



Ways Administrators Can Support Teachers

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Teachers are walking away from education, but the pandemic has accelerated the exit of some educators. I have spoken to several principals who have not filled all vacancies for the 2021-2022 school year. Some keep filling vacancies and become fully staffed only for another educator to resign, putting the administrator back on another search in a teaching pool that is drying up. Now, more than ever, should school administrators update their practices to better support teachers to increase retention and lower vacancies.

Administrators should be responsive.

Becoming an administrator means taking on more responsibility and responding in a timely manner to all aspects of those responsibilities. Administrators help steer the ship, and if they want teachers to take their responsibility seriously and complete tasks in a timely manner, they should do the same.

Administrators should give teachers time to get tasks done.

I learned that a school in Indianapolis gave school staff a paid day off before school began, and teachers could work at school or stay at home and not work at all and take care of themselves. Professional development is great but it can only be realistically implemented if teachers have time to do the tasks associated with it. Redundant tasks and low leverage tasks should be eliminated.

Administrators should have a solid plan for school discipline.

Students can only learn if they are in the classroom. Unfortunately, some teachers lack the skills to manage behavior. Administrators talking to a student for a few minutes and sending the student back to class or having the student stay in the in school suspension room is not the answer. Teachers need strategies they can use to improve behaviors. They need staff to come to support when a child's behavior puts the teacher or students in danger. When teachers feel as if they can't manage behavior and the behavior makes them feel unsafe, they are likely to leave.

Administrators need to support teachers with parents.

Recently, some parents have been pushing back about curriculum. Parents also could push back in other areas. Just like children might go to dad after they get a denial from mom, parents can go to the administration after not getting what they needed or wanted from the teacher. Yes, teachers can make mistakes, but no teachers should feel that the principal is going to abandon them the moment a parent raises a concern.

The upcoming school year is another one under the cloud of the pandemic. To send sunshine to break up those clouds, an administrator should take strong efforts to support teachers in a way that allows them to successfully support students.