**WALK-THROUGH  TRAINING**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Our highly trained staff is dedicated to supporting the development of all children. We use proven methodologies and a highly effective curriculum to help principals  run effective schools. We regularly participate in professional development in order to improve our skills and offer a better learning experience for the children. | |
| **Walking the Talk of Teacher Supervision  Assessing the alignment between the written and taught curriculum**.  By Beverley Freedman  The headlines demand that schools get better and that students become smarter. Government tells us that change is required. Despite pressures from fiscal restraint, parental choice, local empowerment and government centralization, schools struggle to improve. The literature from the school improvement and school effectiveness research both agree that school administrators are critical of educational change. According to Gerstner, Semerald, Doyle & Johnston, without a competent, caring individual in the principal’s position, the task of school reform is very difficult. It is possible that change can occur without the administrator, but if that change is to be sustained, the active support of the administrator is critical.  Today, in a climate of heightened accountability, results count. Although the research suggests that administrators by themselves do not directly contribute to student achievement, their role is pivotal. Administrators influence school and staff cultures, attitudes, behaviours, values and norms, which in turn affect classroom practice and the quality of teaching and learning. For example, school leaders in high-achieving schools involve their staff in collaborative decision-making. Administrators are also found to influence student achievement through their leadership practises. To address current challenges, they must acquire new skills to serve as change agents: visibility, collaboration, articulation of system and school vision and a comfort level with creative tensions and ambiguities.  The administrator’s role balances leadership and management. Leadership primarily deals with supervision, improving instruction, developing and maintaining a vision and mission and building a collaborative community of learning. Management, on the other hand, is more concerned with budgets, timetables, appraisals and resource allocation. Both leadership and management are key to improving the instruction provided to students. These two dimensions are intertwined and administrators are forced to make decisions as to where they need to focus their time and energy. An effective leader both motivates teachers to improve their teaching and provides the ongoing professional development supports to make it happen. In a complementary way, an effective manager makes change possible.  While most if not all administrators would recognize the importance of leadership and management, they are often unable to find the time to work closely with their staff to address the teaching challenges. According to Peterson (2001), administrators face a myriad of demands and may deal with as many as 50 to 60 separate interactions each hour. Parents, staff, boards, the Education Quality Accountability Office, the Ministry of Education and community agencies all demand attention. In addition, there are continuous student issues. When do administrators find time to focus on teaching and learning?  The Ontario Education Act and its Regulations (1998) mandate administrators to supervise instruction and advise and assist teachers. For administrators to be seen as instructional leaders implies an involvement in and knowledge of what goes on in the classroom including the curriculum, teaching strategies and monitoring student progress. Administrators, in a variety of surveys, acknowledge that knowing what is taking place in classrooms is fundamental to understanding, teaching and learning within the school.  However, the existing school-based literature indicates that administrators spend a small amount of time in classrooms. There is substantial educational research linking administrator effectiveness with a management strategy called "Management By Walking Around" (MBWA) designed to increase administrator visibility. Research notes that administrators, who are highly visible within the school, are seen to be more effective, and teachers reported an increased sense of self-worth or self-efficacy. For example, administrators observing and supporting classroom learning are engaged in value-added work. The daily challenge, for most administrators, is how to balance ongoing demands in the office with the need for visibility in the classroom.  One possible solution to this problem is "School Walk-Through," developed by Dr. Caroline Downey at the University of San Diego . It is an extension of the Curriculum Management Audit program, an American-based accountability system for analyzing school districts on the basis of set criteria organized into five standards. Clearly, it makes sense to associate a mechanism for improvement with a mechanism for measurement, otherwise you cannot know whether improvement is taking place.  The Walk-Through and the Curriculum Management Audit program are managed through Phi Delta Kappa International Inc., an international organization concerned with educational research, service and leadership. (Phi Delta Kappa International Inc. also publishes a prominent educational journal called "Kappan".) Currently, hundreds of school districts in the United States , the Caribbean , and other international sites have been audited as a means of improving teaching and learning.  The Walk-Through uses MBWA as a model and consists of repeated, brief, informal, classroom visits lasting three to five minutes. The emphasis is on observing the alignment between the written and taught curriculum. The focus is on student engagement, the expectations being taught, the instructional practice used, and the school/ system emphasis. Training to use the Walk-Through tool can be completed in a day and a half and includes time spent in actual classrooms, along with discussion and reflection among the participants. In particular, administrators spend time learning and practicing the art of reflective questioning.  How does the Walk-Through process differ from the traditional appraisal process? Staff must be involved from the beginning because the emphasis is on supervision, not appraisal. Administrators act as critical players who work with their staff team on improving teaching and learning collaboratively within the school. This is a collegial form of feedback in which the administrator provides support and direction related to the classroom. In the case of the Walk-Through, the feedback comes from repeated classroom visits. Marshall (1996) concluded that "frequent, unannounced, randomly scheduled visits can provide more accurate and reliable information on what is really taking place in the classrooms than scheduled, formal observations." The Walk-Through demands frequent observations by administrators, which adds to the observed data on teaching and learning within the school. Since the time spent in each classroom is relatively short, the Walk-Through can be effectively incorporated on a daily basis, even within a busy school.  Another important component of the Walk-Through is reflective questioning. After 20 to 30 visits, the administrator finds time outside the classroom to provide informal feedback and engage staff in reflective questioning that focuses on the positives. Asking the right questions encourages teachers to reflect on the learning process. This way, administrators work to build consensus and develop the capacity in their staff to think critically about teaching. Reflective questions offer teachers rich, thoughtful feedback that can be used to foster a community of learning within the school.  The combination of short, repeated, classroom visits and reflective questions are an effective tool that can be used to improve the alignment between the written curriculum and the curriculum that is actually taught. Administrators who practice the Walk-Through report not only a renewed focus on teaching and learning, but also an increase in their visibility and in their knowledge of what is really happening in classrooms. •  Beverley Freedman, former superintendent, Durham District School Board, is an accredited auditor for the Curriculum Management Audit program of Phi Delta Kappa International Inc  **A Typical Schedule for**  **“Walk Through Training”**  A Professional Development Opportunity  **Day One**  Agenda  *\*refreshments served at 8:30 am*  **8:30** Sign In and Network (Materials for the Workshop will be available)  **8:45** Introduction of facilitator, **Bev Freedman**  Preliminary presentation  Introduction, Objectives for the Workshop  Structure of the 5 Components of the Walk Through  Videos Simulation  **12:00** Lunch provided  **12:45**  **12:45** Classroom Walk Throughs  **2:45**  **3:00** Links to Appraisal System  Links to Research  Reflective Conversations  **3:45** Closure  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Day Two**  Agenda  **8:45** Classroom Walk Throughs  **11:45** Lunch  **12:45** Alignment of the Taught to Tested  Making it Happen –Conversations with Faculty  Enablers and Barriers  Additional Issues  **3:00** Closure  *\*all resource materials for****Walk Through Training****will be available Day 1 of Training*    Bev Freedman |  |