



Complete notes from **NYSUT**
Policy Council meeting

Data Systems Conversation – NYSUT

- 1. How accessible do you feel student data is to educators? Do you feel as though this level of accessibility is adequate? Too much?**
 - Members reported that most have access to raw data.
 - Overwhelmingly, members reported teachers are not adequately trained on how to use the data. Professional development is limited. In the words of one: “the idea that you get the raw data and get to work is crazy.”
 - Teachers are dependent on others to interpret. Teachers do not always have confidence in what is provided, fearing bias.
 - Several members reported that there was not enough time to analyze the data in a timely manner. Lacking hours.
 - IEPs and student social emotional health records are protected. Several members reported that what is provided may not be as much as teachers need and that the systems to obtaining records can be cumbersome. This leads to delays in getting the information that teachers need. Unfortunately this can also lead to inappropriate discussions. Improved access may be better but teachers need to be reminded of privacy issues.
 - A member whose district uses e-school, reported issues with elementary schools not having the ability to perform routine data entry, such as entering grades and recording students that are tardy. Secondary teachers have greater access. The district is savvy about what data teachers have access to but it is too restrictive.
 - Data is not updated in a timely manner
 - Several members reported inappropriate use of data, often to remove support services. Examples: tests used to remove AIS; weekly fluency tests that must be given grade level that does not capture improvement.
 - Members reported that data is used to report district results and for accountability purposes. It is not helpful for improving instruction.
- 2. In an ideal world, how should information about students and staff be used?**
 - There would not be a disconnect between the data and how it is used. Not enough planning, work to connect the two.
 - It should inform instruction, It doesn't help when it tells you what you already know (like a child is traumatized) teachers do the assessments that are helpful to them. Teachers do not want a preconceived idea of what a child can do.
 - Data should be used to justify program changes – such as accelerating science. However, incomplete or biased data can be harmful, used to hold students back.
 - Several members spoke of the need to decouple the data from accountability to return the focus to helping students. Analysis of test data should help teachers understand what concepts need to be taught. The system now is all about points, how many kids are at level 1, etc. It should be used to inform and move on, it is a trap (global goal-setting) we are moving to the lowest common denominator. Teachers working with high need students get buried. Administration has no idea what the curve is – what it means to move a student from 1 to a 2.

- Members spoke of the value there use to be in using the tests to inform instruction. The ability to review tests and collaborate was powerful professional development. Diagnosing why students did well in one class or grade vs another – looking for trends.
- 3. *It has been said that our current data system was built for collecting information rather than analyzing or digesting it to inform decision-making. Some educators have expressed a need to have a system that connects information to better inform programs and services for students. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?***
- Members agreed that we collect a lot of data and it is not helpful, sometimes it is used for harm. It is too often used to justify positions. It creates busy work without any meaningful end product.
 - a. Teachers should be able to mark student attendance correctly, have access to IEPs, different systems should be better integrated.
 - b. Members were not sure what is left to be collected.
 - c. Many elements are not helpful. Too often, it takes time from instruction. Tests are killing the joy of learning and teaching. Assessments that kids know is not connected to the classroom and what they are doing are not taken seriously – they do not see the purpose. It loses any potential to be helpful. (i-ready, AIMSweb)
 - d. One member reported that in his district when teachers were part of data teams, teachers were more likely to trust the data. Teachers were asked what they needed.
 - To what end are we collecting the data? Time for meaningful instruction is more limited. Districts are concerned with compliance issues, especially with AIS. Teachers would like to focus on the students that they know need help without ongoing testing. The constant testing show a lack of trust in the classroom teacher.
- 4. *Is there any information that for privacy/security or other reasons, you believe should not be collected from students or staff?***
- Yes, sometimes data is collected for the wrong reasons: non-tenured administrators are doing walk-throughs, not for APPR, but to make themselves look good. Micro management where the district must approve all materials, even crayons and snowflake decorations. One member reported the flip side - a disconnect with principals staying in their ivory towers and loosing contact with students and teachers. When the CSE chair sits in the classroom and observes students, it is very helpful.
 - Many reported there is too much assessable personal data out there. Also data that can be manipulated and distorted. There is more collected, or can be collected than most people realize. Members thought that this should be a district level discussion between labor—management.
 - Members are concerned the how much student data is collected and how it can follow and harm them. Student with discipline issues, MH illness, trauma. Staff as well, MH illness, absences tracked.
 - On the flip side, members appreciate that some of this type of reporting may help prevent student shooters.

- One member raised the important point that we have reached a turning point in society because what is collected is also effecting behavior. Example - voice recognition software can create a transcript. School policies do not ensure anything. Some teachers are not tech savvy, kids recording teachers. All this can be edited. Kids using chrome chat rooms. More tech is omnipresent, the less we notice it.
- Members are concerned with techs ability to market to kids (In Bloom)
- Staff absences can be misrepresented, misused (ESSA accountability)

5. *Is there anything we didn't address today that you would like to add?*

- Professional Development records. Need a system that tracks and updates the information efficiently and accurately. Payroll and HR need to be integrated and seamless.

