



2019-2021

Teacher Retention Process Improvement Adams-Friendship Area School District

Process Improvement Team
Industrial & Systems Engineering 515:
Engineering Management of Continuous Process Improvement
University of Wisconsin-Madison



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Executive Summary

This report details the Fall 2020 process improvement project aimed at increasing teacher retention at Adams-Friendship Area School District (AFASD). The project team consisted of Gavin Luter, Managing Director of UniverCity Alliance, Tom Wermuth, AFASD superintendent, Stacey McManus, AFASD administrative assistant, and a team of University of Wisconsin - Madison engineering students.

AFASD experienced a 50% teacher turnover over the past two years. Therefore, the project's goal was to achieve improvement in teacher retention by decreasing the teacher turnover in the Adams-Friendship Area School District by 30% within 5 years. Using the FOCUS-PDCA methodology, the project team identified root causes and key issues through Affinity Diagrams and Interrelationship Digraphs. The two root causes of teacher retention problems within AFASD were "the unattractive community to new teachers/families" and "lack of administrative support." Three key issues were identified: "challenging teacher experience," "issues with the teacher supply pipeline," and "challenging School-Community relationship." The team used a Tree Diagram and a Prioritization Matrix to define and select action items necessary to improve the teacher retention process. The final recommendations include workshops created to address district culture, specific improvements to district communications, and additions to the leadership training curriculum. The project team is confident that these recommendations, if implemented, will address the root causes and key issues related to the teacher retention challenges at AFASD.

Find a Process to Improve

Adams Friendship Area School District (AFASD) is a rural school district in Wisconsin that has experienced a 50% turnover of its professional staff over the last two years. The goal of this project is to create meaningful positive change that could lead to improved teacher retention. Prior work on this issue included a policy brief on teacher retention suggestions completed by a University of Wisconsin - Madison graduate student, and a research report on Accountability Report Cards by a University Wisconsin - Madison statistical consulting class.

Organize a Team

The student team consisted of four students enrolled in Industrial & Systems Engineering 515: Engineering Management of Continuous Process Improvement. Gavin Luter, Managing Director of UniverCity Alliance, laid foundational knowledge about AFASD for the student project team. He worked as our project initiator and let us know that he would be at our aid if we needed help.

Gavin then introduced the student team to the project leaders on site: Tom Wermuth, AFASD superintendent, and Stacey McManus, AFASD administrative assistant. They were the primary points of contact and would serve as our AFASD experts for the duration of the project. In order to keep communication efficient, one student was elected to serve as our student team leader. This role included sending emails to communicate with Tom and Stacey regularly that included project updates, questions and meeting times.

Clarify Current Knowledge

In order to improve AFASD teacher retention over time, the team worked to fully understand the current processes. This follows the FOCUS-PDCA framework and works to clarify current knowledge of their processes and to answer questions such as: “Are the causes for teachers leaving AFASD clearly understood?” or “What approaches have been taken to solve these issues in the past?”

The first meeting with the project leaders began with an overview of the current state of AFASD, which helped familiarize the team with the culture, systems, and methodologies employed by staff members. Key takeaways from this meeting included complaints that AFASD’s work environment is hampered by poor communication, interpersonal issues, and lack of structure at each of its administrative levels. The combination of these issues translated to an ineffective mentoring program, low teacher satisfaction, salary/benefits dissatisfaction, and eventually, teacher turnover.

With more information about the state of AFASD, the team began to brainstorm necessary data and how it might be collected working in a virtual environment. This project required collecting both qualitative and quantitative data on the current state of the process. A survey was created for the staff population, district performance information was requested, and salary/benefit information was collected in order to prepare for a root cause analysis. Finally, the Aim Statement was formed and approved by our project leaders, it states:

We will achieve improvement in Teacher Retention by decreasing the teacher turnover in the Adams-Friendship Area School District by 30% within 5 years focusing

on Salary/benefits, Administrative culture, and Community Improvements using 5S/Kaizen and FOCUS-PDCA and the appropriate management and planning tools.

Understand Root Causes

Using industrial engineering tools, the student team explored root causes and key issues contributing to the teacher retention issues at AFASD. Affinity Diagram (AD) workshops were completed with district staff and project leaders which led to an Interrelationship Digraph (ID) workshop with Tom. Later on in the project an Organizational Change Manager (OCM) Workshop was done by the student team to assess the likelihood of success for our project with AFASD.

The student team created Version 1 of an Affinity Diagram (Appendix 1) to clarify knowledge and attempt to answer the question: “What factors are contributing to the teacher retention issue at AFSD?” An AD workshop can be completed in a variety of ways, our team collected and silently organized responses (small statements that address the issue at hand) into groups based on similarities using Miro, an online software. These groups were refined and improved through group discussion that yielded a completed AD.

This Version 1 AD used the student team’s expertise and information gathered from the AFASD administrative team. This first version of an AD was discussed with project leaders and they encouraged us to add to the diagram with input from all staff instead of just the administrative team to avoid as much bias as possible. This approach was aimed at giving each of the teachers an opportunity to offer feedback and fully represent their ideas.

After this meeting we collected input from the entire AFASD staff using a Google Form, generating new insight into the inner workings of AFASD culture, communication, and administrative processes. The student team then converted staff comments into sticky notes using the online software Miro, and conducted a second iteration of the AD workshop to reveal new factors that might contribute to teacher retention issues. We labeled this AD as Affinity Diagram Version 2 (Appendix 2). The nine factors contributing to the teacher retention problem at AFASD as identified by the Version 2 AD workshop are identified below. These factors represent potential root causes or key issues that have been identified by AFASD staff, and AFASD administration with the help of the student team.

Factors Contributing to the Teacher Retention Problem at AFASD:

1. Lack of attractive housing for new teachers and families
2. Community is not attractive to new people/families
3. Noncompetitive salaries and benefits
4. Challenging teacher experience
5. Issues with teacher supply pipeline
6. Lack of administrative support and direction
7. Inconsistency in Expectations
8. Challenging School-Community relationship
9. Student Behavioral Challenges

Upon completion of the second AD the student team completed an Interrelationship Digraph (ID) with our project leader Tom to find the relationships between the pillars that had arisen. In our ID workshop we used an MS Excel matrix adapted from a file created by Professor Mann to illustrate relationships. The ID workshop highlighted key issues and root causes using a pairwise assessment: “Does this factor cause/influence any other factor?” For example, if option A influences/causes

option B a left arrow would appear in row B column 1. If factor C causes/influences option B an up arrow would appear in row C column 2. (See Table 1)

Factor #	Factor	1	2	3
1	Factor A	X		
2	Factor B	←	X	
3	Factor C		↑	X

Table 1: Example ID: Option A influences/causes option B.
Option C influences/causes option B.

Before we began the ID workshop it was decided by the student team and project leaders to remove the “student behavioral challenges” since that issue was out of scope for the project. Once the ID workshop was completed, two root causes and three key issues were identified; they are listed below (For full ID, see Appendix 3). The root causes and key issues identified in the interrelationship digraph are important to helping team leaders and administrators understand what staff members are thinking about most.

Root Causes

- Community is not attractive to new people/families
- Lack of administrative support and direction

Key Issues:

- Challenging teacher experience
- Issues with teacher supply pipeline
- Challenging School-Community relationship

The OCM workshop was completed last because it requires an in-depth understanding of the organization and task at hand. Regular meetings with Tom helped

us gather key information about AFASD and its culture. The AD and ID furthered this process by identifying key issues and root causes that contribute to poor teacher retention. The OCM workshop identified areas where impactful change could be made to increase the likelihood of project success. Ultimately, we determined that sustainable changes to the system, the culture of both individual schools and AFASD as a whole must be considered.

Our OCM workshop identified several key areas of impactful change (listed below). These areas of change influenced the direction of the project by increasing our awareness to where our project needed our focus.

- **Designate a champion(s) to see the project through to success.**
 - Communication with Adams Friendship has been through the AFASD superintendent Tom. He initiated the project and has provided his opinion on various issues the school district faces. However, we have not explicitly identified Tom as the project champion. Identifying focus areas for district improvement and getting Tom's commitment to these initiatives is essential in the final phases of our project.
- **The project, if successful, will help the organization meet goals.**
 - A "goal" would be to receive a better school report card and retain more teachers. The project is aimed at reducing the percentage of teacher turnover per year, if we can accomplish this goal the district should also see better report card scores.
- **Administrative team members and staff opinion leaders openly endorse the project.**
 - School faculty have already expressed frustration with the current system and a desire to change. By providing staff with the necessary support from administration and clear channels for communication we believe that we can get everyone involved in the improvement.

Select the Improvement

With the AD and ID completed, the student team was able use the root causes and key issues to complete a Tree Diagram workshop (Appendix 4). The intention of this workshop is for each main issue or root cause to be expanded into quality drivers and actionable steps. Our team used the application Miro to organize our specific action items, and to present the material to our project leaders. Once the project leaders examined the tree diagram and offered additional ideas, 34 actionable recommendations were identified.

To determine which actionable recommendations were most important and feasible given the time constraints of the project, the student team completed a Prioritization Matrix Workshop (Appendix 5). This workshop had each member rank items based on several agreed-upon weighted criteria before calculating the “winners.” Our team used four ranking criteria, listed below with their corresponding weights.

Criteria	Weights
Criteria 1: Option can be completed by project team members in the semester or change leaders onsite	1.25
Criteria 2: Option will have a tangible positive impact	1
Criteria 3: Cost is minimal	0.7
Criteria 4: Option is concrete, accessible, and sustainable	1.05

Table 2: Prioritization Matrix Weighted Ranking Criteria

Using these weights, the team sorted the list of 34 actionable items and brought the top ten items to our project leaders. Given the distance from the process that we

face, we offered our project leaders the option to “veto” actionable items. This veto process allowed for the removal of several action items which were beyond what the client really wanted to see from the student team. Following vetoes, several items were pulled from the ranked list created in the PM workshop to fill out the list of action items which is shown below.

Priority Rank	Actionable Item
1	Determine specific email formatting guidelines.
2	Work with Tom to create a list of teachers with influence.
3	Set up QC Circles to encourage feedback between teachers and administration.
4	Creating an anonymous teacher complaint hub for admin.
5	Encourage leaders to set clear expectations for teachers about sub time/everything.
6	Research College connection programs.
7	Research ways to promote a positive community atmosphere.
8	Mentoring Program Improvements.
9	Teachers creating community values.

Table 3: Prioritization Matrix Final Actionable Items

Plan the Improvement

Following the completion of the PM workshop, we took our list of deliverables and assigned completion to team members. These tasks resulted in deliverables including broad recommendations based on student team research, workshop guidelines to

address cultural and communication issues, and recommendations for future improvement efforts. The actionable recommendations crafted by the student team aim at improving teacher retention issues at AFASD, focusing on improvements in leadership, communication processes, and the district's culture. The recommendations of the team were presented to the AFASD Administrative team and may be presented to other stakeholders in the future.

Recommendations

Do the Improvements, Check the Results, Act and Determine Next Steps

Each item below offers specific instructions, checking methods, and potential future actions (following the Do, Check, and Act stages of FOCUS-PDCA).

Leadership-Focused Improvements

The main long-term improvement opportunity at AFASD is in leadership. There is currently a lack of trust in leadership that compounds issues within the district. People at AFASD expressed a “fear of retaliation” if they were to speak up about problems or express their opinions in meetings. The student team initially proposed a feedback/complaint hub for these people to use in these scenarios, but the concept was shelved given the opportunities for misuse and lack of accountability to anonymous sources. Instead we recognize that many of these problems are cultural and they will be long term projects. To offer some direction while the district takes on these challenges we are giving our recommendations for new leadership training foci: Empathy and Transparency.

Leading with empathy in a human-centered environment is extremely important. We have listed out a few resources below that would be helpful additions to the administrative team's leadership curriculum. These resources could be read individually followed by a short discussion, or incorporated into other training activities. We believe these sources will pair nicely with the book "Servant Leadership" by Roger Greenleaf that has already been integrated into the Leadership training curriculum for the AFASD administrative team.

- [Want To Be A Better Leader? Lead With Empathy. \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com)
- [How Education Leaders Can Practice Empathetic Leadership - The Edvocate \(theedadvocate.org\)](https://theedadvocate.org)
- [Empathy in school leadership – ICTEvangelist](#)
- [8 Ways School Leaders Can Practice Empathy in Listening \(gettingsmart.com\)](https://www.gettingsmart.com)

Any additional focus on empathy in administrative leadership will improve the "top-down" culture at AFASD. However, the current district social environment has bred "silos." Silos are compartmented groups of people operating mostly together without significant exposure or reliance on other people in the organization. Silos create weak workplace cultures dominated by contempt and passive-aggressive acts. To "break" silos, concerted efforts must be made to be clear with all communication, and encourage collaboration and listening between individuals who otherwise may not cross paths.

In our other recommendations we propose many workshops that can be used to help break silos and improve transparency at AFASD. While all of these will be helpful, it is important for leaders to buy into these efforts and start with modelling positive communication, collaboration, and listening habits. Included below are several resources that speak to these habits and why they are useful. These resources could also

be read individually followed by a short discussion, or incorporated into other training activities.

- [10 signs your workplace culture is toxic \(and how to fix it\) | HR Morning](#)
- [What Cross-Silo Leadership Looks Like \(hbr.org\)](#)
- [The Importance of Transparency in Leadership | by Adi Dehejia | Medium](#)
- [How Leaders Build -- And Destroy -- Trust \(forbes.com\)](#)

The above resources may help with leadership improvements, but they are only a nudge in the right direction. If any “rejection” of these new leadership foci occurs, the leadership team needs to reassess their goals and decide on the best approaches to integrating new leadership approaches. It will be important to acknowledge that some practices have not worked in the past and they can be changed for the better. We as a team believe that the leadership at AFASD is capable of improving and adopting the continuous improvement mindset through these training foci and the other workshops proposed in this report.

Building Leadership Teams (BLT)

Our Affinity Diagram and OCM workshop identified a need for improved communication and teacher involvement in the district. Introducing Building Leadership Teams (BLT) to AFASD can increase teacher involvement in educational and extracurricular activities and create a culture of improvement. BLT consists of representatives from each grade level in a school building that may be volunteers or nominated. Meetings should be held monthly and may cover both educational and extracurricular topics. Meeting leaders can establish a list of talking points and provide all participants the opportunity to add to the agenda. BLTs allow staff to provide input

and talk about ideas or concerns that they or their peers may have. Involving staff in school improvement increases job satisfaction and acts as a form of professional development.

Effective BLTs require an organization whose culture is rooted in collaboration and continuous improvement. BLT meetings need to reflect these values and be void of administrative and peer pressure. Staff workshops should be used to build on collaboration skills that will translate to a more favorable environment for BLT meetings. These meetings are not a time to reinforce the status quo and act as an opportunity to explore new thoughts and ideas. To address some of the value based concerns, we recommend using the CARV and CVS workshops.

Community Agreements to Restructure Values (CARV) Workshop

At this point in time, individual schools do not have solidified community values and we believe that a workshop that defines those values would have a positive impact on community culture. This workshop would consist of a series of individual, small group, and large group reflection and discussion sections where individuals talk about the values they would like to see in AFASD. This would involve all of the individual school's staff members, giving them a chance to define the culture in which they want to work. This is created with the end goal of having three to five core pillars that the school can work towards that year.

This will consist of a single workshop session devoted to value building with all of the staff members there. To begin, teachers write down five values that they would like to see the school adopt without discussing with anyone else, this should take about five

minutes. After this section, teachers then share out the values with their small group and the group decides on five values that they would like to share out with the large group. The five values from each group will be shared to the large group and written on a board with no explanations, repeats should only be written once on the board. From this list the group will decide between three and five final values that the school will hold that year. This is through collaborative and fluid discussion and they can be chosen based on staff opinions, all ideas should be shared.

It is important to understand the scope of the values workshop and the necessity of iteration in this process. This is something created to change with teacher culture and student achievement and must be updated at the beginning of each school year. The individual brainstorming and group discussion must also happen in a safe place where staff members feel like they can speak their minds without risk of retaliation. If existing power dynamics and relationships exist, groups should be split to include one person from each department to encourage relationship building and collaboration outside of typical groups. A successful workshop results in 3-5 school values and a value statement that is approved by the majority of the staff.

Departmental Area Goal Setting (DAGS) Workshop

Teachers and staff of AFASD have said that they struggle to have their opinions heard in professional development and decision-making settings so a goal setting discussion may help streamline this communication process. After values are set in the CARV stage they may transition to actionable goal setting. This is made to help teachers create goals that they and their departments or grade levels can focus on during the school year. This

workshop will create a shared sense of accountability and promote transparency within the school.

The goal setting workshop should be grouped by grade level, subject, or other groups that work together regularly. For this workshop, each staff member should silently and independently create a list of goals for each of the district values, splitting them up into “student centered” and “staff centered”, each person should have at least two tangible goals for each district value. These responses can be collected through a Google Form prior to meeting or during the workshop. Each value should be brought up and two student and staff centered goals should be chosen through discussion. These are the goals that the groups will work to accomplish by the end of the school year or semester, depending on the intention of the workshop.

Value from ____ Workshop	
Student centered actionable goal	Staff centered actionable goal

Table 4: Example DAGS Workshop Goals List

In this process it is important that everyone involved feels empowered to share their perspectives. These are goals that all teachers should be comfortable and aware of and if there is an unequal power dynamic between teachers it could lead to the development of goals that do not fit the desired culture. To mitigate the impact of peer pressure and power dynamics, teachers should be given ample time to brainstorm individually before sharing out to the large group. If it seems like this is an issue, an anonymous google form can be sent out before the workshop collecting all of the

individual goals that were brainstormed. A successful workshop results in two actionable goals for each value, one student centered and one staff centered.

Community Value Setting (CVS) Workshop

The CVS workshop creates a mission and vision statement representing the district as a whole. Using the individual school values administration should identify a set of core values to be ratified by staff. The team can then establish what these values look and sound like. If collaboration is a core value, ask the question, "What does collaboration look and sound like?" and record these responses. Long term district goals should be created with an action plan that identifies how the district's values will be incorporated.

It is the responsibility of the district staff to hold one another to these values. The value lookalikes can be used to hold peers accountable during the execution of the action plan. The CVS workshop is an iterative process that can be conducted at any point to reestablish or reaffirm district values.

Intentional PD Feedback Form

One challenge that AFASD is facing is getting accurate feedback from professional development workshops. In the Affinity Diagram workshop multiple responses talked about how time and energy was wasted in these group workshops and it seemed like there was limited communication between these people and the administrative staff. To try to improve teacher experience and find a balance between professional development and preparation time this form should be implemented.

The form questions are created to be intentional and open ended, leaving room for teachers to share their concerns and what they want out of future workshops. One potential problem that could arise with an open form is having it become a complaint hub or not specific enough for each workshop. This could lead to people not understanding the purpose of the form and proper use. To avoid the misuse of the form it should be updated consistently and responses from past workshops should be stored in a document for future reference. The questions should be open ended but lead to clear responses. Ask “What would you improve from today’s workshop?” or “What were your key takeaways and how will you use them in your job?” rather than open ended questions like “What didn’t you like about the workshop?” This wording should prevent staff members from using this as an open complaint hub.

Email Formatting Guidelines

The AD workshops and Interrelationship digraph identified “challenging teacher experience” as a key issue and “lack of administrative support and direction” as a root cause. Several participants in the survey conducted with staff explained that the overwhelming number of emails contributes to this issue. The district can combat this issue by agreeing to new best practices for communication. First, a pipeline for communication should be established or reestablished. We provide an example communication structure in (Appendix 10). “Structured communication” gives staff a consistent communication source, prevents duplicate information, and avoids misuse of power dynamics. Staff members that send large quantities of emails may find it useful to review best practices for email formatting. This includes: highlighting dates and times,

using bulleted lists where possible, and adding hyperlinks to additional information to avoid providing extraneous information. An example email is provided in (Appendix 9).

Creating a new format for emails will undoubtedly cause push back from people who have been sending emails the same way for years. If one leader in the district breaks from the agreed upon format, the whole system can suffer. It is important to bring all leaders in on this process and circle back in case anyone reverts to old habits. This change can add clarity to the district's communication and reduce email fatigue, but only if every person buys into the new format and understands the reasoning behind it.

Conclusion and Future Steps

This project does not end with this recommendation, these are a series of recommendations that will work to improve the processes of AFASD and hopefully create long-term sustainable change. With this, it is important to create a plan to see the impact that these policy and workshop recommendations create. Group members will check in after one year to see if there are any concerns from administration and to see if there is a visible impact. After this meeting the members will decide if there should be a meeting the next year or if it would be more beneficial to wait two years and check back in. Due to the breadth and depth of this project more recommendations will likely be useful in the future as AFASD strives to continuously improve.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Affinity Diagram Version 1 Original: https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_kj3ibwE=/

Affinity Diagram Version 1 (Reformatted as a table)

What factors are contributing to the teacher retention issue at AFSD?											
Lack of attractive housing for new teachers and families		Community is not attractive to new people/families		Noncompetitive salaries and benefits		Challenging teacher experience		Issues with teacher supply pipeline		Lack of administrative support and direction	
commute for young teachers	Lack of places to rent	Lack of things to do... the only things left for entertainment in this area are bars.	Population decrease may make it less desirable for teachers to work here	Better benefits in other schools (Pay, benefits, less stress, less busy work)	Better opportunities elsewhere... whether that is cost of living, drive time, family...	Effective and meaningful P.D. experiences for all staff that focus on interpersonal skill enhancement	Too many meetings	Older professionals looking to "retire as a teacher" may be a useful addition to the workforce	Teachers are recruited "fresh out of college"	Lack of mentoring	frustrated by lack of communication, lack of leadership, lack of support
housing for new teacher	Hard to make or find ties to the community	minimal options of employment for spouses	The bowling alley burnt down and no one has stepped up to put a place in for kids to enjoy. It would be hard to have kids here... more opportunities North and South of here	School is not innovative with respect to neighboring districts (low open enrollment)	Not enough quality teachers to go around	stress for new teachers	Schedules and workload	"STEM push" has led young students away from teaching profession	Older teachers are aging out of teaching	Lots of different systems in place - as a result of several administration changes	Teachers feel/felt unappreciated by administration
Adams does not offer a Competitive Salary	District doesn't have amenities or a young community	community does not value teachers	Lack of social rec options	Teacher starting salary is not competitive	Loan forgiveness options are not discussed openly with incoming or new teachers in the district.	community does not value teachers	Mentoring program is not personal			Leadership at the top	Overloading a new teacher with low support from admin.
Lack of housing to relocate	Lack of housing that is OK to live in. I wish the city and the county would make people clean up! ... that might attract people to this area.	Lack of jobs for spouses	Places to purchase things...	Retirement benefits might look similar to surrounding places, therefore not any better	Benefits are long term not short term	Teachers have to work outside of their intended subject	Teachers use this job as a stepping stone to get into a better position.			lack of support network	Building expectations and department expectations are varied.
		Not near families (location)	District doesn't have "city" attractions like Starbucks	Pay... people with 4 year degrees shouldn't have to struggle to live. Private pays better...	We are a stepping stone for most staff (teachers work for short time and move on to another district)	Added stress that comes with teaching in a low income district	District culture doesn't match what young teachers are looking for				
		Teachers not hired in districts similar to where they went to school	Town is not on a major highway	Salary and benefits may be unappealing	Retirement benefits may be too far in the future to be appreciated by incoming teachers	Kids may not be relating to the teachers	Teachers may use this as a starting point in their career				
		Jobs...places to work for your significant other.	Working inside of a lower income school district may be unfavorable	District doesn't have competitive benefits	There are not incentives to do well or overactive as a teacher	Limited resources for teachers	Teachers feel burnt out				
		Community does not have "stickiness" for families and communities to form	Poor social environment out of work	No significant loan forgiveness program	AF avg teacher salary is in bottom 50%	Large spread in colleague abilities	Teachers may not feel like they have the tools to support low income students				
						Teachers are unable to collectively bargain in Wisconsin	Teachers are not finding fulfillment in job duties				
						Teachers perceive they do not have the tools to succeed in this environment.	Teachers may not be working in their focused area				

Appendix 2

Affinity Diagram Version 2 Original

https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_kj3ibwE=

Affinity Diagram Version 2 (Condensed with Heatmap for frequency)

Frequency of similar comments			
1-2	2-5	6-10	11+

What factors are contributing to the teacher retention issue at AFSD?																	
Lack of attractive housing for new teachers and families		Community is not attractive to new people/families		Noncompetitive salaries and benefits		Challenging teacher experience		Lack of administrative support and direction		Student Behavioral Challenges		Issues with teacher supply pipeline		Challenging School-Community relationship		Inconsistency in Expectations	
Lack of nearby available properties to buy/rent	Main services, jobs, and amenities are outside community	Lack of jobs for spouses	Community lacks amenities such as shopping, gyms, etc.	Salary too low (either locally or for the entire profession)	Disruptive benefits and retirement plans as well as working conditions in schools, such as working long hours and having no control over schedule	PD is not useful, inconsistent, and not relevant to the needs of the teachers	Teachers feel stressed and are not motivated, either due to administrative pressure or to professional not being heard	Changes made without any input from teachers	Lack of respect from admin	Student behavior issues	Inconsistent behavior management	Shortage of Subs		District has a poor reputation	Community does not support school	Minimal change in teacher and administrator pay over the years	
Available housing is out of price range	Housing community is not clean or safe	Lack of Community/parent involvement	Community has a negative perception of the school/teachers	Limited Financial planning resources	Benefits limited	Prep time is used to sub for others or is otherwise insufficient	Lots of busy work and tasks assigned beyond what there is time for	Lack of transparent communication	No accountability for administrative actions, no consequences for bad behavior								
Teachers choose to live in cities and commute	Community is "far from home" for most new teachers	Young families are not looking for small town				Lack of professional development or training opportunities for teachers, especially in the area of student behavior management	Interpersonal issues amongst staff and admin	Administrators choose favorites amongst teachers	Lack of clear vision for district								
						Lack of teacher appreciation for their efforts	Too many unnecessary emails and meetings										
						Unprofessional behavior between students/staff/admin	Large Class sizes										
							Fear of retaliation for voicing opinion/concerns										

Appendix 3

Interrelationship Digraph

Issue/Problem Statement: **What factors are contributing to the teacher retention issue at AFASD?**
Pairwise Assessment: **Does this factor cause/influence any other factor?**

Factor #	Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Out	In	Total	Decision
1	Lack of attractive housing for new teachers and families		↑	←		↑			↑				3	1	4	
2	Community is not attractive to new people/families	←		←	↑	↑			↑				3	2	5	Root Cause
3	Noncompetitive salaries and benefits	↑	↑			↑	←						3	1	4	
4	Challenging Teacher Experience		←			↑	←	←	←				1	4	5	Key Issue
5	Issues with teacher supply pipeline	←	←	←	←			↑	↑				2	4	6	Key Issue
6	Lack of administrative support and direction			↑	↑			↑	↑				4	0	4	Root Cause
7	Inconsistency in expectations/Communication				↑	←	←		↑				2	2	4	
8	Challenging Community-School relationship	←	←		↑	←	←	←					1	5	6	Key Issue

Appendix 4

Tree Diagram

https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_khuYom4=/

Appendix 5

Prioritization Matrix

[AFASD Prioritization_Matrix.xlsx](#)

Appendix 6

Building Leadership Teams Flyer

Building Leadership Teams

Why use it?

To actively involve teachers in identifying and solving work related problems and establishing a culture of continuous improvement.

What does it do?

- Allows staff to identify and solve problems in their work area
- Acts as an opportunity for teachers to exchange best practices and ideas
- Builds relationships among employees
- Improves job satisfaction
- Acts as a form of professional development
- Improves quality and productivity within the organization
- Creates better communication within the district
- Establishes a framework for solving problems

How do I do it?

- Identify grade level and special education representatives for each building
 - These individuals may be volunteers or nominated by peers
- Schedule time for representatives to gather input from their peers
- Establish monthly group meeting times
- Provide representatives the opportunity to add to the agenda
- Establish how decisions will be made based on input
 - Establishing how input will be used to make decisions helps maintain transparency within the organization

Pitfalls of BLT

- Time is used to reinforce the status quo opposed improving teaching practices
 - Staff is not equipped with the proper knowledge and skills to collaborate
 - Inability to enact meaningful change due to administrative or peer pressure
-

Appendix 7

Sample Agenda for BLT meeting

Sample Agenda 1

(from South Washington County Schools)

Building Leadership Team Meeting Agenda

September 6th, 8:00 a.m.

1. SharePoint, SharePoint, SharePoint...Handbook, Handbook, Handbook
2. Building Literacy Expectations/Classroom Schedules
3. Staff Meetings – September 11th; September 25th
4. Classroom Volunteers – Reviewing Expectations Checklist
5. PTA Artist in Residency – PTA \$1,500 – NOT ONE DOLLAR MORE
6. Transferring Students between Specialists
7. Curriculum Night Times for Grade Levels Participating
 - Kindergarten – September 13th – 6:00 – 7:00
 - First Grade – September 20th – 5:30 – 6:30
 - Third Grade – September 12th – 5:00 – 6:00
 - Fourth Grade – September 18th – 5:00 – 6:00
8. September 10th – Fundraising Assembly – 1:40, 2:10 and 2:40, in the commons
 - 1:40 – Third Grade, Massucci, Fowler, Hanson, Thorne, Stoffel
 - 2:10 – Sixth Grade, March, Jankowski, Radke, Kelsey
 - 2:40 – Haskins, Henaman, Howe, Second Grade, Hamilton, Ricke, Bestler
9. Classroom Volunteers – Picture Person, Buddy Brigade, Yearbook Pictures Coordinator, Reading Rivalry 3-6
10. Subway Awards
11. Friday Jeans Day – Community Service Project Ideas
12. MAP Testing Schedule – Posted on Cabinet Doors
13. Picture Day Schedule – Will be Posted on Cabinet Doors
14. Bus Safety Schedule
 - 9:30 – First
 - 9:45 – Second
 - 10:00 – Third
 - 10:15 – Fourth
 - 10:30 – Fifth
 - 10:45 – Sixth

Next BLT Meeting: October 2nd, 8:00 in the Media Center

Other Items from Grade Levels/Specialist Areas:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

Appendix 8

Email Formatting Flyer

Formatting Email

Subject Line

- Identify Action Items
 - Emails should clearly identify if content is informative or requires action. This helps readers identify if they need to act immediately on information or can read later
- State Deadlines
 - Clearly identifying deadlines in the subject line avoids important dates from getting lost in the message

Message Body

- Bullet Points wherever Possible
 - Bulleted lists make information easy to skim
- Bold and Colored Text
 - Using bold text to further emphasize key points and deadlines helps emphasize important information
- Use Hyperlinks
 - Avoid providing extraneous information, use hyperlinks to provide readers with additional information to help keep messages concise

Establish a Pipeline for Communication

- Creates consistent communication
 - Avoids duplicate information
 - Helps ensure correct use of power dynamics
 - A message may be received differently when delivered by two different people
-

Appendix 9

Email Formatting Example

The diagram illustrates an email template for 'Virtual Engineering Career Fairs: Week of Sept. 21 - 25'. It features three callout boxes on the left with arrows pointing to specific parts of the email content on the right.

Callout 1: Key information and dates are highlighted. This points to the event title and dates at the top of the email.

Callout 2: Consistent formatting of information is used throughout the email. This points to the structured layout of the event details, including time, date, candidate type, and degree levels.

Callout 3: Required action is clearly identified. This points to the 'WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO PARTICIPATE?' section at the bottom, which lists four numbered steps for registration and participation.

Email Content:

Virtual Engineering Career Fairs: Week of Sept. 21 - 25
All events are open to UW-Madison students and degreed alum

IME, EM, ISYE and ME - Full-time/Entry Career Fair — MONDAY 9/21
When: 1:00-4:00 PM CDT
Candidate type: Full-time (those graduating in Dec. 2020, May 2021 or Aug. 2021) candidates
Degree levels: BS, MS, PhD

IME, EM, ISYE and ME - Co-op/Intern Career Fair — MONDAY 9/21
When: 4:00-7:00 PM CDT
Candidate type: Summer intern and co-op candidates
Degree levels: BS, MS, PhD

CSE and GLE - Full-time/Entry Career Fair — THURSDAY 9/24
When: 1:00-4:00 PM CDT
Candidate type: Full-time (those graduating in Dec. 2020, May 2021 or Aug. 2021) candidates
Degree levels: BS, MS, PhD

CSE and GLE - Co-op/Intern Career Fair — THURSDAY 9/24
When: 4:00-7:00 PM CDT
Candidate type: Summer intern and co-op candidates
Degree levels: BS, MS, PhD

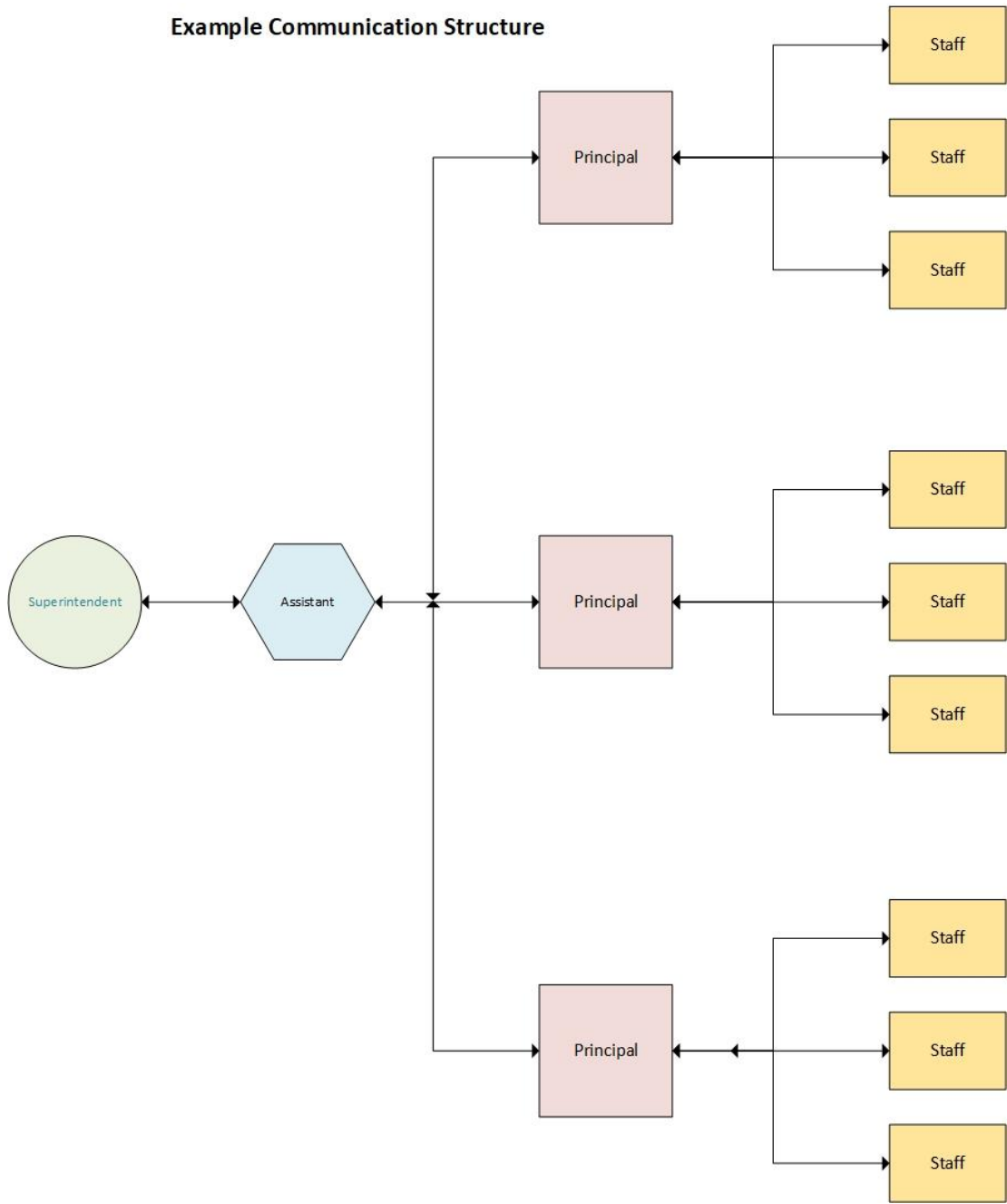
WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO PARTICIPATE?

1. Register for the fairs you are attending in [Handshake](#)
2. Research attending employers (about the employer and what positions they have available)
3. Sign-up for One-on-One (10 min slots) and Group sessions (30 min slots) — if you do not sign up for slots there will be nothing for you to do in the career fair
4. Resume- Create a public link to your resume (you can use your G-suite account to upload a resume pdf and publish this out with a publicly accessible link) that you can drop in the chat with an employer in your 1:1

Appendix 10

Communication Structure

Example Communication Structure

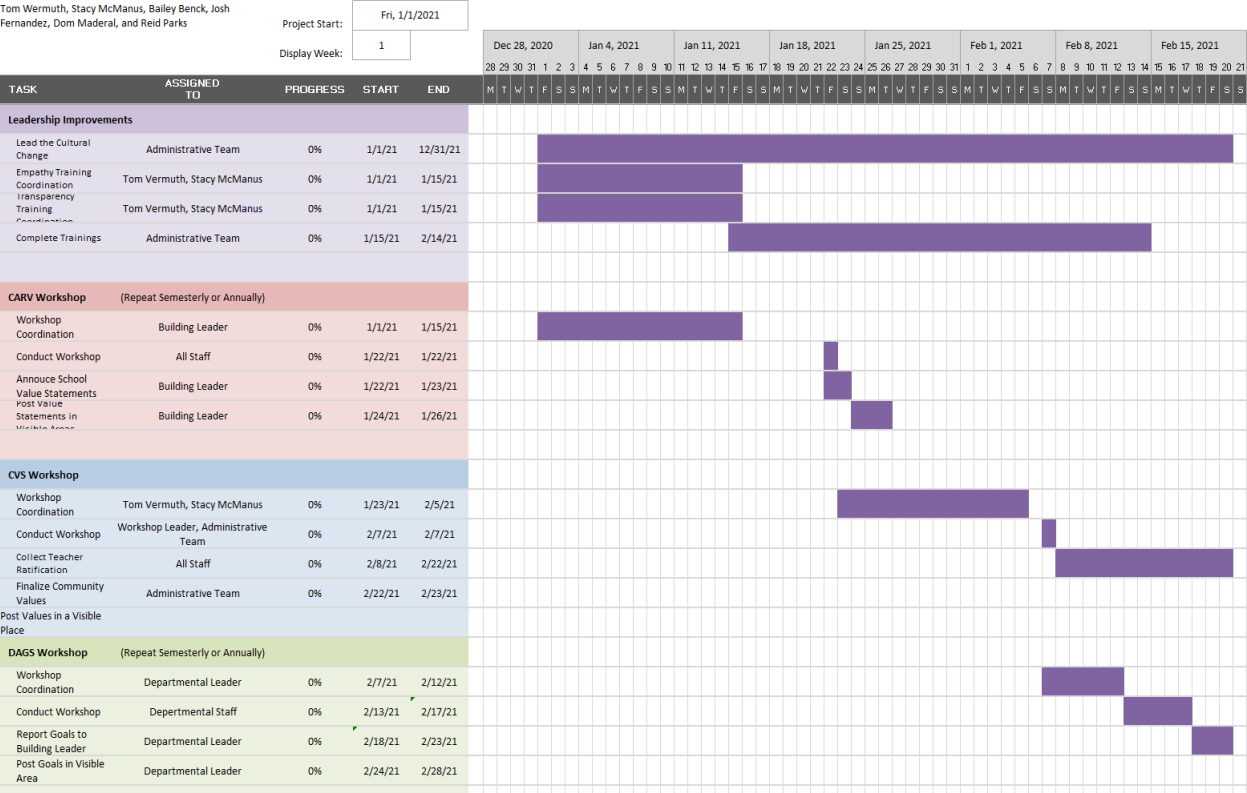


Appendix 11

Gantt Chart

Improving Teacher Retention at AFASD

Adams-Friendship Area School District - UW Madison Engineering
Tom Wermuth, Stacy McManus, Bailey Benck, Josh
Fernandez, Dom Maderal, and Reid Parks



About UniverCity Year



UniverCity Year is a three-phase partnership between UW-Madison and one community in Wisconsin. The concept is simple. The community partner identifies projects that would benefit from UW-Madison expertise. Faculty from across the university incorporate these projects into their courses, and UniverCity Year staff provide administrative support to ensure the collaboration's success. The results are powerful. Partners receive big ideas and feasible recommendations that spark momentum towards a more sustainable, livable, and resilient future. Join us as we create **better places together.**