

Leadership CONNECTIONS



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5 Cs

Principals Can't Ignore to Improve SQR Outcomes!

- **C**ommunication
- **C**ollaboration
- **C**urricula
- **C**ulture and **C**limate

Getting the school community ready for a School Quality Review (SQR) visit is demanding and challenging for all school stakeholders. The SQR visit requires principals and stakeholders to communicate and demonstrate a shared vision for teaching and learning and cohesively present the work of the members of the school teams and individual teachers. Getting prepared requires organization, time, energy, and adds to the day-to-day complexities of running a school building.

The following are 5Cs that will help principals to focus teachers and members of the school community when planning for the SQR or any school audit.

October is

National Principals Month

Thank you for your leadership and service!

Join us for a free SQR Workshop

Friday, October 10, 2014

Register www.partnerwithlegacy.com

C**ommunication**

Teachers and members of the school community are often unsure about the goals, expectations, and process of the SQR. Principals must cohesively communicate what the SQR process is about and must also help teachers and members of the school community feel confident in communicating the vision, mission, and pedagogical practices of the school community. To relieve anxiety and uncertainty about the SQR communication should address the following questions:

- 1) What is the SQR?
- 2) Why are we having an SQR?
- 3) What will the SQR process include? Why?
- 4) What do we need to prepare for the visit?
- 5) When will we know the outcomes of the SQR visit?

Teachers and school leaders often have very different perspectives about teaching and learning. To help ensure a shared language about the SQR principals should unpack the SQR rubric with teachers and schools staff. The attached KWHL graphic organizer may be used to help facilitate and focus the discussion with school staff.

C**ollaboration**

If principals want to improve their SQR rating then the collaboration efforts of school teams during the SQR process must focus on deliverables and should pay close attention to the details. Departments and school based teams should provide attention to ensuring that learning products, classroom environments, and instructional materials (i.e., lesson plans, unit plans and assessments) reflect the details that articulate the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional strategies that meet the needs of Students with Disabilities (SWDs), English Language Learners (ELLs), and other diverse subgroups within the school community. In addition, instructional materials should demonstrate the consistent use of standards-based rubrics, authentic learning tasks, and the use of student work to inform instructional decisions. To meet and exceed the SQR school leaders must ensure that the strategies used to improve teaching and learning are well articulated and reflect best practices.

C**urricula**

Teachers often struggle with understanding the characteristics of higher-order thinking and learning. The reality is that higher-order thinking is the opposite of lower-order thinking. Lower-order thinking is characterized by students having to repeat and recite factual information, students being asked questions that are only factual, and thinking that does not require students to make interpretations and connections. Lower-order thinking that does not require students to synthesize knowledge. The SQR process provides attention to the curriculum of the school with the goal of determining if students are learning concepts that will help them to make sense of the world outside of the classroom. The curriculum and teaching must demonstrate that students are challenged and encouraged to take risks as they learn how to think critically, ask higher-order questions, and work to master challenging tasks.

Climate and Culture

Members of the school community are often confused about the difference between culture and climate of a school. The culture of the school is defined as the way things are done within the school. The climate is defined as the tone and pulse of the school and school day. A primary goal of the SQR is to define and assess the school culture and climate. The process of the SQR includes classroom observations, interviews, and document review for the purpose of learning how the principal and school leadership team go about creating the conditions that are conducive to change and how vision and mission are translated into actions by all members of the school community. Vision is defined as the mental image all staff and stakeholders are working to create.

The culture of the school reflects the collective pursuit of teachers, students, leaders, and parents in creating the best possible conditions for students to learn and grow. A caring environment for students reflects a place where there are systems and structures that serve to keep students safe and can be characterized

by respect, fairness, and communication of high expectations for all learners. The climate and tone of the school should demonstrate that students are part of a community that consistently engage in problem-solving and authentic learning that is cultivated in the classroom but learning must also extend outside of the classroom and into the entire school environment.

As an Outside Educational Expert, I have found that the process and underlying purpose of the SQR often feels cloaked and mysterious for principals, teachers, and members of the school community. Principals should provide attention to the 5 Cs—Communication, collaboration, Curricula, Culture and Climate—to help make the process transparent for teachers and the members of the school community. Legacy Pathways is committed to helping principals and members of the school community meet and exceed SQR. We provide comprehensive support which includes technical expertise in getting the learning environment ready for the SQR. More important, we provide attention to helping principals implement systems and structures to monitor and revise school practices and demonstrate the work of teachers and school based teams.

Dr. Selma K. Bartholomew, president of Legacy Pathways, has more than 16 years of solid experience as an educator and leader. She works with schools locally and nationally to help them improve the quality of teaching, learning, and leadership. Helping schools leaders with the strategic planning needed to effectively manage and rollout the many initiatives. As a company, our team of Program Leaders bring their wealth of expertise to help schools bridge the gap between theory and practice to ensure that ALL students are prepared with the cognitive backpack and skills to meet College and Career Readiness goals.

School Quality Review

KWHL

| What do I Know about the SQR? | What do I Want to know about the SQR? | How will I learn more about the SQR? | What have I Learned about the SQR? |
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