Developing a School-wide Database

Why go this route?
Because with a school-wide database, you can...
- Create a focused direction for change accompanied by realistic goals.
- Compare how different groups of students are achieving.
- Reflect on which instructional strategies are working best.

Your database provides a current baseline against which to measure and monitor the effectiveness of changes you think will help.

You’ll know you’ve arrived when...
- Teachers review instructional strategies in comparison with the results they are getting and make data-based decisions about which to keep or change.
- A member of your leadership team is able to help teachers understand and incorporate the use of assessment data in planning instruction.
- You can use data to align and maximize resources to impact student achievement.
- You have a school-wide system of complete, easily retrievable and organized student-based achievement information that is accessible electronically and easily manipulated.

Construction Zone

It’s about TIME
- 1-2 decision-making meetings
- 1-3 meetings to enlist broad support (See Mi-Map Packet 4:1 “Whetting Your School’s Appetite for Data”)
- 2-6 months to collect and organize data
- 1-2 data-review meetings to sketch out responses
- 1 parent review meeting
- 1-2 reflection/wrap-up meetings to explore implications.

Potential COSTS
- $50 - $200 for supplies (software, printer cartridges etc.) to support a simple electronic database from which reports can be generated
- Optional professional facilitation to increase staff understanding and use of data ($400-$2000 per day depending on presenter)
- Resources to pay for data entry, analysis and display will vary. Schools have managed with volunteers who work with data in lieu of committee assignments. Others earmarked $5000 for a part-time data entry person. Still others have made data a full-time responsibility.
The Process

A step-by-step guide to developing a school-wide database.

NOTE: Steps marked with a green dot are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

1. Make decisions about the framework for your school-wide database. This is probably the work of the school improvement team or the building’s leadership team. Decision-making should be shared widely and the following questions should be considered:
   a. What data do you want to collect? (See INSERT A and B for Step 1)
   b. When should each kind of data be collected? Who should collect it? (See INSERT C for Step 1)
   c. Who should organize the data and maintain the database? (See INSERT D for Step 1)
   d. What do we need to purchase to support data collection/organization? How will we pay? (See INSERT E for Step 1)

2. Enlist employees to participate in the data collection process:
   a. Check their interest/willingness. (INSERT for Step 2 offers an optional survey) and work to increase it if necessary. (See Mi-Map Packet 4:1 “Whetting Your School’s Appetite for Data”)
   b. Distribute the draft data-collection design developed in INSERT C for Step 1 and take feedback seriously.
   c. Establish clear calendar deadlines for when people are to complete steps, reconvene to review and discuss results and make decisions about interventions.

3. Support key people while they carry out tasks.
   a. Ensure that they have the resources they need (time, space, equipment and materials). (See INSERT A for Step 3 for thinking about space). INSERT B for Step 3 is a classroom log for recording student achievement data.
   b. Monitor timelines and nudge cheerfully when necessary.
   c. Preview data to ensure accuracy.

4. Meet to review assessment data, discuss the results, and make decisions about probable interventions.
   a. Use a disciplined protocol for discussing observations. (See INSERT A for Step 4)
   b. Write up conclusions. (See INSERT B for Step 4 for poster format)
   c. Agree on responses to any data reviewed. (INSERT C for Step 4 offers a planning tool)

5. Plan for parental review of student achievement data. INSERT for Step 5 shows a format one Michigan school uses for parent teacher conference discussion.

6. Integrate conclusions into future school improvement planning. Use INSERT for step 6 for an overview of a collaborative approach for creating and using a school-wide database.

7. Establish a data collection schedule (for the beginning, middle and end of each school year) to monitor student achievement and whatever you choose as important contributing factors (attitude, demographic, process).
Getting more mileage from developing a school-wide database

How setting up a building-wide database benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

- School-wide databases help to meet ESEA’s requirement for broad collection of information on individual student performance.
- Databases that link students’ test scores, the length of time they have been enrolled in a given school, and graduation records over a number of years are endorsed by ESEA.

**State Accreditation System**

- In brief, Michigan’s accreditation system measures student achievement with multiple indicators and multiple years of data. School-wide databases help to document student progress.

**Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI)**

This packet will help as you review and analyze many types of data collected throughout the continuous school improvement planning process.
Resources

**Books, Articles, Websites**

*Designing and Using Databases for School Improvement*

*The Results Fieldbook* and *Results: Key to Continuous School Improvement.)*

*Education Commission of the States*

*Using Data to Improve Student Achievement*

Wahlstrom’s thinking is invaluable in explaining how to collect, organize, analyze and use data for practical decision-making.

*Align the Design: A Blueprint for School Improvement*

“Part Digital Training, Part Human Touch”

*“Student Achievement Data: Holding Teachers Accountable”*
Dubrovich, M, *Principal* 81.4: 30-33.

*“Self-graphing to Success: Computerized Data Management”*

*“Digging for Data”*

*Data4SS Data for Student Success*
http://data4ss.org/

This site contains a wealth of information and resources for helping schools build a culture of using data.

*MI School Data*
http://www.mischooldata.org/

MI School Data is your window to a wealth of data on Michigan’s public school education system.

**People**

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

**For more information, contact**

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education Improvement and Innovation
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment and Accountability
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood and Family Services
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation and Teacher Certification
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services
517-373-9433

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