

#7 PRINCIPALS ARE A CONSTANT PRESENCE.

- The expectation is that for the most part, the principals are in the building and walking the halls, conferring with the teachers, looking at student work, and interacting with students, teachers, and parents.
- Depending on how big the school is, some principals stop in on every class at the beginning of the day. It is the principals' version of 'doing rounds'. They are gauging the pulse of their buildings.

ALTHOUGH THE PRINCIPALS ARE IMPORTANT LEADERS, THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY LEADERS.

- Distributed leadership is part of an explicit practice to institutionalize improvement so that it is not reliant on a single individual. These principals are trying to build the kinds of enduring structures that will outlast them.

“ ‘Bad teachers had been allowed to collect in urban schools...Bad teachers could survive there; they had created a safe culture for themselves.’” Superintendent Register
BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“We surveyed teachers to ask what was most important to them. Number one was the opportunity to be successful.”
BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“Administrators also began taking very seriously their role in evaluating teachers. ‘The union has always said that someone gave that person tenure.’...an intensive assistance program”...amount of progress a teacher produces in each child compared to the predicted progress, is called ‘value-added.’ One of the benefits of value-added data is that teachers who teach students who arrive far below grade level can be given credit for growth...not penalized for students who arrive behind” .
BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“...helping teachers and principals took a complex and systematic approach, including clear guidance on what students were expected to know and be able to do at each grade level; help in assessing whether students were meeting those expectations; training in how to use achievement data to recognize problems, set goals, measure progress, and celebrate achievements; and the establishment of a structure for principals to learn to work with other principals and to help teachers work together...”
BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

‘We’re observed 7 times a year until tenure, and once tenured, we observe each other. The observation process is ‘designed to help the teacher.’ English teacher Wendy Tague
ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

“observation is the ‘tool’ for instructional growth. ‘ Instruction drives the building. We talk about it all day.’ AP John Capozzi The administrators themselves are also expected to improve their observation techniques – periodically, lessons are videotaped, and administrators all watch the lesson together, then write up their observations at home overnight. Then they meet the next day to discuss these observations.”
ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

“Shirley said rotating aides is important in order to ‘spread good practices’. ‘I don’t want greatness closed up in one room,’ she said.”
OAKLAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Russellville, Arkansas

“Shirley spends a great deal of time in classrooms herself, watching for effective teaching methods that can be shared.”
OAKLAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Russellville, Arkansas

‘...middle school kids are like dogs – if they trust you, they’ll do anything for you.’ That kind of sums it up. Middle-school-age kids don’t love and trust their teachers unconditionally, the way many young children do. They need a reason to trust teachers. But if they do they will work hard and be enthusiastic participants in school. That’s what I saw at Port Chester.”
PORT CHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, Port Chester, NY

Sheppard instituted the practice of greeting each child in the morning....Sheppard is usually there as well, greeting children and asking how they are doing, alert to signs of unhappiness and doing some instant counseling. ‘If they’re shown love, they’ll meet any expectation you have.’
DAYTON’S BLUFF ACHIEVEMENT PLUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, St. Paul, MN