

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- Tuition Model:
- Setting PreK tuition at the same cost as schoolwide rates and having a too generous sibling discount
- Listen to holding the value of the program
- Researched public PreK funding options sooner, *i.e.*, DPP
- Don't make decisions for your families

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- In two schools that I was HOS, I hired friends in senior positions. Both friends were successful in their past schools, however, neither proved to be a good fit.
- I supported both too long, even in the face of growing discontent from their direct reports.
- I had to eventually let both go.
- Don't hire Friends!

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- I hired a teacher who was a highly qualified science teacher. Despite several complaints from students/parents, I renewed her because my division head did not want turnover in the position.
- I wish I had not renewed her. The turnover would have been better than the results of her staying.
- I should have listened to my students.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- We added one-on-one supports for a few students who really needed it in order to stay at the school. Part of this was based on not wanting to lose students but the other part was trying to help the students.
- If I could have done this over, I would have considered the larger impact of this “program” and what other changes would be needed to make this successful or not.
- Not add these supports for individual students because our school didn’t have the other supports in place.
- A small change can have an impact on the school/community.
- You must consider what is best for the whole vs. the few
- Know the financial limits

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- I was able to identify a problem and articulate the issue in a way no one had, while also offering potential avenues to positive change. However, I did not consider that delivery was key. The message was not only lost, it created new problems
- Now having a better understanding of professional politics, sensitivities, egos, and interpersonal dynamics, I know that not only did I deliver the message the wrong way, I know it should not have been me at all. I would have back-channeled the information.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- When implementing a strategic vision, I did not do an effective job of communicating progress/impact/success to the Board. While we were clearly accomplishing strategic objectives, an annual report out to the Board was not sufficient for them to see/understand/appreciate the work being done and its impact.
- In implementing a current strategic vision, I am far more intentional in how I communicate to the Board, both in terms of cadence and mode of communication. The Board is more engaged, and my team and I are doing an even more effective job of accomplishing strategic objectives.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- I wanted to create a system that recognized students for more than intellectual ability and popularity, or athletic performance. In the “process” (over the years = 20) I allowed others to adjust, tweak, the program to a point in which it lost its original impact and purpose
- The adjustments and changes were well intentioned, and I knew that the success of the program depended on faculty being both honest and courageous. I needed to stay engaged to continue to feed and nurture the program. I am now in the process of a full overhaul and renewal through collaborative work.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- “Culture eats strategy for lunch”
- Example: Swapping out paper copies of sign-in/sign-out sheets with iPad without telling staff first.
- Example: At an info gathering meeting, I assure/preface this is not a decision-making meeting, and we should be okay with non-closure. This helps to eliminate the need to problem-solve or create solutions
- If I could do over, I would have taken more time to share the “why for some of the changes, even small ones during my first year of headship. Because change is hard for some communities(some people), I should have anticipated some of the hesitation, angst, and pushback.
- I didn’t realize that the sign-in/sign-out sheet was (to some) about independence, tradition and trust.
- The Logan community is a highly curious and deeply invested community who needs to feel like their voice matters – so now I have learned to provide spaces to share insight and experiences. I have learned to share the purpose of a meeting at the beginning to help frame the meeting

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- Many examples of a similar challenge
 - Revamping physics curriculum
 - Working toward more inquiry-based learning
 - Other
- I got too far ahead of myself and didn't give time and reason for others to learn alongside me...so I became too sure of a potential change without enough voices at the table
- NOTE: I still make the same mistake at times 😊
- My best change-leading has been when I:
 - gather a small group of educators (volunteers/stipended)
 - Have a shared set of readings/videos
 - Work for 3-4 days together (summer?)
 - Responding to the readings
 - Thinking about how they apply to us
 - Making a plan for the implementation of the change
 - Have the teachers lead the change

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- Post Covid Reset
- Context: During COVID our school-wide goal was staying open and keeping our community safe/healthy. Hiring teachers was a challenge, and we made some hires who were poor quality, which resulted in high turnover and a degraded trust in the education we provide
- Never sacrifice quality of faculty and staff to achieve a short-term goal of having a warm body in front of students
- Poor hiring decisions lead to loss of trust within a school and within a school community. The subsequent efforts of fixing bad hires leads to a decline in school culture, staff morale, and student experience. Focus on hiring, team building, and the student experience over loyalty, teaching experience, and the fact that colleagues “liked” the teacher.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- Issue: donor makes multi-million dollar gift for new facility.
- The board gets excited and thinks he can fundraise the rest and work begins. Donations fall off and project costs grow.
- Don't turn any dirt until 100% of funds are raised.
- Be willing to give money back
- I knew it at the time...but I should have pushed back on the board's optimism and pressure from the donor.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- We split locations and moved our HS while we were building a new ES. Teachers had to travel who worked on both campuses and got extra prep time, which they forgot why it was given to them when we completed construction and moved back together on one campus. I had to take it away. Small revolt.
- Gone more gradually and communicated better, would have made my argument more about students then equity across all division. When the anger reached the board, I would have been more adamant about telling the board to “f” off.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- Once upon a time...we'd run so lean for so long that we simultaneously overextended people and outgrew the skills they had for the specific roles needed
- Identify & Analyze
- True roles & responsibilities and assess time people truly need to do those jobs with excellence annually (in the fall semester).

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- When first joining my school, I focused on logistics and staying open. It was Covid so it was a strange time to start headship, but if I could have done it over, I would have spent more time on giving people time to grieve the former head, share traditions, be heard.
- While my love language is logistics like making sure people are physically safe, the reality is that focusing on logistics first in a crisis is okay (and necessary), but it was really about managing my stress.
- As a leader, I need to tend to people first, ensuring the hearts are heard and held.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- In 2023 we implemented a top-down UbD curriculum training, led by a new director of curriculum. In addition, we were continuing an innovative coaching program, which was the main focus of 2022, but new, and completing an ACIS Reaccreditation self study. Though our director of curriculum and I saw clear purpose, others did not. It unraveled from there.
- I was excited by the new ideas of a new hire and wanted to see her vision out...I also didn't realize how other admins didn't feel comfortable sharing their reluctance and insight...though I felt emboldened to experiment, it came at a cost and impacted other priorities, the fledgling coaching program. Lessons: Slow down, Listen, Create open spaces for feedback

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- When I began in my role, my predecessor had encouraged the board to fund an assistant head position and had identified two finalists. I was given the final decision and selected the person with more independent school admin experience, because I felt self-conscious about my lack of experience. I then kept that person for longer than I should have for the same reason.
- Listened to the voice that told me this person was toxic (have made this same mistake since)
- Trust my own wisdom, even as I listen to others
- Slow down and decide for myself what team I needed and who I wanted on it.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- I had an employee who was a long-time veteran and was in conflict with another employee. The employee ultimately said they were resigning. I immediately said okay.
- You can (and sometimes should) take time to reflect and calm down before making big, impactful decisions.
- I would have said take the weekend, think about it and then let's revisit.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- I hired a music teacher that I felt lukewarm about. We didn't have a ton of candidates, and the 1st day was approaching. I thought we could train him and make it work. We struggled for two school years with this person. I thought I could coach them along, and mentor them into the teacher the school needed/deserved. Two weeks into the school year they resigned and left us in a scramble. Long story short, we had an amazing educational support staff member step in until we could hire a new music teacher, and they were amazing.
- Be picky. Take the time to find the right person even if it is on the wrong timeline
- Once you realize things are not working, or the person is not the right fit, move on.

Do Over and Lesson Learned

- A few years ago, we had a significant increase in lower school and middle school enrollment, while our high school enrollment stayed the same. We needed to shift some classes/age groups to different locations/buildings on campus. To avoid a long, contentious process, I analyzed the situation and made an “executive decision” regarding division relocations – very little input from those involved. Some “grumblings” remain today.
- There is value in process and collaborative input – even if it’s messier – even if the ultimate decision would have been the same.
- Value is beyond “making the right decision”
- “Stakeholder” “buy-in” has many non-obvious payoffs.