Finding Time for Data Meetings

Educators value effective data meetings, but finding the meeting time for these collaborative teams is frequently identified as a challenge! Sufficient time for data teams to meet to **analyze data, dig deeply into root cause, and develop actionable steps** is of great importance to actually using data — to actually move forward from data to action!

Data Teams Defined:

Data meeting teams are often defined as organized at **3 levels:**

1. School-level data teams,
2. Grade/subject data teams, and
3. Classroom-level data teams.

For each type or level, there are:

- Differing **purposes,**
- Differing team **membership,**
- Differing **data,** and
- Differing meeting **frequency needs.**

The graphic on the next page illustrates the **consideration and use of data at each level** (school, grade/subject, and classroom) through a team approach and shows differences in frequency, membership, and purpose. You can see that each level is based on data team routines across various types of data sources.

> " *A culture of data use results when an education organization commits to using data for continuous improvement at the school and classroom levels and embodies that commitment by* **emphasizing collaboration** *and empowering teachers and school leaders to make decisions for which they will be held accountable.*

Understanding Data Culture: What Data Do Education Leaders Use and How Do They Use Them?
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/blogs/blog10_understanding-data-culture.asp

Pennsylvania **Department of Education**   education.pa.gov

LEA / DISTRICT SUPPORT (LEADERSHIP)

Budgetary Support, Professional Development, Resources, School Structure, and Time

Demographic Data • Perceptual Data • Process Data • Student Learning Data

Annual School-Wide Routines

FOCUS: All Students

WHO: School-wide Team

HOW: Annual School-wide Team
(BOY/MOY/EOY or Monthly or Quarterly)

Periodic Grade/Content-Level Routines

FOCUS: Groups of Students

WHO: Teacher Teams
(Grade Level, Horizontal, Course/Subject Specific)

HOW: Periodic, Grade/Content-Level Team
(weekly, bi-weekly or monthly)

Classroom/Student-Level Routines

FOCUS: Classroom/Individual Students

WHO: Teacher(s), School Counselor,
Teacher Leader(s), School Psych, School Leader

HOW: Every 4–6 weeks

Fig. 1: Data-Informed Decision Making: School.

Given the organizational framework of data meetings at three different levels, "finding the time" requires thinking about the **type or level of meeting, purpose of the data team, as well as the frequency** and amount of time needed for the data team to engage in the work.

Note: More information on data meetings may be found in the document titled:
Using ESSER Funds for Professional Learning & Collaboration for Teacher
https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/5261-professional-learning-and-collaboration-guide-v2.pdf
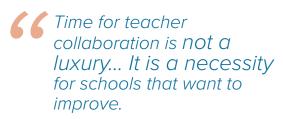
You may also choose to access the PDE Powershot available on the PVAAS log-in page titled:
The Three Levels of Data Analysis: School, Subject/Grade, and Student
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJufteO120U

Finding the Time

Traditionally, there are a variety of strategies that LEA/district and school leaders use to find the time for data meetings. Below is a chart showing the **more common ways that time is created for data team meetings.** The column labeled "level of meeting" is merely a suggestion as to which type of meeting is most aligned with the strategy or means of creating the time. Advantages are listed, along with limitations.

> " *Time for teacher collaboration is not a luxury... It is a necessity for schools that want to improve.*
>
> **(Love, N., Using Data to Improve Learning for All, 2009)**

STRATEGY	LEVEL OF MEETING			ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
	School	Grade/ Subject	Classroom/ Student		
Before/After school time (within contracted time)	✓	✓		Time built into schedule	Often a very short time period
Professional learning days	✓	✓	✓	Can dedicate longer blocks of time	Competing priorities at LEA/district and/or school level
Common time blocks built into schedule		✓		Pre-established	Competing priorities; range of other needs for common time
Department meetings		✓		HS level typically	Must designate some meetings specific to data analysis
Summer	✓			Can analyze data available; school level team can assemble to plan upcoming year needs	Not all data available; Per diem costs or trade time
Substitutes or roving subs			✓	Use of roving sub(s) for class coverage; can stack multiple meetings during one day	Cost; availability of subs

Using Existing Time Effectively

Make sure your school is maximizing the use of current and new time. These are strategies from PA school leaders for how to ensure effective and productive use of allocated time for data meetings:

☐ Does your LEA/district or school have the right structures in place for current and future data meetings to use time effectively?

☐ Are they scheduled as a priority with team members attending consistently?

☐ Are the right roles represented?

☐ Are meeting norms established and reviewed?

☐ Are meeting agendas developed in advance?

☐ Is data prepared in advance of meeting?

☐ Are data protocols provided/used?

☐ Are action plans used consistently?

☐ Is a shared location established for documentation of work?

☐ Is there monitoring of the process/work by school leaders?

Thinking Outside the Box:
Creative Means of Finding Time

In the quest to find time for data meetings, some educators have designed what might be thought of as **"out of the box" solutions.** The following chart shows some creative ways that others have "found" time for data meetings.

In many cases, it is difficult to add time to the existing schedule, but **reallocating time** may be a key to the challenge of finding time for data discussions!

✖

Getting More time:
Less Likely

✔

Reallocation of Time:
More Likely

STRATEGY	LEVEL OF MEETING			ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
	School	Grade/ Subject	Classroom/ Student		
Adding time to school day	✔	✔	✔	Time added dedicated to data meeting; considered protected time	Requires contractual changes
Complete overhaul of entire school schedule	✔	✔	✔	Can schedule data meeting time at desired frequencies; aligned with data release	Major shift with potential "pushback" from staff and students; takes ownership and investment from staff
Combining 2 classes of same grade level		✔		Stations established for student rotation instructed by school counselor (guidance lesson), reading/math specialists, intervention teachers, etc. allowing other teachers to meet in teams	Station rotation must be rigorous in design for meaningful allocation and use of time; more typical for elementary vs. secondary
Using specialists during early morning time to allow data teams to meet		✔		Can be done frequently	Must be well coordinated for coverage; most likely to occur at elementary vs. secondary
Reduce number of faculty meetings using allocated time for data meetings		✔		Time "found" within contracted day *(Use electronic means to disseminate information typically covered in whole staff meetings)*	Staff must adapt to communication occurring through electronic or virtual means
Alter student start times to allow for more teacher time for data meetings	✔	✔	✔	Finding time within contracted day with minor adjustment to student start times	Potential impact on families; transportation considerations

For questions, contact pdepvaas@iu13.org.

STRATEGY	LEVEL OF MEETING			ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
	School	Grade/ Subject	Classroom/ Student		
Extend "specials" blocks at certain intervals to allow for data meetings; may "make up" the lost core instruction time by shortening specials at other times		✓	✓	Can pre-plan to align with data release/availability	Most applicable at elementary and middle school levels; requires staff buy-in
Use "non specials" staff to provide instruction for students (librarian for research related lessons at secondary level and oral reading/listening skills instruction at elementary level, school counselor for group sessions with school counselor, while teachers meet in data teams)	✓	✓	✓	Applicable at elementary, middle, and high school levels; especially useful for scheduling classroom level data meetings to discuss individual students	Impact on instructional time
Employ permanent floating teacher / Contract subtitute on days needed			✓	Can use floating substitute to cover one classroom at a time during a day or sequence of days	Cost

Additional Resources

Other ideas for finding time for data meetings may be found in these resources:

- **ER: ESSER Guidance for School Staffing, Spending, and Scheduling**
  https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/5261-professional-learning-and-collaboration-guide-v2.pdf

- **Dr. Michael Rettig's School Scheduling Associates**
  https://www.schoolschedulingassociates.com/team-details/michael-d-rettig/
  Suggestions for creating or revising the school schedule as well as sample school schedules

- **Using Data, "Finding Time"**
  http://www.usingdatasolutions.org/finding-time.html