CREATING POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

by:
Ara S. Velasco, EdD
School Principal I, Magsaysay National High School

The school's overall environment that caters to the needs of students, teachers, parents, administrators, support staff, and all other stakeholders is a strong determinant of the quality of learning outcomes, quality of work experience by the employees, and the quality of interaction and services received by all its stakeholders. This environment needs to be conducive, supportive, and inclusive as reflected in the kind of school culture that exists.

How is school culture shaped and defined? School culture is described as the overall perception, attitudes, and behaviors that emerge from the social order of a school community to shape the experiences of everyone in it. Setting the right school culture is critical to effective educational leadership. (https://www.educationalleadershipdegree.com/frequently-asked-questions/what-is-school-culture/)

According to Fullan (2007), school culture is the guiding beliefs and values evident in how a school operates and can be used to encompass all the attitudes, expected behaviors, and values that impact how the school operates. (https://www.ibo.org/contentassets/b53fa69a03 d643b1a739d30543ca8d65/darlenefishermadrid.pdf).

Dogan (2017) defines it as the set of shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence the way educators and administrators think, feel, and behave in the school workplace which can have a positive impact on student effectiveness. Recognizing its essence in the

school system, the establishment of a positive school culture that is inclusive, student-focused, and open to learning, is necessary.

What are the common indicators of a positive school culture? First, there is a strong relationship among stakeholders where the members of the group work together more effectively and enable holistic decision-making. Another indicator is the strong support to teachers and students. This happens when teachers and students feel supported, thus, they are more likely to engage in teaching and learning and have better outcomes. Likewise, consistency in policy allows boundaries and expectations to be set which provide stakeholders a sense of safety and promotion of fairness and positivity is evident. Aside from those mentioned, listening to feedback to help the management gain different perspectives, identify blind spots for continuous improvement, enhance relationships, build self-awareness, increase accountability among members of the organization, and foster innovation- is also a strong indicator of a positive school culture.

What practices will help school leaders promote the creation of a positive school culture? One of the essentials is building relationships which involves developing mutual trust, connection, and understanding between individuals or entities. This can lead to better collaboration, increased loyalty, and enhanced opportunities for growth. Next is modeling positive behavior such as leading by example which is more effective at creating positive change than those who don't. "Walking the talk" builds trust and credibility, which makes it easier for others to follow their lead. Another important thing to be done is the setting goals that elevate school expectations. These goals in order to produce results should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-sensitive .It is also vital that the goals are supported by a specific plan of action that outlines the steps to be taken to maximize success. One more thing that can be done is to make sure that there is sharing the school's mission and vision. When all stakeholders are well aware of the focus and the goals of the school, it is much easier to move in sync and all efforts are directed at the ultimate goals of the organization. Having a mission and vision

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provides clear direction and focus for strategic planning and decision-making; inspires and motivates students, staff, and the community; promotes a sense of shared purpose and commitment; promotes consistency and coherence in educational practices; enhances the overall learning environment support holistic student development by emphasizing academic, personal, and social growth; strengthen community engagement by clearly stating the school's values and goals and encouraging collaboration and; serves as criteria for assessing progress and accountability, guiding continuous improvement efforts. (https://varthana.com/school/school-vision-and-mission-why-is-itimportant/)

Lastly, having a positive school culture is about appreciating people or recognizing their contributions and importance. Recognition isn't just about feeling good. Gallup research shows that consistent recognition for doing good work has a direct influence on the key performance measures that we use to evaluate our schools.

Teachers who receive regular recognition and praise found to be more productive, more engaged at work, more likely to stay with their school, are more likely to receive higher satisfaction scores from students and parents. (https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/210041/why-appreciatingteachers-important-think.aspx)

School leaders play a vital role in promoting positive school culture by exercising their AURA through shared governance in the implementation school's PPAs aligned with the MATATAG agenda. As leaders, let us champion a positive school culture!

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