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Case Study: “Test Travesty”

The basis of this case study is an article written in the local newspaper about the preparation strategy your history teacher has taken to prep his students for the state standards test. The reporter’s review was less than complimentary suggesting the teacher’s approach was superficial with very little learning or stimulation taking place. The president of the school advisory council has stopped by to discuss the article and has asked that it be addressed in tonight’s lecture about the state testing program that is to be given to the school advisory council.

This is one of those situations that are a cause of such headaches for principals. State testing is a necessary evil, even if a principal does not fundamentally agree with the state testing program there is no opt out and their job as well as their teachers’ jobs essentially depend on the students’ performance on the tests. It is never an ideal situation when what seems to be less than sound teaching practices by a teacher in a principal’s own building is exposed in a newspaper.

**Standard 5:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

My first move as principal in this situation would be to call my superintendent to get his opinion on how he/she would like this situation to be addressed because ultimately he/she is the leader of the district and will probably have to address this issue at some point as well so having a united front is important. I have sympathy for the teacher because when a state standards test is given and covers material students haven’t seen in two or three years the pressure to make sure that all pertinent information has been covered prior to the test date can be overwhelming.

**Standard 6:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

My point to the school advisory council would be that the need to review with students in this manner is not ideal and is as much a symptom of the nature of standardized testing as it is a reflection on the teacher and his/her instructional strategies.

**Standard 2:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

I do believe that creating and using a review sheet of the nature described in this situation is not desirable, and I would encourage my staff to find more sound instructional methods to ensure that there students were adequately prepped for their state standards tests.