



Assistant Principal *Exc*eleration

Show Notes, Episode 79: Just be visible

About this show:

“Can Every School Succeed?” That’s a big question and I’m not sure about the answer. I do know that every school can get better. Is that enough? Again, I don’t know. But I do know someone who does and he is our guest on the show today!

Notable Quotes

David:

You know, great teachers, equal happy teachers.

I’ve worked with some teachers that were struggling to find their place. And they had bogged down in a lot of negativity. And when we were able to break through that, kind of see the forest through the trees a little bit, you just saw everything change within their instruction and you just saw everything in their classroom change.

But I want everyone to learn from my successes and also my mistakes. As well because again, I made every mistake in the book multiple times.

thinking about positive school cultures, you have to be in a position where it’s OK to fail in front of everybody. Because if you can’t do that, like there there’s a culture issue. But I I went back many times to my different stakeholders. Say I got that wrong. This is what happened. And but we were OK because my heart was in the right place. I was trying to better something and we took the wrong path. But hey, let’s course correct. And then the next time we did it.

You know I’d be so much of a better parent if my kid came with a manual but they didn’t. And so being able to kind of work through that and have that culture transparency but also be able to to to not just. Talk the talk, but walk the walk. Be able to get into classrooms. Be able to be an instructional leader.

<https://www.frederickbuskey.com/apex-members-page.html>



Assistant Principal *Exc*eleration

I used to block it on my calendar. It's a classroom observations and I told my office staff do not book any appointments during those times and it would be like a two hour chunk every day. And the other thing I said was because, you know, administrators care around radios. Well, walkie-talkie I said. I'm going to turn off my radio when I'm on my classroom observations. If there is an emergency like the school is on fire, or I have a or there's a serious injury or like a true emergency, text me.

The first year I did this, I had some parents who I found out were a little upset with me because I came down to the school and you know, I was told he wasn't available. I had to work through that, but then they learned. Call ahead and don't just show up, call ahead. And that time is sacred to me. My staff knew that too, so we worked around it. So again, we were educating parents at the same time and and I wanted them to know, hey, being in classrooms is something super important for me. And I want the best education for your kids and for me to ensure that for me to provide feedback and to be there for my teachers, I need to be in classrooms.

And my office staff, they they took some hits too. I would buy them coffee every time that happened and we worked through it.

the other tangible thing to do once you're in the classroom is you leave, a positive posted. Behind I don't care if it was the worst classroom observation you've ever done. Like you find the one thing. You have some nice work in the classroom, work on the walls, bang, post a note on. You know, you never leave something negative, always positive. And that again helps to bring that fear down from teachers who are not used to you doing this. And they're going to be scared about that posting of the first time. Like what did he put on there? Like what did I do wrong? Oh, he liked, you know, the discussion I was leading. Teachers then talk about that in the lunchroom and that spreads. That's that positive culture that you want to spread.

We want to be clinical, not critical.

But as far as culture goes, get out there, you know, get out of your office.



Assistant Principal *Exc*eleration

When you walk on a school campus, you can feel the culture. You can sense it from the moment you step on campus. No one has to say anything to you. You can just feel it. And I always look around and people are happy. Are they smiling there, greeting each other, saying hello.

I would say keeping up with the current instructional practices that keep changing our world keeps changing because kids keep changing. And so when I'm recommending a strategy, I want to make sure that the research states that these are the best strategies.

be present, be visible, you know, be out there. You do not want to be the Invisible assistant principal.

Being an administrator can be a very, very lonely job because there are things you cannot talk to the general staff with confidential and different things. So have that support system and that's again. Going back to the principal's desk Facebook group, I have folks post in there anonymously all the time, and then all of a sudden, you know, I check it like an hour later, 50 responses on how to deal with the situation or just words of encouragement and people will message me all the time and say it's just what I needed.

Frederick:

I don't know if I have any original thoughts. I just steal from the smartest, best people I can find.

When you're successful, you don't reflect on it and learn from it, but when you fail.

One of the things I really want to draw attention to, and what you were talking about was that that by blocking the classroom observation period. That's not a time management strategy, that's a priority management strategy and that's that's one of the keys for moving from that zone of urgent leadership to being able to be strategic leadership is that we stop focusing on time and we start focusing on priorities.



Assistant Principal *Ex*celeration

I think we, we have a problem with the language around observation. Because if I say I'm doing an observation, why don't even know what that means beyond you being in my room. I don't know what that means and I don't know what to expect. And so I really push this idea of different kinds for patterns of observation, but one of them being performative. So performative observation, I'm going to your performance for my enjoyment. For me to learn, not to help me become a better teacher. And so if teachers know if we can use that language, we're out doing performative observations. They know it's not about them, it's about us just trying to to learn and understand better what's happening in school.

Links:

[Davids Website](#)

[Davids Book](#)

My email: frederick@frederickbuskey.com

The Assistant Principal Podcast website: <https://www.frederickbuskey.com/appodcast.html>

Sign up for the daily leadership email: <https://mailchi.mp/c15c68e6df32/specialedition>

Website: www.frederickbuskey.com

Blog: www.frederickbuskey.com/blog (reposts of the daily email)

<https://www.frederickbuskey.com/apex-members-page.html>