

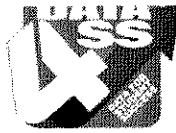


Building a Culture  
Of  
Quality Data



## Roles and Responsibilities in Building a Culture of Quality Data

Role	Key Responsibility In building a culture of quality data	Key Questions That the role should ask	Data Mining Strategy How the role gets at the key questions
Teacher			
Technologist/Data Specialist			
Principal			
Media Specialist			
Director			
Superintendent			
Parent			
Board Member			



## Roles and Responsibilities in Building a Culture of Quality Data (key)

Role	Key Responsibility In building a culture of quality data	Key Questions That the role should ask	Data Mining Strategy How the role gets at the key questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach content</li> <li>Identify gaps</li> <li>Adjust instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are students meeting learning objectives? If not, what are the gaps?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Data 4SS to identify students who, on the past MEAP, scored at the following proficiency levels – low 2, 3 and 4. Further investigate these students to identify gaps in their learning. Likewise, identify students whose proficiency is in the high level 1.</li> <li>Use both diagnostic and formative assessments to chart students' current level of achievement and growth throughout the year</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technologist/Data Specialist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with team to mine data</li> <li>Ensure data is accessible</li> <li>Assist teachers in integrating using 21st century skills in lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the team have access to and ability to use data analysis tools?</li> <li>Is the data complete?</li> <li>Who is responsible for each data set?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide access to the Data 4ss inquiry tool.</li> <li>Determine how to best provide PD to administrators and teachers in the use of Data 4SS inquiry tool and resources.</li> <li>Plan for continued support of both the Data 4ss inquiry tool as well as data analysis resources.</li> <li>Provide PD to staff who input the data to ensure data quality.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage collaboration between all stakeholders</li> <li>Make regular time for collaboration</li> <li>Model by collaborating with other principals, especially feeder buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are teachers adjusting instruction based on formative assessments?</li> <li>Are teachers sharing instructional and data mining strategies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the "culture" of your building.</li> <li>Plan for developing or supporting a culture of quality data in your building (Professional Learning Communities).</li> <li>Become proficient in the use of Data 4SS inquiries and PD resources. Plan for use of data on a regular basis at staff meetings, grade level/department meetings, SI meetings, etc.</li> <li>Expect staff to become proficient in the use of Data 4SS inquiries and data analysis in order to improve student achievement.</li> <li>Expect staff to use data to inform their instruction</li> <li>Implement data conferencing with staff members.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media Specialist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist teachers in designing well rounded lessons with 21st century resources and critical thinking skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do teachers have access and skill to use resources appropriately?</li> <li>Are students thinking critically?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist teachers and curriculum staff by providing access to curricular resources needed based on data</li> <li>Provide professional development on the use of 21st century skills that support the identified areas of student achievement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure principals and teachers are aware of curriculum and that the curriculum is aligned to standards and expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the curriculum complete?</li> <li>Are teachers teaching to the curriculum</li> <li>Are principals instructional leaders?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Data 4SS to study building and district scores Analysis should lead you the identification of curriculum gaps, alignment issues, resource issues, instructional issues, etc.</li> <li>Further analysis should help you identify subgroup issues. At this point, asking questions that will help you dig deeper into the subgroup may allow you to uncover practices that are standing in the way of student growth.</li> <li>Information from your data analysis should help you determine PD needed by staff members</li> <li>Determine how you will hold principals accountable for the use of Data 4SS and its resources to improve student achievement in their buildings</li> </ul>



Role	Key Responsibility In building a culture of quality data	Key Questions That the role should ask	Data Mining Strategy How the role gets at the key questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign resources, including funding, to support a culture of quality data (professional development, data tools, curriculum resources)</li> <li>• Ensure data quality by reviewing data collection processes</li> <li>• Review policies for alignment with data permission and protection needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are buildings forming professional learning communities?</li> <li>• Are all buildings and departments aligned to our vision/mission?</li> <li>• Does our vision/mission support a culture of quality data?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement data conferencing with administrators. Expect regular updates on student achievement/growth.</li> <li>• Determine evidence that you will accept that demonstrates effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities in buildings.</li> <li>• Determine evidence that you will accept that demonstrates building alignment to district vision and mission.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist student in areas of focus identified by school</li> <li>• Understand reports provided by schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does my student need more help?</li> <li>• How can I help my student?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect to see all data related to your child's achievement in the core content areas. This will help you understand what your child actually knows and where, if any, gaps exist. Do not accept grades as the only means of expressing your child's achievement.</li> <li>• Clarify data with the teacher as necessary.</li> <li>• Request strategies to help your child at home.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask leadership for data to support validity of solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are our policies supportive of a culture of quality data?</li> <li>• Are our budgets supportive of a culture of quality data?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect regular updates to the Board on student achievement/growth.</li> <li>• Determine evidence that you will accept that demonstrates effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities in buildings and at the district level.</li> <li>• Determine evidence that you will accept that demonstrates building alignment to district vision and mission.</li> </ul>



## Characteristics of a Culture of Quality Data

Setting	Observations
District Data	
School Wide Data	
Examining Student Work	

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# RESULTS

## Student work at the core of teacher learning

By Joan Richardson

Results, February 2001.

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Examining student work has become a significant part of the culture at the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center in Estes Park, Colo.

Of course, teachers have always "examined student work." But traditionally they've done it solo, noted Lois Easton, director of professional development at Eagle Rock.

"It's been a solitary experience rather than being a collaborative experience. Their learning is limited because they've been working alone," Easton said.

"But, for us to be a professional learning community, we can't be shy. We have to share with each other," Easton said.

This practice of having teachers work together to study student work is one of the most promising professional development strategies in recent years. Examining student work helps teachers intimately understand how state and local standards apply to their teaching practice and to student work. Teachers are able to think more deeply about their teaching and what students are learning. As they see what students produce in response to their assignments,

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they can see the successes as well as the situations where there are gaps. In exploring those gaps, they can improve their practice in order to reach all students.

Intensive examination of student work is key to creating and sustaining a professional learning community, Easton said. She also sees it as a crucial element in deeply understanding the connections between what teachers think they're teaching and what students are learning.

"When schools talk about being data-driven, people think of test scores, graduation rates, absenteeism rates. I don't know that those numbers are really very meaningful. Student work is a powerful example of student data. It's much more meaningful to go to real student work – a math portfolio, a sculpture, a videotape, a piece of writing – than to look at numbers about that work," she said.

But examining student work is more complex than simply pulling together a group of teachers to chat about a student's paper or project.

A number of organizations have written protocols to guide these conversations and respect the unique working culture of schools. They are designed to break down the barriers that prevent teachers from viewing and commenting on each other's work. They also are designed to build the skills and culture necessary for collaborative work to flourish.

Some of the protocols, such as the "tuning protocol" from Coalition of Essential Schools, prescribe how many minutes various individuals will speak and even what sitting position participants will occupy during the discussion.

Other protocols created for similar work include the Collaborative Assessment Conference developed by Harvard's Project Zero, the Action Reflection Process developed by the Education Development Center, and Standards in Practice developed by The Education Trust.

Eagle Rock has adapted the Coalition's tuning protocol to examine everything from student service portfolios and pieces of student art to the school's budget process.

The Eagle Rock staff does "tunings" at lunch, after school, during staff meetings, Easton said. "As long as you keep some things the same – especially providing uninterrupted time for the presenters and for participant discussion – you can apply this to almost anything," she said.

In that way, the process has become part of the fabric of Eagle Rock, both for its study of student work and for its examination of other structures and processes at the school.

Easton favors the tuning protocol because it requires intense listening by participants. The tuning protocol was designed by David Allen and Joe McDonald at the Coalition of Essential Schools primarily as way to examine student

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exhibitions.

Eagle Rock has tuning groups of six to eight persons. Some of these groups are cross-disciplinary, some are grade-level groupings. The Eagle Rock groups meet a couple of times each month for about an hour each time. "Sooner or later, everyone in the group will be presenting student work," she said.

In addition, Easton has a separate tuning group of teacher interns that meet every other week. These are student teachers who have not yet entered a teacher preparation program.

In the Eagle Rock tuning protocols, the facilitator begins by briefly introducing the protocol goals, norms, and agenda. During each protocol, one teacher presents a piece of student work. For 15 to 20 minutes, the teacher-presenter speaks without interruption about the context for that piece of student work. *What was the assignment? What was the expectation? What was the scoring rubric?*

The other participants take five minutes to ask clarifying questions about the information that has been presented.

Then the teacher-presenter literally turns away from the group while the other participants talk among themselves about the work and its context. This process lasts about 15 minutes. The teacher-presenter is able to hear and take notes on all of the comments but he or she does not respond to them.

"This style of having the presenter pull out of the group is really effective. That spreads ownership of the piece. It says in a very subtle way that the learning about this student work is the responsibility of everyone in this group," Easton said.

Next, the teacher-presenter turns back into the group and spends 15 minutes reflecting aloud about the comments and questions raised during the participants' discussion. During this time, the participants must be silent.

Finally, the entire group debriefs both the process and the content.

"The presenter always has a feeling of personally getting better. They're usually overwhelmed by the amount of ideas the tunings generate," Easton said.

"So often, you hear the participants say that, when they began, they didn't see how this example would apply to them at all. But, when they're done, they see the application to their area, their classroom."



See the February/March issue of *Tools for Schools* for a set of tools and resources for examining student work or read all of this on the NSDC web site at [www.nsd.org/library/strategies/examiningwork.cfm](http://www.nsd.org/library/strategies/examiningwork.cfm).



## Examining student work: What works

Katherine Nolan, director of Rethinking Accountability at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, has identified seven qualities that are common to student work studies that have proven effective in improving the quality of teacher assignments and student work.

- **Reciprocal accountability.** Participants must provide help to peers roughly as often as they receive help.
- **Distributed leadership.** Successful "learning about student work" groups rotate leadership and facilitation to ensure that everyone's professional needs are met and that everyone's professional obligations are fulfilled.
- **Protected meeting time.** A block of time must be set aside, scheduled regularly, and protected. Schools that are dedicated to study of student work use up to two hours a week.
- **Ready access to experts.** Although much of the expertise teachers need will be found in members of the group, schools must provide these study groups with the resources and authority to call in an outside expert.
- **Inclusion of co-curricular teachers.** A well-functioning study group needs the viewpoints and expertise of specialists on the staff – special education, music, art, library, physical education, and bilingual.
- **Use of protocols.** Young study groups tend to resist using protocols, but groups tend to understand their value after they see the impact of their use.
- **Voluntary participation.** Forcing participation diminishes the possibility that teachers will seek out such study groups.

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## Tools For Schools

### GROUP WISE: Strategies for examining student work together

By Joan Richardson

*Tools for Schools*, Feb/March 2001

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Examining student work has always been part of a teacher's job. But, in recent years, that practice has moved from being a solitary activity to being a more collaborative effort in which teachers learn about their practice by sharing with and listening to colleagues.

In the hierarchy of professional development practices, examining student work would rank near the top because of the way that teachers work together to sharpen their practice to improve student learning.

#### Select a strategy for examining student work.

As various organizations have become interested in the strategy of examining student work, different protocols have been developed to guide that work. A protocol is simply a structure and guide for a group's conversation regarding a piece of student work. The protocols are designed to provide a safe place for teachers to share their students' work while also encouraging an honest exchange among participants.

Every protocol has been designed to emphasize a different aspect of evaluation. Some, like the Collaborative Assessment Conference, emphasize describing the student work. Others, like the Coalition of Essential Schools'

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Tuning Protocol, emphasize evaluative feedback from participants. Selecting a design that fits the culture of a school is a crucial factor in successfully using that design.

The tools on Pages 3, 4, 5, and 6 provide various options for examining student work. School teams may want to practice several options before identifying one that best fits their school. Schools may also discover that one strategy works best for one team while another team prefers a different strategy.

To learn more about practical options, visit the Learning About Student Work web site maintained by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform ([www.lasw.org](http://www.lasw.org)). That web site includes a synopsis of about a dozen strategies for examining student work and links to learn more about each of them.

### Opt for anonymity

To introduce the process and to help teachers become comfortable with the concept, consider doing one or two practice sessions.

Bring in student work that does not belong to any of the participants. Visit the Learning about Student Work web site ([www.lasw.org](http://www.lasw.org)) and look for samples of student work that could be used for this practice session. Or, tap colleagues at another school for samples of student work.

"Teachers are often quite shy about bringing their own student work to the table. They feel very apologetic. They feel that others might castigate them for the errors, for work that's not perfectly done," said Lois Easton, director of professional development at the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center in Estes Park, Colo. Easton does extensive work with tuning protocols developed by the Coalition of Essential schools.

Practicing on student work in which they have no investment can help teachers feel more comfortable about the conversations they might hear regarding the work of their students.

### Select a project, task, or assessment that addresses one of the schoolwide goals for student performance.

The task should require that students produce something that demonstrates what they have learned. This could be a long-term project or a short-term task. Whatever the final result, the student product or performance should be something significant, not a worksheet, quiz, or test.

Geneva City Schools in Geneva, N.Y., wanted students to do more writing in math as a way to improve their ability to explain how they solved math problems. So teachers assembled by grade level to study students' math journals, said Jody Hoch, now director of mathematics for the Rush-Henrietta Central School District in upstate New York.

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**Collect documents that will help the study group participants understand the project or task.**

These might include the initial assignment, scoring/grading criteria (or rubrics), objectives of the assignments, exemplars, models, timelines, checklists, etc. Think about other key information participants will need to understand the project or task and that can be shared succinctly.

The presenting teacher should be prepared to briefly describe the context of the student work. The documents listed above would be used to illustrate his or her points during that presentation.

**Select samples of student work that demonstrate authentic student responses to the project or task.**

Choose two or three samples to provide contrast. Teachers often find that a sample of work that shows promise but is not a stellar response to the assignment provides the best basis for feedback. Work selected may include final products, drafts, reflections, etc.

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform suggests a variety of ways to select student work samples:

- Written work (or artwork) from several students in response to the same assignment.
- Several pieces of work from one student in response to different assignments.
- One piece of work from a student who completed the assignment successfully and one piece from a student who was not able to complete the assignment successfully (same assignment for both).
- Work done by students working in groups (include work of at least two groups that were given the same assignment).
- Videotape, audio tape, and/or photographs of students working, performing, or presenting their work. This might be particularly useful for very young children who haven't yet acquired adequate written communication skills.

**Watch the details.**

If possible, remove student names from the samples.

Make enough copies of the student work so that each participant has his or her own copy. Ensure that the facilitator knows in advance about any unique types of student work, such as sculpture or an entire portfolio of work, that are not easily duplicated. That will enable the facilitator to adapt the format accordingly.

If the student work is a video, a five-minute clip is usually sufficient to demonstrate the work.

**Prepare a focusing question.**

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The presenting teacher should prepare a "focusing question" about the work that addresses a real interest or concern. Questions typically focus on either inputs (the assignment, teacher's support of student performance) or outputs (quality of student work, teacher's assessment of the work).

A broader question may elicit a wide range of feedback — and this may be desirable. For example: *How can I support higher quality presentations?* (input) *What are the strengths and weaknesses you see in the student presentations?* (output)

A narrower question might provide the kinds of feedback the teacher finds most useful. For example: *How can my prompt bring out more creativity in the students' work?* (input) *What evidence is there in the student work of mathematical problem solving?* (output)

Remember, even with a narrower focus question, participants will offer a range of feedback — on and off the question.

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# School Improvement in MARYLAND

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ASSESSMENTS DATA ANALYSIS INSTRUCTION SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT USER GUIDES

## Examining Student Work to Inform Instruction

### Examining Student Work

PROTOCOL

DISCUSSION

HOW DOES THE PROTOCOL WORK?

WHY WAS THE PROTOCOL DEVELOPED?

HOW DOES THE TEAM DEFINE PROFICIENCY?

HOW DOES THE TEAM DIAGNOSE STUDENT PERFORMANCE TO INFORM INSTRUCTION?

QUOTES FROM EXPERTS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

LESSONS LEARNED

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN STRUCTURING REGULAR EXAMINATIONS OF STUDENT WORK

**"The practice of having teachers work together to study student work is one of the most promising professional development strategies in recent years. Examining student work helps teachers intimately understand how state and local standards apply to their teaching practice and to student work."**



"Teachers are able to think more deeply about their teaching and what students are learning. As they see what students produce in response to their assignments, they can see the successes as well as the situations where there are gaps. In exploring those gaps, they can improve their practice in order to reach all students." —Joan Richardson, editor of NSDC Results

Understanding what students know and still need to learn is a pre-requisite for knowing where to go next instructionally with a student to take them to proficiency on any content standard indicator. Though teachers have always examined student work as part of their grading process, the new focus on accountability and standards has driven a more structured and collaborative examination of student work. This Examining Student Work protocol was developed to help teachers understand what students know and still need to learn. The examination focuses teachers on three critical areas: o Identification of characteristics of proficiency on an objective using a specific assignment/assessment A team of teachers work through the process of reaching consensus on what the team believes constitutes a proficient response on a selected text and question. o Diagnosis student strengths and needs on the performance The team examines three student papers to determine if the response is proficient and to identify what the student knows and still needs to learn. o Identification of next instructional steps based on the diagnosis The team identifies next instructional steps including what questions the teacher might want to ask the

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student to better understand his/her thinking, what feedback the teacher might give, and what re-teaching might need to take place for the whole or part of the class.

A pre-requisite to interpreting student work is a clear understanding of what you are looking for. What does a proficient response look like? What exactly do your students need to know and still need to learn? It is not enough that an individual teacher defines proficiency. It is critical that at least a grade level team has reached consensus on the definition of proficiency to ensure that all students are held to the same performance expectations. Only after the team has agreed on what constitutes a proficient response are they able to diagnose student strengths and needs. Once proficiency has been defined, the team is ready to examine student performance against their proficiency criteria.

This process requires teachers to shift their mindset from scoring (a summative examination) to diagnosing (a formative examination) student performance. In many cases teachers have spent a great deal of time sorting student responses (either by letter grades or by rubric scores) and virtually no time diagnosing what students know and still need to learn. It is only the diagnostic information that will help teachers understand what they need to do next instructionally with their students.

Though the focus of the examining student work protocol is on improving student performance, there are a number of other benefits that come out of the discussion. The assignment itself is examined in terms of how aligned and how successful it was in soliciting the information teachers were looking for. Teachers self-assess their own teaching of the content standard indicator and make refinements accordingly. Facilitators and observers can identify misunderstandings about the intent of the indicator/objective and provide appropriate professional development around these needs. New teachers as well as veteran teachers can self-assess whether their expectations for students were appropriately rigorous. The regular team examination of student work turns out to be excellent and targeted job-embedded, ongoing professional development that is totally aligned with what teachers are or need to be doing in their classrooms on a daily basis.

Principals play a critical role in structuring time for and setting the expectation that teams should regularly examine student work and use the data to inform their instruction. To explore how principals lead this process at their school, click on A Principal's Role in Structuring Regular Examinations of Student Work.

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## A Principal's Role in Improving Student Achievement

### Monitoring Tools

- UNDERSTAND AND COMMUNICATE YOUR TARGET
- ENGAGE STAFF IN ANALYZING YOUR DATA
- ALIGN TEACHING AND ASSESSING WITH VSC
- STRUCTURE REGULAR TIME FOR TEAMS TO EXAMINE STUDENT WORK
- MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS
- KEEP THE FOCUS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Though we have a good deal of research to draw on in identifying what effective leaders do, translating the research into concrete, practical actions has been more elusive.**

- What exactly does a principal need to know and do to be successful in meeting their AYP target?
- How do they find out where their students are on the content standard indicators?
- How do they lead their staff in examining student work and assessing for learning?
- What can they do that will produce the greatest gains?



If our end goal is to improve student achievement to meet AYP, then a critical intermediate goal is to determine where each of our students is in relation to the state content standards. While the logic is clear, most schools do not collect evidence of or for learning on an ongoing basis. We don't know what to teach students to take them to proficiency on indicators/objectives without knowing where they currently are on those indicators/objectives.

Principals need to understand where their school is relative to the AYP target, how their teachers assess for learning and monitor student progress, and how they use the data to adjust instruction based on student needs.

To accomplish these ends, principals need

1. To understand and communicate their student achievement target
2. To engage staff in analyzing state assessment data to determine whether there were any gaps between the AYP targets and their performance

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3. To evaluate school processes to ensure that teachers understand the target and have aligned their teaching and assessments to those standards they are responsible for teaching
4. To structure time to regularly examine student work to inform instruction
5. To have teachers collect and analyze formative assessment data to monitor student performance on the content standard indicators on a daily basis
6. To keep their school focused on their student achievement goals as the primary work of staff

Action steps 2 and 3 provide the data to direct your school improvement goals and strategies. Action steps 4, 5, and 6 give you the data to direct classroom instruction on a daily basis.

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home : process : student achievement : understand and communicate your target

# School Improvement in MARYLAND

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## Understand and Communicate Your Target



Today's teachers are expected to take all students to proficient performance on a common set of grade level content standard indicators defined by the state. And schools have started to shift their focus from how well teachers are teaching to how well students are learning.

**What is the target?** How do state standards change expectations for what happens in schools? What priorities and expectations do you need to communicate?

### What is the target?

The critical first step to meeting any instructional target is to understand the target. Since the inception of NCLB, all public schools have state-identified achievement goals as part of NCLB's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. AYP targets are based on performance on state assessments that measure student proficiency on state content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics. Consequently, understanding the state content standards being assessed and knowing where their students are in relation to those standards is key to schools hitting the target. Educators who don't understand the target can't be counted on to teach the necessary knowledge and skills to students.

The state content standards identify what students are expected to know and be able to do. It is probably obvious, though not always practiced, that classroom instruction and assessment must be aligned with the state content standards if a school wishes to attain state standards. It is critical for staff to understand the state content standards, the state assessments used to measure AYP, and how to recognize proficient student work at their grade level if they are going to fully understand their target.

The 2007 through 2014 AYP achievement targets are shown in the table below.

Year	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics

	Grades 3, 4, 5	Grades 3, 4, 5	Grades 6, 7, 8	Grades 6, 7, 8	Grades 6, 7, 8
2007	67.2%	63.9%	66.3%	50.0%	50.0%
2008	71.8%	69.1%	71.1%	57.2%	57.2%
2009	76.5%	74.2%	75.9%	64.3%	64.3%
2010	81.2%	79.4%	80.8%	71.4%	71.4%
2011	85.9%	84.5%	85.6%	78.6%	78.6%
2012	90.6%	89.7%	90.4%	85.7%	85.7%
2013	95.3%	94.8%	95.2%	92.9%	92.9%
2014	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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## Engage Staff in Analyzing the Data



The No Child Left Behind Act requires all schools, districts, and states to show that students are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading, math and another measure. Meeting AYP targets is the major student achievement goal for all schools.

Student progress in reading and math is measured by the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) or—for a small number of students with profound disabilities—the Alternate MSA (ALT-MSA). Not only does the school as a whole (all students) need to make AYP targets but eight subgroups of students (African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White, LEP, economically disadvantaged, and special education students) also need to make the same AYP target.

There are numerous resources on MDK12 to help you engage your staff in analyzing their state assessment data. Analyzing AYP data will help you identify gaps between your school's performance and NCLB / state targets. Low performance areas will drive your school improvement goals.

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How do you engage staff in analyzing state assessment data?

How do you engage staff in clarifying your problem?

How do you lead the data analysis discussion?

### How do you engage staff in analyzing state assessment data?

Analyzing your data is a process in which you will want to involve your entire staff. Good data-driven dialogue leads to data-driven

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decisions. If you engage staff in an ongoing data dialogue about what the data is telling you, it is much more likely they will feel ownership for the data-based decisions you collectively make.

The online AYP tutorial guides school teams or individuals through a process intended to help you

- interpreting your AYP data,
- understanding how your AYP scores were computed and AYP decisions were made, and
- use the data to determine next steps and set school improvement goals.

Your school and district data is graphed and a Data Analysis Worksheet is available to guide school teams through the data analysis process.

Additional animated, audio tutorials are available to help you understand how to read the AYP graphs and how the confidence interval and safe harbor work.

#### TUTORIALS

- AYP Reading
- AYP Mathematics
- Confidence Interval
- Safe Harbor

Though AYP data give us useful information about our school's performance and, therefore, about our areas of needed improvement, they also leave us with a number of important questions that need additional data to answer.

- How did our students perform at the individual grade levels?
- Were there any concerns about performance at any of the grades?
- Are our students making progress? Adequate progress?
- How did our students perform on the individual grade level standards?
- How does student performance compare across subgroups?

These questions can be answered by examining your school's graphed data in the Analyzing MSA Data section of MDK12.org for students in grades 3-8 or by examining your school's data in the Analyzing HSA Data section for high school students. In addition to accessing graphs of your school and district's performance, you will find some tips in how to lead the data analysis discussion, some suggestions for next steps, and links to additional information about MSA or HSA. The MSA Data tutorial will get you started on how to examine your MSA data. Key questions that school teams need to address during this process include

- Did your school fail to meet AYP in any areas?
- What content area and with which groups of students do you need to improve?

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- What other information does your MSA/HSA or other data you collect provide?
- What are the most compelling needs of our school as indicated by the data?

You will also want school teams to generate a list of questions your data raises as they work through the data analysis process.

Once the data has been studied and strengths and weaknesses identified, the school will need to identify the most urgent and compelling needs. Some schools may find they have instructional challenges in many areas whereas other schools may be moving student achievement toward the advanced level. Though a good instructional program will address all of the appropriate content standards, a good school improvement plan will focus a school-wide effort on one or two priority instructional needs.

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## Align Teaching with Voluntary State Curriculum

It stands to reason that if what is taught is not closely aligned with what is assessed, students will not have been adequately prepared. A perfectly aligned instructional system would include a curriculum that addresses the state content standards, instruction that is based on the curriculum, and assessments that identify opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and can do on the state content standards.

Mike Schmoker writes in *The Real Cause of Higher Achievement*, "We can't expect most students to do well on exams for which their preparation has been spotty or inadequate. But in too many places, it is just that. In some of our lowest-achieving schools, there is a patent mismatch between the real, taught curriculum and the actual standards that are assessed — by state, standardized, or district assessments. This shouldn't surprise us: For all our so-called common curriculum, very little has been done — let's be honest — to ensure that the taught and the tested curriculum are aligned. Prominent researchers have noted this discrepancy, including John Goodlad and colleagues who wrote that "behind the classroom door" all bets are off on what actually gets taught (1970). Judith Warren Little noted the discrepancy as well, finding curricular differences among English teachers to be so wildly divergent that even to call these courses by the same name — "English" — made no sense to her (1990). Susan Rosenholtz found that teachers teach a self-selected "jumble" of different topics and that getting them to teach to common standards is perhaps the toughest challenge schools face (1991). David Berliner detected the same pattern in his studies, that in the same grade and in the same school, one teacher taught 27 times as much science as her same-grade counterparts. No one in the school knew this until researchers came into the school (1979)."

A major shift for teachers in a standards-based system is their loss of autonomy in teaching whatever they determine to be important. Teachers are now responsible for moving their students to proficiency on their state's content standards. Consequently, they must re-examine their instructional program to ensure that classroom tasks and assignments are aligned with the content standards they are expected to teach and that are assessed by the state.

When teachers map their current instructional assignments and class work to the content standards, they will likely see a number of tasks and assignments that are not aligned. If teachers walked through the classrooms in their school to examine the student work on bulletin boards, in journals or on student's desks, they would also see that some if not many activities are not yet aligned to state content standards. Because instructional time is at a premium, and the charge to take all students to proficiency is a challenging one, teachers must use their instructional time effectively to ensure their teaching is aligned with state standards. This tight alignment has the added advantage of giving teachers a reason to weed out some current tasks and assignments and, even more of a time saver, to

stop grading student work that isn't related to standards.

A number of strategies can be employed to help ensure the taught curriculum is aligned with the state standards. Curriculum mapping is the process of mapping a district's curriculum to the state standards. When teachers engage in this activity, they better understand what they are responsible for teaching and know where there are any gaps between their curriculum and state standards. Another effective approach to helping ensure alignment is to identify in your monitoring plan the content standard indicators you expect teachers to collect and submit classroom assessment data. Once you have asked teachers to collect classroom data on a specified set of indicators/objectives aligned to the state standards, you have made clear to them where they need to focus their instructional time.

Analyzing teacher assignments and assessments can reveal what cognitive level of thinking is being called for and what the intellectual rigor is expected as well as the extent to which it matches the cognitive expectation for content standard indicators. A study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research of 1,400 pieces of student work in Chicago Public Schools found that 70% of the work "presented either no challenge or minimal challenge to the students. They also found that if students were given more challenging assignments, they did higher quality work." Furthermore, students who received assignments requiring more challenging intellectual work also achieved greater than average gains on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in reading and mathematics, and demonstrated higher performance in reading, mathematics, and writing on the Illinois Goals Assessment Program.

In the same way that formative assessments provide the teacher some insight into what the student understands, comments that teachers write on student work should provide the student some information about their performance and some guidance about how to improve their work. Letter grades, smiley faces, or comments such as "good work" don't provide useful information. Comments need to be focused on what the task was meant to assess. For example, if a student was asked to read a story and draw an inference and support it with evidence from the text, then comments should focus on the student's demonstration or lack thereof to do that task in a proficient manner. It would not make sense to comment on the student's spelling errors when trying to help the student understand how to find evidence to support an inference. Teachers and students benefit the most from assignments when they have a common understanding of what is being asked and what constitutes proficient work.

## Resources

- "Standards in Practice," on the Educational Trust Web site, describes a team-based professional development strategy for aligning assignments or programs with content standards.
- "Authentic Intellectual Work and Standardized Tests: Conflict or Coexistence?" by Fred M. Newmann, Anthony S. Bryk, and Jenny K. Nagaoka describes findings from a study of the quality of student work in Chicago schools and the relationship of the work to student performance on standardized tests.
- "Teacher Learning for Standards-based Education," Standards in Classroom Practice: Research Synthesis, McRel 2001 (pages 107-140)
- Instructional Coherence: The Changing Role of the Teacher by Sandra J. Finley, Ph.D. on the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Web site.



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## Structure Regular Time for Teams to Examine Student Work



Principals play a critical role in structuring time for and setting the expectation that teams should regularly examine student work and use the data to inform their instruction. Principals need to provide time for this to happen. They need to consider how they could use staff meetings or other meeting times to build capacity and set expectations for how teams or departments will examine student work as a regular activity at their team meetings. Principals must also monitor the process and end-products and recognize successful practices.

In many cases teachers have spent a great deal of time sorting student responses (either by letter grades or by rubric scores) and virtually no time diagnosing what students know and still need to learn. It is only the diagnostic information that will help teachers understand what they need to do next instructionally with their students.

Principals need to

- Communicate expectations
- Find and structure time
- Model engagement in the process
- Monitor process and end products
- Recognize / showcase

Why do we need to collaboratively examine student work?	How should we examine student work?	What capacity building do teachers need to effectively examine student work?	Where can you find time for ongoing team meetings?	How do you structure the team meetings?	How do you communicate expectations?	Resources
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### Why do we need to collaboratively examine student work?

It stands to reason that if we need to take all our students to proficiency on content standards, then we will need all of our teachers working toward this goal. It will no longer be enough for individual teachers to know what they are teaching and what students are learning. It becomes critical that teachers on the same grade level or teaching the same course reach consensus on how they are

defining proficiency on assignments assessing indicators. Teaching is no longer a solitary act. If a school is going to move all students to proficiency on reading and mathematics indicators, then all teachers must be on the same page in terms of defining proficiency and interpreting student performance. It is also important that teachers articulate vertically to make sure their instructional program is aligned and increases rigor as the students advance grades. Teams of teachers must regularly meet to examine student work and reach consensus on what proficient performance looks like at their grade level. Having these discussions takes time and must be built into the school day as frequently as possible. Teachers who think they do not need to regularly collaborate with their colleagues will limit their ability to help their school move all students to proficiency.

The Aspen Workshop on High Schools recommended in its summary report of the Transforming High Schools Task Force that the continuous and collaborative examination of student work along with the personalization of schooling are the two critical strategies for transforming high schools at the local level. The Aspen Report goes on to say that the principal as instructional leader and manager must:

- Understand the power and necessity of using student work as the lens for conversations among students, teachers and other adults
- Recruit, retain and support teachers who share this perspective
- Provide and protect time for teachers to meet with other teachers, students and other adults to discuss student work
- Drastically reduce the routine of meetings, reports and other administrative activities that take time and energy away from these essential dialogues
- Align resources (internal and external partnerships, district networks, professional development) to this strategy

Kate Nolan, Director of Re-Thinking Accountability for the Annenberg Institute of School Reform, believes "The process of studying student work is a meaningful and challenging way to be data-driven, to reflect critically on our instructional practices, and to identify the research we might study to help us think more deeply and carefully about the challenges our students provide us. Rich, complex work samples show us how students are thinking, the fullness of their factual knowledge, the connections they are making. Talking about them together in an accountable way helps us to learn how to adjust instruction to meet the needs of our students."

Joan Richardson, editor of **NSDC Results** asserts, "The practice of having teachers work together to study student work is one of the most promising professional development strategies in recent years. Examining student work helps teachers intimately understand how state and local standards apply to their teaching practice and to student work. Teachers are able to think more deeply about their teaching and what students are learning. As they see what students produce in response to their assignments, they can see the successes as well as the situations where there are gaps. In exploring those gaps, they can improve their practice in order to reach all students."

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## Monitor Student Progress



The only way for teachers and schools to identify which students can demonstrate proficiency on state content standards is to continuously assess and monitor students as part of their classroom instruction. Teachers must know on a day to day basis where their students are in relation to the content standards to have the necessary information to inform instruction. Schools have to identify the student achievement data they need to collect to determine if they are making progress toward the attainment of their priority goals.

Eliminate the box that says How do you lead a discussion... I've added all of that text to the box What are teachers expected to do with the monitoring plan data?

Why do you need to monitor?	What do you need to monitor?	Why start with a monitoring plan?	How do you develop a monitoring plan?	What are teachers expected to do with the monitoring plan data?	Resources
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### Why do you need to monitor?

Both research and common sense support the notion that we need to monitor student performance on an ongoing basis. If we are ever to know how we are doing, we will need to know where our students are. But that is exactly what we don't know. Try asking school staff where each of their students is on the reading comprehension indicator "drawing inferences." Which students are proficient? What evidence do they have that those students are proficient? What data do they have to identify what students who are not proficient still need to learn? Educators who don't know where their students are do not have enough information to know how best to use their instructional time or which students need specific instructional interventions.

Annual data from the state assessments only gives schools a snapshot of where students are at a single point in time. Daily instruction continues between when the tests are given and when the results are returned to schools. The results are dated, and provide only a snapshot of where students were when they took the test. Teachers must know on a day to day basis where their students are in relation to the content standards to have the necessary information to inform instruction.

In a 1998 Phi Delta Kappan article entitled, "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment," authors Paul Black and Dylan William summarize their review of the research that would help answer the question, "Would improved formative

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classroom assessments yield higher student achievement as reflected in summative assessments?" They assert, "There is a body of firm evidence that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement. We know of no other way of raising standards for which such a strong prima facie case can be made."

Rick Stiggins in his article, "Assessment Crisis: The Absence Of Assessment FOR Learning," says that "Assessment for learning is about far more than testing more frequently or providing teachers with evidence so that they can revise instruction, although these steps are part of it. In addition, we now understand that assessment for learning must involve students in the process."

"When they assess for learning, teachers use the classroom assessment process and the continuous flow of information about student achievement that it provides in order to advance, not merely check on, student learning. They do this by:

- understanding and articulating in advance of teaching the achievement targets that their students are to hit;
- informing their students about those learning goals, in terms that students understand, from the very beginning of the teaching and learning process;
- becoming assessment literate and thus able to transform their expectations into assessment exercises and scoring procedures that accurately reflect student achievement;
- using classroom assessments to build students' confidence in themselves as learners and help them take responsibility for their own learning, so as to lay a foundation for lifelong learning;
- translating classroom assessment results into frequent descriptive feedback (versus judgmental feedback) for students, providing them with specific insights as to how to improve;
- continuously adjusting instruction based on the results of classroom assessments;
- engaging students in regular self-assessment, with standards held constant so that students can watch themselves grow over time and thus feel in charge of their own success; and
- actively involving students in communicating with their teacher and their families about their achievement status and improvement."

"In short, the effect of assessment for learning, as it plays out in the classroom, is that students keep learning and remain confident that they can continue to learn at productive levels if they keep trying to learn. In other words, students don't give up in frustration or hopelessness."

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## Keep the Focus on Student Achievement



The allocation of time is one of the truest tests of what is really important in any organization. The time devoted to an issue on both the annual calendar and within the daily schedule of an organization tells its people what is really valued.

Align time, money, and staff development with the goals

Monitor your priority goals	Strategies for Keeping a Sharp Focus	How do you focus other stakeholders on the target?
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### Align time, money, and staff development with the goals

A key challenge for principals is to keep a sharp focus on the target. Given the many competing agendas operating within and without schools, it is always difficult to keep staff focused on improving student achievement. One only has to look at the central office meeting agendas to get a clear idea of the number of issues that can pull schools off that focus. As principal, you have the primary role in keeping this focus at your school. It is you who determines how staff time is used, what is monitored, what is recognized, and how inservice time and resources are used. Therefore, paying careful attention to how you use regularly scheduled staff meeting time, what messages you give and what you recognize and monitor are critical aspects of focusing your staff on the target.

Robert Eaker points out that "modeling is the way leaders 'advertise' their personal values—and the central values around which the organization operates. All too often school officials espouse certain ideals and beliefs but then pay attention to other things. Students and faculty learn what is truly valued in a school by observing what school leaders pay attention to." Consequently, any assessment of a principal's effectiveness in communicating values should include the following questions:

1. What does the principal plan for?
2. What does the principal monitor?

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3. What does the principal model?
4. What does the principal reinforce through recognition and celebration?
5. What behavior is the principal willing to confront?

The allocation of time is one of the truest tests of what is really important in any organization. The time devoted to an issue on both the annual calendar and within the daily schedule of an organization tells its people what is really valued. Successful principals keep the focus on school improvement efforts and align time, money, and staff development opportunities with the student achievement goals.

You might want to self-assess your success in keeping your focus by answering the following questions:

- What did you do at your last two staff meetings?
- What did you do at your last two team meetings?
- What did you do at your last in-service day?
- Were all of these activities aligned with your focus?
- What message is staff receiving from how you spend your time with them?

In most organizations, what gets monitored gets done. When a school devotes considerable time and effort to the continual assessment of a particular condition or outcome, it notifies all members that the condition or outcome is considered important. Conversely, inattention to monitoring a particular factor in a school indicates that it is less than essential, regardless of how often its importance is verbalized.

Principals have numerous opportunities to pay attention to student achievement goals. Perhaps the most important way is to ensure that regularly scheduled time with staff (staff meetings, team meetings, inservice activities) reflects and reinforces the importance of the progress toward achievement goals. Agenda topics should include analyzing and sharing data, problem solving barriers and solutions, examining student work, recognizing efforts, celebrating progress on achievement goals, and sharing successful practices.

One strategy for focusing staff and stakeholders on your student achievement goals is to display the progress toward attainment of the goals on a bulletin board, display case or school wall. The display should allow staff and stakeholders to quickly see where you are, where you are heading, and how the journey is going. You should also communicate progress toward attainment of the student achievement goals in newsletters and other correspondence to staff, parents, and other stakeholders. You should not miss a communication opportunity to reinforce that your top instructional priority is improved student achievement.

Monitoring staff on their collection and use of data is also a critical way to keep staff clear about your priorities. Your school's monitoring plan will already have identified what data need to be submitted to whom and how frequently and how the student performance data will be discussed and used. You will need to monitor the plan and its use on different levels. You will need to make sure the data is being submitted and confront any teachers who are not complying with the expectation to submit their data in a timely way. The attached memo illustrates one way you can both reaffirm the importance of the process as well as remind staff of their assignment. You will need to monitor how frequently and how well they are able to analyze their data and use the results to modify their instruction. You will need to know if they are interpreting the data and can answer basic questions about student

success including which students or what percent of their class have mastered an indicator. You will need to make sure that teams have reached consensus on proficiency on an indicator/objective and have diagnosed student strengths and areas of need. Finally, you will need to monitor whether staff are using the student performance data to modify their instruction to address student diagnosed needs.

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