When school policies and practices are informed by data, inequities in education can be identified and redressed. The below questions and competencies can be utilized to help your school community build a data culture in your school building.

**Why does data matter?**

Data offers a tool for educators and school leaders to systematically monitor student learning, find answers to important questions, and analyze and reflect together on instructional practices, classroom environments, and school systems and policies. When data are at the center of classroom, school, and district improvement efforts, they can serve as a lever to ensure educational equity is the priority in decision making processes.

**What does a data-centered culture look like?**

To build a strong data culture at your school, one must build the capacity of individuals, schools, and districts to engage meaningfully with different types of data, create data-informed action plans, use data to monitor progress toward goals, and make adjustments to practice based on thoughtful data review and reflection. A school with a strong data culture pushes educators and school leaders not only to reflect on patterns in their data, but to identify and commit to making specific changes to their practice.

**What skills and knowledge are necessary to foster a strong data-centered culture?**

The following data competencies are central for a school to cultivate a data-centered culture and build staff capacity to explore and act upon their data:

- **Data Sources:** Identify and evaluate different types and sources of data that could be collected to choose the most appropriate data source(s) to answer specific questions. This includes knowledge about the types of data resources currently available for a district or school (e.g., state standardized assessments, non-academic data, demographics data), as well as familiarity with disaggregation strategies that can ground the conversation in equity.

- **Data Collection Process:** Identify different types of data collection strategies (e.g., surveys, focus groups, observations, community forums) that educators could use to collect feedback or information. This includes awareness about various resources or tools that are available related to data or research (e.g., sample data collection instruments, articles about survey design best practices) to inform data collection instruments, sampling, and analysis processes.

- **Data Review:** Review data systematically (e.g., using data dialogue protocols, generating summary statistics) and interpret data to make inferences and decisions about next steps. This includes awareness about where to seek support, resources, or help with interpreting or understanding data.

- **Data Visualization:** Clean, sort, process, parse, and synthesize complex datasets to make patterns and trends more accessible, including generating data visualizations, particularly through the use of Excel, Google Sheets, or other data visualization software.

- **Data Analysis:** Build educators’ data literacy to cultivate a data-centered culture in schools and districts, and facilitate complex and action-oriented conversations about data.

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