TEACH to LEAD

Maine

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Video Transcript: Standards and Stories - Domain 5: Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement.

Hi, my name is Peter Hill and I am the Teaching Strategist at King Middle School in Portland, Maine. I have a pretty diverse and fun job but one of the roles that I have here, that is also fun, is examining data. And so, with that, Domain V, or using data for school improvement and district resources, is really important to part of my job.

And when I think about using data, I think back to what somebody told me a long time ago - this old teacher - he said, "Look man, data has no soul." And I totally agree, data is nameless and often faceless and teachers don't see the connection between RIT scores, and medians, and what's going on in their day to day classroom. But part of our job here is to make that connection and make data a meaningful, useful tool for improving the school and improving the district.

So when we think about how we use data here at King we really use it in four big ways. The first way that we use data is by using data to inform new programming. An example of this would be this year, we really looked deeply at the ACCESS scores of our English Language Learners. And we saw that while those students at the upper end of the ACCESS range (the 4s and 5s) were doing really well, there was definitely a need to allocate resources and staffing to students that are more IELD identified, or students who are just beginning to learn English. So by compiling data, we were able to make a case that while our classroom instruction is going really well, we're not equitably serving these lower students. We made that case to Central Office, and we were successful in advocating for another half time teacher and building a newcomer center at King to service the needs of those kids.

The second way that we use data builds off the first. The second way we use data is to monitor existing programming. And two interesting ways we've done that this year is, first off, the math department developed an intervention for students about in the 20th to 40th percentile range on the NWEA. So they used data to identify kids and where their gaps might fall and to inform the lessons that they would be teaching during that intervention class. They also used the NWEA to monitor progress of those students who were in the class.

The second way we use data to monitor progress of existing programs is looking at our discipline across

the school. Last year we had a self-contained ED special ed classroom. And this year we have dissolved that and mainstreamed those kids with push-in support from behavioral specialists. And we have seen, by really closely looking at office referral data, that those students as a cohort have received 30% fewer discipline referrals this year. So by monitoring that we know that that push-in mainstream model is working for those kids.

The third way we use data is for professional development, and this gets back to that opening thing about data having no soul. We run professional development closely tied to student data but we use data to set the scene so teachers can make meaningful connections between a data set and kids that they have in their classroom and their classroom practice. An example of how we did this was we really looked closely at ELL ACCESS data points broken out into the four domains of language - reading, listening, speaking and writing - and teachers really took apart the individual strengths and needs of every one of their students. They then tied that information of the four domains and where each of their students was and they connected that to an upcoming summative assessment or an upcoming learning experience they were planning so that they could scaffold and differentiate the lesson to really meet the specific language needs of their ELLs.

The last way we use data is what I think is the most fun way we use data, and that's to celebrate success. Data is a great tool for showing your staff, and for showing the district and the community that what you're doing is working. Some data that we have used this year to celebrate success are King's annual MEA science scores. This year 76% of our students met or exceeded the state proficiency standards in science, and that's, you know, between 10 and 15 points higher than our district and state peers, so that was a real area for success.

Another place that we have celebrated success is by looking at our ELL programming. This year we shifted around the way we are teaching ELL students in the mainstream, and we have seen that not only are more ELL students growing, but the amount of growth they're showing each year is increasing. So there's another tool that we can use to celebrate success.

So yeah, data has no soul, but it has a real purpose for our school. We use it to inform new programming, monitor existing programming, we use it for professional development, and most importantly we use it to celebrate the successes that we've had.

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