



# LEADING *the* JOURNEY

AN E-NEWSLETTER ON EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

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## Management by Walking Around NAD PRINCIPALS' HANDBOOK EXCERPT [➤](#)

Good principals go where the action is. Making time to get out of the office is not easy. Following are some examples that may be helpful:

- » Drop by the teachers' lounge/workroom.
- » Use the drop-off and pick-up process to interact with students and families
- » Eat lunch with students and teachers.
- » Go on student field trips.
- » Schedule daily "visibility time" in the halls before, during, and after school.
- » Spend a few minutes reading in the school library each day.
- » Substitute teach once in a while.
- » Supervise study hall occasionally.
- » Use walk-by and drop-in classroom observations.
- » Attend games, performances, practices, and rehearsals

# The Morning, Noon, and Night Walk

*Shanel Marchany* | PRINCIPAL OF GEORGE E. PETERS SDA SCHOOL IN HYATTSVILLE, MD

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ood leaders model by example. As principal, I want the students, faculty, and parents to be active in their roles. In order to do this, I must lead by example. Therefore, I have developed a routine in which I do morning, noon, and night walks around the campus. These walks allow me to assess needs, build rapport, and understand the mental health of my students, their parents, and employees. Below is a list of goals, key observations, and a brief description on the purpose behind each walk.

## Morning Walk: 9:00am–11:00am

Goal: See smiling faces among all students and staff. During this walk I am looking to see the mental state of my students and staff. Are they happy? Are they angry or upset? I believe mental health is a key component to academic achievement. Therefore, I am always observing the nonverbal language that is being communicated at the school. I want there to always be a positive environment. This walk also gives me information on the morale of my teachers and allows me to make notes on who may need a pep talk or mental health day. I tend to spend some extra time in the PreK classrooms during my morning walk. They often have a hard time settling in emotionally to school routines and need support.

## Noon Walk: 12:00pm–2:00pm

Goal: Build rapport with teachers and students. This walk is simply for me to enjoy the children and staff. I sit down at lunch and talk with them, we play together at recess, and I check in with the teachers on what's happening in their personal lives.

## Night Walk: 4:00pm–6:00pm

Goal: Informally assess student and teacher needs. This walk is the last walk of the day and occurs right before I go home. I take one final lap around the school and check in on the teachers. We dialogue about the day, I listen to their successes and failures, and we form a plan of improvement for tomorrow. I also like to do a health and safety check during this walk. I peek into the bathrooms, check that doors are locked, look over the windows, etc.

# VISIBILITY

*Carla Thrower* | PRINCIPAL OF TAKOMA ACADEMY AND  
TAKOMA ACADEMY PREPARATORY SCHOOL IN TAKOMA PARK, MD

The Principal is to be VISIBLE...When a principal manages the school by walking the building the following can take place...

**V**-Actively communicates the VISION of the school

**I**-IDENTIFY needs

**S**-SHARES the passion for building relationships with students and their families

**I**-Viewed as an INSTRUCTIONAL Leader

**B**-BREEDS student success

**L**-LEARN the culture and dynamics

**E**-ENCOURAGES faculty/staff

According to Zachary Wright, a national finalist for the United States Department of Education's School Ambassador Fellowship, "When it comes to principals, words are lovely; but actions are what count, chief among them being visibility." When visible a principal is viewed by others as one in charge of the building and one who knows what is taking place on the campus.

It is always the expectation that a principal will conduct informal observations, analyze teaching practices, and observe student-teacher interactions while walking the building. A visible principal is also one who is to be seen as the leader who truly knows the day to day operations and routines within the school. Faculty/staff are not to be shocked or caught off guard when the principal enters the room because this is the norm. There are often opportunities for the principal to interact with students in their classrooms by reading a story to them, teaching a lesson, sharing object lessons in morning worship, collecting the attendance or lunch count in a classroom.

When parents ask or refer to situations throughout the building or classrooms a visible principal can readily respond to them. Walking around the school provides the principal with the opportunity to be on the ground seeing first-hand the dynamics of the school. It also

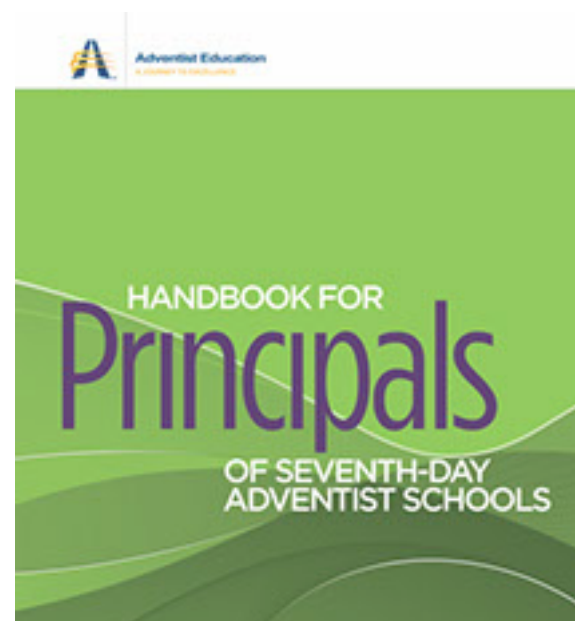
communicates to faculty/staff and students that what we do here is important to the administration and we have their support.

Walking the hallways and entering the classrooms allows the principal to greet students by their names, recognize when they are having a rough day or even welcome them when they have been away due to illness. It is an awareness that the principal will gain when managing the building by walking around.

Serving as principal is a daunting responsibility and there is never enough time to get everything done in a given day, however taking the time to walk the school and being visible will provide engagement that will aid in the success of the school.

 [cthrower@ta.edu](mailto:cthrower@ta.edu)

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**NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR**

Carla Thrower  
*Takoma Academy/Takoma Academy  
Preparatory School Principal*

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Berit von Pohle, Editor  
*Pacific Union Conference, Director of Education*  
Ed Boyatt, Editorial Advisor





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