

Things to Notice on a School Visit

There's a lot going on at every school. You'll find a list of things to look for in order to help you focus on what you want to learn from your visit below.

IN THE CLASSROOM

THE SPACE

- How is the furniture configured?
- Can students easily interact and collaborate?
- Is there open space for gathering together?
- What's on the walls? Is student work displayed?
- Can you see individual differences in the work?
- Is the space cheerful and appealing?
- Are there books available in the classroom? Can students reach them?
- What "things" are in the room? Is it full of art supplies, pets, plants, science equipment; "sense of purposeful clutter"?

SIGHTS + SOUNDS

- Whose voices do you hear?
- Is the teacher's voice genuine and respectful?
- Do you hear a hum of activity and ideas being exchanged?
- Do the students look engaged?
- Are students working alone, in pairs or groups?
- How are they interacting with each other?
- Is the learning joyful?
- Where is the teacher? Can you find him among the students? Is she behind her desk?
- How do the students react to visitors? Are they warm and eager to share what they're doing?

AROUND THE SCHOOL

THE SPACE

- Is the overall atmosphere appealing? Is it a place where you would want to spend time?
- Does student work fill the hallways?
- Is there a school library? Is it well-stocked and comfortable?
- What is the condition of the bathrooms?
- If you get to peek at the faculty lounge, is it a warm and inviting place for staff to spend time?
- Is the school clean?

SIGHTS + SOUNDS

- How were you greeted? Is the staff welcoming toward visitors?
- Are students in the hallways greeted by name?
- Are adults actively engaged with supervising and facilitating recess and lunch?
- Do you feel a sense of community?
- Does the school feel like a safe place?

