

Learning Walk Protocol

Learning Walks are a non-evaluative, cyclical process used for gathering information about how the local curriculum anchored in high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) is being implemented to foster vibrant learning experiences and improve student outcomes. Learning walks provide opportunities to identify patterns in curriculum implementation across classrooms to help determine targeted support for teachers while also building educators' instructional leadership. Over time, learning walks help to ensure the integrity of a curriculum is maintained so it can more fully support a district reaching its instructional vision for teaching and learning in a content area.

It is important to determine the frequency of learning walks (for example, quarterly) for the year and set the dates for those to occur. The frequency may be impacted by the curriculum implementation goals for that year and the current stage of implementation (launch, early, ongoing). The protocol below outlines the process for each learning walk.

Before a Learning Walk

Identify a focus for the learning walk.

- Identify the focus area based on local data/needs related to goals for a particular stage of curriculum/HQIR implementation (launch, early, ongoing).
- Determine the 1-3 priority indicators from the district-determined observation tool (e.g., [early implementation observation tool](#) for year one, [instructional practice guide](#) for years two and beyond) aligned to the area of focus.

Determine composition of learning walk team.

- Teams may potentially include a mix of district leaders, building leaders, coaches, teachers, and/or external partners (e.g., HQIR/HQPL vendor representatives, regional cooperative members). Team composition may change with subsequent rounds.
- Consider identifying a primary facilitator, potentially a district instructional lead, HQPL/HQIR provider or instructional coach.

Communicate the purpose of learning walks and the focus for the upcoming walk to your teachers.

- Be sure to include the identified priority indicators from the common observation tool (examples for early implementation and for ongoing implementation) aligned to the focus area.

Prepare for the learning walk.

- Determine the number of classrooms to be visited (e.g., 3-6). and set them within a schedule.
 - Include time (approximately 20-30 minutes) for a pre-observation meeting to begin the walk to reset the focus, priority indicators and observation norms.
 - Scheduling should allow for approximately 20 minutes in each classroom.
 - Include time (approximately 45 minutes) for a post-observation meeting to debrief and plan next steps.
- Ensure all members of the learning walk team have a common understanding of what should be seen and heard as evidence of prioritized indicators within the context of the local curriculum and HQIR(s).
 - If observing only one grade level/course, consider looking at an overview of the lesson provided by the HQIR to build familiarity.

- Determine how evidence will be collected (e.g., note-catcher, on the common observation tool, graphic organizer) and take a moment to calibrate.
- Establish norms/expectations for classroom observations (a potential list is provided below).
 - Respect the classroom atmosphere.
 - Feel free to lean in, look and listen, and to talk with students if appropriate to the focus.
 - Collect evidence aligned to the focus area and priority indicators. Record observations on the team-developed template/organizer/observation tool.

During a Learning Walk

Conduct pre-learning walk meeting.

- Review the schedule for the day.
- Reset the focus, priority indicators from the common observation tool and how evidence will be collected.
- Review norms for the observation.

Conduct learning walk.

- When visiting classrooms, use the common observation tool/note-catcher to take notes on the focus area and evidence pertaining to identified priorities.

After a Learning Walk

Conduct post-learning walk meeting.

- Review notes to identify important noticings relative to the focus.
- Everyone shares his/her observation providing evidence collected and an overview of what was seen.
- Designated facilitator makes notes on the discussion/feedback.
- Team synthesizes noticings to identify trends, including strengths and possible areas of growth, aligned to the focus area.
- Facilitator supports leaders and teachers in crafting effective feedback from observation notes and supports them as they rehearse how it might be shared.
- Determine next steps and additional supports to be provided for leaders/teachers.

Present findings to appropriate district and school staff.

- Ensure timely communication of feedback/findings.
- Celebrate “bright spots” observed aligned to the focus area.
- Discuss next steps to meet district/school needs aligned to the focus area and to overall curriculum implementation.