

## Learning Walks

**Objective:** To allow teachers to visit and watch numerous classrooms from around the region, outside their own school or district, while having a dialogue with an instructional coach and other teachers around strategies, culture, and other takeaways. Reflection time and followup by the instructional coach is key.

New coaches, we suggest that you have participated in one or two instructional coach building walkthrus with other coaches before taking your teachers out on your own on a learning walk. This is a way to 'norm' ourselves as coaches!

### Process:

- In conversation with your teachers choose a day a couple weeks out. If possible, have at least two teachers to increase the dialogue and reflection. Sometimes their mentor, another new teacher in the district at a similar grade level or subject, or someone from their PLC. Ask other coaches if there is someone in that grade band that may benefit from another district. Make sure that the teacher has approval from admin and funding for the sub from the district (unless part of another grant)
  - *Please be aware* - Other programs have Learning Walks Opportunities built in. We need to be aware of this and make sure we are not stepping on toes by taking teachers out before the district would like them to be.
  - *Best Practice has been to allow **new** teachers as MUCH time in their classroom before suggesting a learning walk.* This gives them time to settle in, figure out what is working for them, and have an idea of what they are wanting to look more into.
- Once day is set, brainstorm where and what you are wanting to take the teacher to see. IMESD coaches are available to help rough out a plan and have a pretty good feel on timing with travel and lunch involved.
- Once we have an outline, then you will reach out to building admin/teachers in the buildings with a request email. If looking for specific subject or strategies, for example math small groups or word work, request those times in that email.

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### Example Emails:

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Good afternoon everyone!

I am working with a group of new teachers from Morrow and Pendleton and am setting up a learning walk for them to see other second and third grade classrooms. I am taking them to a number of schools and was wondering what your schedules were like between about noon and 1:00 on Thursday. We would pop in for about 10 to 15 minutes and observe. This group of teachers are really working on small group instruction and organization, but even if that is not something you are doing during that time, just seeing other teachers and their classes is always beneficial! Let me know if there is a time during that slot that works better for you and we can try and make sure to hit your room!

I hope to hear from you soon!

Thanks – Heidi

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***Later in the year as teachers become more comfortable and admin are welcoming with having learning walks in their building you can send emails that are a little more forward with a schedule already estimated:***

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This next Thursday, January 25 there is a pair of second grade teachers from Sherwood Elementary going on a learning walk to visit first, second, and third grade classrooms. We would like to get into several classrooms from various school districts to give these teachers ideas for them to take back and implement into their own environment.

Thus, I'm sending this email to you asking if there is a conflict **with visiting your class between during the times listed below?**

McKay Elementary 8:30-9:30

Athena Elementary 10:15-11:00

Ferndale Elementary 12:15-1:15

Washington Elementary 2:00-3:00

Please send me a reply if there is a conflict with your schedule during this time slot: you have prep, lunch, you are testing, you will be gone, etc. I'd enjoy a reply if you don't mind us stopping by. If I don't receive an email back, we may stop by on Thursday.

Thanks so much for allowing us to visit, as it's a huge benefit for teachers to visit other classrooms. I feel it is probably one of the best PD opportunities available.

Please reply if you have questions or concerns, Joe

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- Using the information from the emails and responses, set your schedule accordingly and share it with your participating teachers going with you on the learning walk. Think about where to meet, travel time to get to locations, what vehicle you will take, etc...
- ***A couple days before***, email the buildings again that you will be visiting with the approximate times you will be in each building in case something has come up. Email teachers on the learning walk reminding them where to meet and what to bring (including lunches if needed).
- ***On the day of the learning walk:***
  - Supplies needed:
    - Clipboard
    - Schedule printed off
    - Building maps if needed
    - Numerous copies of the learning walk form that you are choosing to use

#### **Learning Walk Forms:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fm9bXnRmmXDk-mb4tiOKiWu5CjIYMyRaMvG5QpcLrSo/edit>

#### **Example schedule:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e34fWlStVl4Mx-YBAqqzFMV50ShcRlStxhIeM8bSljU/edit?usp=sharing>

#### **Learning Walk Etiquette:**

- Visit classrooms with no more than three adults at a time. Stay for 10 - 20 minutes depending on the topic/interest/transition that is happening and what the teachers

are wanting to see. When you step in the hall, ask a question or pose a thought about what you saw to encourage reflection. Then go to next classroom. Use travel and car time to talk about what is being seen and trends in classrooms.

- If students ask “who are you” or “what are you doing here” always say you are there to see the great things they are doing. NEVER say you are there to watch their teacher.
- ***When finished have a set location to debrief.*** This could be in an empty classroom or a room at the ESD. Debrief on takeaways and what they learned from the day.
- **THANK YOU CARDS** - Please sit and take a few minutes to write a Thank You card to EVERY teacher whose classroom was visited. Thank them for allowing you to visit, name something you saw specifically with that teacher, and have all teachers on the walk thru sign. Thank you cards are available at both the Joseph Building in LaGrande and IMESD Pendleton. We can send the cards in the courier or hand deliver to the secretaries at the buildings.

Use the learning walk opportunity as a way to continue working with your teacher. After a couple days of class, email them as a follow up asking if they’ve implemented or tried anything they saw on the learning walk.