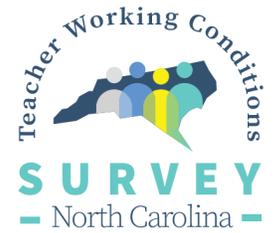# DATA PROTOCOL

- Identify strengths & challenges
- Find opportunities for meaningful, large-scale change
- Make the process manageable by providing focus

Teacher Working Conditions SURVEY — North Carolina

Meet with Purpose

Doing a data protocol is a great way to help a team or group engage in productive dialogue about data, and to build collective capacity to make sense of data relevant to teaching, leading, and learning.

Instructional Teams
School Improvement Team

Gather Data

There are four main types of data that can be used to display a school's successes, progress, and areas needing attention:

- Achievement
- Demographic
- Program
- Perception

Teacher Working Conditions Survey, Classroom Observations, Peer to Peer Interactions

What does the data suggest?

What is happening and why?

The team should focus on narrowing down the problems of practice.

Don't forget to identify your strengths and celebrate!

Describe what you see ...and what you don't

The group(s) should gather information from the data...just the facts. No perceptions, interpretations, or judgments.

- **What sticks out?**
- **Are pieces of data missing?**
- **Do you see trends?**
- **Something unexpected or surprising?**

Look for the story.

What does it mean?

Identify root causes, instead of symptoms.

What recommendations does your team have to address the problems of practice?
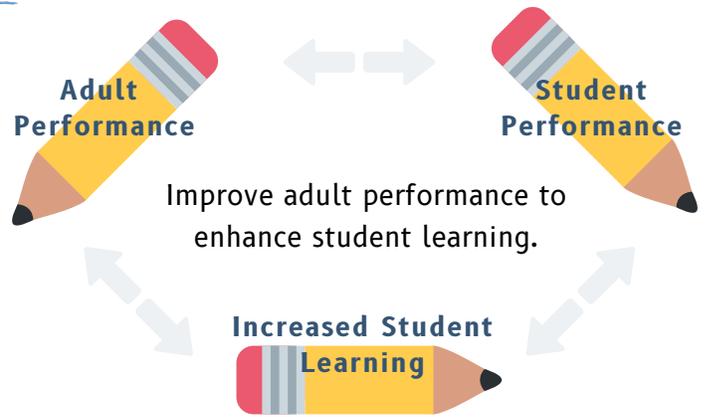
Move from problems to solutions.

What are we going to do?

✓ Plan and Prioritize the work.

✓ Create a series of actions and next steps.

✓ Be transparent. Communicate the plan to the school community.

DATA-DRIVEN CHANGE

To accomplish data-driven change, education leaders work with a team in "practice-focused collaboration." Teams meet for a variety of reasons, but when using data to drive decisions about improving instruction and outcomes for students, it is practice-focused collaboration. Why this terminology?

Because changing adult practice is what changes student outcomes.

Adult Performance

Student Performance

Improve adult performance to enhance student learning.

Increased Student Learning

In practice-focused collaboration, two or more people work together for the improvement of professional practice—getting better at what they do. An effective school leader engages in practice-focused collaboration with teachers and other professional staff, together enhancing their performance.
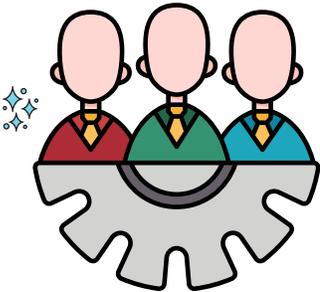
A key component of practice-focused collaboration is mutual trust, resisting ego or blaming, starting with the school leader. When teachers and staff recognize that the principal understands and responds to both strengths and needed areas of improvement—and includes him- or herself in that equation—trust builds. By looking honestly at data sources for patterns, trends, and root causes and pulling on the expertise of all the professionals at the table, collaboration, trust, and respect grows, setting the stage for effective change.

Here are some key elements to ensure that when teams meet, they experience practice-focused collaboration and not just another meeting after which nothing changes:

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1. The school leader must be willing to set the example by examining his/her role first and doing something different as a result of that examination. When the leader is willing to be the first to change, others will follow.

2. Don't just invite the "agreers" to the table. If anything is going to change, everyone has to be rowing in the same direction. Dissenting voices often have valid insight.

3. Draw on everyone's expertise. Move the leadership of the meeting around depending on the discussion. Select teachers who show great strength and leadership and allow them to shine.

4. Make sure everyone has a voice at the table. It may be better to have more meetings with fewer people than one large meeting in which it is easy for team members to sit silently. Silence doesn't mean agreement.

5. Consider carefully who will add value to a meeting, especially when looking at data.
What data are you looking at?
Who would have the best insights on the data?

6. When moving from examination to putting a plan in action, consider adding members from the larger school community (i.e., bus drivers, parents, community members with a vested interest in the school, volunteers, office staff).

7. Never let the meeting be the work. Looking at the data and talking about what it shows is only as good as what actions result from the meeting.

8. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate. Find multiple methods of communication to ensure everyone knows where the school is currently (what the data shows), what the plan of action is to improve, and everyone's role in that plan.