



LIVINGSTON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## The Livingston Lens

Instructional Framework For Continuous  
Reflection, Connection, and Growth

# Finding Focus

A Framework  
for  
Continuous Reflection, Connection, and Growth



Livingston Public Schools

*Empowering all to Learn, Create, Contribute & Grow*



# The Livingston Lens

## The Instructional Core

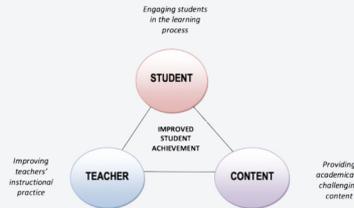
The instructional core includes three interdependent components: teachers' knowledge and skill, students' engagement in their own learning, and academically challenging content.

Our Instructional Framework articulates the relationships between the teacher and student in the presence of content. The relationships between these three elements define the instructional framework - not the individual attributes of any one of these components.

"The instructional core includes **three interdependent components: teachers'** knowledge and skill, **students'** engagement in their own learning, and academically challenging **content.**"

-Richard Elmore, "Improving the Instructional Core"

### THE INSTRUCTIONAL CORE



## The Livingston Lens 5 Focuses

WE BELIEVE THAT  
EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION IS:

- 1 Cultivated in a safe, caring, and brave learning environment.
- 2 Rooted in clearly stated and understood objectives, expectations, and criteria.
- 3 Informed by student performance and targeted feedback.
- 4 Creating opportunities for students to actively engage in sense-making.
- 5 Interconnected.

## What is an Instructional Framework?

AN INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK ...	AN INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK IS NOT ...
Draws from the outstanding work we do every day in the instructional core.	The "next thing"
Is adaptive to the needs of our Students, Community, and Staff	A store-bought model of instruction
Embraces a "balcony view" of our district to focus on the interconnectedness of teaching and learning.	Placing a "spotlight" on individual practitioners or classrooms.
Is a means to develop a common language of instruction	Cookie-cutter solutions
Encourages teacher choice and decision-making	A step-by-step recipe for lesson planning
Curates instructional focuses and professional development programs from data we gather and analyze from our own practice.	Imposed through mandates, trends, or fads in education.
Is transparent, positive, and inclusive	A "gotcha"
Recognizes the need to focus our attention	Expect educators to work on all things at the same time.
A way to clarify and strengthen our collective identity as a District	

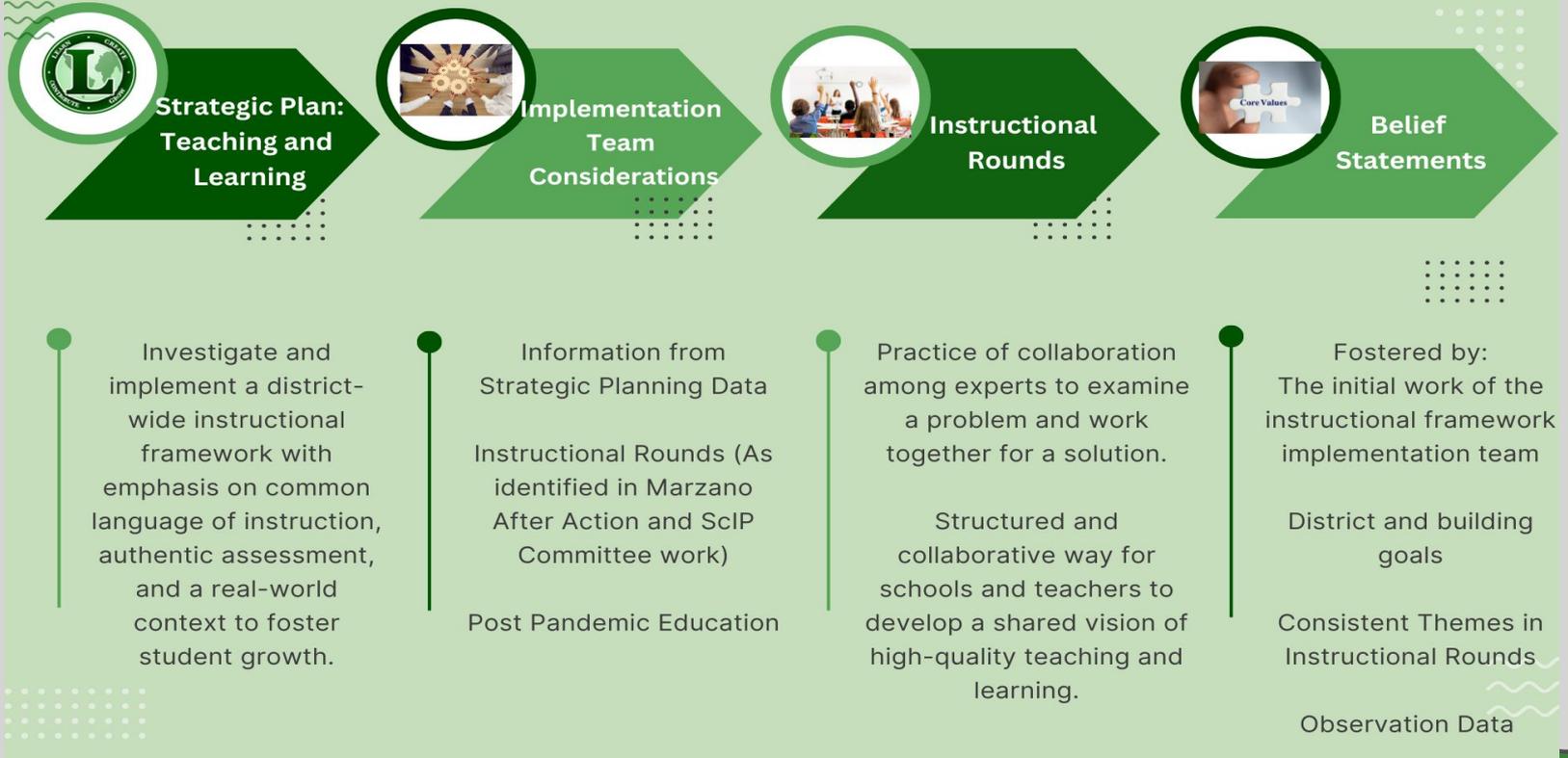


# Critical Ideas

- If the Portrait of a Graduate is an aspirational document, then our Instructional Framework is the practical means of achieving its attributes.
- Our Instructional Framework is a systematic approach in which we:
  - reflect on instructional practices
  - discover core focuses
  - adapt to needs and circumstances
  - create professional development opportunities
  - while clarifying our identity as a District
- A pandemic forced us into working in silos. It's time to re-engage in district-wide, focused discussions about instruction and learning.
  - Our continued success depends on our collective, interconnected work to ensure a cohesive learning experience for our students.
  - We continue to adapt and evolve for our needs and environment while clarifying and strengthening our identity.



# LPS Instructional Framework



# LPS Instructional Framework

- Our goal for Instructional Framework is designed to give common language and connectivity to the work we are doing in our classrooms.
  - Not lockstep. Recognizing the larger context
- While stakeholders shared great appreciation for LPS, Strategic Plan survey data discussed:
  - Disconnect between activities, subjects, and experiences
  - Motivation of grades over learning
  - Learning for its own sake
- Create our priorities and invite others to solidify the work.
- Build PD Plan, repository, and articulation opportunities
- For LPS, By LPS



# Considerations

- What came from the strategic planning data
  - Finding connection and permission
  - Emphasize growth over grades
  - Opportunities to demonstrate understanding and receive feedback
- Marzano After Action/ScIP Committee Work
  - Make the work less “unwieldy.”
    - Working on everything didn’t allow us to work on specific things well.
  - Instructional Rounds allowed for great learning from peers.
  - Can it last through people changes?
- Post-Pandemic Education

A white thought bubble with a thick black outline, containing the text "Hmmm.." in a green serif font. Two smaller white circles with black outlines are positioned below the main bubble, suggesting a trail of thought.



# At Our CORE

“The instructional core includes three interdependent components: **teachers’** knowledge and skill, **students’** engagement in their own learning, and academically challenging **content.**”

-Richard Elmore

“Improving the Instructional Core”

“Infinite-minded leaders understand that “best” is not a permanent state. Instead, they strive to be “better.” “Better” suggests a journey of constant improvement and makes us feel like we are being invited to contribute our talents and energies to make progress in that journey.”

— Simon Sinek

[The Infinite Game](#)

“We learn to do the work by doing the work, not by telling other people to do the work, not by having done the work at some time in the past, and not by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work.”

-Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman, and Lee Teitel, [Instructional Rounds in Education](#)

“To be adaptive means to change form while clarifying identity. Form can be the ways we structure our organizations and the ways in which we do our work. New challenges require new and increasingly flexible forms.”

-Bruce Wellman & Robert Garmston

[The Adaptive School](#)



# At Our CORE

## Factor 1: Portrait of a Graduate

Our North Star.

## Factor 2: Curriculum

- Starting point for rigorous instructional decision making, developed collaboratively
- Learning rooted in essential questions and enduring understandings
- Rigorous plan for learning, includes assessments, learning strategies and resources
- Blueprints are publicly available to encourage at home support

## Factor 3: Instructional Focuses, Strategies, Resources

- The classroom and instructional “moves” (decision-making) are at the heart of learning.
- Connections and common language around learning
- Focuses align with Danielson observation rubric
- Will continue to evolve

## Factor 5: The Feedback Loop

- Strong feedback is specific, timely, consistent, and productive.
- District and School Data Teams will analyze instructional decision-making, practice, and additional needs.
- Instructional framework connects to the LPS Portrait of a Graduate and observation and evaluation practices.
- Common instructional priorities.
- SciP (School Improvement Panel) committees
- Student focus groups

## Factor 4: Professional Development

- District, school, and department PDP plans connect to the LPS Focuses
- Instructional Rounds invite teachers to visit colleague's classes to reflect on teaching practices
- Findings of rounds are shared with the whole LPS community



# At Our CORE

## Factor 1: [Portrait of a Graduate](#)

- Our north star.

## Factor 2: Curriculum

- Curriculum is the starting point of instructional decision-making and articulation. Writing is a collaborative process where teachers and administrators establish the foundation for learning across classrooms and buildings.
- Learning is rooted in essential questions, enduring understandings, knowledge, and skills designed to address learning standards.
- The curriculum is rigorous for learners at all levels and includes components for assessment, learning strategies, and resources to meet high expectations.
- Blueprints for curricula are public-facing, encouraging reinforcement of language and skills at home.

## Factor 3: Instructional Focuses, Strategies, and Resources

- The classroom and instructional “moves” (decision-making) are at the heart of learning.
- These focuses build connections and a common language around the learning that happens across our District.
- Instructional focuses will continue to evolve based on data, environment, research, and student and teacher needs.
- The Focuses will align with the Danielson observation rubric to strengthen instructional decision-making.



# At Our CORE

## Factor 4: Professional Development

- District, Building, and Department Professional Development Plans will connect directly to the focuses of the Livingston Lens.
- [Instructional Rounds](#) invite teams of teachers into one another's classrooms to reflect on their own practice, recognize commonalities, and develop answers to questions about who we are and why we do what we do.
  - ***develop a shared vision of high-quality teaching and learning***
  - diagnose learning needs for students and educators
  - focus on and improve learning tasks
  - foster a collaborative culture that supports learning (Marzano, City, Elmore)
- In conjunction with district data, the findings of instructional rounds are shared with the school community annually to set priorities for professional development, articulation, resource/repository accumulation, and additional rounds.

## Factor 5: The Feedback Loop

- Strong feedback is specific, timely, consistent, and productive.
- District and School Data Teams will analyze performance and environmental data to inform instructional decision-making, practice, and additional needs.
- Instructional framework priorities will be connected to the LPS Portrait of a Graduate and the LPS observation/evaluation practice to establish relevance and context for educators.
- Administrators will continuously work towards consistent observation and feedback in these areas by developing common instructional priorities.
- ScIP (School Improvement Panel) committees will provide feedback to school and District administrators to collaborate in furthering professional development programs for the District.
- Focus groups with students will be utilized to collect experiential data to inform future decision-making.





# So, what is an Instructional Framework?

<b>Our Instructional Framework...</b>	<b>Our Instructional Framework Is NOT...</b>
Embraces a “balcony view” of our District to focus on the interconnectedness of teaching and learning.	Placing a “spotlight” on individual practitioners or classrooms.
Is adaptive to the Needs of Our Students, Community, and Staff	A store-bought model of instruction
Draws from the outstanding work we do every day in the instructional core.	The “next thing”
A means to develop a common language of instruction	Cookie-cutter solutions



# So, what is an Instructional Framework?



<b>Our Instructional Framework...</b>	<b>Our Instructional Framework Is NOT...</b>
Encourages teacher choice and decision-making	A step-by-step recipe for lesson planning
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Transparent, positive, and inclusive	A “gotcha”
Recognizes the need to focus our attention	Expect educators to work on all things at the same time.
A way to clarify and strengthen our collective identity as a District	



# Finding Our Focus

## The Return of Instructional Rounds



# What are Instructional Rounds?

Our schools have observation worthy moments happening every day!

Instructional Rounds are a practice of collaboration among experts to examine a problem and work together for a solution. In education, teachers and administrators work together to identify and solve common problems related to teaching and learning. The instructional rounds process is a structured and collaborative way for schools and teachers to:

- diagnose learning needs for students and educators
- focus on and improve learning tasks
- develop a shared vision of high-quality teaching and learning
- foster a collaborative culture that supports learning
- Provides data for professional development opportunities



# Instructional Rounds at LPS

Instructional rounds are about the observers not the teacher being observed.

[Instructional rounds](#) are an opportunity for those things to be seen, celebrated, and implemented by others for the benefit of our learners.

10-minute observation walkthroughs are not meant for us to correct other teachers or to even leave them feedback. The primary purpose is learning. Our agreements included:

- Assume positive intentions
- We are not evaluating teachers
- Our focus is on specific instructional approaches
- Considerations for our own classroom instruction
- Discover common values K-12
- All conversation stays in the room



# Putting It All Together

Setting Clear Expectations/Objectives - 14 (6)	Humans over students/making connections - 12 (5)	Time to Process - 9 (5) (leads to engagements)	Providing resources needed for success - 8 (5)	Common Language - 6 (4)	Room Design - 6 (4)	Student Choice - 6 (3)
<p>Build consistency in norms and expectations, both in the classroom and across them.</p> <p>Noted - K-2 Reading a book called "Thinking Thoughts and Feeling Feelings" Need to spend the time in morning meeting working on these skills - social thinking skills across the building through morning meeting.</p> <p>have to take instructional time especially in the beginning of the year to lay groundwork for the expectations. Staff needs to take time to explicitly model and review social expectations ( eye contact, volume, patience collaborative work)</p> <p>one of the biggest complaints among elementary teachers is how differently things are done across the elementary schools.</p>	<p>Use inclusive language</p>	<p>Students need to make connections!</p> <p>Noted: Providing time to think. Students have a role in setting the tone in the room with</p>	<p>Defining a growth mindset and what it mean in LPS</p> <p>Noted: Teachers made comments such as "We just learned this so we may not have it yet." Students struggling with answers naturally turning to one another, looking at one another's work, or teacher giving two options to work through, one of which is the correct answer.</p> <p>The learning process is there - but when it comes down to the grade - how do I incorporate the grade into the work I do with students. How does the growth mindset factor into our work?</p>	<p>As a district, we have to talk about how skills build on one another logically, and incrementally.</p> <p>Noted: students are not just yours for one year. Every work that is done in K - is developed further and results in what that looks like in Gr. 12.</p> <p>Important PD surrounds articulation across grade-levels (and across dept's) Getting to know the terminology among all the departments is key</p>	<p>Students need to see themselves in the work/ classroom environment</p> <p>Noted: Text selection, what is around the room (example of scientist posters around the room). "Everyone is welcome here."</p> <p>Use. student ideas or examples in models</p>	<p>What does engagement look like?</p> <p>Engagement vs. compliance</p>
<p>Soft Start does include content.</p> <p>Noted: Lay foundation, set expectations, revisit, alter, repeat</p>	<p>Modeling of behaviors, approaches, expectations, vulnerability, discussion.</p> <p>Noted: teachers engage in the same activities as students.</p>	<p>Balance of modeling and student engagement with content.</p> <p>Modeling with room for processing.</p> <p>Model the thinking</p> <p>Noted: When learning a skill or developing a classroom expectation, a teacher modeling the work is valuable, especially when they share their thinking and process</p> <p>However, when does modeling stifle creativity and thinking in the classroom to the point they are simply copying the model without understanding?</p> <p>vulnerability comes from being honest and open when you are explaining - why we do the things we do - doing this because this is what we will gain from it.</p> <p>there is value in setting expectations for students - with room for processing - there is value in teachers modelling for students</p>	<p>Humans over Students.</p> <p>Noted: In the best moments we pause and recognize the social connection and teach the skill or provide language needed to be successful. Stopping to help a student ask for personal space.</p>	<p>Build consistency in norms and expectations, both in the classroom and across them.</p> <p>Noted - K-2 Reading a book called "Thinking Thoughts and Feeling Feelings" Need to spend the time in morning meeting working on these skills - social thinking skills across the building through morning meeting.</p> <p>have to take instructional time especially in the beginning of the year to lay groundwork for the expectations. Staff needs to take time to explicitly model and review social expectations ( eye contact, volume, patience collaborative work)</p> <p>one of the biggest complaints among elementary teachers is how differently things are done across the elementary schools.</p>	<p>Student collaboration The room set up to set the collaboration</p>	<p>Giving directions is an art.</p> <p>Noted: We may want to get to an activity, but it is essential that students know what is expected of them in this context (conduct, product, efficiency, social interaction). The balance between allowing them time and freedom and clear understanding of what is needed.</p>



# What Are We Finding?

- Belief Statements fostered by:
  - The Initial Work of the Implementation Team
  - Building, Department, and District Goals
  - Consistent Themes in Instructional Rounds
  - Observation Data

These statements do not include all aspects of quality instruction, but those around which we will work to cultivate a common language of instruction and articulation in the next year.

Over time, these statements will adapt and evolve.

We believe that  
effective instruction is:



# We believe that effective instruction is:

1. **Cultivated in a safe, caring, and brave learning environment.**
2. **Rooted in clearly stated and understood objectives, expectations, and criteria.**
3. **Informed by student performance and targeted feedback.**
4. **Creating opportunities for students to actively engage in sense-making.**
5. **Interconnected.**



# Putting It All Together

## FOCUS #4

1. Creating opportunities for students to ***actively engage in sense-making***.

### Questions to Consider:

- a. How am I creating time for students to process information independently and collectively?
- b. What opportunities exist for students to transfer their learning to a unique situation?
- c. What opportunities do students have to ask questions, drive discussion, and share their understanding and wonderings about content?
- d. What questions can be formulated before and during a lesson that facilitates critical and innovative thinking?
- e. What active engagement and strategic collaboration opportunities are provided in this lesson?
- f. Have I created low-stakes opportunities for students to interact with content?
- g. How is student understanding demonstrated?
- h. How do I know if students are engaged or complying with class expectations?
- i. Do I release responsibility for learning to students?
- j. How do I create opportunities for student choice?

#### Danielson Rubric Connections:

1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy  
3b: Questioning and Discussion Techniques  
3c: Engaging Students in Learning  
3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

#### Portrait of a Graduate Connections:

Collaborative Leader  
Independent Thinker  
Motivated Learner



# Summer Retreat

## Penny Payout

- Think about having 100 pennies. You can distribute them among The Five Focuses.
- Thinking about the strengths and needs of your building or department, decide how many pennies to spend on each of the focuses.
- Be prepared to discuss your choices



## What is Sensemaking?



## What is Sensemaking?

Small Group

- As a group, define sensemaking and post it on your group's assigned table.
- Identify **supports students might need** to engage in sensemaking and post them in your table.
  - Identify **supports teachers might need** to engage students in sensemaking and post.

### Information Frame

- Teacher is focused on disseminating information.

### Sensemaking Frame

- Teacher is focused on developing conceptual understanding.

Less Like



body of established facts.

to make sense of something.

- Assessments are focused on "right" answers.

**Knowing about..**

- Assessments are focused on use of evidence to support conclusions/generalizations.

**Figuring out...**

From: Cynthia Passmore, NSTA Virtual PD, Nov. 15, 2014

### What is sensemaking?

- Building understanding by processing new information, making connections with prior experiences/knowledge, and constructing meaning/applying new knowledge.
  - Sensemaking provides space to understand the "why" and answer essential questions.

### Teacher Supports

- Planning and preparation time and space (collaboration)
- Knowledge of common language/experiences across content areas
- Collaboration on interconnected skills
- PD for small group intervention/student-led learning
- Willingness to take risks and feel supported while doing so
- Confidence and comfort with curriculum (training and guidance)
- Knowledge of students
- Data to inform instruction/grouping
- IRTS/Specialized Services
- Technology Support

### Student Supports

- Clear learning objectives and expectations
- Trust to make mistakes, ask questions, explore thinking, and focus on growth
- Anchoring content in the greater context/the "why"
- Targeted and congruent activities to the objectives
- Norms for student discussion
- Time for processing and collaboration
- Time for independent reflection and processing
- Accessing prior knowledge and schema
- Individualized feedback and interventions (conferences)
- Differentiated process and product
- Learning strategies
- Flexible pathways

### Looks less like...

- Teacher-directed
- "One size fits all"
- "One and done"
- Product lessons/skills in isolation
- Role memorization (facts and statements)
- Focus on grades and the "right answer"
- Teacher rigidly sticks to the plan and checks off the boxes
- One lesson per day
- Independent work
- Some students ignored/disconnected
- Back-and-forth between teacher and some students

### Looks more like...

- Using content to answer essential questions
- Collaboration
- Process over product
- Low-stakes opportunities/time to make mistakes
- Busy and noisy
- Revisions and reflections ("What did you learn about what you learned?")
- Intentional grouping/independent work
- Modeling and prompting (K-W-L charts, "I used to think, but now I think")
- Students can communicate why they are engaging in an activity.
- Questions promote higher-order thinking to generate informed answers to essential questions.
- Pausing for reflection (individual/partner/group)



# Turn-key Full Staff Workshops

What does it mean to be informed by Student Performance?  
What is Targeted Feedback?

- Why
- Process
- Meaning through connections

Teacher Supports

Student Supports

**Time to revise...**

## Small Group

1. Define what it means to be rooted in clearly stated and understood **objectives**, **expectations** and **criteria** and post it on your group's assigned table.
2. Identify supports teachers might need and post them in your table.
3. Identify supports students might need and post.
4. Identify what you expect to see in the classroom:
  - instruction looks less like
  - instruction looks more like

## Student Performance and Targeted Feedback

*What does it mean to be informed by student performance?*

*What is "targeted feedback"?*

*Teacher Supports:*

*Student Supports:*

*In the classroom, instruction that is informed by student performance and targeted feedback...*

*Looks Less Like:*

*Looks More Like:*

## Connections to the Five Focuses

### Focus 1

*We believe that effective instruction is:*

1. Cultivated in a **safe, caring, and brave learning environment**.

Questions to consider:

- a. How am I demonstrating care for the people in my room as humans over students?
- b. Have I created low-stakes opportunities for students to interact with content?
- c. Do students see themselves in their learning?
- d. What does the design of my classroom tell students?

#### Danielson Rubric Connections

1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students  
2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport  
3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

#### Portrait of a Graduate Connections

All attributes with a focus on:  
Balanced Individual  
Conscientious Friend  
Thoughtful Communicator

### Sensemaking Definition

Building understanding by processing new information, making connections with prior experiences/knowledge, and constructing meaning/applying new knowledge.

- Sensemaking provides space to understand the "why" and answer essential questions.



# Continuing Steps

## 2024-2025 School Year

- Building and department professional development plans surround selected Focuses of Livingston Lens.
- Present to the Board of Education the values and priorities we have determined as a District.
- Create cross-discipline and grade articulation PD developing common language and classroom “look-fors.”
- Develop “criteria maps”
- Collectively build a repository of resources for teachers and administrators.
- Formalize evaluation criteria for recognizing impact of the Livingston Lens, short and long term.
- Reintroduce the Coaching Observation encouraging the use of new strategies rooted in a focus.
- Fall and Spring Instructional rounds using criteria maps created through PD.
- Form Elementary Schedule Review Committee
- Universal Screener Implementation for student performance informed instruction





Together, we all  
learn, create, contribute and grow.

