



## Why is Using Data Important in the Implementation of High School Redesign?

Educational change is a highly complex process. The move toward more student centered approaches at the high school level has prompted educational leaders to reflect on current practices and examine data pertaining to their school communities, in order to increase student engagement and success. With educational leaders making decisions to change structures, pedagogy, leadership capacity or cultures within their communities, data is often used to drive decisions and actions to create meaningful changes to support student learning.

*"To choose data is also to choose perspective... Varied data offer varied lenses on the world of learning."*

- Laura Lipton

For some, data informed decision making and practice may require both a change in mindset and a change in the culture of our school or district. The extent of data collection, use and interpretation is often limited to Accountability Pillar data and specifically, the items aimed at measuring High School Achievement. While the Accountability Pillar is an excellent place to start, High School Redesign requires schools to balance student achievement and student engagement by asking different questions around our current data use and broadening the use of data within our schools. Triangulation of data, or using data from a variety of sources, establishes a higher degree of confidence in our conclusions. When used effectively, various data sources can provide specific information regarding the school context that can direct changes to structures, pedagogy, leadership capacity or culture. Data can be used to inform decisions and actions to create meaningful changes to support student learning.

*"Prodding, poking, and inquiring into what's going on, what it's going on, and whether it is satisfactory motivates change."*

- Laura Lipton

## How do you use Data in the Implementation of High School Redesign?

According to "A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions", successful implementation is possible when education stakeholders share responsibility to address the seven essential conditions – shared vision, leadership, research and evidence, resources, teacher professional growth, time, and community engagement. Data use in High School Redesign must be framed around a sound, collective understanding of a school's vision. Understanding what matters to a school community helps to better inform data use in the redesign process.

### To consider:

- What matters to us?
- Where are we trying to get?
- What does it look like?
- How will we know?

### Tell Them From Me:

*The Tell Them From Me Survey is a popular tool in MFWHSR schools. Administered by "The Learning Bar", the Tell Them From Me Survey allows for the collection and analysis of data around student engagement in schools. For more information visit: <http://www.thelearningbar.com/>*

Schools across the province have used a myriad of data tools to gauge where their school is at with regards to the foundational principles and assess the success of their implementation practices.

*Surveys* allow administrators and staff to gather a breadth of school data. All too often, however, the data collection process is left at this initial step. An integral piece of our data collection process is using the information obtained as an opportunity to delve deeper. From the initial surveys, the question should become, "what resonates with us from these results and what do we want to find out more about?"

*Focus groups* centered around a specific topic provide administrators and staff with an opportunity to delve deeper and tease out specific themes and understanding. Focus groups also become a vital piece in the engagement process of MFWHSR as they increase meaningful opportunities for student, parent and staff involvement in the change process.

*"Effective plans include clear outcomes, measurable criteria for success, the necessary action steps, and a data-driven monitoring system for determining short and long term goal achievement."*

-Laura Lipton

## The Data Inquiry Cycle:

The *National Forum on Education Statistics*. (2012). Geier, R. and Smith, S. (2012). *Capacity* suggests that effectively using data to drive school change is a cyclical process.

A variety of models for effective data use exist. While some features differ, there is a significant amount of agreement on the basic steps. These are outlined below:



### 1. Seek Information:

#### Questions to consider:

- What do I have vs. what data do I need? (Recognize when information is needed to inform a decision and direct action).
- What is the area of concern?
- What is the critical question?
- What data exists pertaining to this area of concern?
- What are the “gaps” that exist in current data?

### 2. Access and Gather Data:

#### Questions to consider:

- What data might be relevant?
- How will I access the relevant data?
- What data are available at different levels (classroom, school, district, and province)?
- What data sources do you have or need to collect related to your questions/issue?

#### •Examples:

- *Accountability Pillar*
- *PATs / DIPs/SLAs*
- *Tell Them From Me*
- *District/School Assessments*
- *District/School Surveys*
- *Demographic Information - SIS*

### 3. Analyze and Interpret Data

#### Questions to consider:

- What skills and tools do I need to analyze the data?
- What does the data tell me?
- What do we observe in the data? What patterns do we notice?
- What inferences or conclusions can we make?
- What new questions do we have?

### 4. Act

#### Questions to consider:

- What are my conclusions from the data analysis?
- What are the root causes that might have led to the outcomes?
- What will I do?
- What changes or action steps will enable you to achieve the outcomes?

### 5. Evaluate

#### Questions to consider:

- What effects did our actions have?
- What are the next steps?
- How effectively has the initial issue been resolved?
- What new concerns have arisen?

#### Additional Resources:

**Bernhardt, V. (2013).** *Data Analysis for Continuous School Improvement* (3rd Edition). New York: Routledge.

**Lipton, L., and Wellman, B. (2012).** *Got Data? Now What? Creating and Leading Cultures of Inquiry* Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.

**Ronka, D, Geier, R., and Marciniak, M. (2010).** *A Practical Framework for Building a Data-Driven District or School: How a Focus on Data Quality, Capacity, and Culture Supports Data-Driven Action to Improve Student Outcomes.* Boston, MA: Public Consulting Group.

For more information on student engagement in the data analysis cycle contact:

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