**Protocol for Superintendent’s School Visits**

p. B-1 of Implementation Guide for Principal Evaluation

Periodic purposeful school visits offer critical opportunities for superintendents to understand the work of the school leader as it relates to instructional leadership, school culture, and other leadership practices. Superintendents use these visits as opportunities to observe, collect evidence, and analyze the work of school leaders. To do so, they visit classrooms together, but the visits are not for the superintendent to evaluate teachers; instead the superintendent is evaluating the principal’s skills and knowledge as an instructional leader.

Visits to schools should be ongoing and, at times, unannounced as required by the regulations. At a minimum, though, fall, winter, and spring visits to the school leader’s work site can provide invaluable insight into the school leader’s performance over the course of the year. The value of the insights depends on the superintendent and principal engaging together in three specific activities each time:[[1]](#footnote-1)

* Discuss progress and challenges.
* Examine artifacts.
* Observe teaching practice and share analyses.

**1. The superintendent** **and principal discuss progress and challenges in areas such as the following:**

* Goals
  + Professional Practice
  + Student Learning
  + School Improvement
* Outreach to Parents
* School Climate and Culture
* Professional Development
* Challenging Supervisory Cases

**2. The superintendent and principal examine artifacts together such as the following:**

* Classroom observation schedule and a sample of the feedback provided
* Meeting plans
* Newsletters
* Interim assessment results

**3. The superintendent and principal observe classroom and other practice and share their analyses.**

* 10–15 minute observations in two to four classrooms[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Other activities to observe might include:
  + - Leadership team meetings
    - Faculty meetings
    - Grade-level, team and department meetings
    - Lunch and recess
    - Transitions (entry, dismissal, between class)

*MA Guide: Protocol for Superintendent’s School Visits (DESE)*

1. Superintendents often find that they learn the most when they share their general school visit protocol ahead of time with principals so that principals know the purposes of the superintendent’s visits. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Some superintendents visit classrooms with the principal and discuss what they see “along the way.” Other superintendents will discuss with the principal what classes they would like to visit and then visit on their own, meeting afterward with the principal to share perceptions and ask questions. Some do both in the same visit. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)