

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, including the planning steps needed to prepare for implementation.

Readiness and Planning Actions

READINESS DETERMINATION, RESOURCES, AND PROTOCOLS

CONSIDERATION	GETTING STARTED	GETTING BETTER	KEEP IMPROVING
Readiness	The district uses the Hexagon Discussion and Analysis tool to consider the fit and feasibility of implementing Instructional Leadership Routines to monitor instruction and/or other practices within the Instructional System. Instructional leaders who engage in walkthrough observations communicate the expectations for this practice to all teachers and students. This communication aims to minimize distractions to instruction during instructional leader presence.	The team reviews and discusses the questions for each indicator and documents relevant considerations. The team rates each Hexagon component using the 5-point Likert scale in each section. If needed, data is gathered, obstacles documented, and notes are used for the final recommendation.	Using the discussion notes and ratings, the team makes recommendations regarding the fit and feasibility of programs and/or practices and, if relevant, what additional support each component may need. While ratings should be taken into account during the decision-making process, the ratings alone should not be used to determine final recommendations.
Resources	The district and buildings have committed enough resources, most importantly, the time of principals, building administrators, and instructional coaches, to engage in regular observation and review of instruction. Additional resources are required when building leaders do not have the capacity	Building leaders and instructional coaches designate time on their schedules for walkthrough observations, and initially, do so in pairs, making time for discussion following each observation to calibrate the observation. This is to ensure there is shared understanding for the	Districts that have institutionalized these routines regularly schedule both observation and coaching time for building and instructional leaders, to the point where teachers are observed biweekly. There is regular calibration by building leaders and instructional leaders and/or coaches around

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	<p>to regularly complete instructional observations. These practices might be implemented by instructional coaches or specialists when building leaders lack the capacity or expertise. Similarly, data analysis specialists may need to be involved to help review and disaggregate data from walkthrough observations.</p>	<p>protocols and observed practice. Added capacity to implement instructional observations would include teacher leaders or other instructional coaches who serve in both roles.</p>	<p>observed practices. There is also time to continually review and modify observation protocols to employ multiple protocols for different monitoring (i.e. academic and non-academic instruction, classroom management, intervention, etc.). Districts have identified tools used for documentation and analysis, coaching, and evaluation.</p>
<p>Protocols</p>	<p>Sample norms and protocols for instructional observation are documented and tested to ensure the practice works for observers with minimal instructional disruption. Instructional data review and decision-making protocols are reviewed early with limited sharing of data until protocols are universally agreed upon. Some teachers have been provided training in the creation and use of protocols.</p>	<p>Norms and protocols for decision-making and data review are established through collective development and adhered to within each collaborative group. All teachers have been provided training around the protocols for observations and data-based decision-making. Similarly, protocols are revisited with each improvement cycle to ensure that the protocols are being used and are effective in meeting the intended goals.</p>	<p>During implementation of the process, there is ongoing review and consideration of the protocols for information gathering and data-based decision-making to support instructional and curricular implementation. Improvement cycles are used to support the review of the protocols, as well as the framework for each individual protocol.</p>

MONITOR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND CURRICULUM USE

PRACTICE	IN#	GETTING AWARE	GETTING READY
<p>1. District and building leaders identify and communicate high-priority instructional practices and curriculum use expectations.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The district completes a review of instructional and curricular resources to identify if there are specific themes in instructional practices that directly support implementation of the curriculum. The district engages in a review of research on instructional practices relevant to their vision and approach to learning. The district may also engage in an inventory of existing instructional practices in classrooms through standard observation to note areas of alignment or misalignment.</p>	<p>The district identifies curricular and instructional resources and provides training / professional learning support on the initial implementation of these resources. This is done for specific courses, grade levels or bands at one time, rather than uniform implementation across subjects and grade levels all at once.</p>
<p>2. Instructional leaders establish collective coherence on observable qualities of desired instructional practices and curriculum use through shared observation.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Building and district instructional leaders review possible instructional practices or curricular expectations for different grade levels. Such items might be reviewed both for the potential to improve student learning outcomes and the potential for observers to be able to denote the practices during a walkthrough observation.</p>	<p>Building and district instructional leaders prioritize observable practices and select a limited number of practices to focus on during observation. Practices are documented in descriptive terms that can be easily discerned by observers. These practices are noted on paper or electronic forms that will be used to collect observation data. Observers engage in training using the forms with samples of observed practice (either video or actual trial observations).</p>
<p>3. Instructional leaders routinely observe instruction to gather data on instructional practice and curriculum use.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>District and building leaders set aside time on their schedules to participate in walkthrough observations. If they do not have the capacity to engage in walkthrough observations in order to see each teacher at least 1-2 times per month, additional individuals from each building who are familiar with the instructional vision, practices, and the district curriculum are identified as potential observers. Personnel may be instructional coaches or leaders at the building or district level who can dedicate time for observations to meet the threshold of seeing each teacher at least 1-2 times per month.</p>	<p>Those individuals who will routinely observe classroom instruction plan their schedules to dedicate time to the walkthrough process, including time to co-observe with others to calibrate observations. Scheduled times are varied throughout the day and week, so that there are a variety of instructional situations for observers to document.</p>

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4. District / building leadership and instructional leaders expand and modify monitoring to prioritize new instructional expectations.	4a	District and building leaders review existing instructional and student achievement data to prioritize subject areas and grade level bands for staggered implementation of walkthrough observations. Leaders first focus on teachers and classrooms that are open to general instructional observation in order to build positive perception about the process.	District and building leaders develop a decision-map or flowchart for adding new observation areas after data from observed practices are showing valid and reliable evidence of implementation among a majority of the observed teachers.
	4b	When reviewing and prioritizing instructional expectations by subject and grade level, district and building leaders develop a flow chart or learning progression chart mapping out initial teacher and student practices and more complex or advanced practices that can only take place following successful implementation of earlier practices by teachers.	District and building leaders map out likely changes in observed practices to note the natural progression of such practices, starting with building awareness around a practice, increasing frequency of an instructional practice, and begin incorporating observable student actions that are connected with each instructional practice.

GUIDE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM DECISIONS

PRACTICE	IN#	GETTING AWARE	GETTING READY
<p>5. Building leaders review monitoring data to identify instructional strengths and high-performing practitioners to build leadership capacity.</p>	5	<p>During the development of the walkthrough observation protocol and selection of information gathered, district and building leaders identify purposes of the data gathered and how they would use the information to make decisions about supporting teachers and instruction in general. Purposes may include identifying potential instructional leaders (based on strength shown from observations), determining professional learning needs, or ensuring that curriculum is being implemented on schedule and with fidelity.</p>	<p>In addition to scheduling the time for conducting walkthrough observations, building leaders and teacher collaborative teams set aside time within their standard meeting times to review instructional data generated through the walkthrough process (as well as other instructional data sources, including evaluation data, student assessment data, and other identified factors.) These leadership teams set targets for frequency of walkthrough observations for each review to ensure data is statistically valid and reliable.</p>
<p>6. Building leaders analyze data for trends, changes and gaps in practice, and correlation to student outcomes to inform instructional decisions.</p>	6a	<p>District and building leaders collaborate to identify what data they will analyze from the walkthrough observation process. This includes not only broad analyses of data to illustrate trends, but also can be disaggregated to explore grade level or subject area differences.</p>	<p>Building leaders use data generated during the testing of the walkthrough observation form and process for observation to generate data reports to be used in routine decision-making. During this, building or instructional leaders may identify specific data visualizations or data reporting tools that can be used to aid in instructional decision-making. Improvements to the walkthrough observation and data review process can be made.</p>
	6b	<p>District and building leaders review student outcome data (including interim and benchmark data) to identify the indicators that are likely correlated with the instructional practices and curriculum implementation to be documented through walkthrough observation data.</p>	<p>Building leaders work with teacher teams to identify specific indicators they would look to see in terms of impact on student outcomes. This is, ideally, done with coordination of district leaders to ensure these indicators are in general alignment with district data as well.</p>
<p>7. District and building leaders explore new instructional practices or curriculum resources using targeted implementation and monitoring with short term improvement cycles.</p>	7	<p>District and building leaders collaborate to identify potential new instructional practices or curriculum resources. Even if used as “pilot programs,” leaders identify a set of observed practices that would align with the new resources or programming, so that the trial implementation can be monitored to ensure practices are taking place with fidelity. These are documented in a set of “look-fors” from walkthrough observations.</p>	<p>Training is provided to teachers who will be implementing the new instructional practices or curriculum resources. Walkthrough observation forms are created to document desired practices and possible observed student actions (connected to practices specifically demonstrated during the training).</p>

PROVIDE COACHING AND FEEDBACK

PRACTICE	IN#	GETTING AWARE	GETTING READY
8. Instructional leaders who engage in walkthrough observations provide broad instructional information and feedback to teachers.	8a	When determining the instructional practices to look for in the walkthrough observation process, instructional leaders identify a process and frequency for communication, as well as a format for the data to illustrate how broad instructional decisions will be communicated to the district.	Building and district level collaborative teams specifically incorporate instructional observation data reviews into meeting agendas . Building and district level collaborative teams may want to identify a member to specifically be involved in conducting regular data analysis of observation data to inform the team.
	8b	Teacher collaborative groups identify observed practices that would inform and benefit the teachers being observed in order to ensure teachers have a voice in the design of the process. Teachers can utilize data from the process to improve the quality of instruction and curriculum implementation.	Teacher collaborative groups specifically plan for the use of observational data as one element of a broader plan for instructional improvement. These groups integrate information from walkthrough observations as one type of feedback to inform ongoing collaboration efforts.
9. Instructional leaders provide individual coaching to educators based upon walkthrough observations.	9	Instructional leaders meet with teachers to determine how walkthrough observation data will be used to inform the overall coaching process. Instructional leaders communicate to teachers that such data will be used to support their learning needs, and such data will not be the only data used in informing the coaching process. If not yet identified, the district reviews options and identifies a coaching model and protocol for instructional coaching.	Instructional leaders build coaching based on walkthrough observations into the broader timeline for instructional leadership routines. The district selects a coaching model and protocol, and trains instructional leaders in coaching practices aligned to the district coaching model. Coaching discussions are not incorporated until other efforts, such as engaging in routine observations and calibrating observations among all observers, are well established to ensure valid data.
10. Building and district leaders align coaching support with educator evaluation practices.	10	When designing the walkthrough observation process, district and building leaders map the potential observed areas and crosswalk this information with the organizational framework of their educator evaluation process. While walkthrough data is not to be used for evaluation directly, it is important to communicate to teachers how the data is connected to domains of their evaluation framework.	Building and district leaders map out the variety of data used for teacher evaluation and for coaching. This ensures educators see how data and documentation of observations will be used to inform the evaluation process and to guide ongoing coaching discussions for the teacher.

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<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 identify types of information they want to collect from coaching conversations with individual teachers to be used collectively to support needs assessment and selection of professional learning support for the instructional staff.</p>	<p>Building and district leaders create a documentation process that removes individual identifiers yet provides collaborative teams that are in charge of professional learning design and implementation with information from coaching documentation. Needs are identified based upon specific groups of teachers, rather than individuals or the district as a whole.</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>Leaders determine district and building capacity to provide instructional coaching or modeling of instructional practices for their instructional staff. Based upon this, leaders determine district and/or building needs in order to ensure all educators receive some level of instructional coaching or mentorship support at least equivalent to state requirements, if not greater.</p>	<p>Building and district leaders determine priorities for instructional coaching and mentoring. Descriptions of desired competencies for such supports are identified and documented for selection as well as supplemental compensation or hiring of individuals for such roles.</p>

