**CHECKING IN… Becoming the Instructional Leader**

**One of the major roles of a principal is to be the instructional leader for the school. Instructional success involves teachers, students, materials, curriculum, facilities, technology, support personnel and the principal as the head. At the beginning of your career as an administrator, there are many responsibilities pulling at you, and you need to take time to reflect on your role in the teaching-learning process.**

**The following list can help you to gain your focus as an instructional leader of the school.**

**\_\_\_1. Set the tone at the beginning of the year. Know your teachers. Circulate the school when classes are in and out of session. You can learn a great deal by walking the halls, meeting and greeting students and teachers. The more you are out and about, stopping in to see instruction, the more comfortable people will be with you.**

**\_\_\_2. Become familiar with the state’s Learning Standards in the subjects taught by your teachers.**

**\_\_\_3. Sit in on curriculum, team, grade level or department meetings. Be a listener to understand what the issues of instruction are in your school.**

**\_\_\_4. Take time to study the teaching-learning process. Become a learner as well as a leader.**

**\_\_\_5. Know what effective teaching is. Be able to recognize a solid lesson with all if the key components. See the accompanying page *What is Effective Teaching?***

**\_\_\_6. When viewing the classroom, recognize that learning is taking place. Are students responsive, attentive, engaged? Walk around the room observing students as they are learning.**

**\_\_\_7. Seek input from other administrators when planning observations and evaluations.**

**\_\_\_8. Be familiar with the teachers’ contract and responsibilities for assessment.**

**\_\_\_9. Take time to develop a calendar for pop-in visits, preconferences, classroom observations and follow-up conferences.**

**\_\_\_10. Develop a system of notetaking and scripting to keep anecdotal records on the teachers in your building.**

**\_\_\_11. Position teachers as partners. Help set goals for instruction, focus on solutions and identify resources.**

***Principal’s Field Technique: Set aside time in your schedule to work or teach in a classroom. Pick a subject you are comfortable with. This provides you with an opportunity to model instruction and learn firsthand what is going on with students and teachers.***