



52 NIGHT HERON ~ CHAPEL HILL, NC 27517 ~ P: 800-874-1100 ~ E: PHIL@LEARNINGFORLIVING.COM

Sounding Off On School Culture |

Five takeaways from this week's School Culture By Design Podcast

"Culture from the front office"

Guest: Debbie Brannam, Principals Secretary, Del Oro High School, Loomis, California

- 1) Work hard to hire the "right" person for the job.** It might take longer, but it's worth it in the end. At Del Oro, our hiring process takes a long time. We have them going around the school, meeting our parent groups, meeting our student groups, talking to administration and more – and it's for them as much as it's for us. We want to make sure they'd be happy here as much as we want someone who we think would be a good fit for our school.
- 2) Front office staff: let your administrators know that you have their back.** From the beginning, when a new principal starts I go up to them and tell them that I'm on their side and it's my job to make their job easier and help them look good. I tell them for any crises or events, that I'll eventually know what's going on, so I'd prefer they clue me in from the beginning so I can be there to support them and shield them when I can.
- 3) It's truly does take a whole team to make a successful school.** It takes more than just one person for a school to run well. Everyone is important. So the custodian is equal to a cafeteria worker, who is equal to a teacher, etc. We are all gears that help the machine run! When we view our staff as all equally important parts of the bigger picture, it helps everyone to take pride doing their part.
- 4) Make yourself available... even if you're busy.** There have been times where I've been approached by a teacher having a hard day, and I'll take the time to sit with them and listen... even if it means me staying an extra 20 minutes later to get my stuff done. But to me, I see these people as my family! That builds trust and makes your job easier and more enjoyable.
- 5) Remember, as the front office person, you are usually the "shield" for angry parents or community members.** Conflict is usually due to lack of communication or misunderstanding. So first: take time to listen! Most people when they are upset just want to be heard. And then talk them through the process of how you're going to help deal with the problem.



LEARNINGFORLIVING.COM