

Standard 7: Supervision of Personnel

*Reflective Essay*

Administrators wear many hats, each essential to their job. Hiring and keeping good teachers requires proactive learning about content areas, ‘best fit’ of experience and personality for a position, and regular communication to establish positive relationships. While investing in relationships with your staff is time intensive, it is extremely beneficial when teachers must tackle change and address improved student achievement. This is particularly important during classroom observations and evaluation of teacher performance. VonVillas (2004) talks about the necessity of going beyond noting the quality of a lesson plan or the degree to which students are engaged. She charges effective administrators with developing a deep knowledge about instructional design and delivery related to that content. Part of achieving this, she suggests, is approaching supervision as more of a continuous activity rather than isolated, prescribed events.

The 3-minute observation cycle I mentioned in my discussion of Standard 6 is very useful in ongoing supervision as well. Using this routine establishes regular communication between teachers and administrators. Teachers feel supported when administrators are regularly visible in the classroom. Administrators also have the benefit of genuinely knowing how their teachers teach based on frequent observations of their work. This gives the evaluation process a genuine depth that can otherwise feel somewhat artificial.

This proactive stance is also very important during the interview and hiring process. Effective administrators are current on hiring policies so that they are prepared to offer positions to desirable applicants. Several factors can make the interview process

more productive. In-district employees seeking to transfer can be a good fit for a position rather than ‘taking what you get.’ In the district where I completed my internship experience I observed another unique approach. The personnel administration actively recruited potential employees out-of-cycle. In other words, they planned proactively where possible, ensuring that the best possible employees were secured early in the hiring season.

*Related Artifacts*

Two excellent artifacts relate to this standard. I have participated on the Personnel Subcommittee for George Washington High School for the past several years. This year I am the coordinator for the committee. This experience has taught me a lot about the hiring process. Before interviews even begin, I have learned that communication with my colleagues is extremely important. Respecting their time is foremost in my planning when I develop the interview schedule. I relay the dates and times to them well in advance to help alleviate stress related to staying after work hours to interview applicants. We have also worked together as a team to streamline the interview process. Using thoughtful questions helps us assess interviewees at several levels. Not only do we listen for critical indicators of their ability, but we also glean information about them as teammates and colleagues. We know our existing teams and how potential employees would fit with them. This is important preparation for the interview process.

The other artifact that I find particularly applicable to this standard is the Observation Cycle work product from my Supervision course. The observation roughly follows a clinical supervision cycle that uses a pre-observation, observation, and post-

observation format. This observation cycle deviated from traditional administrator observations in that this observation on a peer-to-peer level. In short, it was great! I think both my colleague and I enjoyed the process and the opportunity to discuss teaching strategy for our students.

*References*

VonVillas, B. (September 2004). Improving the way we observe classrooms. *School Administrator*, v 61, n 8, p 52.