# DOINGWHATWORKS

## Providing Supports That Foster a Data-Driven Culture Within a School

January 2010

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

Practice: Data-Driven Culture

### Highlights

- All school and district staff need a thorough understanding of how data can be used to support instructional decision making. This understanding must then be combined with adequate knowledge and skills to use that data appropriately.
- Schools can provide such supports as a data facilitator or coach, structured time for collaboration, and professional development. These supports can help schools build capacity among all staff for data use.
- Structured time can be set aside for staff to collaboratively analyze and interpret their students' achievement data and to talk about instructional changes. This time also can be used for professional development on data use.
- In order for staff to learn to use data in a way that is consistent with school goals, schools and districts need to provide ongoing opportunities for professional development.

## Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Providing Supports That Foster a Data-Driven Culture.


Slide 2: Understanding and knowledge

All school and district staff need a thorough understanding of how data are used to support instructional decision making. This understanding must then be combined with adequate knowledge and skills to use that data appropriately.

This understanding and knowledge help support a culture in which staff use data thoughtfully and consistently to make instructional decisions and to help students meet their learning goals.


Slide 3: Essential elements

Schools can provide such supports as a data facilitator or coach, structured time for collaboration, and professional development. These supports can help schools build capacity among all staff for data use.


Slide 4: Facilitation

In order to encourage staff to use data effectively, schools can provide a facilitator or coach with expertise in using data and the ability to train and encourage other staff.

Data facilitators can be district staff members who support multiple schools, full-time teachers who provide coaching to other staff, or a dedicated site-level staff person who supports all teachers in that school.


Slide 5: Facilitation duties

Data facilitators' duties can include:
   -Modeling data use and interpretation using examples that relate to the school's learning goals,
   -Demonstrating how a data-driven diagnosis of student learning issues applies to daily classroom practices,
   -Assisting staff with data interpretation by preparing data reports and related materials, and
   -Training staff on how to use data to improve their instructional practices and, by extension, student
     achievement.

It's important not to establish an over-reliance on the data facilitators. They do not bear the only responsibility for data interpretation and analysis. They work best when they are used to help staff obtain

the knowledge and skills they need in order to use data appropriately. Data facilitators complement the existing data-literacy capacity and seek to extend that capacity.

Slide 6: Staff collaboration

Encouraging teachers to work collaboratively with data can highlight achievement patterns across grade levels, departments, or schools. A school culture that encourages collaboration in this way can promote consistency in instructional and assessment practices and expectations.

Data meetings occur most frequently between small groups of teachers in the same grade level or subject area. Other times, these meetings may also include a data facilitator or other team members. Schools may want teachers to collaborate across grade levels to vertically align data use.

Slide 7: Structured time

Structured time can be set aside for staff to collaboratively analyze and interpret their students' achievement data and to talk about instructional changes. This time also can be used for professional development on data use.

To help teachers use collaborative time productively, it's important to set an agenda for the meetings that focuses on the most current and relevant data. Teachers can use this time to follow a cycle of inquiry and to establish an action plan that delineates the needed changes to instruction.

Slide 8: Targeted professional development

In order for staff to learn to use data in a way that is consistent with school goals, schools and districts need to provide ongoing opportunities for professional development.

For most staff, professional development can focus on how to apply data to their daily work for everything from understanding patterns in assessment results to instructional planning, rather than on how the system works.

Slide 9: Professional development opportunities

Staff will need to develop new skill sets, ranging from data entry to data analysis to team leadership.

Professional development opportunities could include:
   -Understanding the reporting capabilities of the data system
   -Avoiding common mistakes in data analysis and interpretation

-Using data to answer questions about student achievement

-Using data to modify teaching and learning practices

-Fostering a culture of data-based decision making

Slide 10: Easing into a new culture

Creating staff confidence in, and comfort with, a new data system can increase the chance that data will be used regularly and effectively to raise student achievement.

Training should be implemented in small doses and occur close to the time that the data system is implemented, or before any system enhancements go into effect. In this way, staff do not become overwhelmed by training sessions and can use their new skills shortly after training.

Slide 11: Specific training needs

It can sometimes be difficult to find professional development opportunities that are aligned with the specific needs of the school. With the assistance of the data team, schools can examine their needs and discuss them with their professional development provider.

If a session cannot be tailored to the needs of the school or district, a "train the trainers" model can be considered. The principal can select staff members to participate in trainings on topics or skills relative to data-based decision making. These staff can then adapt the training to fit the needs of the school or district and train other staff members as necessary.

Slide 12: Securing resources for success

Data-based decision making benefits all subject areas and grades. Principals and district-level administrators can work to secure the fiscal and human resources necessary to ensure that staff understand how to interpret and interact with data. Dedicating resources to data literacy will help support a culture of data use, enabling educators to use data to support instructional decision making.

Slide 13: Learn more

To learn more about Providing Supports That Foster a Data-Driven Culture, please see the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.