

Journal Entry 4 Spring 2018  
Deirdre Wilson-Redmond  
April 2018

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This month represents the last one of my Educational Leadership academic journey. I have learned a great deal and feel it will stand me in good stead. I also feel that much of it will be intuitive because I will not be able to pull out my notes every time I have an issue or concern. The intuition will, of course be based on experiential activities. It feels a little like the Twilight Zone to be in the middle of being a teacher and being an administrator. At the very end of March, days before Spring Break, the PEA held a rally to support the contract talks. It was the first rally that I had ever attended because this is my first union job. Several of my cohort members were in attendance along with me at the "Respect the Contract" rally. I did think about what the administration was doing and how they were responding to our action.

Honestly, I am looking forward to being finished with grad school and am hopeful about getting a job in the near future in administration. I will not be a tenured teacher until September 1, 2018 when I hope to be teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade (the only grade between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> that I haven't taught yet).

As we rev up for PARCC, I have watched our administration put together all of the pieces and the manpower to complete the task. We had two PARCC meetings to review the specifics to administer the PAARC.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> I had the great opportunity to shadow Justin O'Neill, principal of Charles DeWolf Middle School in Old Tappan, New Jersey. The attached I secured the shadowing day through Superintendent Danielle M. Da Giau who I know from when I worked in Closter. He spent time discussing a variety of administrative topics with me and walking the rounds of the Kim Marshall evaluation tool, which requires administrators to drop by unannounced for 10 minutes. This 10-minute observation is

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to be performed sans any notebook or writing instrument or even computer, according to Principal O'Neill. He must then meet face to face within 24 hours (the teacher whose room he dropped in on must meet with him to discuss his findings). Earlier in the day, Principal O'Neill presented a new educator evaluation models designed by and developed for the Old Tappan based on the Marshall Evaluation Model and Self-Directed Growth Plan. As he described it to me, it sounded very much like the preparation of a research assignment, not unlike the CARP, with the subject picked at the discretion of the tenured teacher. The quote on the front page of the program guide reads, "One of the beauties of teaching is that there is no limit to one's growth as a teacher, just as there is no knowing beforehand how much your students can learn." (Kohl, H.)

Additionally, I met Mr. Sabatino Lauriello, whose role is Student Manager. Mr. Lauriello holds his Principal's Certification, but his job is supervisory in nature. The school's enrollment is down and so there are not enough students to warrant a VP. He had worked in the district for 15 years in a variety of capacities. Speaking passionately, Mr. Laurello told me about his background and what led him to seek this position.

My day in Old Tappan produced the fruit of familiarity in that though the district was new to me, many of the people I met, including the principal had been recruited by the Superintendent from a district I had worked in for over three years.

This month I also had the opportunity to return to one two districts that gave me my start as an educator. Principal Al Baffa greeted me on this Secretary's Day with an armful of bagels. He had already purchased flowers for his secretaries. We started the day with a teacher and counselor led I and RS meeting to discuss the progress of one third grade girl struggling with math. It was interesting to see that the seven teachers

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present were one time for this early morning meeting and prepared. Everyone spoke of this student from their own experiential perspective. The meeting had some anecdotal information and was clear and to the point. The principal came with his own notes as well. Since I was familiar with the school, Mr. Baffa freed me to wander the halls to catch up with colleague with whom I had previously worked. There was something cathartic about rekindling those relationships and memories. I watched a delightful 3<sup>rd</sup> grade recorder concert orchestrated by the “magician and music” director/teacher who taught them in preparation of a Carnegie Hall trip they were planning to take in conjunction with “Link Up.” Link Up is a program where “students in grades 3-5 are given the opportunity to join the orchestra in this highly participatory program in which they learn to sing and play an instrument in the classroom and perform with a professional orchestra from their seats at a culminating concert at Carnegie Hall.”

Superintendent Joanne Newberry sat with me for a few moments and shared some extremely valuable information about the legal aspects of administration as well as giving me a glimpse into her own journey to become an administrator. She told me of how when she first became a principal she did not know nearly what she knows now and that despite that she found her way and was promoted to Superintendent/Principal the next year in Haworth on the strength of what she had accomplished in one short year.

All three of the administrators I talked to did not have to take the praxis when they became administrators. It was before the time of praxis giving and praxis taking.

I will attach all of the artifacts (and I received some good ones) that I collected and place them in my e-portfolio. This was such a rewarding experience. Everyone was so encouraging and hopeful in their dealings with me.

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