Angela Isenberg: Welcome to I've tried everything, a podcast series focusing on behavior support in schools. I'm your host, Angela Isenberg. I'm the program manager for behavior here at the service center. Our special guest for the series is Melinda Marquez.

Melinda Marquez: Hi, Angela. Behavior is such a hot topic, especially for campus leaders. When I was a principal, I was always looking for guidance around behavior. I think the name of this podcast is great because, in fact, I felt like I did try everything.

Angela Isenberg: Our goal with this series is to provide strategies and guidance for campus leaders on how to best support their campus on behavior. We will be sharing insights, our experiences, and the things we've learned along the way.

Melinda Marquez: So step away from your email, grab that last cup of coffee and let's get started.

Angela Isenberg: This podcast will be all about active supervision. It's always a good idea to routinely refresh, review, revise our expectations around duty stations.

Angela Isenberg: Melinda, tell me a little bit about how you guys developed your duty stations on your campus.

Melinda Marquez: Initially it was, we just plopped people in spots, until we learned that we have to teach people what to do when they're on those duty stations. I think sometimes we kind of have it in our mind that teachers should just know what to do. But really in order to have that active supervision, to be specific, we really need to walk teachers through exactly what that looks like or come together with the teachers to write out a plan on what that looks like.

Angela Isenberg: And I think the other piece is sometimes we forget that students start understanding our behavior, and so they start finding ways to get away with stuff. I was on a campus doing an observation and I ask students, I'm like, "So tell me how you skipped class." And they were like, "Oh, you go to to this hallway, in this restroom, and you stand on the toilet. And then when the bell rings, after they've done their sweep, you go out this door." I was like, "Okay, thank you." And then of course they kept asking, "And who are you?" And I was like, "I'm Angela Isenberg, region 13. I'm just here to do an observation." "Okay."

Angela Isenberg: I said, "So where do you guys smoke?" And I said, of course now it would be vape. And they said, "Oh, you go behind the school and down the dry creek." And I was like, "Okay." "But if it rains you go over there." I was like, "Oh, thank you so much."

Angela Isenberg: And so of course after I got done visiting, I went to the principal and I said, "Okay, here's all your areas that students have discovered that there's not any act of supervision taking place." And he was like, "Oh my gosh, thank you so much."

Angela Isenberg: So I think it is, it is really thinking through where they found the gaps and and what's kind of pattern behavior is happening with staff because sometimes we walk in the same way and students go, "Well, it takes you about five minutes to get all the way around. So I have about five minutes to get away with something."

Angela Isenberg: Thinking through active supervision, what's the most important thing for you, Melinda?

Melinda Marquez: When it comes to active supervision, the most important thing is safety. We think about, as a principal, it's a heavy burden to be a principal and mainly because parents are dropping off their kiddos to you. And I was at a campus, we had about 900 students in their elementary and you've got 900 of these precious little babies that you're taking care of. And so safety has to be the most important piece when it comes to active supervision.

Angela Isenberg: And I think safety is, they're thinking through PBS expectations, be safe, be respectful, be responsible. We think about safe being about students being safe, not running in the hallway, but that safe piece for staff is making sure that they're actively supervising and they're at their duty station on time. So you don't get that call from parents that says, "Why wasn't somebody watching that area?"

Melinda Marquez: Right. Probably one of the worst things that can happen is something happens on campus. But on top of that, something happens on campus and there wasn't an adult present when there should have been.

Angela Isenberg: So when I think about active supervision, there's three things that can enhance that opportunity and it's opportunities for increased positive interactions, it's opportunities to positively reinforce behavior, and to redirect inappropriate behavior. So thinking through, how can we increase those opportunities for students to feel welcome at school? How is that first interaction whenever they walk on a campus? And then if I have to redirect, what is an appropriate way to redirect so that it is not me yelling at the student to walk. I could say, "Thank you for that hustle." What's the expectation for being safe on campus? It's to walk. Okay, well let's make sure that we're walking to class.

Melinda Marquez: So really bringing those expectations back into play whenever you're redirecting a student. It's not just yelling, "Don't run." That it's, "Will you please walk?" Remember what the expectation is. Absolutely.

Angela Isenberg: And that to me is when you really start to see that PBIS is embedded into the culture and climate of the campus is when we're positively reinforcing and redirecting with that language.

Melinda Marquez: I'm Melinda Marquez and we'll get back to today's episode in just a second. If you like what you hear in this episode, hop on over to whatever platform you use and give us a rating and a review. It helps people find our podcast and helps us know what we can improve upon. Thanks. Now let's get back to the show.

Angela Isenberg: Research has shown that high rates of positive contact with individuals or groups of students can significantly reduce student problem behavior by up to 90% in all students. So proximity is key as how are we supervising and what's our proximity to students.

Angela Isenberg: The other piece that I think is important is visibility, scanning, and circulating. And when I think about scanning, it is being there in the moment and not in your head thinking, "I've got all this stuff to do, but you're really paying attention to what's happening." When you think about that visibility circulating and scanning Melinda, what were some things that you encountered as a principal?

Melinda Marquez: After we realized that if we did have to set some expectations for those duty spots, it was difficult at first. It's a habit you have to break because when teachers get together, say they're on the playground or in the cafeteria, they're going to gravitate towards one another to catch up on important issues that they need to talk about. Especially in the morning, maybe they want to talk about what their day's going to look like, but really setting the expectation that that is not the time for that.

Melinda Marquez: You hit the nail on the head when you said proximity. Using that proximity to walk around, to form those positive relationships with kids that you don't get to see, or maybe you had in class last year and you get to touch base with them again. But using that proximity, trying to figure out how to get teachers not to clump and not to be next to each other, but really using that time to build those relationships with students.

Angela Isenberg: One of the things that I've seen for elementary is for recess is creating zones, so that teachers can be assigned to specific zones on the playground. And if you're down a teacher, then that zone just is not allowed to be played on that day. So it reduces that risk of students being too far away to actively supervise. So that's one thing to think about from a principal's perspective is, sometimes you do have staff out at professional development or sick. So how do we encounter those obstacles and overcome them?

Melinda Marquez: Really have those expectations, those protocols written down. That's going to be a key because you're right, people don't show up. There's your subs don't show up and you have to take care of that. But not forgetting those really important pieces of the duty stations.

Angela Isenberg: And then we talked about positive interactions, but proactively intervening. If you see something happening, not sitting back and waiting for it to manifest, but getting over there and intervening as quickly as possible.

Angela Isenberg: Professionalism is one area that I think is important because you don't know all the students. So when you interact with a student, you have to think of that as, how would I want to be treated if I was doing something that maybe was inappropriate? How would I want somebody to approach me and talk to me? So that language and what that redirect looks like. So the first encounter when a student comes onto campus shouldn't be, "Where's your ID?" Whatever. It should be, "Welcome. I'm glad that you're here today. So remember, for us to be safe, we all need to have our IDs on." It's that welcome piece that's important.

Angela Isenberg: And then instruction. I live by the motto that if they knew better, they'd do better, and how can we make sure that even for staff, having that thought process, if they knew better, they'd do better. So we need to reteach staff sometimes just like we need to reteach students.

Melinda Marquez: It's always a great idea to revisit those duty expectations on a regular basis. So after breaks, even if you're monitoring as a campus administrator and you're noticing that the staffs are starting to clump, or they're maybe not actively supervising their... You can tell that they're not interacting with the students. What plan are you going to have in place to revisit those expectations?

Angela Isenberg: I laughed because I went to see a teacher and the expectation on that campus was to be at your duty station the entire duty time. And the administrators would walk around with tickets and I was supposed to visit with her about an observation that I had done and she goes, "Oh, but I can't leave my duty spot because they're going to walk around with tickets and I don't want to miss my opportunity." And they'd have a raffle at the faculty meeting that the staff could put their ticket in and win little prizes and things like that.

Melinda Marquez: It's a great way to positively reinforce as opposed to walking around with a clipboard and checking if you aren't there. And that's great for staff too, staff needs those positives as well.

Angela Isenberg: And I think this is at great link between active supervision and creating that positive school culture, is we want to make sure that we create that positivity with staff, that positivity with students, to create an atmosphere where teachers want to be there and students want to be there.

Melinda Marquez: That's right. So I think that's great and it's a great segue to our next podcast, which the next piece of this series, which is positive school culture, and what does that look like according to the effective schools framework.

Angela Isenberg: All right, well we hope that you have enjoyed our podcast and please stay tuned for our next one on positive school culture. Have a great day. If you like what you heard so far, don't forget to subscribe, rate and review us. I'm Angela Isenberg.

Melinda Marquez: And I'm Melinda Marquez and we'll see you next week.