

A person wearing blue jeans and brown shoes stands on a large white arrow painted on asphalt. The arrow points downwards. The background is a paved surface with some white lines.

Path to Improving  
Instruction:  
Learning Walks as  
Reflection Tool

**Bon Air Career Middle School  
Principal: Amanda Landrum  
Team Members: Kris Dill &  
Brody Goodnight**

# Background

## **Bon Air Middle - A School at a Crossroads**

- **5 years of Failing Test Scores - 2013-2014 to present**
- **Year 3 - DOE School Improvement Grant**
- **2017-2018 State Board of Education School Quality Review**
- **2018-2019 - Year 1 Transformation Zone - Planning Year**
- **2019-2020 - Transformation Zone Implementation**



# Background

## Bon Air Middle - A School at a Crossroads

- **2018-2019 - Year 1 Transformation Zone - Planning Year**
  - **PD**
    - **Social-Emotional Learning**
    - **Employability Skills**
    - **Curriculum Mapping and Refinement** (Marzano, 2014)
    - **Making Thinking Visible (Ritchhart)**



A person in a light green jacket and dark pants is running across a concrete surface. In the background, there is a large, vibrant mural with a blue and green color palette. The mural depicts a hand reaching down from the top, a boat on the right, and various abstract shapes and patterns. The overall scene is bright and energetic.

# Our Purpose

- Improve and increase instructional conversations, reflection and implementation of new instructional strategies.
- Build comfort level and capacity of reflective practices prior to Transformation Zone Implementation.



# Wondering...

How can instructional rounds (Learning Walks) improve and increase instructional conversations, reflection and implementation of new strategies? (Marzano, 2016)



# Actions

- All teachers will take part in at least three instructional rounds during the action research process.
- Specific areas of focus given to teachers for each round: engagement, instructional strategies, daily learning targets.
- Discuss and reflect during weekly PLC meetings.



# Data Collection

- Common Form for Data Collection from teachers.
- Teachers to submit copy of forms from instructional rounds to Principal.
- Forms collected and qualitative data analyzed.
- Qualitative data from emails, PLC meetings and individual teacher meetings collected also.

### Learning Walk Note Catcher

Focus of observation/ Inquiry question:

I saw/ I heard	This means to me...

Key Learning/ Take Away:



# Data

20 teachers

1 instructional coach

180 classroom visits

- 60 focused on daily learning targets
- 60 focused on engagement
- 60 focused on instructional strategies

# Data

21 Mid Year Conferences

4 PLC meetings

4 Leadership Team Meetings focused on instruction

10 requests for observations

- "I'm trying a new strategy, will you come and observe?"



# Discoveries



- Teachers crave feedback.
- Teachers greatly appreciated getting out of their classrooms to see the work of others.
- Instructional conversations and reflection increased.
  - 100% of teachers mentioned instructional rounds in their mid year conference.
- Implementation of new instructional strategies increased.
  - 50% of teachers requested observations when trying a new strategy.

A person wearing blue jeans and brown shoes stands on a white line on a paved surface, looking forward. The background is a blurred asphalt road with white lane markings.

# Where to Next?

- 2019-2020 - The Year of Instruction
  - Implement Coaching Cycle for EVERY teacher
  - Principal model instructional strategies in PD sessions
  - Weekly non-evaluative walkthroughs to collect instructional data to continuously assess implementation and PD needs



A person wearing blue jeans and brown shoes stands on a paved surface. A large white arrow is painted on the pavement, pointing downwards. The person's shadow is cast on the pavement to their left.

# Bibliography

Marzano, R. J., Warrick, P. B., Simms, J. A., Livingston, D., Livingston, P., Pleis, F., Heflebower, T., Hoegh, J.K., Magana, S. (2014). *A handbook for high reliability schools: The next step in school reform*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

Marzano, R. J., Heflebower, T., Grift, G., & Warrick, P. (2016). *Collaborative Teams That Transform Schools: The Next Step in PLCs*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

Ritchhart, R., Church, M., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Making thinking visible: How to promote engagement, understanding, and independence for all learners*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



## **Path to Improving Instruction: Learning Walks as Reflection Tool**

**Principal Name:** Amanda Landrum  
**School Name:** Bon Air Middle School  
**Team Members' Names:** Kris Dill, Brody Goodnight  
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### **Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2-3)**

- Bon Air Middle Schools is a school at a crossroads. With failing scores, Bon Air Middle has entered into a Transformation Zone with our two feeder elementary schools to make sweeping changes in our buildings.
  - 5 years of failing scores
  - Currently in year 3 of DOE School Improvement Grant
  - 2017-2018 DOE/SBOE School Quality Review
  - 2018-2019 Year 1 of Transformation Zone – Planning year
  - 2019-2020 – Transformation Zone Implementation
- During the 2018-2019 school year, Bon Air Middle School teachers have received professional development in the areas of: social-emotional learning, employability skills, curriculum mapping and refinement (Marzano, 2014) and visible thinking routines (Ritchhart).

### **The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 4)**

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to improve and increase instructional conversations, reflection and implementation of new instructional strategies, with the hope of building a level of comfort and a capacity of being reflective in their instructional practices prior to the Transformation Zone implementation in school year 2019-2020.

### **Our Wondering (Slide 5)**

With this purpose, we wondered...How can instructional rounds (Learning Walks) (Marzano, 2016) improve and increase instructional conversations, reflection and implementation of new strategies?



### **Our Actions (Slide 6)**

After completing High Reliability Schools training through IPLI, Bon Air Middle School team not only determined that instruction needed to be a focus for our reform, but also that teachers were craving an opportunity to see what their colleagues were doing throughout the building.

With that in mind, our team took the following steps:

- At least 3 instructional round sessions per teacher.
- Areas of focus for each session would be: Engagement, Daily Learning Targets, and Instructional Strategies.
- Instructional rounds discussed during weekly PLC time.

### **Data Collection (Slide 7-8)**

Common learning walk form was used to collect the following qualitative data: I saw/heard, This means to me, Key Learning/Take Away. Teachers then submitted a copy of the form to the principal. Qualitative data was analyzed. Qualitative data from emails, PLC meetings, team leader meetings, and individual teacher meetings was also collected. Quantitative data was also collected on how many discussions were held.

### **Our Data (Slides 9-10)**

20 teachers

1 Instructional Coach

180 classroom visits

- 60 focused on daily learning targets
- 60 focused on engagement
- 60 focused on instructional strategies

21 midyear conferences held

4 PLC meetings used to discuss instructional rounds

4 Leadership Team Meetings focused on instruction

10 requests from teachers to observe their instruction as they tried a new instructional strategy.

### **Our Discoveries (Slide 11)**

- Learning Statement One: Teachers crave feedback.
- Learning Statement Two: Teachers appreciate opportunity to see their colleagues in action.
- Learning Statement Three: 100% of teachers discussed the instructional rounds during their midyear conference as a positive experience and 50% of teachers requested an observation during a class period where they were trying a new instructional strategy.

As teachers completed instructional rounds, there were positive affirmations throughout. “I had never gone to a colleague’s classroom to see someone else teach.” “Can I see the comments of those who came to my room?” 10 teachers even went so far as to ask a building administrator to observe them while they tried a new instructional strategy with their students. Overall, there was an exponential increase in the amount of instructional conversations and reflections in the building.

### **Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 12)**

The Bon Air Middle School team has been reminded through this action research process that we continue to be a school at a crossroads. As we continue to plan for implementation year for our Transformation Zone, we have realized that the 2019-2020 school year will be “The Year of Instruction”. Our plan includes a coaching cycle which will be a requirement for every classroom teacher. Additionally, our principal will continue to model new instructional strategies during professional development sessions. Lastly, weekly non-evaluative walkthroughs will be used to collect data on instruction which will be used to determine needs for continuing professional development, increase instructional reflection and to assess implementation of our coaching cycle. As you present your concluding thoughts, once again consider weaving a reference or two into your conclusions to connect your conclusions to the field of administration at large.

### **Bibliography (Slide 13)**

Marzano, R. J., Warrick, P. B., Simms, J. A., Livingston, D., Livingston, P., Pleis, F., Heflebower, T., Hoegh, J.K., Magana, S. (2014). *A handbook for high reliability schools: The next step in school reform*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

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