

## Culture and Climate

### Specific Concerns:

- Principals are expected to implement new mandates that affect master schedule, staffing, funding and instructional programs, all within unrealistic timelines and via systems that do not support the changes. Example: ALD/ELD classes where numbers can be small and extra funding is not provided.
- Principals receive unclear, incomplete and/or conflicting information regarding new mandates. Examples: EL expectations, science sequencing, and no clear guidelines on how to effectively implement the Call to Action on supporting special education and EL with researched-based instructional practices that work.
- The district's culture of support, positive relationships, collaboration and staff wellness that is shared by executive leadership is not the culture in which principals work. In reality, principals feel overworked and not supported due to high expectations and little consideration for the amount of work issued over time from many different departments.
- Our district systems do not support efficient operations and the prioritization of effective teaching practice. The operation of the schools is downplayed, yet the work can pile up quickly and to expect it can be done on an after-school basis (as we are constantly reminded to be in classrooms) can be frustrating and overwhelming. Parents expect time to meet, teachers want to make appointments to discuss their concerns, professional development needs time to create, students need support for their classes, teachers need to be hired and trained, new parents need answers, IEPs and 504s need support, quality assurance wants you to respond immediately, etc. With HR, though hiring classified staff may seem like a simple task, it takes months to complete for every new vacancy. The impact of not having the right staff hired is exponential in that either the principal picks up the slack by hiring substitute employees if possible, over-working and doubling up the already cut-tight clerical staff, or doing the work himself/herself.
- There is no prioritization of issues of urgency that are time-sensitive and require quick action. Phone calls and emails sent to various district offices are not returned in a timely fashion or not at all. This has been reported by several principals over time. When getting a response, if the answer is known you likely get an answer, but when someone needs to check with others, it stalls and many times goes unanswered.
- Policies, procedures and mandates are issued by district leadership without principal input or voice, making it challenging to implement or uphold on each site. Examples: PSAT testing for 10th/11th grade, master schedule timeline, and baseline staffing.
  - One-size-fits-all funding allocations and staffing formulas do not take into consideration the unique needs of individual sites and negatively impact student services (i.e. nursing, mental health providers, staffing for classified and vice principals).
  - Operationally, these policies, procedures, and mandates can be difficult or nearly impossible to successfully implement without disrupting student learning.
- Schools are not treated equitably by executive leadership, with some sites with similar demographics receiving priority attention and special consideration over others. In addition, certain schools are highlighted consistently while others are not when they too have made gains.

- There is no on-boarding for new principals, who are frequently left to figure things out on their own, which puts them at a disadvantage and does not set them up for success.
- Principals are told by district leadership that the instructional program is "the priority," but the systems in place do not support the work.
- We are not building the capacity of our vice principals to be instructional leaders on campus or to qualify for principalship when they are in IEPs almost all day and there are limited PD opportunities provided by our district specific to vice principals.
  - Some sites have over 20% special education (and growing) with vice principals in IEPs up to 4 days a week and up to 2-3 hours a day.
  - In order for a high school to make instructional shifts, vice principals and principals need to be in classrooms and providing feedback to teachers. When 50% or more of a vice principal's day is in IEP meetings, there is little time left to make an instructional impact.
  - 2019-2020 Differentiated Support for Principals includes only three learning opportunities for vice principals.
  - VPs don't have time for PD without impacting the principal's schedule to attend trainings. When they leave, the principal picks up the slack on student concerns, IEPs, etc. Subs for VPs could ease the load but there is no funding for that.
- The enhanced math research team and pilots have the potential to make a long-term impact on math instruction; yet, sites are not provided additional funding to support this shift by way of:
  - Additional FTE to have an on-site instructional coach.
  - Administrative support so that the site admin are more available to co-lead this work on their sites.
- There is inequitable practice regarding classified staffing, in that certain schools have certain positions funded centrally and certain positions funded by individual sites. For example, some large high schools have 10-month financial clerks, while others (sometimes smaller schools) have 11-month financial clerks.
- Nursing staff allocations have been cut, which puts more burdens on special education, EP 10 processes, drug intervention and education programs, and classroom concerns. Large high schools are impacted as they have the same support as schools half their size. Large high schools were also allocated two days of Health Technicians without regard to building a team program as everyone got two different health techs for each day of support. The impact of this decision is that consistency in the health office is compromised and team morale continues to be impacted. This also affects counseling as the nurse has to cut back on the services to manage the limited support offered in the health office by the district allocation.

### Impact:

- Principals feel demoralized due to lack of transparency, communication, and support.
- Principals wrestle with the high expectations of district program implementation when they do not feel supported by district departments/personnel and often feel undermined in their efforts.
- Favoritism amongst sites fosters lack of trust.

*High School Principals Group Concerns**September 5, 2019***HR Concerns****Specific Concerns:**

- Schools with unique initiatives and designs that require particular buy-in and belief structures are not allowed to share their designs with prospective teachers, making it nearly impossible to effectively run programs that are out of the box.
- HR (and the district as a whole) appears to work at the service of the unions and not in service of school sites.
- Principals are distrustful of HR staff because incomplete, incorrect, or misleading information is provided to them.
  - Principals have repeatedly requested site data that would prove or discount HR claims that non-priority candidates had previously been placed in vacancies, yet this data has not been provided.
  - Principals were told by Acacia Thede that the term "deemed qualified" is exclusively defined as "having the credential" because of grievance/arbitration history and precedent, yet staff in Labor Relations stated there have been no grievances related to "deemed qualified" at the Level 3 or Arbitration levels.
  - Principals were told by Acacia Thede that there are many instances in which she does not have the "authority" or "legal expertise" to answer concerns brought forth by the HS Principals' group.
- Principals are constantly reminded to provide clear written policies, procedures and expectations to our communities but HR staff does not appear to have such requirements.
- District executive leadership appears to continuously ignore complaints about the ineffectiveness and detrimental behavior of the leadership and staff in the HR department.
  - We met two years ago to discuss HR challenges and discuss solutions, yet no changes have been made.
- When principals complain about HR policies, procedures and practices to executive leadership, they are met with indifference, feigned ignorance, perfunctory concern or disdain.

**Impact:**

- Same as "Impact" under "Climate and Culture"