



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Earning Trust

Thompson Elementary School, Texas • December 2009

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support
Instructional Decision Making
Practice: Vision for Data Use

Highlights

- The key components of a culture of trust are good communication and ongoing collaboration.
- The principal at Thompson Elementary School emphasizes the importance of earning trust.
- At Thompson, teachers can do their jobs well because there is a culture of trust. They do not feel intimidated using data.

About the Site

Thompson Elementary School

Houston, TX

Demographics

89% Hispanic

9% Black

2% White

88% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Thompson Elementary School integrates student achievement data into the instructional decision-making process by implementing the following practices:

- Incorporating the results of multiple assessments into a cycle of instructional improvement
- Maintaining and fostering a culture of trust, solidarity, and support among staff members
- Using school-level data to determine appropriate professional development and support for teachers
- Accessing and analyzing data from the districtwide data warehouse system

Full Transcript

Hello, I'm Sara McClain. I am the principal at Thompson Elementary in the Aldine Independent School District, and we are located in Houston, Texas.

The key components of the culture of trust are constant communication, visibility, and you have to communicate face to face. You have to listen, you have to be open to change, and you must model a very strong work ethic.

It's important to establish the culture of trust because first it has to be between the principal and the teachers and then amongst the teachers themselves. The faculty needs to trust the principal's motivation, and also they need to understand why the principal is pushing them for results. In establishing the culture of trust, I think that the principal first has to recognize up front that you need to work as a team; you have got to work harmoniously as a unit in order to accomplish your goals. And you also as the principal have to recognize that this has to be earned over time, that just because you are a principal you don't automatically have trust. You have to work and earn it. And you need to make all your decisions that are going to further your goal. You have to be honest, tactful. You have to be respectful. And in your decision making, when you are earning this trust, you have to focus on doing the things that you believe are right and not easy. You have to persuade and convince; you can't coerce. People have to choose to follow you.

We are a network of relationships. I believe that our teachers know that there is a culture of trust at Thompson because we work together. We plan and we strategize, but then the teachers do their job, and I let them do their job. And my evidence that they are doing their job is that we can see our results.