DOINGWHATWORKS

Audio
FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

You Can't Hide From Data

Norview High School, Virginia • December 2009

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

Highlights

- The principal at Norview High School has established a high degree of accountability among staff by monitoring data often.
- Teachers often ask themselves if they are helping students be successful.
- Staff constantly ask questions about data to improve instruction and student achievement.

About the Site

Norview High School

Norfolk, VA

Demographics

59% Black

30% White

 3% Asian

 3% Hispanic

42% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Norview High School staff maintain a data-driven culture and hold each other accountable for using data to support instructional decision making. Teachers work in content area teams to enact a cycle of instructional improvement. The cycle includes the following steps:

- Develop a database of test items
- Construct unit tests for progress monitoring
- Examine teaching strategies
- Make adjustments to instruction to improve teaching and learning

Full Transcript

I am Marjorie Stealey, principal of Norview High School, in Norfolk, Virginia.

Because we are constantly in the classroom, we are constantly talking about instruction, we are constantly talking about and looking at data and having instructional conversations in this building, there is a high degree of accountability both from our district with the principals, as well as the principals and the teachers. And so we are very reflective about, are we doing the job that benefits the students, are we helping our students to be able to demonstrate an understanding of material, and have we fostered the ability, collectively, for students to be successful? And so it's not just about the teacher, but have *we* done a good job—the administration, principals, department chairmen—have we all done a good job supporting the teacher so that the teacher can deliver the material so the students can demonstrate an understanding of the material?

When we first started to look at data, it really was rather an eye-opener. We looked at it every which way, and we saw disaggregated data, we saw the data from all 11 of the state tests from that first year. Looking at data is like looking into the window of a classroom. It really started a conversation about what we needed to do in this building. And it's really all connected. Instruction should be the heart of a school. And if you want to improve SAT scores, if you want to improve AP scores, if you want to improve numbers in these classes, if you want more kids to go to college, it's all about improving instruction. When we came together as a school and made a committed effort that we were going to hold each other accountable for improving instruction, we became better teachers, better listeners, better instructors, better counselors, better principals because we were all working together and you can't hide from data. It wasn't pretty. Oftentimes we disagreed, but now we can say that we are constantly looking for answers, and most of the time, we know the questions to ask. Not always do we know how to fix it, but at least we know the questions to ask about data. And I think if you know the questions to ask, there should be someone out there who knows the answers. And so, in this building, by constantly asking questions, we have become a better school.