DOINGWHATWORKS

🔊 **Audio**
FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Ohio Decision Framework
Deborah Telfer, Ph.D., and Betsy Apolito • December 2009

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support
   Instructional Decision Making

Highlights

- The Ohio Decision Framework is a web-based tool used by districts in Stage 1 of the Ohio Improvement Process.
- Data are prepopulated into the tool to help districts conduct an in-depth needs assessment to identify the districts' most critical needs.
- Regional support teams and facilitators work with districts to develop a strategy to help districts implement the decision framework and improve instructional practice.

About the Interviewees

Deborah Telfer

Deborah Telfer is currently executive director of the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) Center for School Improvement, where she is responsible for the development and growth of Ohio's statewide system of support. She is also the liaison to the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, a joint effort between ODE and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Ohio's association for superintendents. The work of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council has resulted in the identification of essential practices for superintendents, district leadership teams, and building leadership

teams, and has provided the foundation for the development of the Ohio Improvement Process and associated tools, such as the Decision Framework. Prior to her work in the Center for School Improvement, Dr. Telfer was associate and interim director of ODE's Office for Exceptional Children. She has been with ODE since 1987.

Betsy Apolito

Betsy Apolito is the director of school improvement and the single point of contact for the Region 10 State Support Team at the Montgomery County Educational Service Center (ESC), in Dayton, Ohio. In additional to leading the State Support Team, Betsy is a member of Ohio Department of Education's State Level Design Team (SLDT). The SLDT is charged with the design and implementation of the Ohio Improvement Process. Betsy has worked collaboratively on the design of many of the data tools used by district and school leadership teams at the state and regional levels, including Ohio's Decision Framework, the Implementation Management and Monitoring Tool, and Measure Up.

Full Transcript

Deborah Telfer: I am Deborah Telfer. I am the executive director of the Center for School Improvement at the Ohio Department of Education.

The Decision Framework is a web-based application that serves as the major tool used by district and building leadership teams at what we have called Stage 1 of the Ohio Improvement Process. The data that are available through the decision framework application include aggregated state assessment data for all tested students, not only data for students who are accounted for state accountability purposes. There are also other data—such as discipline data; graduation, attendance, and dropout data; subscale data for reading and math; and kindergarten readiness assessment for literacy data—that are also prepopulated into the tool.

The Decision Framework is used by district and building leadership teams, and it helps teams have a more strategic, and collective, and often more honest conversation about where their biggest problems are. And as a decision-making aid, it helps districts to make more informed decisions based on what their data tell them—not on opinion or preference—about where to spend their time, their energy, their resources to make and sustain improvements in student performance. Once the district leadership team identifies the district's most critical needs, building leadership teams at the school level then use a building-level Decision Framework and they go through a similar process and analysis using that tool, this time focusing on the building's level of implementation and degree of concern in relation to district-identified priorities.

The Ohio Department of Education supports the use of the Decision Framework through ongoing professional development, through technical support, and continuous revision and refinement of the application. Ohio has trained over 500 regional facilitators, from state support teams and educational service centers in

every part of the state as well as district internal facilitators, in the use of the Decision Framework to assist districts in identifying and addressing their most pressing needs.

Betsy Apolito: This is Betsy Apolito. I am the director of school improvement and the single point of contact for the Region 10 State Support Team, and I work at Montgomery County Educational Service Center. We are located in Dayton, Ohio.

As a state support team consultant, my role with Dayton Public Schools is to help to develop a strategy for ensuring a systematic and coherent approach to build the capacity of Dayton Public Schools staff, central office personnel, teachers, community members in real ways that allow them to improve instructional practice on a districtwide basis. We work at looking at the data specifically through the Decision Framework. We lead the districts through identifying need, their high-need areas. We guide them through the development of a focused plan. And once they have those focused plans, they have goals, strategies, and actions at the district level. And then we also provide technical assistance to that district leadership team in aligning that same work at the building level. So this has really helped us to focus on taking a more narrow, focused look at where can we essentially help students and adults make the greatest change and improvement.

And what I think the most important thing about the Decision Framework is not the numbers; it's the questions that come out that are posed in the Decision Framework and the important discussions and dialogue around student-level academic data. But then through this process, it's really a closer laser look at the data, and it's about the *what* of the data and then it's about the *why* of the data. The Decision Framework really helps us take a look at the adults, and their effect on children, as well as the curricula and the other components that help us focus on where we will see the most significant change in adult implementation and student performance.