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interactions in classes, the lunchroom, and yes, the hallways. One student told me, “The most important thing I want in a principal is a relationship. A principal who takes the time to get to know me on a personal level.”

GET OUT THERE!

So, where do you start? Get out in the hallways. Break away from the chains of your email inbox (which is a whole other topic) and get out there with the kids. A principal who models relationship-building with all kids is one of the first steps in building the foundation of hope. Next, examine the language adults use in your building when talking about kids. Are you referring to students as “at-risk” or “Tier 1?,” or is every student full of treasures just waiting to be discovered? This language shift is up to you.

I learned an important lesson as a principal one day when a student approached me in the hallway and said, “How come you are never smiling?”

Ouch.

That was a student comment that really struck home. It caused me to take some time for deep reflection. I always thought of myself as outwardly smiling and genuinely being positive, but a student just told me otherwise. Thanks to her comment, I made a point of channeling the stresses of running a school, and not letting that stress sit on my face. Instead, the first smile I started counting in the halls was my own... before I started counting others.

Here’s my challenge: Work on your own smile first, then start collecting smile data in your school next. Let AWSP work on getting smiles and hope added to the school report card. ■



Dr. Scott Seaman joined AWSP in the fall of 2013 after serving as the principal at Tumwater High School. In July 2018, he assumed duties as Executive Director.

Humor me!

Created by **David Ford**, Retired Washington State Principal

