



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Developing and Maintaining a Districtwide Data System

January 2010

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support
Instructional Decision Making

Practice: Districtwide Data System

Highlights

- Districts need to implement a high-quality data system that integrates data together for easy reporting and analysis to a range of audiences, from district administrators and specialists to school principals and teachers.
- A properly implemented system is necessary to give all stakeholders the information they need to improve student achievement. For a data system to meet such a wide variety of needs, it is essential to involve a variety of stakeholders in the system's planning, design, and implementation.
- Once the district determines how it will procure a data system, district personnel need to plan a staged rollout and professional development opportunities to prepare staff without overwhelming them with new technology.
- Professional development can also be differentiated based on individuals' skill levels, organizational role and responsibilities, and instructional focus.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Developing and Maintaining a Districtwide Data System.

Slide 2: Moving toward a better system

Many districts collect and work with data, but often it is fragmented, with four to six different systems using different protocols, vocabulary, and data structures. As a result, data often have large gaps and many inaccuracies and are challenging to use for instructional decision making.

To overcome these challenges, districts need to implement a high-quality data system that integrates data together for easy analysis and reporting to a range of audiences, from district administrators and specialists to school principals and teachers. A properly implemented system is necessary to give all stakeholders the information they need to improve student achievement.

Slide 3: Involving all stakeholders

For a data system to meet such a wide variety of needs, it's essential to involve a variety of stakeholders in the system's planning, design, and implementation. Districts can establish a data system advisory council or similar committee of individuals comprising representatives from key stakeholder groups, such as administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students. In this way, a variety of perspectives and needs can be considered when a district seeks to implement a data system.

Slide 4: Council responsibilities

The advisors can meet regularly to help the district make key decisions regarding the selection and implementation of a districtwide data system.

Responsibilities may include

- Developing roles and structures to oversee the district's commitment to data quality and use,
- Communicating to staff the importance of data in making instructional decisions,
- Providing guidance about the requirements and design of the data system,
- Overseeing system development,
- Serving as the liaison between the different stakeholder groups, soliciting feedback about concerns and possible improvements to the system, and

- Identifying professional development needs.

Slide 5: System requirements

First, the district needs to determine the system requirements. Each school can provide representatives who can work with the district council to communicate their school's vision for the data system's requirements and desired functions. The district can then integrate these needs into its larger plan.

The council will also need to consider factors such as

- Access and data security,
- Bandwidth requirements,
- Identification codes for students and teachers,
- Consolidation of old or legacy systems,
- Initial and maintenance costs,
- Data storage, quality, timeliness, and reporting,
- Formats for data sharing across systems, and
- Professional development needed for implementation.

Slide 6: Custom or premade systems

The council will need to weigh all these concerns against the resources available to the district (both human and financial) and decide whether to adopt a premade data system from a vendor or develop one internally. Either approach may have hidden costs, such as the time required to build a customized system or the need to purchase add-ons that will allow a vendor package to meet all the defined system requirements.

Slide 7: Staged rollouts

Once the district determines how it will procure a data system, district personnel need to plan a staged rollout and professional development opportunities to prepare staff without overwhelming them with new technology.

Staged rollouts and pilot tests give staff a chance to become comfortable with the system, and provide opportunities for feedback early enough in the process that necessary adjustments can easily be made. Ideally, the rollout plan would be long-range and include timelines for maintenance, training, and end-user support. Learning activities should be available that are tightly linked with specific tasks that users will

need to accomplish as soon as the system goes live. For example, teachers want to know how to access benchmark assessment results and produce reports in visual formats such as tables or graphs. On the other hand, the attendance monitor might need to access daily attendance rates and produce reports that show attendance trends for individual students.

Slide 8: Professional development and training

Professional development can also be differentiated based on individuals' skill levels, organizational roles and responsibilities, and instructional focus.

Topics could include data transparency and safety, system uses and capabilities, and the use of data for modifying instructional practices.

Users may require ongoing technical assistance and additional trainings when system refinements and enhancements are introduced.

Slide 9: Allaying fears and resistance

A data system may seem like an unnecessary luxury to some. But for districts that understand the powerful impact that coordinated, comprehensive use of student data can have on educational improvement goals, a data system needs to be a high priority. To allay concerns over high costs, the plan needs to describe how a data system supports the district's goals, and in a way that clearly demonstrates why a data system is needed.

Slide 10: Learn More

To learn more about Developing and Maintaining a Districtwide Data System, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.

