



Garrett J. Dukette

Ashford School
Ashford, Connecticut
gdukette@ashfordct.org

Best Practices

1) I feel that one of my most significant accomplishments as an assistant principal has been to redefine our school's culture and approach to student behavior and classroom management. Beginning in 2016, I worked with a team of teachers to shift our focus from punitive responses to behavior to more proactive and restorative approaches to behavior and management. Over the course of those years, I have provided outside training and internal PD; hosted committee meetings focused on developing a multi-year restorative plan; and overseen the implementation of restorative circles both within the academic as well as social settings, across our school. Often, teachers reach out to me to be a part of their circles, both to add gravity to the conversation, but also to provide feedback as needed, or guidance where applicable. That being said, I have seen more and more autonomy within my teaching staff around circles, with fewer teachers needing guidance—a sure sign to me that this process has now become internalized and is woven into the fabric of our school's culture. Additionally, I have worked closely with staff to model ways in which consequences can be more restorative in nature. Both teacher- as well as office-handled behaviors always include a restorative conversation, which focuses on empathic listening and honest expression, and consequences are often used that help the student to “right the wrong”. For instance, a student who throws food in the cafeteria may stay once lunch is over to both hear from the custodian how food being thrown affects them, and then also to help clean the cafeteria.

2) Another accomplishment is more personal to me. Over the past two plus years, I have successfully balanced my administrative role with working to complete my doctorate in educational leadership. As I write this, I am fast approaching my date for defending my dissertation proposal (December 9, 2019). This has been a lot of work, both physically, with writing, interviewing, and attending classes, as well as mentally, which is to be expected with this type of program. My dissertation aims to explore the

differences in how female and male principals experience their role within the confines of teacher evaluation. Through the lens of role congruity theory, I hope to expand the research that exists on the impacts of gender on leadership and add to the conversation about how we as a society can better support women in leadership roles, while also recruiting more women into the role of leader.