

New Bedford Public School leaders in more than 1,000 classes this school year in New Bedford

Over 1,000 classes have been visited by Superintendent Thomas Anderson and district teams since the beginning of the school year. New Bedford, like many urban districts across the country is shifting from a compliance mindset to one of openness and true support. "I view my role as a support to our schools so amazing things can be accomplished for our students by helping to reduce anxiety and for me to have some firsthand knowledge on how the culture and climate is impacting both children and adults," Superintendent Anderson stated.

The District Learning Walk teams, comprised of the school principal, Deputy Superintendent and several departments representing Student Services, Special Education, English Language Learners, Fine Arts, and Athletics, have visited 90% of our schools at least twice as a group with more visits scheduled. Members of the New Bedford School Committee have also participated in some visits to observe schools in session.

The 90-minute visits are structured, so the school staff identifies the priority classroom 'lookfors' which are aligned to the school's strategic plan and is based on the district plan.

The observations focus on trends and patterns within each building and then expanding to see the similarities across all district schools. It is part of a holistic approach to gaining improved understanding of all learning environments in real-time in a way that is more personal and more fully student-

focused, Superintendent Anderson noted.

Most recently, the Elizabeth Carter Brooks Elementary School welcomed a Learning Walk. In noting that the visit highlights Brooks' initiative to emphasize its positive and welcoming culture, Principal Jenn Medeiros said that the learning takeaway is just as important from the perspective of students and staff.

"The benefits of the District Learning Walk vary depending who you talk to. For myself, it allows me to see the goals and initiatives that have been implemented within my school through the eyes of other educational leaders. They are able to give me objective feedback regarding what elements of my initiatives are going well and what needs to be strengthened.

For staff, it validates the hard work they are doing to impact student learning and growth each and every day. Most importantly, for students, it lets them see that what they are doing each day is important to their teacher, their principal, and to the district as a whole."

The learning walks have also included New Bedford High School. "It's an excellent opportunity to get direct real-time feedback from the team," said Headmaster Bernadette Coelho. "And the personal interaction fosters real collaboration across the board."