

# Arizona's State Systemic Improvement Plan and the Learning Walks Protocol

## What Is the Learning Walks Protocol?

Learning Walks is a collaborative coaching process to be modeled for and experienced with partners, grade-level teams, content-area teams, and leadership teams. The purpose of the process is to assist educators in staying focused on what matters most in inclusive learning environments, instructional practices, student interactions, and student engagement. Another purpose is to collect evidence of shared professional learning and collaboration over time.

The Learning Walks Protocol is not a list to be checked off. Rather, it is a tool to collect trends, to capture evidence of shared learning and learning conversations, and to establish a common language of effective teaching and learning.

## How Does the Learning Walks Protocol Connect to the State Systemic Improvement Plan?

The Learning Walks Protocol is a support provided by the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, to PEAs in implementing their SSIP Action Plan. As PEAs begin the second year of implementation of their SSIP Action Plans, the Learning Walks Protocol can assist in collecting evidence of strengths in Tier 1 literacy instruction to improve literacy outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. This tool can also support teams in assessing if professional learning is being transferred to classroom practice.

As a state, Arizona is focused on improving literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. Arizona's State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) states the following:

*Targeted PEAs will increase the performance of students with disabilities in grades 3–5 on the English/Language Arts (ELA) state assessment from 6.4% to 12.99% by FFY 2019 to meet the State proficiency average for students with disabilities in grades 3–5.*

Our state goals and plan are outlined within our State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) found here: <https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5ac7b6203217e1026c6de942>.

## What Are the Expectations for Special Education Directors as a Part of the Learning Walks Protocol?

In fall and winter of the 2018–2019 school year, ESS literacy specialists will demonstrate the process for your literacy leadership team. Each State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Cohort 1 PEA will have a three-hour, real-world experience in the Learning Walks process at a campus



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the PEA chooses. In between the two coaching sessions led by ESS literacy specialists, Cohort 1 SSIP schools are asked to visit classrooms where the SSIP Action Plan is being implemented to independently collect data using the Learning Walks Protocol. The data collected during these Learning Walks will be submitted to the SSIP coordinator.

The SSIP coordinator and your Program Support and Monitoring specialist, along with an ESS literacy specialist can assist you in reviewing your SSIP Action Plan and Success Gaps Rubric to decide which of your campuses and classrooms are the best fit for the Learning Walks sessions. We can support you in choosing a Learning Walks team that suits your PEA’s needs as well. The ideal team might include the following:

Special Education Director  
Building Principal  
General Educator  
Special Educator  
ELL Teacher

\*Ideally, both a primary (K–2) and an intermediate teacher (3–5) should be included. Your team will be joined by at least one ADE ESS literacy specialist, the SSIP coordinator, and/or the assigned Program Support and Monitoring specialist.

During the three-hour coaching session, which will preferably take place in the morning, the team will be visiting classrooms to collect evidence of teaching and learning that include students with disabilities for two of the teachers on your Learning Walks team.

### **How Might You Continue the Learning Walks Protocol Process as You Move Forward in Your Action Plan?**

As your PEA collects data on trends and evidence of teaching and learning, you will be able to use this data to graph your trends, identify strengths, identify needs, and set priorities and next steps for professional learning. Your leadership team may also want to share their learning with other campuses and/or with other teachers and staff.



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## Learning Walks Protocol – The Process

1. Inform the two classroom colleagues that you are going to visit their classrooms.
2. Decide how you will be observing your colleagues (partners, grade-level teams, or leadership teams).
3. Review the Learning Walk attributes together before visiting the classrooms to establish a common language.
4. Plan to start small. For example, each team member may pick one quadrant in the Learning Walk Protocol to observe (Learning Environment, Instructional Practices, Student Interaction, or Student Engagement). Rotate quadrants so that everyone has a chance to observe them all, if possible.
5. Fill in all the details at the top of the Learning Walks Protocol before you enter the classroom (observer name, date, grade, number of students in the class, etc.).
6. Visit the classroom and tally only once if you see evidence of one of the artifacts (or aspects of learning) on the Learning Walk and note evidence of the learning in the comments section. Quote the teacher and/or the student language as evidence to provide specific and immediate feedback.
7. Step outside the classroom and huddle with your team to go through the positive artifacts of learning you collected as a team.
8. Take turns sharing aloud the positive artifacts you documented, what you noticed, and why it was important.
9. Prepare to write your specific feedback to the teacher and the students by taking turns sharing your thinking with your colleagues before writing.
10. Summarize and write one attribute you would like to celebrate on a sticky note to your teacher and/or students. Avoid starting with "I like" or "I noticed." It is not about you! Instead, begin your note by naming the aspect of learning and stating why it was important for student learning. For example, When " \_\_\_\_." Then " \_\_\_\_." Why " \_\_\_\_."
11. Return to the classroom as a team. Ask the teacher and students if you may interrupt the learning just for a moment.
12. Publicly celebrate the learning in the classroom by having each team member take turns naming the learning aspect, why it was important, and celebrating the teacher and the students. Leave the sticky notes with the teacher.

