline process and department liaisons, maintaining a watch on curricular coverage in all disciplines

• Maintaining awareness among staff of upcoming changes in curriculum or recently approved resources

# Areas for Growth

• Staff awareness and utilization of observing best practice as a legitimate PD activity needs to be increased. I need to be more active in promoting this option and making time available for it to occur.

• Operationalizing the phrase “opportunity to meet” is a challenge for me organizationally and pedagogically. While time is flexible within the Alberta Education guidelines for high school completion, the same timeline does not exist in the minds of many parents and students. Graduating on time is a non-negotiable for some. Secondly, have we done due diligence if we simply provide the “opportunity”?

# Action Strategies

1. Through the Professional Growth Plans review process, identify schools where best practices exist and pursue initial contacts with the school principal where required. Even if e-mail is the chosen medium of communication and sharing, helping with the initial contact may increase the number of teachers taking advantage of this option.

2. Through the school council, explore the idea of offering a series of parent workshops of which charting a course to high school graduation could be a component. This may also increase parent satisfaction with their input into issues affecting the school or their child’s education.

# Reflections/Outcomes

• The first strategy did result in three such visits this year. The first revolved around the Challenge Day initiative and whether it has a lasting effect on the students. The second and third visits were in the elective areas, as both teachers wanted to explore new ways of organizing resources and delivering program (art and construction). In addition, materials were acquired to review our feeder school intake process. The goal was to gather “better” information so that services and match-ups could be determined in advance of the school year.

• The school council seems to want to direct their efforts at the drug and alcohol issues within the community. This would include smoking on and around the campus. Information has been provided and at a meeting in April some plans will be set down. The difficulty with some of the concerns is that the proposed solutions require more supervision than can possibly be provided during a school day. Clarification of the school’s role with regard to drug use is needed so that effective solutions can be found. The RCMP have demonstrated a willingness to help in this area.

***Leadership Dimension Five: Developing and Facilitating Leadership in Others****—*The principal promotes the development of leadership capacity within the school community—students, teachers and other staff, parents and school council—for the overall benefit of the school community and education system.

# Areas of Strength

• Allowing teacher leadership in academic areas as well as the traditional extracurricular and co-curricular areas

• Allowing staff and student input to guide school-based directions and initiatives

• Encouraging parent involvement with school extracurricular activities

# Areas for Growth

• Communicating expectations and standards to potential teacher leaders to avoid intervening in the activity or event

• Encouraging teacher leaders to problem solve and take risks without defaulting to the principal’s authority

• Rekindling the passion in veteran teachers so they will actively take a leadership role in the mentoring of new staff and model best pedagogical and professional practice

# Action Strategies

1. Taking more time during the pre-event time to talk frankly about expectations before the leader invests too much time and effort in a particular direction.

2. Honouring mistakes as I do successes should create a better atmosphere for staff that chooses to take on major administrative or organizational tasks. For the purposes of this plan I will endeavour to accentuate positive elements of the work and use debriefing conversations as the basis for looking at improvements.

3. Initiate change in one department to reflect a more positive approach to PD and a desire to be a positive role model for new teachers. Continue to support (through time and training) the interests of senior staff as they pertain to improving school programs or course offerings (eg, SAIT trips, conferences, relief/release time).

# Reflections/Outcomes

• Staff members have done admirably in mentoring their more inexperienced colleagues and this has been appreciated. However, before staff will truly feel confident to take risks they have to trust that they have the support of all levels and the flexibility to utilize personal strengths. This has been a difficult strategy to manage, given change throughout the division this year. Work remains to be done here.

• While mistakes have been honoured, there is a fine line between fixing an unforeseeable error and expecting sound judgment and common sense. There still appears to be a disconnect between what I would consider sound practice and what others see in this regard. Whether the topic is a new pedagogy, the use of a sensitive resource or simply absenteeism, my understanding of the obvious is not so obvious to others. More work to do here as well.

• This last strategy has worked out quite well, on the whole, and has led to some incredible first steps towards our transitioning of students and interschool communications. Professional development continues to be a focus for staff. We have taken time at numerous staff meetings and PD days to show potential connections between division initiatives and our school focus on improving junior high success rates. The change in the AISI focus late last year (June 29) did not allow enough time for staff to make their own connections before “PD started.” Their sense of ownership and investment in the direction was weakened as a result. As long as time is provided, as research suggests, to implement change over time, staff investment can be retrieved and enhanced. Again, more work to do.

This completed plan is respectfully submitted in accordance with board policy and the provisions of the *School Act*. The contents of this plan have improved my service as an administrator and leader for the staff. As indicated in the results, while some strategies were successful, others are very much a work in progress.