

NEXT-LEVEL SUCCESS

Using Data to Do More for More Students



Brandon Byers

Assistant Principal,
Frontier MS,
Moses Lake SD

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Planning with Data, Improving Instruction,
Closing the Gap*

Take 10 minutes and walk into programs around your school, taking note of who makes up the room.

Now go into your halls during passing or the cafeteria at lunch and compare your note to the reality in front of you. If you see the same thing we saw, you'll find the programs in place to give students opportunities to grow academically were only being accessed by a small portion of our school.

DIVING INTO DATA

This realization initiated our work. In the fall of 2017, we analyzed our demographic and program data to determine who was accessing our programs. After that, we identified the barriers, either in our school systems or in individual perceptions, that hindered students from enrolling in and receiving the program benefits. Our initial work looked at how our school programs had the power to overcome external factors outside a student's control.

For example, we found AVID students, on average, scored higher on the SBAC Math and ELA than not only their grade peers, but they also scored higher when compared to demographic peers (gender, race, and socioeconomic status). Our findings allowed us to celebrate

our programs that were positively impacting student achievement and ask why only certain students were participating in these beneficial programs. Working to identify school system barriers or student perceptual barriers that hindered access was critical to our journey.

ADDRESSING PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

While we looked at all the programs in our school, accelerated math was the first major area our process identified. As one may expect, students in these programs averaged higher scores on state math assessments and more frequently showed a high student growth level on the state's student growth percentile rating than their peers, both grade like and demographic. However, our data showed a disproportionately low number of students from low-SES households were enrolled in these math programs. This discovery caused us to change the way our students were enrolled into accelerated math programs. We created a system which placed students into accelerated math programs based upon quantifiable measures, like the NWEA and SBAC assessments.

This process contrasted our school's previous process, which was not as clearly identifiable by students, parents, or staff, but

instead was made up of a mixture of parent recommendation, teacher recommendation, and grades – all items with the potential to pass over students based upon factors that don't necessarily dictate whether a student has the ability mathematically to excel. We also added exit protocols, so if a student wanted to get out of the program, their parent had to sign off. The parents would have a conference with our school administration so they understood their child was placed into the program because of their ability, and to fully understand the overall impact the program could have on their student's education.

POSITIVE CHANGES

As of this fall, we've increased the number of students enrolled in accelerated math programs and have decreased the low-SES demographic gap in our accelerated math programs; all while still maintaining our scores and growth percentiles.

We are really proud of the results we're seeing, both in math and other programs. However, the biggest area of pride is how we continually analyze our school's program data, utilizing what we learn from it to ensure we are providing our students with the opportunity to grow and overcome factors outside their control. ■