

Data-Based Decision Making (DBDM) and Early Warning Systems (EWS) in High Schools: Key Ideas and Reflection on Current Practices

Self-reflection that is paired with discussion is a proven strategy for translating ideas into practice. This handout is being provided to facilitate self-reflection and discussion for Tennessee TSC's "Data-Based Decision Making and Early Warning Systems in High Schools" resources. Many of the key ideas discussed throughout those resources are listed below. Review this list and think about how the key ideas are carried out in your school. Then, with your team members, discuss the degree to which your team's current procedures reflect the key ideas and, when needed, how those procedures could be improved.

Data for Effective Decision Making:

- Data includes all grade levels.
- The data sources enable proactive intervention.
- The data sources make it easy to quickly identify students' general needs.
- Multiple data sources that provide a detailed examination of specific needs and root causes are used for drill-down and analysis.
- Multiple data sources are used throughout the year to ensure all student needs are addressed proactively.

Strategies to Support Effective Data Use:

- A data calendar is developed to support time management and communication.
- Standard procedures are used to ensure meetings include perspectives from key collaborators.
- Standard procedures are used to ensure all team members come to the meeting prepared and ready to problem-solve.
- The team uses creative strategies for information sharing as needed.
- Leadership provides ongoing professional development on data interpretation and analysis.

Guiding Questions for DBDM – The team's process for reviewing data should:

- Include a way to prioritize discussions about students who have intensive needs.
- Include consideration of school- and classroom-level outcomes, similar peer performance, patterns and relationships among data sources, and missing data.
- Include prompts to develop strong problem definition statements.
- Ensure an examination of a variety of educationally relevant variables for potential root causes.
- Include prompts for key collaborators' participation.
- Include an examination of current and necessary resources to support the student.
- Establish short- and long-term goals, as well as progress monitoring and fidelity checking strategies.
- Identify strategies to support interventionists and teachers.
- Ensure multiple data sources are used.
- Prompt for team members to examine a variety of reasons for insufficient responses.
- Prompt for regular meetings to ensure student progress.

Identifying Student Needs – The team's process for moving from schoolwide to individual student data considers:

- Students who have severe/intense needs.
- Students who have needs in more than one area.
- Students who have mental health-related needs.
- Flexible thresholds to determine the basis for providing support.
- Student needs in relation to schoolwide outcomes.

Step 1: Define

- Multiple data sources are used when developing a problem definition statement.
- The team ensures the problem definition statement is specific and measurable, describes the gap in student performance, and identifies the conditions taking place when the problem occurs.

Step 2: Analyze

- The team considers a variety of educationally relevant variables.
- The team identifies if a student has standards-based or skill-based needs.
- Current data are used as the basis for decision making.
- The team takes steps to protect against errors in thinking and misaligned ideas.
- The team ensures data exists that confirms and validates the problem and root cause.

Step 3: Implement

- The intervention aligns with the root cause and problem definition statement.
- The intervention includes the perspectives of key collaborators.
- The intervention includes Tier I strategies when appropriate.
- Strategies to support the interventionists and teachers are included in the support plan.
- A plan to monitor student progress and fidelity is created.

Step 4: Evaluate

- Regular meetings take place throughout the school year.
- Multiple data sources are used to evaluate progress.
- Progress is evaluated for short- and long-term goals, including graduation.
- Key collaborators are included in the evaluation process.
- A variety of educationally relevant variables are considered to explain patterns within the student's data.

Additional resources for data-based decision making within a response to instruction and intervention framework can be found on the Tennessee Department of Education's website:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/districts/instruction/tdoe-rti2/rti2-rediect/rti2-resources.html>