

## Silent Compliance, not Honesty is Wanted in Education

Educator Barnes – 3/7/19

I love to write, so I say more in written form than I tend to say in person. I acknowledge that I am an introvert, but I'm not shy. If I feel the need to verbalize an opinion, I will. Unfortunately, you don't have to work in education for too long to realize that honest feedback is not wanted. Every single principal I have ever had has assured me they have an open-door policy, and they are willing to listen. Experience has shown me that only a few have meant it; the rest were providing lip service.

This behavior does not stop at the principal's office; it also can be witnessed from district level administration. How many surveys are educators asked to complete, or how many meetings are we asked to attend to give feedback only to find out that leadership considered none of it? School administrators put on the biggest horse and pony shows. They ask for your feedback to say they "listened" but instead go on with the plan they wanted to implement in the first place. Moreover, most of them will go the extra mile to provide you with research to back their decisions even though the research they provided a few years ago contradicts the research they are touting now. It seems like the only constant in education is change and not listening to teachers.

A picture for an [article](#) I recently read on LinkedIn said, "Leaders who don't listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say." I know I am not alone in finding this statement true in many schools. I would rather be silent than feed into a leader's ego or give undue praise to quell the insecurities a leader might have.

I've had colleagues say, "Shawnta, you should really share that idea." Most times I think, "What is the point?" I'm tired of participating in the dance where I share an idea, a leader "listens," and nothing I said is ever considered. Yes, I understand that every idea cannot be implemented, and every change cannot be made. But when you bring up a valid point, have real proof based on what you know and not some research study conducted in a community far, far away, and you are always turned down, you become wallpaper. You are a faded fixture in the background of the school.

If you work at a school where listening to your ideas is more than lip service, and you are able to grow as a professional and impact students in a meaningful way, know that you are in a good place. Honestly, you didn't need me to tell you that. Until we really start listening to the teachers, the ones doing the hard work, education in our country will remain stagnant.