

SOME CONTENT TIPS

- * No personal evaluations of staff members, please -- either positive or negative. Yes, even with one principal, we'll use "administration".
- * Keep your focus on problems and strengths, not on identifying the culprits whose derelictions caused whatever regrettable situations may exist.
- * The quality, not necessarily the quantity, of final report matters. Let's concentrate on substance.
- * Seek to verify facts. Don't jump to conclusions. Keep an open mind. KNOW THY SCHOOL!
- * Be specific, so the school knows what we've seen.
- * Be alert to problem areas that are subject to negotiation.
- * Listen more, talk less.
- * Strive to identify the most important problems and issues.
- * Use the school's language whenever and wherever possible.
- * No single individual (by name of title) is recognized.

SOME STYLE TIPS

- * Use the present tense and third person.
"The courses offered by this department are..."
"The committee/team identified the following..."
- * The school will be identified on the title page of the report and the introduction. All subsequent references to it are phrased "The school..."
- * Use the full name of a course or program before referring to it by use of an acronym or initials. Not all readers may know what GATE, SIP, or LEP mean in this school.
- * Use complete sentences, unless using a list. Numbered lists imply order. Thus, we must make decisions between bulleted and numbered lists.
- * The custom is that numbers one through nine are spelled out in sentences, and numbers 10 and beyond are presented as numerals. However, a number used as the first word of a sentence must be spelled out.
- * Capitalize a word or phrase only if it refers to a specific individual or course. Thus: Algebra, the mathematics curriculum, World History, deans.
- * Do not use abbreviations.
- * A comma follows all items in a series.
- * Write in the active voice whenever possible. Use the passive voice when
 - You can't identify the subject
 - When identifying the subject would be unpolitic

- * Check your tone -- be positive. Let's avoid
 - Negative prefixes (*mis-*, *un-*, *in-*, *dis-*, *im-*)
 - *No, not, never, won't, can't*
 - Judgmental words such as *failure, waste, regret, problem, neglect, useless, only, change, negligence, wrong, pointless...*the list goes on!
 - Polarizing words such as *should, must, ought*. Try *invite, recommend, suggest*.

HOUSEKEEPING

- * Datum is...; data are...
- * Criterion is...; criteria are...
- * A variety of (whatever) is...
- * Media are...
- * The staff is... Staff members are...
- * The faculty is... Faculty members are...
- * The team is... Team members are...
- * Between (these two)...
- * Among (several, more than two)...
- * The effect (result, consequences) will be greater...
- * The change will affect (influence) (always a verb) the students...
- * Counseling procedures ensure (guarantee) that all students...
- * The district insures (money payment for loss) all computers...
- * Fewer than 10 members of the faculty... (a countable quantity)
- * Less dedication was in evidence... (a non-countable quantity)
- * The advisory council (a group of people) provides support..
- * The guidance facilities permit no privacy for counseling (advising) students...
- * People are served; things are serviced.
- * Do not use the word utilize.