JERSEYCAN

A TIME TO ACT: *A FRAMEWORK TO ACCELERATE LEARNING*

DATA FOR UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LEARNING

In April 2021, JerseyCAN released A Framework to Accelerate Learning through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. This document focuses on one element of the Framework – Data for Understanding Student Learning – and highlights New Jersey schools and districts who exemplify promising practices in action.

The Opportunity: Leveraging Evidence to Inform Student-Centered Support

In an increasingly digital environment, we have more education data than ever before – the challenge is how to collect and use it to inform instruction and improve student learning. New Jersey districts and schools are receiving significant new funding for pandemic recovery and data must be used to both diagnose needed supports and evaluate the impact of those supports. **JerseyCAN's Framework to Accelerate Learning outlines many evidence-based strategies and examples of data-centered initiatives, as well as New Jersey-specific policy recommendations, which can help to inform local funding plans.**

New Jersey Districts Leading the Way

The following New Jersey districts and schools are focusing on many forms of data to identify individual student needs as well as priorities for schools and districts.

Multiple Data Sources and Tiered Responses to Drive Learning: Mount Olive Township School District

Mount Olive district leaders have embraced Response to Intervention (RTI) as a data-informed approach to student learning. Here, RTI includes three tiers which provide individualized interventions based on universal screening data from the entire duration of the pandemic. The screening data was collected through LinkIt! benchmarks from English Language Arts (ELA) and math. "Fingertip Profiles" were available at the beginning of the year that showed each student's reading level in grades 6-11 and offered standards-based learning progressions for data-informed goal setting. Since the district was using the RTI model pre-COVID, at the start of the 2020-21 school year they treated every student as "tier two" and in need of customized support. Mt. Olive also piloted Personalized Success Plans informed by the Harvard Education Redesign Lab, where each student created individual goals in four areas: Love of Learning, Academic, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Wellness. This experience has shown the power of using RTI for both academic and behavioral support and interventions. ★ Fingertip Profiles" in action, view this video. See our brief on High Quality, Inclusive Curriculum, Instruction and Training for even more. ★

> " Building on our strong foundation of universal data screening using standards-aligned assessments, we will continue to implement customized learning through RTI. Because of this pandemic, we now can reevaluate how we spend our time with students and track the data to measure our progress."
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> **Robert Zywicki**, Superintendent

> " Don't be afraid to look at data, as you don't know what is really going on in your school until you do. When I'm talking about data this means feedback not just from teachers, but students and families, too. Be courageous. Analyze the data and act accordingly."
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> **Patricia Haney**, Superintendent

Data-driven and Inclusive Instruction: Logan Township School District

In Logan Township, a culture of data-informed instruction and a history of using iReady diagnostics and curriculum combine as a foundation for student success. Information from iReady is used to create the district's skill-based groups and RTI interventions. During the pandemic, educators designed classroom systems to ensure students could easily navigate, even in a virtual setting, to their "skill based center" or breakout room, which changed daily based on the skill level associated with the daily content objective. The district's What I Need (WIN) time for K-1 students was informed by Dibels and the 95% Phonics program data. The team built the

schedule to allow ELA and math interventionists and core teaching staff to work together to accelerate student learning. The district also assigned students with the greatest needs to their top teachers. In addition, Logan leaders use data to inform SEL interventions as well as their efforts to foster an inclusive climate and culture. A look at school discipline data through the pandemic showed disciplinary referrals are down; therefore, in anticipation of returning in person in the fall, they will implement the School Wide Information System (SWISS) to collect referral information and dig deeper into the root causes of issues and responses in a culturally responsive manner. ★ For more on Logan's efforts, see this video and our briefs on Student and Family Engagement, Effective Resource Allocation For Equitable Systems and High Quality, Inclusive Curriculum, Instruction and Training. ★

> "When we began implementing a new curriculum, we held 'Coffee with the Principal' times to give parents a chance to ask questions and fully understand the materials we would be using with students. Our scholars were able to continue completing the rigorous iReady work in a remote environment this year because of the strong foundation and communication channels with parents and families."
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> **Monica Villafuerte**, Executive Director

Including Parents in Data Discussions: Cresthaven Academy

Cresthaven Academy charter school leaders use a combination of RTI, Online Progress Monitoring and iReady assessment data to inform student learning. The diagnostic data from iReady provides students, families and teachers with growth targets for each student in ELA and math. These targets are one piece of data that educators use to determine skill level, standards mastery and any needed interventions. This past year, Cresthaven also piloted the Online Progress Monitoring tool through UChicago Impact STEP. This tool allows teachers to meet 1:1 with students to gather even more data around reading accuracy, comprehension and other critical components of literacy. Aligned formative and diagnostic tools provide individualized learning experiences for teachers, parents and students and have enabled the development of plans to accelerate into the fall. For the coming school year, Cresthaven is also creating a weekly intervention block so teachers can plan for data-driven, differentiated instruction that targets identified learning needs. Cresthaven employs a co-teaching model that allows additional opportunities for small group instruction throughout the academic day. ★ To learn more about this inspiring work, see this video and our brief on Student and Family Engagement. ★

Investing in Infrastructure for the Future: Newark Public Schools

Newark Public Schools is dedicated to improving district-wide data and information systems to understand student learning needs. Leaders are focused on unifying systems to provide every student with equitable access to rigorous and relevant learning along with supports and enrichment for educators and students alike. In 2019, the district brought in MAP assessments to better inform student growth in ELA and math throughout the year. Last year, the district took deliberate steps to ensure that teachers and school leaders had access to assessment data and the tools they needed to make necessary instructional shifts. A key strategy involved the identification of power standards for literacy to mitigate reading difficulties in grades P-2. Leaders also established a tracker in Tableau, a data visualization tool that identifies and tracks students who are not meeting state grade-level standards. Looking forward, they are using Schoology as a primary Learning Management System and will continue to ensure the systems they use allow students to demonstrate their progress in a variety of ways. ★ To learn more and see Newark in action, view our video and brief on Educator Support and Innovative Staffing. ★

> The Newark Public School System is constantly looking to improve and grow. As outlined in our ten-year strategic plan, The Next Decade: 2020-30, data and systems are integral to programming decisions that best serve our students. As we move forward, we will continue to build upon the improvements we have made to our assessments, data collection and integration of systems in order to provide a world-class education to every child in Newark."
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> **Roger León**, Superintendent

JerseyCAN applauds these leaders across the state for showing how this work can, and must, be done. Looking ahead, JerseyCAN will support policy and programmatic solutions that will expand these efforts.