

**WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION****\*AGENDA**

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

**PUBLIC CALL TO ORDER:**

5:15 p.m., Staples High School, Room 333, Pupil Services Conference Room

**ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Discussion of Specific Attorney-Client Communication

Non-Union Personnel Compensation

Performance Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

**RESUME PUBLIC SESSION****PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Staples High School, Cafeteria B (Room 301), 7:00 p.m.**RECOGNITION:** 7:00 p.m.

- Recognition of Retirees, Westport Public Schools Staff, June 2014
- Recognition of PTA Co-Presidents, 2013-14 School Year

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION****MINUTES:** June 9, 2014**PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (15 MINUTES)****DISCUSSION/ACTION:**

- |    |                                                         |         |                                       |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Public Comment Guidelines                               |         | Board of Ed                           |
| 2. | Board of Education Goals/Objectives/Action Plans        | (Encl.) | Ms. Aronow<br>Mr. Block<br>Ms. Kleine |
| 3. | Appointment: Chartwells as District Food Management Co. | (Encl.) | Mr. Longo<br>Mr. Rupp                 |
| 4. | School Start Times: 2014-15 School Year                 | (Encl.) | Mr. Longo<br>Ms. Evangelista          |
| 5. | Acceptance of Gifts                                     | (Encl.) | Dr. Landon                            |
| 6. | Approval: Changes to Teacher Evaluation Plan            | (Encl.) | Ms. Cion                              |
| 7. | Non-Union Personnel Compensation: 2014-15 School Year   |         | Dr. Landon                            |
| 8. | Employment Contract of the Superintendent of Schools    |         |                                       |

**UPDATE:**

NEASC Self-Study (Encl.) Mr. D'Amico

**ADJOURNMENT**

\*A 2/3 vote is required to go to executive session, to add a topic to the agenda of a regular meeting, or to start a new topic after 10:30 p.m. The meeting can also be viewed on cable TV on channel 78; AT&T channel 99 and by video stream @www.westport.k12.ct.us

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WELCOME USING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:**

- Comment on non-agenda topics will occur during the first 15 minutes *except* when staff or guest presentations are scheduled.
- Board will not engage in dialogue on non-agenda items.
- Public may speak as agenda topics come up for discussion or information.
- Speakers on non-agenda items are limited to 2 minutes each, *except* by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers on agenda items are limited to 3 minutes each, *except* by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers must give name and use microphone.
- Responses to questions may be deferred if answers not immediately available.
- Public comment is normally not invited for topics listed for action after having been publicly discussed at one or more meetings.

## Westport Public School District GOALS FYE 2015

**Our Mission** is to prepare all students to reach their full potential as life-long learners and socially responsible contributors to our global community. **We achieve this** by fostering critical and creative thinking and collaborative problem solving through a robust curriculum delivered by engaging and dedicated educators.

**We are committed** to maintaining an environment that supports inquiry and academic excellence, emotional and physical well-being, appreciation of the arts and diverse cultures, integrity and ethical behavior.

### *GOAL, PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE and SPECIFIC ACTION Detail*

**Objective: Implement a plan of action that ensures that all students are equipped with globally competitive learning skills**

<b>Performance Objective</b>		<b>Specific Action</b>	<b>YE 2015 Year 1</b>	<b>YE 2016 Year 2</b>	<b>YE 2017 Year 3</b>
<b>Goal 1: Continuous Improvement in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment</b> Progress Towards Curricular and Extracurricular Goals		<b>Track and Quantify</b>	<b>Action Date of Completion</b>		
a. Obtain NEASC self-study accreditation (ongoing)		1. Complete the self-study process at SHS prior to October visit.	September		
		2. Report results to BOE.	June		
		3. Obtain accreditation		September	
b. Significant and incremental improvement in district curriculum and define the instrument of measurement		1. Use of Atlas Curriculum Mapping Software in secondary schools	June		
		2. Provide a schedule of professional development to enhance differentiated instruction in math and language arts practices that supports our balanced literacy framework and the Common Core (K-5)	September		
		3. Based on Kindergarten evaluation, determine and implement any curricular changes (including both Spanish and Music) for Kindergarten based on Common Core standards, instructional minutes and benchmarking with peer school	December	September	

	<p>districts.</p> <p>4. Implement the revised writing and social studies curricula. Allocate time for teachers to collaboratively plan and reflect on evidence of student learning.</p> <p>5. Report on the implementation of the Tri-State Consortium recommendations and modifications to the gifted program through 14-15 school year.</p> <p>6. Provide an analysis of course sequencing and course offerings in our DRG to build upon STEM and explore integration with the arts.</p> <p>7. Benchmark our course offerings against other schools in our DRG, including online alternatives, taking into account economic trends and local opportunities.</p>	<p>Spring</p> <p>Spring</p> <p>November</p> <p>November</p>		
<p>c. Successful preparation for SBAC testing (contingent upon decisions by the State)</p>	<p>1. Develop a plan for all levels.</p> <p>2. Schedule and inform BOE of preparation (including developmentally appropriate keyboarding lessons), practice and dates of testing.</p> <p>3. Obtain student/staff/parent feedback.</p>	<p>December</p> <p>March</p> <p>May</p>		
<p>d. Rollout new K-5 standards-based progress reports</p>	<p>1. Create a parent education piece.</p> <p>2. Solicit feedback from parents/teachers.</p>	<p>November</p> <p>March</p>		
<p>e. Develop the new teacher evaluation system as per requirements by the State</p>	<p>1. Determine guidelines for use.</p> <p>2. Decide on tools of measurement.</p>	<p>December</p> <p>December</p>		

<p>f. Prepare for the implementation of BYOD including a professional development plan for teachers on the use of applicable digital tools. Include best practices for teaching, learning, and assessment.</p>	<p>3. Evaluate results.</p> <p>4. Begin using the new system.</p> <p>1. Report on a plan structure.</p> <p>2. Report on plan progress.</p> <p>3. Report on final outcomes.</p>	<p>April</p> <p>October</p> <p>May</p>	<p>September</p> <p>September</p>	
<p>g. Improve current assessment tools and define measurement of improvement with the following five action points:</p>	<p>1. Develop formative and summative assessments at SHS taking into account how to measure 21st century skills.</p> <p>2. Introduce and evaluate the use of portfolio assessments for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and extend to additional grades over time.</p> <p>3. Report on and analyze required testing (including AP's) and test prep to look for efficiencies.</p> <p>4. Put a system in place for teachers at SHS to obtain feedback from students.</p> <p>5. Make recommendations based on pilot of Standards Based Grading.</p>	<p>December</p> <p>September June</p> <p>December</p> <p>March</p> <p>June</p>	<p>September (6-12)</p> <p>September (K-12)</p>	

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### **GOAL, PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE and SPECIFIC ACTION Detail**

<b>Goal 2: Promote an Environment that fosters respect, ethical behavior and responsible global citizenship</b>		<b>Action Date of Completion</b>		
<b>Performance Objective</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>	<b>YE 2015 Year 1</b>	<b>YE 2016 Year 2</b>	<b>YE 2017 Year 3</b>
<p>a. Implement a fifth domain for the Westport 2025 Critical Lens to reflect goals related to civic, social and ethical expectations at the elementary, middle and high school levels.</p>	<p>1. Review implementation plan with the BOE and determine measurements of success.</p> <p>2. Evaluate results.</p>	<p>May</p>	<p>June</p>	
<p>b. Improve social skills curriculum as measured by the School Climate Survey</p>	<p>1. Revise each school's climate plan to improve by 2-3%.</p> <p>2. Revise the district social skills curriculum and incorporate K2bK into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade social skills curriculum and review overall integration and climate policy with BOE for approval.</p>	<p>June</p>	<p>October</p>	

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### GOAL, PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE and SPECIFIC ACTION Detail

Performance Objective	Specific Action	Action Date of Completion		
		YE 2015 Year 1	YE 2016 Year 2	YE 2017 Year 3
<p><b>Goal 3: Promote and practice good stewardship for all district resources in a manner that supports safe and healthy environments and optimizes student learning.</b></p> <p><b>Performance Objective</b></p> <p>a. Continue to analyze and update safety and security plans and practices</p>	<p>1. Hire new Director of Facilities/Security.</p> <p>2. Complete installation of door locks and window film.</p> <p>3. Comprehensive recommendations for capital projects to enhance school security based upon the Kroll report, School Safety Committees and First Responders.</p> <p>4. Update the crisis manual and provide a current report on security policy and procedures as per recommendations from the Kroll report, school security committees and district security committee and as outlined by Director of Facilities/Security and the town's first responders.</p>	<p>July</p> <p>August</p> <p>October</p> <p>December</p>		
<p>b. Optimize students' physical health. Evaluate and amend (if necessary) start times with regard to sleep research. Benchmark with other schools in our DRG.</p>	<p>1. Analyze and evaluate issues.</p> <p>2. Devise a solution.</p> <p>3. Evaluate the results.</p>	<p>October</p> <p>November</p>		<p>October</p>

<p>c. Prepare a report on current and future building use</p>	<p>1. Obtain five-year enrollment projections.</p> <p>2. Obtain data on any future housing units.</p> <p>3. Create a plan for the creation and design of prioritized capital projects that anticipates a five-year need.</p> <p>4. Create a strategic maintenance plan as part of the operational budget.</p>	<p>October</p> <p>October</p> <p>January</p> <p>January</p>
<p>d. Report on bus arrivals and provide quarterly reports (starting in mid-October) detailing arrival and departure times of buses at all schools on a daily basis.</p>	<p>1. Analyze reports.</p> <p>2. Recommend improvements.</p> <p>3. Evaluate results.</p> <p>4. Produce an RFP for existing bus contract to expire June 2015.</p>	<p>All done quarterly</p> <p>October</p>

DRAFT

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### GOAL, PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE and SPECIFIC ACTION Detail

Goal 4: Productivity and Efficiencies	Specific Action	YE 2015 Year 1	YE 2016 Year 2	YE 2017 Year 3
Performance Objective		Action Date of Completion		
a. Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan in a 3 year time frame targeting an annual increase of no more than 3%.</li> <li>2. Integrate all capital, budget, healthcare and debt service to provide for a more accurate cost per student and integrate all budget item expenditures to be reported on a monthly basis and included in annual planning with analysis on any significant variances.</li> <li>3. Situation analysis of limited areas in budget in order to understand best practice, benchmarking across other districts</li> <li>4. Hire an additional source – intern or consultant to provide this analysis to be reviewed and approved by the board at the first board meeting in August.</li> <li>5. Identify all revenues and expenditures of school budget including Grants, ISF's and Enterprise Funds.</li> <li>6. Report quarterly on current initiatives in progress and new initiatives to be implemented to create productivity</li> </ol>	Summer	Summer	Summer
		Monthly reports	Monthly reports	Monthly reports
		Annual plan	Annual plan	Annual plan
		August	August	August
		July		
		Fall		
		November February		



	and efficiency by collaborating with the town.	May		
b. Identify a target of 1% productivity and efficiency on our current budget for the next 3 years based on \$109 million. This is to be used to increase the health care reserve and/or allocated for additional programming and/or to return to the town. All allocations requiring Board approval to redistribute.	7. Communicate with the community-at-large in the form of informational meetings and/or a newsletter. 1. Brainstorm session for recommendations/ideas. 2. Create and implement a plan. 3. Measure results.	November	September October August	September October August
b. Monitor Health Care Account	1. Provide BOE with monthly medical claims updates. 2. Provide quarterly updates to BOE using new all general ledger accounts showing all revenues and expenses and projected year-end balance of health reserve account.	Monthly September December March June		

**Goals and Informative Reports originally discussed in brainstorming session that have been deleted from above:**

Booster Club Donations

Independent Student Tutoring

Independent College Guidance Counseling and Use of Guidance Counselors

Seek Additional High School Opportunities for Learning

Physical Education for all 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

Benchmark Homework in Grade 1 in our DRG

# WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ELLIOTT LANDON  
Superintendent of Schools

110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
TELEPHONE: (203) 341-1010  
FAX: (203) 341-1029

To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Elliott Landon  
Subject: Appointment of Chartwells as School Food Services Management Company  
Date: June 16, 2014

Elio Longo, on behalf of the Board of Education, issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a food services management company to oversee our K-12 school food services program following the expiration of the current contract with Chartwells. On the basis of the responses to our RFP, or the lack thereof, we are recommending that the Board of Education issue a new contract to Compass Group, Inc., the parent company of Chartwells, for the administration of our school food services program effective July 1, 2014. The agreement is subject to four (4) additional one-year renewals upon the agreement of both the Westport Public Schools and Compass Group, not dissimilar to previous agreements related to the administration of our school food services program.

Additionally, we are recommending that the Board of Education elect not to have Staples High School participate in the National School Lunch Program and to do so by selecting the "alternative proposal" submitted by Chartwells. This "alternative proposal" is outlined in the accompanying materials.

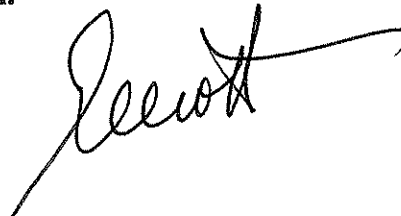
Among our neighboring school districts, Weston, Wilton, Ridgefield and Newtown will not participate in the program next year.

Mr. Longo and Frank Rupp, our Director of Dining Services, will be present to discuss the proposal and answer any questions that may be raised by the members of the Board.

## ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

**Be It Resolved, That upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education appoints Compass Group, Inc., by and through Chartwells, to serve as the Food Service Management Company for the Westport Public Schools for the 2014-15 school year in accordance with the materials accompanying this memorandum, and**

**Be It Further Resolved, That the Board of Education accepts the "Alternative Proposal" for implementation as described therein.**



# Cost Proposal Summary

## *Westport Public Schools- Chartwells*

### School Year 2014-2015

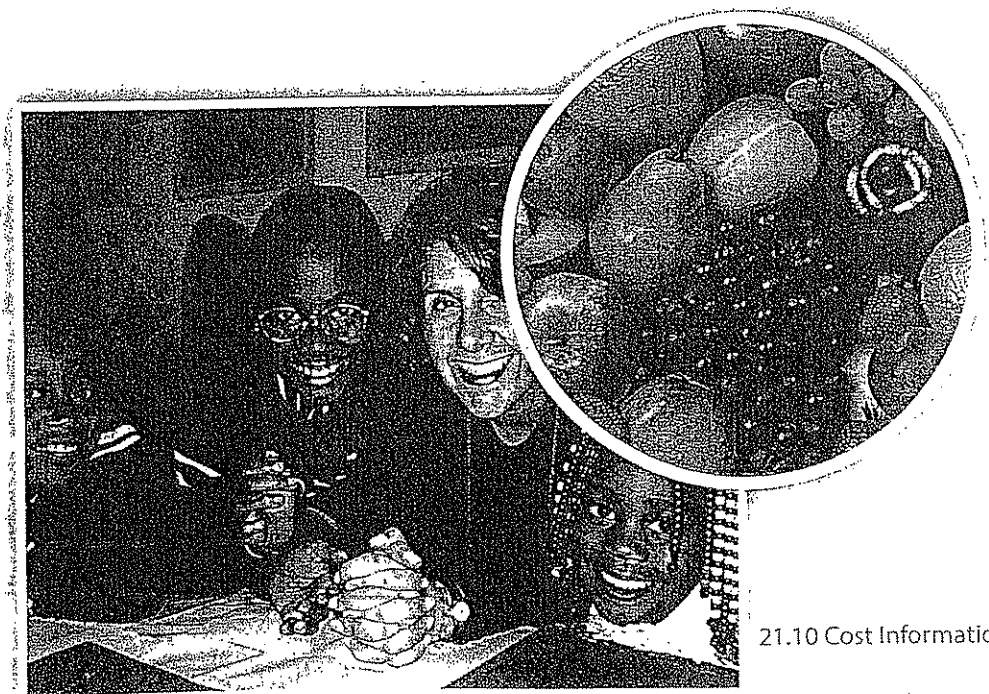
Chartwells is honored to be a partner with Westport Public Schools for the past 20 years. As part of our continued commitment in achieving your financial goals, we are proposing new and creative programs, as outlined in the marketing section of the executive summary, which will positively impact your overall financial position. This will also mitigate the potential financial impact of new à la carte regulations.

**UNLIMITED Guaranteed surplus of \$310,846:** We are confident in our financial proposal and will return up to guaranteed surplus if the program operates less than the financial projections. **An additional \$14,293** could be added to the surplus, if Westport elects not to require a performance bond.

**Alternative proposal if Staples High School departs from the National School Lunch Program: UNLIMITED Guaranteed surplus of \$356,380.** We are confident in our financial proposal and will return up to guaranteed surplus if the program operates less than the financial projections. **An additional \$14,293** for option 1 and **\$14,886** for option 2 would be added to the surplus, if Westport elects not to require a performance bond.

#### The financial proposals are built on the following assumptions:

- Westport provides the funding for the proposed capital improvements, \$236,000. Historically, the district has elected to provide the funding outside of the foodservice contract; however, if the district chooses, Chartwells will make available the capital funding. The transaction would decrease the surplus by including a depreciation expense of \$47,200, annually
- Information provided in the RFP and addendums
- Serving days not to be less than provided in RFP
- Cash and/or reimbursement levels from state and federal sponsors do not fall below the levels estimated in Chartwells' proposal
- Ability to incorporate all programs and concepts recommended in the proposal dated April 25, 2014.
- A mutually agreed upon contract between Westport Public Schools and Compass Group, Chartwells.



**Creative programs that will impact revenue and customer satisfaction: Continuing to provide Westport the best of the best**

- **Engagement:** Allowing Westport students to be directly involved with creating and designing their own dining destination with the students' name the space contest, which includes naming and designing the space, the concepts and creating the recipes.
- Consistency with **local and regional talent:** Your director of dining services, Frank Rupp, will continue to support Westport's foodservice needs. In addition, Frank has the support of a district chef, a district dietitian and regional support to help ensure Westport's program continues to thrive and prosper
- **Enhancing concepts and promotions:** Asian Nation, Chef Jet, Chickendipity
- Focus on enhancing the **breakfast programs** at the High School and Middle by implementing the National School Breakfast Program
- Introducing options at Staples High School, Street Food by converting the existing Outtakes area to new, exciting Street Food concept with rotating, grab and go "urban" cuisine
- Introducing of deli brand with **Boar's Head meats** at the secondary schools and introducing it at the elementary schools
- **Expansion of action stations**, cooked to order meals offered by our district chef
- Introducing new and creative items for à la carte at all schools
- **Farmers Market** promotion featuring locally grown produce from local farms

**Capital Investment of \$272,500 detail:**

- High School – snack area transformed into **Street Food** offering new regional cuisines
- **Middle Schools** –renovation of serving lines
- **Saugatuck Elementary School**- Installation of a Kid's Stop Cafe funded by Chartwells
- Secondary Schools – **digital signage monitors**
- **Transportation van** – to support caterings and other food transportation needs

**NO cost in transition:** Chartwells is the only company that has had the opportunity to build a solid foundation and positive working relationship with Westport Public Schools. That solid foundation brings savings. As your current partner with working knowledge of your program, we do not need to charge additional expenses for start up costs or costs in transition. Those charges could add unnecessary expenses that your program should not bear.

**Performance Bonds:** - Comparing fees for performance bonds are a direct correlation to the financial strength of the company you choose as your partner, who will ultimately oversee and manage your foodservice funds. The fees for our performance bonds are minimal due to our financial strength. The financial update memo dated December 2013 and audited financial report addresses this directly. A copy of each is located in the general conditions section of our proposal.

## Affordable Care Act

*Chartwells' commitment to employees and the communities they serve*

With the implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act many companies in the food service industry have reduced or avoided full-time employment status by lowering hours or changing eligibility requirements for Health Care Benefits. Chartwells offers a comprehensive array of benefit programs that allows us to attract and retain the best talent. Unlike some of our competitors, we modified our **Measurement Period** for healthcare reform for our School clients to allow "full-time" to be defined as 30 hours/week for only those weeks worked. Our associates within our school accounts did not lose any benefits because of ACA changes.

In addition, Compass Group operates self-funded and self-administered benefits that allow greater flexibility to meet any client requirements. We have not delegated to a Private Exchange wherein the benefits plan design and options available to our associates are mandated by a third party. We maintain complete control and the flexibility to meet the ever changing needs of our clients and our associates.

We recognize wellness is a cornerstone of your education process and your commitment to the school community. Chartwells has taken the socially responsible step to maintain benefit levels for the (dedicated food service employees who care for your students on a daily basis). Lowering benefit levels to drive profits for the purpose of winning bids (versus focusing on the value and integral role foodservice employees have to the daily life of students) is not our business strategy. We have included employee benefits as part of our price proposal. The well-being of the food service services employees most of whom live in your community is the key to student wellness and academic success.

## Rebate and Discount Transparency

*Chartwells' delivers significant cost savings through compliant purchasing standards*

Chartwells leverages its multibillion-dollar purchasing power to negotiate volume purchasing discounts and allowances for the benefit of the School Food Authority. The allowable costs billed to the school food authority will be net of all discounts, rebates and other applicable credits accruing to or received by Chartwells under the contract; to the extent those credits are allocable to the allowable portion of the costs billed to the school food authority. Chartwells will identify rebates discounts and allowances on the operating statements and provide the School Food Authority with access to records as required by applicable regulations.

## Value-Added Programs Chartwells will provide at NO COST TO DISTRICT:

Distribution and use of following will be mutually decided on for the best option for district and schools: The grant and scholarship presented annually.

- \$2,000 – Scholarship for a deserving Staples High School senior
- \$9,000 – Nutrition grant to fund Food Play Productions at the Elementary Schools
- \$2,000 – Catering grant to fund opening convocation and any other district catering events

Chartwells is best positioned to continue to build on the existing strong foundation with Westport Public Schools. We are excited about this next phase in our relationship, with highly anticipated positive change within the district, and look forward to the opportunity to enhance our programs and services to meet the unique needs of your community.

**SCHEDULE E**  
**FINANCIAL SCHEDULES**  
**OPERATING STATEMENT**

**PROJECTED REVENUE**

Cafeteria Sales: (Lunch)

	# Meals	Price	Total
<b>STUDENT Meals</b>			
<b>Student Paid Meals</b>			
Lunch Elementary Schools	191,464 @	\$ 2.35 =	\$ 449,940
Lunch Lower Middle School	0 @	\$ - =	\$ -
Lunch Upper Middle School	126,516 @	\$ 2.60 =	\$ 328,942
Lunch High School	64,726 @	\$ 3.25 =	\$ 210,360
Student Reduced Price District Wide	5,552 @	\$ 0.40 =	\$ 2,221
Student A la Carte			\$ 1,589,988
MS breakfast Paid meals	14,173	\$ 2.25	\$ 31,889
MS breakfast Reduced meals	354	\$ 0.30	\$ 106
HS Breakfast Paid Meals	49,766 @	\$ 2.50	\$ 124,415
HS Breakfast Reduced Meals	711 @	\$ 0.30	\$ 213

<b>ADULT LUNCHES</b>			
Adult Lunches	13,323 @	\$ 3.50 =	\$ 46,631
Adult A la Carte			\$ -

<b>SPECIAL FUNCTIONS</b>			
Bank Interest			\$ -
Other Income (Catering)			\$ 130,251
Other Income (Vending)			\$ -
Breakfast Grant			\$ 9,000

Subtotal Sales      \$ 2,923,849 (A)

**ANTICIPATED REIMBURSEMENT**

<b>Anticipated Reimbursement Federal &amp; State (LUNCH)*</b>			
District-wide Paid Meals	382,706 @	\$ 0.386 =	\$ 147,725
Reduced Price	5,552 @	\$ 2.636 =	\$ 14,635
Free	203,633 @	\$ 3.036 =	\$ 61,822
			Subtotal Lunch Reimbursement      \$ 224,182 (B)

\*Rates include State Match(\$0.046)

<b>Anticipated Reimbursement Federal &amp; State (BREAKFAST)</b>			
District-wide Paid Meals	63,939 @	\$ 0.28 =	\$ 17,903
Reduced Price	1,065 @	\$ 1.28 =	\$ 1,363
Free	5,683 @	\$ 1.58 =	\$ 8,979

Subtotal Breakfast Reimbursement	<u>\$ 28,245 (C)</u>
Total Revenue (A+B+C)	<u>\$ 3,176,276 (D)</u>

**PROJECTED EXPENSES**

		<b>Food</b>		
Student Lunches	408621 Meals	@	\$ 1.600 =	<u>\$ 653,794</u>
Student Breakfast	70687 Meals	@	\$ 1.01 =	<u>\$ 71,394</u>
Adult Meals	13323 Meals	@	1.6 =	<u>\$ 21,317</u>
			=	<u>\$ -</u>
District-wide A la Carte				<u>\$ 657,688</u>
Special Functions				<u>\$ 53,403</u>
Rebates				<u>\$ (252,191)</u>
USDA Commodity Value				<u>\$ (95,004)</u>
				<u>\$ 1,110,400 (E)</u>

**Net Food Cost**

**LABOR**

Hourly Wages: (Employee schedules, work hours and rates of pay must be attached.)

FSMC Administration / Clerical	34153	
Food Service Workers	<u>\$ 706,504</u>	
Other: _____	<u>\$</u>	
Other: _____	<u>\$</u>	

Salaries: (Employee schedules, work hours, and rates of pay must be attached.)

Management	<u>\$ 202,026</u>
Other: _____	<u>\$ -</u>

Other Payroll Costs:

FSMC Employee Fringe Benefits	<u>\$ 332,303</u>
<b>Total Labor</b>	<b><u>\$ 1,274,986 (F)</u></b>

**OTHER EXPENSES**

Auto Allowance	<u>\$ 15,500</u>
Cafeteria Supplies (paper, cleaning, etc)	<u>\$ 110,891</u>
Commodity Delivery and Administrative Fees	<u>\$ 7,021</u>
General support and Admin expense	<u>\$ 219,930</u>
Depreciation	<u>\$ -</u>
Equipment Rental	<u>\$ 2,600</u>
Insurance	<u>\$ 40,759</u>
Menu/ Ticket Printing	<u>\$ 2,700</u>
Office Supplies	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
Performance Bond	<u>\$ 14,293</u>
Physicals	<u>\$ -</u>
Promotions	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
Replacements	<u>\$ -</u>





SUMMARY

1. Projected annual subsidy by board not to exceed the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are labor cuts anticipated/factored into this proposal?  YES  NO

3. Is the price of the student lunch increased?  YES  NO

4. Are the prices for Ala Carte items changed?  YES  NO

5. Have you made a physical inspection of all school facilities and found all facilities and equipment to be satisfactory?  YES  NO

6. Identify any clauses or conditions that would change the bottom line.

*Please refer to cost summary*

7. Identify and include a prioritized listing of any major new equipment you feel is desirable for this contract.

*Please refer to Marketing Plan and Investment Summary*

8. What would you suggest in dealing with competitive food sales through school stores?

*Comply with CT Competitive Food Regulations*

*State the percent and amount of increase in the management and administrative fees or indicate if your company chooses to use the consumer price index:*

CPI     Yes\*     YES or NO

*\*The greater of the increase in the (1) Employment Cost Index, Private Industry, Compensation, Non seasonally adjusted-CIU201000000000A (ECI) and (2) Consumer Price Index-Food away from Home (CPI) over prior year*

If no, then fill out the following:

Year 2	_____ %	\$ _____
Year 3	_____ %	\$ _____
Year 4	_____ %	\$ _____
Year 5	_____ %	\$ _____

May 7, 2014



Re: 14-012 RFP- Food Service Management Company

Mr. Elio Longo, Jr., MBA  
Director of Business Operations  
Westport Public Schools  
110 Myrtle Avenue  
Westport, CT 06880

Dear Mr. Longo,

Chartwells is excited to present to Westport Public Schools an alternate proposal to meet the needs of Staple High School's students. The alternative proposal recommends taking the Staples High School foodservice program off the National School Lunch Program.

Our vision is to continue to expand and enhance the dining experience of the students. Westport's students have a sophisticated palate and desire options to meet their needs. By appealing to what they want to eat and providing it to them in a method they prefer to consume, overall student satisfaction with the program could be expected to increase more than 10 percent, and revenue could be expected to increase by over \$300,000.

We have included some of our exciting concepts, promotions and sample menus along with the financial projections and guarantee.

We look forward to the opportunity of continuing and strengthening our partnership.

Sincerely Yours,

Handwritten signature of Kim Gunn in black ink.

Kim Gunn  
Client Relationship Manager

Handwritten signature of Frank Rupp in black ink.

Frank Rupp  
Director of Dining Services

Handwritten signature of George Sottile in black ink.

George Sottile  
District Manager

# A Foodservice Management Proposal for Westport Public Schools Alternative Proposal



# Alternative Proposal

## SCHEDULE E FINANCIAL SCHEDULES OPERATING STATEMENT

### PROJECTED REVENUE

Cafeteria Sales: (Lunch)

	# Meals	Price	Total
<b>STUDENT Meals</b>			
<b>Student Paid Meals</b>			
Lunch Elementary Schools	191,464 @	\$ 2.35 =	\$ 449,940
Lunch Lower Middle School	0 @	\$ - =	\$ -
Lunch Upper Middle School	126,516 @	\$ 2.60 =	\$ 328,942
Lunch High School	0 @	\$ - =	\$ -
Student Reduced Price District Wide	4,270 @	\$ 0.40 =	\$ 1,708
			<u>\$ 2,137,246</u>
Student A la Carte	14,173	\$ 2.25	\$ 31,889
MS breakfast Paid meals	354	\$ 0.30	\$ 106
MS breakfast Reduced meals	0 @	\$ -	\$ -
HS Breakfast Paid Meals	0 @	\$ -	\$ -
HS Breakfast Reduced Meals			
<b>ADULT LUNCHES</b>			
Adult Lunches	13,323 @	\$ 3.50 =	\$ 46,631
Adult A la Carte			\$ -
<b>SPECIAL FUNCTIONS</b>			
Bank Interest			\$ 130,251
Other Income (Catering)			\$ -
Other Income (Vending)			\$ 6,000
Breakfast Grant			
		<b>Subtotal Sales</b>	<b>\$ 3,132,607 (A)</b>

### ANTICIPATED REIMBURSEMENT

<b>Anticipated Reimbursement Federal &amp; State (LUNCH)*</b>			
District-wide Paid Meals	31,798 @	\$ 0.386 =	\$ 122,740
Reduced Price	4,270 @	\$ 2.636 =	\$ 11,256
Free	11,901 @	\$ 3.036 =	\$ 36,131
			<u>\$ 170,127 (B)</u>

\*Rates include State Match(\$0.046)

<b>Anticipated Reimbursement Federal &amp; State (BREAKFAST)</b>			
District-wide Paid Meals	14,173 @	\$ 0.28 =	\$ 3,968
Reduced Price	354 @	\$ 1.28 =	\$ 453
Free	1,417 @	\$ 1.58 =	\$ 2,239

Subtotal Breakfast Reimbursement	<u>\$ 6,660 (C)</u>
Total Revenue (A+B+C)	<u>\$ 3,309,395 (D)</u>

**PROJECTED EXPENSES**

<b>Food</b>	
Student Lunches	334151 Meals @ \$ 1.600 = \$ 534,642
Student Breakfast	15945 Meals @ \$ 1.05 = \$ 16,742
Adult Meals	13621 Meals @ 1.62 = \$ 22,066
	<u>\$ -</u>
District-wide A la Carte	\$ 874,816
Special Functions	\$ 53,403
Rebates	\$ (264,124)
USDA Commodity Value	\$ (77,690)
	<u>\$ 1,159,855 (E)</u>

**Net Food Cost** \$ 1,159,855 (E)

**LABOR**

Hourly Wages: (Employee schedules, work hours and rates of pay must be attached.)

FSMC Administration / Clerical	<u>\$ 34,153.00</u>
Food Service Workers	<u>\$ 706,504</u>
Other: _____	<u>\$ _____</u>
Other: _____	<u>\$ _____</u>

Salaries: (Employee schedules, work hours, and rates of pay must be attached.)

Management	<u>\$ 202,026</u>
Other: _____	<u>\$ -</u>

Other Payroll Costs:

FSMC Employee Fringe Benefits	<u>\$ 332,303</u>
-------------------------------	-------------------

**Total Labor** \$ 1,274,986 (F)

**OTHER EXPENSES**

Auto Allowance	<u>\$ 15,500</u>
Cafeteria Supplies (paper, cleaning, etc)	<u>\$ 115,982</u>
Commodity Delivery and Administrative Fees	<u>\$ 7,021</u>
General support and Admin expense	<u>\$ 219,930</u>
Depreciation	<u>\$ -</u>
Equipment Rental	<u>\$ 2,600</u>
Insurance	<u>\$ 41,505</u>
Menu/ Ticket Printing	<u>\$ 2,700</u>
Office Supplies	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
Performance Bond	<u>\$ 14,886</u>
Physicals	<u>\$ -</u>
Promotions	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
Replacements	<u>\$ -</u>

Stationary / Postage		\$	-
Uniforms/Laundry		\$	5,550
Manuals		\$	-
Miscellaneous		\$	400
Other:	<u>POS and Communication</u>	\$	6,500
Other:	<u>Workshop and Training</u>	\$	7,000
Other:	<u>Vending taxes and license HS School lunch subsidy</u>	\$	38,560
	<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	\$	<b>482,634 (G)</b>

**TOTAL FSMC ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT FEES**

Management Fee Flat Rate \$ 35,540 (H)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ -  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSE TOTAL \$ 2,953,015 (I)  
 (E+F+G+H)

PROFIT / LOSS \$ 356,380  
 (D-I)

SUMMARY

1. Projected annual subsidy by board not to exceed the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are labor cuts anticipated/factored into this proposal?  YES  NO

3. Is the price of the student lunch increased?  YES  NO

4. Are the prices for Ala Carte items changed?  YES  NO

5. Have you made a physical inspection of all school facilities and found all facilities and equipment to be satisfactory?  YES  NO

6. Identify any clauses or conditions that would change the bottom line.

*Please refer to cost summary*

7. Identify and include a prioritized listing of any major new equipment you feel is desirable for this contract.

*Please refer to Marketing Plan and Investment Summary*

8. What would you suggest in dealing with competitive food sales through school stores?

*Comply with CT Competitive Food Regulations*

*State the percent and amount of increase in the management and administrative fees or indicate if your company chooses to use the consumer price index:*

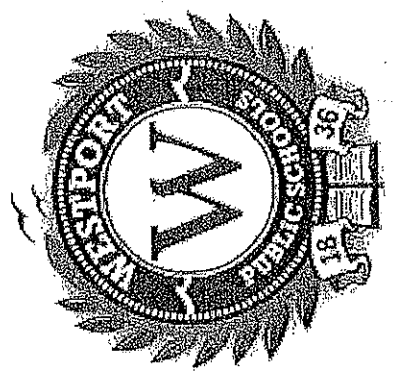
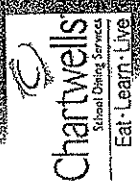
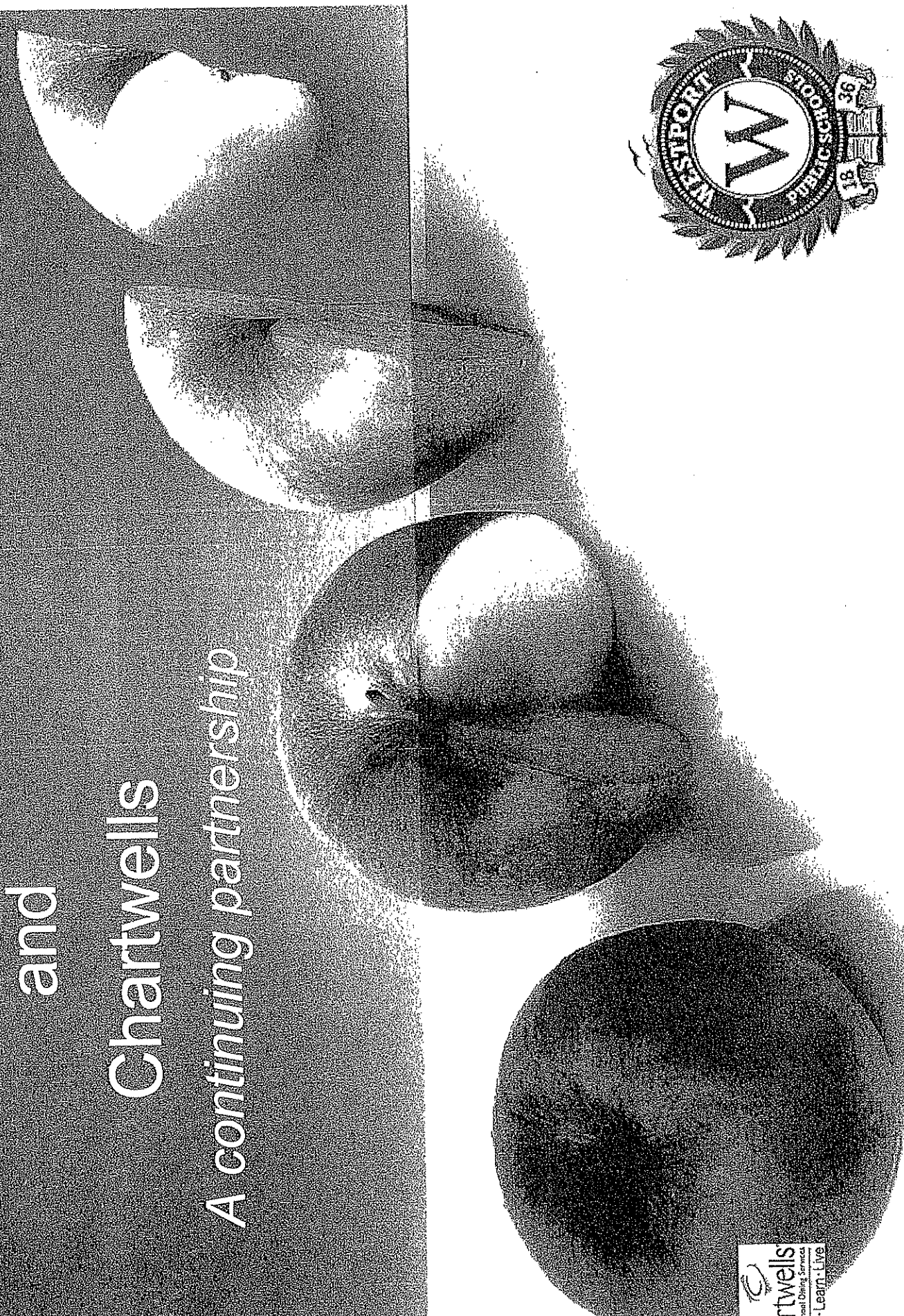
CPI     Yes\*     YES or NO

*\*The greater of the increase in the (1) Employment Cost Index, Private Industry, Compensation, Non seasonally adjusted-CIU201000000000A (ECI) and (2) Consumer Price Index-Food away from Home (CPI) over prior year*

If no, then fill out the following:

Year 2	_____ %	\$ _____
Year 3	_____ %	\$ _____
Year 4	_____ %	\$ _____
Year 5	_____ %	\$ _____

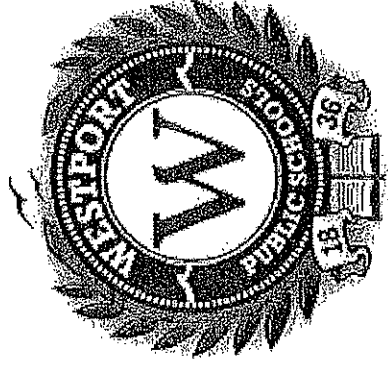
# Westport Public Schools and Chartwells *A continuing partnership*





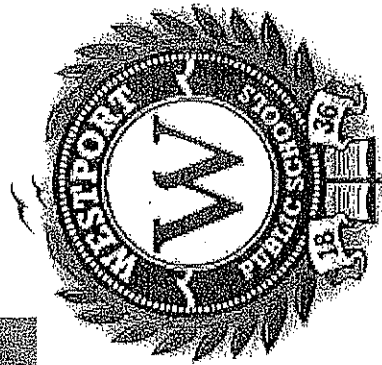
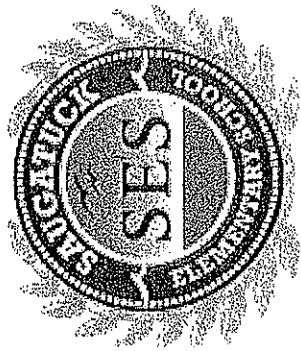
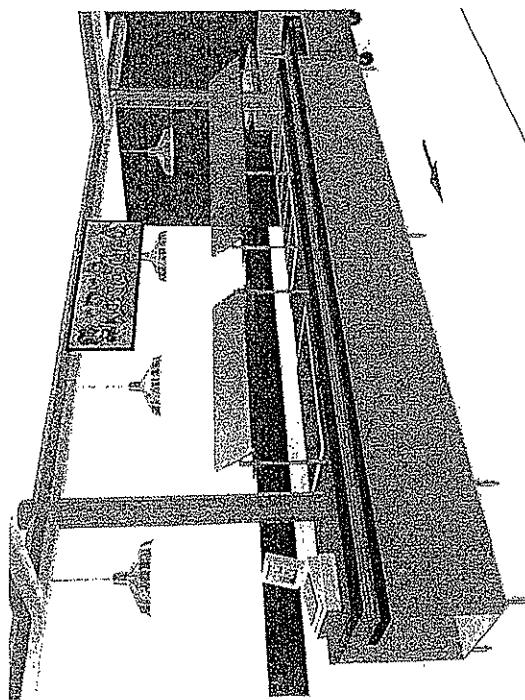
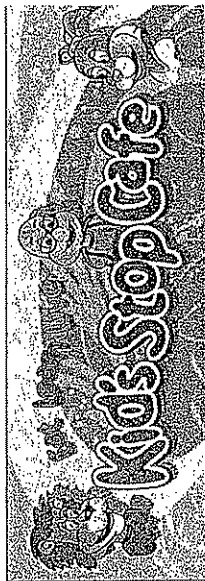
# Agenda

- What's new for 2014-2015?
  - *Vision for the Westport Public Schools*
    - Proposal Highlights
      - Elementary Students
      - Middle School Students
      - High School Students
      - Two Options



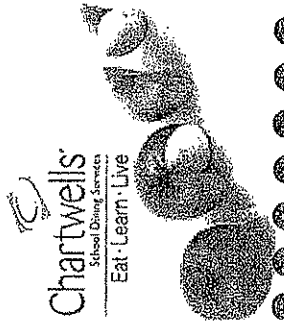
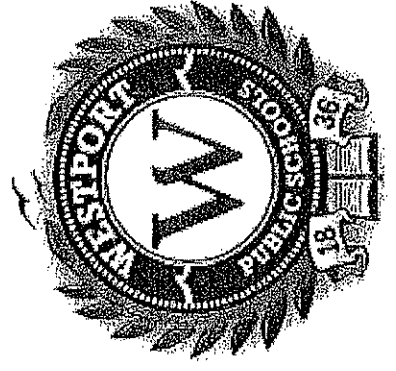
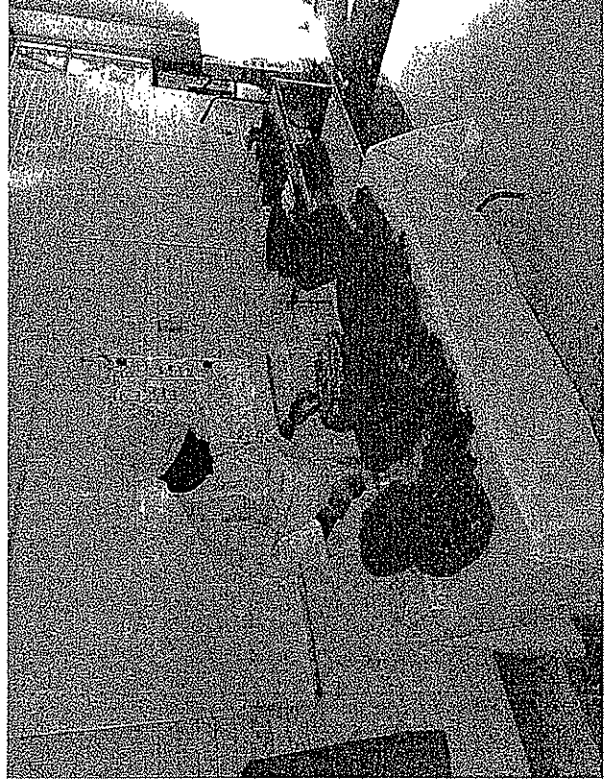
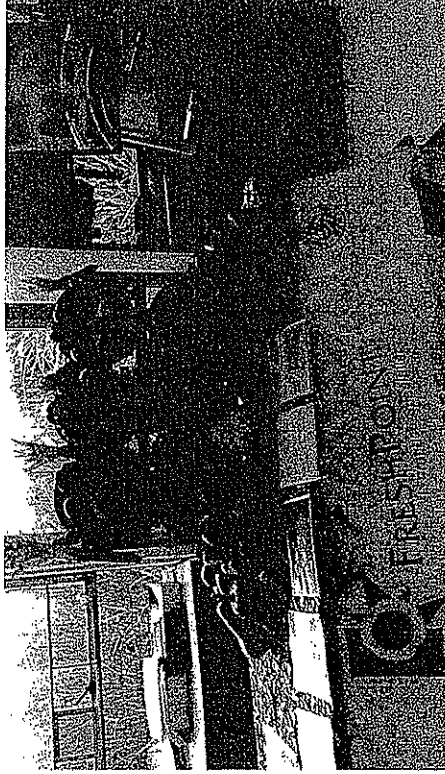
# What's New?

## For Elementary Students:



# What's New?

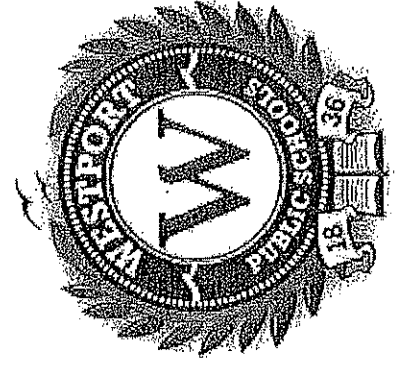
## For Elementary Students:



What's New?

For Elementary Students:

**FOODPLAY**  
productions

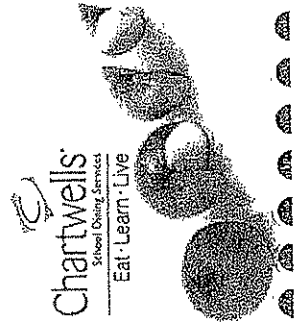
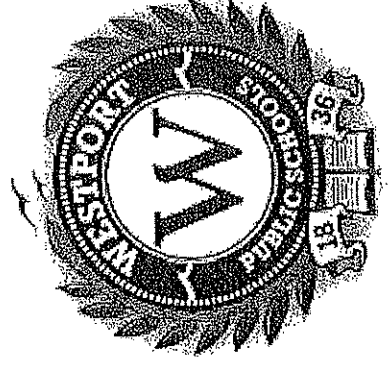
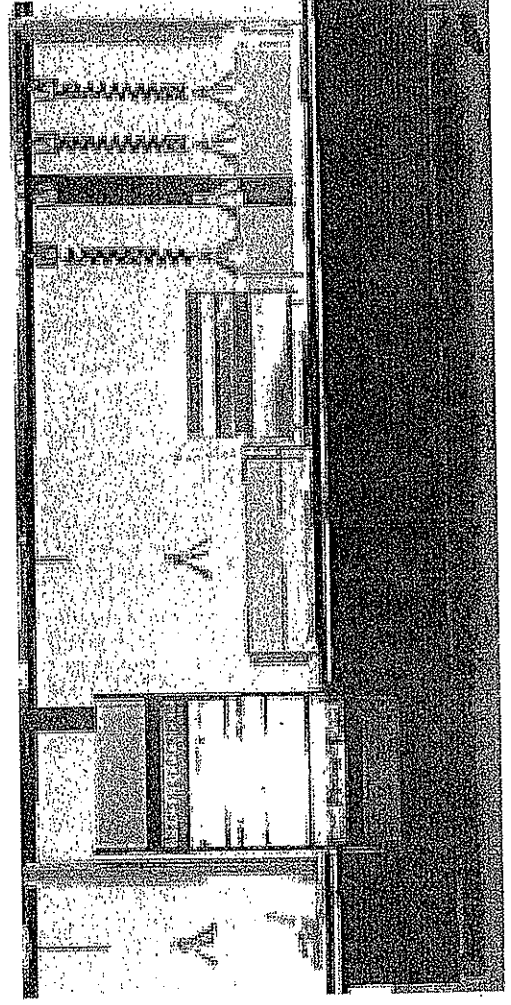
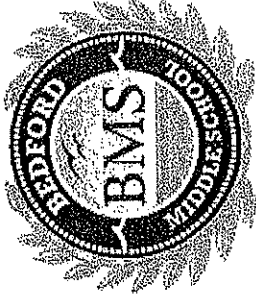


# What's New?

## For Middle School Students:

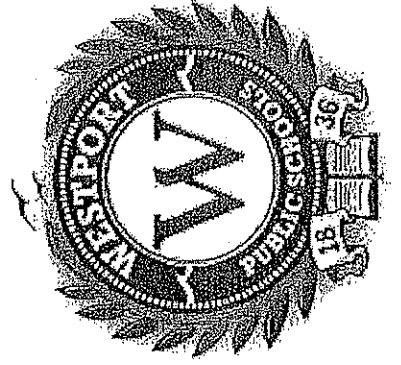
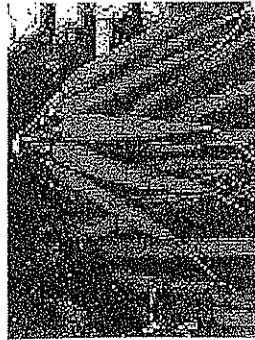
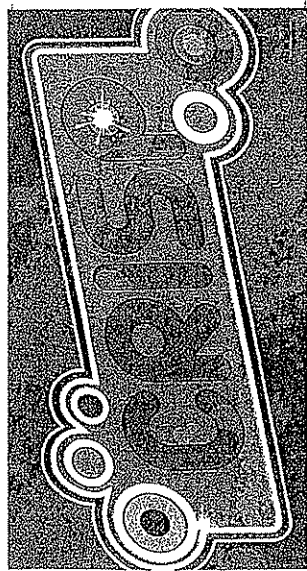
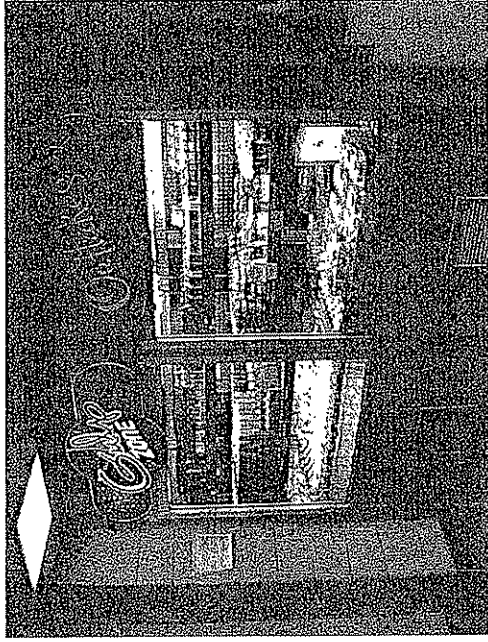
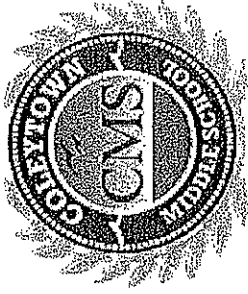
### Retrofit

- Versatility of serving hot and cold items
- Sandwich slide
- Three refrigerated air screens
- Deli bar



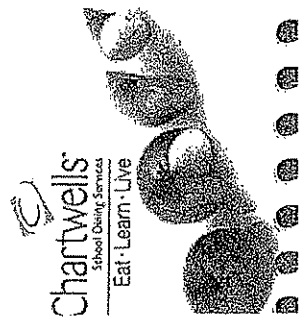
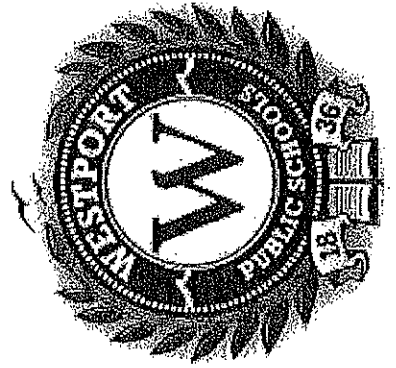
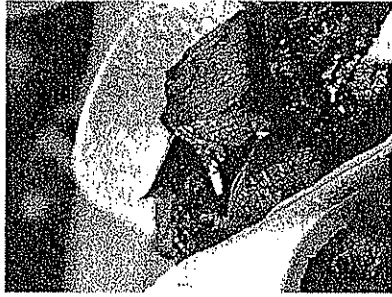
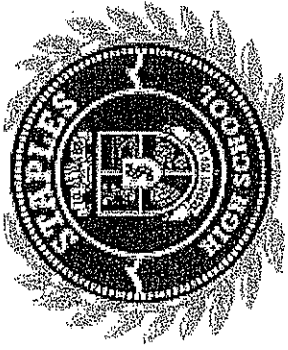
# What's New?

## For Middle School Students: Full Renovation



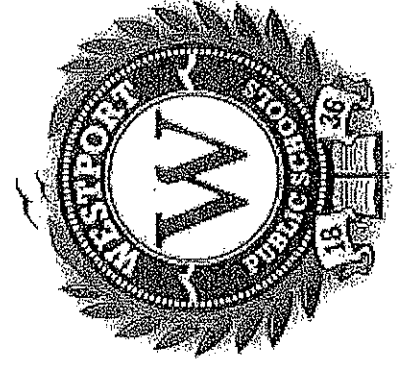
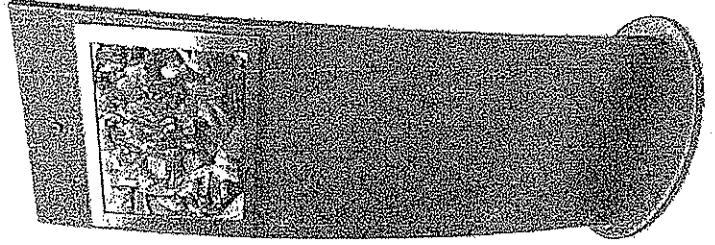
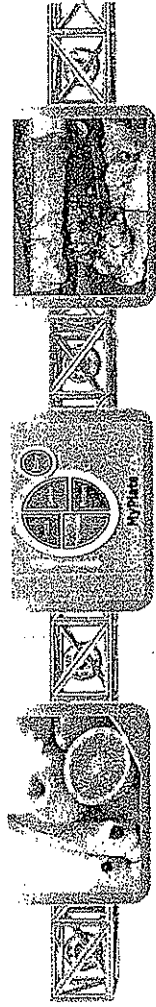
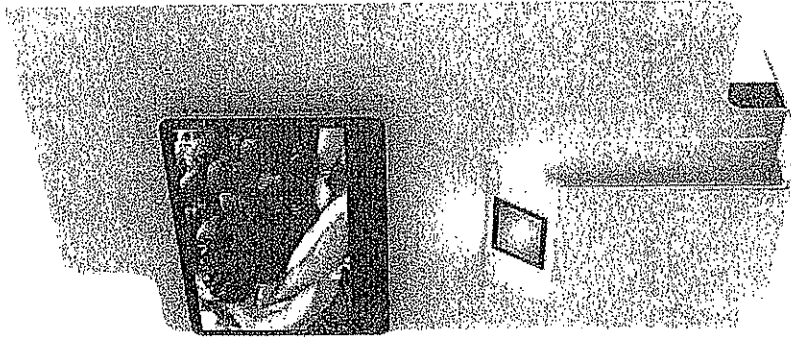
# What's New?

## For High School Students: Snack Room Makeover



What's New?

# For Secondary School Students:





# What's New?

**For All Students:**

*Create Your Own Contest*

**Name**

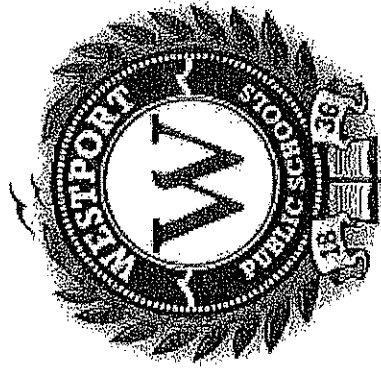
**Your**

**Dining**

**Destination**

**A R T W O R K**

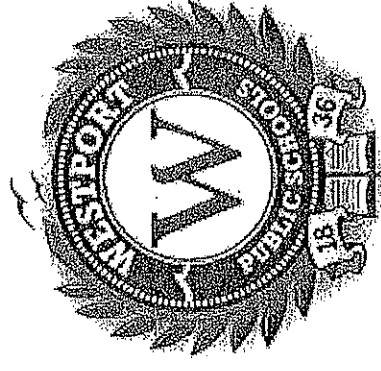
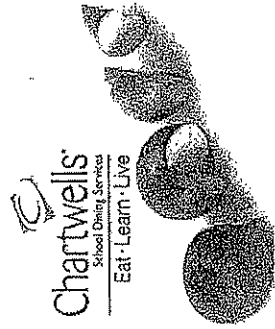
**Recipes**



# High School Options

## *Differences in Proposals:*

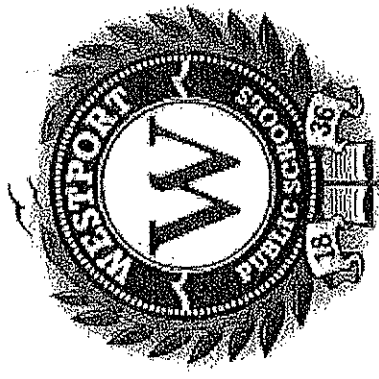
- **Option 1:** Continue with National School Lunch Program
- **Option 2:** Depart from the National School Lunch Program



# High School: Option 2

## ***Enhancements:***

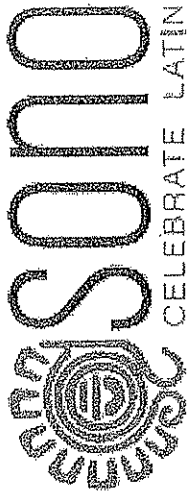
- Upscale Retail Campus Style Dining
- Enhanced Culinary Flexibility
  - *Eliminate Restrictions on Portion Size*
  - *Chef Rich has the Ability to Create Exciting Options*
- Maintains Nutrition and Wellness Platforms



# What's New?

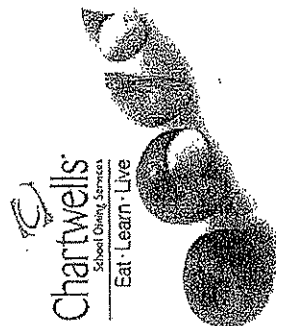
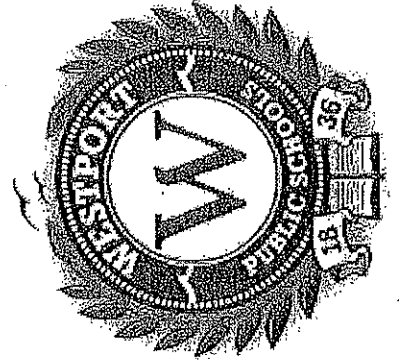
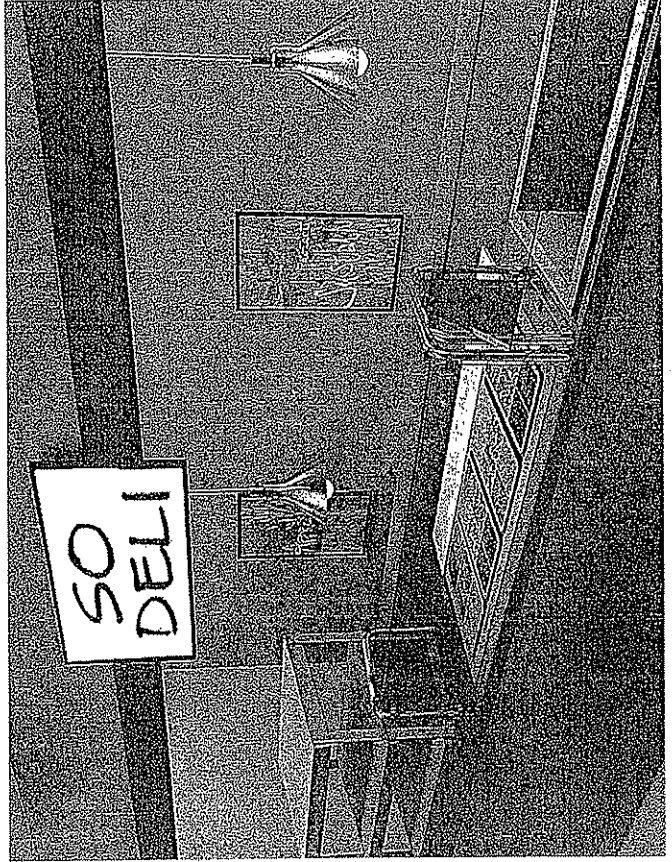
## For High School: Option 2

BALANCE  
KITCHEN



SO  
DELI  
*delicious!*

**garden**  
EXPRESS



# What's New?

## For High School: Option 2

**vegout**  
100% Vegetarian Experience

*Earth Table*  
FRESH · SEASONAL · FROM THE EARTH

chop'd & wrap'd

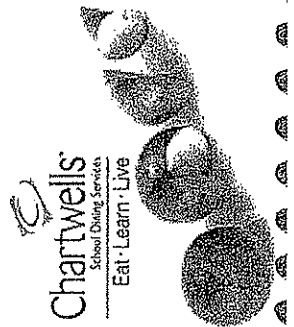
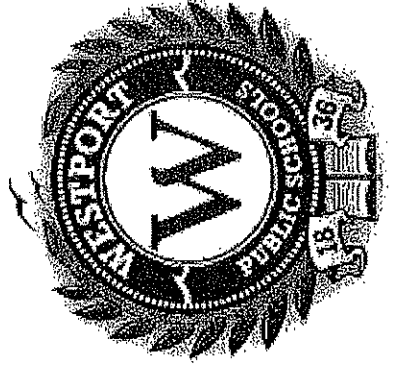
FRESH INGREDIENTS  
MULTI-LAYER FLAVORS  
A TIME TO  
CELEBRATE!

PIZZA  
DE MAYO

ROCK YOUR TASTE BUDS

THE ROCK 'N' CHICKEN TOUR

TRY OUR CENTER-STAGE CHICKEN SANDWICHES BEFORE THEY'RE GONE!



# Financial Commitment

Proposed Surplus: *Guaranteed Unlimited*

Original Proposal:

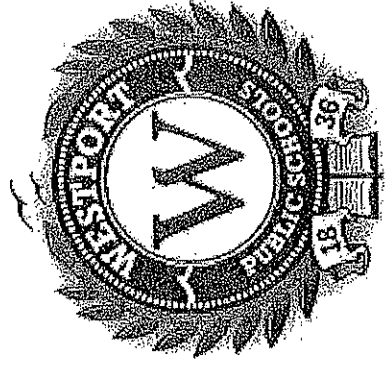
\$310,846

Alternative Proposal:

\$356,380

Capital Improvements:

\$272,500



# Chartwells Commitment

- Scholarships

\$2,000

- Catering Fund

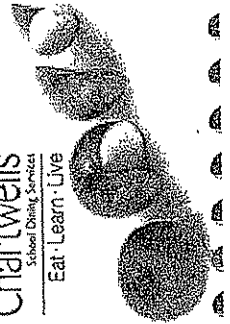
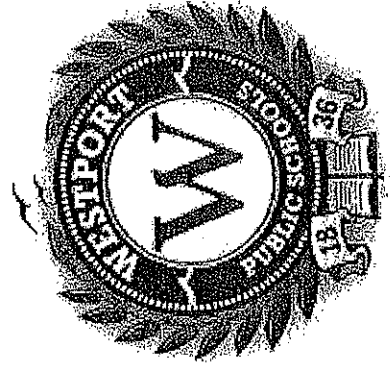
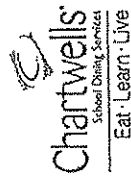
\$2,000

- Food Play Productions

\$9,000 – School Year 2014-15



GIVE



# WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

---

**ELLIOTT LANDON**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
TELEPHONE: (203) 341-1010  
FAX: (203) 341-1029

To: Members of the Board of Education

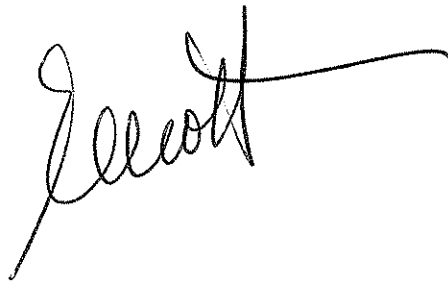
From: Elliott Landon

Subject: School Start Times: 2014-15 School Year

Date: June 16, 2014

During our budget deliberations, the issue of bus arrival and departure times had the Board add four (4) buses to our school bus fleet. As a result of that Board action, the starting and ending times of some of our schools have changed, as have our pickup times in the morning to assure on-time arrivals. You will find appended to this memorandum a schedule of pickup and delivery times as prepared by Sandra Evangelista, Coordinator of Transportation, as well as a listing of all school start and end times scheduled for the 2014-15 school year

At our meeting of June 9, Elio Longo presented to the Board a written report concerning bus arrival and dismissal times for the last several weeks of the school year. I have included that report with this memorandum pursuant to a request of the Board to discuss this item further at our meeting of June 16.





## **2014-15 SCHOOL START AND DISMISSAL TIMES**

Staples High School	7:30-2:15
Bedford Middle School	8:00-2:45
Coleytown Middle School	8:00-2:45
Saugatuck Elementary	8:00-2:45
Coleytown Elementary	8:30-3:15
Greens Farms Elementary	8:30-3:15
Kings Highway Elementary	8:30-3:15
Long Lots Elementary	8:30-3:15

The following time guidelines will be used to develop the AM school bus routes for the 2014-15 school year to ensure on time delivery to school.

<b>School</b>	<b>Earliest 1st Pick up</b>	<b>Earliest Delivery Time</b>
Staples High	6:40	7:10
Bedford Middle	7:10	7:40
Coleytown Middle	7:05	7:35
Saugatuck Elementary	7:15	7:45
Coleytown Elementary	7:40	8:15
Greens Farms Elementary	7:45	8:15
Kings Highway Elementary	7:40	8:15
Long Lots Elementary	7:45	8:15

The table above shows the earliest possible first stop time for each school bus route and the earliest expected delivery time at each individual school. Buses will still operate with at least a 30 minute time frame for each tier. Due to variables in traffic, weather, ridership or mechanical issues it is customary to allow for a 10 minute window for each stop. By utilizing the above guidelines which represent a 5-10 minute adjustment it is expected that all students will benefit from an earlier arrival at school and a much reduce risk of a late arrival to school.

**Sandra Evangelista**  
*Coordinator of Transportation and  
Other Business Services*

**110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880**

**TELEPHONE: (203) 341-1754  
FAX: (203) 341-1008**

**TO:** Elio Longo, Jr.  
Director of School Business Operations

**SUBJECT:** End of Year Status Update WPS Transportation 2013-14

**DATE:** June 9, 2014

I have reviewed all transportation data and prepared this report for the period of May 2014 through present day. This report focuses on three areas of concern. They are on time arrival and departure for school buses, bus monitor responsibilities, coverage and observations and a specific concern regarding bus 10 at Kings Highway Elementary school.

The data reviewed includes the bus arrival and dismissal times logged on a daily basis by a staff member at the middle and elementary schools and forwarded to the transportation office. GPS verification reports when a late arrival/dismissal time is noted. Twice daily reports provided by Dattco which include driver absence and substitution information, mechanical failure information and known traffic challenges for the arrival and dismissal period. Dattco is also responsible to report immediately any accident occurrences and deviations from routes. For example elementary buses will return any kindergarten student to their home school if a parent is not available at the stop before starting the next elementary dismissal route – this is a deviation from normal route.

**Arrival and Departure Times:**

Staples High School and Coleytown Middle School are first tier schools and are not experiencing late buses for arrival or dismissal. Bedford Middle School, Long Lots Elementary School, and Kings Highway Elementary Schools are serviced mostly by the high school buses and have experienced a minimal number of late buses (arrival and dismissal) during this time period. All occurrences have been attributed to normal variables such as driver substitution, weather, traffic, etc. and none were persistent. Greens Farms Elementary School and Saugatuck Elementary School have experienced some late buses at dismissal time due to driver substitutions but overall have had a very positive experience for this time period. Coleytown Elementary School has experienced significant improvement for the majority of buses especially at arrival time. At dismissal time three of the thirteen vehicles which provide service for Coleytown Elementary School continue to be at a higher risk for (+5) tardiness due to driver turnover, area road construction or traffic congestion. New drivers are currently training on these routes.

It must be noted that during the month of May there has been a significant increase in local traffic due to traffic congestion on I-95 and CT-15. School Bus Drivers have reported delays on routes and where possible made incremental schedule changes on first and second tiers to ensure minimal impact to all elementary school arrival times. While routes are still occasionally impacted by poor traffic or weather conditions and spare or new driver delays the majority of buses are consistently arriving to school on time for arrival and dismissal. It should also be noted that the changes to the tier structure which will be in place for the 2014-15 school year will reduce significantly the on time performance challenges experienced in district for this school year.

#### Bus Monitors:

There are currently 18 bus monitors employed by the school district. These bus monitors cover 28 of 47 elementary school bus routes leaving 19 uncovered. Due to the inability to cover all the elementary bus routes the current monitors are assigned to routes determined to have the highest need. When a bus monitor is assigned to a vehicle they are expected to monitor children boarding and disembarking the school bus. They also assist the driver with behavior management. I had been notified that there was a concern about bus monitors meeting the obligations with regards to students boarding the buses in the morning. In the absence of the identity of the specific bus I contacted each bus monitor by telephone and instructed them to ensure students were safely boarding and disembarking the school buses. I received a second complaint and again contacted each bus monitor and received assurances that they would comply. I have a meeting scheduled at the end of the school year and again before the school start up. I will reiterate the expectations for bus monitor employment. I will continue to monitor compliance by following buses in the morning and afternoon.

#### KHS – Bus 10:

It was reported that bus 10 was arriving late to Kings Highway Elementary School. It was determined that the driver was absent from May 6<sup>th</sup> until May 16<sup>th</sup> due to a death in his immediate family. Every effort was made to utilize a consistent spare during this absence. Three separate drivers had to be utilized and all operated within the 10 minute window. The bus was found to be arriving at stops consistently 5 minutes later than normal. The bus arrived to school on time each day with the exception of Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. On this date bus 10 and two other buses arrived to school after 8:30 am. These tardy arrivals were due to a traffic incident on the Post Road. Since the driver's return no issues have been reported.

If required I can provide more specific information. Please let me know if this is necessary.

# WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**ELLIOTT LANDON**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
TELEPHONE: (203) 341-1010  
FAX: (203) 341-1029

To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Elliott Landon  
Subject: Acceptance of Gift  
Date: June 16, 2014

I am delighted to report to you the offers of four (4) separate gifts, one each from the Coleytown Elementary School PTA (CES), the Long Lots School PTA (LLS), the Saugatuck Elementary School PTA (SES), and one from the "Tame the Hill" collective consisting of the Staples Field Hockey Booster Club, Staples Girls Lacrosse Booster Club, Westport Youth Field Hockey and PAL Girls Lacrosse and represented by Scott Bennewitz.

The gift from the Coleytown PTA, consisting of the creation, construction and development of a new outdoor classroom to be located in the courtyard just outside the Library Media Center (LMC), is valued at up to \$48,000, dependent upon the costs of equipment purchase, landscaping, and associated contingencies.

A gift valued at \$18,000 from the Long Lots PTA will enable us to expand upon the work that has been completed at the Long Lots LMC through the generosity of the LLS PTA last year. At that time we received a gift in the amount of \$56,000 for the renovation and refurbishing of the LMC. The new gift will permit us to expand our efforts to improve it further.

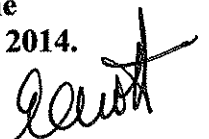
In an effort to enhance the work of our students and teachers at Saugatuck Elementary School, the SES PTA is providing us with a gift of four I-Pads and protection plans for use in the literacy centers in each of our Kindergarten classrooms. The value of this gift is \$2,400.

The gift from the "Tame the Hill" collective in the amount of \$165,000 will be used to construct spectator seating, safe field access stairs, path lighting, and low maintenance landscaping for the hillside above the Virginia Parker Filed at Staples High School. This gift will help to resolve the issues of steep athlete access to the field level and spectators not having any place to sit to watch play.

It is recommended that the Board accept these generous gifts with gratitude and appreciation to the officers and members of the CES PTA, the LLS PTA, and the SES PTA.

## ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

**Be It Resolved, That upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts with thanks and appreciation gifts from the Coleytown Elementary School PTA (up to \$48,000), the Long Lots School PTA (\$18,000), the Saugatuck Elementary School PTA (\$2,400), and one from the "Tame the Hill" collective represented by Scott Bennewitz in the amount of \$165,000, said gifts to be used to enhance the learning environment for students in accordance with the details of a memo to the Board of Education from Elliott Landon pertaining to these gifts and dated June 16, 2014.**




# WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**MARJORIE CION**  
Director of Human Resources

110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
TELEPHONE: (203) 341-10004  
FAX: (203) 341-1024

To: Elliott Landon  
From: Marge Cion   
Subject: Approval of Change to the Teacher Evaluation Plan  
Date: June 16, 2014

In February the State Board of Education, acting upon recommendations of the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, approved certain “flexibility components” relating to several sections of the State’s Teacher Evaluation Guidelines. District’s in mutual agreement with their Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PD Committee), can choose to adopt some or all of these flexibility components for the 2014 – 2015 school year.

Westport’s PD Committee has met and agreed upon several changes to our plan for the 2014 – 2015 school year, some based on the flexibility components and some based on the District’s experience with the plan this year. These changes must be approved by the Board of Education prior to their submission to the Connecticut Department of Education on June 18, 2014.

The PD Committee is recommending the following changes to our plan:

1. Teachers will be required to set at least one Student Learning Objective (SLO). While teachers, through mutual agreement with their evaluators, may set more than one SLO, only one is required. If a teacher sets only one SLO, there must be at least two Indicators of Academic Growth and Achievement (IAGD). The PD Committee recommends decoupling state standardized test indicators from educator evaluation due to the continued uncertainty relating to the SBAC test.

**Rationale:** Entering evidence into ProTraxx, our data management system, is extremely time-consuming. Eliminating one SLO will allow teachers to spend more time refining their craft rather than uploading evidence to support their rating. Administrators have a great deal of discretion when assigning teachers a final rating and the elimination of one SLO will not diminish this discretion. Due to the continued uncertainty surrounding implementation of SBAC testing for the 2014 – 2015 school year, the District will create a list of other acceptable standardized assessments that teachers may use to measure student achievement relating to their SLO’s.

2. The District will adopt the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching as the rubric with which to evaluate teachers on the 40% of the plan relating to teacher practice. A copy of the Danielson Framework and the crosswalk between Danielson and the Westport framework are attached to this memorandum.

**Rationale:** Several years ago, Westport's teachers and administrators created a rubric for teacher evaluation that consisted of forty-six indicators in five domains. The collection of evidence on each of these forty-six indicators proved to be burdensome for both teachers and administrators and interfered with the meaningful evaluation of a teacher's practice. Julie Droller has led the PD Committee in a crosswalk between Westport's rubric and the Danielson Framework and all parties have agreed that each one of our forty-six indicators is covered by the twenty-two indicators in the Danielson Framework. Many states, including both New York and Connecticut, have approved the Danielson Framework as an acceptable rubric with which to evaluate teachers. In addition, district's using the Danielson Framework gain access to incredibly valuable on line professional development resources.

3. The District will continue to observe all non-tenured teachers in accordance with the requirements of our current PDEP plan, with the addition of one Review of Practice in years one and two. A Review of Practice is an evaluation of a teacher in a non-classroom setting. Examples of reviews of practice include, but are not limited to observations of data team meetings, observations of grade level, team or department meetings, observations of coaching/mentoring other teachers, and review of lesson plans or other teaching artifacts. Therefore, teachers in their first and second years of teaching will be observed formally three times and will also receive a Review of Practice. Teachers in years three and four who have received a rating of Accomplished or Exemplary will be observed formally two times and will also receive a Review of Practice. Teachers in years three and four who have received a rating of Developing or Below Standard will be evaluated based on their individual assistance plan.

Tenured teachers who are rated either Accomplished or Exemplary will, through mutual agreement with their evaluator, choose between the following two options for the observation portion of their evaluation process:

- a. One formal observation and one Review of Practice; or
- b. 5 to 6 mini-observations with immediate feedback and one Review of Practice.

Tenured teachers rated Developing or Below Standard will be evaluated based on the requirements of their individual assistance plan.

**Rationale:** Many experts in the area of teacher supervision and evaluation, most notably Kim Marshall, have concluded that frequent, unannounced, 10 to 15 minute observations of a teacher during a school year will provide an evaluator with a more accurate picture of what is happening in the classroom on a regular basis than a formal observation. Mini- observations allow evaluators to monitor and assess the fidelity of the implementation of curriculum and to identify best practices in each classroom. Evaluators will still be able to collect specific and meaningful evidence with which to evaluate teachers on each of the indicators in our new evaluation rubric. Research has also shown that the more specific, targeted feedback that results from these mini-observations is often more valuable to experienced teachers than the lengthy and scripted feedback associated with formal observations. Instituting mini observations will be a significant change for both teachers and administrators. For that reason, we are piloting the use of mini observations offering only tenured teachers the option to be observed in this manner for the 2014 - 2015 school year. Based on the experiences of other districts who have implemented this model (most notably New Canaan),

offering experienced teachers the option of selecting this model will lead to a more meaningful experience for both teachers and administrators during the first year of implementation. We expect that as teachers observe the effectiveness of this model during the 2014 – 2015 school year, more of them will choose the mini-observation model in subsequent years. An excerpt from Kim Marshall's research on the value of mini observations is attached to this memorandum.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

**Be it Resolved, That upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his designee to submit the recommended changes to Westport's Professional Development and Evaluation Plan set forth above to the Connecticut Department of Education no later than June 18, 2014.**



**Crosswalk Between  
Danielson Framework  
And  
Westport Framework**

## Westport's Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Danielson Rubric:	<b>I. Instruction:</b> The teacher displays knowledge of content, curriculum, and pedagogy and conveys his/her knowledge effectively so that all students build deep understanding. <b>Danielson: Domains 1 and 3</b>
1e	I-1 The teacher plans learning activities which follow a coherent progression grounded in essential questions and big ideas and based upon students' academic and developmental needs.
1b	I-2 The teacher anticipates possible student misconceptions, difficulties, and confusion and plans lessons with strategies to address predictable obstacles to understanding.
3c	I-3 The teacher designs learning activities that allow students with the opportunity to practice procedures and thinking skills in order to help students build deep understanding.
3a,d; 1c?	I-4 The teacher frames the learning so that students know: what they need to know and be able to do (mastery objective); what activities they will be involved with that are in direct support of the mastery objective (itinerary); and how their learning will be assessed (assessment criteria). <i>(overlaps with A-2)</i>
1a	I-5 The teacher activates students' current knowledge and integrates new information into the context of previously learned knowledge to help students understand the connections between items of information.
1b	I-6 The teacher provides lessons that relate to daily life and are relevant to students; links to real-life applications.
1b, 3c	I-7 The teacher uses differentiated strategies and assignments which build upon students' interests and skills in order to enable students to effectively demonstrate their understanding.
3b,c	I-8 The teacher employs cognitively challenging tasks and questioning strategies which elicit higher order thinking skills.
3c	I-9 The teacher encourages active participation through student-centered problem-solving.
3e	I-10 The teacher checks for evidence of student understanding during instruction and adjusts the lessons accordingly. <i>(overlaps with A-1)</i>
1e	I-11 The teacher provides individualized and/or small group support as needed and appropriate.
3d	I-12 The teacher provides opportunities for students to reflect upon their learning.
3a	I-13 The teacher helps students make the connection between their effort and their achievement.
1d	I-14 The teacher integrates technology tools and applications appropriately into instruction to build deep understanding.

Danielson Rubric:	<b>II. Assessment:</b> The teacher continually assesses student progress, analyzes the results, and adjusts instruction to improve student achievement. <b>Danielson: Domains 1 and 3</b>
3e	A-1 The teacher assesses student progress before instruction (pre-assessment; determines what students already know and/or are able to do), during instruction (formative assessment; checks for understanding), and after instruction (summative assessment) and makes adjustments during a lesson and/or between lessons according to student learning needs. <i>(overlaps with I-10)</i>
3d	A-2 The teacher develops and communicates appropriate assessment "criteria for success" prior to the assignment of student work; uses rubrics, exemplars/anchor papers, and/or models to describe the expectations for student performance.
1f	A-3 The teacher uses assessment information to support instructional goals when planning lessons. <i>(overlaps with A-5)</i>
3d	A-4 The teacher provides opportunities for students to set learning goals.
1f	A-5 The teacher uses data about student performance and other relevant information from a variety of sources and analyzes such data to plan instruction accordingly. <i>(overlaps with A-3)</i>
3d	A-6 The teacher differentiates assessments as needed so all students have a way to show what they know and are able to do.
3d	A-7 The teacher provides timely feedback to students about the quality of their work and suggests specific strategies for improvement.
4b	A-8 The teacher develops, communicates, and uses a clearly defined grading system consistent with district/school/department policy and practice; maintains accurate records of student performance.
4c	A-9 The teacher communicates effectively with students, families, and colleagues in a timely manner regarding student progress.

Danielson Rubric:	<b>III. Learning Environment:</b> <i>The teacher acts on the belief that every student can learn. The teacher creates and facilitates a positive learning environment through effective classroom management and a classroom climate conducive for learning. Danielson: Domain 2</i>
2b	LE-1 The teacher holds all students to high academic standards and expectations regardless of educational background and achievement, racial/ethnic membership, disabilities, gender, or socioeconomic background.
2b	LE-2 The teacher encourages intellectual risks through the facilitation of dialogue and the delaying of judgment.
2b	LE-3 The teacher exhibits his/her interest, enthusiasm, and energy for teaching and learning and promotes a positive learning environment where students are motivated to learn.
2a	LE-4 The teacher creates and nurtures positive interpersonal relationships (including courtesy, fairness, and respect) with and among students.
2c, d	LE-5 The teacher manages the classroom with clear expectations and instructions for behavior, routines, and procedures (including those for safety), and uses effective strategies to provide momentum for maximum use of instructional time.
2e	LE-6 The teacher organizes and arranges materials, equipment, and classroom space to enhance learning and to ensure safety.

Danielson Rubric:	<b>IV. Professional Development:</b> <i>The teacher is committed to his or her continuing professional growth and contributes to the continuous improvement of the school, district, and profession. Danielson: Domain 4 (a, d, e)</i>
--	PD-1 The teacher participates in the SLO goal-setting process – collaboratively working with his/her administrator(s) to select a goal which focuses on the improvement of student learning.
--	PD-2 The teacher implements strategies to support student achievement associated with the SLO goal.
--	PD-3 The teacher analyzes the success of efforts undertaken during the SLO goal process in terms of the impact on student achievement.
4a	PD-4 The teacher continuously reflects upon his/her practice in relation to the impact on student learning and utilizes feedback from sources including colleagues, administrators, and students to improve professional practice.
4d	PD-5 The teacher engages in ongoing collaboration with colleagues to improve both his or her practice and the practice of colleagues as part of a professional learning community. Examples of collaborative activities include (but are not limited to): analyzing student work, developing common assessments, reading professional literature, participating in peer observations and/or classroom walkthroughs, etc...
4e	PD-6 The teacher pursues opportunities to increase subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skill as well as contributing to the profession through ongoing professional development.

Danielson Rubric:	<b>V. Professionalism:</b> <i>Teachers contribute to the betterment of the learning community by demonstrating a high degree of collegiality, respect, and personal responsibility. Danielson: Domain 4 (b, c, f)</i>
4d	P-1 The teacher participates collegially with administrators and colleagues to identify and implement strategies for continuous improvement which support the mission and vision of the school/district.
4d	P-2 The teacher participates and/or takes a leadership role in professional development activities and committees.
4d, e	P-3 The teacher engages in dialogue, problem-solving, planning, and/or curricular design with other members of the learning community.
4d	P-4 The teacher serves as a mentor (formal or informal) to others.
4f	P-5 The teacher represents himself or herself and the school/district professionally when working with students, parents, and other members of the community.
4f	P-6 The teacher interacts in a respectful manner with all members of the learning community.
4f	P-7 The teacher maintains classroom policies that are consistent with school/district policies.
--	P-8 The teacher sponsors and/or supports student extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities such as clubs, teams, cultural productions, etc.
4c?	P-9 The teacher participates in required meetings (such as staff, team, committee, and department) and parent conferences.
4f	P-10 The teacher performs required school duties (cafeteria/recess duty, hall monitoring, bus monitoring, chaperoning, etc.)
4f	P-11 The teacher meets professional obligations in a timely fashion (i.e. submits paperwork/reports, progress reports/grades, etc.)

# Charlotte Danielson's FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

<p><b>DOMAIN 1: Planning and Preparation</b></p> <p><b>1a Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy I-5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content knowledge • Prerequisite relationships • Content pedagogy</li> </ul> <p><b>1b Demonstrating Knowledge of Students I-2, I-6, I-7, I-8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child development • Learning process • Special needs • Student skills, knowledge, and proficiency • Interests and cultural heritage</li> </ul> <p><b>1c Setting Instructional Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value, sequence, and alignment • Clarity • Balance • Suitability for diverse learners</li> </ul> <p><b>1d Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources I-14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For classroom • To extend content knowledge • For students</li> </ul> <p><b>1e Designing Coherent Instruction I-1, I-11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning activities • Instructional materials and resources • Instructional groups • Lesson and unit structure</li> </ul> <p><b>1f Designing Student Assessments A-3, A-5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congruence with outcomes • Criteria and standards • Formative assessments • Use for planning</li> </ul>	<p><b>DOMAIN 2: The Classroom Environment</b></p> <p><b>2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport LE-4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher interaction with students</li> <li>• Student interaction with students</li> </ul> <p><b>2b Establishing a Culture for Learning LE-1, LE-2, LE-3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of content</li> <li>• Expectations for learning and achievement • Student pride in work</li> </ul> <p><b>2c Managing Classroom Procedures LE-5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional groups • Transitions • Materials and supplies</li> <li>• Non-instructional duties</li> <li>• Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals</li> </ul> <p><b>2d Managing Student Behavior LE-5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations • Monitoring behavior</li> <li>• Response to misbehavior</li> </ul> <p><b>2e Organizing Physical Space LE-6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and accessibility</li> <li>• Arrangement of furniture and resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>DOMAIN 4: Professional Responsibilities</b></p> <p><b>4a Reflecting on Teaching PD-4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy • Use in future teaching</li> </ul> <p><b>4b Maintaining Accurate Records A-8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student completion of assignments • Student progress in learning</li> <li>• Non-instructional records</li> </ul> <p><b>4c Communicating with Families A-9, P-9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About instructional program • About individual students • Engagement of families in instructional program</li> </ul> <p><b>4d Participating in a Professional Community PD-5, P-1, P-2, P-3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with colleagues • Participation in school projects • Involvement in culture of professional inquiry • Service to school</li> </ul> <p><b>4e Growing and Developing Professionally PD-6, P-3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of content knowledge / pedagogical skill • Receptivity to feedback from colleagues • Service to the profession</li> </ul> <p><b>4f Showing Professionalism P-5, P-6, P-7, P-10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity/ethical conduct • Service to students • Advocacy • Decision-making</li> <li>• Compliance with school/district regulations</li> </ul>	<p><b>DOMAIN 3: Instruction</b></p> <p><b>3a Communicating With Students I-4, I-13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations for learning • Directions and procedures</li> <li>• Explanations of content</li> <li>• Use of oral and written language</li> </ul> <p><b>3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques I-8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of questions • Discussion techniques</li> <li>• Student participation</li> </ul> <p><b>3c Engaging Students in Learning I-3, I-7, I-8, I-9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities and assignments • Student groups</li> <li>• Instructional materials and resources • Structure and pacing</li> </ul> <p><b>3d Using Assessment in Instruction A-2, A-4, A-6, A-7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment criteria • Monitoring of student learning</li> <li>• Feedback to students</li> <li>• Student self-assessment and monitoring</li> </ul> <p><b>3e Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness I-10, A-1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson adjustment • Response to students</li> <li>• Persistence</li> </ul>

22 indicators

**Kim Marshall**

**Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation**

**Chapter 4: Mini-Observations 2**

**Doing Them Right**



# Mini-Observations 2

## Doing Them Right

*People change less because they are given analysis that shifts their thinking than because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings.*

—John Kotter and Dan Cohen

Implemented fully, for maximum impact on teaching and learning, mini-observations have twelve key components. The first three are structural changes from the unholy trinity of announced, infrequent, full-lesson observations; by contrast, mini-observations are:

1. Unannounced
2. Frequent
3. Short

Next are the ways that feedback after mini-observations improves the human dimension of supervision and evaluation, maximizing adult learning for teachers and principals:

4. Face-to-face
5. Perceptive
6. Humble
7. Courageous

Finally, these organizational details help the system run well:

8. Systematic
9. Documented
10. Linked to teacher teamwork and schoolwide improvement
11. Linked to end-of-year teacher evaluation
12. Explained well

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

## 1. UNANNOUNCED

As I argued in Chapter Two, announced visits are one of the most glaring weaknesses of the traditional evaluation process, especially when yoked to two other design flaws—observing teachers only once or twice a year and relying on whole-lesson write-ups. Making the shift to unannounced visits is absolutely essential to getting an accurate picture of how teachers are performing on a daily basis. This opens the door to doing a better job with authentic praise and further development for effective teachers; coaching and support for struggling teachers; well-informed decisions on professional development and instructional materials; accurate end-of-year evaluations; dismissal of persistently ineffective teachers; and honest quality assurance to parents and other stakeholders.

But unannounced visits aren't defensible or feasible unless they are frequent and short—hence the next two items.

## 2. FREQUENT

It's clearly unfair to judge a teacher's annual performance based on a single surprise visit. What if it's a bad day, students act up, or the observer disrupts the normal routine? One high-stakes observation a year has a high probability of getting an inaccurate picture of daily reality and raising the teacher's anxiety level to stratospheric heights. But that's no reason to abandon the idea of unannounced observations. By making *lots of them*, the principal can get a representative sampling of teachers' work, reduce the pressure and disruption, and convince teachers to trust the fairness of the system.

"Lots"—how many is that? From my experience at the Mather and my coaching of principals in recent years, I've concluded that ten observations a year are enough to get a reasonably accurate picture of a teacher's overall performance by answering these key questions:

- How is the teacher handling the beginning, middle, and end of lessons?
- How is the teacher handling the different classes and/or subjects he or she teaches? At the elementary level, that often includes reading, writing, math, science, and social studies; for secondary teachers, it's important to see several of the teacher's sections.
- Are there marked differences in the quality of instruction in the morning, midday, and afternoon?
- Is the quality of teaching sustained in different parts of the week?

10  
Ten visits spread out over the entire year (roughly one a month) will also give early warning if there are problems, enabling immediate intervention with coaching and support and, if necessary, an improvement plan.

At first blush, ten visits per teacher strikes principals as really challenging, but when I have them do the math (multiply the number of teachers they supervise by ten and divide by the number of days in the school year), most find that it comes to a manageable number of classroom visits a day. Here is a calculation of an actual goal for principals with different numbers of teachers—and a "stretch" goal, making allowance for days when crises, out-of-building meetings, and other events make it impossible to do mini-observations:

Number of teachers	Minis for year	Number per day	Stretch goal per day
60	600	3.3	4
50	500	2.7	3
40	400	2.2	3
30	300	1.7	2
20	200	1.1	2
10	100	.6	1

Some administrators still think ten is an unrealistic target because they doubt they'll get into classrooms in the superbusy opening and closing days of the school year and during standardized testing. But the first two weeks of school are by far the most important for seeing if classroom management is off to a good start (many rookie teachers need early redirection and support); testing weeks are a great time to visit art, computer, music, library, and physical education teachers and check in with school counselors; and in the final days of each school year, it's important to make sure teachers are giving parents their money's worth right up to the last bell. If you make it your business, I tell principals, you can do it—especially if you're only doing two or three visits a day. Administrators' regular presence in classrooms throughout the year *really matters*.

Is there such a thing as doing too many visits in a day? Definitely. At the Mather, when I did more than five mini-observations a day, I found that my memory of what happened in classrooms was taxed and the quality of feedback was not as good. In addition, teachers can feel smothered if administrators are in their classrooms too much. They need space to do their work—accountable, of course, for quality and results.

A specific numerical target is a useful time-management tool for maintaining the pace of mini-observations amid all the distractions and crises of the principalship. A fuzzy goal (*I'm going to get into more classrooms this month*) doesn't work because it can't be measured and doesn't provide the data to assess progress. It's like exercise: without a specific goal (three vigorous twenty-minute workouts a week is what most doctors recommend), we won't keep it up. Deciding on a target number of daily mini-observations and pushing relentlessly to meet it really helps. So does tracking the data. I was very conscious of how long each one of my cycles was taking, and that helped get me out of my office and into a classroom when I didn't particularly feel like doing it.

In addition to a numerical target, four other elements help administrators keep mini-observations going through thick and thin: a strong conviction that this strategy makes sense, self-discipline, positive interactions with teachers after each visit to reinforce the practice, and support from the principal's boss. I had the first three, but never had the fourth. Principals whose immediate supervisor understands and agrees with the idea of mini-observations have a big advantage. More on this in Chapter Nine.

It's even more helpful if the district has a thoughtful policy on mini-observations, has negotiated certain key elements with the teachers' union (including a shared understanding of what good instruction looks like), and provides training and collegial problem solving and support. That is truly a formula for success.

### 3. SHORT

The only way administrators can get to each teacher ten times a year is for visits to be less than a full class period and not accompanied by time-consuming and often unproductive write-ups and pre- and post-observation conferences. Lots of administrators are ready to make this shift. One principal told me that when she does her "formals," she usually knows within the first ten minutes what she needs to say to the teacher and the rest is a waste of everyone's time.

But what fraction of the full lesson is enough for a mini-observation? Clearly not as small as Nalini Ambady and Robert Rosenthal found in their 1993 study of college teaching: in just thirty seconds, college students were able to make the same overall assessment of a professor that they reached after sitting in class for a full semester. "That's the power of our adaptive unconscious," says Malcolm Gladwell, commenting on this finding in his best-selling book *Blink* (2005, p. 13). And that's every teacher's worst fear—being judged harshly based on one glimpse taken out of context. We can argue the merits of the Ambady-Rosenthal study, but such a tiny slice of a lesson is clearly not enough to give thoughtful feedback to a teacher, and without feedback, mini-observations are an empty exercise.



So how long should the principal stay? The amount of time depends entirely on the purpose. If it's to show the flag (*Good morning, boys and girls*), five seconds is plenty—a quick in-and-out. If it's to check on a substitute teacher, six seconds will do (*Thank God, the kids seem to be working quietly*). If the purpose is in-depth professional development, the principal needs to stay the whole period. And if the goal is dismissing an ineffective teacher, there must be multiple full-period visits, each followed up with a specific improvement plan and a chance for redemption.

But if the principal's goal is to get a snapshot of the quality of instruction, I've found that five to fifteen minutes is enough (provided, of course, that visits are unannounced). And there's surprising agreement on this when I ask audiences of principals and teachers how long an administrator needs to stay in a classroom to form a meaningful impression. Figure 4.1 shows the results to a clicker question.

5-15 min.

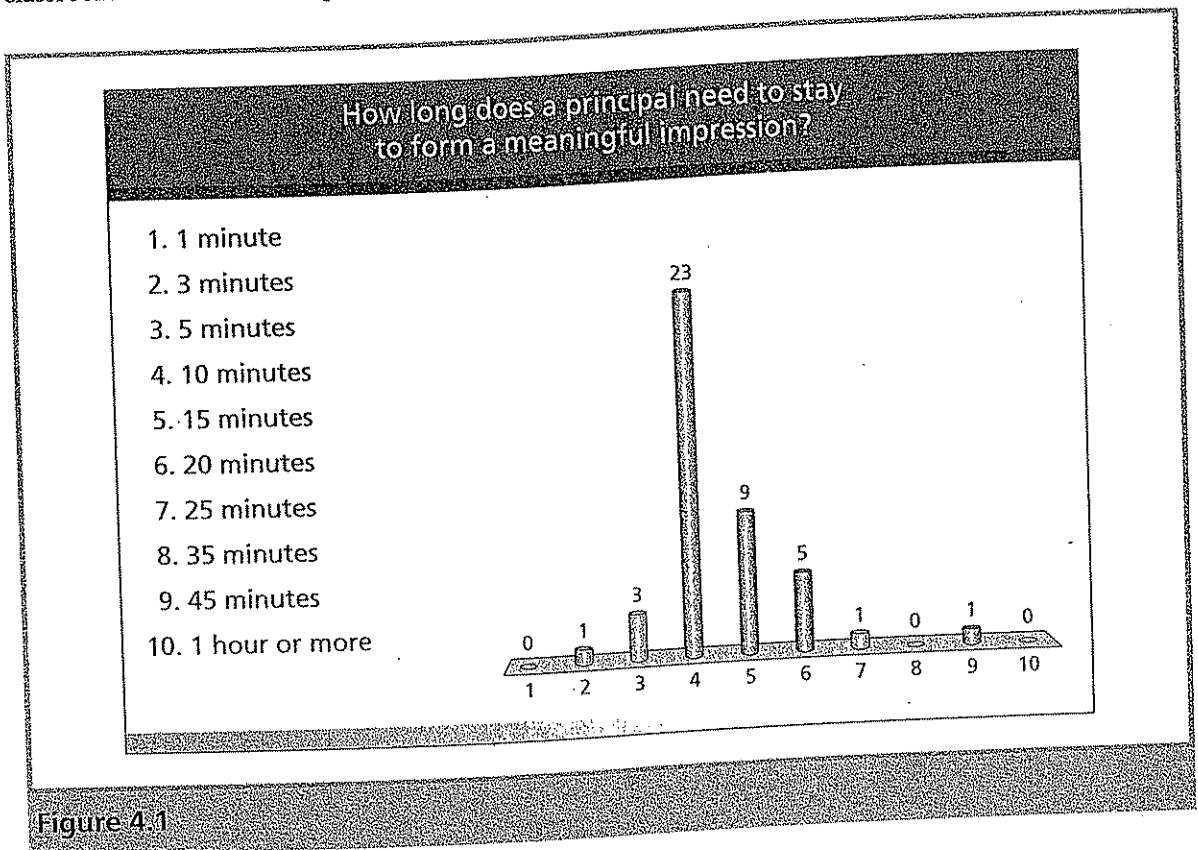


Figure 4.1

Not everyone agrees. *What can you possibly see in ten minutes?* is what I occasionally hear. The best way to change skeptics' minds is to show a brief classroom videotape (without saying how long it is) and then ask people to role-play a feedback conversation with the teacher. I've done this hundreds of times, and people are always struck by how much goes on in a classroom in that amount of time and how many "teaching points" there are to discuss. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show clicker responses immediately following a ten-minute videotape and role-played feedback conversation.

As you can see, there's overwhelming consensus that ten minutes is enough to form a meaningful impression and have a substantive conversation with the teacher.

Here's another way to make this point. When an observer walks into a classroom, there are two possible learning curves. The first (see Figure 4.4) shows new insights increasing with every minute that passes. If this version is true, the observer needs to stay the whole period. But there's a second possibility (see Figure 4.5): the instant the observer enters the classroom, there's a steep learning curve—a flood of

Was that enough time to get a sense of what was going on in the classroom?

1. We saw plenty.
2. We saw a lot.
3. Needed a little more time.
4. Needed a lot more time.

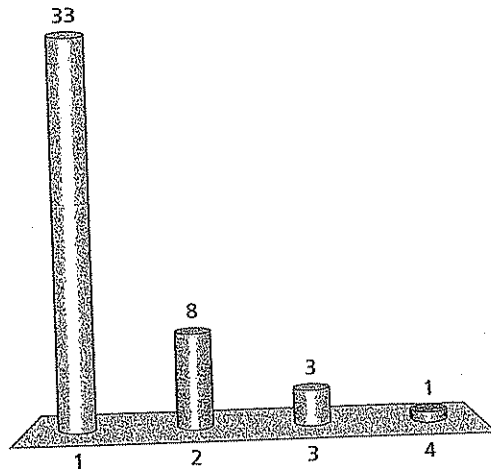


Figure 4.2

Was it possible to give meaningful feedback to the teacher afterward?

1. Yes
2. No

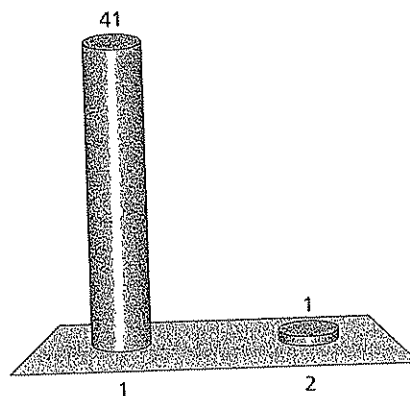


Figure 4.3

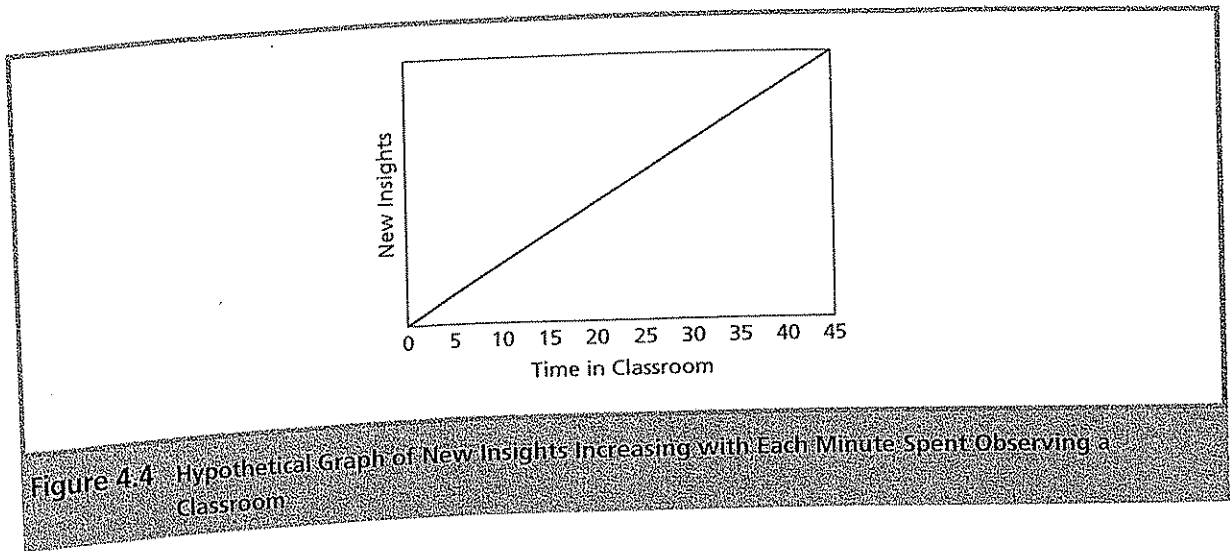


Figure 4.4 Hypothetical Graph of New Insights Increasing with Each Minute Spent Observing a Classroom

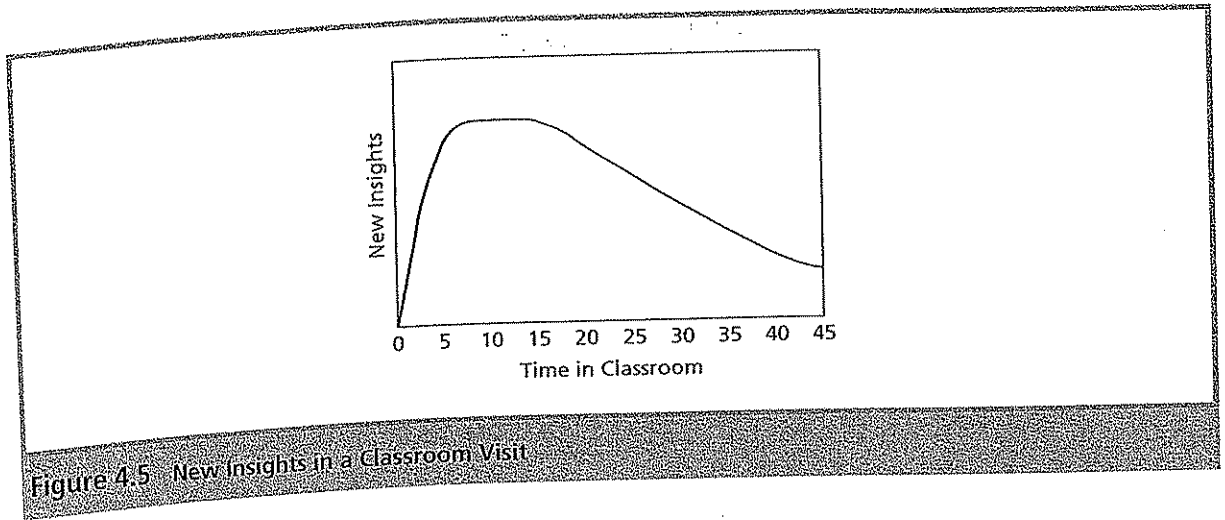


Figure 4.5 New Insights in a Classroom Visit

new information on student climate, the physical characteristics of the room, and what the teacher and students are doing. This mirrors the Ambady-Rosenthal finding. After five or ten minutes, the number of new insights levels off and then gradually declines for the remainder of the class.

I believe that in most cases, the graph in Figure 4.5 is what happens during mini-observations. This suggests that for a very busy principal (and what principal isn't?), staying beyond a certain point has diminishing returns and is a relatively inefficient use of time (in business jargon, it has a high opportunity cost). For administrators who want to be in classrooms a lot, short observations get the maximum amount of information in the least amount of time. Mini-observations are also much easier to squeeze into the nooks and crannies of a busy day, and are therefore easier to orchestrate than longer classroom visits.

What is the shortest visit that still yields a decent amount of information? As a principal supervising a staff of around forty, I found that if I stayed less than five minutes, my impressions were superficial and I was unable to give teachers feedback that was credible or helpful. If I stayed longer than ten minutes, I couldn't see teachers as often and the insights I picked up in the incremental minutes didn't compensate for the loss of frequency. Five minutes worked for me, yielding surprisingly rich and plentiful information on each classroom.

Not all educators agree. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, executive director of the North Star Academy charter schools in Newark, New Jersey, and the author of two books on instructional leadership (*Driven by Data*,

2010, and *Leverage Leadership*, 2012), feels strongly that principals need to stay fifteen minutes to process the initial flood of information and then focus on the lesson's objectives, the teacher's pedagogy, and how much students are learning. Jon Saphier, a veteran staff developer and author on the skills of teaching, makes the same point.

I hear what they're saying and recognize that it may reflect a higher standard for supervision than I became accustomed to in the pre-standards era in which I developed mini-observations. In small schools, or in schools with several administrators doing mini-observations, spending more time makes perfect sense. But in a large school in which a single administrator has thirty to forty teachers to supervise, longer visits mean seeing teachers less frequently, and this poses a choice: Which is more important—depth or frequency? Short term, I lean toward frequency. It's amazing how much a perceptive observer can see in five to ten minutes, especially if the visits are frequent, and talking to teachers about their classrooms every few weeks is tremendously valuable. Long term, the principal should try to build up the administrative team and spread the work of doing mini-observations among several colleagues so everyone can stay a little longer.

The key point is that there's an inverse relationship between the length of each visit and the number of classrooms administrators will be able to visit on a regular basis. The shorter each visit, the more can be squeezed into each day; the longer each visit, the fewer classrooms will be seen. Figure 4.6 shows the dramatic difference that visit length makes to the total number of visits a principal can make in a year.

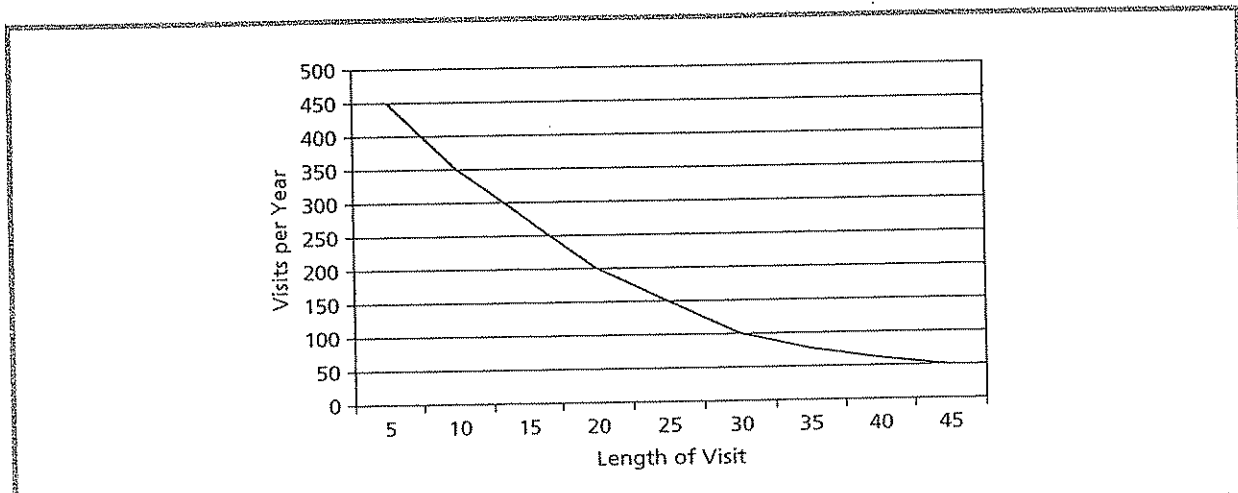


Figure 4.6 Visit Length versus Visit Frequency

Each administrator should do the math as described above, settle on a daily target, and estimate the visit length that makes it possible to keep up that frequency. Explain the rationale to teachers, and then plunge in and start observing, making adjustments as needed.

Here's a related point. In some districts, teachers ask that principals stay *no less* than a particular amount of time (ten minutes, for example). I think it's diplomatically wise to make this concession, but principals should hold out for the right to stay *as long* as they wish. There may be a particularly effective piece of teaching going on, or the principal may be curious about what will happen next, or worried about how the teacher will handle a challenging situation. There should be no ceiling on the length of visits and the length of follow-up talks. These are good areas for differentiation—some teachers will be fine with five-minute visits and three-minute follow-up chats, while others will need fifteen-minute visits and thirty-minute follow-up talks.

An obvious point about short, frequent, unannounced visits: it's impossible to do pre-observation conferences. This saves time and makes it easier for principals to do mini-observations on the fly. Are there significant disadvantages to skipping pre-observation conferences? I'm hard-pressed to think of any. One or two pre-observation talks a year is a pretty weak reed in terms of lesson quality and staff development. As I'll argue in the next chapter, a far better way for principals to supervise lesson and curriculum quality is to orchestrate effective backward unit planning by teacher teams and review the plans they produce.

So are full-lesson observations obsolete? In most cases they're not a good use of administrators' time—but I believe two categories of teachers can benefit from having whole lessons observed: rookies and unsatisfactory teachers. The latter should have full-lesson observations by the principal (unannounced, of course) and get detailed suggestions and feedback. Brand-new teachers should get in-depth observation by colleagues, preferably those with deep knowledge and experience at that particular grade level and subject.

Other teachers can also benefit from occasional full-lesson feedback, but it can't be administrators who do it—otherwise the quantity and quality of mini-observations will suffer. Fortunately, there are several other options: instructional coaches, peer observers, video recording, and Lesson Study:

- *Instructional coaches* are becoming increasingly common in schools, and with their pedagogical content knowledge (usually in literacy or math), they are ideal observers of lessons in their area. Feedback from a coach or teacher leader is less threatening and more palatable to teachers because they are usually in the same bargaining unit and are not acting as evaluators. Coaches also have more time than harried principals for full-lesson observations and longer follow-up conversations.
- *Peer observations* can be very helpful, and some districts—notably Toledo, Ohio, and Montgomery County, Maryland—have developed thoughtful protocols for experienced teacher leaders to observe their colleagues. The PAR (Peer Assistance and Review) program has spread to a number of districts around the country (see sidebar on pages 150–151). One concern with peer observations when they are conducted outside a formal program: the “culture of nice.” It's hard for teachers to give critical comments to people they eat lunch with every day. Colleagues may say they want honest feedback but turn chilly when they get it, which hurts relationships that are important to a congenial workplace. Training and clear protocols are needed to make peer observations effective.
- *The video camera* takes an unsparing look at what happens in a classroom and allows the teacher to examine every detail, even doing instant replays. Watching a videotape of one's own lesson is a powerful way to see teaching flaws and appreciate strengths. Making a video of a lesson requires much less skill than writing up an observation, and the interpersonal challenges of giving critical feedback are virtually eliminated; the tape speaks for itself, holding up a mirror to the teacher's practice. Watching a videotape of one's own teaching alone can feel narcissistic; teachers learn most when they watch with a critical friend who can help them see beyond little quirks and really analyze the lesson.
- *Lesson Study* is the most sophisticated and demanding format for observing and giving feedback on whole lessons. Japanese schools have developed this protocol to a high level in recent decades (see *The Teaching Gap* by James Stigler and James Hiebert, 1999). In Lesson Study, teacher teams develop, pilot, observe, and polish individual lessons designed to address specific student needs. Stigler has suggested that American schools adapt Lesson Study by using videotaped lessons as discussion tools. In schools where teachers craft effective lessons and evaluate their impact, the quality of instruction can improve by leaps and bounds. In addition, teachers' sense of efficacy and professionalism—the deepest kind of morale—will benefit from this kind of detailed, solution-oriented focus on individual lessons. Principals can be members of Lesson Study teams or drop in occasionally, getting insights on the curriculum and the best teaching practices.

#### 4. FACE-TO-FACE

When teachers first hear about short, unannounced classroom visits, a common worry is that there won't be a chance to explain the context, content, and interpersonal dynamics that are so important to understanding what was going on. This is why I believe it's a *must* for administrators to catch each teacher as soon as possible after a mini-observation (ideally within twenty-four hours) and have a brief, informal conversation. Every time administrators talk with a teacher after a short visit, they learn something new—why that student's head was down, why the teacher chose to use this particular approach to teaching division of fractions, how the lesson unfolded after the principal left. Teachers' explanations widen the administrator's observational window and help teachers trust the process—both crucial to making a difference to teaching and learning.

A suburban assistant principal shared this story about a follow-up conversation after a mini-observation in a middle school music class. He had been mildly critical of the teacher because the boys on the drums were fidgety and kept moving around while the teacher was talking to the class.

"That's why they're drummers," said the teacher. This was an intriguing insight for the administrator, and he looked at the class with fresh eyes afterward. But he kept thinking about his initial comment. Should he still expect fidgety drummers to be calm and attentive when the teacher was talking? Was the teacher asking him to lower his expectations for these kids? How much calm attentiveness was appropriate in a middle school music class? Those were really interesting questions, and he and the teacher continued to explore them in subsequent conversations.

It saddens me that so few school leaders talk to teachers after classroom visits. Some principals don't give feedback at all, which drives teachers crazy. (*What did he think?!*) Some principals leave a Post-it note on the teacher's desk on the way out with quick jottings. (*Go Tiger! Great lesson!*) Others prefer to fill out a checklist and put it in the teacher's mailbox. Others devise their own formats for written notes (a box for "Wow" and a box for "I wonder . . ."). And others e-mail their comments. All these suffer from the lack of human contact—and the teacher not having a chance to explain the context.

One of the more dubious practices in U.S. schools these days is administrators dropping into classrooms with clipboards, laptops, or iPads, filling out checklists or rubrics, and sending them to teachers. This kind of feedback is almost invariably one-way, superficial, bureaucratic, annoying, and highly unlikely to make a difference. Another ineffective practice, I believe, is giving teachers a score on each short observation (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, or 4-3-2-1). This increases the teacher's anxiety level and is the opposite of good coaching. Sure, it provides administrators and central-office staff with lots of data, but what are they going to *do* with it?

Putting mini-observation feedback in writing or in electronic form before talking to the teacher has numerous disadvantages. First, it raises the anxiety level on both sides, especially when there's criticism. Second, written communication limits the amount and subtlety of what's communicated and makes administrators that much more leery about being critical. Third, it's time-consuming, which can make the whole mini-observation process more daunting and cut down on frequency. And finally, written feedback almost always ends up being a one-way street from principal to teacher (few teachers take the time to respond to written notes or checklists). Without dialogue and active reflection on the teacher's part, it's much less likely that adult learning will take place. In the words of Steven Levy, writing in *Newsweek* (2007):

In conversations, I can talk with [people], and a casual remark can lead to a level of discussion that neither party anticipated from the beginning. I am more likely to learn from someone in a conversation than an e-mail exchange, which simply does not allow for the serendipity, intensity and give-and-take of real-time interaction.

For these reasons, my strong preference is for face-to-face talks after each mini-observation. Informal, low-stakes conversations (mine were almost always stand-up chats in classrooms, hallways, the copy room, or the parking lot after school) have these important advantages:

- It's possible to communicate a lot of information in just a few minutes.
- Teachers are less nervous when there's nothing written down, and more likely to be open to feedback.
- The teacher can give the principal additional information about the lesson or unit, filling in the bigger picture of what happened before and after the visit.
- The principal can get quick answers to questions about the curriculum or materials.
- The teacher can correct a possible misunderstanding of something that happened during the mini-observation.
- The principal can get a sense of whether the teacher is ready to receive critical feedback; if the teacher seems to be in a fragile or hostile frame of mind, it's best to hold off.
- If face-to-face criticism is handled deftly, it has a much better chance of resulting in classroom change; criticizing by e-mail or note can be seen as a sign of cowardice and be sloughed off.
- The conversation can segue into a more general assessment of how the year is going and ideas for the future, or perhaps get into important personal information that the principal needs to know.

These are compelling reasons for always giving feedback in person and engaging each teacher in a genuinely two-way conversation about the substance of what was observed. During these follow-up chats, administrators need to *slow down* and be good listeners, taking the time to hear what's on the teacher's mind. Ideally, teachers walk away from feedback conversations with specific ideas for improving their practice—or a warm feeling that their work is appreciated by an intelligent and thoughtful colleague.

To maximize the chance of a positive outcome (and minimize the chance of misunderstandings), it's good to ask the teacher at the end of the conversation, "So what's your biggest take-away from our chat?" Teachers sometimes say things that surprise the administrator. One blurted, "You hated my lesson!" leading the principal to backtrack and clarify that her overall impression had actually been quite positive.

Where is the best location for these face-to-face feedback conversations? I pose this question frequently to educators, and Figure 4.7 shows a typical clicker response. There are several advantages to talking in the teacher's classroom when students aren't there: it's the teacher's turf, there are curriculum materials and examples of student work to talk about, and being at the "scene of the crime" is a good memory prompt for busy administrators.

Some principals think it's efficient to give the teacher face-to-face feedback during the class they're observing, perhaps while students are doing group work. But this has real disadvantages: it's too soon to know if students learned what they were supposed to be learning; the administrator is shooting from the hip and hasn't had time to think through the key points; and any kind of criticism is pretty much out of the question because students could overhear. I think it's better to maintain the fiction that the administrator is a fly on the wall, let the teacher finish the lesson, and have the conversation afterward.

Should principals intervene if they see something that really concerns them during a mini-observation? I know one New York City area administrator who coaches his principals to adapt the tactics of professional football and basketball coaches, who don't wait till the end of the game to give players direction and feedback. He thinks principals can do this unobtrusively by asking the teacher, "Excuse me, can I just ask your students a question?" and proceed to make their critical point indirectly. My reaction: *No!* The potential for undermining the teacher's authority with students is too great, and it draws too much

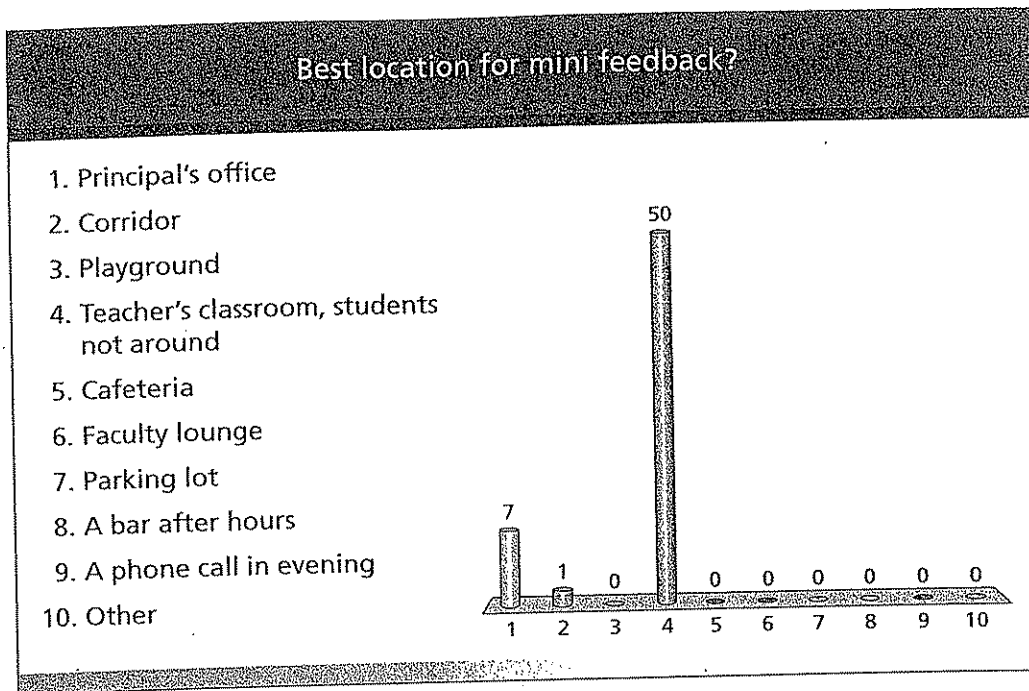


Figure 4-7

attention to the principal, who is supposed to be invisible. Why not talk to the teacher afterward? If the teacher is about to teach the same flawed lesson to four more classes that day, pull the teacher aside between classes!

But what if an egregious instructional mistake is occurring right in front of the administrator's eyes? A Massachusetts principal spoke up in one of my workshops, saying she was unable to contain herself when she saw a middle school math teacher mixing up perimeter and area. A New York City principal told me that she blurted out during a class, "There's a spelling mistake on the board." In the second case, the principal was able to frame it as a challenge to students, who may have thought the teacher misspelled the word intentionally to see if they were paying attention. In the first case, the principal believes her intervention didn't embarrass the teacher. In both cases, I think a private "word to the wise" immediately after the class would have been a better approach.

Keeping these feedback conversations short is key to maintaining a steady pace of two to three mini-observations a day. Brevity is easier to achieve if the principal thinks through the opening thirty seconds in advance. I tried to plan and mentally rehearse my opening thoughts so I could quickly cut to the chase when I was with each teacher. There's a lot to be said for beginning with a declarative statement: "I was really struck by how well those math manipulatives were working to teach the part-whole principle," or "I'm concerned that boys were dominating that discussion on the causes of World War I." When a principal leads off with an open-ended question ("How did you feel the class went?"), teachers can become wary, sensing that a point is being made indirectly and that there's a "right" answer. But if the principal is genuinely puzzled, leading off with a question can work.

All right, face-to-face feedback has strong advantages—but is it possible for a principal to catch up with every teacher after every mini-observation? And what about superstar teachers? Do they really need feedback when they're already performing at a very high level?



I believe that all teachers, including the very best, are hungry for feedback—and deserve it. They spend most of their working days with students and are intensely curious about what other adults think—especially their boss. When I was a principal, I kept a small laminated copy of the school’s master schedule in my shirt pocket to help me target teachers’ nonteaching periods, and I made it my business to track down every teacher I’d observed and have a conversation with them within twenty-four hours. Sometimes I missed my self-imposed deadline, but I kept pushing myself until I’d closed the loop with each teacher and checked them off my list.

It’s all about priorities. If you believe something is important, you can make the time. And one thing is very clear: talking to teachers about the teaching and learning that’s going on in their classrooms is the heart and soul of instructional leadership.

Large schools are a challenge, but principals don’t have to do this work all alone. Assistant principals, department heads, deans, and others can divvy up the work. In one Massachusetts high school, the principal and assistant principal split the staff in two. Other administrators prefer doing mini-observations in tandem, comparing notes after they leave each classroom (people sometimes see quite different things in the same visit, and this is a great way to build one another’s powers of observation). Others prefer having all administrators see all classrooms, comparing notes in weekly meetings on what they’re seeing and which teachers need follow-up. Some principals do mini-observations with an instructional coach; since coaches have deeper pedagogical content knowledge than principals, they can “tutor” the boss on the finer points of lessons in their area after each visit.

Another way of regularly checking in with teachers is a system I encountered in a Bronx high school—weekly twenty-minute meetings with each teacher. Two administrators in this school divided up the teachers (sixteen each) and scheduled regular, mandatory meetings for Thursdays and Fridays (they dubbed them TFM’s—Thursday-Friday meetings). The administrators have found TFM’s an ideal opportunity to give feedback on mini-observations and discuss other artifacts teachers bring with them—samples of student work, grade books, unit plans, interim assessment results. They’ve kept TFM’s up for three years and believe they are one of the biggest reasons the school has built a trusting, high-achieving professional climate.

There’s no question that having face-to-face conversations with teachers after mini-observations is challenging, both at the human and the time-management level. Administrators don’t always get it right. It’s easier to sit in a comfortable office doing e-mail, talking on the phone, and reviewing strategic plans. But there’s no contest when it comes to instructional impact. The way to get better at face-to-face feedback conversations is to do lots of them. That’s what happened to me; teachers taught me. And if the administrator sets a reasonable target—two or three a day—it’s manageable. There’s nothing more productive and satisfying than being in classrooms and talking to colleagues about teaching and learning. *This is the work!*

## 5. PERCEPTIVE

Absolutely crucial to the impact of mini-observations is administrators being thoughtful observers of instruction. Some are naturals at going into classrooms and formulating just the right feedback to move each teacher forward. Others need to work on their skills. What’s the best way to get better? Here are two approaches at opposite ends of the spectrum: “free-range” observations and detailed checklists. Let’s look at each:

- *Free-range.* “You can observe a lot by watching,” said the immortal Yogi Berra, and that’s one approach to short classroom visits. The idea is for the principal to slow down, breathe, walk around,

observe the kids, maybe chat with a couple of them (*What are you working on right now? How does this fit in with what you've been learning? Why is it important for you to learn this?*), look at what they are being asked to do, listen carefully to the teacher, and “smell the roses.” Principals who take the free-range approach to mini-observations believe it's important to keep an open mind and be guided by what's happening in the classroom, rather than imposing a checklist on a fluid, highly complex situation that requires fully focused powers of observation, as well as mobility, wisdom, and differentiation for each teacher's background and unique classroom situation. These principals are confident that they'll see one or two things worth bringing up with the teacher afterward.

But does this make quality mini-observations too dependent on superb instincts and extensive subject-area expertise? Can every administrator be trained to be a good free-range observer?

- *Checklists.* Many superintendents aren't confident that their school leaders can, which is why they require administrators to carry a checklist of the things that should happen during a good lesson and a method of recording data during mini-observations. A number of companies are marketing record-keeping products to school districts—eCove, Rally, iObservation, TeachScape, TeachPoint, and many more. The idea of having a list of classroom criteria in a laptop, tablet, or smartphone is very appealing.

Here's a checklist from Achievement First, a network of high-performing charter schools in Connecticut and New York (reprinted with permission, with minor word changes):

- *Great aims.* Rigorous, bite-sized, measurable, standards-based goals are on the board and drive the lesson.
- *Assessment of student mastery.* Learning of the aims is systematically and diagnostically assessed at the end of the lesson.
- *Content-specific knowledge and strategy.* The teacher knows the content cold and uses a highly effective and efficient strategy to guide students to mastery.
- *Modeling and guided practice.* The lesson includes a clear “think-aloud,” explicit modeling, and a heavily guided mini-lesson that's captured in a display available to students.
- *Sustained, successful independent practice.* Students have plenty of high-success “at bats” to practice, with the teacher moving around to support them.
- *Classroom culture.* Behavior expectations are crystal clear (for example, being attentive, no calling out, no laughing at classmates' mistakes) and there is a positive, energetic, joyful tone with a high ratio of positive to corrective comments.
- *Academic rigor.* Students do most of the heavy lifting, the teacher uses a good mix of higher-order questions and content, and the teacher refuses to accept low-quality student responses (instead requiring acceptable grammar, complete sentences, appropriate vocabulary and understanding) or to let students opt out.
- *Student engagement.* High-involvement strategies keep all students on task and accountable (no desk potatoes!), and there is an accountability mechanism to get all students to complete top-quality work.
- *Cumulative review.* In the lesson and homework, students get fast, fun opportunities to systematically review and practice skills already mastered.
- *Differentiation.* The teacher sees that all students' needs are met by providing extra support (especially during independent practice) and varying the volume, rate, and complexity of work.

This is an excellent list, and it's part of the training for all teachers and administrators in Achievement First schools. But I believe it's too long to be used for mini-observations. Trying to keep track of items on detailed instruments or rubrics makes it much more difficult to be a thoughtful and perceptive observer. The more detailed and elaborate the checklist, the more consumed the principal is with recording data, the less perceptive at observing what's going on, the more superficial the observations, and the less seriously the teacher will take the feedback. Even Robert Marzano (2007), who's developed a list or two in his day, says that using checklists during brief classroom visits is inappropriate.

Let's take a look at some shorter, more holistic lists of desirable classroom attributes. The Seven Cs were developed by Harvard professor Ronald Ferguson and his colleagues in the Tripod Project:

- Caring about students
- Controlling behavior so students stay on task
- Clarifying lessons so knowledge seems feasible
- Challenging students to achieve
- Captivating them by showing learning is relevant
- Conferring with students to show their ideas are welcome and respected
- Consolidating knowledge so lessons are connected and integrated

Another list of classroom desiderata was contained in a thoughtful article in *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* (Johnson, Uline, and Perez, 2011) reporting on a multi-year study of principals in fourteen high-performing, nonselective urban schools. What did these very effective principals look for in their formal and informal visits to classrooms?

- *Student engagement, learning, and understanding.* Were students participating, learning, thinking, making sense, and understanding the skills and concepts being taught? Principals observed closely and checked in with two or three students as they sauntered around each classroom.
- *Climate, tone, and atmosphere.* Was the classroom warm, nurturing, calm, relaxed, respectful, flexible, organized, and neat? "Is there light laughter?" asked one principal. "Are there smiles?"
- *Effective teacher actions.* The principals looked for clear objectives, lucid explanations, probing questions, modeling, checking for understanding, and getting students to explain their thinking.

These lists are more compact, but are they short enough to keep in mind during a mini-observation, making it possible to move around the classroom and be a good observer of teaching and learning?

Here's an even shorter checklist developed by a New York City principal I admire:

- Are students clear about what they need to learn in this lesson?
- Does the teacher have a good method for teaching it?
- Does the teacher have a way of seeing if students have, in fact, learned it by the end of the lesson?

She says she is able to keep these questions in her head as she observes classes. But is the list comprehensive enough? Ideally we'd boil down all the essential ingredients of good teaching into a comprehensive yet brief mental checklist that could be easily remembered and referred to during a mini-observation. The simpler and clearer the vision of good teaching shared by the whole staff, the more observant principals will be during mini-observations—the more attuned to the unique issues of each classroom, the more likely to zero in on one or two key change levers—and the more seriously the teacher will take the feedback.

Here's how I went about developing such a list. In a graduate course I teach for aspiring school leaders every summer, I challenge participants to come up with the five irreducible elements of effective instruction—what they would want to see every day in their own children's classrooms, kindergarten through twelfth grade. The goal is to reduce teaching to its essence and come up with an acronym that principals can keep in their heads as they do mini-observations. I've gone through this exercise a number of times, and the best result so far is SOTEL—safety, objectives, teaching, engagement, and learning:

- **Safety.** The class is running smoothly, and students can focus on learning—they feel physically and psychologically safe and able to take intellectual risks.
- **Objectives.** It's clear where the lesson is going and the rigor and standards alignment are appropriate; at the highest level, the teacher has the unit's essential questions on the wall.
- **Teaching.** Learning experiences are being skillfully orchestrated; the teacher is using a repertoire of well-chosen instructional strategies to teach the material to all students.
- **Engagement.** Students are paying attention and are “minds-on” involved in the lesson and taking some responsibility for their own learning; the teacher isn't doing all the work.
- **Learning.** There's evidence that what's being taught is being learned, such as checks for understanding, exit tickets, and interim assessments.

I encourage schools to play around with SOTEL to make it their own. For example, one district in Oregon added an H at the beginning and moved the S to the end, spelling HOTELS. The H stands for *hospitality*—Is the classroom a warm and welcoming environment for teaching and learning?

Whether it's SOTEL or something else, a short, easy-to-remember list of classroom look-fors helps anchor follow-up conversations. A principal might zero in on one or two—no need to give feedback on the other three if there was nothing spectacular or worrisome in those areas.

The L in SOTEL should always be the “money” question: Are students learning, and what's the evidence? When I visit classrooms, I don't see enough checking for understanding, and asking the L question in the feedback conversation gets teachers thinking about that. The best way to get inside teachers' heads—to get them really thinking about the best instructional practices—is to look together at concrete evidence of student learning—exit tickets, a range of student work from the class just observed, unit test results, or changes in students' reading levels over the last month.

Back to the question of how superintendents can ensure that all administrators are perceptive mini-observers. A SOTEL-like acronym is a good starting point, introduced and discussed with all teachers. Here are some additional steps (more on this in Chapter Nine):

- Reviewing the key insights from successful coaching: focus on one or two actionable elements; be direct and specific; focus on the behavior, not the person; and give clear goals for improvement (Klein, 2011).
- At principals' meetings, playing short video clips of teachers in action and having principals think silently about the most important pointers for the teacher, role-play the conversations, get feedback from their role-play partner, and then discuss as a group the key “teaching points” in the clip.
- Encouraging principals to do mini-observations in pairs and immediately discuss what they noticed and how they would address it with the teacher.
- Having principals bring short write-ups of mini-observations and get suggestions from colleagues.

- The superintendent doing mini-observations with each principal and discussing them in detail.
- Practice, practice, practice. There's nothing like doing mini-observations, as I learned over nine years, to get better at them. Teachers are the best tutors for their school leaders.

## 6. HUMBLE

Humility is a natural posture after mini-observations, and so is an informal tone. It's difficult for administrators to be all-knowing and arrogant after only a few minutes in a classroom. A good way to start a follow-up conversation is, "I was in your class for ten minutes and here's what struck me . . ." or "I'm curious about what happened after I left" or "Can you fill me in on that? I'm not too familiar with the content."

The ideal place for these four- to five-minute follow-up chats is the teacher's classroom when students aren't around. Being on the teacher's turf changes the power dynamic. In fact, it's a significant gesture for the principal to take the time to seek out teachers in their classrooms for feedback chats. There's the additional advantage mentioned earlier—seeing student work, curriculum artifacts, and other reminders of what was happening during the mini-observation. Of course, not all teachers have their own classrooms, and some rooms are in use pretty much continuously; in those cases, a stand-up chat in the corridor during a break might be best.

That doesn't mean the principal's office is always inappropriate for follow-up conversations, especially if there's serious criticism on the agenda. But for a great many teachers, being summoned to "the office" triggers an irrational fear from their days as students. Adults in a school still play with these memories: "Ooh, I saw you were in the principal's office. Is everything all right?" Another disadvantage with talking about mini-observations in the office is constant interruptions. Yet another is the principal being able to bring closure to conversations with especially talkative colleagues. Teachers love to talk about their work, and principals need to be able to move on to the myriad other things on their lists. All these are reasons for doing follow-up chats in teachers' classrooms or "on the hoof."

## 7. COURAGEOUS

In the course of doing mini-observations, administrators will see lots of effective teaching, but they will inevitably stumble across mediocre and ineffective practices—a teacher catching up on e-mail during class, students doing inane busywork, a sarcastic comment directed at a student, a homophobic gibe from one student to another allowed to pass unchallenged, grammatical mistakes on the board. Principals need to say something to these teachers afterward; if they don't, the inescapable message to the teacher is that whatever they were doing or not doing is officially all right.

There are several reasons why principals sometimes fail to speak to a teacher about a less-than-effective practices. One is a simple lack of intestinal fortitude—in plain English, cowardice. This is especially likely if the principal has reason to expect an angry or defensive reaction from the teacher. And let's face it, some teachers are scary. There were several at the Mather who got my stomach churning when I even considered criticizing them. No excuses. Principals have to step up to the plate and do their jobs. If they don't, who will?

A second reason for avoiding difficult conversations is being overly concerned with maintaining harmonious relationships with the staff. Here's what Michael Huberman (1993) had to say:

Public school principals depend heavily on the cooperation of teachers to get their core administrative, custodial, and political tasks accomplished. Such cooperation is endangered by

close supervision. Teachers have thousands of subtle means of retaliation (forgetting requests, over-loading administrators with trivial demands, working to rule, slacking off on monitoring of corridors, feeding parental grievances). And teachers know that the punishment and reward system of administrators depends first on the semblance of maintaining control, harmony, and parental inactivity. (p. 41)

In addition, some school leaders have the fatal weakness of wanting to be *liked*. Big mistake. When Harry Truman was in the White House, he said, “If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.” Good advice (and great for the pet industry).

A third reason for avoidance is that few faculties have talked through and reached agreement on some of the practices principals might criticize. Let’s take teachers correcting papers while students work quietly at their desks. My gut feeling when I encountered this at the Mather was that it wasn’t an appropriate use of contact time—the teacher should be walking around checking for understanding and giving students real-time coaching, or perhaps calling students up for individual conferences. But since our staff had never reached consensus on this question, I hesitated to criticize a teacher when I saw it in a classroom. What seemed obvious to me might not seem obvious to a teacher—so I held back.

A final reason for not stepping up to the plate is that many principals haven’t had enough practice with difficult conversations. When I became a principal, I hadn’t had much experience being a boss and was green when it came to giving critical feedback. I wish I’d been able to role-play with other principals in a “safe space.” Giving principals this kind of practice and feedback responding to real-life case studies is an essential part of the superintendent’s job.

But actually, frequent classroom visits and informal, low-stakes feedback chats make the job of criticizing teachers a bit easier—not easy, but easier. If a principal does only one formal observation a year and comes down hard on a teacher, then 100 percent of that teacher’s evaluations will have a negative tone. But if the principal does ten mini-observations and two or three of them are critical, it’s much easier for the teacher to accept.

What about persistently ineffective teachers? When administrators see serious problems in mini-observations and things don’t improve after suggestions and coaching, it’s time to shift gears and launch into a more formal process—full-lesson observations, a detailed diagnosis and improvement plan, lots of support, and repeating the cycle until the teacher either improves or is dismissed. In such cases, smart principals should get advice from their superintendent and the district’s legal counsel, and also keep union representatives informed as appropriate.

## 8. SYSTEMATIC

When I started doing mini-observations, I quickly realized that I couldn’t keep track of which classrooms I’d visited without a checklist. Exhibit 4.1 is a sample (with fictionalized names and comments) of the format I developed. Each afternoon or evening, I jotted the day, the date, and brief comments on the line after each teacher and put a check mark on the left when I’d had the face-to-face conversation.

In addition to helping me keep track of which teachers I’d seen in each cycle, this checklist was helpful in several other ways. First, it made me confident that every teacher was getting mini-observations—the system was fair and equitable. Second, it made me realize that there were several classrooms I tended to avoid—they always seemed to be the last ones on my list each time around. This had to do with the teacher vibes I got when I walked into these classrooms—and my own uncertainty about how I would handle the feedback. When I noticed this, I made a point of getting to these teachers earlier each cycle—and stepping up to the plate with my concerns.

## Exhibit 4.1

### Mini-Observation Notes

MINI-OBSERVATIONS 2009-2010

FROM: November 10<sup>th</sup>

TO: November

Elizabeth Abidi	
✓ Sylvia Alcock	Tues. Nov. 11 - Going over worksheet, low participation, doing too much for them.
Kwame Amoah	
Sonia Astrid	
Monica Avila	
✓ Angela Bailey	Mon. Nov. 10 - Worksheet on African climate and natural resources. Rigor level?
Constance Bartlett	
Mark Bonner	
Alice Buchner	
Natalie Chan	
Denise Colombo	Tues. Nov. 11 - Cooperative groups doing science exp. on levers, clear roles, great!
Henry Cueva	
Frank Cupido	
Raymond Garcia	
Jeff Gold	
Brian Gottlieb	
✓ Sartreina Harvey	Mon. Nov. 10 - Spelling words copied from board, dictionary. More individualization?
Kathleen Hennessy	
Lada Jaworski	
Kelly Jones	
Andrew Kelsey	
Adrienne Kinsey	
Joshua Koren	
Marc Leopoldo	
✓ Lynn Liu	Mon. Nov. 10 - Circle discussion of HBJ story. Lots of eagerness, participation, praise.
Tyson Matsumoto	Tues. Nov. 11 - Read aloud of Strong Nora - animated. Kids too passive. Method?
Katherine May	
Jacqueline Maynard	
Matthew Ong	
Agnes O'nias	
Jo Phan	
Michael Priest	
Sebastien Renard	
Glea Riss	
Misha Roth	Tues. Nov. 11 - Social studies big book on weather, lots of participation, good questions
✓ Deepak Shah	Tues. Nov. 11 - Hands-on money lesson - bills, coins, making change - real-world!
Naomi Simon	
Ginger Sims	
Robert Singleton	
Katarina Smirnova	
Jessica Wolk	
✓ Kathy Zimmer	Mon. Nov. 10 - Round-robin reading, very hum-drum. Gotta develop alternatives!

And third, the checklist helped me keep up the pace toward my goal of ten visits per teacher for the year. Ideally, each cycle of forty-two teachers would take about three weeks, and if it was taking longer than that, I knew I had to pick up the pace. A daily target was a big motivator for me, but some principals prefer a weekly target—and make a point of rewarding themselves in some way when they hit it.

There is a tendency in some schools toward binge mini-observations—going for a couple of weeks without any classroom visits and then blitzing as many as ten in one day. The killer disadvantage of this is not being able to give prompt, thoughtful feedback to each teacher in a timely manner. Checklists help principals keep up a steady pace of one to three visits a day, fitting in the conversations into the nooks and crannies of each day.

Another aspect of being systematic with mini-observations is making a point of doing them at different times of day, observing different parts of lessons (beginning, middle, and end), and seeing teachers working in different subject areas (at the elementary level) and with different classes (in middle and high schools). Some administrators try to see particular grade levels or subject areas in a single day—for example, the third-grade team or the English department—to get a real-time view of how instruction is going in that area.

Herb Daughtry, then a Brooklyn middle-school principal, developed another practice to deepen his understanding of what was going on in classrooms: “intensives.” In addition to doing two regular mini-observations a day, he picked one teacher each week and made brief visits to his or her class Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. This gave him a much more complete picture of the curriculum as it rolled out over an entire week and made his feedback conversations richer and more helpful.

A different way of getting an in-depth sense of instruction in secondary schools is for the administrator to become a student for a day and follow one class through its schedule: math, English, social studies, science, lunch, physical education, and so forth. This gives powerful insights about how teaching and learning look from the other side of the desk. One principal noticed that in his middle school, the same five students were raising their hands and getting called on in every class. That had immediate implications for instruction throughout the school—cold-calling!

## 9. DOCUMENTED

There are two questions when it comes to documenting mini-observations: Should the administrator take notes in the classroom? And should the teacher get something in writing afterward?

- *Note taking.* Principals often worry that they’ll forget what they see during a mini-observation, so there’s an urge to jot notes. But the minute a principal takes out a pen or flips open a laptop, the visit becomes more official and (to some teachers) nervous-making. Mini-observations work better—and adult learning is more likely to take place—when visits are informal and low-stakes and teachers don’t feel they’re under pressure.

So does this mean principals shouldn’t take notes? As described in Chapter Three, my approach at the Mather was to resist the urge to write anything down during mini-observations; instead, later in the day, I’d jot brief notes in the one-page format shown in Exhibit 4.1. I’ve never had a great short-term memory, but I was pleasantly surprised at how readily I remembered the important details of what happened during each mini-observation when I wrote my notes that afternoon or evening. There’s something about being able to recall a specific scene—Room 12 just before lunch—that helps even the most cluttered mind recapture what happened.



After completing a cycle of all the teachers, I moved on to a new sheet. This collection of very brief notes (which were only for my reference) was helpful to review to prepare for end-of-year evaluation conferences.

As I've shared my not-writing-during-the-observation approach with principals and teachers and checked in with them on what they prefer, I've encountered strikingly different opinions. Some teachers don't want the principal to write *anything* down during mini-observations. Some are fine with writing, but not on smartphones or laptops (the suspicion is always that the administrator is catching up on e-mail). And some don't care what the administrator does as long as they get thoughtful face-to-face feedback.

One way or another—either during the mini-observation or afterward—principals need to write down the key points so as not to forget them, and there are plenty of possible formats. The simplest is a note card for each visit with the teacher's name, the day and date, the period visited, the content, and quick thoughts on one or more of the SOTEL criteria. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo of North Star Academy says it has been very helpful for his administrators to write down one change they'd like to see after each classroom visit—and also keep track of whether teachers are improving or continuing to have the same problem (they write these notes on a single sheet for each teacher).

As mentioned earlier, a number of enterprising companies are marketing software that allows principals to record classroom impressions on their smartphones, tablets, and laptops. While this technology has undeniable appeal for busy principals—"Point, Click, Done" boasts one advertisement—I believe this approach has serious disadvantages. First, the principal is tied to a simple checklist that can't possibly capture the subtleties of a classroom. Second, entering data consumes attention better spent on being a careful observer. And third, to a teacher, having someone tap-tapping on an electronic device at the back of your classroom is bound to be disconcerting.

Whatever method is used, the most important things are (a) maintaining a nonbureaucratic, informal atmosphere during each mini-observation, (b) being a good observer, (c) recording a few insights in a format that is comfortable for the principal's note-taking style, (d) remembering the key points for the conversation with the teacher, and (e) keeping track of which teachers have been visited in each cycle. Figure 4.8 shows the preferences expressed (via clickers) in a recent workshop with principals on Long Island, New York.

- Written feedback after mini-observation? In the nine years I did mini-classroom observations at the Mather, I never gave teachers anything in writing after our follow-up chats. Since then, I've been persuaded that it's a good idea to write a brief summary after each visit and conversation and share it with the teacher. What changed my mind?

First, some teachers hear what they want to hear, especially if criticism is involved, and may leave the conversation without getting the administrator's point. Here's an example. A New York City high school principal spoke quite critically to one of her teachers about lesson planning and preparation. When she asked the teacher for his main take-away from their conversation, he said, "That you want me to do lesson plans because the Department of Education requires them." The principal realized that she needed to try again, more clearly this time, to explain the critical importance of thinking through a lesson beforehand, and she made sure to follow up with a note reinforcing the point.

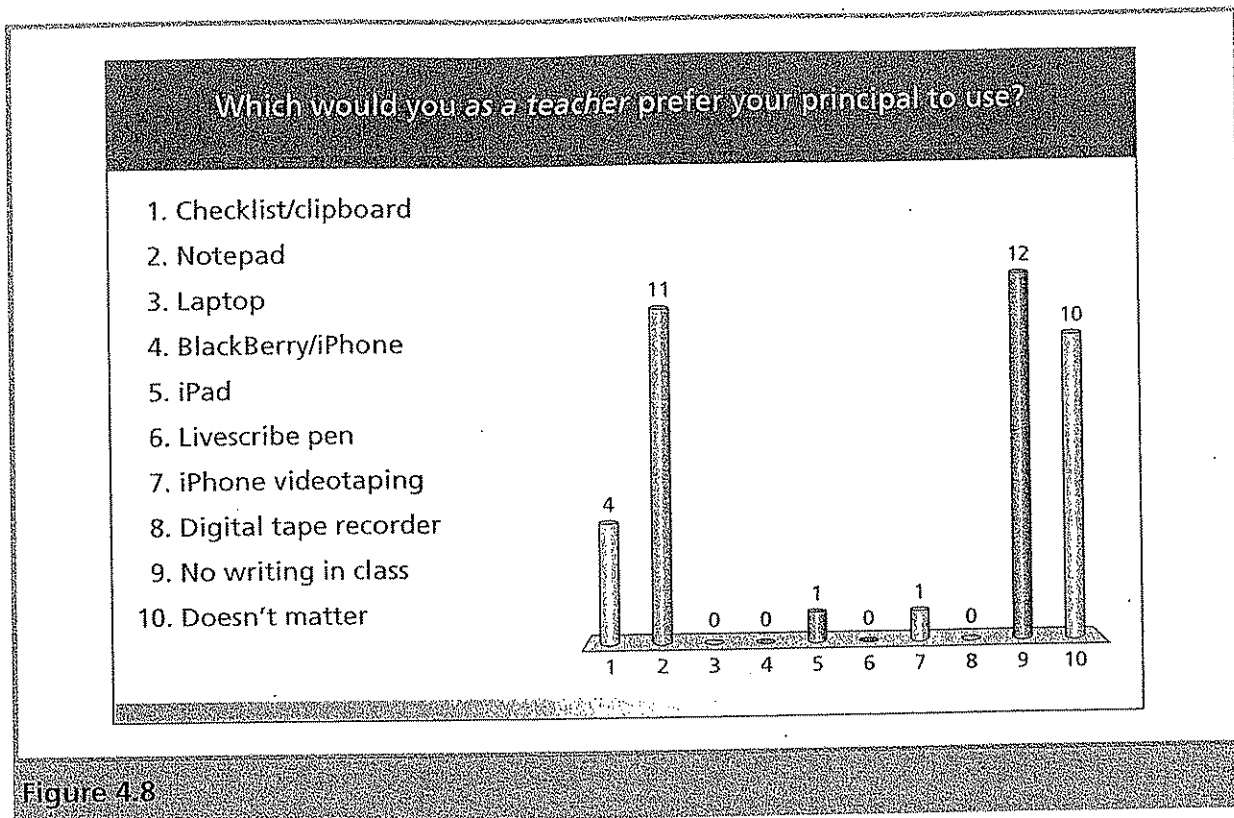


Figure 4.8

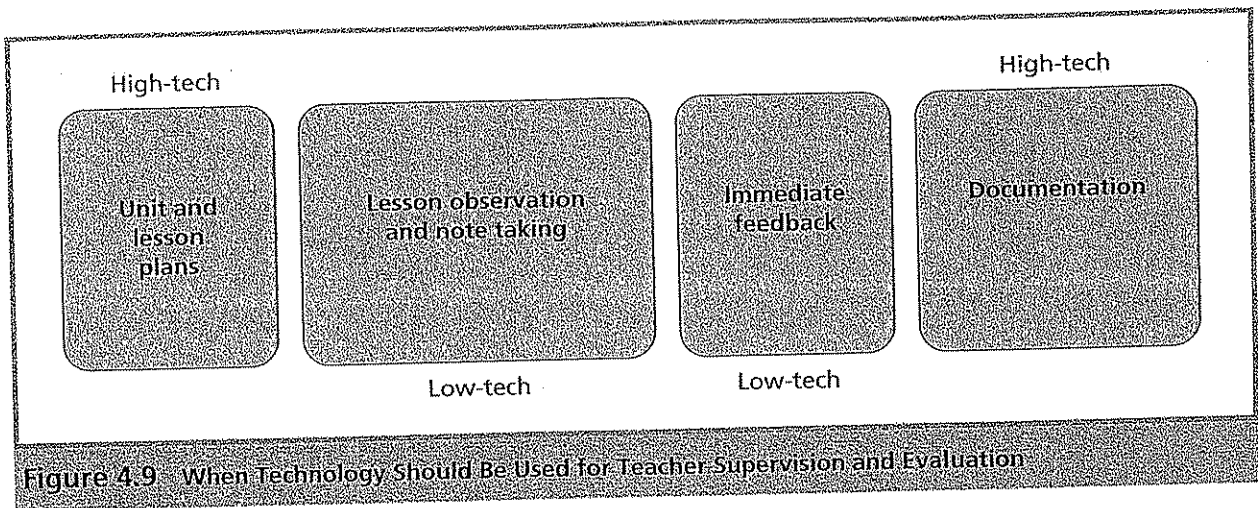
A second reason for brief follow-up notes is to give mini-observations enough gravitas to *replace* traditional whole-lesson observations. This will never happen unless there's detailed documentation of the year's mini-observations; assurances of wonderful face-to-face conversations are not enough. To persuade superintendents, school boards, and union officials, there needs to be a paper trail.

But here's a crucial point—the sequence matters:

1. Mini-observation
2. Conversation
3. Brief write-up

If the written comments *precede* the chat, teachers are likely to think the principal's mind is made up and become defensive or shut down. An informal conversation before official documentation also gives administrators a chance to correct a mistaken impression or decide on a different main point before giving the teacher something in writing.

The best software I've seen for keeping track of mini-observations is T-EVAL—[www.t-eval.com](http://www.t-eval.com)—developed by three educators in Tennessee. This net-based program has pull-down menus for recording which teachers have had mini-observations on which dates, whether each observation took place at the beginning, middle, or end of the lesson, and gives administrators a one-thousand-character-maximum window to sum up their thoughts after each conversation (the paragraph is archived and e-mailed to the teacher). T-EVAL also has teacher evaluation rubrics for self-assessment, goal setting, and summative



evaluation. Appendix B has samples of actual T-EVAL follow-up notes written by two New York City administrators.

Here's my take on where technology is helpful to administrators and where it's not. There are basically four steps to teacher supervision and evaluation: (1) walking in with some knowledge of the intended curriculum, (2) the actual classroom visit, (3) immediate feedback to the teacher, and (4) documentation for the record. I believe high-tech is best for the first step—Google docs or some electronic way for teacher teams to share their curriculum unit plans with administrators and get their input. But classroom visits should be low-tech—being a good observer and maybe jotting a few notes on a notepad. Teacher feedback should be low-tech—face-to-face conversations each time. And documentation should be high-tech, using a program like T-EVAL. Figure 4.9 shows this graphically.

How much time would an average principal spend on mini-observations, conversations, and brief notes? Here's a possible scenario for one teacher:

- Mini-observation: ten minutes
- Follow-up talk: five minutes
- Writing the follow-up note: fifteen minutes

That's a total of thirty minutes per teacher. If a principal did two teachers a day, that's a total of one hour. Should a principal spend an hour a day on this kind of instructional leadership? You bet! Is this challenging? Absolutely. Will there be crazy days with zero classroom visits and follow-ups? Of course. *But this is the work.* Every administrator's priority-management challenge is getting to it almost every day, amidst all the other stuff, and keeping up the pace.

And here's an amazing fact: ten short-visit-and-follow-up cycles would total three hundred minutes per teacher for the year—just a little more than the four-hour (240-minute) traditional process for one teacher—but *so* much more likely to improve teaching and learning!

Superintendents can play a big part in making all this manageable (see Chapter Nine for more on their role). District leaders are in a position to clear away lots of unproductive bureaucracy and paperwork (including the traditional evaluation process), make sure there are enough instructional administrators in each building, provide support and training for classroom observations and feedback, check in on how it's going when they visit schools, and hold principals accountable.

## 10. LINKED TO TEACHER TEAMWORK AND SCHOOLWIDE IMPROVEMENT

Face-to-face feedback with each teacher is vital to the instructional impact of mini-observations. But if follow-up is limited to individual conversations and brief write-ups, part of the potential of these classroom visits is lost. Smart principals get a multiplier effect by using what they learn in mini-observations and follow-up chats to broach ideas with teacher teams, forge links with team curriculum planning and results analysis (more on these in Chapters Five and Six), and bolster the school's overall plan for improving student achievement—especially the “Big Rock” projects that are the special focus for each academic year (see Chapter Eight).

Principals who frequently and systematically visit all classrooms have a unique schoolwide perspective and are constantly seeing ideas that can be leveraged to improve teaching and learning in other classrooms. Principals are ideally situated to be *cross-pollinators*, suggesting best practices to individual teachers or teams and getting people to observe colleagues in other parts of the school. Principals can also pass along insights to instructional coaches and can arrange for training in specific areas of need, drawing on expertise from within the building or from outside consultants.

Here's an example. Boston elementary principal Emily Cox noticed that a number of teachers weren't launching their math lessons effectively; specifically, they weren't communicating their goals to help students understand the overarching purpose, weren't using effective “hooks” to grab students' attention up front, and weren't checking for understanding early on. Cox decided to devote a complete cycle of classroom visits to looking at “lesson launches” and made a point of being in classrooms for the first five to ten minutes of each lesson. The insights she gained led to a series of grade-level discussions, peer visits, and an all-staff professional development session—all of which improved the way many teachers used the opening minutes of their lessons.

Mini-observations can also be an entry point for talking about student learning. Chapter Six makes the case for using interim assessment data to spark low-key discussions about results, but several other strategies can also be used as part of the mini-observation process. First, principals can watch to see how well teachers are tracking student learning. Second, principals can use follow-up chats to ask questions: “How is the Egypt unit coming along?” “What Fountas-Pinnell reading levels have your lowest reading groups reached?” “How did the algebra test go?”

If the principal has established a trusting climate, a teacher might feel comfortable saying, “My team just spent two weeks teaching quadratic equations and my kids bombed in the test. Can you help us figure out what happened?” Teachers need to know that their boss is keenly interested in how well students are learning (not just on high-stakes state tests, but on their assignments, projects, and classroom tests) and feel able to reach out for support. The essence of these conversations should be an ongoing, collegial exploration of what's working in each classroom and what's required to take teaching to the next level and reach all students.

A third way to shift the conversation to results is taking a midyear break from mini-observations, setting up short appointments with teachers, and asking them to bring their grade book, copies of a recent assignment or test, and a few samples of student work. When Mike Schmoker (2006) was a young middle school English teacher in the 1970s, his principal used this approach (in addition to making frequent classroom visits). During her conversations with teachers, she asked questions like these:

- How did this assignment go?
- What elements of the rubric are kids struggling with?

- How do you intend to improve in those areas?
- Do you need any help or support?

“You can’t imagine how powerfully these simple, time-efficient rituals influenced the quality of our teaching and ensured a guaranteed and viable curriculum,” says Schmoker.

The ultimate goal of supervisory feedback, whether it’s the principal’s mini-observations, one-on-one conferences, or a more extensive visit by a coach or peer, is to nurture that supervisory voice in teachers’ heads and foster an acute consciousness of whether students are learning what’s being taught. Achievement will soar when individual teachers and teacher teams are constantly puzzling, theorizing, and debating about how students are responding and how teaching can be improved.

I want to return to the idea of “third-party” evaluators that was mentioned in Chapter Two. Bringing in outside observers to supplement principals’ evaluations has been piloted in Washington, D.C., and was recently endorsed by the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project. The rationale is that outside observers are more objective and can help compensate for the biases and limitations of building leaders.

I’m unconvinced. In addition to the expense of extra evaluators, I’m concerned that people who ride circuit among a number of schools can’t make enough visits to get to know individual teachers well, are often ignorant about the internal politics and human dynamics of each school (whose child just got into college, who is feuding with whom), and may confuse teachers by giving them different feedback from what they’re hearing from the principal.

I believe principals are by far the best people to be supervising and evaluating teachers. They’re ideally positioned to get into classrooms on a daily basis, have access to rewards and sanctions that get teachers to take their suggestions seriously, know the curriculum and human dimensions of their buildings, can spread ideas to teacher teams, and have the potential to knit together their observations into the overall instructional leadership of the school. Superintendents, in my view, should put their time and resources into improving the instructional leadership skills (and courage) of their principals, not into end-running and second-guessing school leaders with another layer of evaluators.

## 11. LINKED TO END-OF-YEAR TEACHER EVALUATION

One of the first questions teachers ask about mini-observations is whether they are supervision or evaluation—in other words, do they *count*? When I started short classroom visits at the Mather, the idea was that there was a firewall between this kind of low-key supervision and summative evaluations. But as teachers got comfortable with my pop-ins and personal feedback, they became more and more disenchanted with formal evaluations and began to wonder if we could allow data from mini-observations to be used in the year-end review.

Within a few years, virtually all teachers agreed (via individual sign-offs, with the assent of the union representative) to allow me to skip formal observation visits entirely and use my short classroom visits-with-feedback to write their final evaluations. (For the small number of teachers in danger of getting overall Unsatisfactory ratings, I followed the district’s regular procedures.) The Mather had tough, no-nonsense union leadership, so getting agreement on treating mini-observations as officially evaluative was remarkable. It showed that we’d reached the point where teachers trusted my informal feedback enough to waive business as usual.

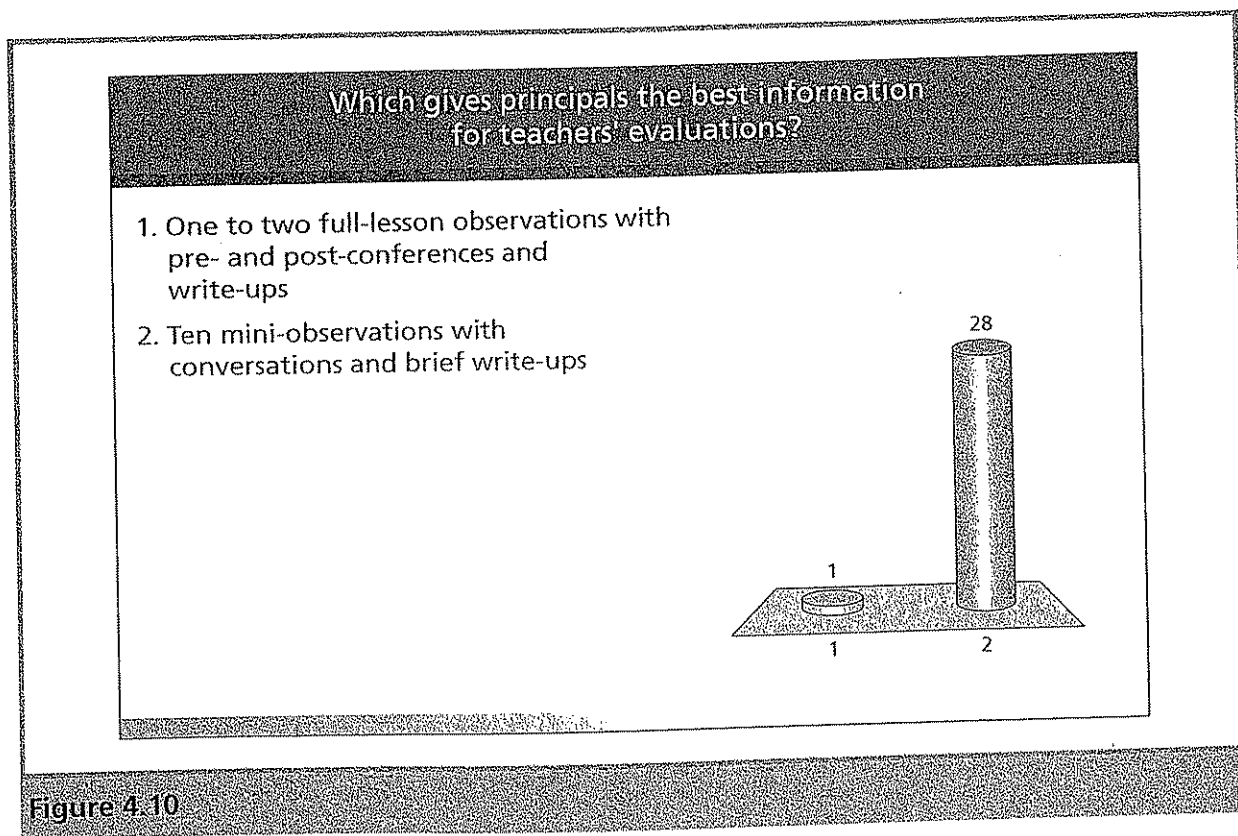
The agreement was an enormous gift of time to me, saving scores of unproductive lesson observations and write-ups and allowing me to focus even more intently on frequent mini-observations and high-quality follow-up talks with teachers. The fact that we were able to arrive at such an arrangement makes me

optimistic that it could happen in other schools and districts. The key is a clear agreement up front, honest feedback during the year, and, most important, *trust*—which has been defined by Aneil Mishra (1996, p. 264) as “one’s willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent.”

So mini-observations are more than just “soft” coaching; what the principal sees in these short visits should count toward the official year-end evaluation. Mini-observations are a great opportunity for principals to praise and make suggestions to teachers, think about ways to improve teacher teamwork and the full-school effort—and gather pieces of the puzzle for the teacher’s year-end evaluation. Mini-observations are an artful blend of supervision, coaching, and evaluation.

When I was in graduate school in the early 1980s, I remember a professor asserting with great confidence that the supervisor and evaluator can’t be the same person—the functions need to be separated. I’ve come to disagree with that. Mini-observations are an arena in which the principal—the official rating officer—can provide useful supervisory feedback and support to teachers on a day-to-day basis *and* use information gathered to do a formal evaluation at the end of the year.

This is a little scary to some teachers, especially the part about *unannounced* visits being evaluative. To address these jitters, I recommend posing a simple question: Which of these options gives administrators a more accurate picture of teachers’ work over an entire school year? (a) One or two announced full-lesson observations with extensive write-ups or (b) ten short unannounced visits with follow-up conversations and brief written comments? I’ve asked this question to many groups of administrators, teachers, and union officials, and the answer (via anonymous clickers) is overwhelmingly the latter. Figure 4.10 shows the data from one group.



Nobody likes to be criticized, but at the end of the day, virtually all teachers want the truth, and they can handle it when it's spread out over ten visits and chats, with criticism interspersed with genuine praise. That's how teachers know they're good—or learn how to get better—at one of the most challenging jobs there is. If school leaders handle this process well, learning from their mistakes and listening to teachers at every stage, the result will be good for teachers, good for administrators, good for the school's adult culture, and good for student learning.

What's the best way to pull together all the information from observations and conversations and team meetings at the end of the year? With a good teacher-evaluation rubric—a tool that is becoming increasingly popular. Chapter Seven will examine these in detail.

Of course, including mini-observation data in final evaluations requires an explicit union agreement, which should also include a different process when a teacher shows signs of being unsatisfactory. When that happens, the principal should shift gears and embark on a more formal process: clear notice of what needs to change via the summative evaluation instrument, longer visits with a detailed diagnosis and prescription, several opportunities to improve, plenty of support, and, if things don't get better, dismissal.

## 12. EXPLAINED WELL

I've seen eager-beaver principals launch into mini-observations without presenting the idea to teachers and then immediately run into problems. Without a proper introduction, teachers will have some serious concerns about what they may regard as intrusions into their classrooms. It's important for principals to explain the rationale for mini-observations and give teachers a chance to talk through their concerns.

I recommend doing this in a staff meeting right at the beginning of the school year, perhaps kicked off by the question, *What's the problem to which mini-observations are the solution?* The truth is that the supervision and evaluation process is a bigger month-by-month headache for administrators than it is for teachers, and to accept change, teachers need to see the world through a principal's eyes. This means talking frankly about the ways the traditional system keeps principals from getting into classrooms on a regular basis, minimizes meaningful conversations about teaching and learning, and saddles them with a lot of paperwork that makes the job that much more tedious and frustrating.

Having explained the basic rationale and sketched out how mini-observations work—brief, unannounced visits every few weeks with a face-to-face conversation after each one—I suggest having teachers work in small groups to brainstorm their worries. This will create a lively buzz! After about five minutes, call the group back together and record the worries on an easel sheet without comment. I've done this many times, and here's what often comes up:

- You won't be in my classroom long enough to understand what's going on.
- When you come in, it will distract me and the students.
- What if you get the wrong idea and unfairly criticize me?
- This is all about "gotcha" to fire teachers.
- What will you be looking for? The whole rubric? Marzano's checklist?
- Is this supervision or evaluation? Does what you see during mini-observations count?
- You don't know enough about my subject to make helpful comments.
- Are you going to be typing on your laptop or iPad? That drives me crazy.
- You'll never be able to give feedback to everyone—we're all too busy.

- Is everyone going to get mini-observations, or is this only for “problem” teachers?
- After we talk, will I get something in writing?
- Do your notes go to the central office?

Next, I suggest playing a ten-minute video clip of a teacher in action. It should be a teacher from a different school with a similar student population, and the teaching should be of mixed quality—not awful, but not excellent either. Then ask teachers to reflect silently for a minute, stand up, find a colleague they don’t usually interact with, decide who’s going to be the principal, and role-play a feedback conversation. Urge people to really get into it—*be the principal, be the teacher.*

After three to four minutes, call time, thank people for engaging in the exercise even if they hate role-playing, have people sit down, and debrief. Good discussion questions include (it’s ideal to ask these via anonymous clickers): Was that long enough to see what was going on in the classroom? Was it possible to have a substantive conversation about what went on? How difficult was it to give the teacher feedback?

What usually emerges from the discussion is (a) surprise at how much goes on in a classroom in ten minutes, and (b) surprise at how much there is to talk about after such a short visit. Invite teachers to share the compliments and criticisms that came up in the role-play and the way these were delivered. There’s usually a diversity of opinion, with some people being much harder on the teacher in the video than others.

Now it’s time for the principal to bring the discussion back to the list of worries and talk about the nitty-gritty of how the mini-observation will work. Teachers might be invited to suggest answers to the worries one by one, rather than the principal being in the position of defending the system. Some items on the list will be easy to deal with—the potential of short visits and the importance of face-to-face conversations will be apparent after the video and role-playing—and some items will require discussion—for example, Should the principal refrain from writing or typing notes during mini-observations? (Teachers differ on this question.) The trickiest issues will be collective bargaining issues, whether what the principal sees can count in final evaluations, and the principal’s subject-area expertise with certain teachers (high school physics, for example). Here are some possible answers to worries:

- *You’ll disrupt my class.* Not if the visits are frequent enough for students and teachers to become accustomed to them.
- *You’ll catch me at a bad moment.* That’s possible, but there will be plenty of other moments to balance that out.
- *There’s no pre-observation conference.* Those have limited impact anyway, and now we’ll be concentrating on team unit plans.
- *What are you looking for during mini-observations?* SOTEL or an alternative five-item list generated by the faculty.
- *How will we know if it’s a mini-observation or you’re there for another reason?* The staff might decide on a nonverbal signal—tugging on your right ear, for example—to signal that it’s a mini.
- *Will some teachers get more than others?* No, this will be fair and equitable—although some follow-up conversations may last longer than others.
- *You’ll never keep this up. I know what will happen. I’ll get three mini-observations in the fall and then no more for the rest of the year.* I hope that won’t happen. I’m going to set a weekly target and work hard to stick to it. Hold me accountable!



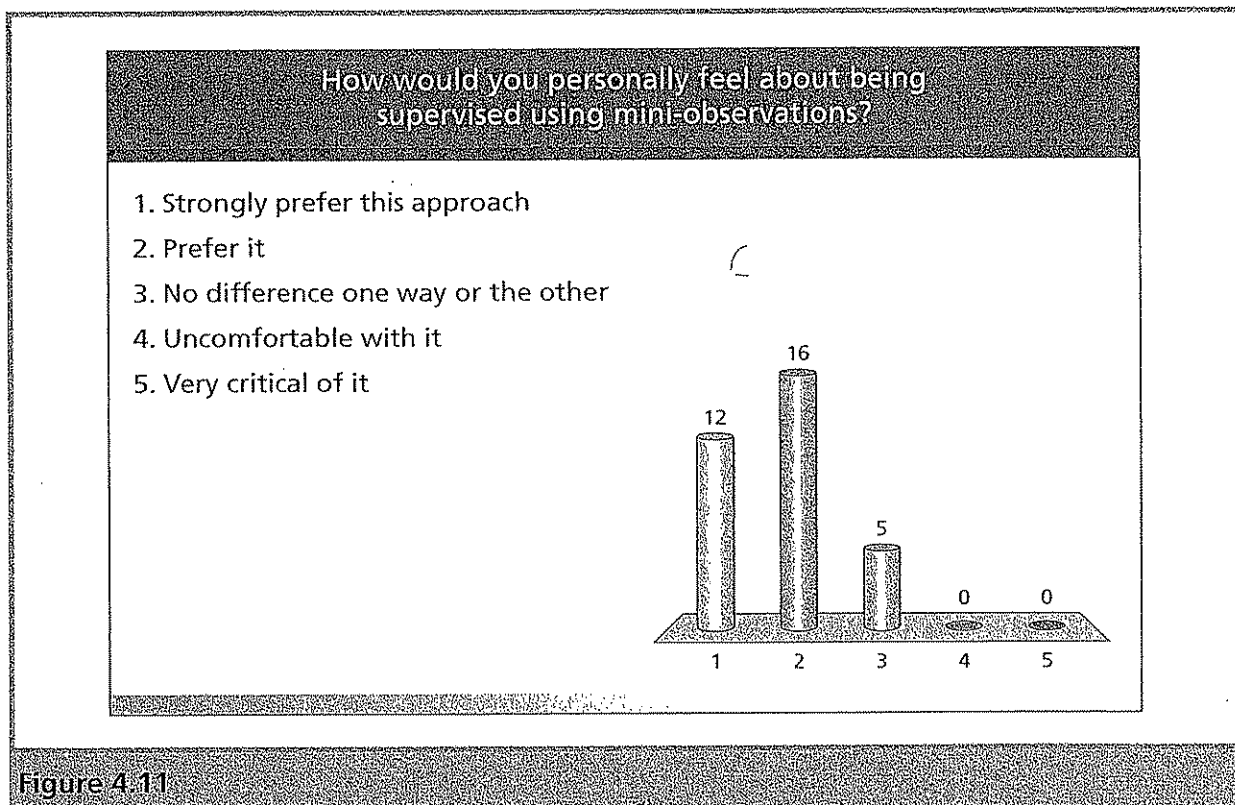
- *Do the mini-observations count toward my evaluation?* Yes, but there should be no surprises at the end of the year because you've been getting feedback and suggestions all along.
- *What does the research say about mini-observations?* So far, there's very little, but a 2011 Wallace Foundation study provided some preliminary evidence that schools whose principals make frequent, spontaneous visits to classrooms and give teachers regular feedback do significantly better in terms of student achievement.

The best outcome from this one-hour meeting should be consensus that the faculty will give this a try, with a meeting scheduled in a month or two to take another look at the list of worries and do some fine-tuning. Figures 4.11 and 4.12 show typical responses after a good explanation of mini-observations.

### NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

Done right, mini-observations greatly enhance the principal's ability to be an effective instructional leader and bring about significant improvements in teaching and learning. Here's a summary of the payoff:

- Getting an accurate sense of the quality of instruction students are experiencing on a daily basis.
- Giving all teachers the message that they should bring their A game every day.
- Getting to know teachers better, both as instructors and as people.
- Through humble and authentic feedback, building trust, which is the lubricant of effective schools.
- Seeing effective teaching practices and spreading them to other teachers.
- Making better decisions on professional development, materials, and consultants.



How much impact would this have on teaching and learning?

1. Very positive
2. Somewhat positive
3. Not much impact
4. No impact

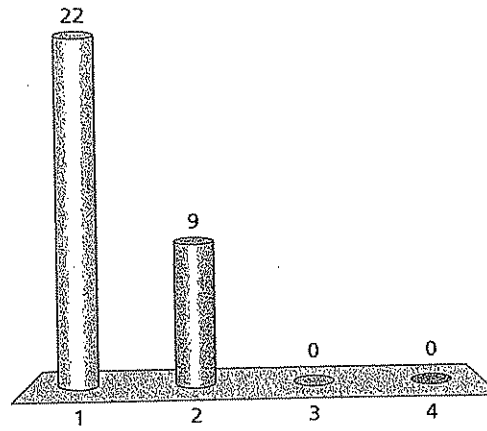


Figure 4.12

- Seeing students in an instructional setting and getting to know their strengths and needs, as well as enjoying their humor and insights.
- Developing “situational awareness”—having a finger on the pulse of the school’s culture and climate.
- Being visible in all parts of the building, which prevents a variety of problems.
- Identifying teachers who are having difficulty so they can get additional support.
- Developing a debureaucratized, informal style that facilitates collegial learning and reduces teacher stress.
- Being well informed for meetings with the leadership team, teacher teams, and parents.
- Through a blend of coaching, supervision, and evaluation, gathering lots of data for end-of-year teacher evaluations.

These are all powerful drivers of school improvement, and I hope I’ve made a persuasive case for implementing mini-observations.

But mini-observations aren’t enough. My coaching, school visits, and research since leaving the principalship in 2002 have convinced me that when it comes to getting all students to high levels of achievement, three other pieces need to be in place—team curriculum unit design, analysis of and follow-up on interim assessments, and teacher evaluation rubrics. Each of these increases the power of mini-observations and is in turn enhanced by them. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven explore these strategies and the synergy that can develop among them.

## WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**ELLIOTT LANDON**  
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To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Elliott Landon

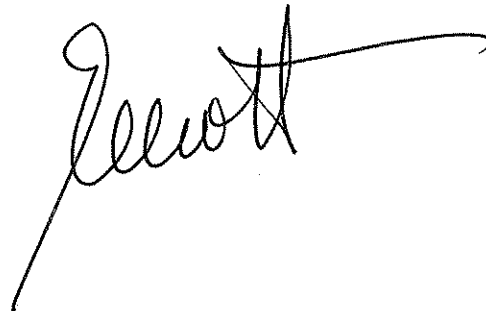
Subject: New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC):  
Staples Self-Study

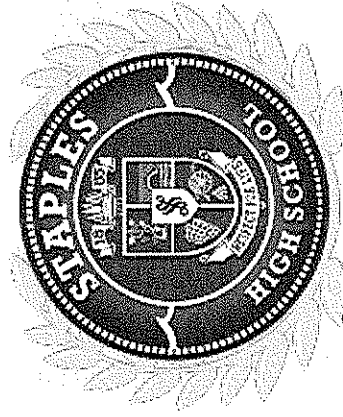
Date: June 16, 2014

During the 2013-14 school year, the Administration and staff at Staples High School embarked upon a self-study, as required by NEASC, as Staples seeks continued accreditation as a high school of excellence. Presiding over the project as co-chairs have been AJ Scheetz, 6-12 Science Department Chair and James D'Amico, 6-12 Social Studies Chair.

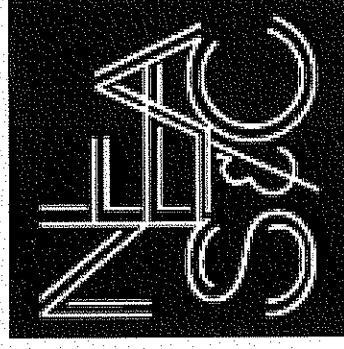
The self-study will continue into the 2014-15 school year and the formal NEASC visitation and evaluation will occur in October 2015.

A final report concerning our continued accreditation will be issued by NEASC in February 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elliott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



# Staples High School NEASC Evaluation



## Year 1 Progress Report

Staples High School Faculty Meeting

June 2, 2014

# **Purpose of the Self-Study**

- ❖ Gather evidence on each Standard for Accreditation
- ❖ Reflection on how well the school meets the Standards
  - ❖ Emphasis on how school follows its own core values, beliefs, expectations
- ❖ Provide guidance to support the school's ongoing efforts to improve practices

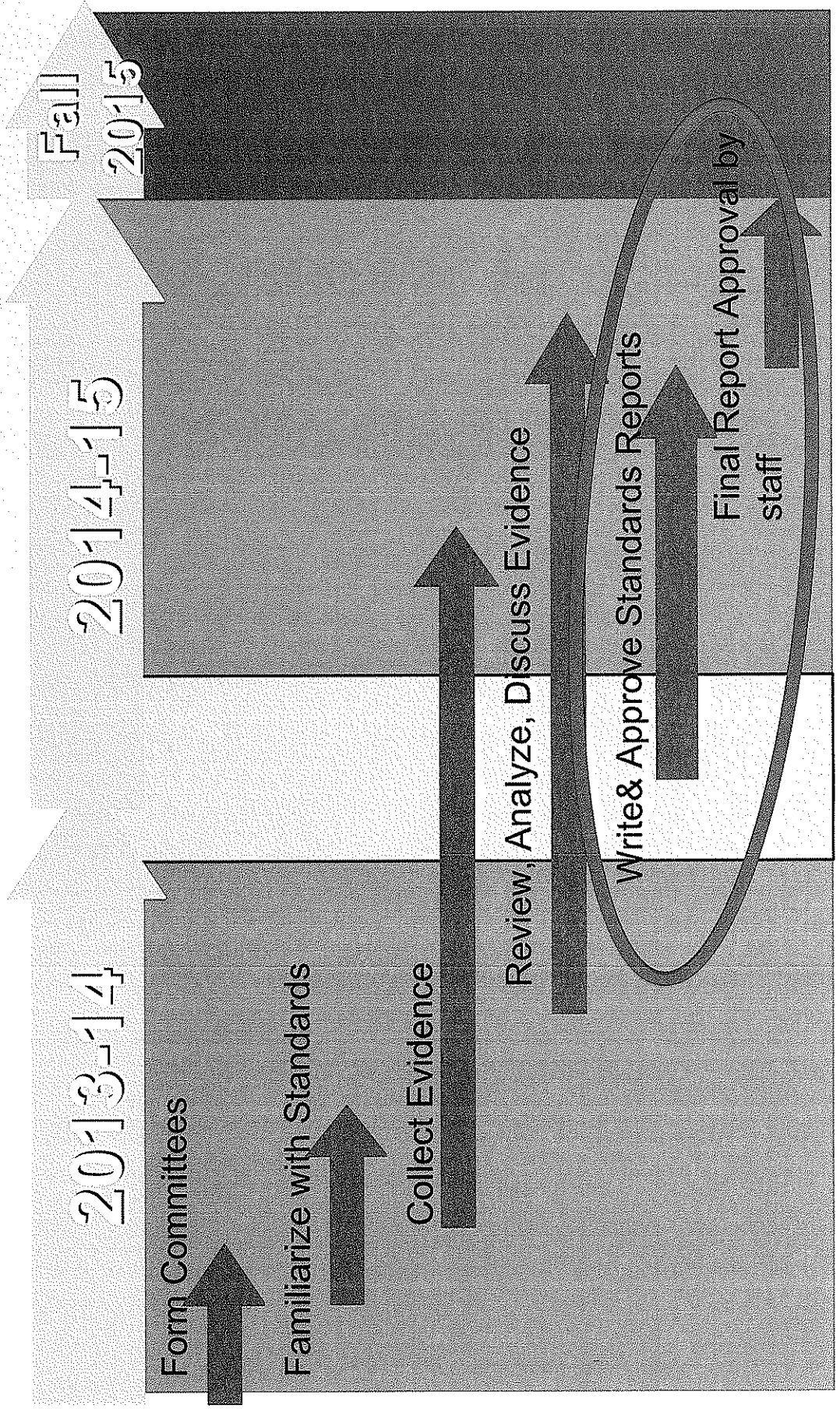
# **Progress: Evidence Gathering**

- ❖ Over 1,000 pieces of evidence across the 7 standards
- ❖ Evidence categorized into 54 separate indicators
- ❖ Endicott surveys administered to 2,248 individuals
- ❖ Over 1,500 hours of labor

# **Progress: Identifying Strengths**

- ❖ Human, capital, and operating resources
- ❖ Parent and student confidence in the education we are providing
- ❖ Emphasis on inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills
- ❖ Diversity and depth of assessments
- ❖ Use of the Westport 2025 Lens for multiple purposes
- ❖ Students feel safe in school
- ❖ Access to and use of technology

# Timeline of the Self-Study





# **Getting Ready for the Accreditation Visit**

- ❖ Reports being drafted by Co-Chairs and Steering Committee now through the fall semester
- ❖ Will talk with many members of the broader school community
- ❖ In October, faculty will begin to review, conduct approval votes for each of the seven Standards reports
- ❖ Report will be completed by end of May, 2015

# **The Big Day(s)**

- ❖ Visiting Team will be here Sunday, October 25 through Wednesday, October 28, 2015
- ❖ Final report from NEASC distributed in February 2016