

**IES Practice Guide from the What Works  
Clearinghouse**

**Using Student Achievement Data  
to Support Instructional Decision  
Making**

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# Recommendation 1

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- **Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.**
  - **Collect and prepare a variety of data about student learning.**
  - **Interpret data and develop hypotheses about how to improve student learning.**
  - **Modify instruction to test hypotheses and increase student learning.**

# Recommendation 1

## Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Too much data
  - Ask focused questions
  - “Triangulate” data (bring the sources together)
- Content areas not with readily available data
  - Work across classes
  - Develop interim or common assessments across areas
  - Use local data

# Recommendation 1

## More Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- A focus on the “bubble” kids.
  - Provide resources to all students according to needs
  - Errors in measurement
- Course assignment based solely on scores.
  - Use tests for valid purposes, not other ways
  - Use multiple measures, not only one score

# Recommendation 2

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- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.
  - Explain expectations and assessment criteria.
  - Provide feedback to students that is timely, specific, well formatted, and constructive.
  - Provide tools that help students learn from feedback.
  - Use students' data analyses to guide instructional changes.

# Recommendation 2

## Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Students internalize feedback, not using it to improve performance
  - Tie to learning goals
  - Don't make statements linking performance to ability
- Different teachers, different approaches
  - Provide help to teachers in providing useful feedback
  - Collaborate
  - Bring students into the mix

# Recommendation 2

## More Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Teachers don't have the time to help students
  - Should be a regular part of teaching activities
  - Integrate it into the instruction and assessment cycle
  - Help the students understand assessment and feedback as tools to improve performance

# Recommendation 3

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- Establish a clear vision for school-wide data use.
  - Establish a schoolwide data team that sets the tone for ongoing data use.
  - Define critical teaching and learning concepts.
  - Develop a written plan that articulates activities, roles, and responsibilities.
  - Provide ongoing data leadership.

# Recommendation 3

## Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Staff do not have time to plan data use
  - Integrate data use into one's school improvement plan
- No human capacity
  - Look at staff strengths
  - Help build capacity of a few - turnkey model
  - Encourage participation through incentives

# Recommendation 3

## More Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Those who understand data are overwhelmed as the go-to people
  - Define roles
  - Turnkey model of training
  - Phase in data use throughout the school
- No research staff participation
  - Consistent message from district
  - Building leadership assumes the role

# Recommendation 4

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- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.
  - Designate a school-based facilitator who meets with teacher teams to discuss data.
  - Dedicate structured time for staff collaboration.
  - Provide targeted professional development regularly.

# Recommendation 4

## Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Hard to find professional development tailored to needs of the school
  - Work with the PD provider so they understand your needs
  - Use the turnkey model
  - Identify internal staff who can provide the PD
- Resources go to other priorities
  - Generic tool integrated into all content areas
  - Dedicate resources to data literacy

# Recommendation 5

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- **Develop and maintain a district-wide data system.**
  - **Increase a variety of stakeholders in selecting a data system.**
  - **Clearly articulate system requirements relative to user needs.**
  - **Determine whether to build or buy the data system.**
  - **Plan and stage the implementation of the data system.**

# Recommendation 5

## Road Blocks and Potential Solutions

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- Technology is hard to use
  - Training and support - insure PD
  - Resources for building knowledge of the technology
  - Continuous help - use it or lose it
- No specifics on how to use the technology in the implementation plan
  - Address instructional goals
  - Bring educational objectives to the forefront
- Data systems are a luxury
  - Not - it should be part of a system that supports teaching and learning and continuous improvement

# Reference

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Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making* (NCEE 2009-4067). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/publications/practiceguides>