

One person's current thoughts on Visiting Committee Member **Best Practices**
enriched by many experienced VC members

Pre-Visit

- o Attend *training* and *know thy criteria*
- o *Communicate* with/through *Chair*- make the connection! Might you accompany the chair on a previsit? Your chair's your next trainer.
- o *Read* the whole self-study, read the whole self-study, read the whole self-study; *predictive reading* helps you see (or not) the *alignment* within the self-study.(Chapter 1 predicts Chapter 2 these with Chapter 4 predict Chapter 5; Chapter 1 predicts Chapter 5; Chapter 5 predicts Chapter 1)
- o *Pre-write* based on what you know and need to know; learn all you can about the school – however, no creative writing (use the self-study, school and district web sites, CDE, other public sources). Write both text and questions. Share with other committee members before visit if possible. Meet the chair's deadline. Check *technology* requirements. Think about the *big issues* raised by the school; Make your list of these. Get prewriting to the chair *on time!*
- o *Arrange your schedule*; plan for return. *Pack*. Make sure you have *directions* to where you're going. Have all the *phone numbers* you need?

Visit

- o What did you learn? What difference will it make for students? Stretch to the action plan and what happens after you leave. *It's truly about the action plan!*
- o *Coaching/supporting*, not giving advice or fixing. *Empowering*, not rescuing. Strengthen the school's capacity to take action. Visiting educator not compliance officer or problem solver; refine areas for growth, identify missing pieces. Maintain an open mind. Be *culturally sensitive*. *Expect the unexpected*.
- o *Celebrate successes, affirm good work, and acknowledge accomplishments. Small, mundane achievements ultimately can lead to accomplishing the larger priorities. Strive for transparency.*
- o Strike "At my school" from your vocabulary; Leave your prejudices at the door; This is NOT your school.
- o Make the campus visits work for you. What are the *appropriate lenses* to use? For you? For the team?
- o *Prepare* and *plan* for meetings; make sure you're talking with the school people about the big issues. *Have an agenda. Write out your questions; prioritize; share; smile.* Start meetings on time; end early.
- o Be a gatherer - Visit everywhere! Hear all the voices! *Listen carefully!* Search for the differentiation and disaggregation of programs and services.
- o Avoid gossip, but listen. Don't mess with the politics at the school or district.
- o I do not love what I write! Use the school's language.
- o *Capture work time* and stay on task when working. Remember *evidence* is important to reality. Figure out the *tech* stuff.
- o Pitch in, back fill, and pick up any loose pieces
- o *Professionalism* (manner, dress, timing, language) and *confidentiality* (dinner, hotel, notes)
- o *Consensus. and team building.* This truly is group work! Establish *norms* for team's behavior.
- o Experienced folks *mentor* new team members, leadership at school
- o Importance of *Documentation and Justification Statement* and *Wednesday's presentation. Leave on a professional note!*
- o *Take your stuff with you.*

Post Visit

- o *Professionalism and confidentiality*
- o *Follow through* on anything you might have promised to the school
- o *Pass on the energy!*