

Learning Walks Reflection

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Learning walks are a valuable tool for school leaders to use each week. The learning walks that I completed allowed me to get to know teachers and students, observe instruction, and learn more about high school curriculum.

When Ms. Dula assumed the principal position at Sanderson, the staff expressed a sincere desire to have the members of administration visible throughout the day. As I was getting to know staff members at the beginning of the year, I made sure to visit classrooms on learning walks in a nonthreatening way. I went into the rooms empty handed and just watched what was going on throughout the room. When appropriate, I interacted with the students and learned from them. I would go back to my office after the learning walks and record my observations in a google form and jot a little positive note for the staff member I observed. This practice helped me build trust with the staff and get to know them in an authentic way.

As the year progressed, I began taking my laptop in classrooms with me and completing my learning walk form as I observed instruction. I felt this was appropriate because it let teachers know that I was visible but expected to see solid instruction as well as action steps from our school improvement plan being implemented in core instruction.

In all learning walks, I was interested in seeing student engagement and a positive classroom environment. This was a large focus for the administration, school improvement team, and equity team this year. I wanted to see students authentically engaged and not just compliant, positive interactions between staff and students, and appropriate pedagogy being implemented.

In my notes to teachers, I made sure to leave one “glow” and one “grow.” Some teachers expressed their appreciation for this nonthreatening feedback.

As a school leader, I will continue this feedback and create the google form to automatically send the responses to teachers after I submit my information. This way teachers know what I am looking for and see my observation notes and thoughts.

I developed the learning walk observation tool with the help of my principal mentor and executive coach based on our school improvement goals and action steps. I shared this form with the admin team for them to use how they saw fit. The admin team did not use the form this year, so I was not able to gather data from multiple perspectives. As a school leader, I will work with my admin team to create a walkthrough tool that we all agree to use with fidelity throughout the year. I would like to create a biweekly learning walk schedule, so every teacher is observed often and by all members of administration. We will use the data collected from the learning walk google form to notice trends across the school and create next steps.