

It was a wonderful experience interviewing the principal at Stevenson Middle School and Ninety-Ninth Street Elementary School. The two leaders provided great context around school operations, teacher development, and establishing the mission and vision of schools. The leaders were receptive to all questions asked. I started with the question, “The dynamic between the principal and assistant principal can often be compared with marriage because it requires sacrifice, effective communication, and collaboration. What are some challenges of leading a school when different leadership styles come into play, and how do you manage those challenges?” The principal at Stevenson Middle School explained his position in managing adults. The principal at Stevenson Elementary School rejects the philosophy of micro-management. He was intentional in establishing a system of communication with the Assistant Principal. They meet every Friday to collaborate on ideas and approaches. He stressed the importance of communication and the need for the Assistant principal to have excellent communication skills. He is persistent in being aware of what happens within the school community to support the Assistant Principal. He does not necessarily believe that the relationship between the principal and assistant principal is a marriage. However, he does acknowledge that they both should be in sync with each other. His assistant principal this year is new to leadership. To provide the best support for his Assistant Principal, he holds bi-weekly meetings for coaching.

Additionally, in reflection on teacher feedback, the principal at Stevenson Middle School provides teachers with feedback in a one-on-one session immediately after the observation. He believes it is never about the individual; but always about the practice. He is extremely particular about the language he uses for teachers when giving feedback. He is never accusatory of the individual but allows teachers to share their pedagogical choices and why they choose certain

practices. Furthermore, he shared that building relationships with staff members is essential. He attends Happy Hour with teachers to help break the ice. He does this to build a network of people who are committed to the mission and vision he has set for the school. Lastly, he shared his educational philosophy. "I look at heart! I don't look at content or classroom management." The principal at Ninety-Ninth Street Elementary School spoke about her passion for joy and ensuring that Ninety-Ninth remains a safe space where all students want to be and have joyful experiences. She focused a lot on the culture and climate of the school. Her work around ensuring that all students and families belong was the heart of the conversation.

The interviews were enlightening. Their identity manifests in their leadership styles. One principal focused on staff relationships and curriculum, while the other focused on the school's mission and vision, school culture, and student joy. Their identity is reflected in various systems within their perspective schools. I went into the interview with assumptions about what leaders need to know and experience to successfully lead schools. I did not consider the unique experiences that make them great leaders and how that would uniquely impact their influence on staff, students, and families. Lastly, in reflection on the courses I have taken thus far, I would love to ask what theories they hold about the teacher evaluation system and best practices around teacher development and coaching.