



THE INTERVIEW CHAIR

EPISODE 30: SHOW NOTES

WHAT IF...

1. Every teacher sent a personal note, letter, or e-mail to every student before the first day of school with a welcoming message.
2. During the first faculty meeting, every parent received a personal phone call from at least one of their child's teacher(s) and it included a positive message about their student. Staff could work together to divide up student contact information to ensure everyone received a call.
3. Teachers and administrators personally called parents anytime an email communication did not receive a response rather than assuming a parent/guardian did not care enough to respond. Assumptions should remain positive by believing that parents/guardians never received the initial email or simply forgot to respond and would have appreciated a follow-up.
4. All cooperating teachers modeled and coached their student teachers on a regular basis so parent communication became something to look forward to rather than something that was feared or dreaded.
5. School administrators assigned beginning teachers a communication coach to model and mentor how to make home calls that leave parents feeling like they have a school advocate to support them and their children.
6. Teachers and administrators committed to trying to resolve student infractions with the student first before involving a parent (immediate parent involvement would be determined by the severity of the infraction). By first revisiting expectations for students and giving them an opportunity to correct their own behavior, we would give them personal ownership and model fairness before involving a higher authority.
7. Teachers reached out to their administration and asked for assistance with challenging situations rather than avoiding calling home. Avoiding communicating with parents/guardians regardless of the concern is never a good practice. It is critical that you seek the support of your administration.
8. Encouraged every staff member to keep a log of calls made home in order to use this information to personalize their relationships with families rather than require teachers to submit documentation. We want our staff to want to call home so requiring staff to submit logs to administration only serves to perpetuate a culture of mistrust rather than cultivate a community of trusted professionals. Let's not put staff in a position to "check off the box" that they completed this expectation.
9. Viewed early release and staff in-service days as opportunities to intentionally focus our discussions on the importance of connecting with all parents, sharing effective strategies to support each other, and then providing staff time to make positive calls home.

And what if we took this last item one step further and we as a staff documented the parent responses? And what if at our next faculty meeting, we all gathered in small groups and shared the list of responses with each other as a way to celebrate our collective great work? And what if we curated all responses and placed them on strips of paper and pulled a couple out of a box before every meeting moving forward to remind all of us of the impact one positive phone call can have on a family member?