

# School Name: St. Peter Lutheran School

## Consultancy Session

**Principal: Sally**

**Consultancy Group: Peter, Jenny and Katie**

### Overview of the Problem

- Campus Culture
- Sally is a new leader of a building where there historically was a shared decision-making process.
- As the enrollment and size grew, there have been challenges with moving away from that small, shared decision-making process.
- We have created more opportunities for the staff to build culture and team.
- We are hiring a new dean next year that will focus on building culture.
- Survey data shows that parents feel that the culture has changed, and the loving feel is lost.
- The question is, with all of these changes, how can we develop and nurture a strong sense of unity among the school as we continue to expand.

### Clarifying Questions

- How much of the staff was retained from last year to this year?
  - 85%
- Shared decision-making?
  - In the past, everyone was a part of that process.
- Who are you getting the most push-back from?
  - Parents
- Were these thoughts brought up before or after the leadership transition?
- What is your background?
  - St. Peter
  - Public school
  - Teacher
- What are new parents saying? Are they overall happy?
  - The new parents have accepted it for what it is, they don't know the difference.
  - There was an expectation that it was going to be small.
- What types of parent interactions?
  - Two meet the principal sessions prior to the start of school
  - Multiple family nights
  - PTA round-up
  - Attended every event in the community
  - Do a newsletter monthly
  - Met with multiple parents

## **Probing Questions**

- The families were feeling the lack of family feel before you arrived?
  - The people that have been there are saying that it has been the same
- What about the former principal, why did she leave?
  - I have been told that we have a unique clientele. Entitled. I have also heard that same thing happens any time any change has been made. I just want to make sure I am covering my bases. Don't know why
- How much of your staff do you want to retain for next year?
  - Happy with teaching staff. Would only cut 5% of staff. They are opening up more. A lot of this happened over our holiday brunch.
- What do you envision for the Dean of Culture role?
  - They will focus on culture on all aspects. Implement celebrations, plan for more intentional.
- What does your family involvement look like? Have some parents provided solutions?
  - I have met with the PTA leads, they are the biggest voices. We have had conversations about what that means. Many have said what they "hear" teachers saying.
  - What were they hearing? That they are not happy. That they don't have freedom. There was an idea that Sally brought the change. There were several things that landed on her plate.
- Have you terminated anyone?
  - Yes, either today or tomorrow.
- You don't want to go back to shared decision-making?
  - No
- 70% of teaching staff completed the survey. 80% said they looked forward to coming to school. 100% said they have autonomy.
- Do you think there is a Pod of teachers giving you lip service?
  - Yes, of the letters of intent 100% said they would return
- Do you feel you have the ability to actualize your ideas right now?
  - This is not new for me, I know the other side. There are some obstacles, but they will go away as time goes on.
- How do you work with your mid-level leadership?
  - Meet weekly with each one. There was disconnect between the top and the other folks. There have been a lot of collaboration conversations. Getting them to feel like at team.
- Would you hire the people you have?
  - I would make changes.
- Do you fully trust your current admin team?
  - Yes
- How much more are you expanding?
  - Going to be at capacity next year

## **Peer Advice / Feedback**

- Some of this is change of leadership nonsense. I'm happy to hear that you feel steadfast, there are ways to create opportunities to create culture. We had task forces. You are going to the "valentine's day" celebration

- We started to do parent forums this year. Monthly, the admin leads a forum. It has been good to open the doors. Attendance has been low, but finding a place for parents to be heard is important. That is important opportunity to leverage the administrators who have been around.
- Our school is culturally diverse. The first year, the principal aligned herself with certain families and they ran the PTL. So they had to dismantle it and create a new parent involvement committee. We had to say, this is not meeting the needs of our families.
- Sometimes PTA has a tone of decision-making, so re-branding is important.
- At the high school, 2 of them left as a result of the principal change. Since then, most of left for various reasons. Time has helped heal that.
- The parents did not like me initially, I have been able to establish the fact that we are all on the same page. We are creating a mentorship program for new teachers. Teachers feel like they have a voice in creating the culture of the organization.
- A lot of this has to do with the growth of the school in general. I'm finding myself going in the opposite direction, as you grow you have to spend more time teaching people how to be professional.
- Something that my colleague does really well...he outcounsils people. He takes the opportunity to give them space to think through their role with the organization. "you don't have to come back"
- In five years at my school, we had five people on improvement plans...4 of them left on their own.
- The other struggle. The people at my organization were so tight that they never adopted best practices from other organizations. "I'm team \_\_\_\_\_".
- I love the Dean of Culture idea...it is something you are creating. That is good to show that. The monthly family celebration will pump that up as well.
- Bring back that small-school feel. Certificates, HW trophy.
- Parents are not upset if the students are not upset, pumping the student satisfaction is a big support.
- Pump up teacher appreciation week...do it bigger and better than last year.
- Seek out the bright spots in teacher PD...have fun.
- The kids are going to make a baby book for the teachers who are having babies.
- Unexpected, spontaneous fun. Get Sally in touch with Brenda.
- I wonder if you need to call out the teachers about what parents are saying about them.
- Have the students write letters of appreciation. Thank you for lending us your loved ones.

## **Presenter Response**

- You have a very clear understanding of the type of situation. It was very helpful.
- I can tweak them in a kind of way.
- Big takeaway: monthly parent forums. A lot of struggles with gossip...offers an opportunity to clarify the truth.
- The family celebrations...never thought about that. It would bring the families in. The HW trophy.
- Deviating from the plan...spontaneous. But you make a great point in they will develop a different kind of outlook for the different person you are. I am a very casual person, I have run meetings where I say "let's just talk". I usually hear more from those discussions.
- The idea of talking to staff regarding certain rumors. So they walk away feeling they just wanted to hear.  
What does the spiritual director do?