

**Principal Name:** Dawn Sonsini

**School Name:** Northeastern Middle School

**Team Members' Names:** Carrie Mitchell and Sara Williams

**Principal's Email Contact:** [dsonsini@nws.k12.in.us](mailto:dsonsini@nws.k12.in.us)



### **Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 1)**

High Reliability Framework survey two results indicated a lower rating on indicator 2.6; teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching and learning. In previous years, individual teachers observed a teacher of their choosing each nine weeks. There was no formal discussion or reflection on observations. This prompted consideration of a more collaborative and reflective observation practice.

### **The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 2)**

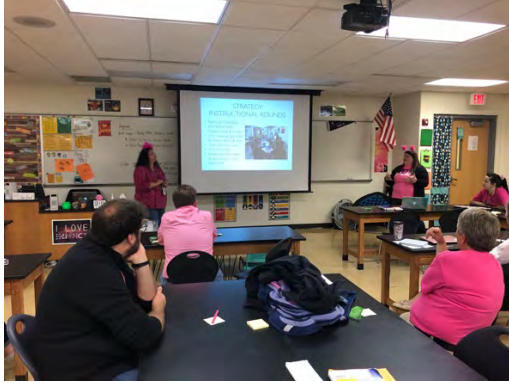
Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to create a model for instructional rounds to give teachers an opportunity to gain ideas for their own professional practice through observing colleagues.

### **Our Wondering (Slide 3)**

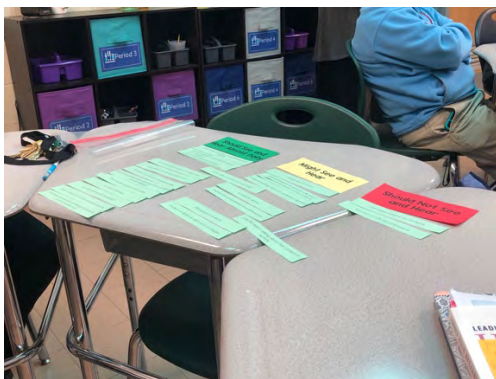
With this purpose, we wondered how highlighting best practices through instructional rounds fosters collaboration and creates transparency and consistency across classrooms.

### **Our Actions (Slide 4)**

On October 30, 2019, we shared High Reliability Framework survey one and two results with staff highlighting strengths and weaknesses in our culture and effective teaching practices.



On November 13, 2019, we shared High Reliability Framework survey three results with staff highlighting strengths and weaknesses in our curriculum. Teacher leaders engaged staff in a sorting activity to identify instructional practices for our school-wide model of instruction. Staff discussed what we should, may, and never see in classrooms. This exercise was referenced in chapter three of *Leading a High Reliability School*.



Teacher leaders created an instructional round observation form that included our instructional snapshot (from the sorting activity) and debriefing reflection questions. This form was shared with staff at a professional development meeting on January 8, 2020.

An instructional round schedule was shared with staff that explained the process. Each month, two groups of three teachers led by one of our teacher leaders visited a colleague's classroom. Each observation lasted approximately ten minutes followed by a fifteen-minute debriefing where the teacher leader facilitated a discussion on best practices. Teacher leaders emailed written feedback and affirmation to the observed teacher by the end of the day.

For the first two rounds, teacher leaders were observed. Following the January observations, teachers who participated in the previous month's observations were asked to host. Volunteers were chosen to continue observations.

### **Data Collection (Slide 5)**

Teacher leaders took pictures during observations, collected observation forms, and kept feedback emails.

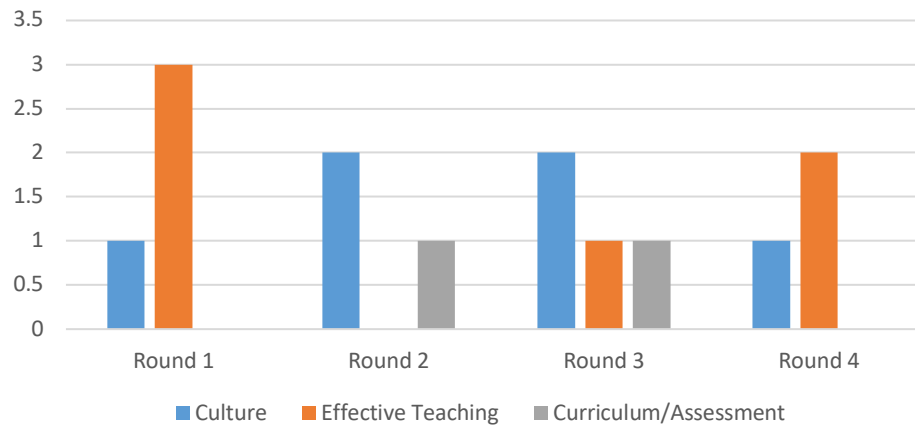


### **Our Data (Slides 6)**

Teacher Email Feedback Aligned to High Reliability Schools Framework

- Safe, Supportive, & Collaborative Culture: 6 Comments
- Effective Teaching in Every Classroom: 6 Comments
- Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum: 2 Comments

## Teacher Email Feedback Aligned to HRS Framework



## Observation Form Example A:

**Instructional Rounds Observation Form**

**NORTHEASTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Focus: Observe classroom practices and gain ideas for possible implementation in your own classroom. Remember to focus on pedagogy, not content.

Use the chart below to circle/highlight instructional practices you observe.

Should See and Hear Almost Daily	Might See and Hear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear learning goals and scales</li> <li>Posted learning targets or objectives</li> <li>Clear classroom routines and procedures</li> <li>Formative assessment of individual students and the whole class</li> <li>Content chunked into digestible bites</li> <li>Teacher withitness</li> <li>Teachers noticing and reacting when students are disengaged</li> <li>Student small-group discussion strategies</li> <li>Quality and timely feedback</li> <li>Questioning Strategies:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Random selection to include all students</li> <li>Use of wait time</li> <li>Use of multiple types of questions</li> <li>Prompts for elaboration on information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previewed content</li> <li>Students tracking their own progress in learning</li> <li>Academic games</li> <li>Academic vocabulary instruction</li> <li>Examination of similarities and differences</li> <li>Examination of errors in reasoning</li> <li>Understanding of student backgrounds and interests</li> <li>Opportunities for students to talk about themselves (in relation to content)</li> </ul>

**Observations:**

moving around the room  
 double-check use  
 clear expectations  
 clear projects  
 choice in assessment  
 highlight items

mindful pacing  
 scaffolding  
 use of rubric  
 know ATP  
 Love the seating

**Debriefing Reflection Questions:**

What did you see that reaffirms something you do?

What did you see that you would like to know more about?

What did you see that you would like to add to your own practice?

\*You will debrief with the instructional round leader and discuss the above questions. Following the debriefing session, the rounds leader will email the group's feedback to the observed teacher(s).

## Observation Form Example B:

**Instructional Rounds Observation Form**

**NORTHEASTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Focus: Observe classroom practices and gain ideas for possible implementation in your own classroom. Remember to focus on pedagogy, not content. ©

Use the chart below to circle/highlight instructional practices you observe.

Should See and Hear Almost Daily	Might See and Hear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear learning goals and scales</li> <li>Posted learning targets or objectives</li> <li>Clear classroom routines and procedures</li> <li>Formative assessment of individual students and the whole class</li> <li>Content chunked into digestible bites</li> <li>Teacher withitness</li> <li>Teachers noticing and reacting when students are disengaged</li> <li>Student small-group discussion strategies</li> <li>Quality and timely feedback: - <i>Joia / other</i></li> <li>Questioning Strategies: - <i>Spoken / written</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Random selection to include all students</li> <li>Use of wait time</li> <li>Use of multiple types of questions</li> <li>Prompts for elaboration on information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previewed content - <i>→ not taking on</i></li> <li>Students tracking their own progress in learning</li> <li>Academic games</li> <li>Academic vocabulary instruction</li> <li>Examination of similarities and differences</li> <li>Examination of errors in reasoning</li> <li>Understanding of student backgrounds and interests</li> <li>Opportunities for students to talk about themselves (in relation to content)</li> </ul>

Observations:

- Bellwork directions

1.  
2.  
3.

- Calming, relaxed classroom environment  
- Students engaged in video

- Loved student in charge of play / pause video

- Notetaking on video sources

Debriefing Reflection Questions:

What did you see that reaffirms something you do?  
*Turn + Talk → thinking lesson into 10 min*

What did you see that you would like to know more about?  
*What is a screen grab?*

What did you see that you would like to add to your own practice?  
*\*Screenshots from video source  
\*Comp. of student taking words from video vs. from Michael's own words*

\*You will debrief with the instructional round leader and discuss the above questions. Following the debriefing session, the rounds leader will email the group's feedback to the observed teacher(s).

## Instructional Round 1:

Thank you so much for letting us pilot this program in your room today. There are so many great things that we observed! Here are a few of the highlights that we wanted share with you:

- 1) Your room felt so calm. It was a such a relaxed atmosphere for students.
- 2) We really liked your use of the announcement feature on Canvas to relay today's agenda and learning targets on Canvas.
- 3) Your use of small white boards attached to your bulletin board with learning targets frees up writing space on your white boards and is clearly seen when the video screen is down.
- 4) Your connections to previous work were amazing. You gave multiple examples or had students helping you with the examples while still moving through the instruction so that students had work time!

Keep moving forward and being the amazing teacher that you are!

## Instructional Round 2:

We loved coming into your classroom today!! Here are some wonderful things we observed:

1. Your Expectations. You clearly have high expectations that have been set for the students. Your doorbell attention-getter was wonderful and effective - the students immediately stopped talking and looked to you. Also, we were impressed with your expectations on your bell ringer activity. As soon as you rang the doorbell, the students immediately knew to pass in their papers and to who. Awesome!

2. The project. We loved tons of aspects about the project. We liked how you gave the students a choice on what they created. Your rubric was great and we loved the suggestion of grading themselves. We liked how you chunked the directions and made them count and highlight the requirements - a wonderful strategy to make sure they know the requirements. Great use of academic vocabulary!

3. Your seating process. This is something we want to know more about and steal! It was so unique and gave the students some choice on where they got to sit and who they were going to work with. As we were talking, here were some questions we had: Do you randomly select kids or is there a process as to who gets to pick when? Do you switch numbers on the fly when you know a combo won't work?

Thanks so much for letting us come in today. We couldn't say enough great things - you're awesome!

#### Instructional Round 3:

Thanks again for allowing us to come and join you this morning. What a fun project students were presenting! Here are a just a few of the awesome things we observed in your classroom:

1) We love your enthusiasm! You are always high energy and we wish we had a few more ounces of enthusiasm some days. Thanks for being excited to be in the classroom with our students!

2) Great use of technology in the PE classroom! The activity was creative, and you could tell that students worked hard to create their own dance. Giving the students the opportunity to present their videos and feel comfortable enough to share them is amazing! Middle school students are always concerned about being in the spotlight, but you help them to overcome that anxiety and have fun.

3) We enjoyed your humor in the classroom. You started out the class by talking about how wonderful the day was because you could breathe through your nose again. It's simple but puts students at ease and creates a comfortable environment.

4) Great reminder of your rubric before beginning the videos so that students were reminded again of how they would be graded. You have high expectations and the

presentations we observed showed that students met those expectations!

Great job! Thanks for leading by example!

#### Instructional Round 4:

We loved coming into your classroom today!! Here are some wonderful things we observed:

1. Your enthusiasm and energy level. You were moving around the room engaging all tables the entire time with your energy and enthusiasm. All your students were engaged and on task!
2. Video Source. We thought your video source was well executed. We loved how you provided students with screen grabs with the important facts from the video and had them preview before watching. We also liked how you paused and chunked the video for students, which made it easier for students to comprehend the information the video was sharing.
3. Student questioning and affirmation. We loved how you engaged all students with a variety of questioning techniques - random selection and prompting for elaboration were two great ways we noted. Your affirmation for student responses (even ones not fully correct) created such a safe learning environment where students were willing to take risks in answering aloud. :)

Thanks so much for letting us come in today. We couldn't say enough great things - we loved visiting your classroom!

#### **Our Discoveries (Slide 7)**

- Learning Statement One: Teachers felt instructional rounds were more productive and collaborative than in the past because of the dialogue and debriefing following the observation. The emails sent to observed teachers highlighted what the team felt were strong instructional practices observed.



## Instructional Round Observation Feb. 25th

Williams, Sara

to Breanna, Sadie, Mark, Tina, bcc: me

Tue, Feb 25, 2:58 PM (2 days ago)

Hi Bre!

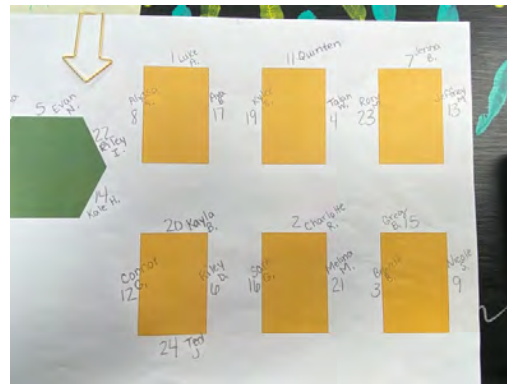
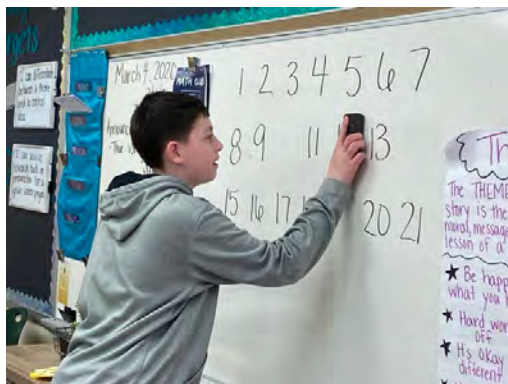
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Thanks so much for letting us come in today. We couldn't say enough great things - we loved visiting your classroom!

Thanks,  
Sara, Sadie, Mark, and Tina

- Learning Statement Two: Teachers gained ideas for implementation in their own classrooms focused on pedagogy, not content. For example, one teacher observed a process of assigning seats which gave students voice and choice in project groups. She then implemented this same process when beginning the next group assignment.



- Learning Statement Three: The process of building and sustaining a culture of greatness requires an intentional focus on team and learning from each other. This action research



provided teachers with an opportunity to provide affirmation to each other observed in the areas of culture, classroom teaching, and assessment.



### **Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 8)**

- General Reflection: There are strong instructional practices in many classrooms. Teachers are willing to engage in reflection on these practices and learn from one another. They enjoy the time together and find that with the loss of team this is a powerful practice. It gives teachers an opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in varying grade levels and content areas.
- Directions for The Future: We would like to expand the opportunity of teacher leaders to include others who may be willing to facilitate observational rounds next year. We wonder whether to expand our instructional model to include feedback, content, and context in our instructional model as suggested in chapter three of *Leading a High Reliability School* is necessary. It would create a more clear playbook for what will occur to help students learn in the classroom.

### **Bibliography (Slide 9)**

Book

Marzano, R., Warrick, P., Rains, C. & DuFour, R. (2018). *Leading a High Reliability School*. Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.

### **Citing Your Presentation and Publication**

#### **Presentation**

Sonsini, D., Mitchell, C., & Williams, S. (2020). Learning From Each Other! Presented at the annual Indiana Principal Leadership Institute Showcase of Schools, Indianapolis, IN.

#### **Publication**

Sonsini, D., Mitchell, C., & Williams, S. (2020). Learning From Each Other! Retrieved from

<https://Web address.>

A photograph of three women sitting at a wooden table, smiling at the camera. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a patterned jacket. The woman in the middle has long brown hair and is wearing a dark blue shirt. The woman on the right has curly brown hair, wears glasses, and is wearing a blue patterned shirt. In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a white polo shirt standing and holding a jacket.

# LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Name of School:  
Northeastern Middle  
School

Principal's Name:  
Dawn Sonsini  
Principal's Email:  
[dsonsini@nws.k12.in.us](mailto:dsonsini@nws.k12.in.us)

Team Members'  
Names: Carrie Mitchell  
and Sara Williams

# BACKGROUND LEADING TO THIS INQUIRY

High Reliability Framework survey two results indicated a lower rating on indicator 2.6; teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching and learning. In previous years, individual teachers observed a teacher of their choosing each nine weeks. There was no formal discussion or reflection on observations. This prompted consideration of a more collaborative and reflective observation practice.

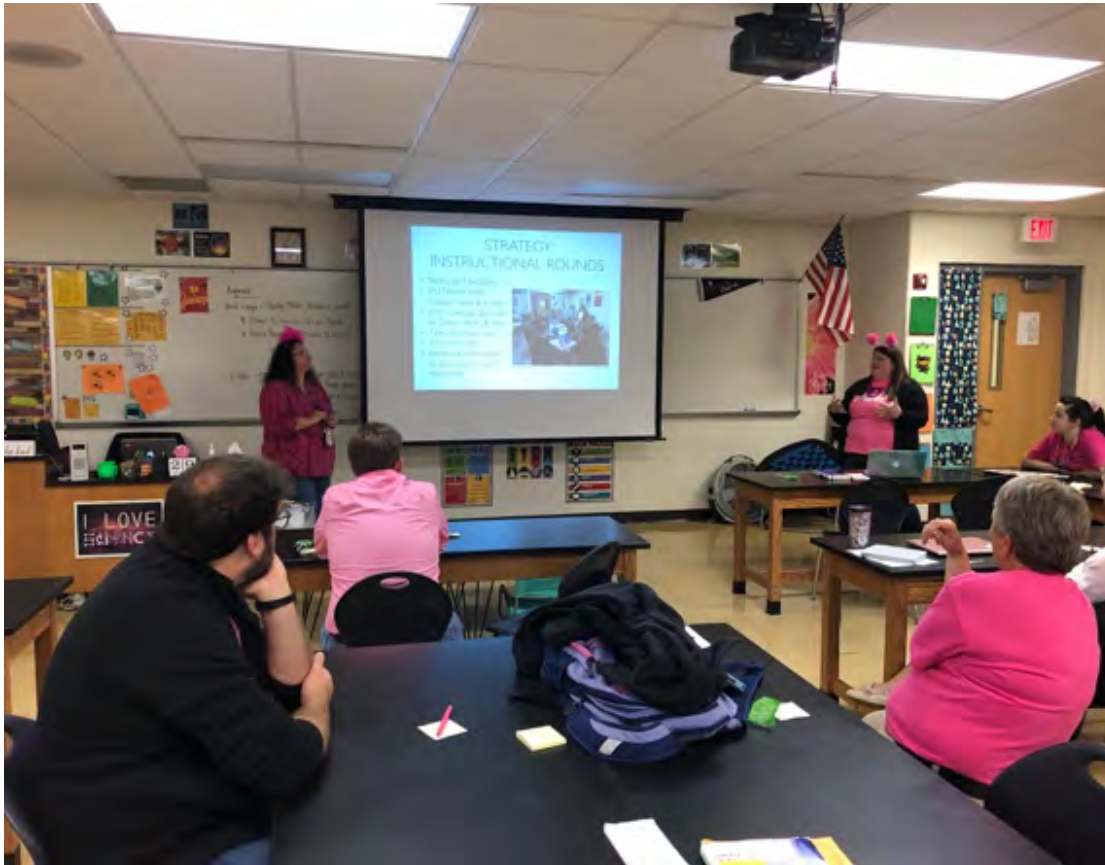
# PURPOSE OF THIS INQUIRY

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to create a model for instructional rounds to give teachers an opportunity to gain ideas for their own professional practice through observing colleagues.

# OUR WONDERING

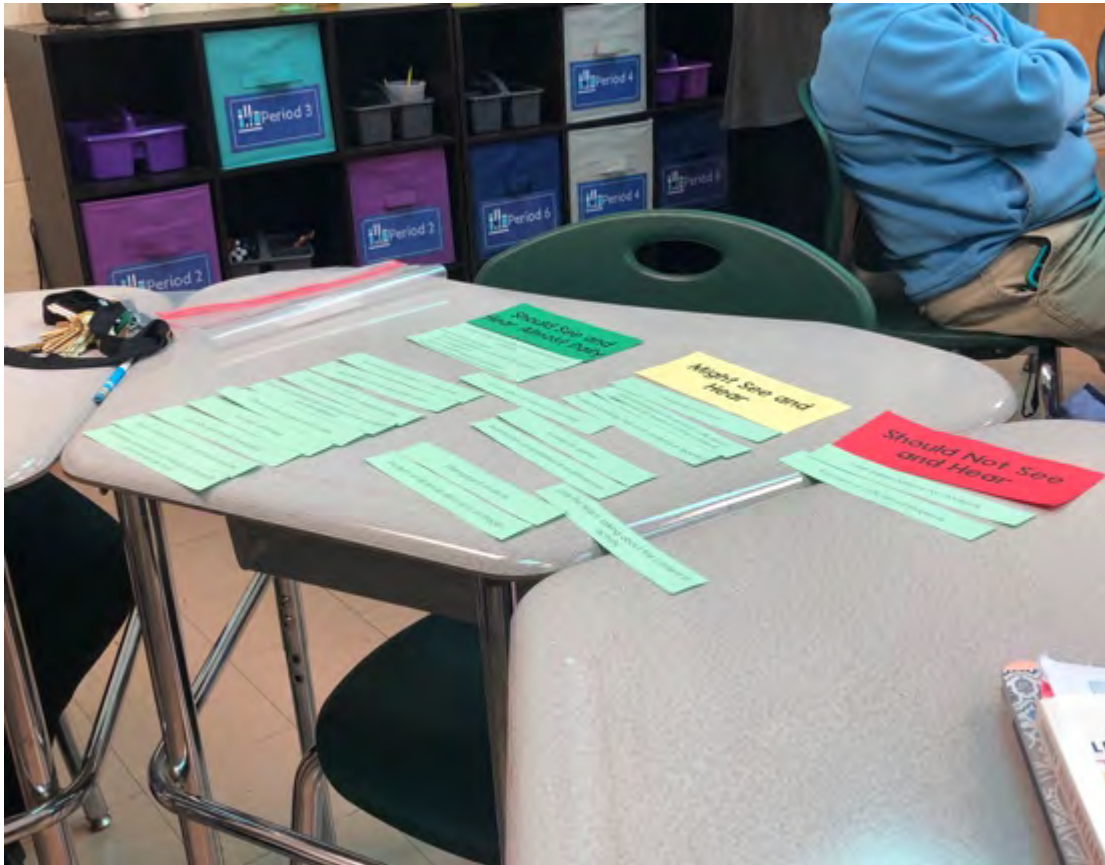
With this purpose, we wondered how highlighting best practices through instructional rounds fosters collaboration and creates transparency and consistency across classrooms.





On October 30, 2019, we shared High Reliability Framework survey one and two results with staff highlighting strengths and weaknesses in our culture and effective teaching practices.

OUR ACTIONS



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## OUR ACTIONS



# OUR ACTIONS

Teacher leaders created an instructional rounds observation form that included our instructional snapshot (from the sorting activity) and debriefing reflection questions. This form was shared with staff at a professional development meeting on January 8, 2020.

# OUR ACTIONS

An instructional round schedule was shared with staff that explained the process. Each month, two groups of three teachers led by one of our teacher leaders visited a colleague's classroom. Each observation lasted approximately ten minutes followed by a fifteen-minute debriefing where the teacher leader facilitated a discussion on best practices. Teacher leaders emailed written feedback and affirmation to the observed teacher by the end of the day.

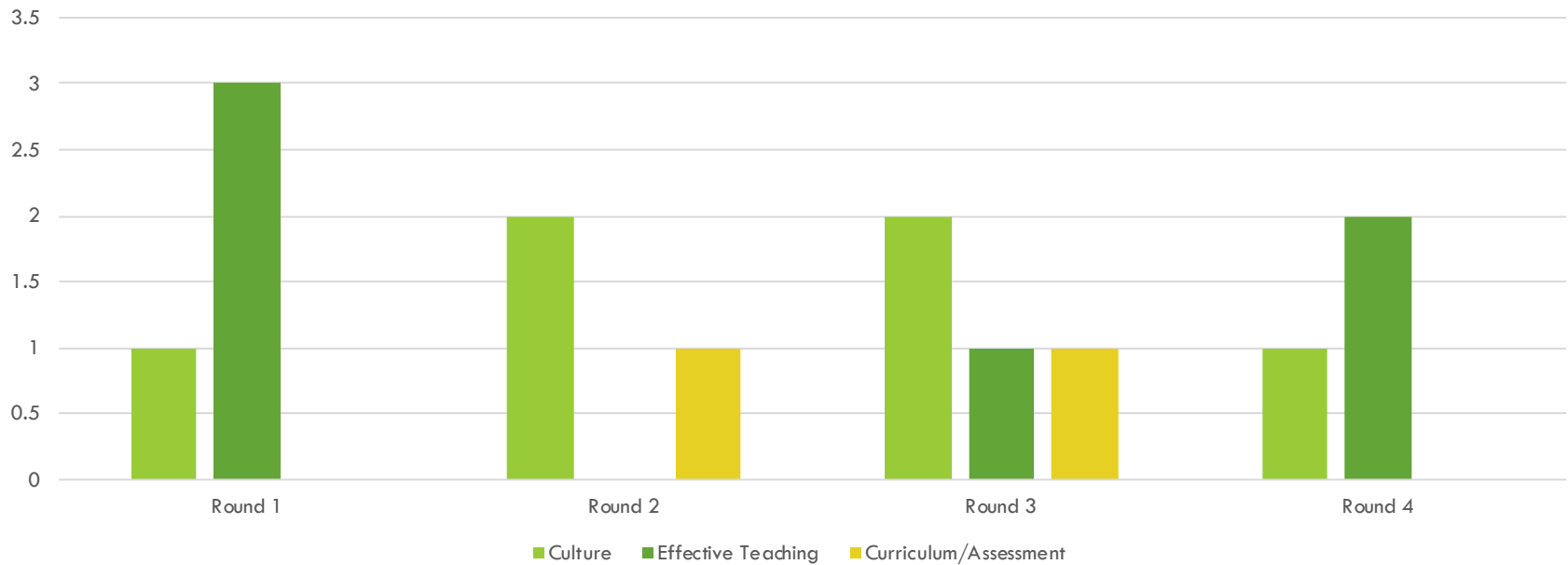
For the first two rounds, teacher leaders were observed. Following the January observations, teachers who participated in the previous month's observations were asked to host. Volunteers were chosen to continue observations.

# DATA COLLECTION

Teacher leaders took pictures during observations, collected observation forms, and kept feedback emails.



Teacher Email Feedback Aligned to HRS Framework



## OUR DATA

TEACHER EMAIL FEEDBACK ALIGNED TO HIGH RELIABILITY SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, & COLLABORATIVE CULTURE: 6 COMMENTS

EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN EVERY CLASSROOM: 6 COMMENTS

GUARANTEED AND VIABLE CURRICULUM: 2 COMMENTS



# OBSERVATIONAL FEEDBACK FORM

## Instructional Rounds Observation Form



**NORTHEASTERN  
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Focus: Observe classroom practices and gain ideas for possible implementation in your own classroom. Remember to focus on pedagogy, not content. ☺

Use the chart below to circle/highlight instructional practices you observe.

Should See and Hear Almost Daily	Might See and Hear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear learning goals and scales</li> <li>• Posted learning targets or objectives</li> <li>• Clear classroom routines and procedures</li> <li>• Formative assessment of individual students and the whole class</li> <li>• Content chunked into digestible bites</li> <li>• Teacher withitness</li> <li>• Teachers noticing and reacting when students are disengaged</li> <li>• Student small-group discussion strategies</li> <li>• Quality and timely feedback</li> <li>• Questioning Strategies:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Random selection to include all students</li> <li>○ Use of wait time</li> <li>○ Use of multiple types of questions</li> <li>○ Prompts for elaboration on information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previewed content</li> <li>• Students tracking their own progress in learning</li> <li>• Academic games</li> <li>• Academic vocabulary instruction</li> <li>• Examination of similarities and differences</li> <li>• Examination of errors in reasoning</li> <li>• Understanding of student backgrounds and interests</li> <li>• Opportunities for students to talk about themselves (in relation to content)</li> </ul>

### Observations:

moving around the room  
doorbell use  
clear expectations  
Elanora projects  
choose w/ assessment  
high light items  
mindful pause  
solmnity  
use of rubric  
Review ATP  
Love the seating

### Debriefing Reflection Questions:

What did you see that reaffirms something you do?

What did you see that you would like to know more about?

What did you see that you would like to add to your own practice?

\*You will debrief with the instructional round leader and discuss the above questions. Following the debriefing session, the rounds leader will email the group's feedback to the observed teacher(s).

## Instructional Rounds Observation Form



**NORTHEASTERN  
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Use the chart below to circle/highlight instructional practices you observe.

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### Observations:

- Bellwork directions  
1.  
2.  
3.  
- Calming, relaxed classroom environment  
• Students engaged in video  
- Loved student in charge of play / pause video  
- Notetaking on video sources  
Debriefing Reflection Questions:  
What did you see that reaffirms something you do?  
What did you see that you would like to know more about?  
What did you see that you would like to add to your own practice?  
Screenshots from video source  
Camp of student  
Stating words from video vs. Michael's own thoughts

\*You will debrief with the instructional round leader and discuss the above questions. Following the debriefing session, the rounds leader will email the group's feedback to the observed teacher(s).

# OUR DATA: INSTRUCTIONAL ROUND 1

Thank you so much for letting us pilot this program in your room today. There are so many great things that we observed! Here are a few of the highlights that we wanted share with you:

1) Your room felt so calm. It was a such a relaxed atmosphere for students.

2) We really liked your use of the announcement feature on Canvas to relay today's agenda and learning targets on Canvas.

3) Your use of small white boards attached to your bulletin board with learning targets frees up writing space on your white boards and is clearly seen when the video screen is down.

4) Your connections to previous work were amazing. You gave multiple examples or had students helping you with the examples while still moving through the instruction so that students had work time!

Keep moving forward and being the amazing teacher that you are!

# OUR DATA: INSTRUCTIONAL ROUND 2

We loved coming into your classroom today!! Here are some wonderful things we observed:

1. Your Expectations. You clearly have high expectations that have been set for the students. Your doorbell attention-getter was wonderful and effective - the students immediately stopped talking and looked to you. Also, we were impressed with your expectations on your bell ringer activity. As soon as you rang the doorbell, the students immediately knew to pass in their papers and to who. Awesome!

2. The project. We loved tons of aspects about the project. We liked how you gave the students a choice on what they created. Your rubric was great and we loved the suggestion of grading themselves. We liked how you chunked the directions and made them count and highlight the requirements - a wonderful strategy to make sure they know the requirements. Great use of academic vocabulary!

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Thanks so much for letting us come in today. We couldn't say enough great things - you're awesome!

# OUR DATA: INSTRUCTIONAL ROUND 3

Thanks again for allowing us to come and join you this morning. What a fun project students were presenting! Here are a just a few of the awesome things we observed in your classroom:

- 1) We love your enthusiasm! You are always high energy and we wish we had a few more ounces of enthusiasm some days. Thanks for being excited to be in the classroom with our students!
- 2) Great use of technology in the PE classroom! The activity was creative, and you could tell that students worked hard to create their own dance. Giving the students the opportunity to present their videos and feel comfortable enough to share them is amazing! Middle school students are always concerned about being in the spotlight, but you help them to overcome that anxiety and have fun.
- 3) We enjoyed your humor in the classroom. You started out the class by talking about how wonderful the day was because you could breathe through your nose again. It's simple but puts students at ease and creates a comfortable environment.
- 4) Great reminder of your rubric before beginning the videos so that students were reminded again of how they would be graded. You have high expectations and the presentations we observed showed that students met those expectations!

Great job! Thanks for leading by example!

# OUR DATA: INSTRUCTIONAL ROUND 4

We loved coming into your classroom today!! Here are some wonderful things we observed:

1. Your enthusiasm and energy level. You were moving around the room engaging all tables the entire time with your energy and enthusiasm. All your students were engaged and on task!

2. Video Source. We thought your video source was well executed. We loved how you provided students with screen grabs with the important facts from the video and had them preview before watching. We also liked how you paused and chunked the video for students, which made it easier for students to comprehend the information the video was sharing.

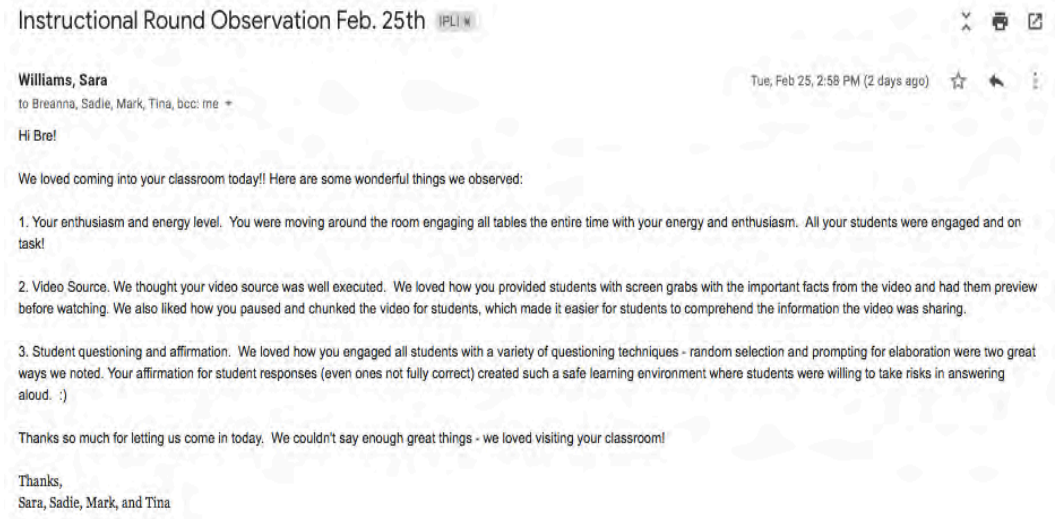
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Thanks so much for letting us come in today. We couldn't say enough great things - we loved visiting your classroom!

# OUR DISCOVERIES

## Learning Statement One:

Teachers felt instructional rounds were more productive and collaborative than in the past because of the dialogue and debriefing following the observation. The emails sent to observed teachers highlighted what the team felt were strong instructional practices observed.

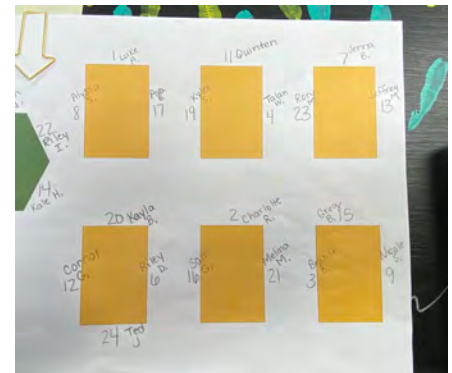
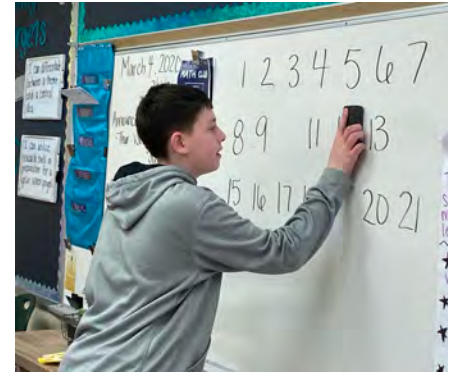




# OUR DISCOVERIES

## Learning Statement Two:

Teachers gained ideas for implementation in their own classrooms focused on pedagogy, not content. For example, one teacher observed a process of assigning seats which gave students voice and choice in project groups. She then implemented this same process when beginning the next group assignment.



# OUR DISCOVERIES

## Learning Statement Three:

The process of building and sustaining a culture of greatness requires an intentional focus on team and learning from each other. This action research provided teachers with an opportunity to provide affirmation to each other observed in the areas of culture, classroom teaching, and assessment.



# WHERE WE ARE HEADING NEXT

General Reflection: There are strong instructional practices in many classrooms. Teachers are willing to engage in reflection on these practices and learn from one another. They enjoy the time together and find that with the loss of team this is a powerful practice. It gives teachers an opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in varying grade levels and content areas.

Directions for The Future: We would like to expand the opportunity of teacher leaders to include others who may be willing to facilitate observational rounds next year. We wonder whether to expand our instructional model to include feedback, content, and context in our instructional model as suggested in chapter three of Leading a High Reliability School is necessary. It would create a more clear playbook for what will occur to help students learn in the classroom.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

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