



MAY 2017



***"Whatever you do in life, surround yourself with smart people who'll argue with you."
– John Wooden***

Teacher Appreciation Week: Nationally this is recognized May 1-5, 2017. Be creative and work with your other stakeholder groups to make this a special week for the staff. There is no doubt this has been a hard year with negative press and budget cut issues, so make a point of letting the staff know you appreciate them. Consider finding ways to celebrate them each day of the week:

- Monday - PTA sponsored bagels and coffee in the lounge.
- Tuesday - A special note from the Administrative team with a piece of candy. I often made these on cardstock and printed on a color copier.
- Wednesday - Have the student council make a sign for each teacher's door with positive attributes about the teacher from the student's perspective.
- Thursday - Pull out your wallet and ask the PTA to contribute for a staff lunch. I found platters from Jimmy Johns or a taco bar from the cafeteria staff to be cost effective and much appreciated options.
- Friday - Let this be a casual day for the staff and make an announcement thanking them for everything they do to make your students and school shine.

Final Exams: Final exams are taking on a new level of importance as many Districts will use these post-test results to demonstrate student growth. Make sure that your school/District has clear common assessment policies and procedures, such as: What type of review activities are permitted? Are notes, calculators and reference materials allowed to be used during the exam? What percentage of the final grade will the exam count toward?

2017-18 Teacher Schedules: The teacher tenure laws require careful thought and consideration when assigning teacher schedules. It is important to ensure that teachers in the core subject areas have "balanced schedules" (a mix of upper and lower level students throughout their day). This will help to ensure fairness and equity when using student growth data as part of the evaluation process. Allow teachers to have input into their schedules but retain "right of assignment." Here are some good guidelines to follow:

- Balance teacher schedules when possible to ensure that each teacher has as few preps as possible.
- Double check teacher certification against MDE requirements.
- Notify teachers of their assignments as early as possible especially if they will be teaching a course for the first time.

Locker Cleanout: Allow time for students to clean out their lockers prior to the last few weeks of school. Custodians should put trash cans in the locker bays and teachers can assist with supervision as students clean out their lockers.

Summer School: As soon as final grades are posted, make sure that counselors do a final check of students needing summer school. It should be the counselor's responsibility to make these contacts with families and to ensure that written notification of credit deficiencies is in the student's file.



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Student Schedules: In many Districts students have identified their course choices and the master schedule is in the process of being developed. Make sure that all necessary notification letters have been written and sent for placement into Advanced Placement, Honors and/or Remedial level classes. It is important to make students/parents aware of the placement policy, the procedures followed and the result. If the student was not placed in the advanced class they were seeking, what is the alternative? If they are placed in a remedial course is there an appeal process?

Graduation Planning Reminders: While you probably have been planning some of the larger components of graduation long before May, this is a good time to begin double-checking yourself and making sure that you have all of the fine details managed. Graduation is one of the biggest stages for a high school principal, so make sure you have things in order: Have you double checked to make sure the photographer is coming to the right location? Have you made arrangements with your Band and Choir Directors for what their role in the ceremony will be? Are your programs ordered and have you quadruple checked to make sure that every graduate's name will be printed? Do you have invitations sent to your board of education and central office administration? These are the small details that can become big issues if they are not double checked, and May is the perfect time to revisit the graduation plan.

8th Graders and/or Seniors Last Days: Anticipate end of the year shenanigans. Meet with custodial staff, campus security, local police and parent groups to discuss plans for the end of the year. Make sure there is clear communication to the students and all stakeholders about a positive end to the year and the possible consequences for those who make poor choices. If there are negative traditions such as shaving cream fights at the middle level and senior pranks at the high school – what can be done to anticipate these events and either eliminate or minimize their disruption. Consider alternate ways to dismiss students on the last day of school – this may allow you to change negative patterns and to catch students off guard.

8th Grade Farewell and/or Commencement: The last major event of a student's academic career at each level marks a milestone. Attention to detail (double- and triple-checking) will pay off. Make an event day check list to ensure you don't forget any of the little things that need to happen – flowers on the stage, verify speaker attendance, programs printed and onsite for distribution, music, etc. Plan to arrive well ahead of the scheduled event...you will be more relaxed and confident when you visually see the setting and you've made sure everything is ready to go. If time allows, visit with parents and greet guests – they love to see you, especially on a special day for their student.

Exit Interviews: Consider holding short meetings with groups of 8th graders and/or Seniors before they leave. Ask them to share their thoughts about their experience at your school: What are their best memories? What are things that could be improved? What content area teachers have made them feel most prepared for the next level? What advice would they have to younger students? Type up these comments and share with staff at a later date.

End Strong: Make time to meet with all key stakeholder groups to begin planning for next year such as:

- **Department Chairs and Teacher Leaders:** Get all supply lists and verify textbook needs. Discuss any staffing and teacher scheduling concerns, enlist their assistance and support to find solutions to any of these issues. Are there any groups meeting over the summer to do curriculum work? Will you need any staff members to assist with interviews? Will there be "test out" opportunities for students over the summer – who will correct these exams?



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- **Student Council and Class Sponsors:** Fill all open positions for class sponsors, student council and national honor society. Is there a theme for next year? Is there a specific charity you will be supporting? What calendar events are already in place for 2016-17?
- **Student Council:** Do you need student council support for freshman orientation or any other summer events? When is Homecoming next fall?
- **Secretaries and Support Staff:** Meet with secretaries about end of the year reports and wrap up as well as packets and pieces that need to be completed over the summer to ensure a smooth return.
- **Coaches and ADs:** Make sure that all coaches are aware of the MHSAA dead period and that all observe this rule. Get a list of coach contact information, tryout dates and summer camps for reference when new students enroll.
- **Custodial and Maintenance:** Discuss any end-of-the-year set up for events, campus clean up needed after student dismissal and summer cleaning schedules. Are there times when portions of the building will be off limits (e.g. for floor waxing or construction)?

Monthly Meetings: Here are two items you should consider adding to your staff meeting agenda this month.

- **Staff Meeting Icebreaker of the Month: Fear in a Hat** - Set an appropriate tone, e.g., settled, attentive, caring and serious.

Ask everyone to anonymously complete this sentence on a piece of paper: "In this group, I am [most] afraid that..." or "In this group, the worst thing that could happen to me would be..." Collect the pieces of paper, mix them around, then invite each person to pick a piece of paper and read about someone's fear. One by one, each group member reads out the fear of another group member and elaborates and what he/she feels that person is most afraid of in this group/situation. No one is to comment on what the person says, just listen and move on to the next person. (If the reader doesn't elaborate much on the fear, then ask them one or two questions. Avoid implying or showing your opinion as to the fear being expressed, unless the person is disrespecting or completely misunderstanding someone's fear. If the person doesn't elaborate after one or two questions, leave it and move on.) When all the fears have been read out and elaborated on, then discuss what people felt and noticed.

This activity lead into others, such as developing a Full Group Contract, personal or team goal settings, course briefings which specifically tackle some of the issues raised.

- **Teacher Meeting Topics of the Month and Mentor Teacher Checklist: (PHD)** Email the mentor checklist to your mentor teachers each month to encourage conversation with untenured teacher mentees.

Upcoming MASSP Events: For more information or to register, please visit mymassp.com/eventlist.

- May: Student Growth and Assessment Data - 5/8 | Zero Tolerance/Seclusion & Restraint Workshop - 5/9
Data Analysis Workshop (Hillsdale) - 5/23
- June: EdCon (Grand Traverse Resort) - 6/26-6/28