pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PA Data Powershot: Finding Root Cause(s): A Focus on Variables Within Our Control!

A Companion Guide on Who, Why, and How to Use this Video

Who might use this PA Data Powershot?

The intended audience is LEA/District Leaders, School Leaders, Teacher Leaders, and Teachers.

Why use this PA Data Powershot?

This Powershot provides a brief overview of the importance of focusing on root cause variables within the control of the educators to:

- Enhance understanding of both internal and external factors and what is meant by locus of control, so that educators at all levels focus their efforts on factors over which they have influence and control; and
- Shift data teams from an external focus to a focus on root causes within their control, allowing teams to create effective action plans that improve student outcomes and impact continuous school improvement efforts.

How might you use this PA Data Powershot in your work?

There are several opportunities to make use of this Powershot! Below are some examples to get started:

- Use as an introduction to a professional learning session to introduce a root cause discovery process.
- During an induction program, create understanding of the importance of identifying internal vs. external factors, and why.
- During administrative team meetings, build consensus on what and how to support school data teams in their work around root cause identification.
- Use as an opening to a data retreat or data work session to set the stage for the data work.

What are possible follow up action steps?

- Prior to individual conference(s) with teachers, ask teacher(s) to view the Powershot and discuss during their conference. Gain insight into teachers' beliefs about their influence on student achievement and growth.
- Create a poster or visuals that cue teams to stay focused on internal factors within their control during data meetings.
- Include language on protocols that explicitly refers to "Root Cause: Factors Within Our Control" as a reminder.
- Observe data meetings, script/record conversations, and discuss any instances where discussions veer towards an external focus.
- Engage data teams in brainstorming reasons they believe needs exist at the school, grade/subject, and individual student level, as identified by data analysis and identification of patterns and trends in longitudinal data.
  - First, make a list of all ideas generated.
  - Next, have the team organize their ideas into variables they believe they can control, and those they believe are not in their control.
  - Discuss the variables in the "do not control" column to expand and challenge thinking around how teachers' instruction and classroom environment impact overall student learning.
- Review action plans to monitor alignment between root cause(s) identified and actions to be taken.
- Create a variety of professional learning activities using the Digging Deeper Guides to increase the knowledge of the array of variables across curriculum, instruction, assessment, and organization.

Links to Resources

You may access the resources referenced in the PA Data Powershot with the links provided below.

- Digging Deeper Resources webpage with access to five (5) Digging Deeper Guides
  - ELA and Keystone Literature
  - Math and Keystone Algebra
  - Science and Keystone Biology
  - Students with a History of Higher Achievement
  - Students with a History of Lower Achievement
- Recorded webinar, Dig Deep to Improve Your Practice and Action Plans