

**Connery Elementary School**

**Video Facilitation Guide**

***Guiding Question:*** *What does the Connery story tell us about the importance of shared focus and practices as well as frequent and ongoing collegial communication as part of the sustainable improvement process?*

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Watch the video to see how the staff at [Connery Elementary School](https://youtu.be/EMvaM6_gOv0) utilized elements of Massachusetts’ four [Turnaround Practices](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-508.pdf) to make significant improvements. During your viewing, identify how Connery educators exemplified different aspects of each of the four turnaround practices as part of their daily routines of planning, instruction, and collaborative discussion.

**Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration *(Turnaround Practice 1)***

**Using teams, shared leadership, and a collaborative and trusting environment to accelerate improvement:**“We [in the vertical team] unpack standards, we talk about pedagogy, we talk about the initiatives that are happening in our building, we check in with one another, we share strategies, we build common language around certain content areas.” (Katia, 3:32)

**Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction *(Turnaround Practice 2)***

**The school is employing intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and**

**student-responsive instruction:** “By meeting daily (as a team) we have the benefit of

problem-solving right away, of finding some of those misconceptions and really digging right in and remediating it immediately.” (Joanne, 2:28)

**Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students *(Turnaround Practice 3)***

**Students are provided with instruction and interventions in direct response to their academic**

**needs, identified through focused analysis of student skill-specific assessments:** “The quick

check is usually a point in the lesson that we will kind of take an account of who seems to be on

track with us, and who might need some extra support at the end of the lesson or the following

day.” (Kerri, 5:13)

**School Climate and Culture *(Turnaround Practice 4)***

**School leadership established an organized community with a shared, collegial, and collective**

**focus and school-wide array of practices to effectively pursue the schools’ improvement**

**efforts:** “The vertical team is comprised of a team leader from each grade level, along with team leader from SPED department, our ESL department, our reading specialists, CITs and our math specialists. It’s quite a large team but we try to include everybody.” (Jim, 3:07)

**Detailed Reflection Questions.** The following sections of the video depict specific aspects of the work at Connery that positively influenced their sustainable improvement efforts. Take time to watch each segment then pause and discuss the questions provided.

* **Team structure.** (2:13-3:06, 3:25-3:54) At multiple points in the video, various staff talk about the work done by teams in the school. What impact do you think having the team structures in place has had on Connery’s success? What qualities do you think need to be present to make a team effective?
* **Academic standards.**  (4:00 – 4:52) There is a clear expectation that standards undergird the instruction at Connery. What is the value in being explicit with students about the standards being addressed in a lesson? What do you believe is the benefit of coding objectives with students?
* **Community held beliefs and practices.** (0:51-1:21, 5:32-6:42) Why is it important for all staff to be unified not only in their instructional focus but in their commitment to the sustainable improvement process? What types of activities and structures does Connery use to create that sense of community responsibility? How has their work extended beyond the school walls to include parents and families?

**Additional Reflections for Your Context**

* What strategies, insights, or specific actions from the video most resonate with you?
* What questions do you have about the video?
* What strategies or actions did you see in the video that you are already doing in your classroom, school, or district?
* What strategies or actions did you see that you could consider implementing in your classroom, school, or district?
* What are the next steps for your classroom, school, or district planning?

***Related Resources***

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| [Research on Effective Practices in School Turnaround](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-508.pdf) - Learn more about the four key practices that characterize effective sustainable improvement in Massachusetts schools. *(Note that Connery is featured on pages 55 - 61).*  [Sustainable Improvement Plan Guidance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html) - Resources for districts and schools on developing an effective sustainable improvement plan, including how to use data to identify school assets, challenges, and opportunities |