Developing Capacities for Evidence-Guided Continuous Improvement:
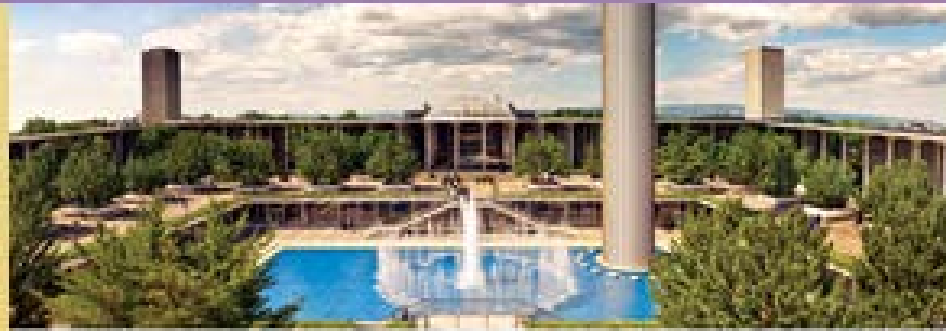- A University-P-12
- Project

**Kristen C. Wilcox,
Janet I. Angelis
Hal A. Lawson**

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

www.albany.edu/nykids

New & Related Research!

The **Mission** of NYKids is to

- **INFORM** schools about their own and other's performance

- **INSPIRE** educators by reporting best practices from field studies

- **IMPROVE** schools by partnering with local networks to provide ongoing embedded professional development

2

refining solutions/ repeating the cycle

framing and analyzing a problem

COMPASS
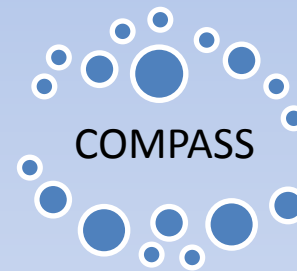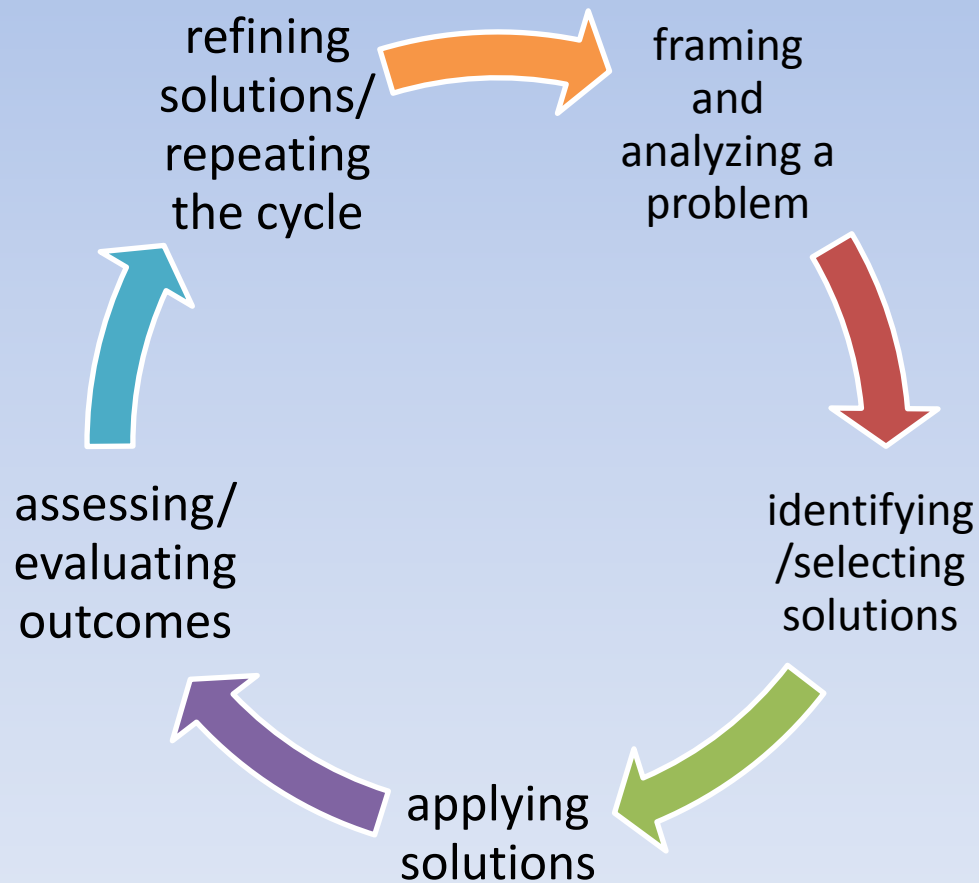
Set SMART Goals

• **COMP**are practices
• **A**ssess priorities
• **S**elect levers to improve

assessing/ evaluating outcomes

identifying /selecting solutions

Action plan

Implement

applying solutions

Monitor

Kowalski et al. 2008

- **Comp**are processes and practices to evidence-based practices
- **A**ssess priorities based upon local constraints and affordances
- **S**elect evidence-based practices
- **S**et SMART goals

- **A**ction Plan
- **I**mplement Plan

Plan

Do

Act

Study

- Recalibrate as needed and continue cycle

- **M**onitor ("check the pulse")

Agenda 2-day initial institute

Day 1

- Team building
- Compare own practices to BP; Assess priorities
- Overview all NY Kids research findings
- Begin to select potential solutions

Day 2

- Determine potential solutions
- Learn to set SMART goals
- Develop SMART goal
- Develop action plan

Goal: Action Plan in hand

Element 1: Aligning Goals and Curriculum. . . . What is your school like?

Step 3: Select levers to improvement

✓ Check those actions that might have impact in your context; consider these "levers" to prompt the next step – setting SMART Goals and crafting an action plan for continuous improvement

Element 1: Aligning Goals and Curriculum

Case in Point: Otselic Valley Junior-Senior High School

for full case studies:
www.albany.edu/nykids/casestudies_higherperforming_hs_completion.php

1. Send a high expectations message – make this explicit, shared, and owned

We believe that there's a higher ed option out there for everybody. – Amityville

Mastery is the school-wide goal. – Elmont

Other cases to refer to:

* Downsville Central High School (smaller rural)
* Eastridge High School (medium suburban)
* Elmont Memorial High School (larger urban)

To push this lever consider:

☐ Including mastery and post-secondary education as school and district-wide goals

☐ Incorporating these goals into school and district improvement plans and encouraging teachers to incorporate these into learning objectives. See references (pp. 22-24).

To push this lever consider:

Best Practices Case Study: *Supporting High School Completion*

Susan Tangorre & Janet Angelis, February 2013

Otselic Valley Junior-Senior High School
Georgetown-South Otselic Central School District

Every kid counts is more than a slogan.
I don't think it's the paperwork that makes us unique.
- principal

School Context

A visit to Otselic Valley Junior-Senior High School involves driving a scenic country road that curves one way then the other, many miles from any city, major grocery store, or mall of any kind. The school is nestled in a valley about an hour south of Syracuse and east of New York State's Finger Lakes, where the hillsides are dotted by farms and fields. As one teacher explained,

Step 4: Set SMART Goals

The spreadsheet we use is a living document on every student junior to senior year. How many credits they need, the exams they still need, PSAT and SAT scores, that's definitely the lifeline. We have weekly meetings every Wed

A SMART goal is:

- **S**trategic and Specific – Linked to district and school goals and strategic plan, focused on student learning, and targeted to what is likely to have the greatest impact on student performance. Answers the question - <u>What</u> exactly do we want to improve? (Underlying question – How do we know this is important?)

- **M**easurable – The success toward meeting the goal can be measured in student achievement. Answers the question - <u>What</u> will be the measures for effectiveness?

- **A**ttainable – Can be achieved in a specific amount of time, with resources available. It should be a stretch from current performance. Answers the question - <u>When</u> will the actions be implemented and with what resources?

- **R**esults Oriented /Relevant/Rigorous – Aligned with district and building goals and focused on increased student achievement in a defined area. Answers the question – <u>How</u> does this goal relate to our school/district mission?

- **T**ime Bound – Has a clearly defined time frame including a target date. Answers the question – <u>When</u> will the goal be assessed?

4.2. Other Resources

	A. Recommended References
Aligning Goals and Curriculum	Most subject area professional associations offer a variety of opportunities to receive updated information electronically (e.g., www.nctm.org for mathematics; www.ncss.org for social studies; www.ncte.org for English language arts; www.nsta.org for science; www.iste.org for technology).

B. Other NYKids Resources (www.albany.edu/nykids)

- Ask your school community to take a self-survey:

  www.surveymonkey.com/s/HSG_Self_Survey

- Download the cross-case report:
  www.albany.edu/nykids/files/high_school_graduation_full_report.pdf

The ABCs of graduating at-risk students on time

Bridging Divides

- Explore the Best Practices Framework(s) and dig down to sample documents from the higher-performing schools. The five themes are

    o Curriculum and academic goals

    o Staff selection, leadership, and capacity building

    o Instructional programs, practices, and arrangements

    o Monitoring: Compilation, analysis, and use of data

    o Recognition, interventions, and adjustments.

    Click in any row to learn more, including key

Organizing Themes	Critical Needs, Elementary Schools (2011)	Elementary Schools (2005)	Middle Schools (2007)	High Schools (2008)	Middle School Science (2009)
	Best Practices				
Curriculum & Academic Goals	• Goals are aligned from classroom to district, and goal-setting is a collaborative process. • Within each building teachers feel that they are working toward shared goals and collaborate extensively to achieve those goals. • The goals for student achievement apply to all students, including English learners and those with special needs. Learn more...				
Staff Selection, Leadership, & Capacity Building	• Care is taken to hire educators who will fit well with the school culture and philosophy and who value and desire to work with diverse and challenging populations. • When teachers are asked to adopt new practices ongoing support is provided formally and informally. • Approaches to curriculum and instruction are not "cookie cutter" but expect teachers to be problem solvers. Learn more...				

http://www.albany.edu/nykids/frameworks_high_school_completion.php

SMART Goal Template

Align goals to district/school/department goals and strategic plans; identify who will be responsible for actions; identify a time frame for implementation and measuring impact. Consider "testing" your goals against SMART goal examples while you do this.

	S	M	A	R	T

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

Planning Sheet adapte

4.4 SMART Goals Action Worksheet

Record specific actions attached to each of the goals you have identified. Use levers to improvement, NYKids resources, and/or other resources.

	Specific Actions/Levers to Improvement Related to Goals (What will we do/use to reach this goal?). Ensure goals and levers are connected to a strategic plan.
Goal 1:	
Goal 2:	
Goal 3:	

4.5. Action Plan Timeline: Who will be responsible for doing what by when?

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Goal 1:				
Goal 2:				
Goal 3:				

COMPASS-AIM Participation, 2010-2015

Year	Schools Participating	# Participants
2010-11	# 1-7	38
2011-12	# 8-15	73
2012-13	# 16-32	71
2013-14	0	0
2014-15	# 33-36	46

COMPASS-AIM Impact, 2010-2015

Research Question 1: COMPASS-AIM's impact on research-based, evidence-guided decision making	% Responding "somewhat" or "very much"
1. Ability to compare practices in own school with those of other schools to identify areas for improvement	97.1
2. Ability to develop a shared vision of priorities with other members of the participating school/district team	99.9

Research Question 2: COMPASS-AIMS's impact on using research to select tailored interventions	
3. Ability to identify potentially effective levers to improvement based on best practice research	100

Research Question 3: COMPASS-AIMS's impact on developing competency and capacity for organizational learning	% Responding "somewhat" or "very much"
4. Ability to develop SMART goals	99.5
5. Ability to develop timelines for accomplishment of actions	99.3
6. Ability to share progress with other participants and outside school/district facilitators	96.2
7. Ability to reflect on and evaluate progress toward achieving goals based on evidence	92.1
8. Ability to plan next action steps	96.6
9. Ability to use processes of evidence-based decision making to improve educational outcomes (e.g. improve graduation rates, increase performance on standardized or other assessment, reduction of suspensions, etc.)	95.4

A Case in Point: Millstream Primary School

- Level: primary school (Pre-K, Full-day Kindergarten, 1, 2)

- Demographics: Rural; avg poverty levels; low ethnic and linguistic diversity; ~380 students

- Duration: joined COMPASS-AIM in 2014-15 school year

- System involvement: whole district including intermediate, middle, and high school

- COMPASS-AIM components completed: full-day institute and three follow-up "check the pulse" sessions

- Participants: School principal plus the 35 staff members

A Case in Point: Millstream Primary School

Post-Institute Reflection Questions	% Responding "somewhat" or "very much"	% Response Rate
1. Ability to compare practices in own school with those of other schools to identify areas for improvement	82.9	94
2. Ability to develop a shared vision of priorities with other members of the participating school/district team	97.1	100
3. Ability to identify potentially effective levers to improvement based on best practice research	100	100
4. Ability to develop SMART goals	97.1	100

A Case in Point: Millstream Primary School

Improvement Principles (Bryk et al., 2015)	Millstream
1. Identifying user-centered specific problems	Major challenge area
2. Focusing on variation in performance	Major challenge area
3. Seeing the system	Major challenge area
4. Measuring outcomes	TBD
5. Engaging in disciplined inquiry	TBD
6. Accelerating learning through networks	TBD

A Case in Point: Millstream Primary School

Improvement Principles (Bryk et al., 2015)	Millstream
1. Identifying user-centered specific problems	Major challenge area
2. Focusing on variation in performance	Major challenge area
3. Seeing the system	Major challenge area
4. Measuring outcomes	TBD
5. Engaging in disciplined inquiry	TBD
6. Accelerating learning through networks	TBD

A Case in Point: Millstream Primary School

Improvement Principles (Bryk et al., 2015)	Millstream
1. Identifying user-centered specific problems	*"They brought to the institute five vision statements that they had earlier drafted as a group, and they insisted on developing a SMART goal and action plan for each, despite our advice that five goals are typically too many".*
2. Focusing on variation in performance 3. Seeing the system	*"With attention now focused on their areas of most concern, they developed more specific actions plans to meet the goals, both by grade level and for the entire school, some for the current academic year, others for the next".*

2. Character Education
* Books with activities
* Displaying word of the month pawprints
* Character word poster family project
* Garden

#3. Families
* Class Dojo/Remind
* Young Author's Fair/Writing Celebration during day
* Garden
* Celebration

KINDERGARTEN

---

1. ## character education
Goal #2

wall of fame
marks of good character
character word on display (daily meetings, announcements, etc.)
Special area award (P.E, music, art, library)
Direct instruction
Modeling positive, caring attitude
real life stories (videos, lets find out)

e community
s to display
ction - building wide
provide positive tools
display character education. (offering
academic support tools, etc. print add!)
t/Meetings

Grade 2
- Writing Celebration - after Father's Day MP
- Plan several days to have parents come in and help organize/get kids ready for the Writing Celebration
- 2nd Grade Book Club
- Summer Social Skills Buddies
- Kid Snippets
- Positive Phone Calls Home to whole class
-

Goal for Next Year
- Quarterly info. nights w/ parents
- Class dojo/remind app

Lessons Learned from Millstream

✓ Considerable attention needed to be paid to affect (such as frustration and blame)

✓ Increased time and facilitation for staff to discuss and work out their differences regarding priorities

Next steps:

1. Support ongoing measurement of outcomes and engaging in disciplined inquiry

2. Integrate the leadership teams into the network more fully

A Case in Point: Echo High School

- Demographics: small city, rural surrounds (c. 1200 students)
- Challenges: lack of AYP, esp. for Hispanic, low SES, and sped students (c. 30%, 30%, and 15%, [districtwide])
- Duration: joined in 2010; last check the pulse 2015
- System involvement: middle and high schools, 2010; elementary schools, 2012
- COMPASS-AIM components: two-day institute, four "check the pulse" sessions, workshop sharing new findings
- Participants: 52 respondents to the self-survey (of 89 staff); director of secondary ed; leadership team -- principal, AP, and 8 others; colleagues the leadership team brought into the process

A Case in Point: Echo High School

Improvement Principles (Bryk et al., 2015)	EHS
1. Identifying user-centered specific problems	Immediate
2. Focusing on variation in performance	Immediate
3. Seeing the system	Began urging ES participation
4. Measuring outcomes	Immediate
5. Engaging in disciplined inquiry	Ongoing and involving colleagues
6. Accelerating learning through networks	As opportunities permit

A Case in Point: Echo High School

Increase in Graduation Rate, 2009-2014	2009	2014
All students	62%	67%
Hispanic Students	32%	49%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	48%	52%
Students with Disabilities	20%	43%

Source: New York State Education Department School Report Card data base

Lessons from EHS

✓ Increased time and facilitation for staff to discuss and work out their differences, find common ground, develop goals

✓ Distributed leadership matters

Next steps:

1. Being available to the team and their new principal as they transition

2. Integrate the leadership teams into the network more fully
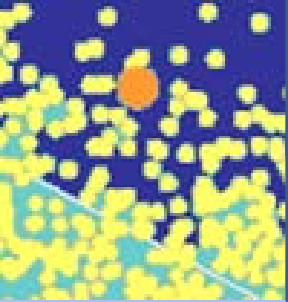
"The problem-solving work of innovation requires access to 'sticky' information regarding user needs and the context of use . . . we need design which explicitly aims to function in the hands of diverse individuals working in highly varied circumstances."

Bryk et al, 2011

"This process has really helped us (not just our team) hone in on our GOALS that are measurable, meaningful and specific. It is the model by which we will operate from now on!! Thanks, ladies!!!"

COMPASS participant, check the pulse, March, 2011

Kristen Wilcox: kwilcox1@albany.edu

Janet Angelis: jangelis@albany.edu

www.albany.edu/nykids

File   Edit   View   History   Bookmarks   Tools   Help

Books | West Vir...   Rural America i...   Handouts Download   Conference Program   New York State ...   Hotel & Travel   Sheraton Times ...   SNYSellersDiagramS...   Critical Nee...   x

www.surveymonkey.com/s/Critical_Needs_Elementary_Self_Survey   university of est virginia press

Most Visited   Getting Started   Suggested Sites   Web Slice Gallery

Critical Needs Elementary Self-Survey

Exit this survey

Dear Visitors,

Based on the findings of our elementary school critical needs study, we developed this survey as a tool for school- and district-based educators to take the pulse of their own organizations in terms of the four key elements of what works for critical needs students in elementary school.

For more about each element, see the full report (available as a PDF) on the NY Kids Website. To access it, please copy and past the following URL into your Web browser:

http://www.albany.edu/nykids/files/NY_Kids_Critical_Needs_Elementary_Full_Report_2011.pdf

and we invite you to use this survey with colleagues in your own setting.

Note that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. As you will see in this brief survey, no questions as to your name or other identifiable personal information is required.

Thank you for your responses.

Sincerely,
The NY Kids Team

Please indicate how well you think your school or district is addressing the following:

[Not at all well; somewhat well; well; very well]

＊1. Close Engagement with and Understanding of the Population . . . What is your school like?

Consider how well you think your school or district is addressing each of the following:

	not at all well	somewhat well	well	very well	N/A
(1) We are a "family" that takes care of and takes responsibility for children's emotional and social growth AND academic achievement.	○	○	○	○	○
(2) We consistently and actively forge parent/legal guardian relationships, and our efforts are supported by school-level activities that recognize and celebrate our community's diversity.	○	○	○	○	○
(3) Teachers, teacher-leaders or coaches, principals, and district administrators consistently analyze student performance data and use these	○	○	○	○	○

Inspire with findings about higher-than-predicted performance

- Select "beating the odds" schools based on 3 years of NYS data
- Find similar, average-performing schools
- Oversample high-poverty schools
- Conduct two-day site visits
- Analyze data looking for differences in practice
- Produce individual and cross-case reports

Details about methodology, all studies, and findings:
www.albany.edu/nykids

6 Studies to Date (2005-2014)

- Elementary schools, 2005 (math, ELA)

- Middle schools, 2007 (math, ELA)

- High schools, 2008 (5 required Regents)

- Middle school science, 2009 (science)

- Critical needs, elementary level, 2011 (math, ELA)

- High school graduation, 2013 (4-yr grad rate, AR stu)

- (English Learners, 2016)

Example

High schools that "beat the odds" to graduating their at-risk populations in 4 years:

- **A**lign goals, curriculum, program, instruction
- **B**ridge divides within school and between school and community
- **C**raft engaging instruction that is differentiated and flexible, with experiential options
- **D**rive a "whole-child" intervention loop that addresses social/emotional and academic needs with evidence-based interventions

Inspire

Know Your Schools ~
for NY Kids

Best Prac
Vincent Amodeo,

Know Your Schools ~
for NY Kids

Best Practices Case Study: *Meeting Critical Needs at the Elementary Level*

Dianne Walshhampton, April 2011

Columbus Elementary School
New Rochelle City School District

Jefferson
...estown

The ABCs of graduating
at-risk students on time }
Promising
practices from
higher-performing
high schools

What works for
diverse and
special needs
students }
Best practices from
higher-performing
elementary schools

UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY
State University of New York

UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY
State University of New York

(6)

...ool Context

...mbus Elementary
...w York City border...
...tudents than th...
...: 31%

Best Practices Case Study: *Supporting High School Completion*

Kathy Nickson, March 2013

(55)

Eastridge High School
East Irondequoit Central School District

School Context

The East Irondequoit Central School District, in Monroe County (NY), serves approximately 3600 student s in two primary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school, and one high school. At first glance, the district appears to encompass a suburban community of single family homes bordering two bodies of water and the north side of Rochester. A closer look, however, reveals many families struggling economically, with approximately 50% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The district has little in the way of an industrial base and not much land on which new industry might locate. It is very dependent on State aid, and as one administrator explained, when it comes to finances, "We try to be as creative as we can be . . . creative and careful about how grant money is used."

At Eastridge High School, with nearly 1,000 students in grades 9 through 12, the faculty and student body embrace the school's socio-economic, racial, and ethnic diversity. As one teacher said, "Diversity creates a very tolerant climate where there's a lot of understanding: faculty with
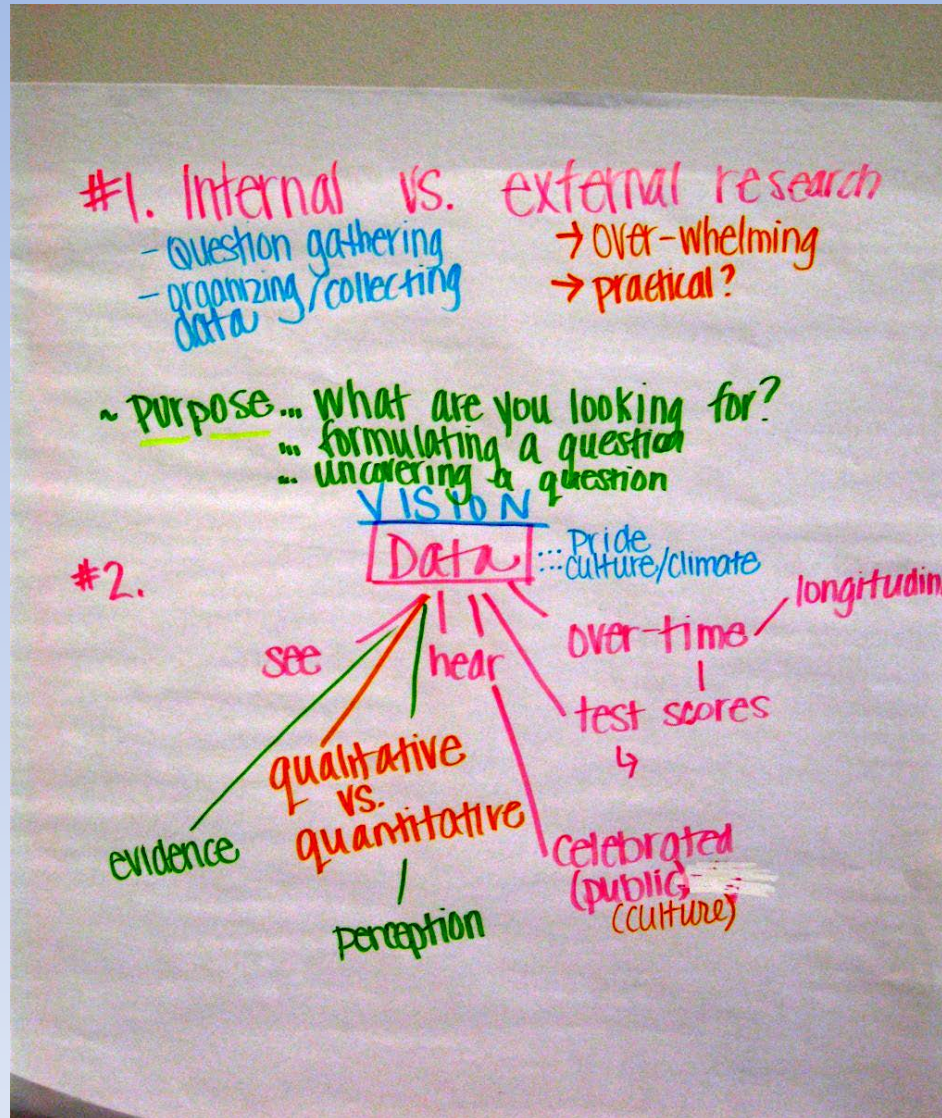
31

Amsterdam High School's Journey

2010

"We didn't know what we didn't know."
- D. Ziskin (2011)

Amsterdam High School's Journey

"There are so many data, getting your arms around them is like wrestling with a mattress."
- D. Ziskin (2011)

Amsterdam High School's Journey

after 1 year of participation

Progress toward goal of *reducing achievement gaps* while *meeting overall performance targets*

Group	ELA	Math
All students	✓ AYP	x 4 points shy
Hispanic	✓ Safe Harbor	✓ Safe Harbor
Econ. Disadv.	✓ AYP	x Not met
Sped.	x Not met	x Not met

"We had to take a look in the mirror, dig in, and decide who we really are."
- D Ziskin (2010)

Echo High School's Journey

4 years after participation

Progress toward goal
of reducing achievement gaps
while meeting overall performance targets

Graduation Rates, 2009-2014	2009	2014
All students	62%	67%
Hispanic Students	32%	49%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	48%	52%
Students with Disabilities	20%	43%

Keeping the Focus

Despite loss of 10.5 teachers in 2010-11 as well as busing for after school tutoring –

Teachers and administrators able to focus on their goals by concentrating on what they *can* do, not what is beyond their control. Have made strategic decisions on curriculum development, CCSS, and professional development to support DI and cooperative learning.

"Capacity-building distributed leadership and COMPASS process keeps us on task and faithful to our goals."

- D. Ziskin (2011)

Where to find more information: www.albany.edu/nykids

- Data displays
- Case reports, all HP schools (55)
- Cross-case reports, each study (6)
- Best practice frameworks (most current 5)
- Documentary evidence (in BP framework)
- Key word collections
- Self-assessments
- COMPASS Institutes to support school teams to use these resources in data-guided decision making

jangelis@albany.edu   nandress@albany.edu

37

Interactive displays of data to *inform*

38