

SEL Learning Walk Protocol

Anchorage School District

Purpose

The “SEL Learning Walk” is a structured way for colleagues (“walkers”) to engage in discussion about SEL as they look for evidence of SEL skills in action. Through this process, the walkers apply what they learn about SEL to their own personal SEL practice and role. The “SEL Learning Walk” is not a venue for evaluative observation, feedback, or judgment but rather a way to learn from watching as colleagues directly teach and infuse SEL skills into their classrooms.

Tools

- ✓ *SEL Learning Walk Protocol* (a copy for each walker)
- ✓ *Learning Walk Tool* (a copy for each walker)
- ✓ *ASD K---12 SEL Standards and Indicators* booklet (one copy for the facilitator and optional copies for the walkers)
- ✓ Clipboards (optional) and pens (optional)

Preparation

- Contact the principal and the teacher about scheduling the classroom visit. Invite the principal to participate as one of the walkers.
- Review the *SEL Learning Walk Protocol* and *Learning Walk Tool* with both the principal and the teacher before the visit so they understand the purpose and the process. Make sure the principal and the teacher each have a copy of both documents.
- Arrange with the principal to use a conference room or other space at the school for the debriefing conversation after the classroom visit.
- Encourage the teacher to touch base with the principal about the visit, so both have a common understanding and as a reminder to the principal about when the visit is scheduled.
- Contact the principal and the teacher just prior to the visit. Make sure they are aware of who will be visiting the school as part of the SEL Learning Walk, particularly if district executives are participating.
- Limit the number of walkers visiting the classroom to a maximum of seven people, including the facilitator(s).
- Prepare the walkers for the visit by giving them the *Protocol*, *Learning Walk Tool* and the *ASD K---12 SEL Standards and Indicators* booklet. The SEL indicators can help walkers understand the specific skills embedded in the SEL standards and what those skills look like at each developmental level.
- Plan for having two SEL Team staff present on the walk. This allows one person to be the facilitator and the other to be the timekeeper, welcome and prepare late walkers, or help re---focus the debriefing if it gets off track.

Facilitator Role

The facilitator will:

- Explain the purpose of the SEL Learning Walk and share the focus of the visit (climate, direct instruction, or infusion), the teacher’s name, and grade level. The facilitator will also share any other background information about the class that helps walkers put what they are about to see in context.
- Specify the amount of time spent in the classroom, and cue walkers when it is time to leave the classroom.

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Facilitator Role, continued:

- Allow time for walkers to record their noticings and wonderings after the classroom visit.
- Focus the group debriefing conversation on the discussion prompts (Process, Content, Purpose), and ensure that the walkers' comments are objective and without judgment.
- Ask the co-facilitator, or one of the walkers, to serve as the timekeeper, if needed, for the classroom visit and/or the group debriefing conversation.

Format

Classroom Experience (between 30 and 45 minutes)

- While in the classroom, walkers may want to look at the *SEL Learning Walk Tool* to remind themselves of the focus and the SEL skills they are looking for, however, there is NO writing in the classroom so walkers can be fully present to the classroom experience.
- Walkers are not there to initiate interaction with students, but to simply notice what they see and hear in the classroom.
- The facilitator will cue the group when it is time to leave the classroom.

Reflection (between 5 and 7 minutes)

- Once the walkers exit the classroom, the facilitator will pause the group to allow *silent* reflection time for recording evidence of what the walkers noticed. This silent reflection time can occur in the pre-arranged conference room or in the hallway if multiple classrooms are being visited.
- Walkers can pose "wonderings", questions that arise based on what walkers have noticed. For example, "I wonder how the teacher prepared the students for engaging in a pair share?"
- Based on the focus of the visit (climate, direct instruction, or infusion), walkers identify the specific SEL skills they observed students using in the classroom.

Group Debriefing (between 20 and 25 minutes)

- Once the walkers have completed the classroom visits and paused to silently reflect after each visit, the group will meet together to debrief the experience and draw connections to personal practice.
- The facilitator will read the Purpose of the Learning Walk again and explain that the debriefing will focus on the process, content, and purpose questions. Clarify that there will be time at the end of the debriefing for questions the walkers may have about the particular class, SEL in the district, etc. but that the debriefing will stay focused on the structured questions.
- Begin with the **process** questions -- what did you notice and wonder? The facilitator will answer the question first, sharing a piece of evidence to model the process and set a non-judgmental tone for the debriefing. The facilitator will then invite the walkers to take turns sharing a piece of evidence to support their observations.
- After several rounds focused on the process, the facilitator will begin conversation around the **content** of the SEL experience – the SEL skills the walkers observed – and will share a piece of evidence, again to model and set the tone before inviting the walkers to take turns sharing their evidence.
- Finally, the facilitator will invite walkers to take turns sharing what they learned about SEL and how their learning will impact their own SEL practice, the **purpose** of the "SEL Learning Walk".
- After the structured conversation is complete, the facilitator can open the conversation to questions about the class, SEL, etc.