



Massachusetts Department of  
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION

Supporting School and District Improvement  
in Massachusetts

## ***Learning Walkthroughs 101: Overview***



# Notes for Facilitators

(remove when finalizing presentation)



- *Learning Walkthroughs 101* is designed to provide a **general introduction** to the Learning Walkthrough process.
- Intended **audiences** include:
  - District personnel who are considering Learning Walkthroughs as part of their systemic improvement.
  - Faculty and staff at schools that will be engaged in Learning Walkthroughs as part of their school improvement initiatives.
- Each slide has **talking points** in the Notes section to guide your presentation
- The presentation is can be done in **one hour** with skillful facilitation. Timing for slides can be found in the notes sections. More time may be needed to allow for more discussion and familiarity.

# Notes for Facilitators

(remove when finalizing presentation)



You may use the slide-show **as is**, or **customize it** to suit your needs by adding, deleting, and/or editing slides to address the considerations on the following slide.

However, ***please note:***

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or support with the use of this resource.

# Notes for Facilitators

(remove when finalizing presentation)



## Considerations for customizing your presentation:

- What are your goals for this presentation?
- How can you tie this Overview to other district improvement efforts?
- Have you already decided to implement Learning Walkthroughs, or are you just exploring the idea?
- Has a *Focus of Inquiry* already been identified?
- Do you plan to link this to a framework or guiding resource? If so, which one?
- What are your ideas for who will serve on the LW team(s)?
- What approach will you take to Hall Work?
- What next steps should your audience be aware of?

**Additional considerations** can be found in the *Scaling Up* sections of the *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide*, available at

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd>.

# Notes for Facilitators

(remove when finalizing presentation)



## Recommended materials (in addition to this presentation):

- Create an **excerpt** of the Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide for each participant . (Recommend pages 1-6 and 50-51)
- Provide a few copies of the **complete** Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide for reference (available <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/walk/>)

# Workshop Goals



- Provide an overview of the *Learning Walkthrough* process
- Identify how *Learning Walkthroughs* link to existing district improvement efforts
- Introduce tools and resources to support implementation of *Learning Walkthroughs*
- Generate further interest in *Learning Walkthroughs*

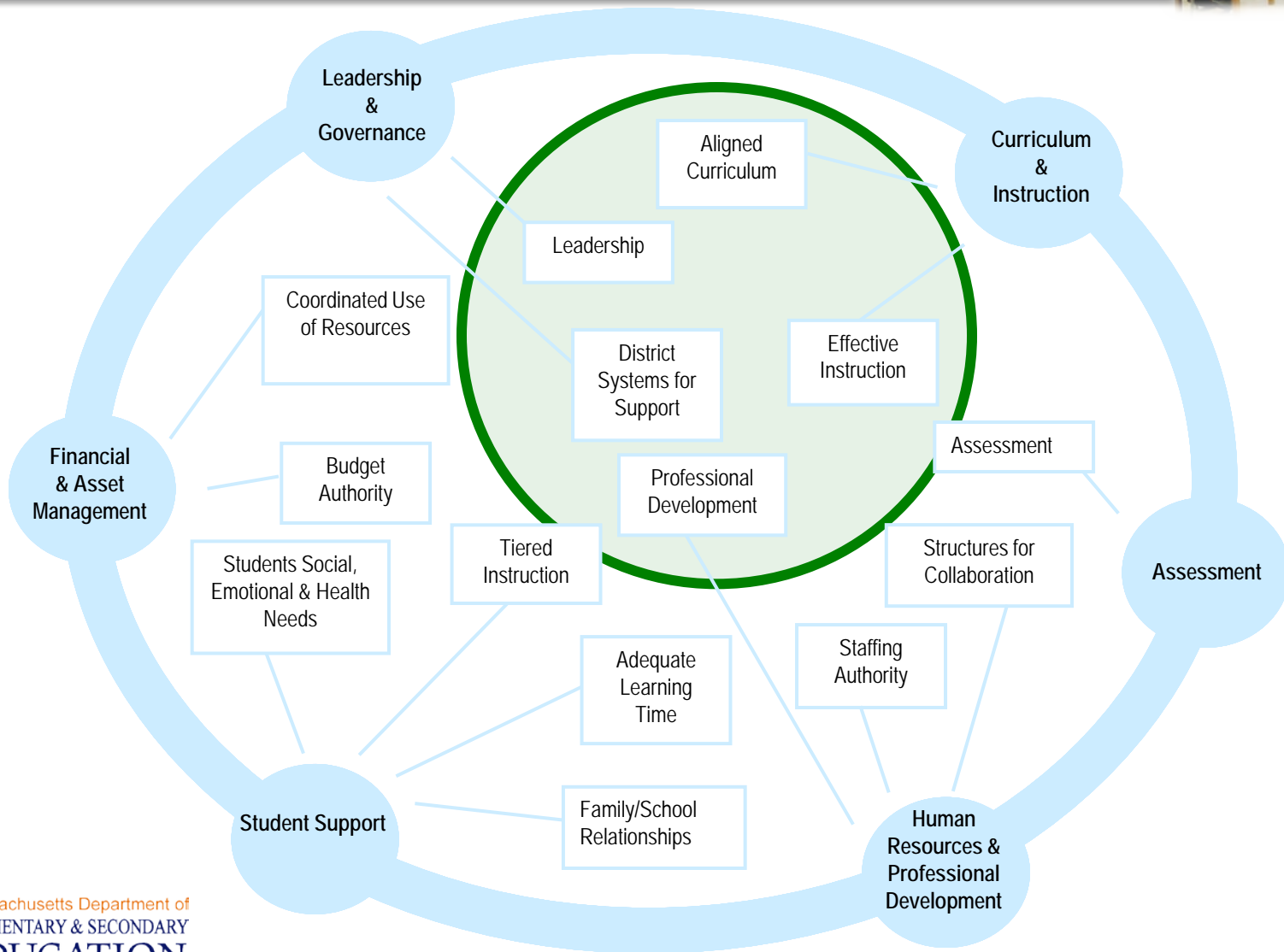
# Professional Learning Communities



## Key Characteristics:

- ✓ **Shared mission**, vision, and values that are ‘embedded in the hearts and minds’ of all members (p. 25)
- ✓ **Collective inquiry** that includes public reflection, shared meaning, joint planning, coordinated action, and analysis of results
- ✓ **Collaborative teams** at all levels, focused on continuous improvement
- ✓ **Action orientation** and experimentation, including ‘a tolerance for results that may be contrary to what was anticipated’ (p. 28)
- ✓ **Continuous improvement** and ‘a constant search for a better way’ (p. 28)
- ✓ **Results orientation**, with work ‘assessed on the basis of results rather than intentions.’ (p. 29)

# District Standards & Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness



# Temperature Check



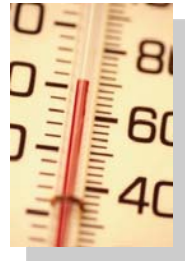
**How familiar are you  
with the MA ESE *Learning Walkthrough (LW)* process?**

## **1 = Not Familiar**

- Never experienced a *Learning Walkthrough* or anything like it

## **2 = Somewhat Familiar**

- Heard about *Learning Walkthroughs* or other similar processes,
- Read through the *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide*, and/or,
- Have been observed as part of a *Learning Walkthrough*



## **3 = Familiar**

- Participated in a *Learning Walkthrough* or similar process, and/or
- Read the *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* thoroughly



# What are *Learning Walkthroughs*?



- *Learning Walkthroughs* are a systematic and coordinated method of gathering data on student learning and instructional practice to inform district- and school-level decisions.
- *Learning Walkthroughs* are **not** an evaluation protocol for teachers or administrators.

# Why conduct *Learning Walkthroughs*?



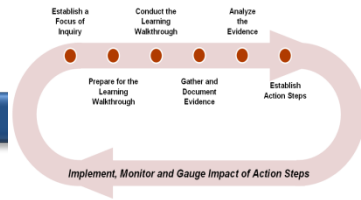
- To engage multiple stakeholders in collaborative observations and discussions of teaching and learning that result in thoughtful, data-driven actions.
- Promote a true professional learning community at all levels of the organization.

# Key Elements of a *Learning Walkthrough*



- A **focus of inquiry** frames the classroom visits in very specific ways
- **Teams** of educators visit classrooms together
- Evidence from multiple classrooms is **aggregated** to reveal system-wide **trends** in practice
- *Learning Walkthrough* teams engage in deep **discussion** and **analysis** of the collected evidence
- Actions target **improvement of the system** rather than improvement of individuals

# Key Phases of *Learning Walkthroughs*



## Preparing for a *Learning Walkthrough*

- Establish a Focus of Inquiry
- Create *Walkthrough* teams
- Plan schedules
- Communicate with stakeholders

## Conducting a *Learning Walkthrough*

- Gather and document evidence
- Analyze the evidence
- Establish action steps

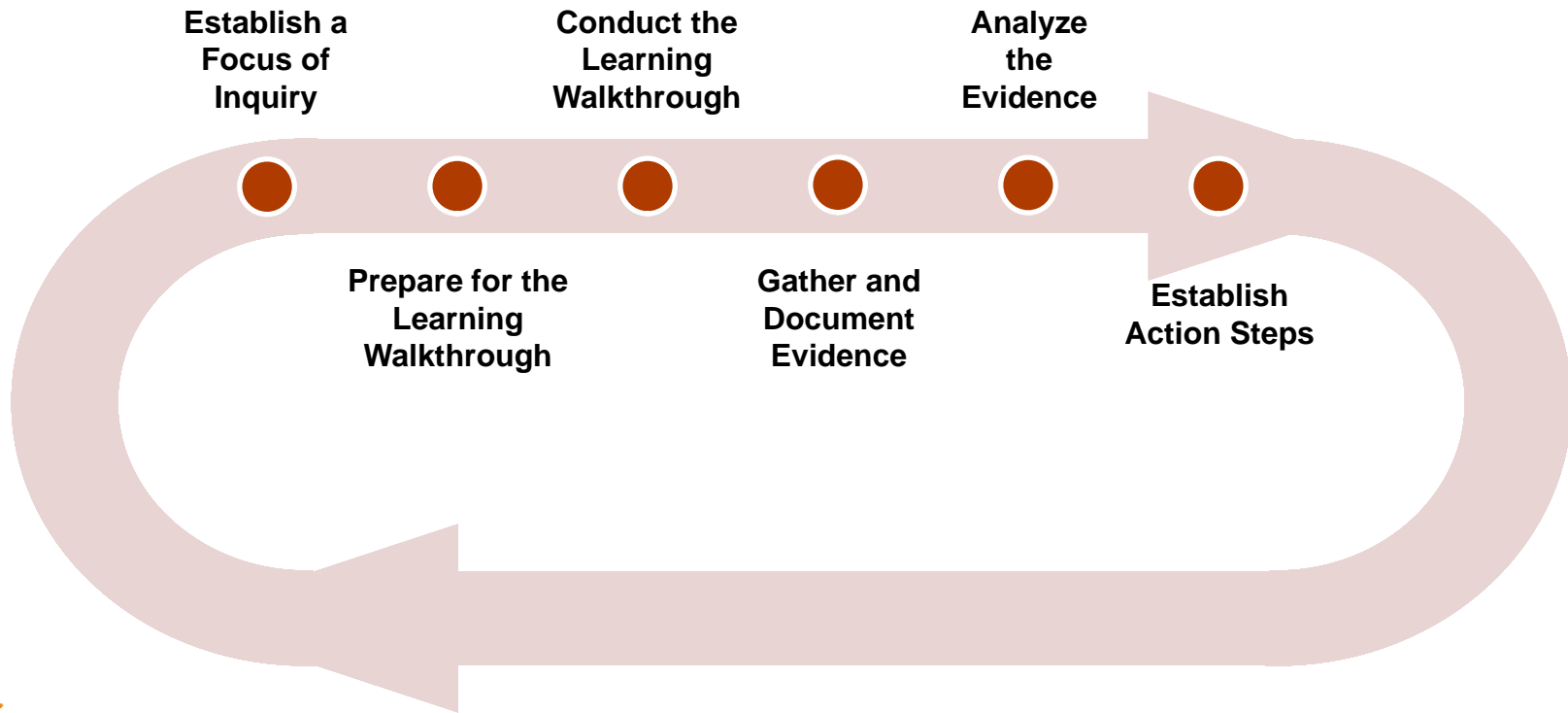
## Going to Scale

- Conduct multiple *Walkthroughs* and aggregate the evidence
- Engage in in-depth analysis of evidence
- Make plans to monitor and sustain the work

# Key Phases of *Learning Walkthroughs*

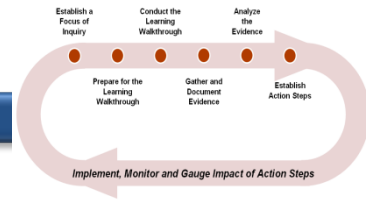


## A Collaborative Inquiry Process





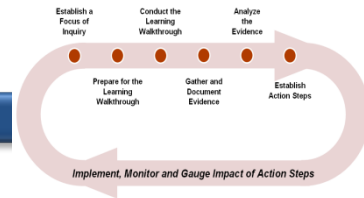
# Preparing for a *Learning Walkthrough*



## Establish a Focus of Inquiry

- Gives a *Learning Walkthrough* purpose and **focus**
- Informs a specific **need** or improvement **goal** within the context of each district and school
- Guides the selection of **participants**
- Ensures that **data** collection is targeted

# Preparing for a *Learning Walkthrough*



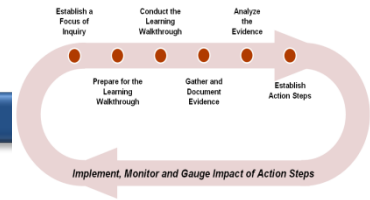
## Creating a *Learning Walkthrough* Team

*Who in the district and school has **expertise** and **influence** that would support our work?*

- Superintendent and other District Leaders
- Curriculum Directors/ Department Heads
- Principals
- District and School Coaches
- Classroom teachers
- Specialists
- Central Office Staff
- Consultants
- Community Partners



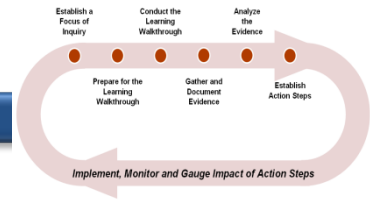
# Preparing for a *Learning Walkthrough*



- **Train and prepare participants**
  - Ensure team members are clear on their role
  - Begin to build a common language
- **Create a schedule for the day**
  - Consider the number of classrooms to visit and time allocated for each
  - Build in adequate time to debrief and discuss the evidence collected
- **Communicate to all stakeholders**
  - Ensure transparency of the purpose for conducting *Walkthroughs*
  - Provide an overview of the *Learning Walkthrough* process
  - Clarify how evidence will be used to inform decision-making



# Conducting a *Learning Walkthrough*



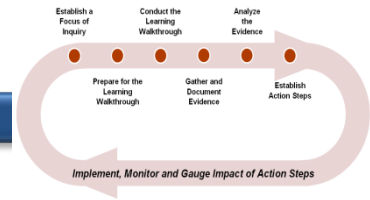
## The Elements of the Day

- Provide orientation to all participants
- Visit classrooms and gather evidence
- Conduct hall work between classroom visits
- Aggregate and analyze evidence from all classrooms
- Determine next steps
- Reflect on the day





# Conducting a *Learning Walkthrough*

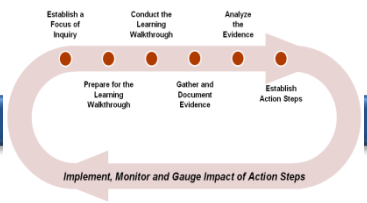


## Gathering and Documenting Evidence

- Script notes that are ***specific and objective*** to generate richer and more focused discussions of classroom practice
- Ensure evidence connects to the ***Focus of Inquiry***
- Use ***guiding questions*** to refocus as needed:
  - *What tasks are students engaged in?*
  - *What do I hear the students and teacher saying?*
  - *What instructional practices do I observe?*
  - *What artifacts are evident that relate to the Focus of Inquiry?*



# Conducting a *Learning Walkthrough*

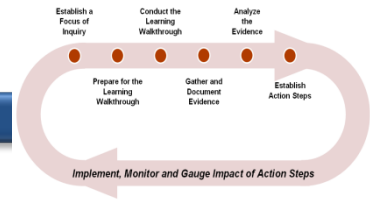


## Hall Work Options

<i>Option 1:</i> <b>Individual Reflection and Processing</b>	Team members <b>individually review scripting notes</b> to refine, clarify, or expand on references.
<i>Option 2:</i> <b>Team Calibration of Scripting</b>	Team members <b>collectively review scripting notes</b> to help each other sharpen the specificity and objectivity of their scripting.
<i>Option 3:</i> <b>Team Consensus on Quality of Practice</b>	The team uses a guiding framework to <b>reach consensus</b> on what was observed in the classroom.



# Conducting a *Learning Walkthrough*



## Debriefing

- Discuss and analyze scripted **evidence**
- Identify school-wide **patterns** and trends
- Identify “**quick wins**” to address identified needs
- Develop message and means to **communicate** to stakeholders
- Clarify **next steps** for the *Learning Walkthrough* team
- **Reflect** on the day’s process for continual improvement

# Going to Scale



## The Power of a District Effort

### **District Data Aggregated**

Patterns and Trends Identified to inform Action

**School Data Aggregated**  
Trends/Patterns Identified

**Classroom**  
observations

**Classroom**  
observations

**Classroom**  
observations

**Classroom**  
observations

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# Going to Scale



## Benefits of District-Wide Implementation

- **Focus** the entire district on instruction and classroom practice
- **Unify** practice and language
- **Inform** analysis of other data
- **Monitor** progress toward goals
- **Identify** and disseminate what works
- **Inform** district-wide decisions and school improvement initiatives
- **Create** a learning organization that continually asks:

*Are we seeing what we expect to see in our classrooms,  
given how we are focusing our energy and resources?*

# Benefits of this Collaborative Work



- Enhanced **focus** on student learning experiences;
- Enhanced professional **dialogue** about teaching and learning;
- Development of a **common language** about teaching and learning;
- Creation of a **culture** of inquiry and research, characterized by collaborative learning and reflective practice;
- Improved district and school **infrastructures** to support teachers;
- Identification of **opportunities** for additional coaching and professional development; and
- Creation of more **consistent** and **higher-quality** teaching and **learning** experiences throughout the school and district.

# Learning Walkthrough Resources



## Tools and Materials

- *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide*
  - *Narrative explanations*
  - *Protocols*
  - *Templates*
  - *Organizers*
- *Learning Walkthroughs 101*
  - A 1-hour overview of the process
- *Learning Walkthroughs 201*
  - A 4-hour comprehensive training of the process



**Thank you for attending this session.  
Please let us know if you have additional questions.**

For more information, please contact the  
Office of Urban and Commissioner's Districts:

- Online: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd>
- Email: [districtassist@doe.mass.edu](mailto:districtassist@doe.mass.edu)



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