

Improving lives and leadership of assistant principals

Episode 2: From AP to P with Guest Holly Miller September 9, 2021 Show Summary

Our guest this episode is Holly Miller, the first-year principal of Sandhills Primary School in Swansea, South Carolina. Holly is here with us today to share her experiences on going from an AP to a principal. Holly brings a wealth of experiences and perspectives to the job. We also touch on the challenges of COVID and the power of relationships.

Holly quotes

“We turned 5-minute coaching into a survey for teachers. We asked them... and we were able to get an intimate understanding from the teachers. They were very vulnerable; they were very honest with it... so we could address their concerns”

“They need you to be as successful as you want to be, because that makes the *whole* school successful!”

When did you decide you wanted to be a P? “When I realized I could be an instructional leader. Lots of times as an assistant principal you are doing the operational things... but when I realized I had a vision and that I did want to move things forward instructionally. I went to my principal and said, ‘I feel weak in instruction’ and he gave me the opportunities and coached me along the way.”

“One of the things that helped was when I started reading outside the field of education.”

“When you think of running a whole school it is daunting, and you think ‘I can’t keep track of all this’ but you can if you know what your focus is and you have a laser like focus on it, you don’t lose sight of it, you can do it.”

“That made the teachers relax a little, that we weren’t going to change things, that we were just going to go deeper with it.”

Advice for APs to grow their IL: “Work with a great team. We are meeting regularly and have expectations of what we expect to see.”

“Part of a role of a principal... is to be looking for opportunities to grow your people. It can’t rest with you. The more they grow, the better you are.”

“It really is about instruction. You’ve got to look for those opportunities and ask for them...you can start small... use 5-minute coaching... to find out what’s going on and what’s working with a teacher.”

“It is always going to be about relationships.”

The takeaway: “It really is about relationships. It is about instructional leadership, but you can’t do that without relationships. You can’t coach them without realizing who they are.”

Frederick Quotes

“When we talk about vision in the strategic sense, it’s really not about the 10,000-foot view, it’s about how we translate that 10,000 foot view into daily operation.”

“You don’t have to have all the answers because you have people that you can develop the answers together”

“The attitude of principals is ‘we want to help you grow.’ So, if you APs out there aren’t getting the instructional leadership experiences, think about those specific experiences you want to gain and how they will help the school, and don’t be afraid to go to your principal.”

