LEARNING WALKS RATIONALE

What are Learning Walks? Learning Walks are organized visits to a school’s learning areas to focus on:
- How teachers teach; and
- How students learn
- Learning Walks focus in on certain instructional principles to improve teaching such as:
  - Questioning strategies
  - Classroom management
  - Differentiated instruction
  - Cooperative learning
  - Wait time
  - Classroom Ecology
- Learning Walks allow for Reflection

What is Reflective Questioning? Reflective questioning allows for:
- A way to initiate dialogue about improvement in teaching and learning;
- A way to look back at what happened;
- A way to look at what you learned; and
- A way to look forward and anticipate what’s coming up

Reflective Practice
- A desirable outgrowth of reflection is new or deeper understanding and insights.
- Consideration for new forms of action.
- Easier to build bridges between theory and practice.
- Personal responsibility for learning and improvement.
- Reflecting on Teaching. Why?
- Educators, as well as researchers, recognize that the ability to reflect on teaching is the mark of a true professional.
- It is through critical reflection that teachers are able to assess the effectiveness of their work and take steps to improve it.

What are the purposes of Learning Walks? Learning Walks serve to:
- Develop a learning community
- Develop a deep understanding of teaching and learning;
- Develop a shared vision of every child in every classroom enabled to meet or exceed high standards;
- Assist in “coaching” for improved practice;
- Reflect on professional practice; and
- Gain new insights and understanding.

Why do we advocate Learning Walks and Reflective Questioning?
- Gain a sense of the current state of instruction and learning.
- Enable educators to share strategies with one another
- Create a system of excellence in teaching and learning
- Facilitates discussion and reflection on what is working well
- Continuous learning and improvement
LEARNING WALKS PROCEDURE

Six Steps
- Step 1- Observe teaching and learning
- Step 2- Focus on instructional techniques
- Step 3- Notice level of learner engagement
- Step 4- Survey classroom ecology
- Step 5- Analyze data collected
- Step 6- Reflection

How do we involve teachers in the Learning Walk Process?
- Small groups of teachers will accompany the Curriculum Coordinator on a Learning Walk during arranged non-contact time.
- A “Learning Walk Data Collection Chart” will be used to collect data.
- Pre-walk discussion for participants.
- Assign a focus when observing.

What protocols are followed?
- Orientation of staff
- Orientation of walkers
- Classroom visits for 10 minutes
- Examine artifacts and student work
- Hall talk
- Debriefing
- Written or verbal communication with teachers

When we leave a classroom, what do we talk about? We talk about:
Evidence of Best Practices in:
- The lesson
- The pupil assignment
- Pupil work products/outcomes
- What the students said in response to questions about their work and learning displays
- Level of questioning
- What the pupils were learning.
- How the teacher assists the learning.
- What the pupils said in response to questions.
- Ideas, strategies, and/or techniques that were used effectively.

What are the parameters of the conversation that walkers engage in? We do NOT:
- Make judgmental statements about what the teacher was or was not doing.
- Make disparaging statements about the teacher, the students or the classroom; and make comments which could be interpreted as being critical of the school.
- Use the information for Performance Management documentation purposes.
- We Do:
- Observe and find strategies and techniques that walkers can incorporate in their own class
- Reflect on best practices and how to incorporate them
What occurs after a Learning Walk?

- The observers will debrief immediately after the classroom visit. The curriculum leader will lead a discussion while the observer(s) complete the reflection form.
- Self reflection
- The observers should come away with ideas, strategies, and/or techniques that can be used effectively in the classroom and a deeper understanding on how to improve instruction.

WE ARE THERE TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING – NOT TO EVALUATE!

- Step by Step
  - Pre-walk discussion
  - Learning Walk in classrooms- 7-10 minutes
  - Debrief in Hallway- 2 minutes
  - Learning Walk in classrooms- 7-10 minutes
  - Debrief in Hallway- 2 minutes
  - Reflection for walkers- 15 minutes
  - Reflective question for classroom teacher- 15 minutes

Reflective Question for Classroom Teacher.

- Ask participants if they would like to ask the classroom teacher a question.
- The Curriculum Coordinator will then write the classroom teacher a reflective question.
- This is done in a non-judgmental or evaluative manner.
- Avoid using the word “you” and “why” when framing the question.
- Use open ended questions that allow for reflection in the present tense.
- Sample Question
  - **Focus of Learning Walk:** strategies for developing responsibility and accountability
  - **Relevant Question:** When planning a daily lesson for students with varying skill levels, what factors should we consider when deciding on the strategies needed to assist students in becoming responsible and accountable in their work?

Pre-walk Discussion
- Each participant is given a Learning Walk Data Collection Chart
- Discussion on the chart
- Protocol is discussed
- What we do and not do during a walk
- Possible scenarios are examined
- Discussion of “Look Fors”

Capturing Data

- Using the Learning Walk Data Chart, walkers will collect data.
- To capture data, walkers will listen to the teacher and students, observe actions of all participants, and talk to students and teacher when appropriate. Teachers are welcome to see and share the data pertaining to their class.
- Ask probing questions of students.
- Look at the classroom ecology.
Student Questions: What might you ask?
• When talking with a student during a walk, what are some questions you might ask?
• Your intention is to seek out if they understand what the teacher is trying to teach and communicate.
• Turn to your neighbor and discuss the type of questions?

Possible Questions of Students
• “What is the purpose of the lesson?”
• “Why are you doing this assignment?”
• “How is this lesson useful to you?”
• “Can you explain what it is you are working on?”
• “Can you tell me how you know if you are correct?”

Debrief in Hallway
• Ask each walker:
• Are you missing data?
• Did you see any Ah-Ahs?
• Are you ready to move on?

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