
Leaders of Data Analysis

The primary responsibility of curriculum leaders is to develop the collective capacity of the organization to assure that all students are successful. One of the functions of these individuals' work to assure the capacity of the system and the success of the students is their collaborative leadership in use of data to inform, implement, monitor, and evaluate results-based decisions.

As leaders of data analysis we must design and implement a systems approach for effective use of data to inform decisions. Each building leader must be able to design and implement plans and initiatives informed by data. This requires a foundation in a technology system that allows access to timely and high-quality data, so that leaders can collect, analyze, use, and report data to ensure high student achievement and accountability.

Questions that we might consider as we assure building leaders have the skills to appropriately use data to increase the achievement and accountability might include, "Have we provided the supports, including the technology, protocols, and training, to our building leaders that allow them to . . .

- Continually assess the goals and adjust their building plans based on progress?
- Benchmark best practices?
- Use the technology effectively for data analysis?
- Disaggregate data to reveal gaps?
- Discuss progress with their teachers and community stakeholders?
- Use formative assessments to develop internal accountability for student learning?
- Use multiple data sources to monitor and evaluate which programs and practices work for which students?
- Teach their staff members effective data analysis and use?
- Hold themselves and their staff accountable for learning in their building?
- Share reports of student success in easy-to-understand formats with families?
- Involve students in the collection, analysis, and use of their own data?"

One of our first and most important jobs to achieve a system of accountability is to help our building leaders select and/or collect the appropriate data for the intended purpose. We must develop their skills in looking at the data of student demographics, perceptions, student learning, school processes and programs, and teachers' characteristics, behaviors, and professional learning. We must also help them in eliminating those data that are not useful in the decision or evaluating the impact. Without data-collection criteria, these building leaders will often become data rich but information poor.

The appropriate data sets then need to be summarized and formatted in a meaningful way that will allow the building leaders to analyze the information in order to address a specific problem or challenge – or show progress toward the elimination of the problem. Efforts made by you to develop the building leaders' skills in summarizing, formatting, and analyzing data will tremendously impact the capacity of the system and the leaders' belief in data to inform decisions.

It is just as important for the building leaders to know how to communicate compelling data sets to educate others about the current reality. Principals need to know how to use data to "tell their story" and engage their students, staff, and the community in the solution. By becoming evidence-based in their conversations with all stakeholders, building leaders are able to address the needed

changes, create a sense of urgency, determine improvement strategies, and celebrate progress toward eliminating the gap between the initial reality and the desired state.

As curriculum leaders, we must create a system of data collection and analysis to monitor the implementation and impact of improvement strategies at both the building and district levels. We are monitoring at the district level to identify pockets of success, the leading indicators, in order to identify, share, and develop best practices in all buildings. We are also seeking to identify gaps in learning and progress, the lagging indicators, in order to provide supports for identified challenges in the district and specific buildings. As leaders of data analysis, it is our obligation to develop the capacity of our leaders system-wide to look at results, processes, organizational development, and financial data – multiple data sets that impact our students' success.

We must support building leaders in assuring data are frequently used diagnostically by teachers and building leaders to refine goals and assessments, monitor progress of students, and continually improve instruction. We do this through data consultations with the principals. This demands clear expectations for use of data, protocols for collection and analysis of data, and modeling and feedback that increases their skills and develops their beliefs in the importance of the right data to make the best decisions.

Once the building leaders are skilled in the selection, collection, summarizing, and analysis of data, they can assist curriculum leads in developing the skills of their teachers and students in the use of data. This transparency in use of data creates a culture of safety and results in each stakeholder taking ownership in the success of students and their learning. They, too, will use the data consistently to diagnose instructional or organizational problems, weigh alternative courses of action, justify the chosen course of action, and use both formative and summative data to inform their practice and progress. Meaning and motivation for learning increase.

Data-informed leadership is the anchor for increased learning. Data become the tool for focusing learning and improving daily practice. As leaders of data analysis, we must be the captains for its regular and systemic use in our district. It is our responsibility to build a culture of inquiry and engage all educators in data-informed actions. It is our obligation to build the skills in others to frame, conduct, and interpret inquiry and subsequent actions based on data. Through the development of data and accountability literacy and data infrastructures, we shape learning and teaching for that learning. A tremendous obligation that results in tremendous rewards – highly educated students system-wide.

Data informed – all stakeholders in each and every building!