

# What Does Your School's Student Performance Data Mean



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Schools are required to share outcomes with parents. Frequently, schools share information about the state student assessment outcomes on the school's website or they invite parents to an informational session where they share and explain their outcomes. Most schools even have a specific plan for addressing gaps or areas of lower performance, and they often share these plans with parents. But parents need to ask, "Where is my voice in addressing this data?"

Parents typically view student outcomes differently from that of teachers and school-based staff. Parents interact daily with their children and have been observers of their child's academic successes and shortcomings for years. It is important that parents and school teams work more intentionally together to

discuss data and academic outcomes so all groups can move forward together, aligned in a plan to build academic success.

## What Schools Can Do

Educators are experts on delivering information and planning activities for students to process that information. The best educators plan activities that are collaborative, engaging, and get students excited about their own learning and growth. Despite this expertise, parent sessions are too often just presented in one direction: the presenter shares information for the parents to hear, then a few questions are answered. But schools can create parent data sessions that are more engaging and purposeful using the same strategies they use with students:

**Chalk-Talk-Walk:** Parents can move around the room and write responses to questions that are posted on the walls. At each poster, parents can discuss a piece of data or answer a question about programming that will help school leaders make decisions using their feedback.

**Think-Pair-Share:** When presenting data, staff can have parents think about a piece of data, talk with another parent about it, and then share out with the whole group. Giving parents time to process what they are seeing will help them ask more meaningful questions and provide specific feedback.

**Socratic Seminars:** If there is a gap identified in the outcomes, educators can create space where parents can discuss the issue and possible solutions. This strategy will focus heavily on the school staff asking questions and listening, not being the source

of all information and solutions.

## What Parents Can Do

When presented with data, parents can think about it in the following ways:

**Descriptive:** What do I see? Parents can take time to identify successes, growth, low scores, or gaps between groups of students (e.g., boys/girls, English Learners/General Education, etc.)

**Diagnostic:** Why do I think the data looks the way it does? Why do I think kids are performing lower in math? Why do I think girls outperform boys?

**Predictive:** What issues do I think will occur if we don't address these gaps?

**Prescriptive:** What do I think we need to do about the gaps I see?

Parents should not be afraid to share their experiences and opinions. Their perspective matters and is very valuable to school teams. Sometimes parents will hold a critical piece of information that will help everyone make a better decision about how to move forward.

Parents should also not be passive recipients of school data and information. All must engage, ask questions, and offer advice based on their experiences as parents.