

# Establishing a Culture of Timeliness



## Van Horn High School

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# Presentation Outcomes...

- Present Van Horn's story and our approach to improving timeliness in our school
- Give you some time to work in small groups to discuss your school's situation
- Present back to the large group and answer questions



# Desired Outcomes

- Review existing tardy and attendance protocols
- Examine Van Horn's school data as an example
- Learn about systems and procedures for how our school has successfully implemented this plan



# Van Horn at a Glance

- School Start Time: 7:15
- Blended block schedule
- Eight Periods
- Passing period with a “warning bell”

## Attempts at dealing with tardies:

- Tiered system (5=warning, 10=phone call home, etc.)
- Random Tardy Sweep resulting in ISS
- Combine tardies with other infractions



# Definitions

- Tardy-occurs when a student is in the hallway up to 10 minutes prior to class starting.
- Truancy-occurs when a student is over 10 minutes late to class or when they don't show at all
- Late to School-occurs when a student arrives late; these students are met at the door.

# Van Horn at a Glance

Challenges we were facing:

- Our staff complained about tardiness affecting instruction
- No sense of urgency among students to get to class on time
- Lots of students in the hallway for various reasons
- Issues were happening during transitions



# Hard Conversations

- Our admin team went to retreat and tardiness was a major topic
- Very emotional conversations about this topic and our role in solving this problem
- We did come to consensus that we would try this new tardy sweep policy.

# Establishing a Culture

- Identify the end goal
- Eliminate as many punitive aspects as possible
- Developed a tardy sweep plan for each passing period
- Established a way to show data to all stakeholders
- Communicated the plan to staff and established a support structure.
- Identify obstacles and tweak the plan





# Focus on Positive not Punitive

- Identify **interventions** rather than **punishments**.
- Involve the students in discussing their behavior
- Encourage staff to teach this skill of timeliness.

# Our Tardy Sweep Plan

- Tardy bell rings...any student in the hallway reports to a common meeting place.
- Administrators discuss the importance of timeliness and utilize a PBIS approach.
- Students are issued a “tardy pass” that they must have to get back into the classroom.
- Excessive tardiness results in interventions and a parent contact.
- Data is collected and compiled.



# Interventions

- Group Discussion with students
- One on One discussion with admin
- Hall restriction
- Parent Phone call/conference
- Problem Solving Team Referral

# Logistical Changes

- Standardized hall pass policy
- Conferences with teachers who are struggling with consistency
- Attendance cleanup

# Debunking the Myths



Myth: This will create a “tardy party”. Frequent tardy students will choose to be tardy together with their friends.

Reality: Actually kids have seemed to be somber when they have reported to get their pass. They don't seem to joke around much and have engaged in discussion with school leadership.

Myth: We are not going to be able to deal with the volume of kids that we have. We don't have enough man-power to deal with this problem.

Reality: The number was a little high at first but once we stuck to the plan and conducted sweeps every hour we found that the number of tardy students dropped below 10 and then below 5 and sometimes we don't have any tardy students at all.

Myth: The same kids will be in the sweeps each hour. We will be dealing with the same kids all day!

Reality: Actually we are finding that we see different kids throughout the day. In fact, most kids seem to have a legitimate reason why they are tardy. This allows us to teach them how to advocate for themselves and ask for a pass when they are talking to a teacher or late completing tasks for a teacher.



Myth: Will this really solve anything? Kids will continue to be tardy just to be tardy.

Reality: Actually kids seem to be tardy for reasons that make a lot of sense. This of course is no excuse but it allows us to have dialogue with the student and do some planning. Most times we are able to brainstorm a plan and we don't see the student again in the sweep.

Myth: This problem is not worth our time. We have other things to be dealing with.

Reality: Tardies do seem trivial until you realize that dealing with them in this manner often solves other problems. We have found that tardiness can sometimes be used as a cry for help or attention. We solve a lot of problems and help a lot of kids because we are constantly triaging with kids every hour of the day.

**Myth: Some teachers will not participate.**

Reality: This is true, some teachers make exceptions and let tardy students in or don't provide passes for students who then get swept up into the tardy sweep. This is an opportunity for us to work with those teachers to encourage them to be consistent and follow the protocol for tardies in our school. Most teachers are thrilled with the results and are very supportive.

**What Questions do you have  
so far?**

# Reflection Questions for You...

- Is timeliness an issue with your students?
- What strategies have you tried?
- Logistically, could you make the tardy sweep plan work at your school?
- Do we have a way to compile data to see if this is truly working?

# The Plan...

- How are we going to present this to our staff and students?
- What obstacles will be face when rolling this out to stakeholders?
- How do we reinforce the behavior of timeliness in our school?

# New Ideas

- What ideas do you have to make this plan even better?
- What things are you already doing that can support this idea of timeliness?
- How might you get parents on board?

# Questions?

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