

School Management Skills Briefing



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Happy New Year to all the schools. Now that all the festivities are over, let the work begin. We held an SEM meeting on the 22 February 2001. This meeting was to introduce Dr Sandy Ludeman to all the SEMs. Sandy, an expert in the field of management and leadership, will be working with us in the schools. We will be visiting all schools soon and look forward to this

Va!

Meet Dr Sandy Ludeman

Dr Sandy Ludeman has over 30 years experience in education and training. She is a former classroom teacher, curriculum coordinator and superintendent. In all her positions, she has focused on improving student learning outcomes and the necessary assessments to measure that learning. Sandy works with schools and other educational units to create a knowledge base so that people can work independently and flexibly. Incorporating a variety of staff development models, she designs plans based on the needs of the system and the people. She has a Bachelor's Degree in English and English Education, a Master's degree in Educational Foundations, and a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in Educational Administration and Curriculum.

Sandy has knowledge and experience of the South African school context as she has been working with a project based at the University of Natal. They are working with schools and the Department of Education in the Escourt area. Sandy is very excited that she will be working with all of you !

School Management 'holds key to good school results'

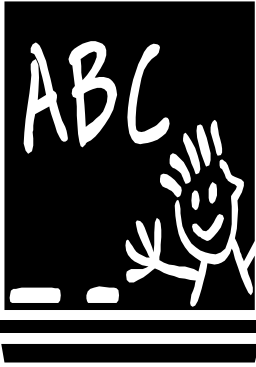
Effective school management has emerged as a critical factor behind the success of good academic performance at schools, according to a study of Western Cape schools commissioned by the German Technical Cooperation organisation (GTZ). The organisation studied 39 schools representing the entire spectrum of schools in the Western Cape.

On the issue of management, the GTZ said that attention should be paid to allocating teachers appropriately, managing time-tables and grade allocations well, and assuring retention of learners in the foundation phase.

Most teachers expressed satisfaction with their schools and learners. Key areas of satisfaction related to team work and professional autonomy, while dissatisfaction related to the lack of teamwork and community support.

Curriculum 2005 remained a major challenge. The key issues cited by teachers concerned resourcing, followed by discipline. About 75% of teachers felt that their schools would cope with these challenges.

Do you agree that school management holds the key to good school results?



Committee Rules – well, sort-of...

- * Never arrive on time, or you will be stamped a beginner.
- * Don't say anything until the meeting is half over; this stamps you as being wise.
- * Be as vague as possible; this prevents irritating the others
- * When in doubt, suggest that a subcommittee be appointed.
- * Be the first to move for adjournment; this will make you popular – it's what everyone is waiting for.

Note – smile value only – never for practice!

Guidelines for Delivering Constructive Criticism

Managers are often caught in what seems to be a paradox:

- ⇒ They need to maintain and create good working relationships
- ⇒ And at the same time they need to constantly perform course corrections on other's performance. In other words they need to **criticize**.

1. Think it through before you

say something. Don't just shoot from the hip.

- 2. Criticise in private (and praise in public). Public criticism offends not only the receivers, but the observers.
- 3. Respond to problems in a timely fashion. Realise your own propensity to put off dis-

cussing problem behaviours.

Remember the difficulty in reconstructing problems because everyone remembers them differently.

4. Criticise without comparison.

5. Criticise with specificity, not labels.

Focusing on Teacher Safety

Discussions of school safety issues usually focus on ensuring student safety. This is a natural expectation, given the charge schools have to protect the youngsters in their care. However, there is also a need to make sure that adult caregivers are well-versed in measures to protect their own safety. After all, how can teachers focus on protecting students if they have not taken sufficient steps to help insure their own well-being.

Are concerns about teacher safety justified? Reliable surveys abroad indicate that teachers are the victims of over 18 000 serious violent crimes each school year. A second sobering statistic from abroad is that between 8 and 10 percent of students report carrying a weapon to school on any given day. This means that two to three students in the classroom may have ready access to a means of immediate, lethal harm to a teacher.

Some questions to consider when focusing on teacher safety:

- Can staff identify alternate building exits in case the nearest one is blocked?
- How easy is it for a teacher to alert the office of an emergency?
- Have teachers been trained to intervene in a student fight?
- How do teachers deal with an intruder?
- Have teachers being trained to deal with an out-of-control parent?
- Have school personnel been trained to deal with a student emergency that might involve contact with bodily fluids (blood, urine)?
- Are there alternate means for teachers to contact outside emergency personnel in the event that they are unable to contact the school office?

Sources of information used in this briefing:

School management 'holds key to good school results' -Media release, 2 July 2001 Issued by: *The Communications Directorate, Western Cape Education Department*

Criticizing a Project Team Member's

Performance Five Guidelines for Delivering Constructive Criticism
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