

# Walkthroughs, Walkbys and the Like

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SEA has heard concerns from numerous members regarding the practice of walkthroughs. These concerns stem from: 1) the lack of understanding regarding the purpose of this process, 2) the increasing occurrences of principals in the classroom, 3) worry that the data collected will be used on evaluations, and 4) new forms used to collect data during the walkthroughs. These are valid concerns.

SEA has taken these issues to labor management; a meeting in which we formally discuss these types of issues. According to our understanding, the purpose is evolving. In the past, walkthroughs were used as a way for principals and district administrators to get out into the classrooms and see what was happening. With the increasing call for education reform, walkthroughs now are being used to prompt discussion around instruction. The Spokane School District, along with most others in Washington State, is using walkthroughs as a way to prompt this discussion. The union, and more importantly the profession, must be willing to have conversations about instructional practice. Done correctly, these walkthroughs should give administrators and educators the opportunity to have deep and critical conversations about our work.

The concern about data from walkthroughs showing up on evaluations is understandable. Currently, we do have some language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding walkthroughs. It reads:

- A. By October 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year, the District will restate the philosophy and current intent/focus of walkthroughs for the Certificated Leadership Team and for all staff. A walkthrough does not constitute an observation for the purpose of annual evaluation.
- B. Any evaluative information obtained or written during a walkthrough on an individual shall not be placed in that individual's supervisory file.

No data collected from the walkthroughs should be used in your observations or evaluations. In order to ensure this, SEA has some advice:

- If you do not receive copies of the data collected during a walkthrough, ASK FOR IT!** The only way that we can assure that data collected from the walkthroughs does not show up on your evaluation is if we know what data was collected. Then walkthrough data can be compared to observations and evaluation forms.
- 2. Keep all observation forms and walkthrough data for easy comparison at the end of the year when you receive your evaluation.**
- 3. If you are still concerned, **ask to see your supervisor's file.** You have a right to see this file. Make sure that no walkthrough data is there.
- 4. Not every time that an administrator enters the room is an official walkthrough taking place. Work with your administrative team to create a signal that will alert staff when a walkthrough is occurring. It might be an announcement that walkthroughs are happening that week in a certain grade level or department. It might be that the principal only carries a certain notebook or his/her laptop into classrooms when data is being collected for a walkthrough.

The forms principals are using to collect data vary from site to site. As long as they are not used as supporting data for observations or evaluations, they are not in violation of the contract.

SEA is closely monitoring the walkthroughs. We will grieve any evaluation that includes data collected on a walkthrough which is in violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.