



ANALYZING WHOLE CHILD DATA TO DRIVE EQUITABLE ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

A toolkit for data-driven
educators



TOOLKIT



Introduction

The mission felt by so many educators—to provide equitable access and outcomes as advocates for all students—has never been stronger or more urgent. Beyond the existing “education debt” owed to marginalized students, the ongoing impacts of the pandemic have widened achievement gaps among learners and disproportionately impacted those who were already experiencing inequities in a variety of ways.

In the wake of these experiences, districts are presented with a host of challenges. Yet this period of change also presents opportunities to reimagine systems and increase equitable practices, policies, and outcomes for all learners. The way educators use data to guide decisions around accelerating learning and measuring growth has the potential to not only close achievement gaps, but also enhance the way that schools equitably support learners for years to come.

The purpose of this toolkit is to support data-driven educators in examining whole child data and growth through an equity lens in order to inform system-level improvements that bolster the success of all learners. Please keep in mind that these tools are intended simply as a starting point and reference. This work will surely look different for each team, and there are numerous additional resources available in the education community. We invite you to adapt the articles in this toolkit as needed to best suit your unique needs.

If you have further questions or would like to discuss the equity initiatives in your specific school or district, feel free to [reach out to our team](#).

Analyzing Whole Child Data to Drive Equitable Actions and Outcomes

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SECTION 1:

TAKING AN EQUITY LENS TO WHOLE CHILD DATA SOURCES

This section highlights many of the common whole child data sources used in schools today. Each article offers sample questions for analyzing a specific data source, as well as possible action steps to take in various scenarios. For introductory information and background around these data sources, please reference [The Whole Child eBook](#) and the [Accelerate Learning with Assessment Toolkit](#).

Document	Description	Additional Support
Using Universal Screening and Diagnostic Assessment Data	Universal screening data helps educators equitably accelerate learning by identifying and addressing the needs of all students, identifying students for intensified supports, and tracking whether all students are growing. Because they're collected for all students, they're also a powerful tool for analyzing equity in student risk levels and outcomes. Use this article to get started.	[eBook] Universal Screening 101
Using Progress Monitoring Assessment Data	Progress monitoring data help identify whether an intervention is working and if it's working fast enough. These data can also be analyzed through an equity lens to determine whether interventions are working for all groups of students. Use this article to get started.	[eBook] Progress Monitoring 101

Document	Description	Additional Support
<u>Using Interim Assessment Data</u>	Interim assessments provide central, aggregated data around trends, groups of students, and equitable growth on standards mastery. Analyzing interim data can help guide systemic adjustments during the year, while there is still an opportunity to impact results and experiences. Use this article to get started.	[Webinar on Demand] <u>Data into Action: Analyzing and Interpreting Assessment Data</u>
<u>Using Attendance Data</u>	Analyzing attendance data can provide important insights around whether Tier 1 practices and supports are accessible, effective, engaging, and inclusive for all students. Use this article to get started.	[Article] <u>BI Tool: Distance Learning Engagement Report</u>
<u>Using Behavior Incident Data</u>	Analyzing behavior incident data can help educators recognize non-academic factors underpinning an academic struggle, monitor Tier 1 behavioral instruction effectiveness, and address areas of disproportionality and possible inequitable practices. Use this article to get started.	[Webinar on Demand] <u>Changing How We Approach Social-Emotional and Behavior Interventions</u>
<u>Using Well-Being Survey Data</u>	Documenting and codifying well-being survey responses turns them into actionable data for flagging students in need, informing current and future supports, and gaining visibility into Tier 1 needs. Use this article to get started.	[Article] <u>Use the Data You Have Today to Group Students, Align Remote Resources, and Plan for the Future</u>
<u>Using School Climate & Social-Emotional Survey Data</u>	Survey data around school climate and social-emotional needs can help educators identify barriers that prevent students from physically, mentally, or emotionally attending to learning. They are also a key data for monitoring equitable practices. Use this article to get started.	[Article] <u>An Equity-Based Approach to Supporting SEB Functioning</u>

SECTION 2: TOOLS FOR EQUITY-BASED DATA CONVERSATIONS

This section provides additional tools to support your team in using data to drive equitable outcomes.

Document	Description	Additional Support
<u>A Facilitator's Guide to Leading Data Conversations About Equity</u>	Data provide the foundation and impetus for the right conversations to take place around systems, policies, and practices. However, conversations around equity are inherently delicate and complex situations to navigate. A little planning can go a long way in yielding productive and learner-centered conversations. Use this article for support.	[Playbook] <u>Increasing Equity & Empowering Change</u>
<u>Sample Data Protocol</u>	Following a data protocol can provide structure and clarity to data conversations. Use or adapt this sample protocol to ensure that key questions are covered in an appropriate sequence through an equity lens.	[eBook] <u>Creating Data Teams that Accelerate Learning</u>
<u>Action Planning Template</u>	Use this template to clarify your goals, align on specific action steps, and set up for success.	[Workbook] <u>Data Dashboard Workbook</u>
<u>Rolling Agenda Template</u>	A “rolling” agenda is an ongoing note sheet that each data team can collaboratively use and maintain. Having a single source of information, action items, and important links can keep the team organized and accountable while preventing important information from falling through the cracks.	

SECTION 3:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Document	Description
<u>Disaggregating & Analyzing Data Workbook</u>	Practice viewing and analyzing your data through different lenses in order to find patterns and trends among different groups of students. Download this free workbook for prompts and reflection questions to help you examine attendance, behavior incident, and assessment data for various groups of students.
<u>Comprehensive, Balanced Assessment Systems: The What and the Why</u>	A comprehensive and balanced assessment system provides the high-quality assessment tools that educators need to equitably address unfinished learning and accelerate growth for all. Read this article to learn more.
<u>Assessment Tools & Comprehensive Assessment System Resources Page</u>	This page provides webinars, inventory templates, infographics, and other resources to help your team fine-tune your assessment system to support equity in your school.
<u>Introduction to Understanding Growth Data</u>	Many of the articles in this toolkit reference analyzing growth. However, there can be much confusion about growth data. Use this article to learn key terminology about student growth and the data to use when evaluating growth.
<u>MTSS Toolkit</u>	A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) provides a framework for equitably meeting the needs of all students. Our MTSS Toolkit provides a refresher on MTSS daily practices, guidance on which data to use for key decisions, and templates for your MTSS meetings.

SECTION 1:

**TAKING AN EQUITY LENS TO
WHOLE CHILD DATA SOURCES**



USING UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT DATA

Universal screening is the process of analyzing academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) data about all students in a class, grade, school, or district. Screening helps reveal areas of need within the universal tier and identify which students are at risk on various skills. Educators should use universal screening data as a check on where students are, to monitor whether students are growing at needed rates, and to identify opportunities for Tier 1 improvements.

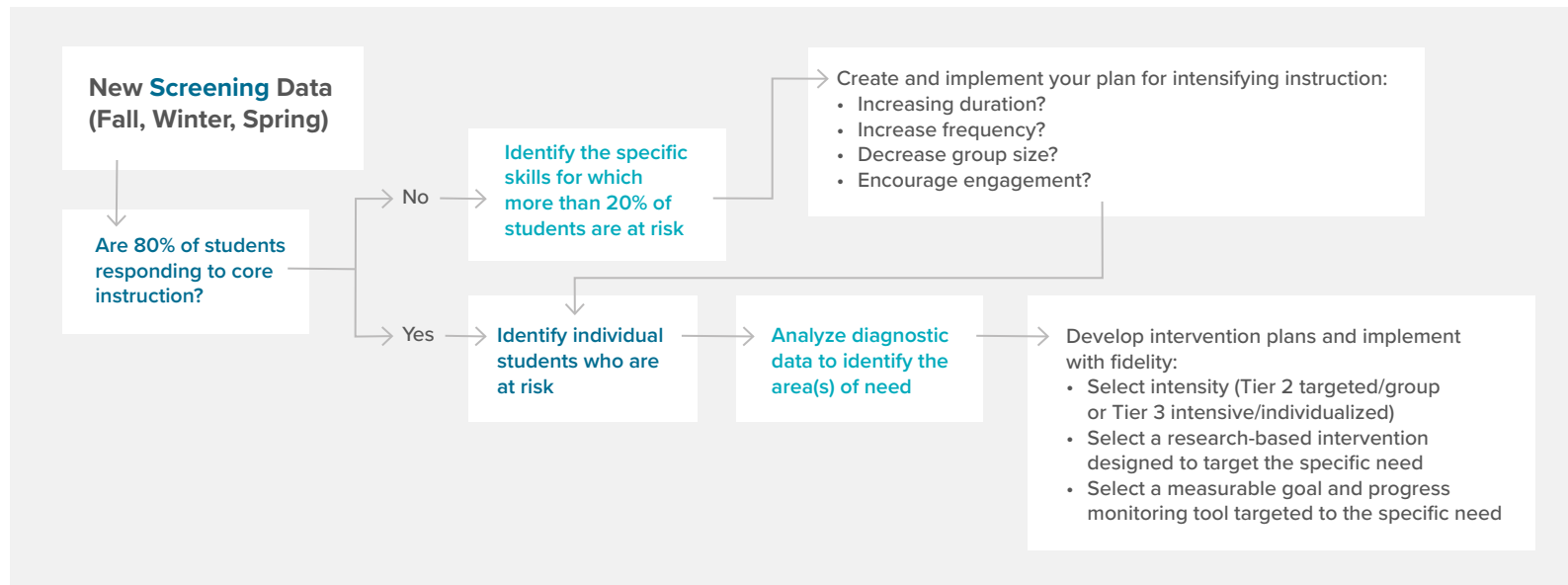
Diagnostic assessment is the process of using multiple measures and reports to identify student strengths and needs in *specific skill areas*, so teachers can provide instruction to address learning needs. Diagnostic assessment helps pinpoint the specific need that was broadly indicated by the universal screener.

Because universal screening data are collected with all students, they are a powerful tool for analyzing the needs, risk levels, and growth for specific groups of students to identify possible areas of inequity.



OVERVIEW

The flowchart below provides a high-level overview of using screening and diagnostic data.



WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHEN

Here are key questions to ask about your screening and diagnostic data at different points throughout the year. The table provides an overview, followed by in-depth explanations.

	Fall 	Winter 	Spring 
1 Are at least 80% of students meeting low-risk targets?	✓	✓	✓
2 On which specific academic and/or SEB skills are more than 20% of students at risk?	✓	✓	✓
3 Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?	✓	✓	✓
4 Which individual students are at risk? What level of risk and for which skills?	✓	✓	✓
5 Are at least 95% of students who begin the year on track growing enough to stay on track at the end of the year?		✓	✓
6 Are we seeing “catch-up” or above average growth?		✓	✓
7 What Tier 1 needs are shown at the end of the year?			✓



Universal Screening



Diagnostic

1

Universal
Screening

Are at least 80% of students meeting low-risk targets?

Why does this matter? This question helps identify whether there is an issue or need in the universal tier. Districts often use the “80% rule” because they typically only have the resources (e.g., staff, programming, time, and dollars) to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to about 20% of students. When a district attempts to provide interventions to more students than it truly has the capacity to serve, the interventions become overloaded and ineffective. For this reason, if data show that more than 20% of students require interventions in a specific academic and or SEB skill, districts should address those wide-spread needs at the universal tier—not through Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. This enables districts to address the needs of all students without overloading their intervention program, and the students with the greatest level of need are able to receive the most intensive supports.

2

Diagnostic



On which specific academic and/or SEB skills are more than 20% of students at risk?

Why does this matter? This question helps identify where to focus Tier 1 intensification efforts. If data aren’t used to target Tier 1 interventions, they may not align to the needs of students and are therefore less likely to be effective. By using data to guide Tier 1 intervention selection, those efforts are significantly more likely to improve student outcomes.

3

Universal
Screening

Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?

Why does this matter? This question helps identify whether Tier 1 instruction and intervention efforts are yielding equitable outcomes for all students. Oftentimes, this level of data analysis is more characteristic of end-of-year analysis and planning. Given the impacts of the pandemic, however, districts should carefully monitor groups of students throughout the year and ensure that all students are growing. Data must be used to identify areas of both success and need, so that any necessary adjustments can be made while there’s still time to impact student outcomes. For support in this work, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).

4

Diagnostic

**Which individual students are at risk? What level of risk and for which specific skills? Consider:**

- Which students are starting at high-risk levels and staying at high-risk levels?
- Which students are starting at a level that is not on track to meet goals by EOY?

Why does this matter? These questions help educators identify students with the greatest level of need for additional supports. They also help educators to determine what intensity of support is needed—a targeted, group Tier 2 intervention or an intensive, individualized Tier 3 intervention—and select an intervention aligned to the specific skill gap.

Again, it's important to first review the data for universal tier needs before examining these questions. If educators start by identifying individual students for interventions, they may find themselves with overloaded and ineffective interventions. The percent of students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions should be approximately 15% and 5% respectively; if proportions are higher than that, continue going back to the universal tier.

5

Universal
Screening**Are at least 95% of students who begin the year on track growing enough to stay on track at the end of the year?**

Why does this matter? This question gives another perspective of identifying universal tier needs. The goal is to ensure that students who begin the year on track continue to learn and grow enough throughout the year to stay on track at the end of the year. If students are not staying on track, it indicates that Tier 1 instruction or intensification is not yet meeting students' needs.

Focusing on students who start the year on track is significant because it will isolate students who have likely only received universal tier instruction (filtering out students who have also received Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions). This gives a clearer picture of universal tier instructional effectiveness.

6

Universal
Screening

Are we seeing “catch-up” or above average growth?

Why does this matter? Most years, educators aim to see at least average growth with their students because that is the rate of growth needed to be at grade-level by the end of the year. Since the impacts of the pandemic have resulted in [measurable learning loss](#), the rate of growth must be increased with many students.

Prior to the pandemic, winter screening processes were skipped by many districts. As districts work to help all students address unfinished learning, winter screening is strongly encouraged for all students. It will be an important mid-year check to see if students are growing, if gaps are closing, and if adjustments to instruction, intervention, and intensification are needed.

7

Diagnostic



What Tier 1 needs are shown at the end of the year?

Why does this matter? Educators can use spring screening and diagnostic data to plan programming, staffing, scheduling, and resourcing for the following year. This enables educators to act on those needs immediately in the fall, as opposed to waiting for new fall data—the latter of which not only delays providing support to students but also makes new supports harder to implement as the semester is already underway.



WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

Here are answers to common questions or challenges—and recommended next steps—around using screening and diagnostic data efficiently and effectively.

WHAT SHOULD OUR TEAM DO WHEN...

We discover a Tier 1 universal need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use diagnostic data to identify where students are succeeding in Tier 1.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrate these successes and work as a team to identify and retain the effective practices in this area.• Use diagnostic data to identify where students are not succeeding in Tier 1 and align universal interventions in those areas. This might include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing frequency: Increase the number of days per week the students receive intervention.• Increasing duration: Increase the length of time the students receive the intervention in each session.• Decrease group size: Reduce the number of students for more individualized attention.• Encourage engagement: Increase sense of connection or collaboration, increase motivation, and ensure opportunities to engage in a variety of learning activities and instruction.
We have significantly more students starting out at risk than we ever have before. Should we adjust the benchmarks to account for the fact that more students are starting out at risk?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. Due to the ongoing, varied, and complex disruptions caused by the pandemic, educators should not be surprised to see that more students are at risk than usual. The pandemic is a valuable context for interpreting those data, but not cause to alter grade-level benchmarks. Research shows that lowering expectations ultimately leads to lower outcomes. Adjusting benchmarks would likely widen and perpetuate decreased learning, while also disrupting longitudinal data sets and obscuring the learning gaps that do exist.• Instead, when you have more students who are not meeting benchmark, turn to Tier 1 interventions to meet growth needs.

<p>Our winter screening data shows that students are not making catch-up growth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use diagnostic data to identify where students <u>are</u> growing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate and retain the practices in this area. • Use diagnostic data to identify where students <u>are not</u> growing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further intensify Tier 1 interventions in those areas throughout the next semester. • Prioritize grade levels where students are not making catch-up growth and find ways to intensify Tier 1 instruction and provide Tier 1 intervention. • Ensure interventions that are being provided are being implemented with fidelity and are intensive enough to expect catch-up growth.
<p>Our data shows that some groups of students are at higher risk than others?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, ask why this might be. Work as a team to explore the screening data for this group of students compared to others groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the “Assessment” worksheet in the Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook for support. • Work as a team to reflect on Tier 1 practices that might not be meeting this group of students’ needs. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of evidence-based curricular materials and instructional practices at all grade levels as part of Tier 1 instruction • Instructional strategies (and fidelity in implementing planned strategies) • Current processes in place to promote relationships, connection, and engagement • Culturally sustaining programs and curriculum • Overall climate of the school and individual classes • Create a hypothesis. • Test and validate your hypothesis with data. Do not act based only on assumption. • Work as a team to plan and take action. For support, use the Action Planning Template in this toolkit.
<p>Our screening data show that many students are still at risk in the spring?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your diagnostic data to identify areas of Tier 1 academic and SEB needs, so you can plan early interventions in the fall. • Use your data to analyze the general effectiveness of current intervention practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether schools, grades, or educators should consider changes. • Consider strengths to amplify across the district and weaknesses to support. • Review the percent of students with each intervention practice that achieve growth goals to identify more and less successful interventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Explore why the less successful interventions didn’t achieve expected success.

We are doing hybrid or remote learning—can we still implement Tier 1 interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, Tier 1 interventions can be done in the same modality that core instruction is delivered. If core instruction is delivered remotely, Tier 1 interventions (e.g., increasing frequency, increasing duration, decreasing group size, encouraging engagement) would all happen via remote methods.
We are doing hybrid or remote learning—can we still screen our students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Check out Illuminate's Remote Universal Screening with FastBridge webinar recording for help getting started.
We are doing hybrid or remote learning—can we still implement PBIS at the universal tier?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Educators should identify behavior expectations for synchronous and asynchronous environments, explicitly teach those behaviors to students, and reinforce displays of appropriate behaviors. In a hybrid/remote environment, new behaviors will likely need to be discussed. Examples might include: How do students ask a question (e.g., type into the chat, raise their hands)? How often do students need to sign into asynchronous learning (i.e., can they complete all of their work on Monday, or do they need to log in each day)?
We're having trouble getting a process in place for analyzing our data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the MTSS Toolkit for help forming different data analysis teams (Universal DATs, Intervention DATs, and Program DATs) and for sample agendas for each team. • Schedule your data analysis team (DAT) meetings at the beginning of the year. • Create and follow an agenda. • Invest in a data management and visualization platform to house and analyze your data.



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USING PROGRESS MONITORING DATA

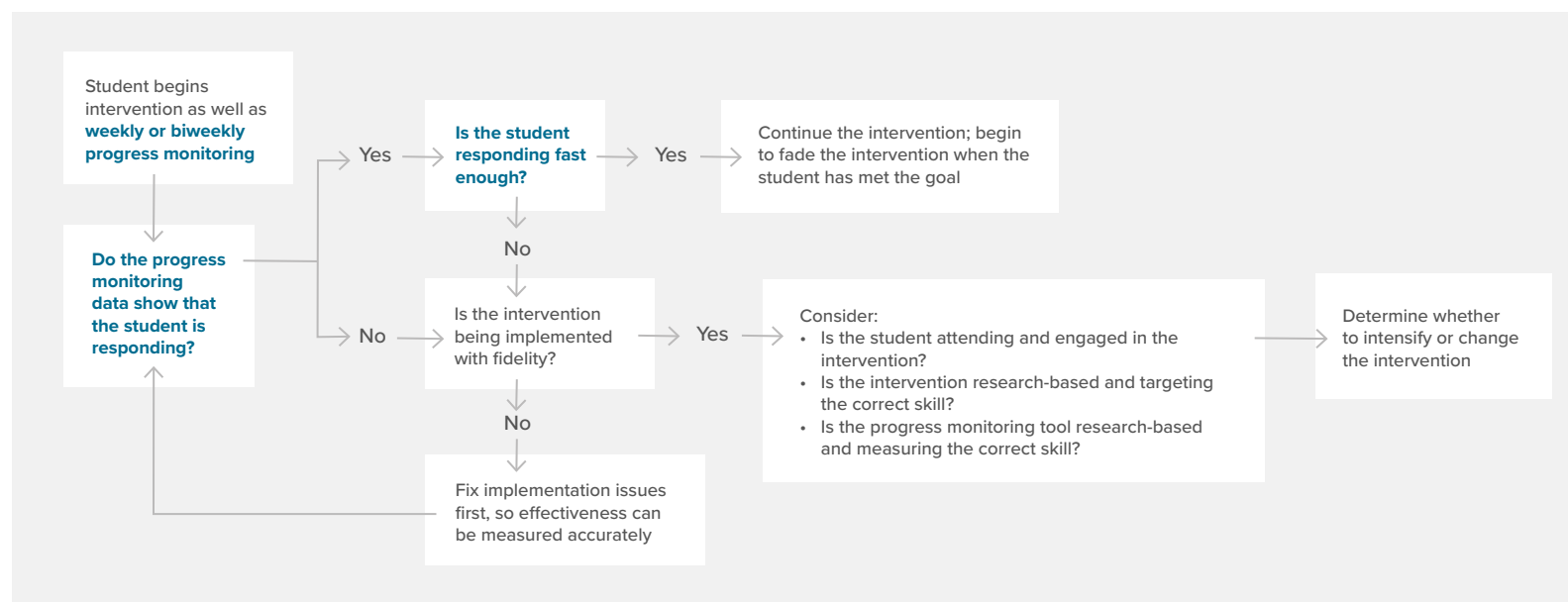
Progress monitoring is a standardized process of evaluating progress toward a performance target, based on rates of improvement from frequent (usually weekly or biweekly) assessment of a specific skill. Progress monitoring assessments are very sensitive to growth and are aligned to the skill or need that is identified during diagnosis and targeted by an intervention. They help measure whether an intervention is working and if it's working fast enough. The goal of using high-quality progress monitoring tools is to prevent students from receiving ineffective interventions for prolonged or indefinite periods of time and to efficiently remove students from interventions when they are no longer needed.

Progress monitoring data can also be analyzed through an equity lens to determine whether interventions are working for all groups of students. Use this article to get started.



OVERVIEW

The flowchart below provides a high-level overview of using progress monitoring data.



WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHEN

Here are key questions to ask about your progress monitoring data at different intervals. The table provides an overview, followed by in-depth explanations.

	Intervention Data Analysis Team Meetings Meets every 6 weeks for academic interventions; every 3 weeks for SEB interventions	Program Data Analysis Meetings Meets every 12 weeks for both academic and SEB interventions
1 Do we have enough data points to make a decision?	✓	
2 Is there a lot of variability in the data?	✓	
3 How does the student's rate of improvement (ROI) compare to the ROI goal?	✓	
4 What is the student's growth percentile?	✓	
5 Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?		✓
6 Is the ROI for students who participate in interventions significantly higher than the ROI for students who have not?		✓
7 Should the intervention be continued, adjusted, or faded out?	✓	



Intervention DAT



Program DAT

1

Intervention
DAT

Are there enough data to make a decision?

Why does this matter? In order to get an accurate picture of how the student is responding, there need to be enough data points to establish a trend. Decisions should be validated by at least 12 data points, unless using Illuminate's [FAST Projection™ algorithm](#) (the only tool to provide an accurate prediction of future growth in only six data points, as opposed to the usual 12).

2

Intervention
DAT

Is there a lot of variability in the data?

Why does this matter? If the data points vary significantly, it implies that there might be accuracy or validity issues with the data. A good rule of thumb is that 80% of data points should be within 20% of each other.

3

Intervention
DAT

How does the student's rate of improvement (ROI) compare to the ROI goal?

Why does this matter? This question helps determine whether the student is on track to meet the goal in time, and ultimately, whether the intervention is helping the student close a specific skill gap successfully and efficiently.

The rate of improvement is essentially the difference between the starting data point and the goal, divided by the number of weeks implemented. In other words, it breaks out the total amount of growth that needs to happen into weekly intervals, so educators are able to see if students are on track week by week. If the current ROI trendline does not show the student is on track to meet the goal, it indicates that the intervention is either not working or not working fast enough.

4

Intervention
DAT

What is the student's growth percentile?

Why does this matter? This question helps educators determine whether the student is going to catch up to the end-of-year benchmark. The "growth percentile" helps us track whether the student is growing rapidly enough to catch up to their grade-level benchmark, or achieving "catch-up growth."

In a normal year, ROIs typically translate to a student needing to be in the 65th growth percentile in order to meet their goal and catch up. When students start further than usual from their goal, their ROI must be more aggressive (i.e., they need to be in a higher growth percentile than the 65th). Thus, monitoring growth percentiles is another way to check whether an intervention is working fast enough.

5

Program
DAT**Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?**

Why does this matter? This question helps identify whether intervention efforts are yielding equitable outcomes for all students. Oftentimes, this level of data analysis is more characteristic of end-of-year analysis and planning. Given the impacts of the pandemic, however, districts should carefully monitor groups of students throughout the year and ensure that all students are growing. Data must be used to identify areas of both success and need, so that any necessary adjustments can be made while there's still time to impact student outcomes. For support in this work, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).

6

Program
DAT**Is the ROI for students who participate in interventions significantly higher than the ROI for students who have not?**

Why does this matter? Monitoring whether interventions are helping students close specific skill gaps is only one lens of evaluating effectiveness. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure students are on track for their grade level benchmarks. Since students receiving interventions are receiving intensified supports, we should see growth toward grade-level benchmarks happening at a faster rate than with students who are not receiving those additional supports. If interventions appear to be effective but are not helping students get back on track with their general outcome measures, consider intensifying the intervention.

7

Intervention
DAT**Should the intervention be continued, adjusted, or ended?**

Why does this matter? This question helps your team articulate a clear plan of action for how to respond to the progress monitoring data. Adjusting or ending ineffective interventions when needed is an important component of accelerating learning; otherwise, students may continue receiving ineffective supports for a prolonged or indefinite period of time.

At the same time, it's just as important to promptly begin fading a student out of an effective intervention when they reach the goal. By promptly beginning to transition students out of interventions, the student can return to only receiving universal instruction and a "seat" in the intervention is made available for another student who needs additional supports.

WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

Here are answers to common questions or challenges—and possible next steps—around using progress monitoring data efficiently and effectively.

WHAT SHOULD OUR TEAM DO WHEN...

<p>The student <u>is</u> responding to an intervention at a rate that will meet the grade-level EOY goal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the intervention until the student has reached the goal. • Then, fade the intervention supports gradually. A good rule of thumb is to fade over 4–6 weeks. This allows the team to collect enough data to ensure the student is still successful without additional supports before exiting the intervention completely.
<p>The student <u>is</u> improving but <u>is not</u> responding to the intervention at a rate that will meet grade level EOY goal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that a research-based intervention is being used. • Determine if the intervention is being implemented with “fidelity,” or implemented as prescribed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider factors such as duration, frequency, student participation, and student engagement. • If the implementation is not being implemented with fidelity (or if the student was not present or engaged in the intervention), the intervention has not been implemented as prescribed and effectiveness cannot be accurately evaluated. In this case, start by addressing those issues and then re-evaluate. • If the intervention is being implemented with fidelity, determine how to adjust intervention intensity, or “dosage,” to meet the student’s needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing frequency: Increase the number of days per week the student receives the intervention. • Increasing duration: Increase the length of time the student receives the intervention in each session. • Decrease group size: Reduce the number of students for more individualized attention. • Encourage engagement: Increase sense of connection or collaboration, increase motivation, and ensure opportunities to engage in a variety of learning activities and instruction.

The student <u>is not</u> improving?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, consider why the intervention is not effective. Common causes include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The intervention is not research-based.• The intervention is not being implemented with fidelity.• The progress monitoring measure is monitoring a different skill than what is being targeted by the intervention.• The intervention is truly not working for a particular student.• Take action.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If there is an issue with the intervention, progress monitoring tool, or implementation fidelity, fix those issues and then re-evaluate.• If you determine that the intervention simply isn't working for a student, move that student to a different research-based intervention designed to target the specific skill deficit identified by the diagnostic data. (Be sure to update the student's plan to note when the intervention adjusted.) Then, re-evaluate.
An intervention is not being implemented with fidelity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, work to understand why this is the case. Consider questions such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the interventionist receive training in the intervention?• Is the interventionist unable to provide the intervention due to conflicting meetings or tasks?• Have typical intervention durations been divided to accommodate additional intervention slots?• Is the student unable to attend the intervention due to device or internet access?• Then, resolve the issues preventing the intervention from being implemented as prescribed. This might entail:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes to intervention schedules.• Professional learning on interventions.• Moving current Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions into the universal tier.• Changes to protocols or tools around documenting and scheduling intervention.

There are groups of students who are not responding to interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, ask why this might be.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the groups of students for whom interventions are and aren't working; the goal is to retain effective practices for the students responding to them, while also adjusting practices for students who are still struggling.• Consider whether regrouping is needed. It's normal for students to progress at different rates. At least once per quarter, it's important to regroup students in relation to the progress they're making, so supports continue to be aligned to their needs.• Create a hypothesis.• Test and validate your hypothesis with data. Do not act based only on assumption.• Work as a team to plan and take action.
Students receiving interventions do not have a higher ROI than students who have not received interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, try to understand the underlying reasons or causes.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be sure to review intervention fidelity and integrity data.• If the issues lie in fidelity, address those issues first. It's possible that when interventions are implemented as prescribed, they will indeed prove to effectively help students get back on track for grade-level benchmarks.• If there are not implementation issues, consider intensification or changing to different research-based interventions.
The district is unsure how to conduct remote interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is ample guidance online around implementing interventions remotely. By and large, remote interventions do not need to be elaborate or complicated—often, they just require video and audio.• There will likely be additional planning associated with getting remote interventions scheduled, ensuring that they actually happen, and equipping educators to track the instructional minutes and engagement for each session.• Fidelity data will be extremely important as educators work to understand which interventions are and aren't working for students and what to do about it.

The district is unsure how to conduct remote progress monitoring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check out Illuminate’s Remote Progress Monitoring with FastBridge webinar recording for help getting started.
Leaders want to support this work across modalities but aren’t sure how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District leaders can help educators prioritize the time and space necessary for interventions to happen and, just as importantly, for data review sessions to happen. With the many competing demands of the school year—especially this school year—those meetings can fall by the wayside. They must be protected and prioritized if acceleration is to occur.• Leaders can also equip educators with data visualization tools, intervention tracking tools, and collaboration tools to make this process more efficient. eduCLIMBER provides these MTSS tools (and more) in a single platform.
Teams are having trouble getting a process in place for analyzing our data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the MTSS Toolkit for help forming different data analysis teams—Universal DATs, Intervention DATs, and Program DATs—and for sample agendas for each team.• Schedule your data analysis team (DAT) meetings at the beginning of the year.• Create and follow an agenda.• Invest in a data management and visualization platform to house and analyze your data.



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USING INTERIM ASSESSMENT DATA

Interim assessments measure students' standards proficiency and are typically administered periodically or seasonally. They provide central, aggregated data around trends, groups of students, and equitable practices. These data can also be used to guide systemic adjustments during the year, while there is still an opportunity to impact results and experiences. Use this article to get started.



WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHEN

Here are sets of questions to ask at different points throughout the year. The table provides an overview, followed by in-depth explanations.

Question Groups	Fall 	Winter 	Spring 
1 Proficiency and Learning Targets	✓	✓	✓
2 Student Groups	✓	✓	✓
3 Individual Students	✓	✓	✓

1

Proficiency and Learning Targets

Start by looking at high-level trends in achievement to identify areas of both success and need. This analysis can guide system-level decisions around resources and instructional practices.

- What percentage of students are achieving proficiency in math? In ELA?
- Are there areas of especially high proficiency? What is driving those successes?
- Are there areas of especially low proficiency? What are the possible causes? Do any of those areas incorporate priority learning targets?
- How is proficiency changing over time or across administrations? Is proficiency growing or decreasing?

Why does this matter? If there are areas of particularly high proficiency, it's possible there are effective teaching strategies used in those areas that could be applied elsewhere. These questions also help identify areas of need and adjust instructional approaches and resources according to the data. By analyzing trends over time, it helps determine longitudinal patterns around whether current practices are supporting student learning.

2

Student Groups

After looking at data for all students, analyze the data by groups of students. This helps take an equity lens to the data and ensures that needs among different groups of students aren't obscured by aggregate data.

- Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device, and internet access)?
- How is proficiency changing over time or across administrations for these groups of students? Is proficiency growing or decreasing? How does growth for these groups of students compare to the growth of all students?

Why does this matter? These questions help identify whether instructional efforts are yielding equitable outcomes. Oftentimes, this level of data analysis is more characteristic of end-of-year analysis and planning. Given the impacts of the pandemic, however, districts should carefully monitor groups of students throughout the year and ensure that all students are growing. Data must be used to identify areas of both success and need, so that any necessary adjustments can be made while there's still time to impact student outcomes. For support in this work, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).



3

Individual Students

After looking at data for all students and groups of students, analyze data for individual learners to determine who needs additional supports.

- Which students are achieving low proficiency?
- Have those students displayed low proficiency on previous assessments?
- How is proficiency changing over time or across administrations for these students? Is proficiency growing or decreasing? How does growth for this student compare to the growth of all students?

Why does this matter? These questions help educators identify students with the greatest level of need for additional supports. They also help educators identify general areas for additional analysis and/or diagnostic assessment to determine whether an intervention is potentially needed to support the student.

Again, it's important to first review the data for universal tier needs before examining these questions. If educators start by identifying individual students for interventions, they may find themselves with overloaded and ineffective interventions. The percent of students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions should be approximately 15% and 5% respectively; if proportions are higher than that, continue going back to the universal tier.



WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

Here are answers to common questions or challenges—and possible next steps—around using interim data efficiently and effectively.

WHAT SHOULD OUR TEAM DO WHEN...

More students score below proficiency than usual?

- Use frequent formative assessment processes throughout the year, even daily.
 - With frequent checks on learning, educators can use data to identify reteaching and intervention needs in the moment, provide just-in-time feedback, and correct misconceptions as they happen. Every instructional minute is maximized because educators have data to guide their actions, based on what students need.
- Be sure that your team is also monitoring and measuring risk levels through a universal screener.
 - By assessing skill needs, educators are able to help students fill in any missing skills that underpin the standards and may cause a barrier to learning if unaddressed. Assessing skills also provides important insight around growth that may not be captured by measuring proficiency alone.



Our interim assessments show some groups of students with lower rates of proficiency than their peers?

- First, ask why this might be. Work as a team to explore the data for this group of students compared to others groups.
 - Use the “Assessment” worksheet in the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#) for support.
- Work as a team to reflect on Tier 1 practices that might not be meeting this group of students’ needs. Consider:
 - Use of evidence-based curricular materials and instructional practices at all grade levels as part of Tier 1 instruction
 - Instructional strategies (and fidelity in implementing planned strategies)
 - Current processes in place to promote relationships, connection, and engagement
 - Culturally sustaining programs and curriculum
 - Overall climate of the school and individual classes
- Create a hypothesis.
- Test and validate your hypothesis with data. Do not act based only on assumption.
- Work as a team to plan and take action. For support, use the [Action Planning Template](#) in this toolkit.



Illuminate provides pre-built standards-based interim assessments as well as custom assessment creation and administration. Reach out to [schedule a demo](#).

USING ATTENDANCE DATA

Attendance data can be an important indicator of whether Tier 1 practices and supports are accessible, effective, engaging, and inclusive for all students. By monitoring and taking action on attendance data, educators are able to provide the right early interventions to maintain attendance for all groups of learners, removing barriers that prevent them from physically, mentally, or emotionally attending to learning. Here are some example questions to help your team get started.

WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHEN

Here are sets of questions to ask at different points throughout the year. The table provides an overview, followed by in-depth explanations.

Question Groups	Fall 	Winter 	Spring 
1 Attendance Patterns by District, School or Grade	✓	✓	✓
2 Attendance Patterns by Different Groups of Students	✓	✓	✓
3 Response & Communication Patterns	✓	✓	✓

1



Attendance Patterns by District, School, and Grade

- What are the overall attendance and absence rates?
- What are the average attendance and absence counts (e.g., number of missed periods)?
- What percentage of students are chronically absent (e.g., missing 10% or more of school days)?
- Do patterns emerge when attendance is filtered by month? By weekday? By time of day?
- How does attendance for the district, school, and grade change over time? Are there areas where attendance is increasing? Decreasing?

Why does this matter? These questions help teams begin to examine high-level trends in attendance data and determine first if there are universal attendance needs. If a high percentage of students are not regularly attending school, that indicates that adjustments should be made to Tier 1 practices before looking at small group or individual intervention and supports. Addressing universal needs on an individual-student basis is likely unsustainable and unlikely to address root causes. To learn more about supporting both the universal tier and Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs, download the [MTSS Interventions: Increasing Effectiveness at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3](#).

2



Attendance Patterns by Different Groups of Students

- Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?
- Are there groups of students who are more likely to be chronically absent?
- For groups of students with lower attendance, what patterns are seen in the same students' achievement data?
- Can we isolate a group of students for which we will intensify supports?

Why does this matter? These questions help identify whether there are potential equity gaps in terms of how students are able to logistically, mentally, or emotionally attend to or engage in learning. Oftentimes, this level of data analysis is more characteristic of end-of-year analysis and planning. Given the impacts of the pandemic, however, districts should carefully monitor groups of students throughout the year and ensure that all students are growing. Data must be used to identify areas of both success and need, so that any necessary adjustments can be made while there's still time to impact student outcomes. For support in this work, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).

3



Response & Communication Patterns

- At what point is action taken in response to absences? Which actions?
- Are there students or families who haven't successfully been contacted regarding absences?
- Of the actions taken to respond to attendance concerns, which are most effectively increasing attendance?
- Are different practices more effective for different groups of students?
- What other types of communications are being sent to families? When and for what reasons? Are they positive or negative?

Why does this matter? These questions help educators confirm that the planned, appropriate responses to attendance needs are indeed happening at the right time and as expected for all groups of students. They also help determine whether some responses are more impactful than others, and for which students; this can help maximize effective responses and adjust ineffective responses. Additionally, these questions can also help educators get a sense of the overall communications being shared with families and determine whether communications are likely to be supporting or depleting a sense of connection and trust (e.g., if communications are usually negative, they may discourage student and family engagement).

WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

Here are answers to common questions or challenges—and possible next steps—around using attendance data efficiently and effectively.

WHAT SHOULD OUR TEAM DO WHEN...

We aren't sure how to start exploring possible root causes of absences for specific groups of students?

- First, start by exploring the attendance data for this group of students compared to other groups.
 - Use the “Attendance” worksheet in the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#) for support.
- Examine patterns for this group of students compared to other data. For example:
 - If school climate data are available, compare patterns in absences to school climate. Are there any correlations to feelings of safety, relationships, and connectedness?
 - Are there days of the week or times of the day for which absences are more or less common?
 - Are absences more common for students in specific teaching modalities (e.g., remote, hybrid, or onsite)?
 - Have student surveys indicated patterns in other needs, such as transportation, internet access, or conflicting family or work obligations?
 - Are there parent, family, or community-level surveys that can be considered?
- Reflect on Tier 1 practices that might not be meeting this group of students’ needs. Consider:
 - Use of evidence-based curricular materials and instructional practices at all grade levels as part of Tier 1 instruction
 - Instructional strategies (and fidelity in implementing planned strategies).
 - Underlying skill gaps
 - Current processes in place to promote high student attendance
 - Approaches in responding to absences
 - Culturally sustaining programs and curriculum
 - Overall climate of the school and individual classes
- Examine current responses to absences.
 - Which families or students have been contacted about the attendance concerns and which have not?
 - Are different types of responses to absences more common for different groups of students? Which responses are most and least effective for this group of students?

We aren't sure how to help increase attendance with groups of students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, ask what might be impacting attendance (see above). • Then, create and implement a plan. Depending on the need, this might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensifying relationship-building in the universal tier • Changing family engagement practices • Including a fun activity at the beginning of every class • Increasing positive communications with families • Providing classroom teachers with resources to promote a positive class climate • Providing transportation or other logistical supports
We are struggling to track attendance in the moment and respond at the right time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an early warning system alert so that attendance data are monitored for your team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which attendance thresholds require an alert. • Determine who should be alerted. • Specify which next steps should be taken when the alert is triggered.
We're having trouble getting a process in place for analyzing our data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule your data analysis team (DAT) meetings at the beginning of the year. • Create and follow an agenda. • Invest in a data management and visualization platform to house your data so they can be analyzed easily.



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USING BEHAVIOR INCIDENT DATA

Examining behavior incident data can have powerful impacts on student success. Behavior incidents can help teachers understand non-academic factors causing a student to struggle academically, enabling whole child supports to be aligned and positive behaviors to be developed so that academic success is more attainable.

These data are also instrumental in understanding the effectiveness of Tier 1 behavioral instruction, the impact of various responses to incidents on student outcomes, and the presence of disproportionality in the school or district. Use these sample questions to get started.

WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHEN

Here are sets of questions to ask at different points throughout the year. The table provides an overview, followed by in-depth explanations.

Question Groups	Fall 	Winter 	Spring 
1 Behavior Incident Patterns by District, School or Grade	✓	✓	✓
2 Behavior Incident Patterns by Different Groups of Students	✓	✓	✓
3 Response & Communication Patterns	✓	✓	✓

1



Behavior Incident Patterns by District, School, and Grade

- How many major (office-managed) behavior incidents are there?
- How many minor (classroom-managed) behavior incidents are there?
- Do patterns emerge when incidents are filtered by specific incident type? By month? By weekday? By location?
- How do behavior incidents counts change over time for the district, school, and grade? Are there areas where the number of incidents are increasing? Decreasing?

Why does this matter? These questions help teams begin to examine high-level trends in behavior data and determine first if there are universal behavior needs. If universal instruction is not currently helping students succeed behaviorally, that indicates that adjustments should be made to Tier 1 practices before looking at small group or individual intervention and supports. Addressing universal needs on an individual-student basis is likely unsustainable and unlikely to address root causes. To learn more about supporting both the universal tier and Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs, download the [MTSS Interventions: Increasing Effectiveness at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3](#).

2



Behavior Incident by Different Groups of Students

- Do we see different results for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?
- Are there any groups of students for which we see significantly more or fewer major and/or minor behavior incidents? If so, what types of behavior incidents are happening?
- For groups of students with more behavior incidents, what patterns are seen in the same students' attendance and achievement data?
- Can we isolate a group of students for which we will intensify supports?

Why does this matter? These questions help examine whether there are gaps in how different groups of students are exhibiting positive behaviors, potentially revealing areas in which additional supports are needed. These questions can also highlight patterns in how behaviors are perceived and reported for different groups of students, revealing possible areas of disproportionality. Oftentimes, this level of data analysis is more characteristic of end-of-year analysis and planning. Given the impacts of the pandemic, however, districts should carefully monitor groups of students throughout the year and ensure that all students are growing. Data must be used to identify areas of both success and need, so that any necessary adjustments can be made while there's still time to impact student outcomes. For support in this work, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).

3

Response & Communication Patterns



- What responses are taken to major (office-managed) behavior incidents?
- What responses are taken to minor (classroom-managed) behavior incidents? If responses to minor behaviors aren't being recorded, is there a way to start doing so?
- Are various responses more frequently used with different groups of students?
- Of our various responses to behavior incidents, which are most effectively improving positive behavior?
- Are different responses more effective for different groups of students?

Why does this matter? These questions help educators explore whether some responses are more impactful than others (and for which students) so that effective practices are retained and maximized, while ineffective or harmful practices are identified and addressed. These questions can also reveal areas of disproportionality in responses to behaviors for various groups of students, indicating possible areas of bias. Without examining response data, ineffective and inequitable patterns can sometimes go undetected and therefore inadvertently and indefinitely continue.



WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

Here are a few common questions and challenges around using behavior incident data impactfully, along with possible next steps.

WHAT SHOULD OUR TEAM DO WHEN...

We aren't sure how to examine incident data for groups of students to better understand root causes?

- First, start by exploring the behavior data for this group of students compared to other groups.
 - Use the “Behavior” worksheet in the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#) for support.
- Examine patterns for this group of students compared to other data. For example:
 - If school climate data are available, compare patterns in behavior to school climate. Are there any correlations to feelings of safety, relationships, and connectedness?
 - What do attendance and achievement data look like for this group of students?
 - Are there days, times, and locations for which incidents are more or less common?
 - Are incidents more common for students in specific teaching modalities (e.g., online, hybrid, or onsite)?
- Reflect on Tier 1 practices that might not be meeting this group of students' needs. Consider:
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) practices and other Tier 1 instructional strategies (as well as fidelity in implementing planned strategies)
 - Underlying skill gaps
 - Current processes in place to build relationships and promote engagement
 - Approaches in responding to incidents
 - Culturally sustaining programs and curriculum
 - Overall climate of the school and individual classes
- Examine current responses to behavior incidents.
 - What types of responses are typically taken? Which are most effective? Least effective? Who is usually providing the responses?

We are struggling to track behavior incidents in order to provide early interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a common practice for documenting behavior incidents in your data management system.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide guidance for coding different behaviors as well as definitions and examples of various behavior incident types.• Create an an early warning system alert so that behavior incident data are monitored for your team.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine which behavior incident thresholds require an alert.• Determine who should be alerted.• Specify which next steps should be taken when the alert is triggered.
We're having trouble getting a process in place for analyzing our data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule your data analysis team (DAT) meetings at the beginning of the year.• Create and follow an agenda.• Invest in a data management and visualization platform to house your data so they can be analyzed easily.



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USING WELL-BEING SURVEY DATA

Well-being surveys can be great tools for monitoring whether students are physically, mentally, and emotionally able to attend to learning. The data gleaned from these surveys, however, can feel fragmented and hard to turn into action steps, especially as they tend to be fairly informal. To support your team's usage and responsiveness to these data, try using a consistent guided question list and documentation protocol. Here are some example questions and follow-up actions to get you started.

1. What do we consider “at-need” responses?

- For numerical responses, at which value do we believe that action is needed? What action?
- For written responses, what types of things indicate that a student is “at-need”? What are examples?

2. Which students have submitted “at-need” responses?

- What is the protocol for documenting “at-need” responses from students?
- Is there a way to flag students who submitted an “at-need” response in the district's data management platform?
- Is it possible to document and aggregate responses, so that patterns and trends can be tracked?
- Does it also allow us to input teacher observations and notes, in addition to the students' responses?

3. What follow-up actions have or will be taken?

- What is the protocol for documenting follow-up supports to students who are “at-need”?
- What supports can be provided in-district? By the community?
- Are there specific things (safety concerns, abuse, etc.) that need additional or escalated actions, such as reporting to other entities? What is the protocol for reporting those?

4. In the aggregated data, what patterns and trends are emerging? What needs are surfacing?

- Where are the Tier 1 needs? Are there groups of students with similar needs? What might be causing these needs?
- Are there changes in areas of need over time? Where are those changes? What might be causing these changes?
- Are there other commonalities in students who are “at-need” (e.g., geographic location)? Can this information help address the needs of many students more efficiently?
- When the data are filtered by groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access), are some groups of students struggling more than others? What might be causing this?

5. How can root causes be addressed?

- What are the root causes of the needs that are surfacing?
- What specific actions will we take to address the root causes?

6. How can effective practices be shared and maximized?

- Of the various actions we take for “at-need” responses, which are most effective?
- Should any small-group supports be moved into our Tier 1 supports?



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USING SCHOOL CLIMATE & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SURVEY DATA

School climate and social-emotional survey data can help educators monitor whether Tier 1 practices are inclusive, effective, engaging, and accessible for all students and identify barriers that otherwise prevent students from physically, mentally, or emotionally attending to learning. By examining these data with an equity lens, educators can identify whether there are groups of students for which school climate or social-emotional needs are not being met and may be underpinning academic struggles. Here are some example questions to help you get started.

WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHEN

Here are sets of questions to ask at different points throughout the year. The table provides an overview, followed by in-depth explanations.

Question Groups	Fall 	Spring 
1 What patterns are seen at the district, school, and grade level?	✓	✓
2 What patterns do we see when we filter the data by different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?	✓	✓
3 What practices were the most effective?		✓



What patterns are seen at the district, school, and grade level?

- Where are there areas of success? What effective practices should be continued (and perhaps expanded) to retain those areas of success?
- Where are there areas of need? How long have they been areas of need?
- What are the possible root causes of each need?
- How do the current areas of need compare to the needs seen last year?
- While considering potential root causes, what Tier 1 practices might need to be examined to better address those needs?

Why does this matter? These questions help teams begin to examine high-level trends in survey data and determine first if there are universal school climate or social-emotional needs. If large percentages of students indicate that their school climate or social-emotional needs are not being met, that indicates that adjustments should be made to Tier 1 practices before looking at small group or individual intervention and supports. Addressing universal needs on an individual-student basis is likely unsustainable and unlikely to address root causes. To learn more about supporting both the universal tier and Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs, download the [MTSS Interventions: Increasing Effectiveness at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3](#).



2



What patterns do we see when we filter the data by different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)?

- Are there areas where our universal tier data look to be successful, but aren't successful for different particular groups of students?
 - What are the possible root causes for this?
 - Are there Tier 1 practices that might need to be examined and adjusted to better meet these students' needs?
 - Do we see any connections or patterns when examining the attendance, behavior, or achievement data for this same group of students?

Why does this matter? These questions help identify whether there are areas of disproportionality in the survey data, indicating that there are potential equity gaps in terms of how students are able to logistically, mentally, or emotionally attend to learning. Oftentimes, this level of data analysis is more characteristic of end-of-year analysis and planning. Given the impacts of the pandemic, however, districts should carefully monitor groups of students throughout the year and ensure that all students are growing. Data must be used to identify areas of both success and need, so that any necessary adjustments can be made while there's still time to impact student outcomes. For support in this work, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).



3



What practices were the most effective?

- Between the fall and spring, what were the areas of the most growth or improvement? The least growth or improvement? What are the possible causes for this?
- Are the areas of greatest growth different for different groups of students (e.g., by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, teaching modality, device and internet access)? What are the possible causes for this?
- Which practices should be continued into the coming year? Which should be discontinued?
- Were there any group supports that might be impactful for other groups of students?
- Were there any group supports that should be moved into universal Tier 1 practices for all students?

Why does this matter? These questions help educators retain and amplify effective practices that support all students, while also discontinuing practices that are not impactful.



WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN

Here are answers to common questions or challenges—and possible next steps—around using school climate and social-emotional survey data efficiently and effectively.

WHAT SHOULD OUR TEAM DO WHEN...

We aren't sure what to do when our survey data shows areas of need?

- First, work as a team to examine the area of need.
 - What is the specific domain or concern? (e.g., safety vs. sense of belonging)
 - Use the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#) for support.
- Work as a team to identify and articulate why you think this is happening and what the root cause is.
- Then, create a plan to address the root cause. Use the [Action Planning Template](#) in this toolkit to outline your measurable goals and action steps. Depending on the need, next steps might include:
 - Intensifying relationship-building in the universal tier
 - Changing family engagement practices
 - Increasing or adjusting communication about family engagement opportunities or events at the school
 - Increasing deliberate, positive communications with families as a Tier 1 practice
 - Establishing mentoring programs
 - Involving community programs or leaders, especially leaders who represent the students in the school
 - Offering communications in different languages or via different channels (e.g., text messages vs. letters home)

**We're having trouble
getting a process in place
for analyzing our data.
What can we do?**

- Identify the right team members and help them understand the purpose of using these data
- Schedule your data analysis team (DAT) meetings at the beginning of the year
- Create and follow an agenda
- Invest in a [data management and visualization platform](#) to house your data so they can be analyzed easily.



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SECTION 2: **TOOLS FOR EQUITY-BASED DATA CONVERSATIONS**



A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO LEADING DATA CONVERSATIONS ABOUT EQUITY

When it comes to ensuring equitable outcomes for all students, holding equity-based data conversations is one of the most powerful tools an educator can use. Data can provide the foundation and impetus for the right conversations to take place around systems, policies, and practices. Data also help educators peel back the layers of why certain patterns are emerging and where change is needed.

However, conversations around equity are inherently delicate and complex situations to navigate. Moreover, if the group isn't yet accustomed to looking at data regularly—much less to examine for areas of equity or inequity—these conversations can feel awkward or uncomfortable. This makes it no less important to have these data-based, student-centered conversations, but it does mean that some preparation can go a long way in terms of how impactful these conversations can be.

The purpose of this article is to provide suggestions for how to prepare for and facilitate data-based conversations about equity, so that your team feels safe and supported and your meeting is positive and productive.



LOGISTICS

Start by planning out the who, where, and what of your meeting.

► **Identify an appropriate facilitator (or co-facilitators)**

To ensure an open and honest conversation, select a neutral facilitator for the meeting. The facilitator should be someone who is trusted and respected by their peers and seen as a safe ally; they should not be connected to teacher evaluations, pay, or promotions. The facilitator should also be skilled and comfortable in analyzing data and navigating uncomfortable conversations with care. It might be a math or literacy coach, but should not be an administrator.

► **Pick a new physical location**

If possible, try to schedule this meeting in a location that is different from other staff meetings, especially if those meetings tend to be “sit and get” type meetings. Onsite locations are ideal for these conversations, but if your meeting takes place in a remote environment, be sure to establish the appropriate norms/standards (e.g., whether cameras are turned on, what active participation looks like).

► **Set an appropriate time frame**

Ultimately, questions about equity should become part of all data conversations—and many of the articles in this toolkit depict how teams can start to weave those questions into their regular data conversations. However, if your team is new to equity-based conversations (or data conversations in general), try scheduling a dedicated meeting around this work instead of merging it into a meeting with other purposes. This allows for your team to take its time and be thoughtful without rushing into the next task of the day. Ideally, try to allow 2-3 hours for your first meeting.

► **Use your data management platform**

This work depends on your team’s ability to quickly analyze data from multiple sources through multiple lenses. If your team is distracted by how long it takes to find or access different data, the meeting will be frustrating and unfocused. Ensure that the right data are loaded into your platform before you begin and that the right people have access to appropriate data for the conversations.

► **Create small groups**

These conversations should not be held as assemblies. They are more intimate conversations for smaller groups of people. Plan on breaking participants up into groups of about 6-7 people for the training, and plan the small groups ahead of time.

► **Consider providing snacks and a break**

Providing refreshments can make staff feel more at ease and set a more comfortable environment. When basic needs are met, it’s easier for educators to engage in mentally rigorous conversations. Incorporating a planned break gives the participants an opportunity to clear their head and catch up on emails so that they are not distracted during the meeting.

SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

Next, complete some pre-work around the content of the meeting.

► Have a pre-meeting about the data

Before holding the meeting, create a team to review the data ahead of time. This team might include instructional coaches, reading coaches, math coaches, PBIS leaders, and the facilitator. Consider including an administrator, such as a principal, assistant principal, or special education director, as well.

The goal of this is *not* to craft a narrative to present during the meeting; in fact, doing so can make the educators in the meeting feel attacked or that their colleagues are colluding around them. The goal *is* to bring a number of perspectives to the table to unpack the data and identify possible pathways on which the facilitator can guide the conversation, especially if key findings exist a few layers down within the data. It also ensures that the facilitator is familiar with and has time to process the data, as opposed to reacting to surprises during the meeting. Finally, this planning helps establish cohesion across the data conversations (if there are several different meetings happening) as opposed to different groups looking at different data sets.

► Create a list of questions and prompts

After the team has had a chance to look at the data, you may want to create a list of questions for the facilitator to reference throughout the meeting. While it's important that the staff are actively digging into data and identifying findings, the facilitator can use a reference sheet for guiding the conversation. This helps the facilitator remember to draw attention to important data points throughout the meeting and can be a grounding reference if difficult moments arise. For a list of questions, download the [Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook](#).

► Create a list of strategies and next steps

During your pre-meeting, work together to create a menu of strategies and resources that can be available to help educators take action on areas of need. This avoids the event of identifying alarming or troubling issues without having clear next steps to take. This list should correlate with the findings from the pre-meeting. They should be resources and actions that are available immediately—not something that the participants have to wait a month or two to receive more information about. Depending on the situation, next steps might include reviewing additional data, creating a dashboard to monitor data, sharing findings with other stakeholders, forming a committee or work group, or creating an action plan. If you're working with classroom teachers, your team might want to research and prepare a list of classroom strategies they could implement with students.

► **If possible, consider administering an *anonymous* student and staff survey beforehand**

Surveys can be a powerful tool in better understanding how students and staff perceive themselves, their environment, and one another. This data set can be helpful in disproving or validating assumptions about system-level causes, and must be anonymous.

► **Work as a team to prepare the facilitator for uncomfortable or negative situations**

Even with deliberate messaging to keep the meeting growth-oriented and student-centered, there may be moments when the meeting stalls, where emotions become high, or when discomfort sets in. Knowing that this is possible (even likely) and having a plan of action for navigating these situations makes it easier for the facilitator to unpack and work through those situations—without appearing to gloss over them or allowing them to derail progress. Here are a few examples to get started, but others may be appropriate based on what you know about your unique group. There are also excellent examples in [Coaching for Equity: Conversations that Change Practice](#) by Elena Aguilar.

What happened: The conversation abruptly stops and the group becomes quiet

Why this happened: This can occur when something alarming or concerning appears in the data that is hard to process, confusing, or upsetting.

What to do: Awkward moments are likely to happen and are more frequent when participants are uncomfortable. Acknowledge the moment of discomfort and then back the group up to the last point at which discussion was occurring smoothly. Return the group to a safer situation, and then help them unpack their thought processes over the last few moments. Ask questions such as: *What were you examining right before we got to this point? What about the data did you notice? What surprised you? What did you have more questions about?*

What happened: The group begins assigning blame on systems, leaders, or colleagues

Why this happened: This can occur when something alarming or concerning appears in the data, when a longstanding frustration has been uncovered, or when it feels that the conversation is shifting blame onto the participants.

What to do: Continue to guide the conversation toward action planning. Ask questions such as: *What has been improving that should be retained? What do you think can be improved? What changes would need to happen to prevent this from occurring?* Help the group articulate a specific recommendation or action to solve the issue or better understand the issue, even if it is small. Small actions can accumulate to big changes.

FACILITATING

Review these tips for facilitating the meeting itself.

► Create a safe space and establish norms

Before your team jumps into data, set the stage for the meeting around growth and student success. It is absolutely essential that the staff know they are not under attack or at risk of being blamed or shamed. The goal is to work as a team to ensure all students have equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes—data can help us both celebrate areas of success and explore and change areas of need.

As an example in [**Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools**](#), Glenn Singleton proposes the Four Agreements for Courageous Conversations:

1. Stay engaged
2. Experience discomfort
3. Speak your truth
4. Expect and accept non-closure

► Always, always use data

The significance of using data is that it creates an inarguable starting point for conversations to happen and ensures that conversations are focused in the right areas for your unique district. If the meeting starts to drift away from data, pull it back. The intention is not to dismiss the importance of observations, gut feelings, and teachers' experiences with students, all of which have their place in supporting learners. Rather, data provide a baseline starting point for these conversations to happen. Data are only as useful as the ways that they're used, and these types of conversations are part of why data are collected. Use the facilitator reference sheet created in the pre-meeting as a guide.

► Start with data that are easier to digest

For instance, starting with attendance data can feel more approachable than behavior or assessment data. Disaggregating by gender first can feel more approachable than starting with ethnicity. Start with data at the district and school level, even if teachers are eager to look at data for their own classrooms. Then, gauge how the group is doing and determine whether to move into grade-level data or teacher-level data. Teacher-level data may not be appropriate for an initial data conversation around equity. For support, download the [**Disaggregating and Analyzing Data Workbook**](#).

► **Let the staff do the exploring, questioning, and discovering**

The facilitator's role is to guide the conversation, establish a safe space for learning and growth, and help participants ask questions about what they are seeing. It's extremely important that this not be a "sit and get" meeting; this can cause participants to shut down immediately, feel attacked, and can eliminate the potential positive outcomes of the meeting. Ensure that the participants are actively disaggregating the data and asking the questions. The facilitator can ask general questions and help call out important data points as they arise, but the staff should actively explore the data on their own.

► **Start with areas of success**

Deliberately celebrating areas of success can help keep morale and momentum high, while also pinpointing successful practices and strategies that can be applied to areas of need. It's easier to replicate a successful process in a new context than to continually start from scratch in every scenario. Starting with areas of success puts the participants in a positive mindset that makes it easier to process and unpack data that are concerning or alarming down the road.

► **Use a common format**

If you have multiple groups reviewing data in various meetings, use consistent documentation and processes for examining data and action planning. This way, next steps can be more easily aggregated across the various meetings.



NEXT STEPS & FOLLOW UP

Finally, connect the findings from your meeting to next steps.

► **Specify when your next meeting will take place**

Creating an annual schedule at the beginning of the year can also help establish a regular cadence.

► **End the meeting with specific action steps**

At the end of your meeting, outline specific action steps your team will take, such as reviewing additional data, creating a dashboard to monitor data, sharing findings with other stakeholders, forming a committee or work group, or creating an action plan. Outline who is responsible for each task and its due date. Schedule your next follow-up meeting. Use the [Action Planning Template](#) in this toolkit for support.

► **Ensure district and school leaders help prioritize follow-up**

In order to follow through on next steps and further meetings, teams will need support from administrators. Leaders have the ability and responsibility to provide the time, space, prioritization, and tools that this work requires. If team members are constantly getting pulled out of data meetings or can only work on follow-up steps after regular hours, it makes it unlikely for continued data conversations and follow-up steps to happen. Leaders can help ensure this work happens by valuing and protecting the time and resources that next steps require.



OTHER RESOURCES

While this guide is intended to be a helpful starting place, many dedicated educators and experts have shared best practices, strategies, and insights that may be of further assistance. A few resources are listed here. Feel free to share other resources that have been impactful for you and your team that you would like us to consider adding.

<https://www.tolerance.org>

<https://brightmorningteam.com/books-by-elena/>

<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/courageous-conversations-about-race/book242855>



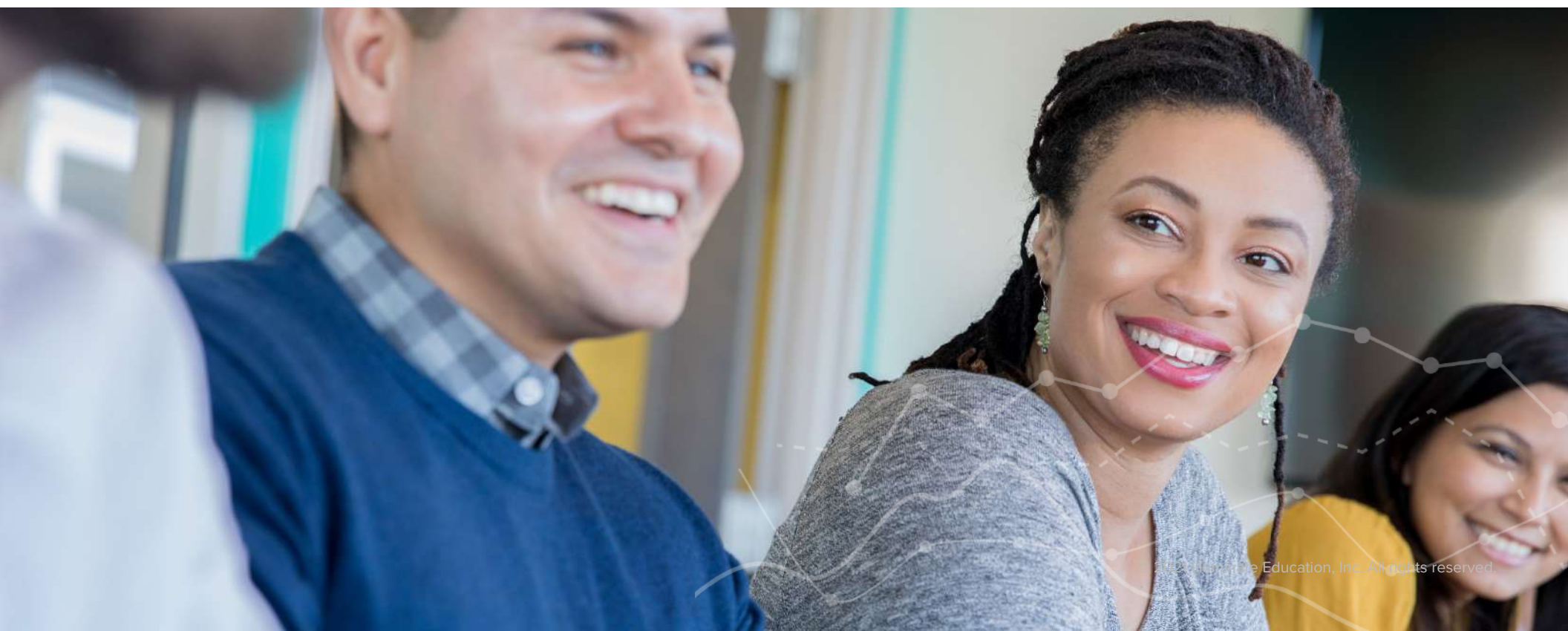
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SAMPLE DATA PROTOCOL

Following a data protocol can provide structure to data conversations and ensure that key questions are all covered in an appropriate sequence. Data protocols also guard educators from jumping to conclusions or making unsubstantiated assumptions, so that actions can be guided by data.

This sample protocol (and accompanying question prompts) can be used as a reference for most types of conversations. Feel free to adapt it to meet your team's unique needs.



DATA PROTOCOL



Analyze demographic data to learn who your students are.

Disaggregate your demographic data by gender, ethnicity, disability code, socio-economic status*, programming, and other groups.

- How many students are in each group?
- What percentage of students are in each group?



Analyze the data for all students.

Analyze your data by **district**, **school** and then **grade**.

Ask the questions:

- What do we notice in the data?
- What do we wonder?



- What will we do next?
- What practices will we keep? Change?
- How will we measure success?
- Who is responsible?



Analyze the data for different groups of students.

Disaggregate your data by gender, ethnicity, disability code, socio-economic status*, and then any other groups.

Ask the questions:

- What do we notice in the data?
- What do we wonder?



- What will we do next?
- What practices will we keep? Change?
- How will we measure success?
- Who is responsible?



Analyze the data for individual students.

Isolate and analyze data for students who appear to have the greatest need for support or enrichment.

Ask the questions:

- What do we notice in the data?
- What do we wonder?



- What will we do next?
- What practices will we keep? Change?
- How will we measure success?
- Who is responsible?

*Not all educators will have access to these data, as they are carefully protected by FERPA.

QUESTION PROMPTS

“What do we notice?”

- Where do we see students succeeding? Which students?
- Where do we see students struggling? Which students?
- What patterns do we notice?
- What data are surprising to us?

“What do we wonder?”

- Why might this be?
- What other questions do we need to ask?
- What other data do we need?
- What other data should we review to see if this pattern exists elsewhere?

“What actions will we take?”

- Are we interested in sharing the results of this analysis? If so, how and with whom?
- What systems and processes can be reviewed to ensure all students are excelling?
- How do we plan to continue this discussion and data review beyond today?
- How will we define success?
- Who is responsible for which action items?



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ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

As a result of data analysis meetings, your team may identify changes you want to make to practices, policies, or systems. Use this template to clarify your goals, align on specific action steps, and determine how success will be measured. There is also an example plan at the end for reference.

Need & Goal

1. What is the need that we identified?
2. What evidence confirms this need?
3. What is our goal?
4. What data will be used to measure goal attainment?
5. By when will we accomplish our goal?

Action Steps

6. What specific actions will we take to meet our goal?
7. Who is responsible for which action items (or leads the work for each action item)?
8. By when will items be done?

Monitoring Progress

9. How will we track our progress in the meantime?
10. When will we meet to review our progress?

EXAMPLE ACTION PLAN: INCREASE ATTENDANCE RATE OF 9TH GRADE HISPANIC/LATINX FEMALE STUDENTS

Need & Goal

What is the need that we identified?	Our district has a significant attendance gap for Hispanic/Latinx female students in 9th grade.
What evidence confirms this need?	<p>In reviewing our attendance data, we noticed that district-wide attendance is 95%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• However, when broken up by grade, we saw that attendance between 8th and 9th grade drops from 94% to 72%.• When digging deeper, we found that 75% of 9th grade absences are from female students.• Of those female students, we found that 82% of those absences are from Hispanic/Latinx female students. <p>This is disproportionate to our student population. Only 32% of 9th grade students are Hispanic/Latinx female students.</p>
What is our goal?	We want to increase attendance among 9th grade Hispanic/Latinx female students to our district average of 95%.
What data will be used to measure goal attainment?	We will use daily attendance counts to measure success.
By when will we accomplish our goal?	We will accomplish this by the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Action Steps

What specific actions will we take to meet our goal? Who is responsible for which action items (or leads the work for each action item)?
By when will items be done?

Action	Person Responsible	Done By
We will review our secondary curriculum for cultural sustainability.	Dr. Zarek Philips	September 2021
We will administer a school climate survey in the high school to better understand feelings of connection, engagement, and support.	Dr. Hanley Montgomery	September 2021
We will ask teachers to ensure they are proportionately including Hispanic/Latinx students' families in their five parent phone calls each Wednesday.	Hannah Wu	October 2021
We will create an early warning alert for Hispanic/Latinx females with 3 absences so we can reach out to the student and her family early and prevent additional absences.	Mohammed Sahani	November 2021
We will invite Hispanic/Latinx women with leadership positions in the community to speak to our 9th grade students each quarter.	Dr. Monica Vallejo	February 2022
We will implement a peer mentoring program with 12th grade Hispanic/Latinx female students with 9th grade students.	Elizabeth Barnes	February 2022

Monitoring Progress

How will we track our progress in the meantime?	We will monitor our progress using Achievement Dashboard in eduCLIMBER .
When will we meet to review our progress?	We will review our data at our Student Success Team Leadership Meetings every 6 weeks.



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ROLLING AGENDA TEMPLATE

Using a single, ongoing or “rolling” document for meeting notes and action items helps teams stay organized, collaborative, and accountable, while preventing important information from being lost in inboxes and busy schedules. Here’s a simple template to help you get started. Use the index section at the top to link each meeting’s notes so you can jump back to them quickly.

[Team Name]

Rolling Agenda Notes

Meeting Date Index

Meeting Date	Goals & Agenda Items
[Date & Hyperlink within Document]	[Bulleted List of Goals from Meeting]
[Date & Hyperlink within Document]	[Bulleted List of Goals from Meeting]

Meeting Notes Section

Copy and paste a new section for each meeting, and then link the header to the index at the top. This makes it easy to jump to a particular meeting later.

[Meeting Date]

Agenda Items	Notes	Questions/Parking Lot
	[Link to Date]	

Next Steps

Who	Will Do What	By When



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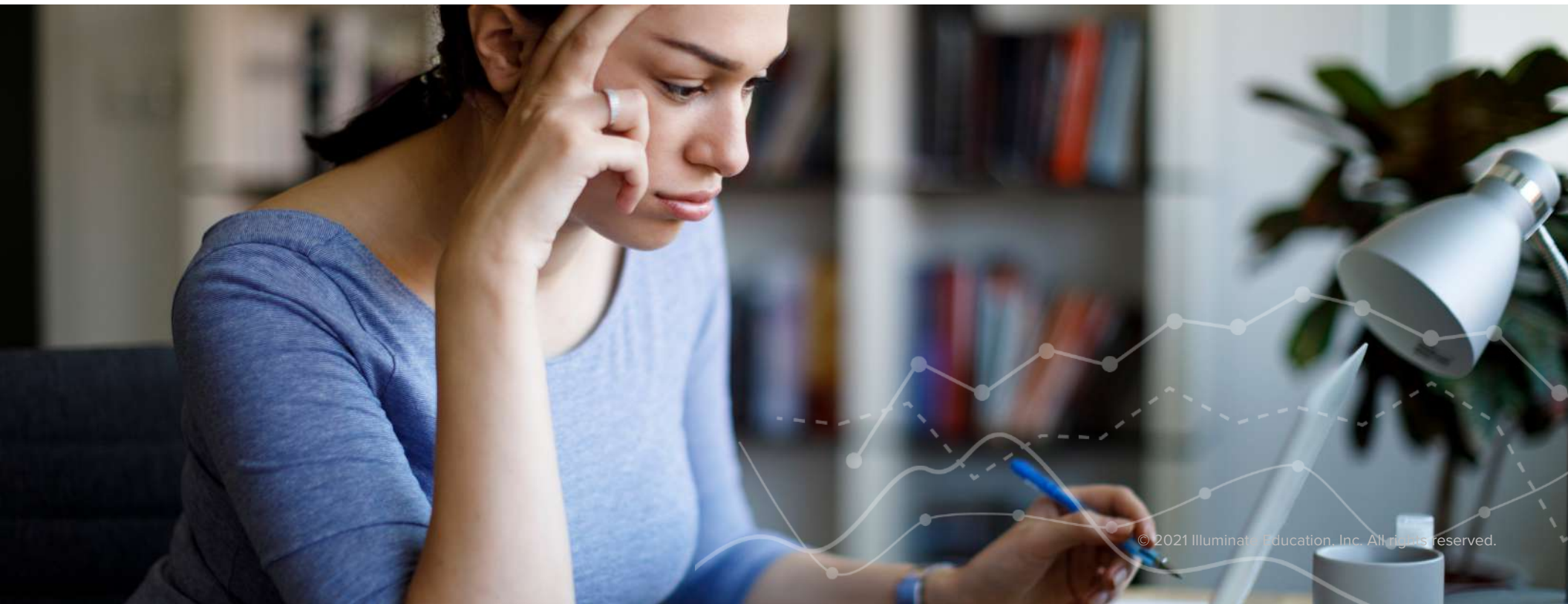
SECTION 3: **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**



COMPREHENSIVE, BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS: THE WHAT AND THE WHY

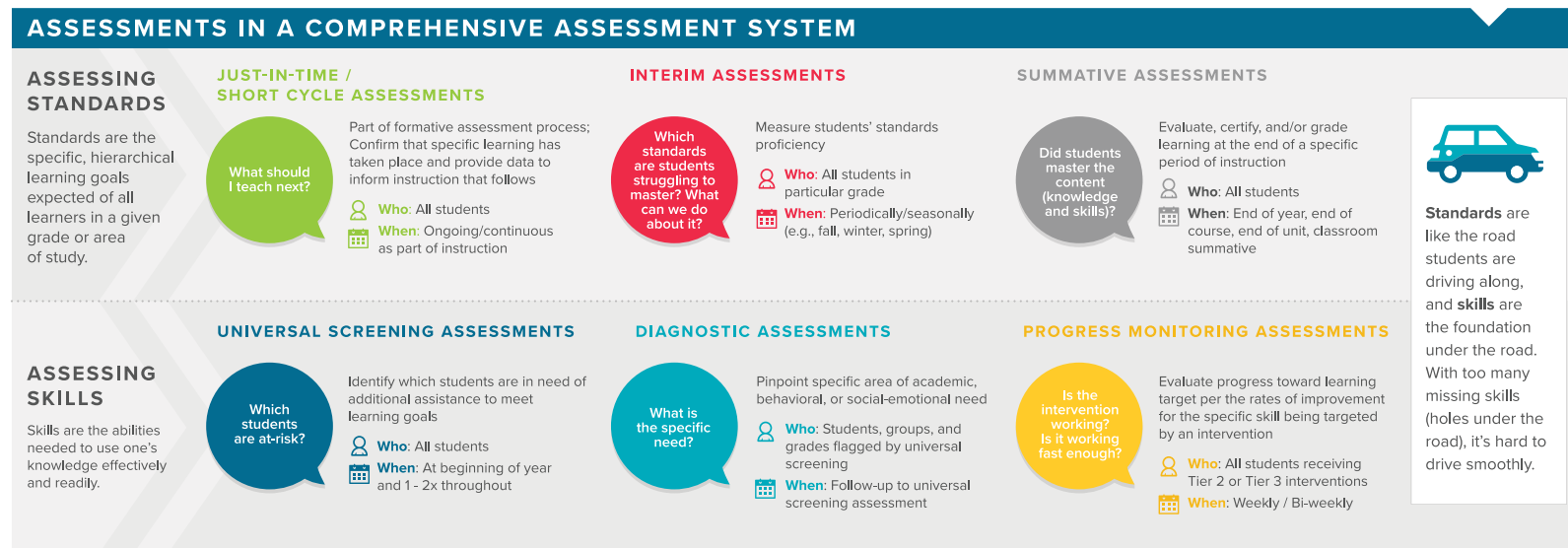
There can be a lot of confusion around the different types and purposes of assessment as well as how each assessment supports teaching and learning. When educators feel uncertainty around those concepts, it makes using assessment data frustrating and overwhelming—and can lead to misguided decisions and bloated or incomplete assessment systems.

For this reason, before teams can meaningfully start using their assessment data, they should first ensure that they understand the purposes and uses of each assessment in a comprehensive assessment system. For help examining your own system, use the *Inventory & Evaluate Your Assessment System's Readiness* article in the [Accelerate Learning with Assessment Toolkit](#).



WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE, BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM?

A comprehensive and balanced assessment system is a cohesive set of high-quality assessment practices and tools that promotes an informed, intentional selection of assessments for the right purpose and supplies all stakeholders with the right information to inform next steps.



A system is *comprehensive* when it integrates a complete set of assessment types to appropriately and effectively support teaching and learning.

A system is *balanced* when those tools are ensconced in high-quality practices that support knowledgeable use of each assessment for the right purpose at the right time, both in isolation and as a holistic system.

In other words, *comprehensive* is the what, and *balanced* is the how.

ASSESSMENT TYPES & PURPOSES

Universal Screening Assessment

Universal screening is the process of analyzing academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) data about *all* students in a class, grade, school, or district. Screening helps identify which students are at risk on various skills and reveals needs within the universal tier. Educators should use universal screening data as a check on where students are, to monitor whether students are equitably growing at needed rates, and to identify opportunities for Tier 1 improvements.

? What questions does universal screening answer?

- Are our universal efforts effective? Are they effective for all students?
- If not, where and how can we improve them?
- Which students are at risk?
- Which students may need an academic or SEB intervention?

How does universal screening accelerate learning?

- ↗ • Shows where students are starting the year in relation to grade-level standards to inform early intervention and data-based decisions for students who exceed or have skill deficits
- Measures growth in the winter to identify students and grade levels that need additional improvement before the end of the school year—educators should avoid waiting until the end of the year to measure student growth
- Equips educators to accelerate learning equitably; teacher referral and parent referrals alone are typically not equitable tools and do not facilitate preventative early intervention or proactive enrollment in gifted programming
- Provides visibility into whether growth is happening for all students

ASSESSMENT TYPES & PURPOSES

Diagnostic Assessment

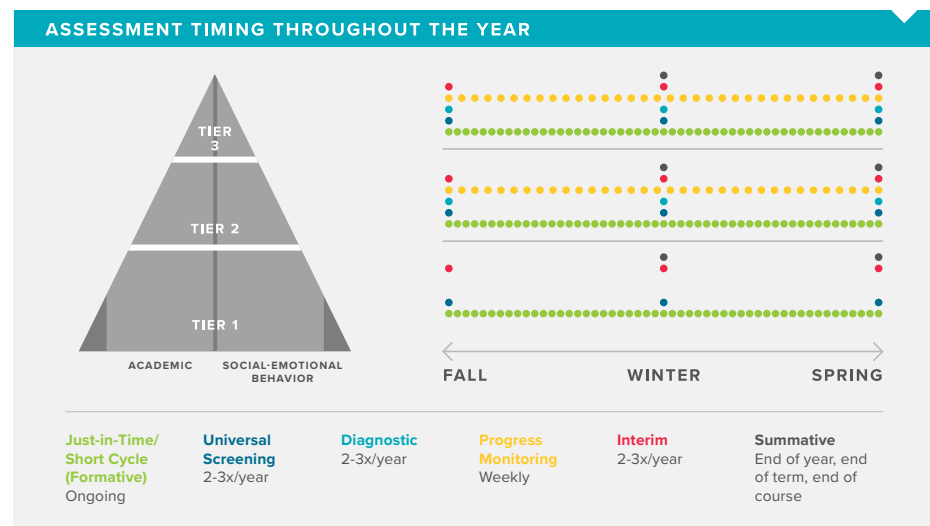
Diagnostic assessment is the process of using multiple measures and reports to identify student strengths and needs in specific skill areas, so teachers can provide instruction to address learning needs. Diagnostic assessment tools directly guide academic, curricular, and instructional decisions because there is a better understanding of what a student knows or doesn't know in relation to specific learning goals.

? What questions does the diagnostic assessment process answer?

- What is the specific area of need for each student who is at risk?

↗ How does diagnostic assessment accelerated learning?

- Allows for intervention and instruction to be targeted to specific skill needs
- Ensures intensification and intervention are tightly aligned to students' needs, so educators do not lose time to implementing ineffective, unfocused, or mismatched supports



ASSESSMENT TYPES & PURPOSES

Just-in-Time Assessment

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that is supported by just-in-time assessments. It's a mechanism to continually and routinely (often on a daily basis) monitor student learning and identify where students struggle and where misconceptions exist, so that teachers can take the right next step to help move learning forward. A report by [The Aspen Institute](#) describes it as a process for “providing feedback and reveals needed adjustments for ongoing teaching and learning in order to increase students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes.”

? What questions does just-in-time assessment answer?

- What should happen next in terms of instruction?
- Are students mastering this standard?
- How can I group students to differentiate instruction according to their needs?
- Should I reteach before moving on?
- Should I form small groups for intervention?

↗ How does just-in-time assessment accelerate learning?

- Maximizes instructional minutes with frequent checks on standards mastery to move forward as soon as students are ready, but not before
- Informs daily decisions around reteaching, intervention, and learning progression without waiting for medium-stakes assessments
- Addresses misconceptions in the moment to prevent students from falling further behind

ASSESSMENT TYPES & PURPOSES

Progress Monitoring Assessment

Progress monitoring is a standardized process of evaluating progress toward a performance target, based on rates of improvement from frequent (usually weekly or biweekly) assessment of a specific skill. Progress monitoring assessments are very sensitive to growth and are aligned to the skill or need that is identified during diagnosis and targeted by an intervention. They help measure whether an intervention is working and if it's working fast enough. The goal of high-quality progress monitoring tools is to prevent students from receiving ineffective interventions for prolonged or indefinite periods of time, and to efficiently remove students from interventions when they are no longer needed.

? What questions does progress monitoring answer?

- Is a student's intervention working?
- Is it working fast enough?

↗ How does progress monitoring accelerate learning?

- Helps educators identify ineffective interventions so they can adjust before unnecessary time is lost.
- Helps educators move students out of a successful intervention as soon as they are ready, returning the student to core instruction and freeing up an in intervention "seat" for another student.



ASSESSMENT TYPES & PURPOSES

Interim Assessment

Interim assessments measure students' standards proficiency and are typically administered periodically or seasonally (e.g., fall, winter, spring). These assessments are aligned to a pacing calendar and the district's scope and sequence. Interim assessments are often used to predict the students' end-of-year proficiency. Interim data can be aggregated and used to analyze class, school, and district trends in learning.

? What questions do interim assessments answer?

- Are students mastering standards?
- How do these results compare to past data?
- Are there teachers who are exceeding or struggling in terms of efficacy?
- Are there specific student groups exceeding or struggling?

↗ How does interim assessment accelerate learning?

- Provides central, aggregated data around trends, groups of students, and equitable practices
- Guides systemic adjustments throughout the year, while there is still an opportunity to impact results and experiences



ASSESSMENT TYPES & PURPOSES

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is the process of evaluating or certifying learning at the end of a specific period of instruction. Summative assessments are often used for grading students and can be used to measure growth or change in student learning. They're typically administered at the end of the year, end of course, or end of term. Examples include high-stakes state standardized assessments, SAT, and ACT.

? What questions do summative assessments answer?

- Did students master the content (knowledge and skills)?
- Are we meeting district targets and goals?
- Are there specific student groups exceeding or struggling?

↗ How does summative assessment accelerate learning?

- Provides central, aggregated data tracking around trends, groups of students, and equitable practices



Illuminate provides each of the assessment tools needed for a [comprehensive assessment system](#), equipping districts to equitably accelerate learning and growth. [Reach out to our team](#) to learn more.

INTRODUCTION TO UNDERSTANDING GROWTH DATA

As educators work to meet students' needs and move learning forward, [experts](#) affirm the importance of measuring student success as reflected by growth, and to do so through an equity lens. However, there can be lots of confusion around what the term “growth” means and what it looks like.

This article will help outline key terminology about growth and explain which data and assessments are central to measuring and monitoring growth.

What is growth?

Growth is how much academic or SEB progress a student has made between two points in time. Growth can be an increase (e.g., an increase in scores) or a decrease (e.g., a decrease in problematic behaviors).

What is average growth and catch-up growth?

Average growth is the typical growth seen for all learners in a specific grade over a period of time. Catch-up growth is growth that happens more rapidly than average growth as an outcome of accelerating learning to help a student who starts out further behind to “catch up” to a goal or benchmark. When students start significantly behind a goal, average growth won't be enough for the student to reach the goal in time, thus requiring catch-up growth.

How is growth different from achievement?

Achievement depicts performance at a point in time, often in terms of a score or proficiency level. Achievement is only one lens of student success. Whereas achievement might show where a student starts out or ends the school year in terms of knowledge and skills, growth shows us how much progress that student has made. In a year when students start out further behind than typical years, growth is an important factor. This is partially because “proficiency” won't be as easy to compare to previous years, and partially because growth captures whether accelerated learning occurred to help students get back on track.

What is a growth percentile?

Often referred to as a student growth percentile (SGP), a growth percentile describes student growth compared to other students with similar prior test scores. In other words, it describes how they are growing compared to students who started with a similar achievement score. Growth percentiles range between 1 and 99. Average growth means that the student is in the 50th percentile. Catch-up growth typically ranges between the 50th to 85th percentile.

Which assessments should be used to measure growth?

Educators should consider using both a universal screening assessment that measures risk as well as an interim assessment that measures standard proficiency.

What's the difference between those assessments?

Universal screeners, such as [FastBridge](#), identify students who are at risk of poor learning outcomes (academic or SEB). Standards-based interim measures, such as [Inspect](#) pre-built assessments, measure students' proficiency expressed in terms of mastery of grade-level standards. Both are important. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on standards-based measures may benefit from instruction in underlying skills, a need which can be identified by examining universal screening data. Growth for these students can be measured by how much their risk level decreases over time. That is, positive growth can be stated as moving from high-risk to low-risk. This approach can help students achieve proficiency in grade-level standards because it strengthens the skills that underlie those standards. Further, measuring growth by examining risk levels can provide insights about student learning that augment data about standards proficiency.



How do we know which assessment from our assessment system to use for each?

For help analyzing your own assessment system, use the [Comprehensive, Balanced Assessment Systems](#) article in this toolkit and the *Inventory & Evaluate Your Assessment System* articles in the [Accelerate Learning with Assessment Toolkit](#).

Make sure that your **universal screening assessment** is:

- **Being used for the right purpose.** Ensure that the assessment is designed to be a universal screening tool.
- **Valid, reliable, and standardized.** This means that the assessments are consistently and accurately measuring what they are designed to measure for all students and that the data can be aggregated meaningfully. Teacher-based assessments play an important role in an assessment system. However, when they're indeed designed by individual teachers, those assessments have inherent variability in them and are consequentially hard to compare against each other. Standardized assessments are consistently designed and administered and can be aggregated together accurately.
- **Nationally normed.** Norms provide a way for teachers to know what scores are typical (or average) for students in a given grade, as well as which rates of growth are average and above average. Without norms, there's no comparison point to understand where the student is in relation to what is typical, or if they're growing at an adequate rate. It's similar to being on a car trip: if you need to get to the end of your journey by a certain day, you need to know where you're starting, how far you have to go, and how far you typically drive in a single day to know if you'll reach your destination in time (or if you need to speed up to do so).
- **Criterion-referenced.** Benchmarks are criterion-referenced scores, which allow us to evaluate students against a defined standard of achievement rather than evaluating them in comparison with the performance of other students. While norms indicate all students' standing compared to the distribution of scores from a normative sample, benchmarks show which students have met a single specific goal. These indicators are designed to help teachers identify which students need additional help or are "at risk."



Make sure that your **interim assessment** is:

- **Being used for the right purpose.** Ensure that the assessment is designed to be an interim assessment.
- **Valid and reliable.** This means that the assessment is consistently and accurately measuring what it is designed to measure for all students, and therefore, able to be aggregated meaningfully.
- **Standards-aligned.** Ensure that the items used in the assessment are indeed aligned to standards and can provide valid data about students' proficiency.
- **Standardized across the district.** Many standard-based interim assessments are often developed locally within the district. Even though this means that they can't be standardized at a national level (e.g., to create national norms), it's still important that they be standardized across the district, and that they aren't being developed or customized by individual teachers. These assessments must be consistent and measure the same thing so that their data can be aggregated together accurately.



Illuminate provides each of the assessment tools needed for a [comprehensive assessment system](#), equipping districts to equitably accelerate learning and growth. Reach out to [schedule a demo](#).



Illuminate Education equips educators to take a data-driven approach to serving the whole child. Our solution combines comprehensive assessment, MTSS management and collaboration, and real-time dashboard tools, and puts them in the hands of educators. As a result, educators can monitor learning and growth, identify academic and social-emotional behavioral needs, and align targeted supports in order to accelerate learning for each student.

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