Evidence-Based Decisions

An effective school, operating as a professional learning community, consists of teams of educators working together to review, analyze and interpret data with a view to provide an organized plan for learning. (DuFour, 2016) The composition of these teams will depend on the school size and configuration. A school determines which structures work best given their specific needs and available resources. These teams meet regularly to analyze and respond to data on teacher practice and student learning.

Some examples of how staff can be configured into teams are:

Divisional	Teachers teaching within the same division. (e.g., Primary, Elementary, Intermediate, Senior High).
Grade-Level	Teachers teaching at the same grade level. (e.g., all grade five teachers, all teachers who teach grade 10 students).
Subject	Teachers across all grades teaching the same subject. (e.g., junior/senior high departments, English teachers, mathematics teachers).
Whole-School	All teachers in a school.
Cross-School	Teachers at the same grade level and/or subject area from two or more schools.

Data Analysis:

Once established, teams begin the work of regular data analysis which allows members to set goals and support student learning. Teams examine the four key questions of a Professional Learning Community (PLC): What do we want students to learn? How will we know if they learned it? What will we do if they didn't learn it? What will we do if they already know it? (DuFour, 2016)

To answer these questions, teams will:

⮞ determine sources of internal and external data that may be utilized.

Examples of Sources of Data:

Internal Sources	External Sources
✓ Ongoing Classroom Assessments ✓ Anecdotal records and notes ✓ Assessment Portfolios ✓ School-Based Common Assessments ✓ Cross-School Common Assessments ✓ District Common Assessments ✓ PowerSchool/Gradebook (BEV Tables) ✓ Review 360 ✓ Student support services documentation ✓ Records of Interventions ✓ Attendance	✓ Performance Measurement Framework ✓ School Development Surveys ✓ Provincial Assessments ✓ Graduation Rates ✓ National and International Assessments (PCAP, PISA, PIRL, TIMMS)

⮞ analyze the data which may include:

- coming to a shared understanding of what the data shows;
- identifying where students are in their learning;
- using data to reflect on teacher practice including instruction and assessment;
- identifying learner centered needs;
- challenging assumptions about why students perform the way they do;
- identifying strengths and prioritizing specific instruction, assessment and achievement challenges;
- reviewing learner profiles; and
- sharing interpretations of data with members of the PLC.

> respond to data analysis which may include:

- developing and implementing teaching and learning plans in response to the identified challenges;
- monitoring indicators of success to assess the implementation of actions and impact on learning; and
- adjusting teaching and learning plans in response to the ongoing analysis of data.

Reflection

The following data sources and questions can be used to guide the group's discussion.

Additional Evidence:
→ School-specific data tracking systems
→ Team meeting agendas and minutes (e.g. Teaching and Learning team, Student Support Services team, Program planning team, divisional etc.)
→ Intervention plans
→ Item and Outcome Analysis
→ Action Plans

Reference Documents
District Assessment and Evaluation Policy;

Responsive Teaching Learning Policy;

Safe and Caring Schools Policy.

Questions to Consider

Use evidence of current practices to support your discussion points, strengths and opportunities for growth.

> What team structures e.g., norms, agendas, minutes, attendees, scheduling of meetings, have been established within your school?

- How is student learning made the focus of the team meetings?

- What data is being collected and how is it collected and utilized within classes, divisions, school-wide?

- How is data used to inform decisions on implementing responsive teaching strategies?

- How is progress of teaching and learning monitored?

- How is external data, such as the Performance Measurement Framework, used to inform decision making?

- How is student voice included as a data source to inform teaching and learning?

References:

Dufour, R., Dufour, R., Eaker, R., Many, T. & Mattos, M. (2016). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.