

Ten Questions Every Principal Should Ask and Answer

Note: These questions are appropriate for Data Team leaders as well.

Here are some questions that principals should be prepared to answer in the course of their periodic visits with district administrators. In addition, the school improvement plan should address how these questions will be answered in your school.

1. What in-school assessment data, including teacher-made tests, in-class diagnostic assessments, school-wide assessments, and other assessments, have you completed during the current school year that you have used as the basis for differentiated instruction? Provide at least three specific examples of how the faculty and administration have:
 - Revised the instructional schedule, providing additional instruction for students who need significant additional intervention.
 - Revised curriculum and instruction, providing enrichment and challenge for students who are already achieving at the proficient or advanced levels.
2. Based on last spring's state assessment data, what percentage of your students are not proficient, what percentage are proficient, and what percentage are advanced? What specific changes have you implemented in curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment for this year to decrease the number of nonproficient students and increase the number of proficient and advanced students? Please be specific. An intention to "focus on" a subject or "give more attention to" a subject is not as helpful as a specific list of expectations that allows classroom teachers to make explicit changes toward more effective instructional practices.
3. Based on your analysis of data in your school that compared the performance of students in individual classrooms, which specific teaching strategies have you found to be most effective for improving student performance? What are the plans for replicating and expanding those strategies for this school year?
4. What lessons have you learned about effective instruction, curriculum, and leadership from your discussions with colleagues and reviews of their data walls? Please provide at least three specific examples of ideas, techniques, or professional practices from other schools that will be implemented this year in your school.
5. What have you taken off the table? Please identify at least three examples of activities, units, chapters, subchapters, meetings, or other expenditures of time that took place in your school last year that have been explicitly identified and canceled for this year.
6. As of today (the date of the visit of a district administrator), what percentage of your students are proficient and what percentage are advanced in nonfiction writing? What method did you use to assess student writing? How are those percentages different from the last time you assessed writing? What is your plan for assessing student writing for the remainder of the year?
7. What measurements are you using to monitor academic equity in your school? What are those indicators today? How have they changed since the last time you measured them? What is the plan to monitor academic equity for the rest of the school year?

8. What opportunities exist in your school for academic acceleration? How have those opportunities increased or expanded since last year? What steps are you taking to identify additional students who would benefit from academic acceleration? What steps are you taking to make more students eligible for academic acceleration?
9. What strategies have you used to involve 100% of staff members in continuous academic improvement? Please be specific. "Literacy across the curriculum" is a good idea, but it is not as helpful as specific examples of direct support by faculty and staff members for specific requirements contained in the academic content standards.
10. What is an exceptionally effective practice that you are using that you would like to share with other administrators and educators throughout the district?