

DOINGWHATWORKS

 VIDEO
2:33 min

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Walkthrough Support

MacArthur Elementary School, Minnesota
January 2014

Topic **TURNING AROUND CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

Highlights

- » At Laura MacArthur, the principal conducts periodic classroom walkthroughs in every classroom.
- » The principal looks for three things: (1) a “homerun,” (2) something he is wondering about, and (3) ideas for reflection.
- » He fills out the feedback sheet and then leaves it with the teacher.
- » Teachers find the feedback sheet helpful, because the observations are purely for support and help them think of reflection pieces they may not think of themselves.

About the Site **MacArthur Elementary School Duluth, Minnesota**

Demographics

(Source: NCES Common Core of Data, 2011-12)


- » Grades PreK–5
- » 466 students
- » 77% White
- » 9% Multiracial
- » 6% American Indian/Alaska Native


- » 5% Black
- » 2% Hispanic
- » 1% Asian/Pacific Islander
- » 79% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- » Schoolwide Title I

- » The Minnesota Department of Education identified Laura MacArthur Elementary School as a Priority school in 2012, demonstrating performance in the lowest 5 percent in the state.
- » The school applied for and received a School Improvement Grant (SIG) in September 2012.
- » The principal and the Leadership Team worked together to identify areas of weakness and form a plan for instructional changes in the following areas:
 - Differentiated instruction in math
 - Small-group instruction in reading
- » The school received support from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) as well as a regional center called the Northern Center of Excellence.


Full Transcript




 **00:04** My name is Nancy Pulkrabek. I teach first grade at Laura MacArthur Elementary School in Duluth, Minnesota.


 **00:11** My name is Rhonda Erie. I teach fifth grade at Laura MacArthur Elementary in Duluth, Minnesota.


Nancy Pulkrabek

 **00:17** Our principal Nathan Glockle comes in and does walkthroughs. And, of course, we never know when they're going to happen. And they're strictly observations and they're strictly to help us be better teachers. I appreciate his walkthroughs. He comes in and sits down and watches and listens to what we're doing. He focuses in on "home runs"—that's what he calls them. What are we doing great? He asks some questions of us, wondering what's happening if he doesn't understand what we're doing and why we're doing it.

And then the last thing he does is, he puts down some things for us to reflect on, how we could do this better, or some questions to say, “What do you think you could do when so and so does this in your class?” Or “How do you think you could do that in a better way?” So, basically, when he does a walkthrough he leaves us some feedback. He leaves for a little while, fills out his feedback sheet, and then leaves it with us.

Rhonda Erie  **01:07** I totally appreciate the feedback sheet, which is so helpful, because as long as we’ve been teaching we’ve always been told: reflect, reflect. And we do with ourselves. I mean, I can say, “How could I have taught that better?” But when you have somebody that you respect that comes in, and can just get a snippet of what you’re doing and just give you ideas. So, it’s things that he just notices; that we’re so busy during the day that things you maybe don’t really think about. So, they’re very, very helpful.

Nancy Pulkrabek  **01:39** It’s good for us to look at for ourselves. “Hmm, he was wondering that. I’m wondering why I did that, too.” But, of course, we like the pat on the back, the homers, and I like the reflection piece of it. It’s very good information. He bases a lot of it on our practice profiles to see if we are practicing what we’ve been talking about, and to make sure that we’re teaching the way that the kids are going to learn.

Rhonda Erie  **02:03** I think our students deserve to get the best teachers in Duluth. They deserve that. And walkthroughs are one piece of me becoming a better teacher. There are so many things I can learn, there are so many things I can do better. And I have learned a ton from my principal. And that’s because of walkthroughs.

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