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CONSULTING
LLC

**Beye Elementary School
After Action Report**

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"Reimagining & Generating Wonder"

KEY COMPONENTS

1

PRELIMINARY
DISCOVERY
CONSULT

2

PRELIMINARY
PLANNING
CALLS

3

FOCUS GROUP
LISTENING
SESSIONS

4

AFTER ACTION
REPORT &
FOLLOW UP
CONFERENCE

OBJECTIVES

- Participants give an account of the journey the organization has taken to date, both from an ideal and an actual perspective
- Participants will be instrumental in the shaping and forming of the objective impressions that will develop over the course of intersectional listening sessions and the reporting recommendations
- Participants are informed by what they hear and share over the course of the discovery process as it unfolds intersectionally
- Participants are empowered toward implementation of the recommendations that emerge from the discovery process as a result of their participation in the development of the resulting findings

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the elements of the organization that have been addressed by way of the work that has taken place? What are the elements of the organization's development that need further attention as it pertains to culture and climate?
- What are the ways in which policies, protocols, and procedures must be amended to fortify the organization's journey for all?
- What are the next natural best steps that the organization can take to enhance its practices around culture and climate?

*Beye Elementary School
Executive Summary*

Excutive Summary

Beye School and Oak Park are no exception to the rule of the day where individual decisions and behavior can and sometimes does default to defensive and subsequently offensive posture. This very human fight or flight response typically exacerbates tense or emotional situations. This past academic year most certainly qualifies as one of the most challenging any of us has ever experienced, and so it is no wonder that our individual and communal responses would reflect that.

In this report, I have outlined my observations and recommendations for navigating a way forward by first acknowledging the past and then collaborating to create a new way forward. "The Tale of Two Schools" that has been articulated at every level of the Beye school community is impeding the quality and effectiveness of communications and collaborations, thereby making it difficult to collectively look outward and create effective communal and administrative collaboration. As is the case with any deep and lasting work, the cultural foundation must be analyzed, interrogated, and reimaged at Beye School.

I have already witnessed the capacity of this school community to rise up and meet the call to action, and I trust that the love that the Beye School community has for itself and each other will prevail toward a more healthful school community this fall. It has been my honor to serve, and RGW Consulting remains willing, should further engagement be beneficial.

Committed to service, I am,

Reesheda Graham Washington
Principal Consultant, RGW Consulting, LLC



Strengths

STRENGTHS

Some of the key strengths upon which to build a Beye School culture that mitigates injustice include:

- Clerical staff supports the school and the human beings who show up there
- Many of the teachers and administrators who I encountered have a heart and passion for Beye School particularly--they are not just in love with teaching and learning; they are deeply fond of Beye School
- Incredible parent and PTO support for the school and the human beings associated with the school
- There are teachers who have a desire to participate in teaching and learning evaluative processes as a means by which to hone their craft as professional educators
- There is a beloved administrative candidate within the current staff who has depth of experience within Beye School as well as beyond
- There was a mix of new, mid and long term families participating in the process
- There is an element of candor and integrity expressed at every level of the school community, albeit not always across the board
- There is a willingness to rise to the occasion and do what is required to positively transform the culture and climate of the school community, albeit not always across the board
- Many school community members were transparent in acknowledging their own complicit responsibility in the devolvement of Beye's culture and climate; this is helpful in considering how to establish a more restorative and reconciled way forward



Challenges

CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges impeding our capacity to build a Beye School culture that is free of injustice include:

- Beye School is comprised of at least two "teams"; teachers and staff present when the previous principal started and those hired by the previous principal. These groups do not consistently function equitably
- There is expressed felt need for additional supports by way of coaching and professional development that include social services and school building administrators
- A gradual deterioration of the culture and climate of the school community that shows up among faculty and staff as evidenced by:
 - a teacher of color who experienced a profound and painful loss, asked for support but felt ignored
 - the weaponization of DEI language and of interpersonal relationships
- A somewhat fragmented/disjointed hiring protocol coupled with a lack of relational trust toward the fidelity of the process. This lack of trust applies to the internal parties as well as the community
- While the team as a whole is one that is robust and poised to support Beye's future success, as is the case in most school communities, there is some toxicity among a few that bear further attention and support
- New(er) teachers at Beye are not as clear about expectations moving forward and are yearning for a more robust, healthy, and vibrant school culture and climate-- they do not feel as though they are a part of the community by way of acceptance and support

CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges impeding our capacity to build a Beye School culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

- Teachers and administrators alike spoke of feeling “oppressed” by the nature of communications, particularly between them and the parent community. They overwhelmingly articulated an inability to operate within their professional expertise, feeling as though they are not trusted and empowered to do their jobs well. While this was not a sentiment felt from all or even most parents, it was articulated that the toxicity created by some was weighing on the system and its culture enough to impact the school community pervasively--there was a resounding sentiment that this also needed to be quelled prior to a new principal appointment
- The email communication and social media comments from parents inside and outside the school community is at an intolerable tone and tenor
- There is a seemingly pervasive relational trust issue between teachers, parents, and the administration in all directions--work needs to be done to reestablish relational trust and find healthful ways to hold and mitigate power
- The "outrage monster" has severely impacted all parties. At times, the 5' view of the circumstances prevails rather than finding the connection to the 30,000' view
- There is a propensity to assign negative outcomes to all children based on individual observations from home
- There is tension about what can be known and a lack of transparency about the circumstances under which information is determined to be sharable



Recommended Next Steps

RGW anticipates will require implementation for the continued growth and development of Beye School and District 97, as it pertains to the development and advancement of a healthy climate and culture:

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RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Additional coaching and onboarding support for administrative and social service personnel
- Professional development specifically pertaining to school culture and climate for staff and administration, prior to the onboarding of a new principal
- Assistance in the creation of a holistic and integrated hiring protocol and then implementation of that plan (this recommendation holds true for District 97 as a whole)
- In my work, I was able to meet with school leaders of D97 who are not at Beye; it is based on these conversations, as well as ones with parents and future aspiring administrators from within the school and the district, that I would recommend the implementation of a broader, more intentional framework for principal support, as well as even more specific acclimation training for administrators who may be sought from outside of the district and have not been acculturated to Oak Park
- There should be some support and development tailored to new(er) teachers at Beye who are not as clear about expectations moving forward and are yearning for a more robust, healthy, and vibrant school culture and climate--this may be a necessary step in quality teacher retention
- Beye's incoming interim principal needs to be someone who is familiar and acquainted with the culture of Oak Park; someone who has principalship experience. There was an individual who was specifically mentioned in several spaces and by various parties to be considered for this role.
- There is a seemingly pervasive relational trust issue between teachers, parents, and the administration in all directions--work needs to be done to reestablish relational trust and find healthful ways to hold and mitigate power
- Discernment of ways to maintain relational ties while managing instructional accountability
- Acknowledgement of the harm caused by the administration's management of communication in the midst of extreme uncertainty



Further Curiosities

Further Curiosities

As RGW processed the information garnered from communications, there were a few questions that arose as ones to continue to grapple with.

While no immediate answers may be currently evident, the following are a few of those questions to consider as this work continues:



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Who are our partners in our work toward transparency and effective communication? Who are the ones that we should come alongside to learn from? Who are ones that we should be coming alongside to learn with in ways that might raise the bar across the community and beyond?

How do you engage the people groups who are affected by transparency and communication including students, staff, faculty, administration, community members, parents and other local agencies?

Who are the "highest fliers" amongst community organizations that might be best equipped to galvanize a communications practice that meets the needs of the people within the organization as well as those it serves?

What steps will be taken to address the remaining questions from the community, specifically acknowledging past missteps and communicating future timelines for staffing fulfillment at multiple levels? Specifically, can the Administration clearly map out and overlay the timeline of the permanent Superintendent as well as the interim and permanent principal at Beye?

How will we ensure that the ways in which we inadvertently center whiteness as a social construct, we do not negatively impact the non-dominant cultural and work of effective communication? How can we be intentional about building accessible systems that do not leave out historically, intentionally, and traditionally marginalized people groups?

How will the organization gauge success with transparency and communication?

How should the findings of this report be shared more widely? In what form or forum?

The RGW Commitment

It is our belief that these findings should be shared in the fullest and most appropriate ways with the board, leadership team, staff, and other stakeholders. RGW recommends the sharing of these findings by:

- Holding a debrief session with the Leadership Team
- Holding a debrief session with the boards members
- Holding a debrief session with community members who want to pose questions about the report, as they participated in listening sessions
- Holding a debrief session with staff and other key stakeholders as identified by their respective leadership

Let's Get Curious!!!

Additionally, RGW Consulting, LLC, having established these recommendations, would welcome an opportunity to deliver upon these recommendations as a consultant to the implementation phase. RGW welcomes the opportunity to discuss this report, its recommendations, and future planning in greater detail.

Should you have interest, please email us at info@rgwashington.com to set up a day and time for us to connect to speak about this report/plan and the potential to move forward with these recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to have come alongside you and the broader community in this great work! It has truly been a joy to support you! We look forward to hearing from you soon. Be well.



REIMAGINING & GENERATING WONDER



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