

Walk-About Organizer—Full View

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Subject: _____

Grade: _____

**Curricular/
Instructional
Decision
Points**

- Obj/
Alignment
- Strategies
- Lesson steps

**Physical
Environment**

- Walk Walls
- Safety/Health
- Physical
Arrangement

**Teacher
Engagement**

- Relationships
- Movement

**Student
Engagement**

- On Task
- Understanding

Follow Up: _____

A Model of Principal Walk-about

Aim: Participants will understand the purpose, benefits, and components of classroom walk-about by completing the reflective question form.

- Purpose
- Structure
 - Timeline for Professional development and implementation
 - Actual steps for conducting the Walkabout
 - Professional development material for training staff, and administration
(to be developed)
- Handouts and rubric(s) to be used by administration
(to be developed)
- Feedback
(to be developed)

PURPOSE:

Walk-about are 3 to 5 minute informal observations by the principal and assistant principal. Visits are made to all classrooms to observe instruction and enacted curriculum. This is not for evaluation of individual teachers. The walk-about results in gathering data for targeted professional growth and a school-wide snapshot of the curriculum and instructional decisions.

BENEFITS:

- Develops a positive school culture.
- Walk-about help administrators act as instructional leaders to insure quality instruction and work.
- Walk-about send students the message that instruction and learning are important. They view their teachers and administrators as learners.
- Walk-about help administrators assess the school's operations and culture.
- Walk-about inform on the delivery of curriculum and the use of instructional strategies.
- Walk-about keep all staff focused on student learning.
- Walk-about lead to school-wide reflection and promote collaborative planning by staff and administration for increased student achievement.
- Promotes an understanding of trends and patterns in the school. Principals need to use that information to promote learning at staff meetings.
- Promotes principal as a reflective thinker.
- Promotes positive principal visibility in the classroom.
- Enhances comfort level with reflective questions.

EXPECTATIONS:

Building administrators should aspire to the following:

- Walk-about happen in all classrooms on a weekly basis.
- Varying the time of each walk-about will provide the administrator with a clearer picture of the school's operations.
- Spend 3-5 minutes for each classroom, (5 minute maximum)
- Walk-about do not interrupt instruction, e.g. students and teachers are familiar with the walk-about process.

Behaviors

- Administrators circulate the entire room. Avoid standing in the doorway.
- Do not take notes while present at the instructional activity. Capture what occurs and processes after leaving the room.
- Provide informal feedback within 48 hours. Periodically, feedback should be a discussion that facilitates teacher reflection on their practice.
- Administrators do not assist or attempt to solve classroom management issues.
- Walk-about are perceived by teachers as respectful and having high expectations.

Process

- Look for the academic focus
 - Look for clear objectives and instructions on display. Wording should be in student-friendly language.
 - Observe if the activity meets the expectations of the objectives.
- Look for student engagement
 - Conduct quiet questioning with a few students:
 - What are you working on today?
 - Why is this (lesson) important?
 - Why are you doing this (lesson) today?
 - Are you interested/enjoying what you are doing?
 - What have you learned in this lesson?
 - Observe if students appear to be talking and doing the intended work.
- Look at the environment
 - Walking the Walls: Should support the teaching and learning
 - Posters and charts that support the current learning
 - Student work that represents quality.
 - Rules clearly defined
 - Learning visuals are current with the taught curriculum.

Student Orientation to the Work – Are students on task when you walk in the classroom?

Curricular Decisions – What Aims has the teacher chosen to teach and are they aligned to the prescribed curriculum? Are the Aims/Objectives clearly articulated in student friendly language?

Instructional Decisions – What instructional practices is the teacher choosing to use at this time to help students achieve the learning of the curricular Aims?

Walk-the-Walls: What evidence is there of past Aims taught and/or instructional decisions used to teach the Aims that are present in the classroom – walk-the-walls, portfolios, projects in the room? The classroom environment needs to support the current learning. Are posters, charts, student work displayed to support the learning? Are the rules clearly defined?

Safety and Health Issues – Are there any noticeable safety or health issues that need to be addressed?

The Walk-About Organizer: Explanation of the organizer, and its usage

Curricular and Instructional Decision Points

Why is this important?

The state has mandated what students must know and be able to do. The curriculum provides seamless instructions for student learning from grade to grade.

- **Curricular Decisions**
The lesson objective gives focus to the teacher and students of what needs to be accomplished within the curriculum sequence.
 - What objectives (Aims) has the teacher chosen?
 - Is the objective aligned to the district and state standards (GLCE)?
- **Instructional Decisions**
Everyone needs a clear understanding (road map) of how the objective will be achieved.
 - What instructional strategies is the teacher using to achieve the objectives?
 - Is the lesson objective(s) understood by the students, teacher, and observer?
 - Can teachers and students articulate the purpose of the lesson?

Physical Environment

Why is this important?

Environmental (Classroom) Scanning is to observe what in the room supports or impedes student learning.

- **Walking the walls¹**
Entering the room, walk along the walls to get a close-up view of what is posted on the walls.
 - What is posted and/or visible that is supporting the current instruction?
 - Student products (finished and works in progress) are posted. Builds student's self-esteem and sends the message that sharing work is important. Helps students to learn concepts better when shared.
 - What is posted? For Example, classroom rules, jobs, student progress, places for students to keep work. With effective organization and classroom procedures students are not wasting instructional time and immediately are on task.
- **Checking for Safety and Health Issues**
Are there any safety or health issues that need to be addressed?
Are students feeling comfortable to participate and take positive risks?

¹ Downey, Carolyn J., Betty E. Steffy, Fenwick W. English, Larry E. Frase, William K. Poston, Jr. *The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time*. Corwin Press. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2004, pp. 21, 35-36.

- **Physical Arrangement**
How is the furniture arranged for students to freely move about the room, and engage in group activities?
Is the classroom environment warm and flexible to support student learning? A warm environment is a positive relationship amongst students; and it is also between the teacher and students. A flexible environment accommodates group and independent activities with minimal rearranging the room for little disruption of instruction.

Teacher Engagement

Why is this important?

Teacher interaction with students creates a supportive environment for students to learn.

- Are they making connections with students in their learning?
- Is the teacher walking around the classroom and talking with students about their learning?

Student Engagement

Why is this important?

Student achievement improves when they are motivated to learn. Students who are not engaged disrupt learning for themselves and others.

- Do students understand what they are doing?
- Do students understand why they are doing the activity?
- Are students attending to the appropriate work based on the learning objectives?

Follow Up

Why is this important?

1. Between Principal and Teacher

Reinforce what teachers are doing well so that they will continue doing the effective practice(s). Identify areas of support to assist the teacher such as resources, materials, and instructional strategies.

2. Principal Personal Reflection

Look at trends and patterns to determine the strengths for celebration and areas that need to be addressed for further improvement.

- School initiatives
- Instructional decisions
- School Climate