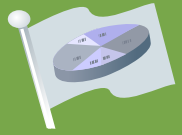
Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

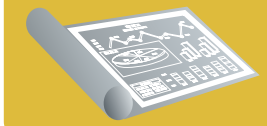
The practice guide *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* provides a framework for teachers and school and district leaders to learn to use data effectively and consistently. Teachers can use data to ask questions about student progress through a cycle of inquiry. They can also teach students to use their own data and to set learning goals. School and district leaders need to establish a vision for data use and provide supports to foster a data-driven culture. To assist schools, districts can maintain a high-quality districtwide data system.

Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school

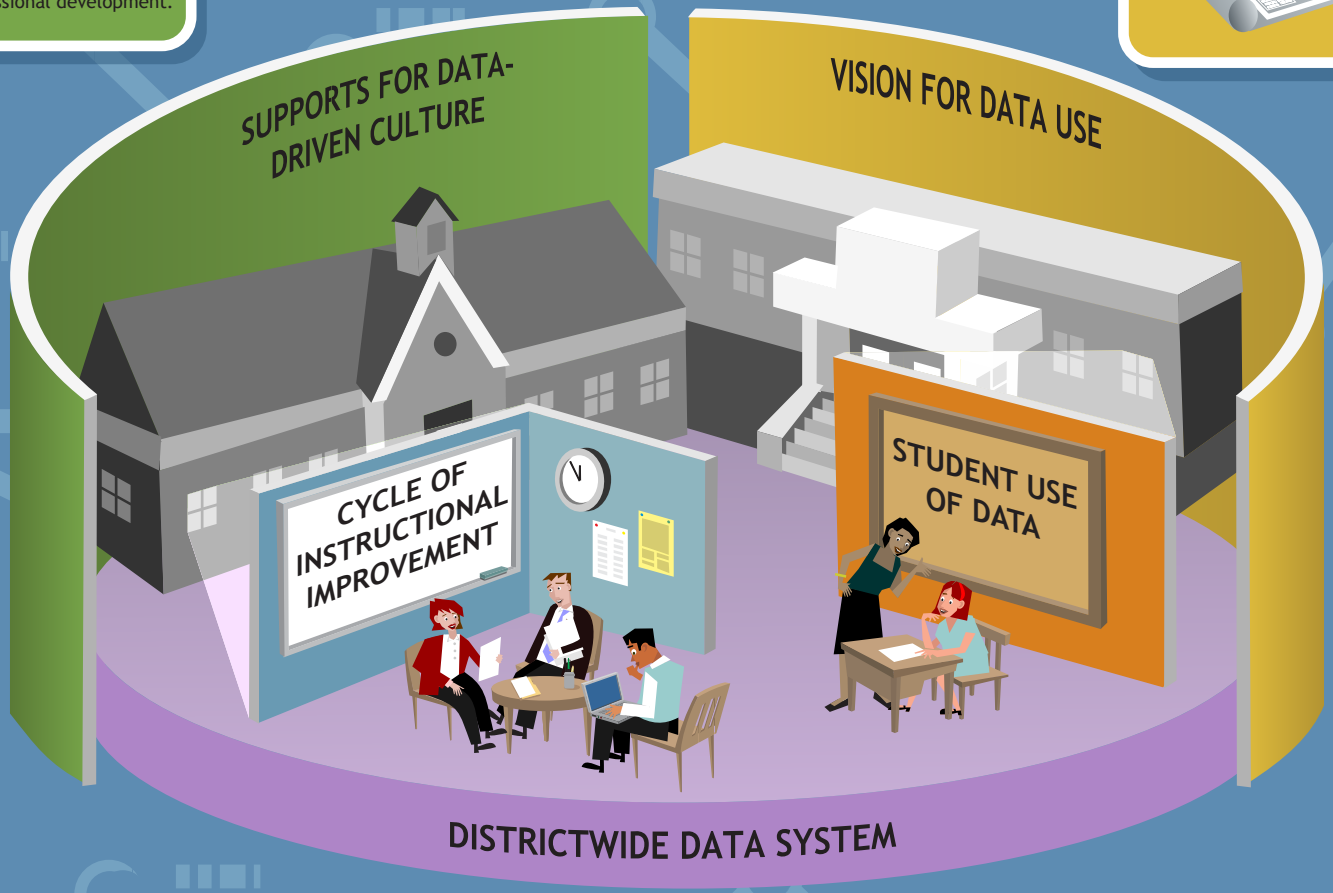


- Designate a facilitator.
- Dedicate time for collaboration.
- Provide professional development.

Establish a clear vision for schoolwide data use



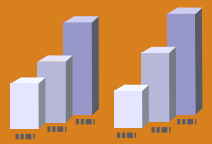
- Establish a data team.
- Develop a written plan.
- Provide ongoing leadership.



Make data part of teachers' ongoing cycle of instructional improvement

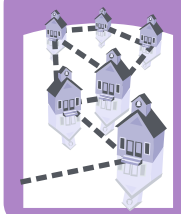
- Collect data about student learning.
- Interpret data and develop hypotheses.
- Modify instruction.

Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals



- Explain expectations and assessment criteria.
- Provide feedback and tools to students.
- Use students' analyses to guide instructional changes.

Develop and maintain a districtwide data system



- Articulate system requirements.
- Determine whether to build or buy the data system.
- Plan the implementation of the system.

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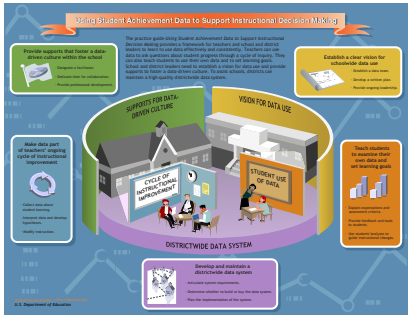

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This diagram visually depicts the five research-based recommended practices from the practice guide *Using Student Achievement to Support Instructional Decision Making*. The five practices form a framework for effective data use at the district and school levels.

Develop and maintain a districtwide data system.

The first practice, *develop and maintain a districtwide data system,* is located at the base of the diagram. Districts can benefit from securing a reliable data-management system that allows personnel at the school and district levels to access student achievement and other types of data in a timely fashion. Ideally, a district's data system should link disparate forms of data for reporting and analysis. A districtwide data system supports data-informed schools.

Establish a clear vision for schoolwide data use.

Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.

The second and third practices, *establish a clear vision for schoolwide data use* and *provide supports that foster a data-driven culture with the school,* are the curved walls surrounding the representations of the schools.

Through a clear vision for schoolwide data use, school leaders can establish a comprehensive plan that provides for teacher collaboration across and within grade levels and subject areas. Teachers can work together to diagnose problems and to refine practices to ensure data-based decisions are made frequently, consistently, and appropriately. Schools also need supports to ensure teachers, administrators, and other school staff have a thorough understanding of their roles in using data. Supports may include a data facilitator, data teams, professional development, and time set aside for structured collaboration. Taken together, the first three practices depicted in this diagram emphasize the need to establish the organizational and technological structures and practices that support using student achievement data to make instructional decisions.

Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.

Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.

The fourth and fifth practices, *make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement* and *teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals,* are integrated into the middle of the visual diagram.

These practices are geared toward teachers and those staff who provide specialized support, such as special education teachers or reading specialists. It is important for teachers to use data from multiple sources to set goals, make curricular and instructional choices, and allocate instructional time. By engaging in structured collaboration, teachers can enact a cycle of instructional improvement to collect and prepare data, to interpret and develop hypotheses on how they can improve their teaching and student learning, and to modify instruction. Further developing the use of data in classrooms, teachers can explicitly show students how to interpret their data and use it to set goals and guide their personal learning.

It is recommended that districts and schools implement the practices together as part of a cohesive and comprehensive framework undergirded by a districtwide data system. A schoolwide vision and comprehensive supports enable teachers to use a variety of data sources to make instructional decisions and to help students understand the data and their progress toward learning goals.