

Chart #1

## Principal's Walk-Through Checklist

DIRECTIONS: Although you may be able to answer the overview questions 1-7 without actual classroom observation, answer questions 8 through 30 found on the next page by observing several grade-level and/or content-area classrooms.

Observation: Overview	Yes	No
1. Is there evidence of students' writings in the hallways?		
2. Are your teachers interested in learning how to teach writing? (Do they ask questions, request professional development in writing instruction, or give you lists of supplemental professional books related to teaching writing?)		
3. Have <i>all</i> of your teachers participated in a variety of writing professional development within the last three years?		
4. Do any of your teachers participate in a study group?		
5. Are community members invited to share with your students how they use writing in their daily lives?		
6. Is there ongoing parent communication about writing instruction?		
7. Are writing skills taught in <i>all</i> grades?		

**Chart #1 – Principal’s Walk-Through Checklist (continued)**

Observation: Inside the Classroom	Classroom A		Classroom B	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
8. Do lesson plans show time for daily writing?				
9. Is there evidence of children’s writings on walls?				
10. Does each child have a writing folder?				
11. Is there evidence of practice writings, drafts, and finished pieces in their folders?				
12. Is there evidence that students are making choices about individual writing topics rather than writing to “canned assignments,” story starters, or teacher-selected topics?				
13. Do writings show student choice within broad topics? (e.g., Topic: your state; Possible forms: brochure on the top bass fishing lakes, personal narrative, article on children’s attractions at a state park.)				
14. Is there evidence of a variety of graphic planners—drawings, lists, webs, Venn diagrams, mapping?				
15. Is there evidence of developmentally appropriate student writing in different genres (personal narrative, feature article, persuasive letter, story, poetry, etc.)?				
16. Is there evidence that students write real-world forms (persuasive letters, articles, proposals) to authentic audiences (cafeteria worker, pet owner, school board member) for genuine purposes (serve pizza once a week, care and feeding of a gerbil, repair of bleachers)?				
17. Is the teacher sharing her own writing with students?				
18. Is there evidence of an ongoing writers’ workshop rather than sporadic and “cutesy” writings?				
19. Are grammar, punctuation, and capitalization taught in the context of students’ writing and editing rather than just in textbook exercises?				
20. Is there evidence of peer and/or teacher conferencing and response groups?				

**Chart #1 – Principal’s Walk-Through Checklist (continued)**

Observation: Inside the Classroom	Classroom A		Classroom B	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
21. Can students analyze for strengths and weaknesses in their own writings?				
22. Do students speak the language of writing when conferencing with peers and /or teacher?				
23. Do students work somewhat independently, not constantly asking for teacher approval?				
24. Are students excited about writing?				
25. Is the classroom atmosphere conducive for class or partner discussion rather than totally teacher-controlled?				
26. Is technology used for drafting and revision, as well as final stage word processing and publishing?				
27. Are there word walls and Writing Helper’s Lists (e.g., synonyms for “said,” catchy leads, effective closings, etc.)?				
28. Is the state’s scoring rubric for writing posted for all to see (if available)?				
29. Is there a variety of developmentally appropriate writing resources (magazines, picture books, nonfiction, brochures, newspapers, dictionaries) available to students?				
30. Do teachers keep a Teacher’s Writing Instruction Notebook (TWIN) of their own writings, target skills lessons they have taught, and samples of their students’ writings?				

*Obviously, the more “yeses” you checked, the better.*