

project RESA

What is Project RESA?

Project RESA is a district-wide think tank that addresses climate and culture topics impacting the organization.

Team Members:

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- Cyndi Ursprung
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- Jamie Ely
- Jasmine Good
- Jessica Mcauliffe
- John Phillips
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- Leanna Sysak
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- Melanie Foster
- Mindy Watson
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Share your ideas!

You are encouraged to share your ideas and suggestions with the Project RESA team. Contact us via email at projectresa@berrienresa.org or you can fill out a [Google Form](#) that will allow you to submit your thoughts without anyone knowing who submitted the comment. Please be assured, Berrien RESA cannot identify who submitted comments through the form.

Spotlight

Meeting Date: September 24, 2018

Goal of meeting: Complete Needs of the Field Rubric

Business Items:

1. Needs of the Field rubric

Old Business:

- Reviewed last year's work.

New Business:

- Discussed Management Team's work relative to the Needs of the Field rubric and updated Culture Guide. Needs of the Field rubric asks five questions in regard to each of the principles listed in the Culture Guide (Amazing People, Service Oriented, Transparency, Trust, Leadership Development, Balance, and Results). The questions were:

1. What is current practice? (What is the current status of the issue from each stakeholder's perspective?)
2. Where are the gaps?
3. What information is needed to move forward?
4. What skills are needed to move forward?
5. What processes need to be in place to support acquisition of knowledge and skills for those interested and/or involved in the issue or those who we invite into the work?

- **Requests from Management Team:** Upon completion of the Needs of the Field rubric, Management Team will compare Project RESA's answer with their own. From there, they will identify commonalities and areas of differing perspectives. These results will help determine the implementation plan for the Culture Guide. It is anticipated that the Guide and the Needs of the Field will both be shared with all staff in December. It is anticipated that Management Team will ask Project RESA to help develop an implementation/ongoing support plan for the Guide.

Communications Received from Management Team: None

Questions addressed by Project RESA: None

Communications received from staff via email or online form dealing with our organization's culture:

Suggestion Box:

Question: *Why is the rock under the tree that we donated in memory of Mark Reigle covered in mulch? These items were paid for with donations from his staff colleagues.*

Answer: This question was shared with Building & Grounds over the summer. Since then, the stone has been uncovered. It was accidentally covered while working on the lawn.

Question: *In order to raise more money for our annual United Way Campaign, have more incentives that cost Berrien RESA very little. Maybe a week of fun activities to help build relationships in the office and also to increase motivation to raise more funds?*

A small committee would probably work best in organizing events. All of these things can be spread out throughout the work day and week. Normal business can still go on as per usual as these things don't take up a lot of employees' time. It can be an easy way to donate a couple

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Background:

Participants from every department and building were invited to participate in the think tank (February 2017). Nearly 20 people joined the group. Committee members have agreed to serve on the committee for at least one year. An open invitation to participate will be offered to the RESA family annually.

Principles:

Project RESA is founded on two overarching principles; candor, and the concept of no authority. This means that all conversations had by Project RESA members will be honest discussions. No authority means that while the group is not a decision-making entity, it will make suggestions on ways in which issues may be resolved. Those ideas will be shared with Berrien RESA's Management Team. It will be up to Management Team to make decisions for the organization.

Communication:

To help keep all Berrien RESA team members informed of the topics being discussed by Project RESA, the suggestions being made to Management Team, and the decisions being made by Management Team regarding those suggestions, Project RESA will be issuing a "Spotlight" after each meeting. Spotlights will be shared via email as well as highlighted during staff meetings.

extra hundred dollars to United Way, build awareness to 'Campaign Week' here at RESA and build morale with employees.

Answer: Great suggestions! In fact, Berrien RESA does have a United Way Committee. This group determined the activities that were scheduled over the past year. The committee will meet again this winter to determine next year's events and welcomes new members. Stay tuned to Berrien RESA's newsletter, Our Neighborhood, for more information.

Culture Questions:

Question: *The opinions and experiences of references, past colleagues, and future colleagues should be given more weight in the hiring process than those in management. This would certainly help hire for the culture we aspire to create.*

Answer: As a reminder, Berrien RESA has a [process for hiring new employees](#). Often, staff members are asked to support the hiring process. All ideas and thoughts are taken into account. Additionally, reference and background checks are performed-which either enhances or diminishes the applicant's qualifications. Ultimately, however, the supervisor or director of that particular department makes the decision on who is welcomed to the team.

Please note, it is difficult to answer this question because it appears that the question is a result of a specific situation. Because the question was submitted via the anonymous form, answers are provided based on the assumption that the question is fully understood. With that being said, Berrien RESA encourages staff to discuss questions with your supervisors (or in this case, the Human Resource Department). While details may not be able to be shared (out of respect for an employee's privacy rights), at least some clarification can be provided.

Question (Suggestion): *Way to improve work-life balance: Offer fully-paid maternity leave AND paternity leave to ALL staff, whether they are contracted by days, salaried or hourly; full-time or part-time. All employees should be valued the same in regard to the need to care for a newborn.*

Knowing your employer supports you and values family would help solidify trust that the RESA really is pro family and pro work-life balance. There are countless articles on the benefits of having both parents home and available during the early months of a child's life.

Answer: The majority of Berrien RESA's staff members are considered "professional contracted staff" or "paraprofessional contracted staff". Both groups, whose benefits are negotiated by union representation, have determined their benefit package, including paid maternity and paternity leave. Under the current contracts, units bargained for five days of paid paternity leave. Additional benefits include the banking of sick days, tuition reimbursement, two weeks off during the winter holidays, and generous healthcare coverage. With each benefit provided, a cost is associated with it. These costs, in addition to salaries paid, equal about 72 percent of the district's total budget (which is similar for most educational organizations). If additional benefits are desired, current benefits may have to be reduced or eliminated (like the sick bank) to maintain that 72 percent allocation. As always, all ideas are welcome to be addressed during the bargaining process.

Next Meetings:

(All meetings will be held from 3:15-4:15 p.m.):

- October-30 (BLC)
- November-28 (LEC)
- December-No meeting
- January-31 (Distance Learning)
- February-25 (LEC)
- March-26 (Distance Learning)
- April-25 (Distance Learning)
- May-28 (Distance Learning)