

Sarge Truesdell—Innovative School Summit 11/14-17/2019

11/14/19

Keynote:

10 steps to Trauma-Empowered Schools and Classrooms—Mr. Aaron Wiemeier

I listened to this 60 minute keynote from a professional with 20+ years of counseling experience. He was hired as the dean of students in a K-8 building and immediately recognized that the majority of a school administrator's job was counseling kids and families. He talked about how administrators do this job but have not had any of the necessary training. I have talked about this with other administrators who also spend the majority of their day working with kids who just need counseling. They need a person who has the background, training, and time to help them work through their trauma. I found myself being very envious of Mr. Wiemeier that he is able to take his 20 years of experience and his extensive training and work with his students. All in all it was a very powerful keynote and I learned the significant difference between trauma-informed school and trauma-EMPOWERED schools.

11/15/19

Trauma, NOT a D-Code Drama—Catava Burton, Ed. S.

This session on adverse childhood experiences is exactly why I chose this conference. Ms. Burton spent significant time talking about the impact that trauma has on a child's brain. She spent a significant amount of time discussing pubescent brains (my middle school kids) and how the impact is even more significant because it can actually disrupt brain development. I enjoyed some of her main points, especially those the research she presented on non-punitive disciplinary approaches for these students.

Reaching the Unreachable—Blake Daniels & Renaissance Academy Staff

Mr. Daniels and his staff gave a one hour presentation on their alternative school. He even had his head secretary along as support employees play a HUGE role in the lives of their students. Renaissance Academy has moved from an alternative school with less than a 20% graduation rate to a 98% graduation rate under him and his staff. He talked about creative student centered approaches for working with the students that are unreachable to all other schools.

11/16/19

Motivating, Engaging & Empowering Latino and African American Males to Learn While Creating Conditions that Promote Student Achievement—Pedro Noguero, PHD

This one hour Keynote was the highlight of the trip for me. Mr. Noguero had me hooked when he told us about his 7 year old daughter and how "gifted" she was. Her "gift" is that she was born into a family with two professionals who love and care for her. Who provide her with food, warmth, and love. All of our students can achieve when they are raised in the kind of home. How do we motivate, engage & empower our students who don't have any of those needs being met at home. How do we get the most out of our students who are angry and discriminated against? This was a powerful 60 minutes for me. I waited in line for 10 minutes to shake Mr. Noguero's hand and tell him how inspiring his work is to me.

Catching Kids before they Fall—Jim Sporleder

I attended this session primarily because I had seen the film *Paper Tigers* which was filmed at the High School in Washington state where Jim was Principal until he retired in 2014. Jim gained national notoriety when his HS was recognized as a trauma-informed school due to a dramatic reduction in out of school suspensions and an increase in graduation rate.

11/17/19

Building a Responsibility-Centered School Culture—Larry Thompson

This was an excellent session on school culture. I was able to sit back and listen and compare our disciplinary procedures to those best practices that Mr. Thompson presented about. I found during the session that several of our school and district policies do not follow best practice with regard to creating a positive school environment. It is my intent to spend some time with my school leadership team, and sitre council discussing ways to become more restorative in our disciplinary practices. Mr. Thompson also spent time on creating a positive school culture with your staff. Providing support and self care for your teachers can go a long way in creating the kind of school environment where students and staff feel safe.

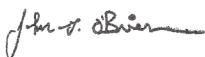
Climate and Culture Cannot Be Transformed with Disciplinary Referrals—Baruti Kafele

This was my final session at the conference. Mr. Kafele really spoke right to the heart of what I feel a lot of our school climate issues are right here at Skyview Middle School. Our punitive nature and the constant disciplinary referrals create a division between the teachers and the students. If we put the relationship between students and teachers at the front of every decision we would send less kids to the office and spend more time showing them that we love and care about them.

Summary:

This was a great conference. I was starting feel information overload already on Friday and by the time I was done listening to Dr. Noguero on Saturday morning I was whipped. There was so much great information on school culture, school disciplinary procedures, and working with difficult students that it was almost too much. I attended the conference with the goal to learn more about becoming a trauma-informed school. I want to be able to work with my staff to fully understand the impact that trauma has on our students brains. Just like we in-service on FASD to understand the impact that alcohol has on our students brains, I want to be able to do the same with trauma. I feel this was a strong first step in that direction.

Thanks for allowing me to attend this conference!



11/27/19