



Principal's Information and Exchange *Week of February 2, 2015*

Excellence for All: Collaborate to Compete

"Exceptional can't sit in the same room as Ordinary."- *Mighty Mike*

As I mentioned at this past Friday's PD, the Leadership Team recently discovered that it was not just our students who were feeling as though fingers were being pointed and efforts were being overlooked. Consequently, we wanted to make sure that we countered these sentiments before entering into our second semester, so that everyone would know that they are valued and appreciated by administration. We also wanted to reignite and reinforce the sense of community we had established back in August so we could start second semester strong- and end even stronger.

For those of you who weren't able to be there, we certainly missed your presence, and you sadly missed the great wisdom and humor of Mighty Mike. Although, as always, he shared so many insights and provoked so many necessary thoughts, the words that resonated with me the most was the aforementioned quote on "exceptional" and "ordinary."

Mighty Mike alluded to the fact that we had likely lost some of the bond created over the summer, highlighting how easy it is for us to get so entrenched in our work that we forget the humanity in our colleagues. He also pointed out how quickly communications can break down when people isolate themselves and allow resentments to build and fester rather than approaching others, sharing concerns or asking questions in order to clarify confusions or resolve issues.

While I do not believe ALH had hit "rock bottom" in the arena of communications and community, I recognize that certain relations were becoming strained and collaboration was not at optimal levels, so the Power of Peace midyear follow up workshop seemed like a great way to rejuvenate, reconnect and refocus. And when Mighty Mike declared, "Exceptional can't sit in the same room as ordinary," I felt my heart saying, "Preach, brother...preach!" ☺ There were lots of head nods and contemplative faces; the whole room seemed to take pause when he made the commentary.

Now one could argue that "exceptional" is hard to achieve in any field, but that it is particularly difficult in education. Furthermore, one could feel (especially as a new teacher or staff member) that this view "disqualifies" them from remaining at the school - if only the "exceptional" are acceptable and accepted. However, we need not take the concept so literally. I do not believe that Mighty Mike was suggesting only the "perfect" may remain at ALH, but rather that everyone must *strive* for excellence. It is the settling for mediocrity that destroys not only individual promise, but group camaraderie, and this ultimately compromises the organization's success.

So as we begin second semester this week, let's all commit to not only striving for excellence ourselves, but also for being our "sister/brother's keeper." If something is working for you, share it! If something is troubling you, seek help! If you see someone withdrawing, engage the person! If you see someone thriving, publicly celebrate it! As Mighty Mike said (and the British lady from that game show alluded), "We're only as strong as our weakest link." ALH will never be able to attain our very ambitious goals if we do not pursue them with fidelity and in solidarity. Friday was a reaffirmation for me (and I hope for all of you) that we *do* possess the right team...and our potential is limitless so long as we are willing to commit to our work and one another!

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