

Indicator: The school's Leadership Team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregate classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs. (45)

Explanation: Student performance data is typically disaggregated by sub-groups; for example race, ethnicity, gender, income, special education, bilingual/ELL, Section 504 plans, Homeless/McKinney Vento Act, migrant. Classroom observation data may be aggregated to show patterns of professional practice across the faculty. Both of these data sources are important for planning professional development, and the Leadership Team is the ideal decision-making body for planning professional development.

Questions: Does your Leadership Team consider both disaggregated student outcome data and data on patterns of professional practice to determine professional development needs and plan appropriate professional development?

Finding time for school leaders to meet is not easy, but essential. The Leadership Team is positioned to take a broad view of the data available to them and to make decisions on the focus and direction of the school. They can assess where there are strengths to be celebrated and weaknesses that need shoring up. Professional development can be a huge drain on resources (time and money) if it is not well thought out and implemented. The Leadership team must use all available information in order to make wise decisions on where best to use those resources. Professional development should be directly tied to classroom observations and analysis of student learning data. An IES study of successful school turnarounds (2008) found that turnaround schools considered data at three levels: at the school level to focus on areas that needed schoolwide improvement to meet adequate yearly progress, at the classroom level to focus on teachers' instructional strengths and weaknesses, and at the student level to focus on instructional needs of individual students" (p. 14-15).

Simply sharing the data with instructional staff does not necessarily mean that change is imminent. Levin (2012) writes, "A further important caution is that assessment and data do not tell people what to do next. It is important to know, say, that our fourth graders are not doing well in expository writing, but that does not tell the staff what to do to generate improvement. The latter requires work to review the research, share and test new practices, and help teachers integrate better practice into their classrooms in a sustainable way...Given how critical effective professional learning is, and how much time and other resources PD involves, we cannot continue to support activities that do not produce significant results" (p. 107 & 126). Elmore (2000) states that "if the purpose of leadership is the improvement of teaching practice and performance, then the skills and knowledge that matter are those that bear on the creation of settings for learning focused on clear expectations for instruction" (p. 20)

References and Resources

- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute.
- Herman, R., Dawson, P., Dee, T., Greene, J., Maynard, R., Redding, S., & Darwin, M. (2008). *Turning around chronically low-performing schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Marzano, R. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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