STRONG DATA COLLECTION

PRACTICES ROADMAP

9-CHECKPOINTS
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Tackling issues around collecting student data with consistency, collecting the *right* data from quality sources, and aggregating all of this [data] into a coherent system primed for insights-gathering, poses a great challenge to teachers and school administrators. The task of gathering and evaluating data and the sources from which we accrue data may seem daunting. However, over the years, Learnmetrics has found the following recommendations helpful in preparing collections processes for meaningful data analysis for the years ahead in our work with them:

1. **Align Decisions to Goals:**
    - Teachers: Think about the school year and what you hope student achievement outcomes will be. For example, if you have an outcome goal for behavior data, will you track behavior data before *and* after lunch to try and identify trends that could be influencing student learning during these key times?
    - Administrators: After setting your school goals for the year, identify key metrics and data sources that align specifically to those outcomes. Focus your high quality data collection processes on these specific school outcomes.
    - ☐ *Checkpoint: Does the data you're collecting align to your goals?*

2. **Know How You Will Collect Data:**
    - Teachers:
        a. Do you have a place where you plan to record and store your data?
        b. What will be the most efficient way for you to collect and organize it?
    - Administrators: Is your data contained in a product platform, a Google document, a teacher spreadsheet? Know this ahead of time. It will make a big difference as you setup your systems.
    - ☐ *Checkpoint: Do you have your student IDs assigned and ready to use?*

3. **Attach All Data to One Common Identifier: The SIS Student ID#, Course, Section, Classroom, Etc.**
    - Teachers:
        a. Do you know where to get this information?
        b. Do you have a place to put this information so you can easily access it each time it's needed?

- Administrators: What steps can you take *now* to get this information organized for your teachers so they are ready *before* "day 1"?

Precautionary Tale: This is the #1 problem we see with data collection. There are too many ways for data to be in conflict later on if it is matched by name or birthday, for example. Do it right on the front end. Trust us, you'll be grateful later.

☐ *Checkpoint: Does each student have a unique identifier?*

4. **Start Early**
   - Teachers: Planning ahead can make all the difference! Enter all of your student's information into your spreadsheets, and do a quick double check to make sure it's accurate.
   - Administrators: Enter student information into any spreadsheets and 3rd party products *before* the year begins and check for accuracy.

☐ *Checkpoint: Are your spreadsheets and data information systems completed correctly?*

5. **Less Is Not More**
   - Teachers: It is better to have data that you might not end up needing than to not have it at all. As teachers, we are never quite sure what might transpire during the school year, so plan to gather as much data as you can and then use it when problem solving, meeting with parents, filling out report cards, and so much more!
   - Administrators: Even if you aren't sure if you need it right now, collect it (as long as it's connected to your goals - see #1). You can't go back and get old data that you didn't keep in the first place. If you are wondering if you should collect a bit of data, you ~~probably~~ definitely should.

☐ *Checkpoint: Am I prepared to collect multiple data points even if I am not immediately sure what I might need them for?*

6. **Create Consistency**
   - Teachers:
       a. Do you collect data every day and keep it in the same place?
       b. Do you have a format/platform where this information is stored?
   - Administrators: What can you provide your teachers in terms of software/products or tools to help them manage data efficiently?

☐ *Checkpoint: Did you set a reminder for yourself to collect data?*

7. **The Dreaded Spreadsheet**
   - Teachers and Administrators:
       a. Different data goes into different columns - separate it out!
       b. Timestamp your data and date it
       c. Dropdown options>open text cells
       d. Clearly define your fields/headings
       e. When you can, pre-populate spreadsheets with known information (Student ID, Name, etc.) from a single source of truth (SIS)
       f. Have a clean master roster for lead teachers for courses taught at your school

☐ *Checkpoint: Is your spreadsheet pre-populated and ready for one item to be entered per cell?*

8. **Think About The "Missing" Field**
   - Teachers and Administrators: Think about your blind spots and ask yourself other questions you might want to know about the data.
      a. Who reported it?
      b. Do you need to capture the time of day the assignment was given?
      c. What about the day of the week?

   ☐ *Checkpoint: Have you taken time to think through how thorough your data is?*

9. **Be Clear About What Is Wanted**
   - Teachers: Be sure to check in with school/team leaders to see if there is anything specific they want you to focus on for the year and that you are clear on what and how they want you to collect that information. For example, Atlas Rubicon Unit ELA Calendars are a focus for the 2017-18 school year. Be sure you are working on language arts curriculum mapping by entering data into that system.
   - Administrators: Give clear directions on what you want collected, how you want it collected, and when you want it collected by. The more clarity on the front end, the higher quality data you'll get on the back end.

   ☐ *Checkpoint: Do you understand what you need to be collecting to meet data goals?*