# Guiding Questions for Data-Based Decision Making (DBDM): Student-Level

**Purpose:** This resource is designed to assist facilitators of data-based decision-making (DBDM) teams as they apply the problem-solving process to student-level data. This resource is provided as a supplement to existing Tennessee Tiered Support Center (Tennessee TSC) resources containing more specific examples and/or summaries of the DBDM process. These resources, available on the Tennessee TSC website, include the:

- Data Drill-Down Case Studies and Facilitator Guide,
- Drill-Down Process Handout,
- Responding to Academic Data – Planning Reading Interventions Module, and
- Data-Based Decision Making Using an Early Warning System in High Schools.

**The guiding questions should not be used as a checklist.** Within each step of the four-step DBDM process, facilitators have flexibility to pull from the guiding questions *as needed* to provide structure to their team's drill-down process, encourage team members to think critically about multiple types of data, and enhance team discussions about student data and supports.

**Application of the Guiding Questions:**

- The guiding questions may be applied to academic (English language arts, math, written expression) The questions are broad enough to be used across grade levels.
- The guiding questions contained in this document focus on "**student-level**" data analysis and decision making, helping teams to think critically about multiple types of data before making decisions about student-level supports. As teams work their way through the different steps of the DBDM process, they should consider the extent to which their system-level outcomes, analysis and implementation plan aligns with, informs and addresses individual student needs.
- DBDM teams are encouraged to complete the guiding questions for system-level decision-making (separate document) prior to completing the student-level guiding questions. The system-level guiding questions help to establish a context for student performance that is useful to consider when identifying student-level needs.

## Pre-Work: Identifying Students at Risk

| | Guiding Question |
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| PRIORITIZE | **1.** Which students have outcome data that suggests they may have additional needs in at least one area? |
| | **2.** Which students have outcome data that suggests their need(s) may be intense compared to those of their peers? In which area(s)? |
| | **3.** Which students have outcome data that suggests they have elevated needs in **multiple** areas? |
| | **4.** Are there any patterns or relationships across students who may have elevated needs? |
| | **5.** Which student will our team focus on first? |

## Step 1: Student-Level Problem Definition

| | Guiding Question |
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| DEFINE | **1.** What is the student expected to know and do? |
| | **2.** How is the student currently performing relative to those expectations? |
| | **3.** How does this student's performance align with school-level outcomes? |
| | **4.** How does this student's performance compare to the performance of other students in their classroom? |
| | **5.** How does this student's performance compare to the performance of similar peers? |
| | **6.** What relationships and/or patterns exist across this student's comprehensive data profile? |
| | **7.** What else do we need to know to accurately define the problem experienced by this student? |
| | **8.** *Problem Definition:* What is the specific need experienced by this student? |

## Step 2: Problem Analysis

| | Guiding Question |
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| ANALYZE | **1.** To what degree does this learner have the prerequisite knowledge and skills necessary to participate in Tier I instruction with their peers? |
| | **2.** To what degree is *this student's* curriculum across tiers:<br>a. Aligned to grade level standards?<br>b. Used with fidelity?<br>c. Relevant and meaningful to the student?<br>d. Matched to this student's instructional level?<br>e. Accessible for this student?<br>f. Sequenced to address necessary prerequisite knowledge/skills?<br>g. Inclusive of adequate information to support scaffolding?<br>h. Inclusive of adequate opportunities for practice, feedback and review? |
| | **3.** To what degree does *this student's* instruction across tiers:<br>a. Provide adequate scaffolding that enables the student to access grade-level content?<br>b. Reflect the use of high-leverage practices?<br>c. Reflect their current instructional level?<br>d. Include explicit instruction on necessary skills?<br>e. Include adequate modeling?<br>f. Reflect a brisk instructional pace?<br>g. Have a high level of active engagement?<br>h. Include prompting and precorrection?<br>i. Include explicit teaching of how to work effectively with peers?<br>j. Utilize relevant and meaningful learning strategies?<br>k. Include corrective feedback with additional opportunities to practice?<br>l. Utilize the expected number of minutes and session frequencies?<br>m. Include recognition and celebration of this student's successes? |

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| | Guiding Question |
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| ANALYZE | **4.** To what degree do *this student's* educational environments:<br>a. Reflect a positive and instructional climate?<br>b. Include high rates of behavior-specific praise?<br>c. Include diverse learners as valued members of the community?<br>d. Demonstrate respect for this student, their friends and their family?<br>e. Include clear and consistent expectations and routines?<br>f. Minimize transition and "down" times?<br>g. Enable and encourage instructional and supportive discipline strategies?<br>h. Support the development of positive peer relationships?<br>i. Support the development of positive student-teacher and family-teacher relationships?<br>j. Remain conducive to learning, even when distractions occur?<br>k. Use physical layouts that facilitate learning and minimize behavioral disruptions?<br>l. Include an overview of learning objectives?<br>m. Allow flexibility so that unique situations and student needs may be addressed in a sensible and just manner? |
| | **5.** To what degree do our policies, practices, and resources account for this learner's characteristics? |
| | **6.** What other factors could be preventing this student from demonstrating expectations? |
| | **7.** How do the factor(s) impacting this student relate to system-level outcomes and action plans? |
| | **8.** What relationships exist between the different factors identified by the team? Are there factors that suggest a common root cause? |
| | **9.** What other information does the team need to identify, understand, and validate the causes of this student's defined problem? |
| | **10.** Whose perspectives are missing from the team's analysis? |
| | **11.** *Likely root causes:* What themes were identified in our analysis? |
| | **12.** *Validated root cause:* What evidence does our team have to support the root cause identified through our analysis? |

## Step 3: Implementation Planning

| | Guiding Question |
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| Implement | **1.** Which validated root cause will our team address first? |
| | **2.** What resources already exist that could help address this root cause? |
| | **3.** What new actions could our team take to address this root cause, if needed? |
| | **4.** What do other key collaborators, including the student and their caretaker(s), suggest as potential actions to address the root cause? Which actions do key collaborators wish to prioritize? |

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| | Guiding Question |
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| Implement | **5.** What should be included in the support plan? |
| | **6.** What is the expected (short-term) outcome of our team's action, and how quickly would the action impact the root cause? When can the team expect to see a change in the student's defined problem? |
| | **7.** How will the team monitor the short-term impact on the root cause? How will the team monitor the longer-term impact on the defined problem? |
| | **8.** How will the team monitor fidelity to this student's plan? How often will fidelity be measured? |
| | **9.** What resources are available to implement this plan? What resources are needed? |
| | **10.** Who will lead the implementation of this student's plan? Who will serve as a support and/or backup? |

### Step 4: Evaluate

| | Guiding Question |
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| Evaluate | **1.** What patterns do the data reveal? |
| | **2.** What do other data sources tell us? How are the results across data sources similar or different? |
| | **3.** Will short- and/or longer-term benchmarks and goals be met within the expected timeline?<br>a. If yes, should the team create a plan to fade the intervention and plan for longer-term sustainability?<br>b. If no, how might data and assessment issues be responsible for the lack of progress?<br>c. If no, how might dosage and **fidelity** issues be responsible for the lack of progress?<br>d. If no, how might content and intensity issues be responsible for the lack of progress?<br>e. If no, should we intensify or change our intervention plan? |
| | **4.** What feedback have key collaborators provided about the current intervention plan? |
| | **5.** When will we reconvene to discuss progress? |