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much by having a direct discussion with the teacher in question, outlining the perceived concern and calling on the teacher to exercise professional responsibility in the best interest of the students.

At times the coasting has occurred because the teacher is bored or "burned out." In this case, a new instructional responsibility can often breathe new life into the veteran teacher. Professional development opportunities are often important in providing veteran teachers with appropriate training for accepting new areas of responsibility. In cases where no offers of assistance are accepted by the teacher, it may be necessary for the administrator to become more directive and actually begin the process that will lead to a professional improvement plan.

### **Growth Process for the Administrator**

Facing the issue of ineffective teaching is a growing experience for the majority of administrators. Initially, hearing of the untruths that are being spread throughout the school and community about the principal can be shattering. Incompetent people often do not know they are incompetent, and they are offended when an administrator says they are. For example, some teachers may react negatively to an observation and notation that criticizes their actions and statements to students. Such teachers may accuse administrators of being a biased or bigoted or join other marginal teachers to verbalize untruths and perpetuate negativism.

The strength that is needed by an administrator to sustain a personal attack can be acquired over time. Experience soon helps him or her realize that quality teachers on the faculty appreciate any effort to rid the

school of ineffective teachers. Further support is gained by asking the most compelling question, "Would I want my child in that room?" The answer "No!" provides the most reassurance that dealing with an ineffective teacher can be one of the most worthwhile endeavors of the school year. PL

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### **Resources**

- *Writing Year-End Teacher Improvement Plans—Right Now!*; Cornelius L. Barker & Claudette J. Searchwell; London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 2000.
- *The Marginal Teacher* (2nd edition); C. Edward Lawrence, Myra K. Vachon, Donald O. Leake, & Brenda H. Leake; London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 2001.
- *Teacher Evaluation* (2nd edition). Kenneth D. Peterson; Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2000.

## **WRITE FOR PL**

The experts and gurus regularly have their say about leadership. Here's your chance. What has been your most important leadership lesson? Please send 500-1000 words by Nov. 1 and your thoughts may be included in the April 2004 *PL*.