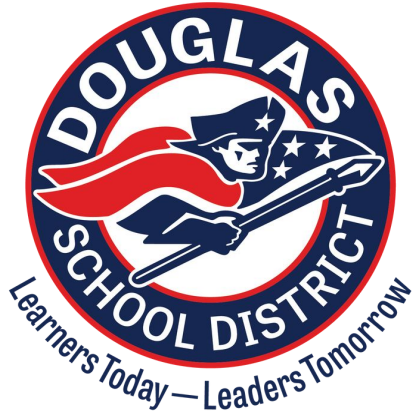


EMBRACING THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY



Kevin Case, Superintendent
Douglas 51-1 School District
Box Elder, South Dakota
kevin.case@k12.sd.us



Visit Our Website:
[**DSDk12.net**](http://DSDk12.net)

DSD 51-1 Guiding Documents

Douglas 51-1 School District Strategic Direction

Identity

Strategy 1 Honor the district's legacy while creating new traditions. Discover, develop and assess existing key components of DSD's identity;

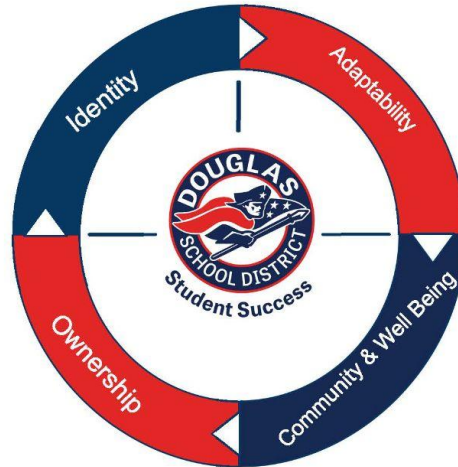
Strategy 2 Create a welcoming and safe learning community that recognizes, celebrates, and embraces the district's diverse student, staff and community population.

Ownership

Strategy 1: Identify and communicate clear and consistent expectations for all stakeholders.

Strategy 2: All stakeholders will pursue student success (academic, behavior, attendance) through the creation of goals & benchmarks and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Strategy 3: Douglas School District will ensure fiscal responsibility through the safeguarding of resources and a focus on fiscal sustainability.



Adaptability

Strategy 1 Create a comprehensive professional development plan for Douglas School District that places emphasis on adaptability and a growth mindset.

Strategy 2 Identify, collect and analyze data needed to make informed decisions and adjust daily operations as necessary.

Community & Well-Being

Strategy 1: Develop a robust mental health/wellness plan for the Douglas School District that is responsive to all stakeholders.

Strategy 2: Create ongoing opportunities for family engagement and community involvement.

Strategy 3: Continually evaluate and further align our crisis response plan with best practice.



DSD 51-1 Guiding Documents



We **BELIEVE** student success is our priority.

We **BELIEVE** in continuous improvement at all levels.

We **BELIEVE** that open and honest communication fosters trust, cultivates gratitude, and propels growth.

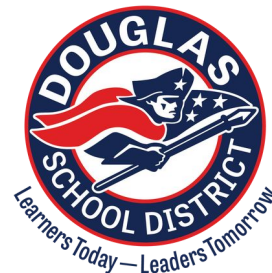
We **BELIEVE** professionalism and collaboration among all stakeholders builds a strong, cohesive culture and community.

DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT



Foundational Work

- **Studer Education Strategic Partnership;**
 - Onsite & Remote Coaching;
 - Intentional “Moves” To Support
Continuous Improvement;
 - Network Improvers - DHP
 - Connected to Our Prior Work
 - Building Leadership Capacity Across The
Organization

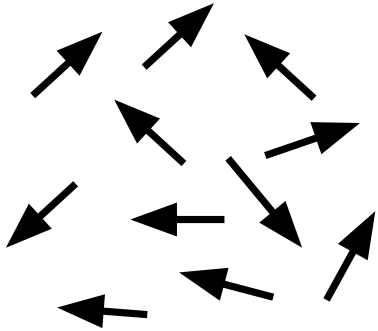


Coherence Framework - Fullan

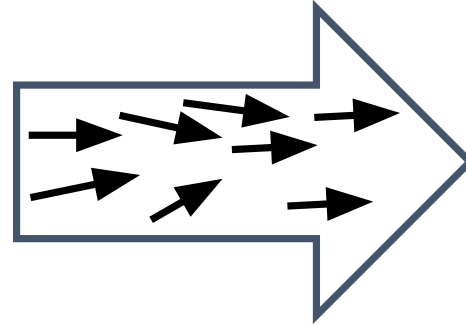
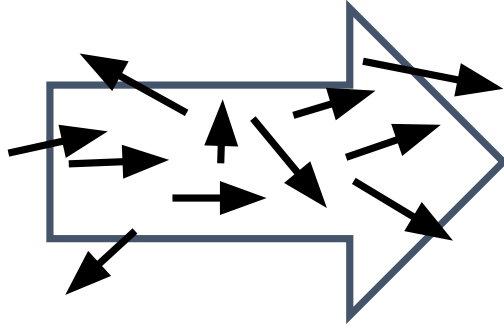
- The Right Drivers In Action
 - Focusing Direction;
 - Cultivating Collaborative Cultures;
 - Deepening Learning;
 - Securing Accountability.
 - What sits in the middle is LEADERSHIP!



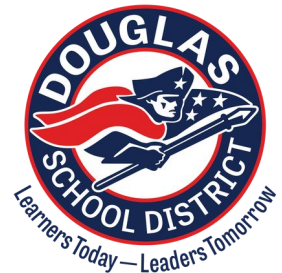
Strategic Alignment



FROM RANDOM
ACTS OF
IMPROVEMENT

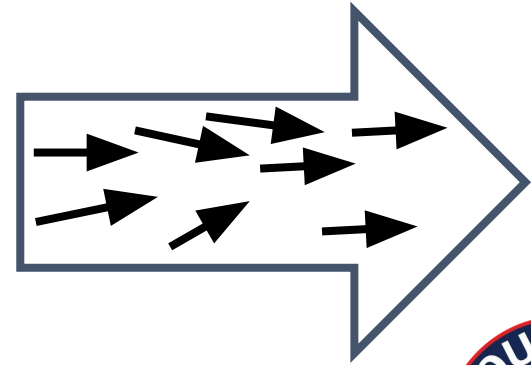
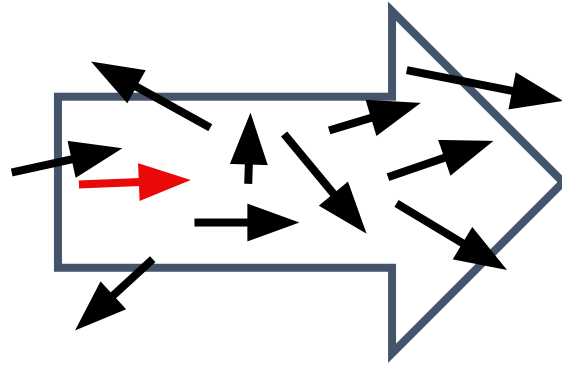
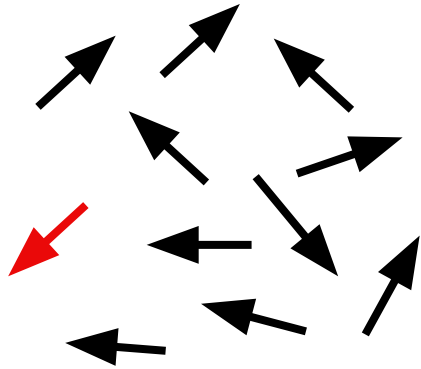


TO ALIGNED
ACTS OF
IMPROVEMENT



Strategic Alignment of Priorities

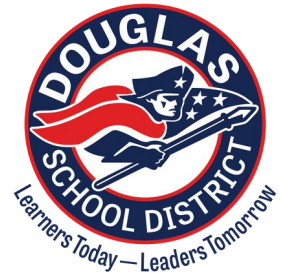
Studer Education



Continuous Improvement



... yet

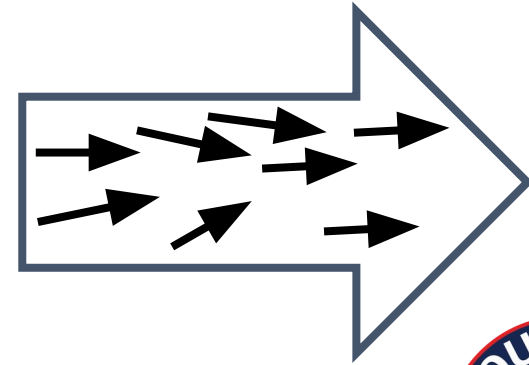
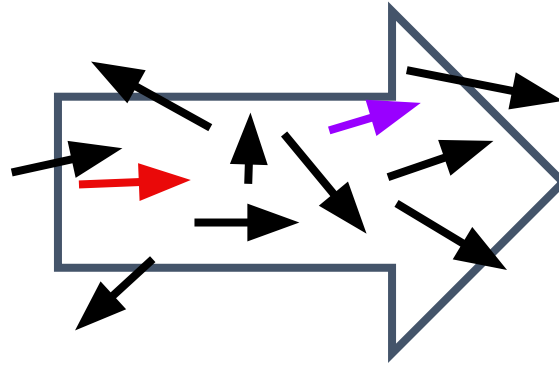
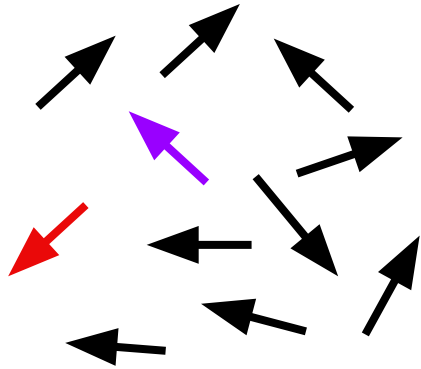


Strategic Alignment of Priorities

Recognize & Reward
Success

Intentionality

Studer Education



Continuous Improvement



... yet

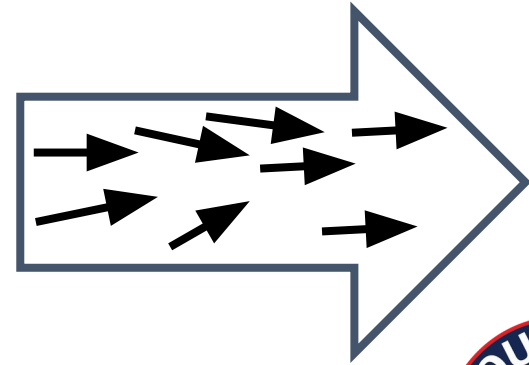
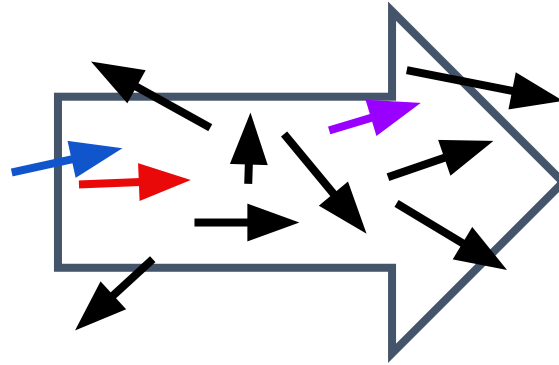
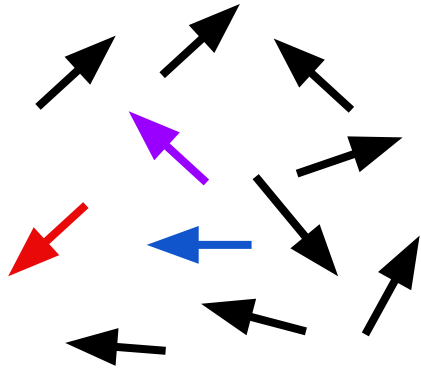


Strategic Alignment of Priorities

Recognize & Reward
Success

Leader Rounding

Studer Education



Continuous Improvement



... yet



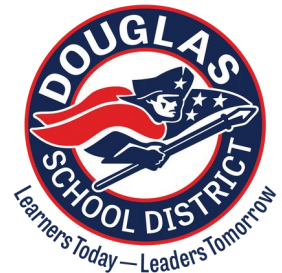
Questions We Ask

Who are we?

Why are we doing this?

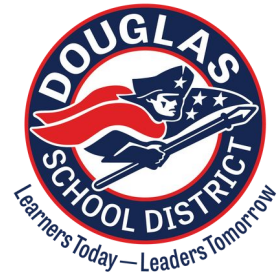
Why are we doing this this way?

Whose needs are being met?



The Power of Intentional Language

**The language that leaders
use matters!**



**“Don’t leave it to
chance . . .”**

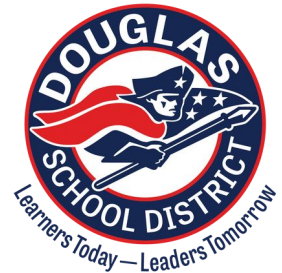


**“What might better
look like?”**



“Getting better at getting better!”

Studer Education

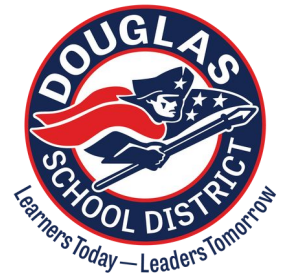


**“What we permit, we
promote; what we measure,
we value; what we recognize,
we get more of.”**



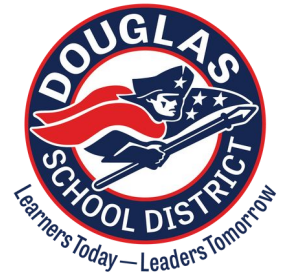
**The pattern of adult
interactions in a school
strongly influences the climate
and instructional outcomes for
students.**

Garmston & Wellman



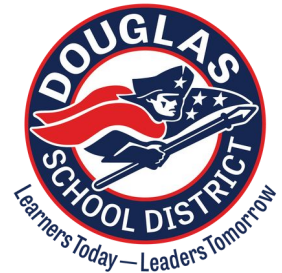
**“Do the best you can until
you know better.
Then when you know better,
do better.”**

Maya Angelou



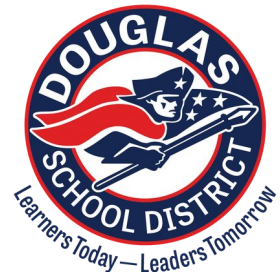
PROGRESS
Not
Perfection!

~~PERFECTION~~
PROGRESS



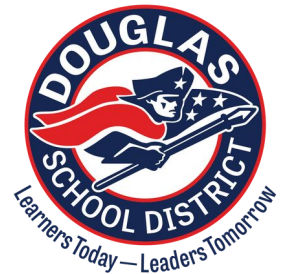
The Power of Being A Reflective Practitioner!

“After being a Superintendent for 25+ years, one of my biggest “ah-ha’s” is the impact reflection can have on an organization . . . At DSD 51-1 that includes Professional Coaching, Adaptive Schools, and the work we are doing with Studer. ‘Don’t leave it (reflection) to chance!’”



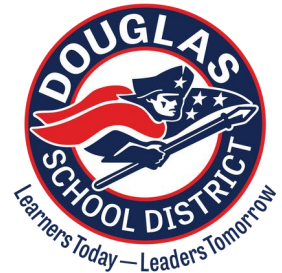
**“Any group that is too
busy to reflect is too
busy to improve.”**

Garmston & Wellman



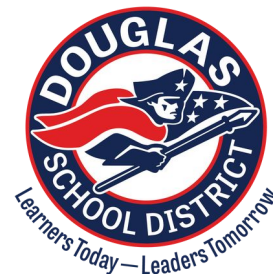
“Learning happens in *‘The Pause’*.”

Garmston & Wellman



Our Strategic Partners

- Adaptive Schools
 - Administrative Values & Beliefs
 - 4 Day Summer Training
 - 250 Certified & Classified Staff Trained
 - Common Language
 - Expansion of Values & Beliefs
- Studer Education
 - Coach Casey Blochowiak
 - DHS Conferences
- Riggs Consulting
- Thought Exchange



Foundational Work

Adaptive Schools

- Administrative Values & Beliefs
- 4 Day Summer Training
- 250 Certified & Classified Staff Trained
- Common Language
- Expansion of Values & Beliefs
- Leadership Matters
 - Monthly Professional Coaching
 - Coherence - Michael Fullen
 - Change Model



What are the 9 Principles?



PRINCIPLE 1: COMMIT TO EXCELLENCE

Set high expectations to achieve results while living out mission and values.

PRINCIPLE 2: MEASURE THE IMPORTANT THINGS

Continuously track progress to achieve results with an improvement mindset.

PRINCIPLE 3: BUILD A CULTURE AROUND SERVICE

Serve others with great care and concern.

PRINCIPLE 4: DEVELOP LEADERS TO DEVELOP PEOPLE

Coach people to be their best at work.

PRINCIPLE 5: FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Attend to aspirations and desires in the workplace.

PRINCIPLE 6: BE ACCOUNTABLE

Commit to individual accountability to achieve organizational goals.

PRINCIPLE 7: ALIGN BEHAVIORS WITH GOALS AND VALUES

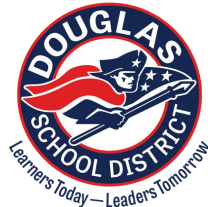
Apply consistent practices to move the organization in a positive direction.

PRINCIPLE 8: COMMUNICATE AT ALL LEVELS

People know why what they do matters.

PRINCIPLE 9: RECOGNIZE AND REWARD SUCCESS

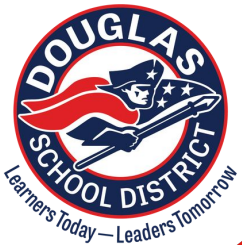
Value and appreciate people working together to get results.



Principle 1

Commit To Excellence

- We commit to being the best at what we do.



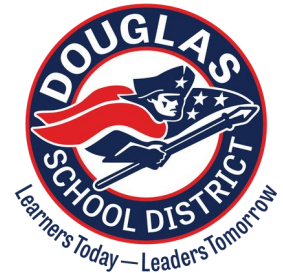
Improvement Mindset

A way of thinking!

Improvement Mindset

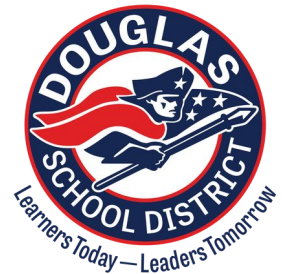
The final focus area for committing to excellence is working with an improvement mindset. An improvement mindset means we are always looking for ways to get better. We celebrate actions that are working, and we do more of them. We turn challenges into opportunities and identify ways to solve problems that impede progress. We focus more on improvement and less on accountability. Why? Because if we continuously improve, we are more likely to achieve our desired results. Accountability then is the outcome of our improvements rather than a threatening way to lead people.

Improvement motivates people. Most people want to have goals and ways to improve to achieve those goals. Engaging our people in improvement conversations leads to a more highly engaged workforce. We get better when we know the goal, talk about what's working, what's not working, and how we can work together to improve.

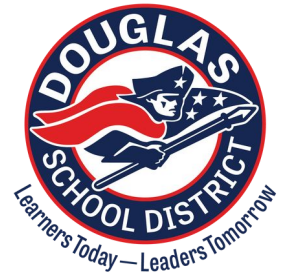


Moment of Reflection

What might be some ways
you could best support the
concept of continuous
improvement in your district?

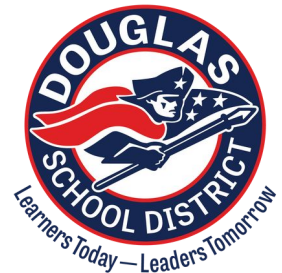


**“What might better
look like?”**



What is Hardwiring?

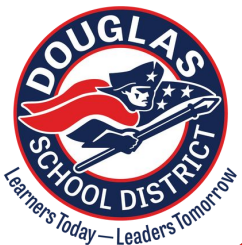
100% of the people in the organization have been trained and we are executing that training 95% of the time.



Principle 5

Focus on Employee Engagement

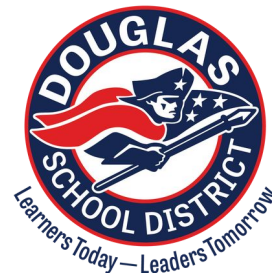
- **Most employees want to do purposeful work.**
- **Let's put employees at the center of our work.**



Intentional “Move” - Rounding

“Leader rounding may be the most important tactic to help leaders engage individuals in the work environment.”

Janet Pilcher



Intentional “Move” - Rounding

“Leader rounding is intentional & focused on what employees are looking for in their leaders. They want:

- Good relationships with their leader;
- Their leaders to be approachable & sincere;
- Their leader to work side by side with them;
- Systems to work smoothly & resources to do their job;
- To be trained and developed;
- To feel appreciated and cared for as an employee and a person.

-Hardwiring Excellence in Education p. 134



Rounding Questions & Cadence

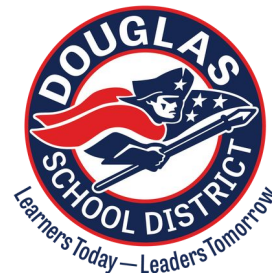
Personal Connection

Q1 - Over the past week or so, what's going well?

Q2 - What's getting in the way of you doing your best work?

Q3 - Who has been especially helpful to you? . .
.what did they do?

Q4 - Is there anything I could do to be helpful to you OR Do you have the resources you need to be successful in your job?



2024-25 Rounding Summary

Process & what we are learning. . .

- Admin Team 2/month;
- Record Results;
- Hardwire/Accountability;
- Look For Trends;
- Find Easy Wins;
- Listen;
- Recognize & Reward Success

Overview				
Total Entries	370		Total	
May Check In			Ann Pettit	
Today's date:		May 22	Beau Voegeli	
Admins:		76%	Courtney Crosswait	
By Month			Jace Waltman	
	Admins	Entries	Jeannie Clark	
September			Jennifer Garner	
October	12	42	Josh Haaland	
November	12	52	Kevin Case	
December	11	29	Monica Waltman	
January	16	49	Nathan Batteen	
February	18	63	Sean Gholson	
March	16	53	Shanna Sandal	
April	15	44	Shawn Compton	
May	13	37	Stacey Cowen	
			Timothy Kosters	
			Trista Olney	
			Troy Volesky	



2024-25 Rounding Success Stories

Bright Spots. . .

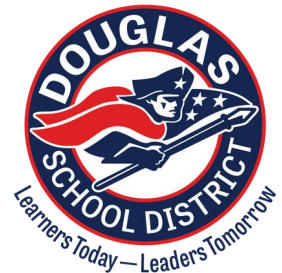
- Supports staff members feeling valued;
- Increased understanding of staff viewpoints;
- Close to “hardwired” with Administrative Team (20);
- Supports Principle 9 - Recognize and Reward;
- Supports a positive culture.



2025-26 Next Steps - Rounding

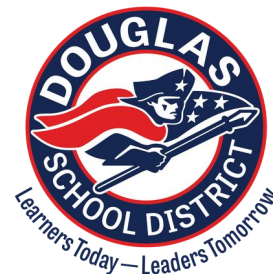
Next Steps. . .

- Continue to hardwire throughout the organization;
 - Consider expanding beyond staff to parents and students
- Be more intentional about using the data;
- Harvest small wins where & when applicable.



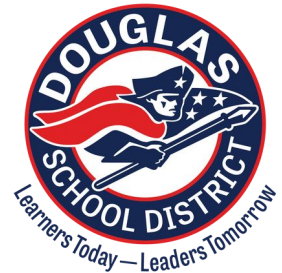
Common Themes

Positive Year
Culture
Collaboration
Cohesive
Teamwork
Leadership
Growth & Success



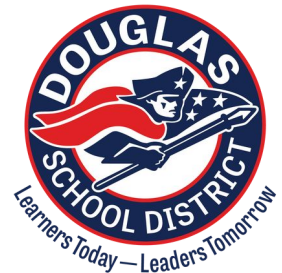
Moment of Practice

Model Leader Rounding



Moment of Reflection

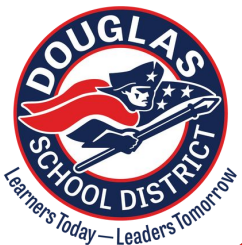
How might rounding best
support the concept of
continuous improvement in
your district?



Principle 9

Recognize & Reward Success

- People want to be appreciated and recognized.
- Recognizing and appreciating people must be hardwired into our organizations.



Harvesting Wins

“Harvesting is the most labor-intensive activity of the growing season. ... Harvesting wins means we do the heavy lifting needed to see all the good that we do and contribute to the world. The differences that we make in others’ lives are too important to leave on the field. We harvest as many wins as we can every day. We share and celebrate wins all the time. It helps people continue to see that they have purpose, do worthwhile work, and make a difference in the lives of others.”

Hardwiring Excellence in Education, p. 231-232.



AUGUST 27, 2024

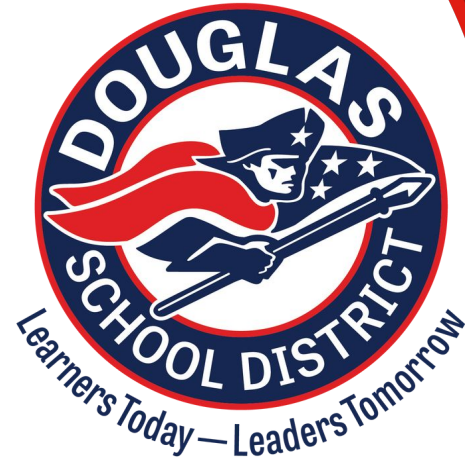
As you enter, please acknowledge employees who performs their role with exceptional efficiency and skill. Our goal is to recognize what RIGHT looks like.

Hi Deanna,

A quick note to recognize you as a problem solver on our team. Specifically, during our last team meeting your questions helped the team slow down and really understand the problem we were trying to solve. Thanks to this we left the meeting with a strengthened action plan.

Thanks for living our standard of Teamwork and Collaboration.

My best,
Louis



Recognize and Reward

Depending on the context, promoting recognition increases engagement by 40-60%, making it the single most important lever for engagement.

Turbocharging Employee Engagement: The Power of Recognition From Managers. Towers Watson. 2009:2

When asked about characteristics they desire in their workplace, employee recognition is the most often mentioned.

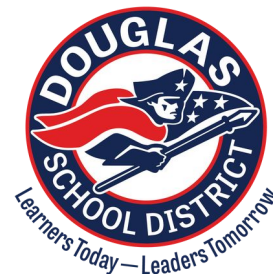
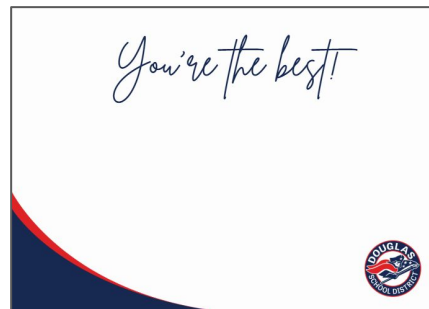
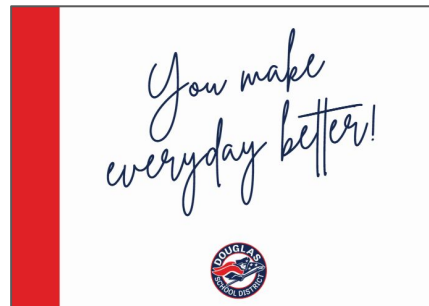
Hein P, Baumruk R, Lloyd A, Devcich C. Workforce Mindset Study. Aon Hewitt. 2015:6-7

Recognizing success makes the brain change neural pathways and in doing so makes it more efficient to repeat the successful activity again.

Berinato S. Success Gets into Your Head and Changes it. Harvard Business Review. 2010-Jan:24



At Your Fingertips



2024-25 Recognition Summary

Process & what we are learning. . .

- Admin Team 2/week;
- Record Results Optional;
- Hardwire/Accountability;
- Align with Strategic Direction;
- Connection to Rounding

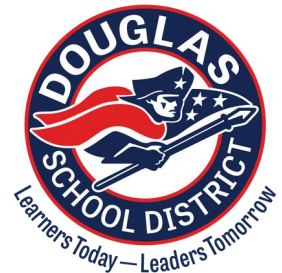
Leader In DSD 51-1	Thank You Notes Sent in 2024-25
Cowen	45
Voegeli	50
Case	50
Trista	54
Volesky	55
Balteen	56
Crosswait	67
Sandal	75
Gamer	75
Average	59



2024-25 Recognition Success Stories

Bright Spots. . .

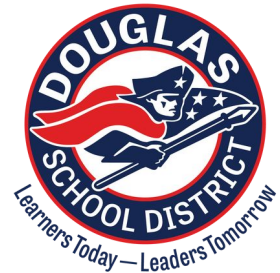
- Concept Spread Organically;
- Record Results Optional;
- Hardwire/Accountability;
- Align with Strategic Direction;
- A BIG Connection With Rounding:
 - Second Hand Compliments;
- Visibility of Thank You Notes;
- Above & Beyond Awards;



2025-26 Next Steps - Recognize & Reward Success

Next Steps. . .

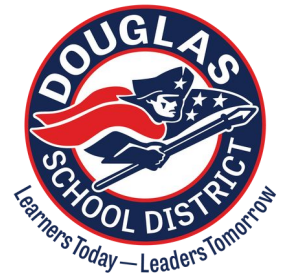
- Continue to hardwire throughout the organization;
 - Teach “specificity”
 - Give people time
- Thank You & Recognition Card Availability
- Recognize Students (Parent/Caregiver Survey)
- Session at our Choice PD Day at the Beginning of The Year;
- Develop “Pillars of Excellence”
- Refine “Above and Beyond” Awards



Moment of Reflection

Share a recent opportunity you
seized to Reward and
Recognize Success.

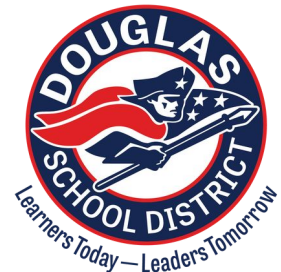
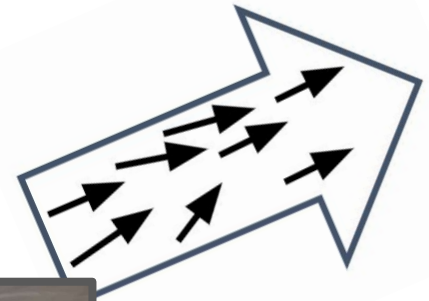
What specific action did you
call out?



Peek Around The Corner

DSD 51-1's Next Moves:

- Continue to Align and Make Connections to “The Arrows”
- Hardwire Rounding and Recognition
- Develop Pillars of Excellence → Focusing Direction → Focus our Efforts
- Refine Our District Scorecard
- Staff Survey - This Fall
- Portrait of a Graduate



Kevin's Closing Thoughts

A successful Continuous Improvement Journey must be approached in a strategic fashion with a great deal of intentionality. Factors that greatly increase your chances of success include: a firm foundation in change processes, ongoing professional support, professional coaching, engaging staff voice, and a firm belief in the concept of progress not perfection. Move away from random acts of improvement, they will not get you there. . .



3 - 2 - 1 Reflection Activity

- What are three things you learned today;
 - What are two questions you might have;
 - What is one thing you are considering implementing?
-



Questions - Comments -
Thoughts

What questions might you have?

