Good and Bad Safety Practices

As I’ve had the opportunity to go travel and evaluate different schools for program areas, we do come across some things occasionally that we recommend maybe be changed and fixed. Sometimes, yes it’s going to cost money, but sometimes it’s things that won’t cost money. For example, if your administrator tells you that you have some evaluators from outside entities coming in, there are some things, as a teacher, that I would probably address before they ever got there.

Simple things like if I’m walking into a classroom with the just the classroom in disarray with the desks everywhere and things on the floor, and backpacks just all on the floor, and just things like that, anything that could be a potential trip hazard is definitely something that takes a little practice and things that we can do from day one on classroom management, and we can take care of that.

As we move out into the shop area and things like that, a lot of times what we see and a lot of things that I’ve witnessed is they’re storing materials, project materials and things like that, maybe in the middle of the shop, and you have a lot of equipment in a tiny facility. And so you couple that with 30 students because maybe we don’t have a good relation with our administrators on the fact that it’s not safe to have that many students in a small setting with machines running and things like that. Sometimes, it’s just overcrowding; it’s having too many students or too much equipment or maybe equipment that’s not being utilized anymore, equipment that’s broken, and needs to be removed, and taken out of the area all together, and stored somewhere else. So a lot of times we recommend that maybe they get container, a cargo container, or something like that to put outside the school, where you could put metal or wood and all of those things that take up a lot of floor space, so then you could utilize more area for students to learn, and then to also to take, as far as the materials and things like that, and put it out there and also old equipment that’s not being used.

Sometimes it’s little things, a doorknob that’s been broken for years. I’ve seen that, you know how come a doorknob is not fixed? I’ve seen the electrical panel, main panel on a breaker box, not even be installed. It was sitting on the floor, where a kid could actually stick their hand into where the breaker panel is and be electrocuted, and there were cobwebs on it, so it was very apparent it had been there for many years. It’s not something that just happened. Of course when you walk into older facilities, a lot of times you have water leaks, and you have issues with the leaking ceilings and things like that, and buildings that haven’t been kept up with and things like that.

And so you go into a facility and it’s apparent that there are several tools that are broken and need to be fixed and be replaced. But it really comes down to in some of those areas, and I really hate to say this, but it goes back to the professionalism of the educator that’s hired by the school district and in charge of those programs. And I know that that might not be a very popular statement, but it really boils down to that. When I walk into a lab, for example, let’s say it’s an auto tech classroom, and there’s two students working with the teacher in the lab and
there’s 18 students sleeping in the classroom. And you ask them why they’re in there sleeping, well number one, they’ll tell you they didn’t want to be out there, they were just put out there and that wasn’t the choice of their program they really wanted to be in. So we definitely need to work with our business and industry; we need to work with our advisory committee; we need to work with our students doing career assessments and inventory assessments. And use all that data, so that our program areas reflect what our students are actually interested in being in the classes that they’re taking, so that they’re not just necessarily just placed in a class.