



District Plan for School Intervention Review Protocol

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Part I: Introduction

What is the purpose of the District Plan for School Intervention (DPSI) review?

The purpose of the DPSI review is to understand district efforts to support school intervention, as well as the strategic decisions made to support ongoing school improvement. It also seeks to understand the impact of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) support efforts. These reviews will also meet state accountability requirements.

How was the DPSI review process designed?

The review process is designed around the District Plan for School Intervention (DPSI), approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in June 2008. The DPSI, which serves as the guiding document to support and hold accountable Commonwealth Priority Schools (CPSs), is unique to each district and its schools. The DPSI serves as the foundation for the review process, ensuring that each district's unique priorities, current improvement strategies, and key decisions are central to the review process. In addition, the review considers other key documents, processes, and initiatives that have been central to the development and implementation of district intervention strategies and Department support efforts in recent years. These include, for example: The District Leadership Report on the Essential Conditions, the State Review Panel report and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the district and the state.

What does the DPSI review entail?

The review process includes several key events to ensure a comprehensive evidence base. It includes: interviews with Department staff and focus groups and interviews at the central office level, as well as visits to Commonwealth Priority Schools. In some districts, visits will also be conducted at schools in restructuring that require a follow-up review.

The review process places a review team of contracted Department consultants in the district and its schools to collect and analyze data. It extends beyond standardized measures of student achievement to collect evidence about district efforts to support school intervention, the evolution and current status of school intervention and improvement strategies, as well as the impact of Department efforts to support the district.

The review process places a value on engaging the district in understanding its own performance. The process is evidence-based and designed to promote learning and improvement. The review culminates with a professional dialog between the district, its schools, the review team, and the Department to plan strategies to build greater capacity within the district to improve its schools. Clear communication between the district, schools, and the review team is essential to the process. All review team members are governed by a code of conduct. Objectivity and a focus on the best interests of students and staff are essential to the success and positive impact of the review.

The review team will use an evidence-based process to collect information and answer the key questions. This includes review of documents provided both by the district and the Department, focus groups with ESE staff and district leadership, as well as school visits. While on site at schools, the review team will review school documents, conduct focus groups, and visit classrooms.

Part II: Key Questions

Two overarching key questions guide the work of the DPSI review team. Additional guidance has been provided below each key question that will be used by the review team to focus its analysis. This will ensure that the review process and the corresponding report are comprehensive. The DPSI will serve as the entry point for the review team, ensuring that each district's unique priorities, current improvement strategies, and key decisions are central to the review process.

Key Question 1: What capacity to support school intervention efforts has the district demonstrated to date? To what extent have these efforts impacted student achievement?

- **The review team will assess the extent to which the DPSI has been implemented, the effectiveness of its implementation, the district's strategy in making modifications to the DPSI, and the district's use of other improvement strategies to make gains in student achievement.**
 - *The actions undertaken to implement the DPSI, current progress, and caveats.*
 - *The actions the district has taken to augment current strategies with additional programs, practices, and initiatives (if applicable).*
 - *The reasons the district decided to revise aspects of its DPSI or change its current strategy and how this has affected implementation (if applicable).*
 - *Data-based results that indicate the impact of the DPSI and/or other improvement strategies.*
 - *Evidence of DPSI implementation and other improvement strategies in schools and classrooms.*
- **If not outlined in the DPSI, the review team will also comment on the following district systems to further understand the district's capacity (i.e., time, resources, staffing, ability to support instruction) to implement improvement initiatives with and/or without support—systems for:**
 - *Monitoring the quality of instructional practices taking place in the identified schools.*
 - *Using and analyzing data to understand the impact of instruction on student learning.*
 - *Conducting formative or benchmark assessments to track student performance and the results of the assessments that measure progress toward attaining the planned objectives.*
 - *Analyzing available data to evaluate the impact of the planned initiatives and any needed adjustments to attain intended outcomes.*
 - *Providing guidance to schools to support school improvement, including infrastructure.*

Key Question 2: To what extent has the work of the Department impacted and supported the district in implementing improvement initiatives?

- **The team will assess the Department's provision of support outlined in the MOU, as well as:**
 - *Department grants and assistance not included in the MOU.*
 - *The district's use of Department resources (time, money, and staff) to support school improvement work, and the impact of those resources.*
 - *The perceived value of the Department's support.*

Part III: Process and Results

DETAILED STEPS IN THE PROCESS

Below is an overview of the district review process, including pre-visit planning, onsite review, written report with findings and recommendations, and the subsequent planning session. When applicable, the processes for district level and school level events are differentiated.

Pre-visit planning

The Department and review team pre-visit planning

1. The review team leader coordinates all initial logistics with the Department.
2. The Department provides key documents to the review team, including:
 - The District Plan for School Intervention (DPSI)
 - Memorandum of Understanding between the district and the Department (this school year and the previous school year)
 - The District Leadership Report on the Essential Conditions
 - The State Panel Review Report
 - The ESE learning walk protocol
 - Any other documents the Department deems pertinent to specific district reviews
3. The review team leader interviews Department staff about support provided by the Department to the district and its schools.
4. The Department provides district contact information and preference requests for dates on which the district review will occur.
5. The Department acts as an essential partner throughout the district review process.

District pre-visit planning

1. The review team leader communicates with the district to determine dates for the review and to introduce district leadership to the protocol.
2. The review team leader works with the district to begin establishing a specific schedule for the review, including school visits. **NOTE:** *There are a number of scheduling tasks to be completed. It is important to the review team that the schedule works for the district and its schools to the extent possible; the team is committed to working collaboratively with both the district and its schools (see Appendices).*
3. Throughout the pre-visit planning, the review team leader is available to assist the district in planning and to answer any questions.
4. The district and its schools use their respective checklists (see Appendices A and B) to ensure that all preparation has been completed before the visit.
5. All members of the review team are responsible for reviewing documents provided by the Department and the district before the site visit.

Onsite review

Detailed information pertaining to the onsite review is provided in Appendix A: Guidance for Districts, Appendix B: Guidance for Schools, and Appendix C: Classroom Visits.

Review team onsite review activities

1. The review team continues to review documents, conduct focus groups, and visit schools in accordance with the visit schedule.
2. The review team meets regularly during the visit to share evidence. Since it is not possible to predict what will emerge from the evidence collected, the review team requires flexibility. The review team leader works with the district and schools to define as much of the schedule as possible without restricting the team's ability to pursue important evidence.

District level onsite review activities

1. The review team begins the onsite visit with meetings and interviews with district staff in order to collect information pertaining to central office planning for, provisioning for, and analysis of district interventions in the schools covered under the DPSI.
2. The review team conducts mid-point interviews to triangulate the developing evidence base. The team will ask questions to clarify information collected, to gather more information needed to fill gaps in evidence, and to seek leadership perspectives and analyses of evidence gathered by the team. This provides the district the opportunity to present evidence to address the team's questions.
3. At the end of the review, the team conducts a final meeting with the district to provide an overview of some of the themes identified throughout the evidence-collection process. The themes identified are not findings, which will be developed after the team's further analysis following the onsite portion of the review.

School level onsite review activities

1. The review team conducts interviews and observes classroom instruction in order to gather information about the process, progress, and outcomes of initiatives to improve school performance.
2. At the end of the school visit, the team shares what it has learned throughout the evidence collection process. This ensures that the school has every opportunity to present evidence to address the team's questions. Again, the themes identified are not findings, which will be developed after the team's further analysis following the onsite portion of the review. **NOTE:** *District representatives are strongly encouraged to attend the presentation of the summary provided to school leadership at the end of each school visit, as the schedule allows. This provides an additional opportunity to hear from the review team about the developing evidence base.*

Written report

Findings in the written report

1. The review team completes the analysis of information collected during the review process and develops preliminary findings under each key question, based on themes emerging from the evidence.
2. Review team member(s) responsible for writing sections of the report gather(s) all notes and other key evidence collected by the team during the site visit to use to draft the full text of each preliminary finding.
3. Each finding is refined with team feedback to ensure that the claim is stated up front, the evidence clearly supports the claim, the impact on teaching and learning is explained, and the statement of the team's professional judgment responds to the key question.
4. The complete draft of the report is reviewed by the team to check for factual accuracy and consensus before it is sent to the district and the Department.
5. The district and the Department review the draft for factual errors.
6. The report is finalized and submitted to the district and the Department.

Recommendations in the written report

1. The review team develops preliminary recommendations based on the district's strengths and weaknesses and contextual factors identified by the preliminary findings.
2. For each recommendation, the report will provide a brief explanation, describing the evidence leading to the recommendation and how next steps could build greater capacity for further improvements.
3. The recommendations may be used by the district and the Department to inform improvement planning, intervention, and supports in the future.

Planning session

A planning session is scheduled following the review, after the final written report has been submitted. This session includes district leadership, member(s) of the review team, and representatives from the Department. The purpose of the follow-up meeting is threefold:

1. To reflect and provide feedback on the district review process;
2. To review the recommendations in the report; and,
3. To establish a prioritized list of next steps that the district and the Department can use to ensure maximum impact for improvement initiatives and the alignment of district priorities with supports available from the state.

Part IV: Code of Conduct

The review team is guided in its work by a code of conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REVIEWERS

1. Carry out work with integrity.

- a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to minimize stress.
- b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
- c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
- d. Assure confidentiality.

2. Act in the best interests of students and staff.

- a. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
- b. As much as possible, minimize disruption to teaching and learning.
- c. Do not criticize the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school.
- d. Classroom visits are used only to understand instruction at the school. Classroom visits are not evaluations. Specific feedback and information about individual teachers will not be shared with any school personnel.
- e. All teacher interviews are anonymous. Only the superintendent will be identified by name; other individuals will be identified by position only, where appropriate, in both oral and written reports.
- f. Try to understand what leaders and teachers are doing and why.

3. Base findings on evidence.

- a. Findings must be robust, fully supported by evidence, and defensible and must inform the key questions.
- b. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
- c. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on evidence. This applies, as well, to review team members' findings.
- d. Discussion with staff and review team members is part of the process to create a fair and secure evidence base from which findings are made.

Part V: Roles and Responsibilities

In order to develop an accurate portrait of a district, all participants have key roles in preparing for and conducting the district review. This section explains the roles and responsibilities of the review team leader, team members, the districts, and their schools. Participants should read this section carefully to learn how to prepare for the district review.

Review Team Leader

1. *Modeling and enforcing the code of conduct*
 - Review team leaders should exhibit the highest professional standards and are responsible for ensuring that their team does so, as well.
2. *Coordination with the district*
 - Before the visit, the review team leader should be in contact with the district to ensure that the schedule is made available in a timely manner.
 - The review team leader ensures that the district and the schools have secured adequate meeting space for the team.
 - The district and schools are likely to have questions about the process. The review team leader should serve as the contact person to address these questions.
3. *Coordination of materials and assignment of team members*
 - Before the site visit, the review team leader identifies team members and ensures that all materials have been provided.
 - Once the site visit schedule has been established, the review team leader must make sure that team members are assigned to all district and school level events.
4. *Facilitation and management of logistics for the site visit day(s)*
 - Once on site, the review team leader is responsible for facilitating all team meetings.
 - The review team leader ensures that all focus groups and classroom visits are attended and go smoothly and also conducts a daily review of the schedule with the team.
5. *Communication with the district/schools while on site*
 - The review team leader is responsible for maintaining good channels of communication with the district and schools at all times.
 - The review team leader keeps district and school leadership informed of the team's progress and developing themes throughout the visit.
 - The review team leader takes appropriate actions to follow up on any questions by the team.
 - At the end of the visit, the review team leader orally shares the team's emerging themes with district and/or school leadership.
6. *Reporting*
 - The review team leader writes and/or oversees the writing of the site visit report.

Review Team Members

The success of the visit relies heavily on review team members:

1. *Adherence to the code of conduct*
 - Review team members should exhibit the highest professional standards.
2. *Preparation for the site visit*
 - In advance of the visit, each review team member studies district and school documents.
3. *Collection of evidence*
 - Review team members complete the visit schedule established by the district and/or the school under the direction of the review team leader.
 - Review team members secure their evidence in notes and provide all necessary data to the review team leader at each team meeting:
 - Pre-visit reading has been completed.
 - Notes and classroom visit forms are completed and organized for end-of-day meetings.
 - All notes are in order and completed in a timely manner for all other meetings.
4. *Collaborating with others under the review team leader's direction*
 - Review team members support and take direction from the team leader.
 - Review team members actively participate in team meetings in order to reach unified findings based on evidence.
5. *Reporting*
 - Review team members may be responsible for writing sections of the report, and all team members will participate in refining the draft of the report, ensuring that the report contains sufficient evidence, is accurate, and reflects the consensus of the team.

District and Schools

To be an effective partner in the process, the district and its schools:

1. *Act as essential partners in the review process*

- The district and its schools make the purpose and process of the review team's visit clear to all faculty and staff.
- The district and its schools welcome the review team and recognize its efforts are on behalf of its students.
- The district and its schools work with the review team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.
- The district and its schools engage faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on the school's performance.

2. *Designate a meeting room*

- The review team will need a meeting space during each day on site, both at the district and at schools. The space should allow for confidential meetings and should be available to review team members for the full visit.
- To the extent possible, interviews and focus groups should not be scheduled in this space but planned for elsewhere in the building.

3. *Communicate with the review team*

- District and school leadership works collaboratively with the review team leader before the site visit to ensure that a schedule is established, additional documents are provided in a timely manner, and all faculty and staff are aware of the visit and its purposes.
- District and school leadership works collaboratively with the review team leader during the site visit to provide any additional documents requested.
- District and school leadership maintains good communication with the review team leader throughout the process, honestly expressing concerns and feedback from staff.
- District and school leadership responds frankly to the review team's developing themes by providing additional evidence that may inform the review team's analysis.

Appendix A: Guidance for Districts

This section provides guidance for districts on scheduling interviews and focus groups and preparing documents.

SCHEDULING

As mentioned previously, the review team leader will work collaboratively with the district to establish a specific schedule for the review that meets the needs of the district and its schools, to the extent possible. What works for one district may not work for another. In addition, the number of schools to be reviewed per district varies, as well as the number of days on site for some schools. Schools in restructuring that require a follow-up review will receive a two-day visit (applicable only to some districts).

Commonwealth Priority Schools included in the DPSI will receive a one-day visit.

In addition, some districts may prefer to schedule school visits on the same day, whereas others may prefer to have all school visits on different days. At least some district level interviews could also occur on the same day as a school visit. In making scheduling determinations, the district should consider its representation at the summary report meeting with school leadership at the end of each school visit. District representatives are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions because they provide an additional opportunity to learn about the review team's developing evidence base.

The onsite visit will begin with a meeting with key district leaders. This will be used to provide the review team with an overview of the DPSI, as well as other key school intervention strategies, improvement initiatives, and key collaborations with the Department that have supported the work of the district. This district review will culminate with a final meeting that will provide the district with an overview of the team's evidence.

Sample District Review Schedules

Below are three samples that the district can consider when thinking about the review schedule.

NOTE: *To the extent possible, district reviews will be scheduled in consecutive weeks. Due to the MCAS and other scheduling constraints, this may not always be possible.*

Sample 1:

Schedule with district events; 3 two-day school reviews (2); 3 Commonwealth priority schools (CPS)					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	District meeting and interviews	School 1 (2)	School 1(2)	School 2 (2)	School 2 (2)
					School 3 (CPS)
Week 2	District mid-point interviews	School 4 (2)	School 4 (2)	District follow-up and team meeting (morning)	
		School 5 (CPS)	School 6 (CPS)	District final meeting (afternoon)	

Sample 2:

Schedule with district events; 1 two-day school review (2); 6 Commonwealth priority schools (CPS)					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	District meeting and interviews	School 1 (2)	School 1 (2)	School 2 (CPS)	School 3 (CPS)
Week 2	District mid-point interviews	School 5 (CPS)	School 6 (CPS)	School 7 (CPS)	District follow-up and team meeting (morning) District final meeting (afternoon)
	School 4 (CPS)				

Sample 3:

Schedule with district events; 5 two-day school reviews (2) ; 5 Commonwealth priority schools (CPS)					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	District meeting and interviews	School 1 (2)	School 1 (2)	School 2 (2)	School 2 (2) School 3 (CPS)
Week 2	School 4 (CPS)	District mid-point interviews	School 6 (2)	School 6 (2)	School 8 (CPS)
	School 5 (CPS)		School 7 (2)	School 7 (2)	
Week 3	School 9 (2)	School 9 (2)	District follow-up and team meeting (morning) District final meeting (afternoon)		
	School 10 (CPS)				

DISTRICT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

During the district review, a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information about the implementation of the DPSI and other key documents, processes, and initiatives that have been central to district efforts to provide intervention and support to schools. Focus groups will also focus on key decisions to change strategic initiatives (if applicable) as well as the impact of support functions provided by the Department.

The review team leader, with guidance from district leadership, will work to establish a schedule and focus group composition that is appropriate. On the following page are examples of interviews/focus groups that will be conducted.

NOTE: *Focus groups should include no more than eight individuals to the extent possible. With the exception of meetings with leadership teams, supervising staff should not be scheduled in focus groups with those under their supervision.*

DISTRICT-LEVEL INTERVIEWS		
Interviews/ focus groups	Description	Approximate Time Needed
Meetings with key district leaders	The initial meeting should include representatives from the district who can provide insight into the DPSI and other improvement and school intervention initiatives as well as some historical context as it pertains to key documents. Representation at mid-point interviews should include individuals that can inform the review team about the DPSI.	2-hour initial meeting 45-minute interviews
Interview with the Superintendent	This interview will provide the superintendent an opportunity to provide top-level insight into the DPSI, as well as other improvement and school intervention priorities (current and future), including their effectiveness. The support of the Department will also be discussed.	1 hour
District leaders who directly oversee specific DPSI initiatives	This focus group/s (or interviews) should include district-level administrators who oversee the development and/or implementation of specific initiatives in the DPSI, as well as other intervention strategies. Effectiveness of initiatives and implementation hurdles will be discussed, as well as supports provided by the Department.	1 hour
District staff who directly support schools	This focus group/s should include individuals deployed from the district office (e.g., coaches) who work directly with the schools to support implementation of DPSI initiatives, as well as any intervention strategies that may be school-specific. Effectiveness of initiatives, as well as supports provided by the Department, will be discussed.	45 minutes
Other district partners who directly support DPSI initiatives	This focus group/s should include any other internal or external partners who have worked with the district to support development and/or implementation of DPSI initiatives, other improvement efforts, or school intervention strategies.	45 minutes
District liaisons to ESE	This focus group (or interview) should include individuals who work directly with Department staff to support district and school intervention and improvement efforts.	45 minutes
Grants Manager	This interview will be used to discuss methods for resource allocations to fund improvement efforts, school intervention, and other district priorities. This includes state assistance and grant funding.	45 minutes

DISTRICT TASK CHECKLIST

The District Task Checklist can be used by the district to prepare for the review. It includes key tasks that should be completed before the district review, as well as the list of materials the review team is requesting before the visit and upon arrival onsite.

NOTE: *All documents requested in this list should be provided only if the district already has the materials on hand. This list is in **NO WAY** a request to create new documents or analyses; the review team is looking to understand the current systems and process that the district is using to support school intervention and improvement.*

NOTE: *Documents should be submitted in electronic format, when possible.*

ITEMS PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT TO THE TEAM LEADER PRIOR TO THE REVIEW	
1. Contact information for school leaders at schools to be visited by the review team	
2. Preferences on methods of communication with school leaders, including any district representatives that should be copied on key correspondences	
3. A copy of the district's learning walk protocol and standards, if different from the ESE	
4. An overview document that describes the formative and/or benchmark assessment system	
5. An overview document that describes the processes in place to monitor the implementation of the DPSI, other intervention strategies and/or improvement efforts	
6. A calendar, including descriptions, of professional development events that have occurred to support DPSI implementation. This should include, for example, embedded professional development (e.g. coaching), leadership development and teacher trainings. It should also include internal professional development offerings as well as external opportunities.	
7. Copies of any data results that have been collected as a result of learning walks	
8. Copies of data reports from district formative and/or benchmark assessments	
9. Copies of data reports that assess the effectiveness of DPSI initiatives, other intervention strategies and/or improvement efforts	
10. Any other documents that the district believes would help the review team to better understand the district's efforts and respond to the key questions	
11. Any other documents identified by the team leader that may provide important context to understand important initiatives in the DPSI	
ITEMS TO BE PREPARED BY THE DISTRICT BEFORE THE REVIEW	
12. All district administrators, school faculty and staff are aware of the visit and its purpose	
13. Private meeting space for review team secured during days in the district office	
14. Meeting space secured for district level focus groups	
15. Lunch arrangements for the district review team (the team will reimburse)	
16. The district should also be prepared to provide documents requested by the review team throughout the course of the district review	

Appendix B: Guidance for Schools

This section provides specific guidance for schools with regard to scheduling, participants needed for interviews/focus groups and a checklist to prepare for the review, including document requests.

SCHEDULING

Once the district has established site visit dates for schools, the review team leader will work collaboratively with the school to establish a specific schedule for the site visit. Alternatively, some districts may wish to coordinate site visit schedules internally. The review team is open to the option that works best for the district and its schools.

Sample School Visit Schedule

Below is a sample daily schedule. The review team leader will work to construct a daily schedule for the visit, based on schedule documents and guidance provided by district and school leadership. Schedules will vary from school to school, depending on the size of the school and the number of team members.

All efforts will be made to ensure that teacher focus groups occur during non-instructional time. Teacher focus groups can be conducted either at the end of the school day or during teacher preparatory time.

For two-day follow-up reviews, mid-point interviews with school leadership will be scheduled each morning to provide opportunity for discussion and redirection.

Sample Daily Site Visit Schedule			
Time	Team Leader	Team Member #1	Team Member #2
7:00–8:00 AM	Team arrives at school and morning meeting		
8:00–9:00 AM	Focus group with school leadership		
9:00–11:30 AM	Classroom visits		
11:30–12:00 PM	Classroom visits	Focus group with representatives of the school leadership team / improvement planning team	
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch; mid-day meeting and team debrief		
1:00–2:00 PM	Follow-up with school leadership	Classroom visits	
2:00–2:30 PM	Focus group with school based “coaches”		Classroom visits
2:30-3:30	Teacher focus groups		
3:30– 5:00 PM	Team debrief and moderation; evidence sorting		
5:00-5:30	Team report of emerging themes		
5:30 PM	Team departs		

SCHOOL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

During the review, a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information about the school's intervention efforts, as well as the work of the district to support the school. The review team will focus on the DPSI, as well as other efforts to provide intervention and support to students at the school. Focus groups will also focus on intervention and improvement efforts, as well as the availability and impact of support functions provided by the Department.

The review team leader, with guidance from district leadership, will work to establish a schedule and focus group composition that is appropriate. The following are examples of interviews/focus groups that will be conducted.

NOTE: *Focus groups should include no more than eight individuals to the extent possible. With the exception of meetings with leadership teams, supervising staff should not be scheduled with those under their supervision.*

SCHOOL-WIDE INTERVIEWS / CLASSROOM VISITS		
Interviews/ focus groups	Description	Approximate Time Needed
School Leadership	School leadership includes the principal and key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director and/or lead teachers). In addition to an interview, school leadership may be asked to provide further guidance and insight throughout the visit. A report on the team's emerging themes will be discussed with school leadership at the end of the site visit.	1 hour interview/ focus group 30 –minute mid-point interview
Teacher focus group	Groups of teachers, typically by grade level , make up focus groups. The team makes an effort to speak to as many of the school's teaching staff as possible.	30 minutes (during non-instructional time)
Specialist interviews	Interviews with specialists may also be conducted. School leaders are asked to identify personnel who play a significant role in school functioning and improvement, such as the school's special education director, ELL coordinator, curriculum coordinators, coaches and other relevant staff.	30 minutes
School support staff	In some cases, the review team may request a focus group meeting with teaching assistants, aides or other personnel to discuss their roles in intervention at the school.	30 minutes
Student focus group	A selection of four to eight students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff. Students selected should be in grades 4 or higher.	30 minutes
Classroom Visits	Classroom visits will be conducted throughout the school visit. Classroom visits are designed to understand instructional practices and improvement efforts across the school; they are not evaluations of individual teachers. More information is provided in Appendix C.	20-30 minute blocks

SCHOOL TASK CHECKLIST

The School Task Checklist can be used by the school to prepare for the review. It includes key tasks that should be completed before the visit, as well as the list of materials the team is requesting before the visit and upon arrival onsite. **NOTE:** *All documents requested in this list should be provided only if the school already has the materials on hand. This list is in **NO WAY** a request to create new documents or analyses; the review team is looking to understand the current systems and process that the school is using to implement district and school-based interventions and to support students who are struggling.*

ITEMS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL TO THE TEAM LEADER PRIOR TO THE REVIEW	
1. School bell schedule	
2. Roster of ALL staff, including grade levels and subject areas taught	
3. Master schedule for all staff, including periods/times teaching and room numbers	
4. A list of teacher preparation times or “free” periods (if not included in either the roster or master schedule)	
5. A copy of the school’s learning walk protocol and standards / classroom visit tool for formative (not evaluative) purposes	
6. An overview document that describes the formative and / or benchmark assessment system	
7. An overview document that describes the processes in place to monitor the implementation of the DPSI, other school-based intervention strategies and / or improvement efforts	
8. A calendar, including descriptions, of professional development events that have occurred to support DPSI implementation as well as to support school intervention and improvement efforts. This should include, for example, embedded professional development (e.g. coaching), leadership development and teacher trainings. It should also include internal professional development offerings as well as external opportunities.	
9. Copies of any data results that have been collected as a result of learning walks / formative classroom visits	
10. Copies of data reports from district (or school) formative and / or benchmark assessments	
11. Copies of data reports that assess the effectiveness of DPSI initiatives, other school-based intervention strategies and / or improvement efforts	
12. Any other documents that the school believes would help team to better understand the district’s efforts and respond to the key questions	
ITEMS TO BE PREPARED BY THE SCHOOL BEFORE THE SITE VISIT	
13. All school faculty and staff are aware of the visit and its purpose	
14. Private meeting space for team secured during days in the district office	
15. To the extent possible, meeting space secured for focus groups separate from the team meeting room	
16. Lunch arrangements for the team (the team will reimburse)	
17. The school should also be prepared to provide documents requested by the team	

Appendix C: Classroom Visits

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Classroom visits are one source of evidence that the review team uses to understand the impact of the district's intervention efforts on teaching and learning. The review team will visit a range of grade levels that represent the school, focusing on core academic areas.

Members of the review team will be assigned to randomly-selected classrooms based on their teaching experience and expertise. Classrooms will be visited for 20-30 minutes to allow the team to observe instructional practices, student activities, classroom structures, and climate.

Classroom visits should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. Teachers do not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work and/or classroom postings, if appropriate. Classrooms taught by substitutes and student teachers will not be visited; the principal and teachers need to identify these classrooms in advance of the observation.

Classroom visits are NOT evaluations of individual teachers. Specific information about individual teachers will not be shared with any school personnel. Review team members will not provide feedback to individual teachers.

CLASSROOM VISIT TOOL

During classroom visits, the review team will use the 17 characteristics of ESE's Learning Walk tool to gather evidence on classroom practices. The review team will focus on the specific characteristics of the Learning Walk that the district and/or the school have adopted as priorities. If the district has been using a modified version of the Learning Walk tool, the district inform the review team of the modification during the document collection process in advance of the onsite visit.

Understanding the impact of instruction on student learning is a key focus of the review team. The Department's Learning Walk characteristics will be used by the review team because most districts participating in this review have used the Learning Walk or a variation of it to assess and support instruction in schools. Accordingly, an external assessment of the district's instructional practices using Learning Walk characteristics may provide additional insights to the district and its schools, as well as to the Department. Quantitative and qualitative information will be collected during classroom visits. The review team will analyze quantitative data about the characteristics of instruction and classroom practices (e.g., the rate of occurrence of classroom practices) as well as provide qualitative descriptions of strategies, practices, and behaviors observed in the classroom. In combination, the quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through classroom visits provides a 'snapshot' of teaching and learning in the schools.