**Reflective Journal – Week 5**

Date: April 6, 2012

Journal Entry #: 5

Issue addressed (e.g. Student Discipline): Formal Observation/Evaluation Cycle

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

What I Observed/Learned:

This week I was able to observe and participate in the first two parts of the formal observation cycle. The first part consisted of the pre-observation conference between the teacher, the assistant principal, and myself. The teacher prepares plans and fills out a document before coming to the pre-conference, and during the pre-conference the administrator fills out a form and takes notes. The pre-conference detailed what would be taking place during the weightlifting class we would be observing, the assessment of learning that would be taking place throughout the weightlifting unit, and the alignment of the unit to state standards. The next day we did the observation, where we attended the class and watched what happened. My assistant principal provided me with the observation and evaluation tool that the district uses, and I was able to take notes on what I was observing. I was also able to interact with both the teacher and student during class to get input and feedback on what was taking place, and why it was happening.

How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice:

I believe that performing quality observations and evaluations is an extremely important tool an administrator must use in order to be an effective educational and instructional leader. An observation that provides excellent feedback to a teacher can help to stimulate new thoughts and ideas about their teaching practice, and can help them to grow into a more effective teacher. My only concern is that I find it very difficult to give this type of quality feedback when you are only doing one formal observation per year. I feel that I will need to observe a number of times, in a number of different situations before I can fully understand what is taking place and be able to help that teacher grow. I understand that the purpose of evaluation is to make sure sound teaching practices are taking place, and to remove teachers when they are not. However, I also want to make sure that the observations and evaluations that take place in my building are something that really helps improve instruction as opposed to just a process of going through the motions and returning to the status quo. To do this, I will have to make sure that I make the time to get out and observe as often as possible, and that I put quality time and effort into the feedback I give to teachers.

Critical Issues:

Obviously evaluating teachers is a large part of the job of an administrator, and will become an even bigger part of the job as senate bill 191 is fully implemented. The critical issue here is that evaluations have to be done by law, and that those evaluations will now have a large impact on how a teacher is “labeled” according to the law. However, I think the observation-evaluation cycle is even more important in the fact that it allows you to help teachers improve their instruction. No one person can know everything there is about teaching or the most effective way to teach a particular topic, but by getting in to classrooms and observing as much as possible you can learn and continue to grow as an instructional leader.