

Guidelines for PAR Board School Site Visits

Purpose: A PAR Board School Site Visit during year five of the grant identifies successes and barriers a school is experiencing in addressing and meeting NETWORK Project goals. Additionally: "Visits from the PAR Board have been successful in providing a forum for the conversations that typically are not occurring at a deep level at the schools." (Finding, May 2013 PAR Board Retreat)

Process: A PAR Board Site Visit is a collaboration between the school and an outside group of knowledgeable & critical friends. It is not a "compliance" audit. Site Visit Team members focus on school successes and barriers, and offer insights based on what they observe and hear. The Site Visit Report includes suggestions about how a school might increase successes and minimize or eliminate barriers to sustaining inquiry-learning and performance assessment strategies during SY1415 and beyond.

As was the case in year four, visits will be for two days: Day 1- 10 a.m.-4:00 pm for PAR Board members (**optional for school-based teacher & student members of the Site Visit Team**)*; and **Day 2 for all members of the Site Visit Team**, from 7:30 to 4:00 p.m. The PAR Board Lead, school administration, Site Coordinator and CSSR coach should be in regular/prior contact to plan the visits. The Site Visit includes as many of the following activities as practicable:

1. Participating in moderation or validation sessions with at least one content team with school administrators present. (Note: *The school's participating members of the PAWG should work with the CSSR School Coach to plan this activity.*)
2. Reviewing and recording school definition, standards and practices concerning *challenging intellectual work* (i.e., "rigorous" work) – through varying means and across all stakeholders in the school community.
3. Reviewing samples** of teacher/school-designed performance assessments in use by teachers in major content and selected elective areas. Visiting Team focus is on quality and abundance of the assessments in order to offer feedback for improving assignments and promoting higher quality student work.
4. Arranging opportunities for facilitated dialog about sustaining the work as grant funding draws to a close.
5. Interviewing administrators, teachers and students to establish perceptions of **evidence of adjusted practice***** *This could be asking teachers to provide samples of instruction/assessment of key standards, skills and topics now being taught in fundamentally different ways; describing efficacy and results; and provide answers to questions such as the following:*

- For principals and department heads: During how many teacher observations have you observed teachers facilitating an inquiry-learning and performance assessment unit? How many students in your school have actually engaged in two or more such units? What is your plan to meet the **grant requirement; i.e., evidence that each student has or will experience two such units during the grant period?**
- For teachers: How many inquiry lessons and performance assessments have you conducted and for how many of your students? How often do you engage with colleagues to discuss instructional strategies, visit a colleague’s classroom and, in turn, been visited by a colleague? Has an administrator observed you during the past two-three years? How many of those observations took place while you were facilitating an inquiry learning and performance assessment unit? Has your instruction changed over the past four years as a result of activities related to the grant-supported project? If so, how? If not, why not?
- For students: If your Principal were to ask you, “Have you yourself or with a small group of classmates investigated an important question or problem, reported your findings or otherwise demonstrated or provided evidence of what you have learned?” How have your teachers modified their teaching?

6. Observing a juried student presentation and a variety of classes, both planned and random; conducting interviews with students, also planned and random; and looking at a range of student work** and reviewing assignments both prior to and during the visit.

7. Determining who has seen and used the previous PAR Board Site Visit Report, and seeking suggestions about how reports could be written to be more useful to schools.

8. Assessing school-wide conditions (e.g., support for improving student academic behaviors, PD, scheduling, governance, knowledge base, continuity of leadership; etc.) that have been created for carrying on student-centered work after the grant expires.

9. Using a protocol (or not) for facilitating key stakeholder dialog about one or more dilemmas of the school’s choice for sustaining systemic, student-centered change.

****- Students may participate as Site Visit Team members and, possibly, earn ELO or inquiry-learning credit according to their own school’s policies and procedures***

***** - A guiding principle from the I3 Grant application***

******-Work samples should be viewable online well before visit***