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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education, Health, and Human Services

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE

of

Jarred Zapolnik

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Foundations, Leadership, and Administration

**PRINCIPALS AND FEEDBACK:
UNDERSTANDING FEEDBACK QUANTITY, TYPE &
CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS
IN RELATION TO BLACK STUDENT ACADEMIC
GROWTH IN OHIO MIDDLE SCHOOLS AS MEASURED
BY A PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK SCALE**

October 27, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Meeting ID: 262 214 856 813

Passcode: saNyck

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Jarred Zapolnik

B.A. AYA Integrated Social Studies & History
Walsh University, 2004

M.A. Educational Leadership and Instruction
University of Akron, 2006

Superintendent's License
Ashland University, 2008

Jarred Zapolnik has served Ohio's students, parents, and staff as a superintendent, head intermediate school principal, head middle school principal, an assistant high school principal, and as a lead high school social studies teacher. He has coached and directed numerous co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for students. Mr. Zapolnik has presented at numerous conferences within the State of Ohio around the topics of standards, leadership, instructional practices, assessment, and alignment. He is married with three children, serves as a volunteer coach for several sports, and is a member of two local non-profit organizations, Pegasus Farms and Girls on the Run East Central Ohio.

Throughout his educational career, Mr. Zapolnik has worked to create systems and structures to improve student achievement. As a teacher, he worked to increase student performance on the Social Studies Ohio Graduation Test. As an assistant principal, he improved student attendance and decreased the number of out-of-school suspensions through collaboration with staff to implement system-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). As head middle principal, Mr. Zapolnik increased student achievement for literacy, numeracy, and in science by collaborating with teachers and other staff members. Additionally, Mr. Zapolnik has removed barriers for diverse learners, while increasing student agency and leadership. Mr. Zapolnik's recognitions include Osnaburg Local's Rookie Teacher of the Year, a member of Stark County Leadership Signature Program's 32nd class, a Canton Repository's Difference Maker (2018), interviewee for the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council's (OLAC) voices in the field (2017), and a 2023 Ohio Principal of the Year nominee. He is currently serving as superintendent in Mahoning County.

PRINCIPALS AND FEEDBACK: UNDERSTANDING FEEDBACK QUANTITY, TYPE & CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN RELATION TO BLACK STUDENT ACADEMIC GROWTH IN OHIO MIDDLE SCHOOLS AS MEASURED BY A PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK SCALE

The purpose of this descriptive quantitative study was to examine the relationship between principal feedback, instructional leadership, and cultural responsiveness in middle schools. The study described a sample of Ohio teachers and principals responding to questions on an instrument assessing principal feedback in two Ohio middle schools with high value added growth serving a majority (i.e. 51% or more) Black students. There has been an increasing achievement gap between Black and White students on standardized assessments throughout the nation, especially in Ohio.

The pilot testing phase consisted of 30 participants in northeast Ohio who were teachers, intervention specialists, assistant principals, and principals that completed the instrument to collect their responses regarding principal feedback topics, quantity, and cultural responsiveness. After collecting and examining their information, the instrument was revised and administered to 38 principals and teachers of two Ohio middle schools serving Black students with high value added growth over a two-month span. Data collected during both the pilot testing and the full study phase were used to guide and assess the psychometric properties of the instrument while data collected from the full study phase described the sample's responses between principal feedback, instructional leadership, and cultural responsiveness in two schools demonstrating significant academic growth.