



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Establishing a Clear Vision for Schoolwide Data Use

January 2010

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making
Practice: Vision for Data Use

Highlights

- A strong culture of data use in a school can ensure that data-based decisions are made frequently, consistently, and appropriately. This culture cannot develop, however, without a clear vision, developed among all staff, for schoolwide data use.
- A data team can clarify the school's vision for data use, model the use of data to make instructional decisions, and encourage and support other school staff to do the same.
- The schoolwide plan developed by the data team should clearly articulate how the school will use data to support school-level goals for improving student achievement. It should reflect the concerns and needs uncovered through the data teams' discussions and other staff input.
- A crucial element to establishing a clear vision and using data effectively is having a common language around its use.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Establishing a Clear Vision for Schoolwide Data Use.

Slide 2: Description of practice

A strong culture of data use in a school can ensure that data-based decisions are made frequently, consistently, and appropriately. This culture cannot develop, however, without a clear vision, developed among all staff, for schoolwide data use.

Slide 3: Key elements

A data team can support the development of a clear vision by:

- Providing consistent leadership,
- Leading the development of a schoolwide plan for using data for instructional decision making, and
- Creating a common language for data use, shared by staff, teachers, and administrators alike.

Slide 4: Data team

The task of a data team is to clarify the school's vision for data use, model the use of data to make instructional decisions, and encourage and support other school staff to do the same.

This team can include stakeholders who represent the entire school community. This breadth of representation serves to ensure that the data system that is developed meets everyone's needs, provides opportunities for collaboration between grades and subject areas, and makes it more likely that all staff will adopt the practices established by the team.

Ideally, some members would have experience with—or have a desire to learn—data analysis and interpretation. Staff with an interest in data-driven instructional decision making and/or strong leadership and motivation skills can make ideal data team members.

Slide 5: Leadership: guidance

A data team provides leadership to the rest of the school through guidance, education, encouragement, and modeling.

The team guides the school staff on using the data system, and helps build staff capacity to use data in their everyday decision making. It's important for all staff to understand how the system can help everyone make informed decisions based on data.

Slide 6: Education

The data team can help educate staff by providing resources and support for data analysis and interpretation, such as information about professional development sessions.

Slide 7: Encouragement

When the data team is formed, members of the team should regularly interact with school staff about data and its uses, providing encouragement to those who don't immediately see how the system helps them, or who are reluctant to use data.

Slide 8: Modeling

Data team members also need to clarify the school's vision for data use and model how data is used to make instructional decisions.

However, it's important to note that it is not the role of the data team to hold staff accountable for data use, to supervise data activities, or to provide expert advice on the use of data.

Slide 9: Schoolwide plan and school goals

The schoolwide plan developed by the data team should clearly articulate how the school will use data to support school-level goals for improving student achievement. It should reflect the concerns and needs uncovered through the data team's discussions and other staff input.

The team should revisit the school's goals to ensure that they are attainable, measurable, and relevant. If the team determines that the current school goals don't meet these criteria, and are therefore incompatible with effective data use, the team may wish to establish short- and medium-term goals that do.

Slide 10: Schoolwide plan specifics

A data plan can:

- Define specific actions for using data to make instructional decisions,

- Identify which staff and team members are responsible for carrying out specific actions,
- Set timelines for executing each action, and
- Show the links between data use and the school's long-term goals.

Slide 11: Common language

A crucial element to both buy-in and effective use of data is having a common language around its use. Some educators may think of data simply as test scores, whereas others define it as any available information about a student. The data team can work with staff to develop a common language, minimizing misunderstandings and conflicting assumptions.

Terms relating to education in general, and data use in particular, can be defined. Such terms include *achievement, learning, data, evidence, and collaboration*.

Slide 12: Challenges with time and interest

All of this, of course, requires careful planning and support from the principal and the district in order to foster and maintain a data culture. Even with support, however, forming a data team, creating a plan, and fostering a new culture can be a daunting task.

School staff may not have time to develop an additional plan for how to use data. The school may decide to integrate data into other school improvement or reform plans that already exist.

Alternately, a school may find that no one is qualified (or wants) to be on the data team. Administrators may need to work directly with potential candidates to promote enthusiasm for the process.

Slide 13: Challenges with burnout

If a school does have existing qualified staff, questions or requests for assistance may quickly overwhelm them. It is important for principals and district leaders to protect people's time by clearly defining roles and responsibilities. Principals can also encourage all members of the data team to train other educators in using and interpreting data, reducing the need for staff to approach the team with routine questions.

Phasing data use into the entire school can help prevent staff burnout, deepen staff data literacy, and encourage schoolwide support and implementation of the data-based decision-making process.

Slide 14: Learn more

To learn more about Establishing a Clear Vision for Schoolwide Data Use, please see the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.