**W’s of Data Collection**

Data will be used to make decisions regarding professional development, systems change, and/or student interventions through a process called data based decision-making. Data is embedded within the daily routine of the school system. It is just part of the day.

What is data based decision-making?

An on going process of analyzing and evaluating information (data) to learn about and make decisions pertaining to important educational issues.

Why use data?

The purpose of data based decision-making is to review systems, practices, and tools to make informed decisions.

When is data based decision-making done?

That depends on what you want the data to tell you:

* Individual data: may be daily, weekly, monthly, depending on what you need to know and how often.
* School-wide data: may be reviewed every other week at first. Then monthly or even quarterly.
* District-wide data: may be reviewed monthly at first, but usually quarterly.
* State-wide data: usually collected yearly unless otherwise requested.

Required components of data based decision-making:

* Know what you want the data to tell you!
* Standardized data collection tools.
* Operationally defined definitions.
* Professional development training to use data collection tools consistently across staff.
* Efficient and structured way to gather information.
* Efficient and confidential way for data entry and store the data.
* Efficient and user friendly way to generate data reports.
* Professional development training to analyze and use data.
* Efficient and standardized process to review, analyze, and problem solve data.
* Objective and nonjudgmental data analysis……don’t read into the data!

When do we do data based decision-making?

* During leadership team meetings, child study team meetings, determine academic strategies and supports.

How does collecting data help students learn?

* Review of data helps to determine if there is a problem, the nature of the problem, and possible interventions.
* Data helps determine the areas and/or systems that do or do not have a problem.
* Data helps to determine the most efficient and effective way to use school resources.

How do I know what data to collect?

* Always start with what you want to learn or what questions you want to answer.
* Select data to answer the question.
* Collect data that can be collected with consistency and reliability.
* Collect data that is not too cumbersome on staff (more likely to do it).

Helpful hints for collecting data:

* Know what data is already being collected.
* Make data easy to collect and not too time consuming.
* Train staff to collect, understand and use data.
* Have a schedule to collect and review data.
* Use more than one type of data collection and more than one source from where the data comes from.

Steps for data based decision-making:

1. Know what goal you are trying to achieve.
2. Gather information around the data (location, others involved, time of day, etc).
3. Clearly define the problem based on the data analysis.
4. Collaboratively discuss options to resolve the problem (no more than 3-5 options).
5. Clearly define one option that will most likely solve the problem or make things better.
6. Develop an action plan around the chosen option with the following.

* Timeframe for the intervention.
* Formulate a plan with effectiveness and consistency in mind.
* Method to evaluate the effectiveness (data collection).
* Use data to evaluate effectiveness of plan.
  + If getting desired results, continue plan.
  + If no change or getting worse, review data and revise action plan.

What are the “Big 5” for school-based decision-making?

1. Student name
2. Average referrals per day per month
3. Location
4. Problem behavior
5. Time of day

In summary…data is good, but tells you nothing if you don’t know what you are collecting or how it is used within a system of data based decision-making:

* Collect data
* Summarize data
* Analyze data
* Make decisions
* Make action plans
* Implement interventions
* Collect data
* Sustain or revise interventions.