**Reflective Journal – Week 4**

Date: March 30, 2012

Journal Entry #: 4

Issue addressed (e.g. Student Discipline): Informal Observations

Colorado Principal Standard addressed: II(c), III(a), III(d)

What I Observed/Learned:

This week I spent a good deal of time shadowing one of our assistant principals. On one of the days we spent an hour walking around to a number of classrooms and doing some quick “drop-in” observations. Our building’s major focus this year is on feedback and engagement, and we were looking for examples of feedback and engagement in action in the classroom. Each administrator has a form that they can take around and use to check off the different types of feedback and engagement strategies that they see. However, the assistant principal I was following around chose not to use the form. He felt that using the form made it so that he was not as able to effectively observe what the teacher was doing, especially since we were only doing short “drop-in” observations. It was interesting to see how quickly you can observe best teaching practice strategies in action, particularly when you have specific strategies you are looking for. Another very important thing that I observed were the conversations that took place between the AP and the teachers as he walked around. There were a lot of discussions that took place about how things were going and if there was anything that the teachers needed. The AP mentioned a number of times how important he felt it was that he gets out and talks with the teachers so that he would be able to support them. One teacher that he spoke with was clearly depressed and upset about some things that had happened to her regarding the drama production that had been put on. The AP was able to sit for a few minutes, talk with her, and make her feel a lot better about the entire situation.

How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice:

One impact that this will have on my leadership practice is making sure that I have something specific in mind that I am looking for when I am doing short, informal observations. I think it is helpful for an administrator to have something to focus on when you are only observing for a very short period of time. I also think it is important to not get overly attached to any particular form that is used as an observation tool. The form is there for a good purpose, but we must make sure that was are actually there observing as opposed to just checking off boxes on a form. Another impact this week had on me was realizing how important it is for an administrator to be out and visible in the building, so that teachers know that they have a support system there and available for them if needed.

Critical Issues:

Getting in a lot of observation periods is important in getting a complete (or as complete as possible) picture of a teacher’s instructional practices. Just stopping in for one formal observation is not enough to be able to effectively evaluate a teacher. Finding a way to use time effectively and get in to classrooms as often as possible is extremely important. It is also essential for the administration team to be a visible presence in the building. We must make sure that our teachers know that we care about them and are there to support them whenever needed. Being out and visible gives teachers an opportunity to talk with you, and also shows them that they can come find you at any other time and you will be available for them.