Principal Checklist

“Leaders don’t force people to follow, they invite them on a journey.”
– Charles S. Lauer

☐ FTE Week: The very best thing a building administrator can do is to make sure your teachers are taking accurate attendance each and every day:
  • Counselors should double check schedules to ensure all students have the classes you think they have.
  • Class changes should be over and done with, finished and completed, by the week before FTE week.
  • If you have a homecoming assembly on the count day, everybody (the homecoming court, the band, the gym set-up people, everybody) reports to that period class for attendance before headed to the gym. If you have a two period assembly, have the students report to the second class for attendance after the assembly is out.
  • If a student is waiting to see a counselor, make sure the student has gone to class first for attendance. If the counselor is working with a student and not finished when the bell rings to end a class, have the student leave the counselor’s office and report to the class for attendance, then go back to the counselor.
  • Have you begun services to home-bound students? How are you accounting for your online students?
  • Ensure that teachers are taking attendance every period, every day.
  • If at all possible avoid suspensions during FTE week.
  • If you have a policy in which a student is considered absent if the student shows up for class 10 minutes late, then relax that tardy policy a bit during FTE week - a tardy student is considered in attendance with no follow-up necessary.
  • FTE week is not a particularly good week for fire drills or lock-downs.
  • Have any substitute teachers sign something to indicate that they verify that their attendance that day was to the best of their knowledge.

☐ Audit: If you get an audit (the auditors come to your building), have a place set aside for them to work. Not a coat room, copy room, or next to the band room. A place with sufficient space within a reasonable distance to a restroom. A place that can be locked when they leave for lunch. Provide access to beverages (coffee, tea, water, and some light snacks (donuts, bagels, etc.) Designate a person who is familiar with your attendance program to be their contact person.

☐ Give the auditors a number to use to contact them during the day when needed and, for that day, make responding a priority. Have what is required ready. Things like teaching schedules, signed attendance reports, student schedules, etc. should have been gathered the day before and there
when the auditors arrive. If you are scrambling to get these things when the auditors arrive, you are sending a message that student count is not a priority. And while your plate is full of many, many things that are truly more important than counting students, your funding, for now, is based on your school's ability to count students successfully.

☐ You will not lose money if a student is marked absent for a day during FTE week. The student has the entire week to show up. If they are marked in attendance during FTE week, they qualify for the money. You do the things above to reduce the work load on your support staff in tracking students marked absent and, the less students absent, the less chance of mistakes. The less mistakes are made. Auditors want you to get the money to which you are entitled. It never hurts to contact them to introduce yourself and ask them for suggestions for a successful audit. That gesture will mean a lot.

☐ **Academic Progress:** Review your systems in place for determining ongoing academic progress.

☐ **Lesson Plans:** Review lesson plans to ensure alignment to the Florida Standards and to inspect the rigor of work.

☐ **Feedback:** Insure that feedback sessions are scheduled after every formal or informal observation or walkthrough and conducted in person to promote growth. Be conscience of giving positive feedback as well as having collegial conversation about the next steps in teacher growth.

☐ **High-Visibility Supervision:** Plan your schedule to be in the hallways and classrooms. Students and teachers will appreciate your being visible and accessible. Be purposeful about your hall walks during passing periods – visit the classrooms of substitute teachers and hit each area of the building during the course of the day.

☐ **Student Activities:** Band and Choir concerts join athletics on the school calendar for the month of October. Make sure that facilities are reserved and ready for concerts. It is impossible to attend every event at the school, so be deliberate about attending at least one event for each activity. Look for nights on the calendar where three events are going on at one time – choir concert, volleyball game and football game...stop in for a trifecta! Don’t just blend in at events or stand in a corner. Meet and greet parents/students and remember to take pictures for your website and hallway bulletin boards. Pictures will attract people to your communications.

☐ **Monthly Meetings:** Here are two items you should consider adding to your staff meeting agenda this month.

  • **Staff Meeting Icebreaker of the Month: Beach Ball Toss:** Pre-divide a beach ball with random questions written on it. Participants toss the ball around the room introducing themselves and answering the question closest to their pinky. Looking for a ready-made beach ball? Try the Clever Catch Ball (they are great for use in the classroom too)!

  • **New Teacher Meeting Topics of the Month and Mentor Teacher Checklist:** E-mail the mentor checklist to your mentor teachers each month to encourage conversation with teacher mentees. Monthly suggestions are listed in the Teacher Induction Resource Guide.

  • **Teachers:** October and November can be a difficult time for new teachers, consider adding food or recognition to your monthly new teacher meeting.