

**ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL/ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR FORUM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 2014
NATIONAL HARBOR MARYLAND
1:45 PM (PAUL PENDLETON & KEVIN SIMMERMAN)**

STARTED WITH 10 PARTICIPANTS & ENDED WITH 14

Many of us put in 13 to 15 hours of time per day.

How can we battle the time constraints that we have? What kind of help do you have? Any strategies?

- Event Managers (paid)
- 2 assistants that get paid a stipend to help out.
- Secretary manages the entire office and keeps AD organized

How many times sitting in office and you have to take care of assistant principal duties? How many people have to deal with discipline?

- 5 deal with discipline

DISCUSSION OF TIME SAVING STRATEGIES...

- Steve: designated to directors/sponsors of Fine Arts that he would attend the dress rehearsals/practices/other performances instead of performance.
- Steve: Same for other performances... find out a start time of a performance and show up when it is to start and leave right after it is over.

-Blessed with a superintendent who was an AD...the Supt. allows the AD to come in to the office later after a long night the night before. There are 5 people have this same opportunity....

How important is the support of all administrators?

What are some other things for time sake?

-A private school AD would come to work at 4:30 am and would work his 8-hour time slot until 12:30 pm. He would then take a walk for a while or close the office door and take a nap to stay refreshed. He would then be ready to take care of the after school activities.

-A different AD would put on his coat (secretary would joke that he was checking fields again). He has a large campus and would take off and get time away (out of the office). Getting out to get some sun...fresh air.... Get refreshed and come back to the office.

How many AD's take their phones with them when they "get away"?

-Just about all of them...the suggestion was given to leave it on the desk...it is important to get away and GET AWAY.

HOW MANY HAVE JOBS THAT DO OTHER THINGS BESIDES AP?

-Drivers Ed Division Head

-7-3 is AP and after 3 is AD

-An AD presented this same topic at their state conference...It is hard to describe what you do? Not many people know what your job is? A lot of people do not understand that you have been at work since 6:30 am and now see you at the night event. Some people just think you stand around and watch games 😊.

-Many Assistant Principals have duties that require them to Supervise teachers...This requires different amounts of time in different districts.

-I thought I had to have my hands on everything...I have learned to delegate...Delegating will help get the Assistant AD ready for the next level...this allows me to do some Assistant Principal administrative work completed. I am also the "Building Manager" so I have to oversee many pieces in the building.

-DELEGATION: The nature of what we do is to get everything right the first time we do it. We want everything to go perfect...it was suggested to "learn to let go" and let others help us out.

THE QUESTION WAS ASKED IF ANYBODY HAD A PRINCIPAL THAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A "MICROMANAGER"?

-There was only one that responded in the positive stating "on some-days"

Being an AD is a full-time job in and of itself....then you add the AP work as well. I don't complain, because I knew what I was getting into. It is something that I enjoy doing and is very beneficial.

As an Assistant Principal you often take over for the Principal...this takes up a lot of time. Who takes over for you when you are gone? DO YOU HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE FOR WHEN YOU ARE ABSENT?

-Need to have an assistant to help out with the multiple activities.

-Another AD has a system set up of checklists that is on his desk for somebody to take a look at and do all of the pre-game checks that are needed prior to the games. (I like this idea).

-If you know you are going to be out of the office...Plan ahead and set up everything ahead of time. A list of items is made available so somebody can cover.

-Another AD always hits up the PE classes to help with the “set up” for the event as it gives him additional time to get other things done.

-Another AD has a Citizen Education class (peer helpers) help set up and get things done on the field. He will use them prior to the activity, during the game/activity (gives them a special shirt) and gives them an opportunity to develop leadership skills.

-Another AD mentioned that he tries to put people in a position of opportunity. He will get some people that don't normally do the job like students, parents, etc. (will get students that are trustworthy and give them his keys which is normally a no-no)

The comment was made that 85% of their job is about athletics and 15% of the job is about other Activities...The comment was also made that the band director is considered a teacher and an Assistant Principal is responsible for the supervision of this teacher...if there are any issues with the band then the AP will take care of those issues which frees up the AD.

-Director of Student Activities...Fairfax, Virginia....Making sure that there is a level of communication between all...being engaged and supportive of one another....

There are conflicts that happen with students who participate in multiple activities at the same time... these are sometimes graded vs non-graded activities.

-One AD commented that the band and choir instructors must turn in a list of their graded and non-graded events....When a conflict arises either the day before or the day of an event the instructors comment is usually “I gave the kid a calendar three-months ago” Kids don't look ahead... you (the instructors) need to communicate with each other... Plan ahead!

-Another AD stated “Everything comes to me. We are in a smaller district with a K-12 principal...I run everything at the HS and still do the AD work....he has a Dean of Students which helps.

The Question was asked about Compensation?

-One AD commented that he gets paid for the Assistant Principal job... This pay is the same for other Assistant Principals but I don't get paid for extra AD work.

-The AD position is a certified position in some places...some get paid a stipend.

CONVERSATION ABOUT SPLITTING SUPERVISION DUTIES.

-Many AD's take time to assign events and prepare a list before each season for varsity home and away games..... all AP's sign up to cover and supervise events....Some AD's are usually there as well...

-Steve: we do Administrative supervision to cover events but I find myself telling the Assistant Principal scheduled the he will be there and ends up covering. This happens more times than not. This has taken away a lot of flexibility for him. He has since stopped doing this.

-You need to learn to be very good at making cameo appearances and follow the schedule that has been put in place.

-This is a high burn-out position...not staying in positions very long...need to find a way to stay fresh.

-There is no set job description for the Assistant Principal/Activities Director position...An AD stated that their were two job openings 50 miles apart has two different expectations and descriptions.

Where are you budgeted at central office?

Being a large district...1500 students in the smallest school ranging to 3300 students in the largest schools in Fairfax, Virginia...they have two levels of Assistant Principals...AP1 (lower level) and AP 2 (senior level)...The AP 2 is the Executive officer of the building...curriculum side is important...changes in learning communities etc. some higher up don't know what those people do. **What would they think if they shadowed someone (an AD) for a day.**

People need to remember that things that happen on Friday night is recognized by more people than anything inside the building with testing. There needs to be time available for AD duties.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES THAT YOU ARE FACING?

1. Being an expert at two completely different jobs...
2. The AD is who everybody sees...must put best foot forward.
3. Fundraising...just curious what you guys are doing.....instead of Boosters.
-Getting out into the community...tough to do...

-Corporate sponsorships on the gym floor....first school in Nebraska to do this....use this money to pay for larger items. \$1000 per year for 10 years...

-Sold Scoreboard panels for extra money

-school budget pays for transportation and salaries....the rest is up to the athletic department to survive

-FUNDRAISING definitely falls under the job of the AD.

4. Challenges...the disconnect with coaches and kids...We become so busy with the job and getting everything else done that we forget to stay connected.

5. Concern...most coaches are not staff members and we barely see them around.... Need to have a pre-season coaches meeting in order to meet and know who the coaches are.

6. As disciplinarian of the school... your students see you in a different light...which this can harm relationships....

As the AD we want to know our kids...we (both Assistant Principals) volunteer for lunch duty...get to see kids and make contact with them....school climate has changed (for the better) over the last 15-years...

7. PARENTS...Priority list and the AD is down the list...If a parent comes to the AD then they are asked if they have gone to see the coach yet.... Bill Fitzgerald (Fremont, Nebraska)...“Have you talked to the coach”...they can solve your issues better than I can.

8. I don't want to get into that business of solving the problems/issues for coaches or parents....not telling coaches how to coach...I might tell you how to keep yourself out of trouble with things that I observe but I will not tell you how to coach.

9. AD's and children of yours that play....how do you deal with your own children in sport....**tough**...direct them to go to their coach and discuss...

ARE THERE ANY OTHER “HOT TOPICS” THAT YOU WANT TO COVER?

Biggest concern is how to Balance with personal life...wife and family at home.

-My entire career has been long hours...my wife has always been actively involved in my career...my wife fixes meals and brings them to school and we will eat together...

-Fitzgerald...wife and kids have been involved in my career and other school activities....retirement is coming soon and this is going to be her time....need very understanding spouse....

-A female AD had children that were 3, 5 and 7 and now 6, 8 and 10 now... the Principal would her to “go home to your family”. kick out the door and be mom...she stated “to work diligently while at school and be with family at night”

-You can still recognize kids even though you are not at their game/activity. You can talk to coaches or sponsors and check the scores in order to go to a student and tell them “good job”. Show that you care. Being at an event is not the “be all end all” ...

-When you don't have to be there then don't be there...

-Make sure your kids and families are involved in what you are doing...I was coaching and kids were young....linemen would come over and watch our kids (and they wanted to do it) so I can take my wife out....NEED TO BE CAREFUL OF BURNOUT!

-One thing is that your kids need to know what your job is about...educate your kids that they will hear things about you.

-We always had family night on Wednesday night and they still look forward to it....long lasting relationships....

LAST THING....An AD was given advice at one time that “If you find out things (issues) that are happening at the school from your own children...you do not need to act on it. Don't put your kids in a position”relationships are important...

We work to support our family....

THESE WERE THE NOTES THAT I WENT BACK AND RE-WROTE AFTER THE SESSION WAS OVER. I TRIED TO MAKE THEM READABLE SO PEOPLE COULD “MAKE SENSE” OF WHAT WAS BEING DISCUSSED.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS!

THANK YOU!

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