

Instructional Leadership Routines

Research on effective schools identifies a number of regularly implemented actions that are led by building leaders in schools to ensure the district's instructional system is being effectively utilized with students. These actions, taken collectively, are considered "Instructional Leadership Routines" (or ILR). These routines draw upon district systems to incorporate specific practices in three distinct areas of support, all with the eventual broader goal of increasing collective understanding and efficacy among the building's teachers, leaders, and support staff around classroom implementation of the curriculum through instruction.

Following collective communication and decisions around these processes to orient teachers to these routines, ILRs first Monitor Instructional Practices and Curriculum Use through multiple strategies to develop a variety of indicators of these practices. These practices then support the next stage of ILRs, which are to Guide Instructional System Decisions at the building and district level. Those engaged in these routines Provide Coaching and Feedback to focus on the individual needs of teachers and others to support instructional practice and student well-being. Since there is a focus on gathering and analyzing data to support instruction and non-academic support of students and the school climate, many of these efforts connect directly with Teacher Collaborative Routines. Below are the specific practices that set the stage for Instructional Leadership Routines, followed by descriptors of their implementation.

Practices and Progress Indicators

MONITOR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND CURRICULUM USE

| PRACTICE | IN# | GETTING STARTED | GETTING BETTER | KEEP IMPROVING |
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| 1. District and building leaders identify and communicate high-priority instructional practices and curriculum use expectations. | 1 | District and building leaders generate a list of common instructional practices that they expect to observe during walkthrough observations. | Leaders develop a continuum of instructional practices to be documented during walkthrough observations. These practices are described in common terms, stating what is to be observed in classroom instruction. The practices may have affiliated video examples for teachers and observers. | Multiple sets of instructional practices are described, based upon the instructional focus of the class. These include video examples for reference, and may also have corresponding observable student actions that are anticipated for each instructional practice. |
| 2. Instructional leaders establish collective coherence on observable qualities of desired instructional practices and curriculum use through shared observation. | 2 | Instructional leaders involved in walkthrough observations have a shared description of the observable practice. | Instructional leaders meet regularly following the observation process to note their perceptions and how they classify the instruction or curriculum use they observed. The descriptions are regularly reviewed and improved based upon observer feedback. | Instructional leaders throughout the building and district regularly review examples of practice and set up "calibration" visits to ensure validity of reporting uniformly across the district. Updated terms or descriptions are communicated to teachers with video examples. |

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| 3. Instructional leaders routinely observe instruction to gather data on instructional practice and curriculum use. | 3 | Instructional leaders schedule times for walkthrough observations and conduct a mix of random and scheduled observations to ensure such observation of all teachers at least 1-2 times per month. Walkthrough observations are recorded on paper or electronic forms. | Instructional leaders schedule times for walkthrough observations to ensure a mix of observations during the day and to see different parts of instructional practice and lessons. Some observations are conducted in pairs to support calibration and coherence of observations. | Instructional leaders schedule enough time to ensure walkthrough observations of each teacher every 1-2 weeks, including a mix of class periods and times during a lesson. Observations are documented using electronic forms, which may vary over time as needed. |
| 4. District / building leadership and instructional leaders expand and modify monitoring to prioritize new instructional expectations. | 4a | Instructional leaders use walkthrough observations to monitor classroom instruction, noting the presence of prioritized practices and implementation of curricula. Notes may be a mix of pre-determined practices and open-ended notes to give context and support post-observation coaching. | Instructional leaders observe classroom instruction using forms that draw from a range of curricular topics or general practices, and use the appropriate forms depending on the focus of instruction for the observed classroom (such as one form for engaging in group discussion or a different form for facilitating student learning centers). | Instructional leaders observe classroom instruction using a set of forms that have evolved over time with the needs of the school or district. Multiple documentation options (using specialized walkthrough observation forms) are available to the observer based on the focus of instruction, with both teacher and student actions noted. |
| | 4b. | Instructional leaders observe instruction noting both instructional "strengths" along with opportunities for potential practices to support learning, which may be shared with the observed teacher during post-observation coaching. | Instructional leaders observe and note instructional practices from a continuum of implementation levels. Once certain practices from past observations are being implemented with fidelity, they may be replaced with other desired practices on the monitoring form. | Instructional leaders observe and note practices from adaptive forms that allow for depth of implementation to capture nuances of practice to inform coaching and to identify potential examples of instructional practices from one teacher to use to model for other teachers. Data collection and analysis evolves to meet these changes in observation. |

GUIDE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM DECISIONS

| PRACTICE | IN# | GETTING STARTED | GETTING BETTER | KEEP IMPROVING |
|---|-----|--|---|--|
| 5. Building leaders review monitoring data to identify instructional strengths and high-performing practitioners to build leadership capacity. | 5 | Building leaders review observation data regularly (generally once a month or when at least 30 observations have been collected for statistical validity). Strengths are noted for future use in coaching or mentoring support for other teachers. | Building leaders review observation data regularly using a data protocol based on improvement cycles. Each cycle involves decisions around how best to build upon strengths identified in the process. | Building leaders review observation data regularly and correlate it with student outcome data and other student data to identify areas of strength. Improvement cycles are used to make decisions regarding instructional support and coaching with each review of the data. |
| 6. Building leaders analyze data for trends, changes and gaps in practice, and correlation to student outcomes to inform instructional decisions. | 6a. | Building leaders review walkthrough observation data holistically to identify general patterns in instructional practice. | Building leaders review walkthrough observation data to look at holistic information about patterns, and also look at changes in trends over time. Decisions based on such analysis supports both general instructional support of high priority practices and modifications to the walkthrough observation process itself. | Building leaders review walkthrough observation data to look at holistic information about patterns as well as changes over time. Improvement cycle-based protocols are used for addressing instructional practices, the observation process and documentation tools. Decisions based on past monitoring reviews are revisited with each subsequent review of data. Such data is shared regularly with the district to inform the instructional system and its implementation. |
| | 6b. | Building leaders look at disaggregated data regularly to see if patterns emerge regarding grade level, subject-area, or similar considerations. | Building leaders look at disaggregated data for both patterns within current walkthrough observations, and trends over time. Data may be shared with teacher collaborative teams regarding patterns specific to their focus area. | Building leaders disaggregate data with each routine review of data to see if patterns or trends emerge that need responses, and share such trends with district leaders to inform the instructional system. Data is regularly used by teacher collaborative teams, and these teams provide feedback to building leaders to inform future observation. |

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| <p>7. District and building leaders explore new instructional practices or curriculum resources using targeted implementation and monitoring with short term improvement cycles.</p> | <p>7</p> | <p>District and building leaders work with teachers who are implementing new practices or resources following training to involve them in the observation process. Observations are done frequently using standard techniques and are reviewed in short cycles (weekly or biweekly) with the teachers observed.</p> | <p>District and building leaders use the initial cycles to make adjustments to the practices or resources to the context of the classes that are using the new materials. Following that, continued intensive observation takes place, though review and feedback cycles may be extended once implementation of the new materials or practices stabilizes.</p> | <p>District and building leaders determine a broader expansion of practices or materials for subsequent implementation. Following training, walkthrough observations follow a similar start-up process. Data is disaggregated to show differences between those who already worked with materials and those beginning anew. This reflects teachers' natural progression in implementing new materials and how practices change with experience. Data is used to inform the broader implementation process and expectations for teachers.</p> |

PROVIDE COACHING AND FEEDBACK

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| 8. Instructional leaders who engage in walkthrough observations provide broad instructional information and feedback to teachers. | 8a. | Following early stages of walkthrough observations (for developing the schedule, process, and calibration among reviewers), broad observational data is provided to teachers after the review by instructional leaders. | Instructional leaders provide regular feedback to all teachers following each review cycle. Data informs all decisions regarding the instructional system and/or the observation process. Themes or trends are revealed in such communication. | Instructional leaders provide regular feedback to all teachers following review cycles. Additionally, leaders seek teacher input regularly in the review process to help provide rationale or suggestions for moving forward with the progression of practices within the walkthrough observation process. |
| | 8b. | Following early stages of walkthrough observations (for developing the schedule, process, and calibration among reviewers), more specific observational data (disaggregated but not individualized) is shared with teacher collaborative groups for use in planning and support. | Disaggregated and holistic data is provided to teacher collaborative groups regularly with each review cycle. These groups have a voice in amending or refining the observation process or observed practices. | Teacher collaborative groups have access to observation data and are able to analyze and manipulate the outcome data on their own. Teachers provide direct input on the design and implementation of the walkthrough observation process for their specific area of focus (grade level or subject area). |
| 9. Instructional leaders provide individual coaching to educators based upon walkthrough observations. | 9 | Once calibration of the walkthrough observations is done, instructional leaders share observations with teachers following each observation. | Instructional leaders schedule regular coaching conversations to review observed practice. Observation notes are shared with teachers following each observation, so teachers can review observations prior to coaching sessions. | Instructional leaders schedule regular coaching conversations with teachers, including walkthrough observations notes as a part of the coaching session. Teachers may request specific observation details based on these conversations to help focus their instructional practices for future coaching conversations. |

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| <p>10. Building and district leaders align coaching support with educator evaluation practices.</p> | <p>10</p> | <p>Building and district leaders establish a coaching protocol and process for teachers that is, in part, built from walkthrough observation data, and is structured around the framework of the educator evaluation process.</p> | <p>Instructional leaders engage in regular coaching of teachers. Areas of focus are based upon the evaluation framework. Walkthrough observations provide opportunities to discuss instructional practices in coaching, however, these are not specifically used in the evaluation process unless specifically requested by the teacher.</p> | <p>Instructional leaders develop a coaching plan that aligns with needs identified from the educator evaluation, and offers opportunities to use walkthrough observations and other artifacts of instruction to demonstrate growth.</p> |
| <p>11. Building and district leaders gather information about professional learning needs for the instructional staff through their coaching of individual educators.</p> | <p>11</p> | <p>Building and district leaders establish instructional coaching for teachers, and use notes from these efforts to track patterns and trends that can be used to identify professional learning needs for broad groups of teachers.</p> | <p>Instructional coaches use a coaching protocol that includes documentation of supports and areas of need. This data is documented in a way that can be easily monitored and reviewed to gather collective information for the school or district for the purpose of identifying professional learning needs.</p> | <p>Instructional coaches use a coaching protocol and documentation process to provide information about building or district needs. This is reviewed regularly along with walkthrough observation and other monitoring data to guide decisions about teacher support and instructional system needs.</p> |
| <p>12. Building and district leaders identify instructional leaders who can model instructional practices to others through coaching and mentorship.</p> | <p>12</p> | <p>Building and district leaders use observations and other data sources to identify potential instructional leaders within each school and subject area. These individuals may first be used to provide mentorship to new or struggling teachers.</p> | <p>Building and district leaders establish specific roles and responsibilities for instructional coaches. These coaches are drawn from teachers with a track record of strong instructional practices and effective mentoring experiences for others.</p> | <p>Instructional coaching roles are established by the district and used by building leaders specifically to support improvements in instructional practice. These individuals are provided training in coaching strategies and use of feedback. If multiple coaching roles are established, coaches have the opportunity to convene and plan instructional supports collectively. These individuals engage in observations and provide direct coaching support to teachers using observation notes and other data.</p> |