

Assurance Framework: Evidence-Informed Decision-Making: Creating a Data Culture – Know Your Data

The intent of a CASS Learning Guide is to apply research, deepen understanding and enhance professional practice within the Alberta context. With a focus on optimum learning for all students, a Learning Guide provides an opportunity to grow system leader knowledge, resulting in quality school leadership and quality teaching throughout Alberta.

Summary Messages (February 23, 2021 Learning Opportunity)

Creating a Data Culture – Know Your Data: System Leaders shared their stories of practice to address the intent of the assurance framework. [Watch full recording here.](#)



How does data drive which Education Plan goals and outcomes you choose?

Associate Superintendent Ron Eberts

describes the evolution of Red Deer Public Schools' (RDPS) Education Plan from a 58-page document that was focused on compliance to a one-page document, which captures the essence of RDPS through three main priorities, namely: literacy and numeracy, equity, and student success and completion. All initiatives and goals must fit into one of the three priorities. RDPS has created a data culture focused on data gathering and data analysis for the purpose of knowing if interventions are having an impact. For RDPS "Data" is all about meeting their priorities!

What tools/resources have supported your work? RDPS uses PowerSchool and Dossier data. PowerSchool and Dossier provide software solutions that help us to gather, sort and connect our data sources. Once the data is gathered, both allow us to display information on a dashboard with different access points for both schools and the system. (e.g., the system can see all school data, schools see data for their own school. These existing software solutions can be adapted to address local measures as well as provincial data. Ron will be best to make it right!

Ron.Eberts@rdpsd.ab.ca (Timestamp 6:46 on recording.)

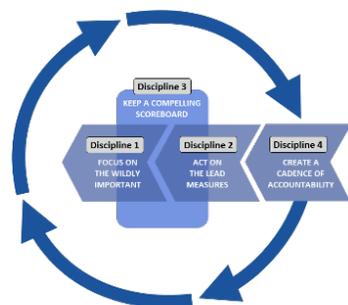


How do we know what data is important?

Managing Director of Strategic Division Supports Nancy Petersen points out, "A strength of the Assurance Framework is

that it allows us to be nimble and responsive to the students and families we serve." Every jurisdiction will create their own story and, in her words, "the foundation to a good story is a good plan." Edmonton Public Schools' foundation is the strategic plan/education plan which outlines what is important based on an evidence and data-based culture. Edmonton Public has a one-page strategic plan that is a living document. The mission, vision, values, and priorities are the work of the Trustees based on engaging the community that helps to inform the direction. Strategic direction is unpacked under the priorities through the goals and outcomes. Administration is responsible for bringing to life the direction set by the board of trustees.

How does data work at all levels of the organization? Once you know where you are going (i.e., the plan), Nancy points out that you can begin to understand what data is important. As you



How do you establish performance measures that address your goals and outcomes? RDPS uses the [4 Disciplines of Execution](#) to build their data culture. Ron reminds us that we have a greater chance of success if we focus on fewer wildly important goals. It is

important to identify lead and lag measures. Lead measures are high impact, ongoing processes that provide staff with an indication if they are going in the right direction. Lag data tells you if you have or have not achieved your goal. The third discipline of execution is establishing a scoreboard to track your score, or progress based on lead measures. Finally, establishing a cadence of accountability is necessary to regularly monitor progress. System and school leaders meet regularly throughout the school year to identify successes, lack of progress and possible interventions.

Acknowledgements

This guide was developed by CASS. Thank you to Alberta system leaders involved in the assurance model pilot who shared their Stories of Practice. This guide is provided in support of improved system leadership capacity and under the following Creative Commons license.



Summary Messages (February 9, 2021 Learning Opportunity)

respond to key areas of the plan, you can look at what data you have and map out a profile signaling the most important data to use. At the school authority level, most of the data is what EPS would call autopsy data, which is after the fact data or lag data. For example, the accountability pillar data is after the fact. It assists in knowing how your school authority results compare to previous years and the provincial landscape, which is helpful for long term planning. The same data, mostly achievement test data, is shared with the school level for analysis. Responsive data informs the work that is done with students to evidence growth throughout the year. This local context data is unique to the school authority (e.g., Student surveys, MIPI, writing samples) and assists with programming, prioritizing interventions and identifying gaps. These would be examples of lead data – as well as used as lag data sources.

Nancy points out that in an evidence-based culture, decision making is never really “done”. There is always the opportunity to continue to figure out what data is important and to make

new decisions based on new understandings. Is the data available to me or do I need to think more creatively about the context of my school authority and gather the data in a new way?

Can you separate data from engagement? Nancy argues that if you are going to conduct a stakeholder engagement session at the front end of a problem and intend to learn from feedback, this process becomes a source of data to support you inform your decisions. If you are conducting a stakeholder engagement session after the school authority has grappled with the problem and come to a solution, this is information to garner buy-in, timing and intention are important. Data and engagement serve each other quite well because when done at a strategic time, it becomes a source of new data to help confirm your decisions or that you are moving ahead in the right direction.

Nancy Petersen nancy.petersen@epsb.ca
(Timestamp 29:14 on recording.)

Connections with the Alberta Context

Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent’s on-going analysis of context, and the superintendent’s decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students. There is a direct alignment with the SLQS professional practice standard and the 5 domains of the assurance framework. A specific example of this alignment to the competencies of Visionary Leadership and Leading Learning.



In his opening remarks, Executive Director Keohane reminds us that “when we are using effective decision making through data, we are really taking a visionary look, thinking about what really leads learning in the classroom and wanting to support the governance model very strongly.” It is the work of the superintendent and system leadership teams to take generative interest, to think about what the ministry wants in terms of must have deliverables and to ultimately get to the main thing which is the heart of what all data and decision making should be about--student growth and achievement. The professional expertise of leader and teachers really help in this work.

Research to Practice

Questions for reflection and dialogue within your context.

1. What is your reason for creating a data culture?
2. As you examine your data, which data sets will assist you in evidencing your priorities?
3. Are there gaps? If so, what data sources can you gather through stakeholder engagement?

Additional Supports for System Leadership Capacity

CASS Professional Learning outcome is to: Create assurance framework resources for school authorities to support SLQS growth. Resources created based on this learning opportunity focused on Creating a Data Culture:

- [Slide deck](#)
- [Padlet \(Online repository\) of System Authority, Alberta Education and CASS resources](#)
- [A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions](#)
- [CASS resource library including additional Assurance Framework Learning Guides](#)

✓ Visionary Leadership

✓ Leading Learning