

Staff Community Circles Anecdotal Notes

January Circle

Circle #: 1	Date: 1/27/15 Time: 3:30-4:30	Attendance Teachers (total): 22 Administrators (total): 4
<p>Summary of Circle Objectives</p> <p>Community Building and Trust</p>	<p>Questions Answered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One high and one low from the first month of school 2. Apologize to or thank someone on staff. It can be a student or a staff member; anonymous or not. 3. One word to describe how you are feeling after participating in today's circle. 	
<p>General Observations:</p> <p>The staff that apologized to an individual tended to apologize to a student or group of students, whereas staff that thanked an individual tended to thank a colleague. To maintain true circle form, the talking piece was passed around two times. On the initial go-around, many staff members were hesitant to speak and passed on their turn. However, after hearing approximately half the circle share on the first round, the majority of the remaining staff that originally passed was willing to share their response.</p>		
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more staff members to participate • Affective Statements Prompts 		

February Circle

Circle #: 2	Date: 2/17/15 Time: 3:30-4:30	Attendance Teachers (total): 24 Administrators (total): 2
Summary of Circle Objectives Affective Statements	Questions Answered: Opening: Describe how you are feeling using the weather. For example, I feel like blue skies with scattered clouds. Sequential: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What behavior has a student done this semester that has made you angry? Think about your reaction to that behavior. How might you have better handled yourself in that situation?2. Now, think back to the moment that the behavior occurred. How could you respond to the student's behavior using an affective statement?	
General Observations: This circle was more controversial than the first in that teachers felt uncomfortable expressing their emotions or feelings to students. These feelings were heightened in more veteran teachers as well as in male teachers. However, teachers were asked during the circle to explain a scenario and then how they could respond to the scenario using affective statements. Although not all teachers agreed to use affective statements to explain how a behavior affected them personally, they were willing to use affective statements to explain how a student's behavior may affect other students in their classes.		
Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff members felt the circle was too negative• Create prompts that are positively framed and increase staff morale		

March Circle

Circle #: 3	Date: 3/24/15 Time: 3:30-4:30	Attendance Teachers (total): 20 Administrators (total): 3
<p>Summary of Circle Objectives</p> <p>Community Building and Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The purpose of this circle was to increase staff morale after the notification of RIFs and re-structuring had begun to take a significant toll on school culture.	<p>Questions Answered:</p> <p>Opening: If you had unlimited funds, what would you do for spring break? What are you actually doing for spring break?</p> <p>Sequential:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I feel loved/appreciated by my students when...2. I feel loved/appreciated by my colleagues when... <p>Closure: One word to summarize how you're feeling</p>	
<p>General Observations:</p> <p>Feedback from the previous community circle indicated that the tone may have been too negative. Therefore, rather than focusing on students' challenging behaviors, the prompts were intended to focus on the positive relationships that teachers have with their students. Anecdotal notes indicate that almost all staff members participated on the initial go-around, indicating an increased desire to participate when the prompt does not challenge a teacher's viewpoint or ask them to reflect on a controversial topic. Additionally, on the second go-around, many teachers were eager to add to their initial responses.</p>		
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harm and repairing harm in our own lives• Testimonial from use in classroom		

April Circle

Circle #: 4	Date: 4/28/15 Time: 3:30-4:30	Attendance: 15 Teachers (total): 13 Administrators (total): 2
<p>Summary of Circle Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently, approximately 20 out of 25 teachers are not returning to next year's newly transformed Locke Gold Academy. Therefore, in order to maintain investment and morale through the end of the year, the topic of this community circle was closure and reflection.	<p>Questions Answered:</p> <p>Framing/Reading: "Life is divided into 3 terms -- that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future." -William Wordsworth</p> <p>Opening: Take a moment to reflect on significant events from this year. As you reflect, what is one word to describe your thoughts?</p> <p>Sequential</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is one thing you're always going to take with you from your experiences at Locke.2. If you could write every student a letter, what would you want them to know and why? <p>Closing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. One word to describe how you're feeling after participating in today's circle	
<p>General Observations: The most noteworthy observation from this community circle is that there were minimal staff members in attendance. At the time of the circle, there was a crisis-response IEP meeting occurring, in which three administrators, two counselors, and three special education teachers were attending. Therefore, some of the difficulties with attendance can be attributed to this meeting. However, this still leaves approximately 7-10 teachers that were not in attendance. Despite attendance issues, the prompts for this circle were powerful and provided teachers with the opportunity to discuss some of the guilt they have been feeling for leaving while at the same time reflect on the positive experiences they have had while working at Locke. Framing the questions in a positive way helped to reduce some of the negativity that can occur within staff-wide circles.</p>		
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine a way to increase attendance at the last circle on May 22nd.• Discuss next year's implementation plan with staff.		