

The Instructional Walk-Through Process: Suggestions for Follow-up/Next Step

Before you begin

- The district communicates to principals (through the principal's job description, the supervision process, on-going communication—and possibly through board policy) the expectation that principals conduct regular classroom walk-throughs to provide instructional leadership, to determine teacher needs for further training and support and to assure that students throughout the school are receiving effective instruction.
- The district has a conversation with the district teacher's association leadership—and the principal has a meeting with the building representative about intent to use the instructional walk-through process. Participants in these conversations use this opportunity to clarify the intent of this process, to share any tools or forms to be used and to address any issues or concerns surrounding the process.
- The principal leads a discussion with school staff before walk-throughs begin about the rationale for the walkthrough process, the "look fors" to be focused upon, and any tools or forms to be used in the process. This discussion is revisited periodically to review what has been learned from the walk-throughs and to announce any new "look fors", tools or forms as they are added to the process.
- The principal schedules a few blocks of time in his/her calendar during which s/he intends to visit classrooms for walk-through purposes. This schedule is shared with an office support staff person so that they can help facilitate the principal's time in following through on the schedule. This process is repeated weekly or monthly as the principal schedules his/her time.

Early in the process

- Shortly after initial training, small groups of principals take part in facilitated school visits to practice the walkthrough process with someone experienced in the entire process.
- Two or more principals collaborate at the school of one of the principals for joint walk-through time to calibrate "look fors" and to learn from one another's perspective how to focus on instruction and how to follow-up with instructional conversations. You might want to repeat this process periodically to further develop instructional "look for" and conversational skills.

Once the process is established

The principal invites people in selected roles (e.g. classroom teachers, literacy specialists or instructional coaches, district leaders, others who teach, support or supervise reading) to pair up with him/her to participate in several walkthroughs. The purpose of these shared walkthroughs is to demystify the process, derive instructional insights from one another and further develop a culture of collaboration around teaching and learning.

The principal checks in with teachers informally to see how the process is working for them and uses this information to clarify the process/purpose and to make any adjustments needed to make the process work better.