Internship II: Texas Principal Competencies

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Domain I: Competencies 1-3

**Competency 001**

**The principal knows how to shape campus culture by facilitating the development,**

**articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared**

**and supported by the school community.**

When giving the morning announcements, I was able to set the tone for the entire school day. Even though the announcements took up very little of the day, they had an impact on the overall school culture. By handling the morning announcements I was able to communicate and reinforce student expectations and speak life into the campus vision. As the mentor coordinator, I had several conversations with the new teachers about campus mission and goals and the strategies that needed to be implemented. Teachers are professionals who have invested in perfecting their craft and understandably want to be treated that way. As the leader of the science department, the teachers did not always agree with every decision. However, I took steps to make sure that their voices were heard and their viewpoints were valued. Also, recognizing teachers for they work they do and celebrating their successes was one of my focuses this year. It goes a long way in creating a campus culture where teachers feel supported and empowered to serve the children. With all the demands and responsibilities of an administrator, it is important to communicate effectively with all stakeholders. I have learned how important it is that my message be tailored to the audience. Things must be explained differently to different groups. While the core message would be the same, using educational jargon, research, and statistics is not the best way to explain to a student or parent a new policy or procedure. I know that with experience I will learn how to do this.

As an administrator, I will focus on a culture of shared leadership to gain multiple perspectives. Teachers will be integral to the design of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the classrooms. Teachers support what they help create, and sharing leadership generates greater commitment and dedication. I would also use the leadership team to make decisions such as how to spend certain funds, what professional development to offer, or how to implement state requirements. I will continue to use the instructional coaching model to provide structure for effective teachers to evolve into effective teacher leaders.

**Competency 002**

**The principal knows how to communicate and collaborate with all members of the school**

**community, responds to diverse interests and needs, and mobilize resources to**

**promote student success.**

The true resource of any school is ultimately the personnel who work there. In order to understand the school’s priorities, I served as a member of the campus improvement team charged with developing the campus improvement plan. I learned that conversations with teachers and parents can help develop the vision and goals by bringing. Having these conversations gave me an opportunity to learn what stakeholders value. I used this information to help my principal fine tune the campus vision. We also reviewed climate surveys, test scores, student demographic data such as socio-economic status and mobility rates, teacher turnover, and discipline data. I found that it was beneficial to look at many different types of data to get a clear view of the problems to determine which problems have the most impact on student achievement. We had three main targets for this year. The first was trends in mathematics and reading scores. We looked at several successive years of assessment data to chart increasing, declining, or stagnant student growth. Our second target was performance of subgroups. We needed to discover who was being helped by current practices and who was being left behind and what strategies could be implemented to close achievement gaps. The third target was teachers’ class results. We talked about the teachers that were being the most or least effective.

Once we found the trends, patterns, and outliers, we worked to figure out the reasons behind the data, “root cause”. We wanted to know if a teacher got better scores because he or she used different strategies, or was it because they have the top performing students. Did students with disabilities do worse because of the effectiveness of an individual teacher or because all teachers had low expectations? Figuring out the reasons for the data takes a lot of work, but I know this is a skill that will be required as an administrator. I plan to use web based survey tools to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data from parents and the community to determine their perceived needs of the school. I will also make sure that my leadership team gets the necessary training in disaggregating data to improve the quality of data team meetings.

**Competency 003**

**The principal knows how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner.**

There are testing security rules in place for state mandated tests. I have worked with the campus testing coordinator to prevent testing errors such as proper placement of students, oral administration confidentiality, and the securing of testing materials. I also was in charge of TELPAS reading this semester. I know that any breaches of security or integrity (no matter how small the infraction may seem) must be reported immediately. Self-reporting is the best reporting. It is much better to get ahead of the situation than have the district or TEA discover a problem and think there was an attempt to be dishonest.

As an administrator, I will work with the testing coordinator on every aspect of testing to cut down on confusion, wasted time, and a disorderly environment. This means that a major part of the process will be training the staff in testing security and testing errors, and monitoring and being very visible during testing to reinforce expectations.

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**Competency 004**

**The principal knows how to facilitate the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment; and promote the use of varied assessments to measure student performance.**

As an instructional coach, I was able to rotate through classes during the day to monitor student learning. This action helped me keep a pulse on the school atmosphere for the day. It also helped keep teachers accountable and sent the message to teachers and students that instructional time is valued and monitored. I made note of positive behaviors and particularly good lessons or other moments to talk about with teachers and students later. Following up with a teacher in a brief not or hallway conservation about something g positive I noticed during my rounds helped boost morale and let them know that I was paying attention. The same was true for students.

It was also my responsibility as instructional coach and department chair to facilitate planning meetings to create lessons that were aligned to the curriculum and had the necessary rigor to challenge our students and drive academic growth. I think the job of instructional leader is the most important job of a principal. A principal that is knowledgeable about instructional programs and recognizes and rewards highly effective instruction is critical to school improvement. As an administrator, I will have to become more familiar with all of the content areas in order to increase my effectiveness as an instructional leader. So much scheduling may seem tedious, but it allows for devotion to more important things as the school year progresses.

**Competency 005**

The principal knows how to advocate, nurture, and sustain an instructional program and a campus culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Educators, by nature, are lifelong learners, and come to education from many paths. Some have had the calling to be teachers from a young age; others come to education later in life, perhaps because they want to give something back. Regardless of whether a teacher is new or a veteran with decades in the classroom, helping them hone and master their craft is a top priority. As a campus SIOP trainer, Teach Like a Champion Leader, and instructional coach. It was my responsibility to model research based strategies for teachers. Providing this valuable professional development will help shepherd teachers through the changes the school will undergo as we work to make improvements. I think I would benefit from more study of adult learning theory to best understand how adults interpret and analyze new information in a professional setting.

**Competency 006**

**The principal know how to implement a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, select and implement appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and apply the legal requirements for human resource management.**

As the school year progressed, I built time into my schedule for teacher observations and teacher conferences. A requirement of the course was to complete an entire cycle of the observation process for one teacher. As I have eight teachers on my team, I completed the process for all of them. I discovered that these evaluations require an enormous amount of time. I tried to break the observations into cycles so that I would have time to conference with the teachers and also give them the support they needed for identified areas of growth. My district’s evaluation cycle requires unannounced observations. As I am in the classrooms daily with the teachers on my team, I was able to do this seamlessly. I spoke with the teachers at the beginning of each semester to schedule time with them based on the classes that were in need of the most feedback.

I did discover the frustration of having to reschedule appointments due to unexpected incidents or unscheduled meetings that I had to attend. I came to understand from my principal that this is an unfortunate, but common occurrence. I learned how important it is to maintain a spreadsheet of all scheduled observations in order to ensure that observations are completed in a timely manner.

**Competency 007**

**The principal knows how to apply organizational, decision-making, and problem solving skills to ensure an effective learning environment.**

An administrator has many demands on their time. Having exceptional organization skills is important when managing a large staff and student body. I was granted access to the master calendar. Having the knowledge that the master calendar is essential to the staff to keep track of events, I thought the opportunity to manage the calendar would be a great way to keep my finger on the pulse of my campus. I included information from the district about school holidays, conference days, progress report and report card distribution, field trips sporting events, open houses, fundraisers, club events, and choir and band performances. When placing items on the calendar, I didn’t just name the event, but I included the time, location and any requirements such as audio visual equipment, seating, staff member required to attend, the administrator on duty, and other relevant details. Having this information in a central location prevented conflicting events.

I believe that maintaining the calendar was a worthwhile endeavor, but as an administrator, this is a task that I would delegate to a staff member. I think my time would be better utilized on other tasks. However, I would require approval on events and their additions to the calendar. Being an organized manager of time, tasks, and people prevents many problems. There will always be unforeseen events that are hard to predict and even harder to resolve. It is critical for administrators to establish daily routines so that time is not wasted.

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**Competency 008**

**The principal knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and management in relation to campus budgeting, personnel, resource utilization, financial management and technology use.**

The spending of district funds can be a complicated process. I was responsible for making all science department, science fair and academic pentathlon purchases. My district has its own forms for documenting money and spending, but I created my own system for tracking my expenditures. I was not aware of all of the financial rules of my district. My mentor created a cheat sheet with a list of definitions and a flow chart that shows the different steps for requesting money. I kept this in my office and also attached a copy to my request and purchase order folders.

I also learned the value of a well-trained, reliable bookkeeper. Keeping accurate financial records is an important part of running a school, but it shouldn’t take up the majority of an administrator’s time. I would still closely supervise the record keeping making sure that the money management is done correctly. I understand that all financial decisions are my responsibility.

**Competency 009**

The principal knows how to apply principles of leadership and management to the campus physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.

I was given the opportunity to be the administrator on duty at several sporting events. To have successful events with a large group of students and/or parents, plans must be made ahead of time to make sure all staff members know their responsibilities. Student supervision is critical, so I would create a map of the event location showing where all students and adults would be located, along with descriptions of the adult responsibilities in each location. When assisting with school assemblies, entering and exiting were key times when incidents could happen. To avoid having a large group of students coming in at once through limited doorways, they would be called in groups by hallway. Teachers would escort their classes and remain and entrance and exit points for additional supervision.

I think the most important part of the competency is planning and prevention. Anticipating problems and creating a plan is much more effective and safer than having to respond to a problem after it happens. I know that I will need additional training in crisis prevention and management when I become an administrator to handle events where student safety issues are critically heightened.