

NEWSLETTER BY:
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Exceptional Programs for Exceptional Learners Monthly Newsletter

Parsons, Neodesha, Fredonia, Cherryvale, Thayer, Independence, Coffeyville, Caney

Improving Classroom Instruction with Support Through Administration Observation

Goals for teachers:

- Be experts in your field
- Search for best practice in your field
- Utilize best practice
- Change what is not working
- Diagnose needs with appropriate tools
- Progress Monitor student needs at least weekly
- Be excited about your growth and your students' growth
- Care about all children, even the tough ones

Best Practice

Congratulations to Joyce McWherter, teacher at Eisenhower Elementary. She will be awarded on February 25, 2010 at Greenbush with the KASEA, Region 5 Special Education Professional of the Year. Her dedication to children, families and teachers is just part of why she was recognized.

Congratulations Joyce!

Teacher/Administrator Teaming

Do you have visits from your Tri-County Coordinator and/or your building principal in your classroom? Do you know when they are coming? When they visit your classroom what are they observing? Why do they pick a certain day and time? Do you get any feedback?

Limited Time.

Your administrator's time for observations is affected by the dynamic nature of the daily classroom and school routine. Tools, knowledge, and skill are needed to discern meaningful information regarding your classroom performance and the effectiveness of your instruction which are both effective and time efficient. Unless you are on the evaluation cycle you may not have many visits by administrators in your classroom.

Guess What?

There is a body of research which validates the merit of classroom visits in positively influencing effectiveness of instruction, student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Administrators in USD 503 Parsons are engaged in practicing time-efficient, reliable, and teacher motivating classroom observations. The current training and practice came about as a result of Kansas Learning Network efforts to assist the district as a whole find ways to improve instructional efficiency and student achieve-

ment. The practice of meaningful observation and feedback provides a great opportunity for professional engagement, student achievement, and instructional improvement.



What Are They Doing?

Teams of administrators including Tri-County 607 elementary and secondary coordinators assigned to USD 503 are observing instruction in classes at middle school, high school and elementary levels. Three teams visiting classes in ten minute rotations observed teachers for teaching practices and students for learning practices. Administrators use the *Classroom Observation Form* from the [The Learning Network Handbook](#). Administrators look at the classroom environment, the lesson design and instructional planning, strategies used to communicate the information and the thinking level from basic to advanced promoted during the period of observation. The observation matrix is two pronged. The aforementioned process applies to the classroom instructor. The second half applies to the engagement of the students including the resources used in the learning activity, the type of student engagement in problem solving, the strategies the students use in processing the learning task and the thinking level demonstrated by the

students from basic through advanced. At the conclusion of the observation each team meets to discuss the individual ratings to resolve differences in what was observed and to calibrate observation results among observers improving the reliability of the observation results. It is an opportunity to improve administrator observation skills

What does it have to do with you?

The method of observation provides an administrator with a time-efficient and reliable source of information on teaching and learning. The method of observation affords the administrator a tool and process which promotes increased numbers of classroom observations. This method is research based and promoted by The Learning Network. The process has application to special education classrooms, special education students, and special education teachers. It provides a frame-of-reference for dialogue between teacher and administrator, an opportunity for self-evaluative reflection by the special education teacher, and a target for planning the type and level of learning expectations special education students have for their special education students. It enables a greater number of opportunities for meaningful communication focused on instruction between teachers and administrators.