

Using Data to Improve Learning and Teaching

I. Continuous Improvement is the Mindset

Both leaders and teachers embrace a variety of behaviors and attitudes that foster this mindset. In doing so, educators open themselves up to growing as practitioners in a challenging field.

- The quality of teaching is improved through ongoing, focused effort.
- Problems, challenges, and mistakes are viewed as an opportunity for learning and growth and leaders provide school staff members the support and the time they need to improve.
- Indicators of student success are viewed as formative feedback for improving teacher practice
- Leaders value, solicit, and use the perspectives of teachers who base their ideas on research and relevant data.
- Innovation based on research and data is encouraged and supported.

II. Collaborative Inquiry is the Process

The school is community of learners where knowledge is generated and shared. Teachers and leaders sustain a comfortable, democratic, non-threatening environment that affirms differences, multiple perspectives, and experiences.

- Collaborative Structures (e.g., cross grade and grade-level professional learning communities, family engagement teams, data teams, and leadership teams) promote sharing of information, common values, planning, and a focus on the needs of all students.
- School leaders value, promote, and support collaboration by consistently allocating uninterrupted time for teams to meet.
- To ensure the success of each student, teachers fine-tune their instruction through ongoing reflection of their practice.
- Teachers routinely seek advice and assistance from colleagues to improve their practice.

III. Data is the Driver

Schools use a wide variety of data for the purpose of transforming practice rather than as an opening for criticism. Data are the catalyst for change, not just an acknowledgment of success or failure. Educators are guided and supported to rely on the power of data to reveal disparities and to engage in open and honest dialogue.

- Data is used to guide instruction and meet individual student learning needs.
- Schools have an established process for conducting a school-wide data inventory and analysis. This information is systematically used to guide decision-making.
- Schools utilize a wide variety of data sources, including but not limited to academic assessments (formative, benchmark, summative), promotion/ retention, attendance, discipline referrals, school demographics, staff and parent perceptions, special education placements, curriculum alignment, extended learning opportunities, and family involvement.
- School staff participates in on-going learning opportunities designed to provide deeper understanding and use of data and to guide collaborative work on designing and interpreting assessments.
- Grade level teams/PLCs meet regularly to analyze student data by class, subject matter, and subgroups. Teams consistently attend to the performance of all subgroups with responsive plans of support and accelerate learning.
- Grade level teams/PLCs develop and use the results from formative, benchmark, and summative assessments to determine if essential learning goals are met and to guide teaching and learning.

Citation:

Ritchie, S. (2013). *Using data to improve teaching and learning*. Chapel Hill, NC: FirstSchool.