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What is an Equity Visit? (Adapted from Perry, G.S. Jr. & Richardson, J. (2022) *Equity Warriors: Creating Schools That Students Deserve*. Corwin. p. 50-51)

Equity visits are a variation on instructional rounds. Developed by Richard Elmore and his colleagues (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009), instructional rounds are based on medical rounds through which physician teams gather evidence and confer on their diagnoses and treatment. Instructional rounds are intended to gather evidence as objectively as possible on a predetermined problem of practice. The key to successful instructional rounds is objectivity. The evidence collected must be observed and the description specific. There is a time for interpretation after the evidence is reported without bias or our professional judgment. Providing just the facts creates a level playing field for the team so that everyone can contribute, and agreement on the evidence can precede decisions. Learning to be objective is easier to say than to do, and preparation for objective evidence gathering takes time.

Using the instructional round structure of problem of practice, observations, and decisions/actions, district leader equity visits focus on a specific equity goal as the problem of practice. An example of a problem of practice and look-fors that are specific to instructional improvement and equity is:

Do we have effective practices to support equity and access to learning goals and increased achievement of every student? Are our co-teaching classes (heterogeneous classes with one special education teacher and one content area teacher) effective?

- What types of co-teaching models are teachers using?
- How are both teachers differentiating instruction for individuals or small groups?
- What does it mean to effectively construct in co-teaching classrooms?
- To what extent do both teachers have an established role and contribute to instruction, management, assessments, and planning?
- To what extent do students respect each teacher's role in the classroom? (Roegman, Allen, Leverett, Thompson, & Hatch, 2019, p. 25).

While these questions may be helpful for school leaders to consider, the purpose of the equity visit protocol is for district equity warriors to better understand equity and instruction. The authors of *Equity Visits* describe a three-step protocol: Identify an equity focus such as the one above, collect and analyze evidence through an equity lens, and reflect on the next steps of district equity-focused work.

District leaders, not school leaders, drive each step in the process. Schools are the context where the evidence is collected that enables district leaders to consider systemic responses. School leaders do not identify the equity focus and do not participate in the visit except to arrange logistics, provide background, and answer questions. The visit is not about one school. Responses to challenges must apply to all schools and every student. Therefore, equity visits are conducted across schools in order to objectively collect data to inform the solution.

City, E. A., Elmore, R. F., Fiarman, S. E., & Teitel, L. (2009). *Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving teaching and learning*. Harvard Education Press.

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Roegman, R., Allen, D., Leverett, L., Thompson, S., & Hatch, T. (2019). *Equity visits: A new approach to supporting equity-focused school and district leadership*. Corwin.