An Evaluation of One School District Standards Assessment Program

Derrick King

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An Evaluation of One School District’s Standards Assessment Program

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

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An Evaluation of One School District’s Standards Assessment Program

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Abstract

This project focuses on how one school district uses quarterly assessments to identify standards students have not mastered. This project identifies how some schools utilize quarterly assessment data with varying results. One problem I have identified is a lack of a consistent expectation from district leadership, regarding the expectation for how schools should use the assessment program. In my research, I examine two schools that use the assessment program differently. The literature I present reveals how the program can help improve student achievement. The research reveals what is working well, and what is not. In closing, I recommend implementing a policy for each school to follow regarding the program.
Preface

During my career as a public school educator I have been privileged to serve at three schools in the Horizon School District. I have served as a classroom teacher, program specialist, testing coordinator, and instructional dean. As a classroom teacher I have had the opportunity to work with students in administering quarterly assessments. As a program specialist and testing coordinator I have had the opportunity to work as an educator who oversees the quarterly assessment administration process.

It was during my time serving as program specialist where I first began to understand the importance of quarterly assessment and how they can be utilized to improve student achievement. The school I served in as program specialist and testing coordinator attained a school grade of A during each of the three years I served at the school. I immediately began to recall how the school I previously had served at achieved a school grade of C or worse, over the five years I spent there as an educator.

This revelation sparked my concern as to the manner I remembered seeing my previous school utilize quarterly assessment data as opposed to how my second school utilized the quarterly assessment program. I began to wonder if the differences between the two schools’ usage of quarterly assessment data might show a correlation between the disparities between the schools in the student achievement scores. In my role as program specialist I had the opportunity to gather assessment and disseminate assessment data.

While working to disseminate student data our team had an opportunity to narrow down specific standards students were weakest in mastering. Once we identified the group of standards in which students were most deficient, we then met with subject area
instructional leaders to develop a plan for how to include remediation time for students while continuing to deliver curriculum as assigned by the district blueprint.

The more I reflected on how assessment data was utilized at the second school I served at the more curious I became at identifying if there was a correlation between the use of assessment data and student achievement scores. When the opportunity arose for me to decide on a research topic for my dissertation it was clear to me that I would begin to study the use of quarterly assessment data and its relationship to student achievement. I began to review literature pertaining to quarterly assessment programs. Through this literature review I was able to evaluate research which helped to reveal the pros and cons of using quarterly assessment programs to improve student achievement.

While performing research on the quarterly assessment program in the district I serve I learned several leadership lessons which I thoroughly elaborate on in the change leadership portion of this dissertation. However, a few key leadership lessons I learned include ensuring that every program within a school is utilized with fidelity, and student achievement is the most important responsibility of a school leader. Programs designed to improve student achievement are instrumental. Programs designed to improve student achievement should not be optional or arbitrarily utilized. When school leaders make a commitment to leading a school, they also make a commitment to ensure that they are utilizing every resource available at their disposal.

In the change leadership portion of this dissertation I also address what research has revealed are best practices for utilizing quarterly assessments. I also discuss policies the Horizon School District can implement in order to hold each school within their district accountable for the manner in which they utilize quarterly assessments. It is my
opinion that research performed in this dissertation will help perpetuate student success
across the Horizon School District if the policy recommendation I present is adopted by
school district leaders.
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife The Christine King, and my three children, J’Dawn, Derrick Jr., and Jordan, I thank each of you for your prayers, support, and encouragement you have given me. Your consistent questions about how school is going and understanding when Dad needed to close his office door and go into scholarly hibernation, is a sacrifice the three of you made that I hope makes you proud to know your father has accomplished this milestone.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of differentiated instruction for students based on quarterly assessment data (QAD). My desire was to determine if differentiated instruction based on quarterly assessments (QAs) can improve student achievement, particularly students’ performance on state assessments; ultimately improving the overall performance of a school. A major problem in the school district where I serve has been that nearly 45% of our district students are failing the required state assessments, which continue to be needed to graduate. Classroom teachers in our district teach curriculum daily, which often leaves students struggling to master standards that continue to be assessed by state assessments.

I believed that it would be possible to use instructional time for re-teaching standards students have not mastered. Currently instructional time is spent teaching standards many students have already demonstrated mastering. QAs which are based on state standards covered on standardized assessments; allow educators the ability to identify areas of inadequate student learning. “Diagnostic decisions determine which specific difficulties account for a student's inadequate progress so that the teacher can remediate the learning problem and design more effective instructional plans” (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994, p. 19). To address the deficiencies identified by students at my school based on their performance on state standardized assessments, School Number One adopted a data driven remediation program in 2015. School Number One’s use of the district quarterly assessment data to create a remediation program is the focus of my evaluation.
School Number One remediation program team members included the principal and program specialist. They teamed together to examine student state assessment data. Along with data gathered from state assessments, they examined the quarterly assessments, which were generated by the school district psychometrician and their team, to identify areas of deficiency. During the months of October, January, and March, student assessment data were gathered and analyzed to determine areas of student weakness.

The data were distributed to each of the teachers. Then the administrators and teachers worked together to determine the specific standards that showed the greatest need for differentiated instruction. Once a consensus was agreed upon, the instructional team scheduled times for student remediation based on quarterly data identified need. Twice during each quarter, School Number One teachers delivered direct instruction to students who demonstrated a poor working knowledge of specific standards identified during quarterly assessments (QAs).

I focused my study on the impact instruction based on quarterly assessment data (QAD) has on improving the achievement students demonstrate on state assessments. All students in our district grades 3 through 12 must demonstrate proficiency of the State Standards or its equivalency in order to graduate from a state public school. I learned from the evaluation and I have been able to propose changes to how our district schools currently utilize QAD. I analyzed whether the program utilized at School Number One would benefit the entire district and I made a recommendation to our district leadership to implement this process district wide. My evaluation demonstrated that differentiated
instruction based on assessment data is beneficial to students; therefore, I used my findings to advocate for the district to adopt the program widespread.

According to published reports from the Department of Education in 2017, 45% of students have scored less than satisfactory on the English Language Arts Exam. Similarly, results from this same report indicate that 48% of high school students have scored less than satisfactory on the FSA Algebra 1 End of Course Exam (EOC) (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality). In this state, all schools are expected to teach the state standards. Student performance on the state assessments are generally utilized to provide information to parents, teachers, policy makers, and the public in general, regarding how well students are progressing in learning the state standards. In 2015, the State Achievement Test replaced the State Comprehensive Achievement Test. The rationale given for why the State Comprehensive Achievement Test was replaced by State Standards Assessment alluded to a need for state standardized testing to be closer “aligned to the new State Standards, education standards modeled after the Common Core State Standards that will be adopted in 45 states and the District of Columbia” (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality). Following the transition from State Comprehensive Achievement Test to the State Standards Assessment, students across the state faced a test that was much more challenging than previous exam had been.

This for me is a problem which I feel can be better addressed in our schools, through the usage of benchmark assessment data implemented with fidelity. The problem in our district seems to revolve around insufficient analysis and application of student data that is readily available. Administrators and instructional coaches have access to more than enough data that they need to implement a comprehensive level of intervention
programs to their students. Data are currently readily available to teachers through the
district webpage Performance Matters. This task, which can be performed by
instructional coaches, can provide teachers with the ammunition they need to adequately
remediate their students.

**Purpose of the Program Evaluation**

The program I evaluated uses quarterly assessment data (QAD) that is designed to drive instruction in classroom through a standards remediation format. The manner which benchmark data is being utilized currently is obviously insufficient. Educators have access to a broad scope of assessment data, which identifies student’s current level of mastery for the standards they have been assessed on during the quarter. Far too many schools currently can see the specific areas where our students are deficient academically but are not using the data to enact remediation strategies. Because the areas of deficiency are not properly addressed through the usage of student data, our students repeatedly are assessed and continue to fail to meet the mark of satisfactory when attempting standardized testing. The need is obvious to do more than currently is being done regarding how benchmark data is being used.

In the school district where I serve, Horizon Public Schools, (pseudonym) the Horizon Data Assessments (HDA) were developed as part of Horizon School District Continuous Improvement Model. The goal of the Horizon School District was to utilize HDA as a tool to help monitor the progress of student’s mastery of the State standards. The HDA were designed to be in alignment with DOE Test Design and curriculum blueprints. Classroom teachers developed questions on the HDA assessments in conjunction as specialists guided them from the State Department of Education. Horizon
subject area program specialists spearheaded HDA Assessments. Prior to the 2018-2019 school year, HDA were completed once in the fall and twice in the spring.

Data from the quarterly assessments (QAs) are reported to each school through the Performance Matters webpage within two weeks of the initial offering of the assessments being completed by students. Next, school administration and the school testing coordinator review assessment data. Data is then passed from the testing coordinator to the instructional coaches. The instructional coaches meet with their department administrator and begin to aggregate assessment data. What takes place next is that each subject area instructional coach meets with their subject area teachers and decide how best to remediate their students based on what has been revealed in the data.

What I find troubling concerning this process, is that based on the process I have witnessed, it appears that several of our school district level instructional coaches are not utilizing assessment data with fidelity. Based on my previous time as a classroom teacher at a 9-12 school, as well as conversations with current teachers, many instructional coaches were not delivering student data to their teachers with a recommendation for how to remediate students who are deficient in certain standards.

Given the evidence of what I have witnessed, along with the results that are seen among our student’s state assessment scores, there are other ways QAD can be utilized than is currently being done. Based on witnessing what classroom teachers have access to in the Performance Matters platform, the data which is received by instructional coaches is far more in depth than what is allocated to subject area teachers. Instructional coaches are capable of not only seeing the standards which each question is in direct relation too, but coaches are also capable of seeing the questions that were presented on the test, as
well as the percentages of their students who answered the questions correctly. The data can be broken down so specifically that coaches are able to know by racial demographic which students answered each question right or wrong, including the standards that have been insufficiently mastered. If instructional coaches would take the data and break it down to identify students who need remediation, then students would get the essential help they need. One way of doing this would be to hold data meetings with department head teachers. During these meetings, individual students can be identified, and a determination can be made on the remediation process that will take place.

I first became aware of Horizon Data Assessments (HDAs) in 2012 while I was serving as a classroom support facilitator. I was tasked with proctoring an assessment of 9th grade students who were completing the fall version of quarterly assessments, also referred to as baseline HDAs. The HDAs have been utilized as part of the Horizon School District (HSD) Progress Monitoring Assessments for an unknown period (Citation omitted to preserve anonymity). The expectation of these assessments is intended to provide classroom teachers with “information which will guide instructional decisions and monitor student mastery of State Standards” (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality). However, the approach instructional coaches typically use to investigate the HDA results is grossly insufficient. What I have personally witnessed many instructional coaches do with assessment data is, review the data, aggregate student results into tiers 1 through 4, identify the lowest performers, and target tiers 2 through 1 for remediation. Following this process, coaches then meet with department heads and they formulate a plan for how remediation efforts will take place between teachers and students.
My evaluation of this program was related to student learning because it lays out a road map other schools may potentially use in the future to improve student achievement. My purpose for evaluating how the Horizon Data Assessments (HDA) are used is to shed light on how assessment data is used at my school to drive instruction in the classroom. My evaluation is designed to investigate how student achievement scores can be increased at a higher level for our students. I believe this was a possibility through the full utilization of QAD. The purpose of utilizing assessment data during the fall, winter, and spring was to be able to determine where our students are regarding understanding standards. If we truly intend to help our students become proficient in the State Standards, then assessment data must be used to drive instruction in our classrooms.

**Rationale**

I evaluated this program because I felt that this program has been greatly beneficial to the school where I served as program specialist and testing coordinator. For the purpose of this research project the school where I serve was referred to as School Number One. Since School Number One began utilizing data from this program student achievement scores have risen. School Number One utilizes quarterly assessments (QAs) to address areas of low performance for students on state assessments. School Number One has received high marks for its school grade for three consecutive years. My rationale was to determine whether the use of QAD to drive instruction has been instrumental in our school’s attainment of a successful school grade for three consecutive years.

Before I began working at School Number One, I worked at another school in our district who for the purpose of this research project will be referred to as School Number
Two, as an Intensive Reading teacher. At School Number Two I had the opportunity to work with other teachers and our literacy coach as we aggregated student data. We utilized data charts as we looked for ways to differentiate instruction for our students who were not successful on state assessments. While quarterly assessment data (QAD) was readily available to instructional coaches this data was not always readily available for classroom teachers to utilize. As I have advanced in my career as an educator, I have seen QAD used both inefficiently, as well as effectively.

I believe my research can make an impact on our district deciding to re-enforce to schools that QAD is able to be used more effectively than it currently is daily in our schools. The process of how QAD is managed in our school, and across our district is inconsistent. The process of how assessment data is currently utilized in many of our district schools runs contrary to what we claim to be the desired result. What I feel should transpire is, once students have been identified as needing intervention based on assessment data, the school responds through a form of Response to Intervention (RTI) framework which can produce powerful student improvement (RTI, 2018). By giving teachers a higher level of ideal feedback on where their focus should be as they remediate students, they are able to formulate a more effective process of differentiated instruction.

This evaluation is important to parents, students, teachers, and administrators of our schools because teacher instruction can become a much more powerful tool. This evaluation can be instrumental for teachers because teachers can become empowered with access to data which is specific and targets the needs of each student. Once teachers have specified targeted areas, they should focus instruction on, then it is quite possible that classroom instruction will target specific areas where students are deficient.
This evaluation is important to parents because nearly all parents desire to see their students perform exceptionally well on state assessments. Arming teachers with data that allows them to differentiate instruction in a manner that leads to student achievement, will allow teachers to fulfill expectations they are given by parents to produce high performing students. This evaluation is important to administrators because administrators are ultimately held responsible for how students perform on standardized tests. If this program is adopted by our school district, then administrators will have an additional program with a proven track record they can adopt to meet the needs of students at each area of academic ability. This evaluation is important to the educational community because nearly all educators are constantly searching for proven ways of bringing about student achievement.

Goals

Implementing the changes that I recommended have the potential to make a tremendous impact on our schools. There are several goals I attained through the evaluation of this program. My first goal was to provide school and district leaders a comprehensive view of the quarterly assessment program (QAP) and reveal to them solutions for how assessment data can be utilized with a greater measure of fidelity than it is currently being used at some schools within the district. My goals included seeing our schools begin to benefit from maximizing QAD that is accessible through the Performance Matters webpage.

Another goal I accomplished included promoting a more cohesive relationship between instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers. During my evaluation, I desired to see instructional leader aggregate data in a manner that identified specific
standards students have not mastered. This allows teachers to develop lessons that address remediating student deficiencies. Each lesson designed by instructional leaders can be designed to be based on the individual need of each student. QAD can be aggregated in a manner that identifies individual deficiencies of students. Designing lessons based on individual needs of students allows each student to receive instruction that is differentiated. Differentiated instruction can lead to a higher level of student achievement.

Research suggests that many educators are not aware of how assessment data can be utilized. According to Murnane, Sharkey, and Boudett (2005) the idea that a “systematic analysis of assessment results on external standardized exams could provide information that is useful in planning instruction was new to most participants” (Murnane et al., 2005, p. 275). Based on research I gathered during this project many educators were unaware how beneficial assessment data was when it is utilized to drive instruction in the classroom. Another desired goal of this program evaluation is also to see the end of the process in which teachers differentiate instruction solely based on student performance on curriculum which is taught in the classroom as a part of the traditional curriculum blueprint.

Data driven instruction allows teachers the opportunity to be armed with knowledge pertaining to what their students have already mastered. Data driven instruction also identifies what a teacher’s students have not mastered, thus need remediation in a specific area. Using assessment data, teachers become equipped with the ability to prioritize their academic calendar to include what sections of the curriculum blueprint they would teach at certain times. My goal for this program evaluation also
includes our seeing drastic changes made in how Horizon Data Assessments (HDA) data is utilized at both the school and district level. One way that this goal can be accomplished is through professional development (P.D.).

Professional development can be developed by working in conjunction with district level professional development coordinators. Working in tangent with district PD leaders could lead to the development of courses which can bring a greater awareness to administrators, instructional coaches, department heads and teachers. Educators across our district can learn how each of them can play a role in aggregating student data. Once this team of school leaders have a clear understanding how to disseminate data, the data can then be infused into daily classroom lesson plans. Lesson plans driven by data will allow for differentiate instruction for students to take place in the classroom. My goal is also to ensure that building level administration are made aware of how in depth the data can be disseminated. The hope is that once administrators are aware of the benefits of data driven instruction, they will begin requiring that QAD is used with a greater sense of fidelity.

A measure that can help ensure fidelity of the quarterly assessment program (QAP) use, is for our district to require that data chats take place during common planning. Data chats are currently a requirement for teachers and coaches in our district. Having administrators attend data chats during common planning will ensure that differentiated instruction is discussed during lesson planning.

Additionally, I desire to see our school district enact a policy pertaining to how quarterly assessment data (QAD) will be dissected in the future. I envision that instructional coaches and department heads will be required to break assessment data
down to its smallest element. This will allow educators to see each specific standard that students have not mastered. Educators can then design lessons which target remediation for each standard student are weakest in. I also desire to see specific data, such as standards-based errors become a requirement that coaches must pass down to department heads and teachers. The goals of my program evaluation are related to students learning by helping all our district students to move to a higher level of proficiency on state standardized assessment.

**Definition of Terms**

In this section I discuss terms which may have multiple meanings. We also discuss often used abbreviations of terms readers may not be familiar with. In order to prevent confusion for the readers I have listed terms in alphabetical order including a definition of each term. The list of defined terms is as followed:

- **Differentiated Instruction** – is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms (Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003).

- **End of Course Exams (EOC)** – EOC measure the State Standards (FS) or the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for specific courses. In 2011, Algebra 1 (NGSSS) was the first course to undergo the implementation of a statewide EOC assessment. Over the next few years, it was followed by Biology 1, Geometry, U.S. History, and Civics (DOE, 2019).
• *State Standards Assessment (State Assessments)* – the State Standards Assessments (FSA) in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and end-of-course (EOC) subjects (Algebra 1 and Geometry) serve State students by measuring education gains and progress. (FDOE, 2019).

• *State Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA’s)* – the State Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA) is designed for students whose participation in the general statewide assessment program (State Standards Assessments, Statewide Science Assessment is not appropriate, even with accommodations. (FDOE, 2019).

• *Horizon Data Assessments (HDA)* – were developed as part of Horizon School District Continuous Improvement Model. The goal of the Horizon School District was to utilize HDA’s as a tool to help monitor the progress of student’s mastery of the state standards (Citation withheld to protect anonymity).

• *Next Generation State Standards (NGSSS)* – the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for science were created in 2008 to address the necessity for all lessons to be aligned to these standards (DOE, 2019).

• *Remediation* – has to do with righting a wrong or correcting a fault. Students who can't read well or do their multiplication tables might need remediation to bring them up to speed (IXL Learning, 2020).

• *Response to Intervention (RTI)* – is an assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making decisions about
the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006).

**Research Questions**

My exploratory questions that investigate the problem are: 1. What do the administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers currently report that is working well in the quarterly assessment data (QAD) review process? By answering this question, I will be able to discover the opinions of current building level stakeholders regarding the benefits they are receiving through the program. Once I discover the current benefits to stakeholders, I can have a firm grasp on the viewpoint others have regarding the way the program is currently being operated. It is important to know the pros and cons of what I view as inadequacies of the program versus how others currently feel benefited by the program.

My second exploratory question is 2. What do the administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers report is not working well in the QAD review process? By answering this question, I will be able to better understand how teachers and administrators view the program regarding benefits and deficiencies. By gaining a clear indication for how stakeholders may feel the program currently falls short, I can present my findings of inadequacies to them in an unbiased manner.

The third exploratory question is: 3. What do the administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers in the QAD review program report as the greatest challenges in the program? This question is important because I need to understand the depth of the issue that I am facing. If stakeholders do not have a clear
understanding of how little feedback, they are currently accessing from QAD, it will be beneficial to them to be better aware of ways in which they can better utilize this data. Subsequently, if there is a consensus that the system currently being used is broken, then informing them of additional benefits of their program may possibly change their opinions.

The final exploratory question is: 4. What do the stakeholders, administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers in the QAD review process report as ways to address these challenges, and improve the program? This question is essential because collaborative solutions are generally met with enthusiasm and a resolve to commit to a solution. When stakeholders can present solutions, which are not only taken into consideration, but utilized, then morale will be high, and the overall goal of student achievement can be met.

Secondary exploratory questions include:

1. What do teachers view as the most troubling aspect of remediating their students?

2. What are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of progress monitoring can be improved using QAD?

3. What are the perceptions of administrators concerning how the use of QAD might be utilized to help raise student achievement?

By answering these questions, I will have an opportunity to understand the desire building level leaders have for the use of QAD. Each of these questions will be answered by disclosing the benefits of change and how it will directly address the needs raised by stakeholders in these questions.
Conclusion

In closing, because our students are not achieving proficiency on standardized assessments, the quarterly assessment system that is currently being utilized in our district is not as effective as it could be. Teachers are currently at a tremendous disadvantage regarding how they are currently remediating their students. Students are currently at a disadvantage as well. Students are currently in classrooms where instruction is not differentiated in a manner that best prepares them for success on standardized assessments. There are many different options for teachers to utilize when using quarterly assessment data in order to differentiate instruction in the classroom. Teachers who are not aware of the different options must utilize this data are at a disadvantage when delivering instruction to their students. Once the district decides to hold building leaders accountable for utilizing assessment data that is available in the Performance Matters platform, teachers can be given professional development to learn how to access student data.

If teachers were adequately armed with information regarding specific standards their students have met yet, they would be able to use instructional time more effectively. Students subsequently would be motivated to discover that there are certain aspects of curriculum that they have been found to master regarding academic content standards. I have witnessed firsthand students participating in remediation programs, then being afforded the opportunity to skip ahead to another curriculum content. This measure of success for those students brought intrinsic value to them that cannot be measured through assessment.
By accessing all relevant data that is produced through quarterly assessment the process of response to intervention can be improved. Teachers and students will both see results on performance of classroom curriculum improve. Administrators and instructional coaches will reap the benefits of successful results on standardized assessments. In the coming chapter, we will review writings pertaining to what others have said regarding quarterly assessment data (QAD). I will reveal how my thoughts align and differ from the thoughts of many other education professionals regarding this topic.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

At the heart of instructional leadership, there should be a desire to see underperforming schools transform from having a culture of student failure to a culture that exhibits student academic success. In this literature review, I discussed a wide range of academic research that can light a path to producing transformed schools. Based on my professional opinion, to best effect a culture of academic change throughout schools using data-driven instruction, instructional leaders must possess the requisite knowledge and frameworks of what data-driven instruction is. School leaders also must understand how data driven instruction can guide their schools through the effective use of data and the structures that improve student learning.

To best realize the goal of transformational student achievement, “leaders need to reframe the traditional data-use practices of schools” (Halverson, Prichett, & Thomas, 2007, p. 476). The use of data in improving the academic performance of students is not a new tool. Since the inception of the landmark ‘No Child Left Behind Act’ of 2001 schools have been readily introducing practices and policies to combat the rampant decline of student performance on standardized tests. In this literature review I will present perspectives of researchers who have taken opportunities to develop successful instructional practices.

Building the Framework for Data-Driven Instruction

The concept of data driven instruction has evolved over time and has been constructed by countless men and women of academia for decades. Mandinach, Honey, and Light (2008) introduced a conceptual framework model for data-driven decision-
making. In their model, they examined a process for managing data. Mandanich et al. (2008) developed a platform that was able to disseminate student assessment data in a manner that could transform data driven instruction. The authors allude to the fact that information is data, but it only can become useful once it is placed in the appropriate context.

Data-Driven instruction is essential because it ties together principles of gathering knowledge. Data-driven instruction effectively uses the information that has been gleaned to promote student achievement. The ability of an instructional leader to see the connection between student performance on assessment, and the classroom instruction the student is receiving, is the catalyst behind the framework of data-driven instruction. It is one thing to know that a student is struggling, but it is progress to be able to do something about it.

When attempting to build a framework for data-driven instruction, it is essential that schools be prepared to manage the abundance of material that data-driven instruction brings. In their article on data-driven instruction, Levin and Datlow (2012) explained that schools must have the capacity that is needed to implement the results that are found in data. I have witnessed schools in our district that have access to large amounts of data. I have seen these schools sit on that data because they do not have the personnel who is properly equipped to disaggregate the data into useful material. If our schools are ever going to reach their full potential, then they must have a framework in place that is conducive for utilizing the data that is available to them.

One example of a specific technique that allows a school to use assessment data effectively to drive instruction in the classroom is for a team of educators to review data
from a quarterly assessment given in October and begin differentiating instruction in the classroom based on this data. The fact that students master some standards and are weaker in others give educators an opportunity to re-teach poorer learned standards during the time that better acquired standards are scheduled for teaching. In order to maximize access to data, a commitment to utilizing QAD must established by school leaders.

**Getting Buy-In for Data-Driven Instruction**

One of the most difficult tasks facing school leaders has become garnering consistent support for student achievement reform. Research indicates that it is nearly impossible to gain buy-in for data-driven instruction without first establishing clearly defined, goal-oriented student achievement goals. Wohlstetter, Datnow, and Park (2008) described getting buy-in for data-driven instruction as a process that is handled differently by each school leader. The way data driven instruction was utilized depended on the needs of the specific school. When the goal is improving student achievement, and thus improving schools, attaining buy-in should be relatively simple when stakeholders agree on why data-driven instruction is being implemented.

Through years of experience in the education field educators are presented with numerous programs that are geared to improve student learning using data. It is imperative for school leaders to choose a standards-based program that fits best with their school district. In the district I serve, quarterly assessment data (QAD) has shown itself to be effective. The struggle our district must overcome is to gain buy-in from all stakeholders. One example of how school leaders can attain buy in for standards-based instruction is to develop professional development that gives stakeholders knowledge of
how effective it can be. The purpose of professional development should be geared towards familiarizing educators with the essentials of QAD. Once stakeholders become familiar with quarterly data, they will discover how it can fill learning gaps for students.

In today’s schools, human, tangible, and financial resources are all limited. Many stakeholders are hesitant to agree to invest valuable time and capital. Processes that are selected to promote academic success are expected to clearly articulate a record of accomplishment for having a direct effect on the plagues that ails their schools.

Another inhibitor of data-driven instruction was described by Bambrick-Santoyo (2010), he explains that many schools struggle to enact effective data-driven reform because many educators do not understand what true data-driven is. When stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of what an initiative is then it will be difficult for school leaders to get sufficient buy-in. There have been many educational initiatives that have come along over the years. Confused stakeholders may possibly take the attitude that this initiative will soon go away as many others have in the past.

Another way to promote buy-in for data-driven instruction is to take advantage of every opportunity available to involve teachers in the data accessing process. Wayman (2005) explains how the implementation of technology has made access to data readily available for most stakeholders in the school setting. He goes on to stress that when teachers have direct access to pertinent instructional data about their students, teachers can deliver a richer level of differentiated instruction.

Once the decision to use data has been made, a decision must be made by school leaders for the expectations for how the data will be used in the classroom. It is important to not only allow teachers to have access to QAD, but effective professional development
must be established which teaches educators how to effectively utilize the data to drive instruction. When a guideline for administrative expectation for teachers to use data driven instruction in the classroom is established, it is important that school leaders visit classroom often to determine if standards-based instruction is being done with fidelity.

**Barriers to Implementing Data-driven Instruction**

There is a myriad of barriers that make it difficult to implement data-driven instruction. Insufficient knowledge of modifying curriculum, lack of proficiency in scaffolding instruction, and poor ability to motivate students, are just a few barriers that make it difficult in attempting to implement data-driven instructional practices. Often, when data reveals that there is curriculum that should be re-taught, “Teachers lack discretion to veer from district-mandated curriculum guides. Given the perceived pressure to stay on pace, many teachers opt to follow curriculum instead of data.” (Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006, p. 513). Because of this barrier, many educators fail to implement data driven instruction due to a lack of flexibility to alter instruction.

Another reason standards-based instruction is not implemented in the classroom is that oftentimes the data is not disseminated in a manner that identifies areas of weaknesses regarding student mastery of standards. If a teacher is not aware of a student mastering a standard, or being weak in a standard, the teacher is likely teaching to the lesson plan established during common planning. During common planning teachers meet with instructional coaches and as a team they lay out the roadmap for the week’s instruction. If student data is made available to the team then a schedule can be made that
identifies when adjustments to the lesson plan will take place that allows for data driven instruction.

When QAD is gathered, the returning data should be disseminated in a manner that allows it to move from a raw state to one which identifies specific standards students have not mastered. School districts are wise to invest in instructional coaches and technology that allows schools to break the data down into usable quantities. In their 2010 article on supporting data-driven instruction, Marsh, Sloan, McCombs, and Martorell identified a major barrier to implementing data-driven instruction. In their article, the authors describe how many schools are not able to implement data-driven instruction because they are hamstrung by their budgets. The authors identify a need for subject specific instructional coaches to be able to provide dissemination of data that can be delivered to teachers, who then deliver differentiated instruction to students (Marsh et al., 2010, p. 878). The schools that I have personally witnessed data-driven instruction taking place effectively were fortunate to have subject area instructional coaches who were able to spearhead the dissemination process of student data. These instructional coaches were also able to help teachers prepare differentiated lessons that aligned to the curriculum blueprints.

An additional barrier that prevent school systems from effectively utilizing data to drive instruction in the classroom is when school leaders fail to establish “expectations and training for schools to implement professional learning communities (PLCs) geared towards using QAD along with systems of monitoring and rating the quality of PLCs and the frequency of teachers’ use of data systems” (Marsh et al., 2010, p. 19). While my school district has done an exemplary job in my opinion in providing an effective means
for gathering student data, I feel that not enough emphasis has been placed on establishing expectations for how each school is expected to utilize the data they have gathered. Not only has there not been a resounding announcement of our school district expectation for schools use of QAD, I feel more of an emphasis can be put on how this data can be utilized during PLCs.

It is possible that during PLCs instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers can gather to identify to merge quarterly data with instructional blueprints. During PLCs, these instructional teams can build lesson plans and schedule them in a manner that allows each individual lesson to be structured to address gaps in student’s mastery of standards. For schools to receive the benefits from PLCs geared towards building a best practices approach for using assessment data, school leaders must make it their priority to visit teams during PLC teams to monitor them for fidelity. Not only should administrators visit PLCs they must also visit individual classrooms to ensure teachers are utilizing the instructional practices agreed upon during their PLCs.

**Data-Driven Instruction Effectiveness**

While there may be a debate as to the effectiveness of data-driven instruction, the fact that there are a growing number of schools who are participating in it would lead one to believe that it is having an impact on student achievement. While we may not know every technique, or facet of just how to evaluate the effectiveness of data-driven instruction, there is research that exists which can show us how. In their article promoting data use for instructional improvement Kerr et al. (2006) gives us insight on how to examine whether a school is delivering effective data-driven instruction. Kerr et al. show us that strong leadership from the superintendent down to the principal is a key factor. He
also reveals that pre-planning for how data will be both collected and evaluated is another key factor in ensuring effective data-driven instruction. And finally, the research by Kerr et al. (2006) revealed that a strong commitment to the overall process of data-driven instruction must be made by all stakeholders of the school if effective data-driven instruction is going to take place.

There is mounting evidence that shows data-driven instruction to be effective. An example of such evidence can be seen in Shapiro, Keller, Lutz, Santoro, and Hintze’s 2006 article on Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs). In this article, Shapiro et al. performed a research study on students in grades 3 through 5. In this study to predict the outcomes of end of year state standardized assessments, one-minute samples of student reading, and three-minute samples of student math computations were examined over the course of a school year (2006). Students were given baseline mini-assessments in Reading and Math in the fall and mid-year mini-assessments during the winter. Classroom Reading and Math data was collected during the school year, along with the mini-assessment data. Researchers were able to predict with 80% accuracy which students would perform below proficient on the state standardized assessment based on data gathered from Reading, Math, and mini-assessment data that was gathered during the school year.

The use of CBM is not the only evidence which speak to the effectiveness of data-driven instruction. In 2007, Halverson et al. produced an article on Formative Feedback Systems (FFS). In this article, the authors wrote of how data can be used to not only drive instruction, but also be used to track “what data is tracked, how the data is stored, how interventions are designed, how interventions are measured for effectiveness, and how
feedback is presented to teachers” (Halverson et al., 2007, p. 6). In their article, the authors disclosed powerful findings after observing the use of the formative feedback system over the course of five years.

The schools that were observed had produced such exemplary students using data-driven instruction that population demographics in the schools were beginning to shift. Previously, in the sampled schools, minority students encompassed an overwhelming majority of students enrolled in the schools being studied. Because of the success students exhibited through the use of formative feedback, a large number of Caucasian parents began enrolling their children in the observed schools due to their desire for their children to share in the explosive academic growth that was taking place.

**Data-Driven Instruction**

In his article on improving student achievement Bianco (2010) delivers excellent advice on how to improve data-driven instruction. Bianco (2010) shares with his readers how the old instructional paradigm of assessing the class, and then delivering a one size all remediated lesson does not work. Utilizing current individual student data, differentiating student instruction that is specific to the needs of individual students are identified as a form of best practices. Unless educators utilize the data to address the needs of individual students, data-driven instruction will never be as effective as it could be.

Another example of how to avoid barriers to implementing data-driven instruction can be seen in Streifer’s (2002) article on data driven instruction. In this article Streifer (2002) suggests that schools must utilize data-driven instruction with fidelity. He further alludes to the fact that often educators agree to implement forms of curriculum reform
only to revert to what they felt worked for them in the past. School leaders must guard
against allowing educators to go on solo missions with regards to curriculum delivery. If
data-driven instruction is believed to be the best practice to promote student achievement,
then this barrier must be safeguarded against.

A profound case for continuing to evaluate data-driven instruction can be found in
an article on using data to promote continuous improvement in schools by Herman and
Gribbons (2001). In their article, the authors sought to utilize three distinct questions as
an evaluative tool. These questions are:

1. How are we doing?
2. Are we well serving all students?
3. What are our relative strengths and weaknesses?

(Herman & Gribbons, 2001, p. 5)

Answering these three questions can be the difference between continuing with the status
quo and advancing student achievement to a level that is desirable for school leaders.

Essentially, determining how we are doing allows an overarching evaluation into
the data-driven programs that are being utilized in a school. Are the programs effective?
Have we seen sufficient progress made by students throughout the entire school? Are we
serving all students, answers the question of are there certain segments of students who
are successful, while other groups of students are missing the mark?

**Improving Teacher Effectiveness Through Utilizing Data-Driven Instruction**

Throughout most of the literature I have read during my research into data-driven
instruction I have noticed a common theme; in spite of all of the proactive attempts that
researchers have made to develop interventions to improve student achievement, the
success or failure of students ultimately is determined by the effectiveness of teacher instruction in the classroom. Unless school leaders can develop professional development practices in and out of the classroom geared at developing better prepared, effective teachers, then implementing data-driven instruction will not make a difference in promoting student achievement.

In my years as a classroom teacher, I desired to have more opportunities to collaborate with my peers. While I did not clearly know at the time, collaboration among teachers is a tool that brings great benefits to both teachers and the students they are trying to educate. In an article on teacher collaboration Huffman and Kalnin (2003) show us how collaboration is useful in preventing teachers from feeling alone in their journey of educating students. Collaboration also builds stronger teachers by allowing them to mature in their profession. “Collaboration impacts students because it builds better teachers who deliver a stronger level of service to students in the classroom” (Huffman & Kalnin, 2003, p. 19). In speaking with numerous educators throughout the years, I have witnessed many of them vent similar frustrations, and that frustration is, that there is not enough time given for teachers to collaborate.

Huffman and Kalnin (2003) conducted research on high school teachers at an urban school who participated in collaborative research. The goal of this research was designed to determine whether the teachers who participated in collaborative research produced students who performed better on classroom coursework, as well as on statewide-standardized assessments, in comparison with the teachers who did not participate in collaborative research. During one full school year, teachers who
participated in collaborating were evaluated along with a set of teachers who did not participate in collaborative inquiry.

Throughout the school year, collaborative teachers performed research by utilizing basic identifiable data pertaining to both teachers and students. This collected data allowed teachers to aggregate an understanding of how better to reach their students. This research project also allowed teachers to understand how to endear their students to them by showing a more human side of themselves to students. A main finding of this article is that “80% of participating teachers surveyed agreed that through research and collaboration they were able to deliver a stronger curriculum to their students, thus improving student achievement and building stronger relationships with their students in the process” (Huffman & Kalnin, 2003, p. 12). This study demonstrates that data-driven instruction not only is a benefit for students, but it is also a benefit for the teachers who can participate in it.

While collaboration infused data-driven instruction is effective, the realities of a limitation of time is an obvious barrier for teachers. Many teachers who participated in the research done by Huffman and Kalnin (2003) alluded to a lack of sufficient time being a hindrance. School leaders must prioritize developing schedules which allow teachers to collaborate with one another in order that they can develop best practices in instructional delivery.

Data driven-instruction is a resource that if utilized with fidelity can empower school leaders with such a wide-array of tools, that every demographic of student can have their educational needs met. Research literature shows us that there are frameworks that exists which shows school leaders how data-driven instruction can be effective.
Literature has given us frameworks to follow as we attempt to build programs that are able to address the academic needs of students. Moreover, while there are barriers to implementing data-driven instruction, evidence exists which show us how to effectively combat those barriers. As I continue to gather research literature on data-driven instruction, my goal is to continue to build an argument that is able to withstand the questions that inevitably will arise concerning the validity of my suggested approach to creating schools that will produce exemplary students in our not so distant future.

**Conclusion**

In this review of literature, I discussed a wide range of research that serves to enlighten readers of multiple paths schools have taken on the journey to becoming effective users of data to drive instruction in schools. In this chapter, I discussed literature that helps leaders attain requisite knowledge of frameworks used by educators who have successfully built programs for effective use of differentiating instruction with data in their schools. This chapter reveals to us that the use of assessment data to drive instruction in schools is not a new idea. But in fact, data driven instruction has been on the rise since the landmark inception of ‘No Child Left Behind’ in 2001.

I shared literature in this chapter that identifies how building a framework for data-driven instruction allows educators to attain a uniform guideline for a program of data use that is unique to their district. Further, I discussed literature that explained that school leaders are able to gain buy in from stakeholders through the sharing of data that shows how successful the usage of data driven instruction has been in other school district currently utilizing the practice. This chapter also discusses the fact that like most education initiatives there are barriers that exist which cause many school leaders to
struggle to effectively enact data-driven instruction programs. While barriers do exist, this chapter discusses research on the steps leaders undertook to mitigate barriers to implementation of data driven instruction.

This chapter presents literature that summarize many of the benefits and challenges school leaders’ face when implanting data-driven instruction programs. The chapter presents literature that presents the case for how data-driven instruction has shown to be effective, but also has areas that can be improved. I closed this chapter by presenting literature that shows evidence of how teacher’s instructional practice improves with data-driven instruction. In the upcoming chapter, I will discuss an overview of our programs evaluation and the practices I will utilize during our programs research.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design Overview

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of differentiated instruction for students based on QAD. My desire is to determine if differentiated instruction based on quarterly assessments (QAs) can improve student performance on state assessments. A major problem in the school district where I serve is that nearly 45% of our district students are failing the required state assessments, which are needed to graduate. Classroom teachers in our district teach curriculum daily which often leaves students struggling to master standards students are tested on during state assessments. It is possible that instructional time students receive in the classroom would be better spent re-teaching standards students have not mastered. Often students are being taught content they have already demonstrated a mastery learning. QAs which are based on state standards covered on standardized assessments, allow educators the ability to identify areas of inadequate student learning. “Diagnostic decisions determine which specific difficulties account for a student's inadequate progress so that the teacher can remediate the learning problem and design more effective instructional plans” (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994, p. 19). To address the deficiencies identified by students at my school based on their performance on state standardized assessments, School Number One adopted a data driven remediation program in 2015. The effectiveness of the data driven remediation program at School Number One is the focus of my evaluation.

The remediation program consisted of the School Number One principal, and program specialist teaming together to break down School Number One student’s state
assessment data. Along with data gathered from state assessments, quarterly assessments (QAs) generated by the school district psychometrician and their team were used to identify areas of deficiency by School Number One students. During the months of October, January, and March, School Number One quarterly assessment data (QAD) was gathered and broken down to determine areas of student weaknesses.

The gathered data was distributed to each of School Number One teachers. School Number One administrators and teachers work together to determine which specific standards were in most need of differentiated instruction. Once a consensus was agreed upon, the instructional team times that remediation took place for students who have been identified based on their QAD. Twice during each quarter, School Number One teachers deliver direct instruction to students who demonstrated a poor working knowledge of specific standards identified during QAs.

I studied the impact instruction based on QAD has on improving the achievement students demonstrate on state assessments. All students in our district grades 3 through 12 must demonstrate proficiency of the State Standards or it is equivalency in order to graduate from a State public school. I learned from the evaluation so that I may propose changes to how our district schools currently utilize QAD. I decided that the program utilized at School Number One will benefit the entire district so that I can make recommendations to our district leadership regarding implementing this process district wide. My evaluation demonstrated that differentiated instruction based on assessment data is beneficial to students. I used my findings to advocate for the district to adopt the program widespread.
As a former reading teacher, I am an advocate for intervention programs that can improve student achievement. I believe researching the effects of data driven instruction based on quarterly assessment data (QAD) will inform possible ways to meet the needs of improving school grades in our school district. I want to research whether data driven instruction programs are a crucial part of improving student achievement on standardized assessments.

I served as the program specialist for School Number One. My role of program specialist is equivalent to the role of an assistant principal. A few of my responsibilities while serving at School Number One was to oversee testing, professional development for our teachers, and response to intervention (RTI) for our students. School Number One was rated an ‘A’ school for the years of 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and for the 2018-2019 school year, we were rated as a ‘B’ school. Based on the success School has achieved utilizing QAD to drive instruction, I felt a responsibility to determine if there is a correlation to student participation in the program and the achievement students have shown on state assessments.

The goal of my evaluation was to study the impact of the data driven instruction program, independent of a school that is not utilizing quarterly assessment data (QAD) in a similar format. One intended goal of the program evaluation was to determine whether there was a relationship between using QAD to drive instruction and the gains School Number One students have demonstrated on state assessments. Another intended goal of the program evaluation was to shed light on the benefits of thoroughly using data that was readily available following each round of quarterly assessments (QAs) and its relationship to student achievement. I will share the results of the evaluation with all
stakeholders, including school board members. My expectation was that stakeholders across our district will have a better understanding of the effective use of QAD to differentiate instruction in the classroom. A decision to implement the use of QAD district wide may be made by district leadership as a result of this program evaluation.

Part of the vision which has been implemented by our Superintendent during her first year in our school district, has been to “evaluate the instructional structures, practices and policies” (Citation withheld to protect anonymity). The research that I propose to conduct will enhance the evaluative practice which was currently taking place to determine whether our district Horizon Data Assessments (HDA) have an impact on student achievement. This research aligns with the Horizon School District (HSD) desire to ensure that “results from the HAD are used formatively by classroom teachers to inform instructional practices and monitor student progression toward mastery of State standards” (Citation withheld to protect anonymity). This research will contribute to the field of education by providing evidence that reinforces the idea that data-driven instruction enhances student achievement (Halverson et al., 2007). My goal was to add significant evidence through the evaluation of this program that will suggest that all schools will benefit from the use of QAD to drive instruction. It was my hope that not only will QAD driven instruction take place in the classrooms of schools within my school district, but also in school district across our country.

Participants

I previously served as program specialist for School Number One. Before beginning my role in 2017, I served as a teacher at School Number Two from 2012-2017. I applied to my school district to ask for permission to perform research on my program
evaluation using student data and faculty surveys and interviews. I utilized teachers and administrators for research, at both, School Number One and School Number Two. I plan to mitigate impacts on voluntary participation and confidentiality for participants in my research, by ensuring each participant that their involvement was voluntary and will be kept completely confidential. I will invite all teachers and administrators from both schools to voluntarily participate in my research. As a representative of the school district, my job allows me to have access to student assessment data. I will maintain student anonymity throughout the evaluation process and exclude identifying student information in the reporting of student results. I will provide teachers and administrators an informed consent for the teacher and administrator survey providing full disclosure of collection methods, data usage, and the right to abstain from the study.

Data Gathering Techniques

Student Data. Prior to beginning this research project, I communicated with my school district official who oversees the IRRB process. My school district requires individuals who desire to utilize district student achievement data to apply for permission to perform research. Candidates are required to utilize the IRRB document which addresses each area of concern in relation to each person who will participate in the research project. I had to gain permission from school principals and district data supervisors in order to utilize the student Horizon Data Assessment (HDA) data on this project. The student data was readily accessible on the Horizon School District (HSD) intranet through Performance Matters. I requested permission to use these data and to conduct my research as described above from the district administrator responsible for research requests in the Horizon School District.
The student data that I collected was student HDA assessment scores from School Number One and School Number Two. I will collect student HDA data from these two schools for the 2017-2018 school year for up to 500 students, and the 2018-2019 school year for up to 500 students. The student data was readily accessible on the Horizon School District intranet. I had to gain permission from school principals and district data supervisors in order to utilize the student achievement data for all schools who participated in this project.

**Surveys.** After teachers and administrators completed the informed consent form and placed it in the envelope, they placed the envelope into the box that was used to collect surveys and informed consent forms. After faculty members completed surveys, to keep them anonymous, faculty members placed surveys in a separate envelope marked surveys. Each faculty member completed the survey in approximately ten minutes. The directions noted that faculty members can simply throw away the envelopes if they desire not to participate. The directions clearly indicated that that participation was strictly voluntary, and individuals should not feel obligated to participate.

**Interviews.** I obtained Informed Consent forms from teachers and administrators by having each person who participated in my research to complete the informed consent form prior to completing the research interview. After the faculty members completed the Informed Consent form and placed it in the envelope, they placed the envelope into the box that was used to collect Informed Consent forms. Each faculty member completed the interview in approximately 30 minutes. The directions clearly note that interviews would take place outside of school hours and that faculty members could simply throw away the envelopes if they desire not to participate. The directions clearly indicated that
participation was strictly voluntary, and individuals should not feel obligated to participate. Each interview that occurred consisted of 30 minute or less phone calls during times which were designated as convenient for participants.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

When I performed my surveys and interviews, I utilized both opened ended and scaled questions. The surveys consisted of thirteen question, seven scaled questions and six open ended questions. The interviews consisted of fifteen questions that were all open ended. I was be able to determine percentages of opinions and answers given to me by respondents. While performing open-ended questions during surveys and interviews I was able to develop themes based on reoccurring opinions and answers given to me by respondents. After developing themes based on responses from participants, I was able to transfer responses from open-ended questions into quantitative data using percentages of themes presented from respondents as answers.

**Ethical Considerations**

I obtained informed consent from teachers and administrators by having each person who participated in my research to complete the Informed Consent form prior to completing the research survey. After the teachers and administrators completed the Informed Consent form and placed it in the envelope, they placed the envelope into the box that was used to collect surveys and informed consent forms. After faculty members completed surveys, to keep them anonymous, faculty members placed surveys in a separate envelope marked “surveys”. Each faculty member completed both the Informed Consent form and survey in approximately 10 minutes. The directions noted that faculty members can simply throw away the envelopes if they desire not to participate. The
directions clearly indicated that participation was strictly voluntary, and individuals should not feel obligated to participate.

I obtained Informed Consent forms from teachers and administrators by having each teacher and administrator who participated in my research to complete the Informed Consent form prior to completing the research interview. After the faculty members completed the Informed Consent form and placed it in the envelope, they placed the envelope into the box that was used to collect informed consent forms. Each faculty member completed both the Informed Consent form and interview in approximately thirty minutes. The directions clearly note that interviews would take place outside of school hours and that faculty members could simply throw away the envelopes if they desire not to participate. The directions clearly indicated that participation was strictly voluntary, and individuals should not feel obligated to participate. Each interview that occurred consisted of 30 minute or less phone calls during times that were designated as convenient for participants.

The participation in my research project study for all parties who will be asked to participate was of a voluntary nature. Any teacher, administrator, or district person who will be asked for access to student data, may discontinue their participation at any time with no negative effects. I will protect all participants’ confidentiality by ensuring that no one other than myself has access to any material that would identify the participants by name.

While conducting my research I will ensure that the name of the individual who was participating remains anonymous. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as names will not be attached to the data and I will use
pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the data, interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all interview transcripts, tapes, and notes.

**Limitations**

There are always limitations with any research project that is undertaken. The feelings I have for the program can possibly lend itself to personal bias. Due to the fact I served at the two schools primary research is taking place will mean I will potentially know some of the respondents. Prior relationships with respondents can possibly influence them to respond in a manner they feel I would like them to, as opposed to answering in the manner they feel. While each of these possibilities are remote, they bear identifying as potential limitations to this research project. To safeguard all data gathered in this project, all surveys, interviews and student data has been able to allow me to evaluate the effectiveness of utilizing quarterly assessment data (QAD) to improve student achievement. If during my research limitations pertaining to my data acquiring process are discovered I will revise this section in order to address the limitations that have been discovered.

**Conclusion**

During performing data collection, I will ensure that I acquire data from participants utilizing the safest measures as possible. Data collection was the most important step in performing research. I fully understand that the data I collected was vital in my attempt to present an accurate evaluation of the program I was evaluating. My
desire was to present my findings in a manner that allows future researchers to utilize my findings.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Findings

In this chapter I disclosed the findings of my study. After performing surveys, interviews with teachers and administrators, as well as collecting student assessment data; I revealed my findings based on gathered qualitative and quantitative data. Through the dissemination of collected data I will be able to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of the district standards assessment program.

Using the 4 C’s framework by Wagner et al. which includes context, culture, conditions, and competencies, I was able to evaluate the current conditions of the standards assessment program of the Horizon’s School District. This chapter contains surveys, interviews, and student assessment data conducted and gathered from two schools (School Number One and School Number Two) within the district which participate in QAs. My evaluation of this data allows me to determine the effectiveness of the QAP and to identify if the program was accomplishing the desired goals of the district.

My upcoming disclosure of research combines qualitative and quantitative from two schools (School Number One and School Number Two). School Number One has a history of utilizing QAD to drive instruction for students in the classroom who require remediation in certain standards which have been identified by QAD as being deficient. School Number Two also utilizes QAD but uses it a different manner than School Number One does. As it was stated earlier, School Number One’s use of the program begins with their principal, and program specialist (assistant principal) teaming together
to break down the quarterly assessment data. This process was done three times during the months of October, January, and March, School Number One’s QAD was gathered and broken down to determine specific areas of student weaknesses.

I distributed to each of School Number One teachers. Next, administrators and teachers work together to determine which specific standards were in most need of differentiated instruction. Once a consensus was agreed upon, the instructional team schedules times that remediation will take place for students who have been identified based on their QAD. Twice during each quarter, School Number One teachers deliver direct instruction to students who demonstrated a poor working knowledge of specific standards identified during QAs. School Number Two also utilizes the district quarterly assessment program. However, based on research performed during this project the direct steps taken by administration and teachers to identify and plan for remediation of students interspersed with traditional instruction was the major difference between these two schools.

After discussing the data trends shown from the two usage of quarterly assessment’s I utilized Wagner’s 4’C’s to ascertain the district standing with regards to quarterly assessment performance. By analyzing data which was collected from both schools, I was able to make judgements and recommendations for organizational change. Recommendations for change were based on collected data which served to provide answers to my primary and secondary questions.

Surveys. At School Number One I conducted surveys with teachers and administrators. Out of fifteen teachers and administrators invited to participate ten (67%) out of fifteen of them participated in the surveys. Of the ten participants, four (40%) were
male and six (60%) were female. Years of service for teachers and administrators at School Number One who participated in the survey ranged from 1 year to 25 years of service in education. Ages of survey participants ranged from 27 years old to 58 years of age. Subjects taught by survey participants at School Number One who participated in the survey included English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Driver’s Education, Physical Education, Spanish, Peer Counseling, and Digital Information Technology. The surveys consisted of seven scale questions and six open ended questions. The following sections will include a breakdown of each question, a chart to show percentages of responses, as well as an analysis of findings related to each question.

I asked on survey question #1, how well do you feel the HDA data review process is working? Eight of 10 (80%) participants moderately agreed that the HDA data review process was working well. Two of 10 (20%) participants strongly agreed that the HDA data review process was working well. Zero of ten (0%) participants somewhat agreed that the HDA data review process was working well. Zero of 10 (0%) participants agreed that the HDA data review process was not at all working. This suggests that a large majority of School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey were confident that the HDA data review process is working well.
Table 1.

Survey Question 1: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the HDA data review process is working?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I asked in survey question #2, how well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have been identified? Six of ten (60%) participants somewhat agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has been identified. Two of ten (20%) participants strongly agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has been identified. Two of ten (20%) participants moderately agreed the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has been identified. Zero of ten (0%) participants agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has not at all been identified. This suggests that most of the School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey felt that challenges within the HDA data review process have not fully been identified.
Table 2.

Survey Question 2: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have been identified?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I asked in survey question #3, how well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected? Eight of ten (80%) participants somewhat agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected. Two of ten (20%) participants strongly agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected. Zero of ten (0%) participants agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are moderately being corrected. Zero of ten (0%) participated not at all agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected. This suggests that a large majority of School Number One’s teachers and administrators who participated in the survey felt that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have not fully been corrected.
Table 3

*Survey Question 3: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #4 was the question, how well do you feel ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing? Six of ten (60%) participants moderately agreed that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. Two of ten (20%) participants strongly agreed that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. Two of ten (20%) participants somewhat agreed that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. Zero of ten (0%) participants not at all agreed that that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. This suggests that a majority of School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey feel that that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing.
Survey Question 4: Scaled Response: How well do you feel ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the survey question #5, I asked, how well do you feel the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified? Six of ten (60%) participants moderately agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified. Two of ten (20%) participants strongly agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified. Two of ten (20%) participants somewhat agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified. Zero of ten (0%) participants agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have not at all been identified. This suggests that most of the School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey felt that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified.
Table 5.

Survey Question 5: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #6 is, how effective you feel progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data? Ten of ten (100%) participants moderately agreed that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. Zero of ten (0%) participants strongly agreed that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. Zero of ten (0%) participants somewhat agreed that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. Zero of ten (0%) participants agreed not at all that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. This suggests that each of School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey feel that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data.
Table 6.

Survey Question 6: Scaled Response: How effective you feel progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>0/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #7 is, how effective do you feel HDA data is helping to raise student achievement? Six of ten (60%) participants moderately agreed that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. Two of ten (20%) participants strongly agreed that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. Two of ten (20%) participants somewhat agreed that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. Zero of ten (0%) participants agreed not at all that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. This suggests that most of the School Number One’s teachers and administrators who participated in the survey feel that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement.

Table 7.

Survey Question 7: Scaled Response: How effective do you feel HDA data is helping to raise student achievement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following the first seven scaled questions on teacher and administrator surveys I asked a total of six open-ended questions. These questions allowed teachers and administrators to respond to the questions in a manner which allowed them to freely elaborate on their opinions of the QAs without their being steered towards any specific response. In the following is presented a breakdown of each question, a chart to show percentages of responses, as well as an analysis of findings related to each question.

Survey question #8, what do you feel is working well in the HDA data review process? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Eight of ten (80%) participants listed being able to identify standards that students were weakest in mastering as what was working well in the HDA data review process. One of ten (10%) participants listed being able to identify the specific standards covered by the assessment as what was working well in the HDA data review process. One of ten (10%) participants listed not being sure what specifically was working well in the HDA data review process. These responses suggest that a large majority of School Number One teachers and administrators value the convenience of being able to identify standards identified by HDA.

Table 8.

Survey Question 8: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is working well in the HDA data review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Deficiencies</td>
<td>8/10 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Standards Assessed</td>
<td>1/10 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1/10 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey question #9 asked, what do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Four of ten (40%) participants listed teachers not understanding how to utilize the data as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. Two of ten (20%) participants listed too long between testing windows as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. Two of ten (20%) participants listed teachers not having confidence in the actual assessment as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. Two of ten (10%) participants listed not being sure what was not working well in the HDA data review process. These responses suggest that School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey view the inability of some teachers to utilize data to remediate students as a serious impediment of utilizing the HDA data review process.

Table 9.

Survey Question 9: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Skills to Use Data</td>
<td>4/10 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Between Assessments</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Assessment</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #10, what do you feel are the greatest challenges involved with the benchmark data program? There were three themes identified by teachers and
administrators in response to this question. Six of ten (60%) participants identified lack of
time to work with struggling students as the greatest challenges involved with the HDA
data program. Two of ten (20%) participants listed length of assessments as the greatest
challenges involved with the HDA data program. Two of ten (20%) participants listed
students not taking the assessment serious as the greatest challenges involved with the
HDA data program. These responses suggest that most of the School Number One
teachers and administrators who participated in the survey view a lack of instructional
time for remediation as a detriment when utilizing the HDA data program.

Table 10.

*Survey Question 10: Open-ended Response: What do you feel are the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>6/10 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Assessments</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not Motivated</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #11, in what areas could we improve the benchmark data review
process? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to
this question. Four of ten (40%) participants listed more time for teachers to review
student data as the area could we improve the HDA data review process. Two of ten
(20%) participants identified focusing on all students, not just the lower performing
students as the area we could improve the HDA data review process. Two of ten (20%)
participants listed length of assessments as the area we could improve the HDA data
review process. Two of ten (20%) participants listed not being sure of how we could improve the HDA data review process. These responses indicate that School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey view having more time to review student data before they are expected to remediate students as a viable improvement to the HDA data review process.

Table 11.

Survey Question 11: Open-ended Response: In what areas could we improve the HDA data review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>4/10 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on all Students</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Assessments</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #12, what do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Four of ten (40%) participants identified students not participating in remediation as the most troubling aspect of remediating students. Four of ten (40%) participants identified an uncertainty of understanding exactly what student data has revealed, as the most troubling aspect of remediating students. Two of 10 (20%) participants listed not being sure as what they feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating students. These responses suggest that School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey had two primary concerns that stood out as
the most troubling aspect of remediating students. The two primary concerns were: 1) the combination of students not participating in remediation, and 2) teachers being uncertain of what student data has revealed.

Table 12.

*Survey Question 12: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Student Participation</td>
<td>4/10 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty of Data</td>
<td>4/10 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2/10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #13 asked, what are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of performing progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data? There was one theme identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Ten of 10 (100%) participants understood that department heads need to operate with an established protocol for progress monitoring to utilize HDA data, but none of the respondents were clear on how this is being done. These responses indicate that most of the School Number One teachers and administrators who participated in the survey there is a need for a uniform approach for how department heads are expected to utilize HDA data to accomplish progress monitoring.
Survey Question 13: Open-ended Response: What are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of performing progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>10/10 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At School Number Two I conducted surveys with teachers and administrators. Out of one hundred teachers and administrators invited to participate forty (40%) out of one hundred of them participated in the surveys. Of the forty participants, twelve were male (30%) and twenty-eight (70%) were female. Years of service for teachers and administrators at School Number Two who participated in the survey ranged from 1 year to 30 years of service in education. Ages of survey participants at School Number Two ranged from 25 years old to 60 years of age. Subjects taught by survey participants at School Number One who participated in the survey included English, Intensive Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Spanish, Exceptional Student Education, and Digital Information Technology. The surveys consisted of seven scale questions and six open ended questions. The following sections will include a breakdown of each question, a chart to show percentages of responses, as well as an analysis of findings related to each question.

Survey question #1 asked, how well do you feel the HDA data review process is working? Sixteen of forty (40%) participants somewhat agreed that the HDA data review process was working well. Eleven of forty (28%) participants moderately agreed that the HDA data review process was working well. Eight of forty (20%) participants agreed that
the HDA data review process was not at all working. Five of forty (12%) participants strongly agreed that the HDA data review process was working well. This suggests that most of the School Number Two teachers and administrators who participated in the survey lacked confidence that the HDA data review process is working well.

Table 14.

_Survey Question 1: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the HDA data review process is working?_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/40</td>
<td>16/40</td>
<td>11/40</td>
<td>5/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #2 asked, how well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have been identified? Fifteen of forty (38%) participants moderately agreed the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has been identified. Thirteen of forty (32%) participants somewhat agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has been identified. Twelve of forty (30%) participants agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have not at all been identified. None of the participants strongly agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process has been identified. This suggests that a majority of School Number Two teachers and administrators who participated in the survey lack confidence that the challenges within the HDA data review process have been identified.
Table 15.

Survey Question 2: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have been identified?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/40</td>
<td>13/40</td>
<td>15/40</td>
<td>0/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #3 asked, how well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected? Fifteen of forty (38%) participants somewhat agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected. Thirteen of forty (33%) participants agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have not at all being corrected. Ten of forty (25%) participants moderately agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected. Two of forty (5%) participants strongly agreed that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected. This suggests that most of the School Number Two teachers and administrators who participated in the survey lack confidence that the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have been corrected.
Table 16.

Survey Question 3: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13/40</td>
<td>15/40</td>
<td>10/40</td>
<td>2/40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #4 asked, how well do you feel ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing? Sixteen of forty (40%) participants somewhat agreed that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. Nine of forty (22%) participants not at all agreed that that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. Eight of forty (20%) participants moderately agreed that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. Seven of forty (18%) participants strongly agreed that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing. This suggests that a majority of School Number Two teachers and administrators who participated in the survey lacked confidence that ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing.
Table 17.

Survey Question 4: Scaled Response: How well do you feel ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/40</td>
<td>16/40</td>
<td>8/40</td>
<td>7/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #5 asked, how well do you feel the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified? Eighteen of forty (45%) participants somewhat agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified. Eleven of forty (28%) participants agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have not at all been identified. Nine of forty (22%) participants moderately agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified. Two of forty (5%) participants strongly agreed that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified. This suggests that most of the School Number Two teachers and administrators who participated in the survey lack confidence that the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified.
Table 18.

_Survey Question 5: Scaled Response: How well do you feel the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified?_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/40</td>
<td>18/40</td>
<td>9/40</td>
<td>2/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #6 asked, how effective you feel progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data? Fifteen of forty (38%) participants somewhat agreed that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. Ten of forty (25%) participants agreed that progress monitoring was not at all being supported with HDA data. Nine of forty (22%) participants moderately agreed that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. Six of forty (15%) participants strongly agreed that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data. This suggests that most of the School Number Two teachers and administrators who participated in the survey lacked confidence that progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data.

Table 19.

_Survey Question 6: Scaled Response: How effective you feel progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data?_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/40</td>
<td>15/40</td>
<td>9/40</td>
<td>6/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey question #7 asked, how effective do you feel HDA data is helping to raise student achievement? Sixteen of forty (40%) participants moderately agreed that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. Twelve of forty (30%) participants agreed that HDA data was not at all helping to raise student achievement. Ten of forty (25%) participants somewhat agreed that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. Two of forty (5%) participants strongly agreed that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement. This suggests that most of the School Number Two teachers and administrators surveyed are not confident that HDA data is helping to raise student achievement.

Table 20.

Survey Question 7: Scaled Response: How effective do you feel HDA data is helping to raise student achievement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/40</td>
<td>10/40</td>
<td>16/40</td>
<td>2/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the first seven scaled questions on teacher and administrator surveys I asked a total of six open-ended questions. These questions allowed teachers and administrators to respond to the questions in a manner which allowed them to freely elaborate on their opinions of the QAs without their being steered towards any specific response. Using the following sections will include a breakdown of each question, a chart to show percentages of responses, as well as an analysis of findings related to each question.
Survey question #8 asked, what do you feel is working well in the benchmark data review process? There were two main themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Twenty-five of forty (63%) participants listed they either felt the entire HDA data review process was not working well, or, they were not sure what was working well with the data review process. Fifteen of forty (37%) participants listed being able to identify specific standards students were deficient in and receiving consistently accurate data as what was working well in the HDA data review process. These responses suggest that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this survey could not identify anything that was working well with the HDA data review process.

Table 21.

Survey Question 8: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is working well in the HDA data review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/Nothing</td>
<td>25/40 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy/Specific Area of Focus</td>
<td>15/40 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #9 asked, what do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Seventeen of forty (43%) participants listed not being sure as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. Nine of forty (22%) participants listed not having enough time to spend on following up on data and remediating students as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. Eight of forty (20%) participants listed assessment standards not being aligned to
curriculum taught in the classroom as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. Six of forty (15%) participants listed too much testing on students and students not taking the assessment seriously as what was not working well in the HDA data review process. These responses suggest that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this survey agree that there are components of utilizing the HDA data review process that are not working well at their school.

Table 22.

Survey Question 9: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>17/40 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Follow-up</td>
<td>9/40 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Alignment</td>
<td>8/40 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Fatigue</td>
<td>6/40 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #10 asked, what do you feel are the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Fifteen of forty (38%) participants identified a lack of inclusion of site-based faculty in developing assessments and remediation, as the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program. Twelve of forty (30%) participants listed not sure as the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program. Eight of forty (20%) participants listed a lack of time to utilize assessment data and follow the curriculum map as the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program. Five of forty (12%) participants listed a lack of confidence in the assessment as
the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program. These responses suggest
that a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated
in this survey view their not being included in assessment development and a lack of
confidence in the assessment as the greatest challenges involved when utilizing the HDA
data program.

Table 23:

*Survey Question 10: Open-ended Response: What do you feel are the greatest challenges
involved with the HDA data program?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Inclusion</td>
<td>15/40 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>12/40 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>8/40 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Confidence</td>
<td>5/40 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #11 asked, in what areas could we improve the HDA data review
process? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to
this question. Twenty-one of forty (53%) participants answered not sure how to improve
the HDA data review process. Fifteen of forty (37%) participants listed revamping the
data review process to include less assessments and greater input from subject area
teachers, as the area we could improve the HDA data review process. Four of forty (10%)
participants identified incentivizing assessments for students as the area we could
improve the HDA data review process. These responses indicate that most teachers and
administrators from School Number Two who participated in this survey are uncertain
what areas could we improve the HDA data review process?
Table 24.

Survey Question 11: Open-ended Response: In what areas could we improve the HDA data review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>21/40 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revamp the Process</td>
<td>15/40 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive Assessments</td>
<td>4/40 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #12 asked, what do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Seventeen of forty (43%) participants identified a lack of time to provide adequate remediation to students as the most troubling aspect of remediating students. Eleven of forty (27%) participants identified a lack of student engagement and attendance of remediation as the most troubling aspect of remediating students. Nine of forty (23%) participants identified not being sure of what they feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating students. Three of forty (7%) participants listed inaccurate assessment data as what they feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating students. These responses suggest that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this survey feel that a lack of time to remediate students, along with students not being engaged in remediation is the most troubling aspect of remediating students.
Table 25

*Survey Question 12: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Remediation Time</td>
<td>17/40 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Student Participation</td>
<td>11/40 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>9/40 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Confidence</td>
<td>3/40 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question #13 asked, what are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of performing progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Nineteen of forty (48%) participants were not sure what the perceptions of subject area department heads were concerning how the process of performing progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data. Nine of forty (22%) participants felt as though district assessment leaders do not communicate well with site-based department heads and that HDA are a waste of time. Seven of forty (17%) participants felt that allowing site-based department heads to have greater autonomy for operating QAs would help improve using HDA data for progress monitoring. Five of forty (13%) participants feel as though the current practice regarding how HDA’s are currently used are already effective towards performing progress monitoring for their students. These responses indicate that a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this survey were unsure of how their department
heads felt and did not presently agree with how HDA data is currently used to accomplish progress monitoring at their schools.

Table 26.

Survey Question 13: Open-ended Response: What are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of performing progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>19/40 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Collaboration</td>
<td>9/40 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Autonomy</td>
<td>7/40 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>5/40 (13%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews. At School Number One I conducted interviews with teachers and administrators. Out of 15 teachers and administrators invited to participate five out of fifteen (33%) of them participated in the interviews. Of the five participants, three were male (60%) and two (40%) were female. Years of service for teachers and administrators at School Number One who participated in the interview ranged from 1 year to 25 years of service in education. Ages of interview participants ranged from 35 years old to 58 years of age. Subjects taught by survey participants at School Number One who participated in the survey included English, Social Studies, Driver’s Education, Physical Education, Spanish, and Peer Counseling. During my interview process, I asked teachers and administrators 15 open ended questions. On average, each interview lasted between 5 and 15 minutes, with the longest interview lasting around 25 minutes. At School Number One five out of fifteen teachers and administrators (33%) who participated in surveys
participated in the interviews. The following section will include an analysis of each of
the 15 open-ended interview questions, a chart to show percentages of responses, as well
as an analysis of findings related to each question.

Interview question #1 asked, what do you feel is currently working well in the
HDA data review process? There were three themes identified by teachers and
administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants identified
being able to narrow down specific standards students needed help with as what was
working well with the HDA data review process. Two of five (40%) participants felt that
assessment questions being aligned to standards students are taught as what was working
well with the HDA data review process. One of five (20%) participants identified the
quick turn-around time that student data was available following QAs as what was
working well with the HDA data review process. These responses indicate that a majority
of teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this
interview were in agreements that QAs were a good tool for assessing how well students
were mastering standards content that is taught to them during them a nine-week period.

Table 27.

*Interview Question 1: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is working well in the
HDA data review process?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Standards Deficiencies</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions Aligned to Standards</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn Around Time for Data</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview question #2 asked, what do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants felt that students not being given a pre-test at the beginning of the school year, prevents students from showing true growth according to QAs, over the course of a school year as what is not working well in the HDA data review process. Two of five (40%) participants identified the amount of data provided from QAs as overwhelming, they felt this was what is not working well with the HDA data review process. One of five (20%) participants stated that QAs should be shorter and given more frequently, as what is not working well with the HDA data review process. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview agreed that there were identifiable aspects of the HDA data review process that are not working well.

Table 28.

*Interview Question 2: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Pre-Test</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much Data</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter More Frequent Assessments</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #3 asked, what do you feel is the greatest challenges in the program? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Three of five (60%) participants felt that students not taking the assessments seriously were the greatest challenge of the program. Two of five (40%)
participants identified the difficulty of utilizing assessment data to meet the needs of struggling students as the greatest challenge of the program. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview are concerned that students not taking the assessments serious are the greatest challenge in the HDA process.

Table 29.

Interview Question 3: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is the greatest challenges in the program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Not Taking Assessment Seriously</td>
<td>3/5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing Data to Meet Needs of Students</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #4 asked, what do you feel are ways to address these challenges, if any, and improve the program? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants identified making QAs mandatory as one way to improve the program. Two of five (40%) participants felt that allocating more time for faculty and staff to evaluate student assessment data as one way to improve the program. One of five (20%) participants stated that evaluating the entire QAP for its effectiveness was a solution for improving the program. These responses indicate that teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview had opinions for how to improve the program, but they were divided on exactly how to improve the greatest challenges of the program.
Table 30.

*Interview Question 4: Open-ended Response: What do you feel are ways to address challenges, if any, and improve the program?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make Assessments Mandatory</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Time for Evaluating Data</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Entire Program</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #5 asked, what do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants stated that a lack of time for teachers to evaluate data was the most troubling aspect of remediating their students. Two of five (40%) participants identified a lack of time to remediate students and deliver regularly scheduled classroom instruction as the most troubling aspect of remediating their students. One of five (20%) participants felt that a lack of a beginning of the year assessment that helps track actual student growth throughout the year as the most troubling aspect of remediating their students. These responses indicate that a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview agreed that a lack of time for teachers to review assessment data, teach scheduled curriculum, and remediate students was the most challenging aspect of remediating their students.
Table 31.

*Interview Question 5: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time to Evaluate Data</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Instructional and Remediation Time</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Pre-Test</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #6 asked, what are your feelings concerning progress monitoring and how it can be improved using HDA data? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants stated that they felt teachers were not adequately prepared to utilize assessment data in order to perform progress monitoring. Three of five (40%) participants responded that they were not sure how progress monitoring can be improved using benchmark data. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview were not aware how progress monitoring could be improved using HDA data.

Table 32.

*Interview Question 6: Open-ended Response: What are your feelings concerning progress monitoring and how it can be improved using HDA data?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>3/5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying standards assessed</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview question #7 asked, what are your perceptions for how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants identified creating pre-tests for students to take before quarterly instruction is given in order to determine learning gains which can be identified by HDA data as how HDA data might be utilized to raise student achievement. Three of five (60%) participants identified not being sure how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview were not sure how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement data.

Table 33.

Interview Question 7: Open-ended Response: What are your perceptions for how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>3/5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize Pre-Test</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #8 asked, please describe the possible ways that you feel QAs can be used. There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants identified creating pre-tests for students to take before quarterly instruction is given in order to determine learning gains as a possible way QAs can be used. Two of five (40%) participants were not sure of how QAs can be used. One of five (20%) participants identified having instructional teams work together to break down standards in order to identify what each level of standards
mastery looks like as a possible way QAs can be used. These responses indicate that while most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview had an opinion of how QAs could be used, there was not a consensus agreement between them concerning this topic.

Table 34.

*Interview Question 8: Open-ended Response: Please describe the possible ways that you feel QAs can be used.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize Pre-Tests</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams Identify What Mastery Looks Like</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #9 asked, in your opinion how well do you feel that the HDA are being used to prepare your students for their upcoming FSA’s? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Four of five (80%) participants stated that the HDA’s were extremely helpful in preparing students for the upcoming FSA’s. These participants shared that the HDA’s helped identify standards students were deficient in. One of five (20%) participants were not sure how helpful the HDA’s were working to help prepare students for the upcoming FSA’s. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview were in agreements that the HDA’s were extremely helpful in preparing their students for the upcoming FSA’s.
Table 35

Interview Question 9: Open-ended Response: How well do you feel that the HDA’s are being used to prepare your students for their upcoming FSA’s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well, Helps Identify Deficiencies</td>
<td>4/5 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #10 asked, do you have an opinion of how concerned district officials are with how in depth HDA are being utilized to drive instruction at your school? If so elaborate. There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Three of five (60%) participants stated that district officials are overly concerned with how in depth HDA’s are utilized to drive instruction at the school level. Two of five (40%) participants answered that they were not sure how concerned district officials were with how in depth HDA are utilized to drive instruction at the school level. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview felt that district officials were overly concerned with how in depth HAD are being utilized to drive instruction at the school level.
Table 36.

*Interview Question 10: Open-ended Response: Do you have an opinion of how concerned district officials are with how in depth HDA’s are being utilized to drive instruction at your school? If so elaborate.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Concerned</td>
<td>3/5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #11 asked, are you satisfied with how your students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom? Elaborate. There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Three of five (60%) participants stated yes, they felt that teachers were doing a good job of differentiating instruction for students based on the needs identified by QAD. One of five (20%) participants stated no, they felt that teachers were not able to effectively scaffold lessons based on feedback they receive from QAD. One of five (20%) participants stated they were not sure felt concerning how their students HDA data is being used to drive instruction in the classroom. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview were satisfied with how their students HDA data is being used to drive instruction in the classroom.
Table 37.

*Interview Question 11: Open-ended Response: Are you satisfied with how your students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3/5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #12 asked, in your opinion, what do you think is the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at your school? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants identified a lack of teacher buy-in due to lack of confidence in the assessment as the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classrooms at their school. Two of five (40%) participants felt the lack of time teachers must differentiate instruction for their lower performing students as the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classrooms at their school. One of five (20%) participants identified the lack of time teachers spend reviewing what HDA data has revealed as the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classrooms at their school. These responses indicate that while there was not one single answer that served as a majority, each respondent felt there are legitimate explanations as to why schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at your school?
Table 38.

*Interview Question 12: Open-ended Response: What schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Teacher Buy-In</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Instructional Time</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Data Review</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #13 asked, has your perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data changed over time? If so, when and why? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants stated yes, their perception of the effectiveness of using HDA data has changed. They stated that they were previously uncomfortable utilizing assessment data to drive instruction, but now they are more comfortable with the process. Two of five (40%) participants stated yes, their perception has changed from being unsure how HDA’s work, to now understanding that the assessments target standards students are taught during each quarter of the school year. One of five (20%) participants stated yes, their perception of the HDA process has changed. They previously saw the HDA process as trial and error but now they feel the HDA are strategically developed and implemented. These responses indicate that while there was not a majority theme that stood out as an answer to this question, all of teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview were in agreements that their perception has changed regarding the effectiveness of using HDA data.
Table 39

*Interview Question 13: Open-ended Response: Has your perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data changed over time?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, No Longer Uncomfortable Using Data</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Better Understanding of HDA’s</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, HDA Process Has Improved</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #14 asked, in your own words, briefly explain how your school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom. There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants stated that HDA data is gathered and areas of need are identified for students to receive remediation. Two of five (40%) participants stated that instructional staff members review HDA data, but they are not sure how each individual teacher utilizes HDA Data to drive instruction in the classroom. One of five (20%) participants stated that they were not sure how their school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview were not in agreement for how HDA data was being utilized by their school to drive instruction in the classroom.
Table 40

*Interview Question 14: Open-ended Response: In your own words, briefly explain how your school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Deficiencies</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing Data</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #15 asked, if any, what changes would you recommend be made concerning the utilization of HDA data at your school? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Two of five (40%) participants stated that more time should be allocated for instructional personnel to review data before decisions are made for what remediation is needed for students. Two of five (40%) participants stated that they would like to see instructional coaches and department heads model for teachers what effective remediation strategies look like. One of five (20%) participants stated that shorter, more frequent assessments should be given in order to track gains students are making each month. These responses indicate that there was not a majority agreement for changes should be made to the utilization of HDA data by teachers and administrators from School Number One who participated in this interview.
Table 41.

*Interview Question 15: Open-ended Response: What changes would you recommend be made concerning the utilization of HDA data at your school?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Time to Review Data</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches Model Remediation Strategies</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter/More Frequent Assessments</td>
<td>1/5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At School Number Two I conducted interviews with teachers and administrators. Out of one hundred teachers and administrators invited to participate fifteen (15%) of them participated in the interviews. Of the fifteen participants, five (33%) were male and 10 (67%) were female. Years of service for teachers and administrators at School Number Two who participated in the interview ranged from 1 year to 25 years of service in education. Ages of interview participants ranged from 25 years old to 56 years of age. Subjects taught by survey participants at School Number Two who participated in the interview included English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Spanish, Exceptional Student Education, and Digital Information Technology.

During my interview process teachers and administrators were asked fifteen open-ended questions. On average, each interview lasted between 5 and 15 minutes, with the longest interview lasting around 25 minutes. The following section will include an analysis of each of the 15 open-ended interview questions, a chart to show percentages of responses, as well as an analysis of findings related to each question.

Interview question #1 asked, what do you feel is currently working well in the HDA data review process? There were four themes identified by teachers and
administrators in response to this question. Eight of twenty (40%) participants stated that the assessments touched on the important standards students needed to learn. Six of twenty (30%) participants felt that the assessments give teachers information on what standards need to be re-taught. Four of twenty (20%) participants stated that it is clear what the assessments are trying to accomplish. Two of twenty (10%) participants stated that the assessments are frustrating and are a waste of time. These responses indicate that there was no clear majority of opinions for what teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview felt was working well in the HDA data review process.

Table 42.

*Interview Question 1: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is working well in the HDA data review process?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Touches on Important Standards</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Standards to Re-teach</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Purpose of Assessment</td>
<td>4/20 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrating Waste of Time</td>
<td>2/20 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #2 asked, what do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Twelve of twenty (60%) participants identified students not taking the assessments seriously as what they feel is not working well with the HDA data review process. Six of twenty (30%) participants felt that there was a disconnect between what is on the assessment, versus what is being taught during the quarter, as what feel is
not working well with the HDA data review process. Two of twenty (10%) participants stated that the HAD do not reveal what students are struggling with as what they feel is not working well with the HDA data review process. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were in agreements that students not taking the assessments seriously is what is not working well with the HDA data review process.

Table 43.

*Interview Question 2: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students not Taking Assessments Seriously</td>
<td>12/20 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnect Between Instruction and Assessment</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments Not Accurate</td>
<td>2/20 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #3 asked, what do you feel is the greatest challenges in the program? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Fifteen of twenty (75%) participants stated that students not being motivated to take the assessment seriously was the greatest challenge in the program.

Five of twenty (25%) participants feel that the assessment questions are not aligned to the curriculum blueprints, and this is the greatest challenge in the program. These responses indicate that a large majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were in agreements that students not taking QAs seriously are the greatest challenges in the program.
Table 44.

Interview Question 3: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is the greatest challenges in the program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students not Taking Assessments Seriously</td>
<td>15/20 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments not Aligned to Curriculum</td>
<td>5/20 (25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #4 asked, what do you feel are ways to address these challenges, if any, and improve the program? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Eight of twenty (40%) participants stated that teachers should be allowed to create their own assessments and track their own data to address challenges and improve the program. Seven of twenty (35%) participants felt that their school should get parent involvement as a means of getting more student buy in for assessments to address challenges and improve the program. Five of twenty (25%) participants stated that they were not sure how to address challenges and improve the program. These responses indicate that while most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview had ideas of how to address challenges and improve the program there was not a majority agreement on how to answer this interview question.
Table 45.

*Interview Question 4: Open-ended Response: What do you feel are ways to address these challenges, if any, and improve the program?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give Teachers Control of Assessments</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Parent Involvement</td>
<td>7/20 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>5/20 (25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #5 asked, what do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Twelve of twenty (60%) participants identified students being motivated to participate in remediation as the most troubling aspect of remediation. Six of twenty (30%) participants felt that performing remediation and keeping up with curriculum blueprints was the most troubling aspect of remediating students. Two of twenty (20%) participants stated that the exorbitant amount of testing students must perform was the most troubling aspect of remediating their students. These responses indicate that a large majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were in agreements that students not being motivated to participate in remediation is the most troubling aspect of remediating their students.
Table 46.

*Interview Question 5: Open-ended Response: What do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Student Motivation</td>
<td>12/20 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Much Testing</td>
<td>2/20 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #6 asked, what are your feelings concerning progress monitoring and how it can be improved using benchmark data? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Three of twenty (15%) participants stated that their school was effectively using progress monitoring in conjunction with HDA data. Five of twenty (25%) participants felt that more communication between leaders and faculty should take place in order to improve the process using HDA data. Twelve of twenty (60%) participants stated that they were not sure how progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were in agreements that they were not sure how progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data.
Table 47.

Interview Question 6: Open-ended Response: What are your feelings concerning progress monitoring and how it can be improved using HDA data?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>12/20 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Communication</td>
<td>5/20 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Effective</td>
<td>3/20 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #7 asked, what are your perceptions for how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Three of twenty (15%) participants identified creating a specific class time for students to receive remediation according to HDA data, as how HDA data might be used to help raise student achievement. Seventeen of twenty (40%) participants stated that they were not sure how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement. These responses indicate that a large majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were not sure how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement.
Table 48.

**Interview Question 7: Open-ended Response: What are your perceptions for how HDA data might be utilized to help raise student achievement?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create Specific Remediation Times</td>
<td>3/20 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>17/20 (85%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #8 asked, please describe the possible ways that you feel QAs can be used. There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Four of twenty (20%) participants identified being able to narrow down specific standards students needed help with as how they felt QAs could be used. Sixteen of twenty (80%) participants were not sure how QAs can be used. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were not sure how QAs can be used at their school.

Table 49.

**Interview Question 8: Open-ended Response: Please describe the possible ways that you feel QAs can be used.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Deficiencies</td>
<td>4/20 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>16/20 (80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #9 asked, in your opinion how well do you feel that the HDA’s are being used to prepare your students for their upcoming FSA’s? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Twelve of
twenty (60%) participants stated that HAD were not working well to help prepare their students for the FSA. Reasons for this opinion ranged from assessments not being aligned to instructional blueprints, to assessments not being reliable to students not taking the assessments seriously. Eight of twenty (40%) participants felt that HAD’s were working well to help prepare their students for the FSA. Reasons for this opinion ranged from assessments preparing students to answer standards-based questions, to teachers having an opportunity to remediate students in areas they are weak in. These responses indicate that a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were in agreements that the HAD were not working well to help prepare their students for their upcoming FSA’s.

Table 50.

Interview Question 9: Open-ended Response: In your opinion how well do you feel that the HAD’s are being used to prepare your students for their upcoming FSA’s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Well</td>
<td>12/20 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Well</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #10 asked, do you have an opinion of how concerned district officials are with how in depth HAD are being utilized to drive instruction at your school? If so elaborate. There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Four of twenty (20%) participants stated that they felt the district was overly concerned with how in depth HAD are being utilized to drive instruction at their school. Sixteen of twenty (80%) participants stated that they were not sure how the district felt with how in depth HAD are being utilized to drive instruction at
their school. These responses indicate that most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were not sure how the district felt with how in depth HAD are being utilized to drive instruction at their school.

Table 51.

Interview Question 10: Open-ended Response: Do you have an opinion of how concerned district officials are with how in depth HDA’s are being utilized to drive instruction at your school? If so elaborate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Concerned</td>
<td>4/20 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>16/20 (80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #11 asked, are you satisfied with how your students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom? Elaborate. There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Twelve of twenty (60%) participants stated that they were satisfied with how their students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom. Reasons identified for this response included administrators providing student data in a timely fashion, and data being easily accessible for teachers to identify areas needing remediation. Eight of twenty (40%) participants stated that they were not sure if they were satisfied, they were with how their students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom. These responses indicate that a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview were satisfied with how their students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom.
Table 52.

Interview Question 11: Open-ended Response: Are you satisfied with how your students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom? Elaborate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>12/20 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #12 asked, in your opinion, what do you think is the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at your school? There were two themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Twelve of twenty (60%) participants identified a lack of confidence in what data reveals as a need for students to be remediated in as the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at their school. Eight of twenty (40%) participants stated that they were not sure why schools were not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at their school. These responses indicate that a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview agreed that a lack of confidence in what data reveals as a need for students to be remediated in as the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at their schools.
Table 53.

Interview Question 12: Open-ended Response: In your opinion, what do think is the reason schools are not thoroughly using QAD to drive instruction in the classroom at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Confidence in Assessment Data</td>
<td>12/20 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #13 asked, has your perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data changed over time? If so, when and why? There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Eight of twenty (40%) participants responded no, their perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data has not changed over time. The rationale behind their responses was that they have never been sold on the effectiveness of the HDA. Six of twenty (30%) participants responded yes, their perception about the effectiveness of using HDA felt that assessment data has changed over time. The rationale behind their responses were they now have a clearer understanding of why HDA are given, and what is done with the assessment data. Six of twenty (30%) participants stated that they were not sure if their perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data has not changed over time. These responses indicate that while most teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview had opinions of whether their opinion of using HDA data has changed over time, there was not a majority opinion concerning this interview question.
Table 54.

Interview Question 13: Open-ended Response: Has your perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data changed over time? If so, when and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #14 asked, in your own words, briefly explain how your school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom. There were three themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Eight of twenty (40%) participants stated that student assessment data is evaluated, and teachers are given data identifying standards need remediation in. Six of twenty (30%) participants responded that assessment data is given to them but that they do not have time to implement the remediation student’s need. Six of twenty (30%) participants stated that they were not sure how their school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom. These responses indicate that while a majority of teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview had opinions of how their school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom, there was not a majority opinion concerning this interview question.
Table 55.

*Interview Question 14: Open-ended Response: In your own words, briefly explain how your school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Used for Remediation</td>
<td>8/20 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Time for Remediation</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>6/20 (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview question #15 asked, if any, what changes would you recommend be made concerning the utilization of HDA data at your school? There were four themes identified by teachers and administrators in response to this question. Ten of twenty (50%) participants recommended teachers having more control over creating assessments and utilizing their own assessment data. Four of twenty (20%) participants recommended making assessment data easier to access. Three of twenty (15%) participants recommended creating a measure of accountability for students to take the assessments seriously. Three of twenty (15%) participants stated that the entire HDA process should be re-developed. These responses indicate that while all of the teachers and administrators from School Number Two who participated in this interview had opinions in response to this question, a majority of them felt that teachers should be given more control over the creation of assessments and the utilization of the assessment data at their school.
Table 56.

*Interview Question 15: Open-ended Response: If any, what changes would you recommend be made concerning the utilization of HDA data at your school?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give Teachers More Control</td>
<td>10/20 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier Access to Data</td>
<td>4/20 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Accountability for Students</td>
<td>3/20 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Develop Process</td>
<td>3/20 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Achievement Data**

In the State, student achievement data is primarily evaluated by using student performance scores for how students performed on “English Language Arts (SA, SAA), Mathematics (SA, SAA, EOCs), Science (NGSSS, SAA, EOCs), and Social Studies (EOCs)” (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality). In HSD Horizon Data Assessments (HDAs) are given to students on a quarterly basis. They are given in October, January, and March, to evaluate a student’s mastery of content standards that will be assessed on the State Assessments. Content that is evaluated should have been taught to students during delivery of instruction which is based on curriculum blueprints.

Theoretically, HDA data should mirror data that is compiled following students’ completion of the State Assessments. The desire is to see student scores improve from what was seen on HDA data in comparison to data taken from State Assessments. During gathering research for this dissertation my focus has been on comparing student SSA achievement data in the subjects of English Language Arts (ELA) and math, at School Number One and School Number Two. The goal is to determine whether the relationship
School Number One has with how it utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom, versus School Number Two utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom.

Over the past two school years, data suggests that SSA scores in ELA and math have been higher at School Number One than scores seen at School Number Two over the past two school years. See Tables 57 and 58 for overall performance of School Number One and School Number Two in the areas of ELA and math over the past two school years. The percentage of students meeting proficiency and beyond in ELA at School Number One has been an average of 31% higher than the percentage of students meeting proficiency and above at School Number Two over the past two school years. The percentage of students meeting proficiency and beyond in math at School Number One has been an average of 25% higher than the percentage of students meeting proficiency and above at School Number Two over the past two school years. This data suggests that the close relationship that School Number One has with utilizing HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom is proving more beneficial than the practices School Number Two is using. This further suggests an implementation of instructional practices aligned with HDA data should become commonplace at School Number Two.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA and Math Achievement Scores: School Number One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA and Math Achievement Scores: School Number Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Is: Four Change Agent Components

An approach for addressing the needs found during my research can be seen in Wagner’s (2006) 4 C’s. Wagner et al. offer a systematic tool which creates a guideline researcher can use to identify the challenges which may prevent success in an organization. Wagner et al. identifies four components change agents can evaluate in order to determine areas in their schools which need correction. The four components Wagner et al. lists are “competency, conditions, culture, and context” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 99). In this research project I performed research at two schools I previously worked at. I was able to develop a needs assessment for both schools as part of my research. I have included a 4 C’s chart (see Appendix F) that identifies each area of need which will be addressed in my recommended change plan. Each component of change plan is designed to improve teaching and learning in the HSD.

In our district schools, the expectation was that quarterly assessment data (QAD) is utilized in order to determine the specific standards on which students are performing
poorly in and remediation can be provided to address these deficiencies. When assessment data is not utilized to address student deficiencies it contributes to preventing success among students within our district. A lack of confidence with the current quarterly assessment process have has left some educators unaware of just how detrimental their Lasa fare attitude has been to student achievement.

**Context.** Each school is designed to operate as a vehicle which serves to produce citizens which can become viable contributors to society. During the process of a student’s four years at a public high school it is desired that they garner expected attributes that address their “particular aspirations, needs, and concerns of the families and community that the school serves” (Wagner et.al., 2006, p. 104). Context defines the attributes of each component which in one way or another affects a student’s ability to accomplish their goals and meet the expectations placed upon them by themselves, their families, and the community they reside in.

One contextual problem can be seen in survey and interview data at School Number Two. Survey and interview data from participants of this school show an overall lack of confidence in the quarterly assessment process. Research suggests that “teacher enthusiasm mediates the relationship between teacher and student enjoyment” (Frenzel, Goetz, Ludtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009, p. 707). It may be safe to say that students are able to sense when teachers are not enthusiastic regarding quarterly assessment (QAs). The lack of enthusiasm with the use of QAP results in my district may be a direct contributor to a lack of student buy-in as expressed by teachers and administrators during surveys and interviews.
Another contextual problem at School Number Two which is revealed in survey and interview results is that the QAP is not being utilized as effectively as it could be. Research suggests that schools with instructional personnel who creatively use formative assessments and unifying concepts as opportunities to improve teaching and learning for students (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010). Student data indicate that it may be possible that a lack of maximizing the use of the district QAP could be a key contributor to low scores School Number Two students have earned on standardized assessments over the past two school years.

A third contextual problem at School Number Two is that the expectation of the state department of education is that all schools in the state will strive to attain 83% proficiency on average for its students in ELA and Math. This is a contextual problem for School Number Two because currently the school ranks last among high schools in the district in ELA proficiency and third to last among district high schools in Math proficiency. Despite these deficiencies among its students in ELA and Math research suggests that School Number Two has much room with regards to utilizing QAD to drive instruction in the classroom thus improving student achievement.

By comparison, School Number One shows an overall confidence in the quarterly assessment process. The confidence displayed by participants in the district QAP may be a direct correlation to the success its students have shown in standardized assessments. While School Number Two has not attained the state’s desired 83% proficiency in ELA and Math, it has maintained a top tier percentage of students showing proficiency across the school district.
**Culture.** Culture within a school, although invisible, can permeate and be seen in every aspect of a school system. Culture is the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students learning, and teachers teaching” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 102). Bolman and Deal (1997) described organizational culture, as the "way things get done around here." In other words, while an organizational chart might demonstrate how things "should" get done, culture is the reality of an organization’s modus operandi.

While employed and researching School Number One, it was apparent to me that the culture within the school was one that exuded a sense of success. When I say success, I mean that there is an air of confidence within the school stakeholders that everything that can be done is being done to position the school-students to be successful. Teachers expected to attend faculty meetings where student quarterly assessment data (QAD) will be discussed. Teachers expect that they will meet with administrators, coaches, and department heads to discuss strategies to provide remediation for their students. Faculty at School Number One also have stated that they expect to meet cross curriculum to identify standards that align from one subject to another.

This was not the case while I worked or performed research at School Number Two. At School Number Two there is a strong culture of distrust when it comes to the QAP designed by the district. Most research participants expressed a belief that quarterly assessments (QAs) designed by the district was not reliable in identifying content areas students needed remediation.

At School Number Two there exists an air of belief that QAs operates with impunity for students. Many participants stated that students do not take QAs seriously
because they are not a factor in their nine-weeks grade. There appears to be a belief amongst School Number Two faculty that this reason alone prevents the assessments from being a viable tool that be utilized to improve student achievement.

In fact, among participants there were a high percentage of respondents who recommended stripping the control of QAs from the district. These stakeholders suggested allowing local teachers to implement their own QAs. Not only did they recommend allowing teachers to create assessments, but they suggested that teachers alone should determine how assessment data is utilized to meet the needs of their students.

**Conditions.** Conditions in an educational setting can be visible in the way the organization is structured to meet the needs of its stakeholders. Wagner et al. (2006) defines conditions as “the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p. 101). If one evaluates the schools being examined in my research based on Wagner et al. definition one would see two contrasting pictures. Having an opportunity to both work in and perform research at School Number One and School Number Two gave me an opportunity to clearly evaluate the conditions which exists within the confines of both organizations. Through performing research, I have been able to identify and delineate the differences within conditions at both schools which may be contributors to the discrepancies which are seen in the areas of student achievement at both schools.

At School Number One stakeholder is exposed to its conditions immediately upon introduction to the school. As soon as parents and students express an interest in enrolling their students into the school, they are informed that participation in the QAP is a
mandatory requirement to attend the school. One may ask how a school of choice (not a
zoned school for any students) can be evaluated equally with a zoned school, I will
remind them that State Statute 1001.42 (2019) states that schools “must include data on
the number of students identified by the system as exhibiting two or more early warning
indicators” (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality). All schools in the state are
compelled by state statute to enact a vehicle which identifies students who need academic
intervention in order to be successful academically.

While School Number One exists as a school of choice and may implement
aggressive measures to ensure participation, all public schools have the opportunity to
inform stakeholders of state statute which compels schools to utilize early warning
systems (EWS) such as the district QAP. Not only are parents and students expected to
align with conditions existing at School Number One, but faculty and staff members are
also held to a high standard of expectation regarding the usage of QAs. Administrators
are expected to have continuous conversations with parents and students regarding
participation in assessments. Instructional staff and coaches are expected to keep students
abreast of upcoming assessments. Teachers are also expected to collaborate during
professional learning community (PLCs) meetings to address effective ways to remediate
students based on needed content standards which align across curriculum. Clearly,
School Number One has made a commitment to allocate its resources in a way that has
produced success among its students over the past two school years.

At School Number Two there exists a condition as it is within every school within
the district where structure is in place for stakeholders to thoroughly utilize the district
QAP. Facilities, computers, available classrooms, instructional personnel, testing
coordinators, instructional coaches, administrators, and students all exist. As is the case in every school in the district assessment data is made available to stakeholders within weeks of students completing QAs. However, there is a condition within School Number One where there is a lack of enthusiasm among staff and students for the utilization of the QAP. There exists an uncertainty whether the administration of School Number One are pressing the point of utilizing the QAP.

**Competencies.** Competencies can be described as the abilities each educator brings to the table which are needed in order to develop a school focused on improving student achievement. These abilities must be diverse, and readily available to change when the need arises. In fact, Wagner (2006) defines competencies as “the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (p. 99). In every school it is the people within the school that are depended upon to bring about desired change that accomplishes student achievement.

There is a myriad of skills stakeholders within a school need in order to successfully utilize the QAP. These competencies include exemplary leadership skills, a clear understanding of what the quarterly assessment are, understanding how to assess quarterly assessment data (QAD), understanding how to pare down specific areas in need of remediation, understanding how to differentiate instruction by including radiation of standards students are underperforming in, and the interpersonal skills of collaborating with other stakeholders, and inspiring students to participate in the QAP.

While working and performing research at School Number One I noticed that there were specific examples of competencies exuded by staff at this school. It is possible that these competencies have served to help contribute to the success this school enjoyed
over the past few years. A few competencies that have been seen at School Number One are clear leadership skills exemplified from administration, a sense of purpose behind utilizing the QAP, and consistency of message from stakeholders QAs.

Administrators at School Number One shared the vision of using the QAP to ensure student achievement to both students, parents, and faculty. Administrators at this school participated in delivering the message of expectation to all stakeholders. They participated in aggregating data, as well as participating in professional learning communities (PLCs) designed to assist teachers in preparation for remediation instruction for students. One thing that became clear while speaking with participants during research at School Number One was that an overwhelming majority of them were committed to the utilization of the QAP. Staff members believe in the effectiveness of the program, understand the purpose and expectation for why and how QAs are utilized.

While working at and performing research at School Number Two I noticed a different set of competencies being utilized in relation to QAs. It may be possible that these competencies have served to help contribute to a lack of success at this school over the past few years. While reviewing competencies at this school I reflected on what Wagner et al. (2006) describes of how competencies influence student learning. Just looking at survey and interview data it became evident that the negative opinion most participants from School Number Two have concerning quarterly assessments (QAs) possibly play a role in how educators at this school are choosing to utilize quarterly assessment at this school.

At this school there appears to be an overall disdain by faculty members with regards to the QAP. There appears to be a belief that QAs are a waste of time. And, there
appears to be a belief among participants that even if they desired to utilize assessment data to remediate students that there was not adequate time to teach and provide remediation for students based on results from QAs. After completing research at School Number One and School Number Two there are a few unanswered questions which remain. One unanswered question is regarding the response from School Number Two participants when answering primary question #2. Most respondents from this school reported that student is not taking quarterly assessments seriously as being the greatest problem with operating the district quarterly assessment program. This response raises an unanswered question because when these participants were asked what the greatest challenge of using the district quarterly assessment program was these same respondents identified teachers not having enough control over the quarterly assessment program as being their greatest challenge. This raises the unanswered question of whether School Number Two students were being sincere when they answered primary question #2, when they identified that students were not taking quarterly assessments (QAs) seriously as the major component of what was not working well with the district quarterly assessment program.

A second unanswered question which developed following my research at the schools stems from the response of participants from School Number Two when they answered primary question #4. Most respondents from this school reported that giving teachers a greater level of input on the development of quarterly assessments as the best way to address the greatest challenges they face with utilizing the district quarterly assessment program. The response to this question raises an unanswered question since most respondents did not report this as the greatest challenge they dealt with when using
the quarterly assessment program. Yet, School Number Two respondents list this as the best way to address the problems in the quarterly assessment program. This raises the unanswered question of, is the major problem respondents at School Number Two have with the district quarterly assessment program a lack of control being given to local teachers?

A third unanswered question arising from research performed during this project stems from a response from participants at School Number Two when they answered secondary question #3. When answering the question, what are the perceptions of administrators at their school regarding how effectively quarterly currently assessments were being utilized at their school to improve student achievement, most respondents reported that administrators were pleased with how quarterly assessment were currently being utilized. This response raises the question, how could administrators be pleased with how quarterly assessments were utilized at their schools to improve student achievement at their school if student achievement levels at School Number Two have been less than desirable for multiple years (See Appendix H).

**Interpretation**

The results I have compiled through years of working at both schools, conducting surveys, interviews, and examining student achievement data suggests that School Number One has been conducting the utilization of the district standards assessment program more effectively than School Number Two has. The top down approach seen utilized at School Number One signifies that this school leadership is not leaving the direction of guiding the utilization of QAD to instructional coaches, department heads, or teachers. It is apparent that School Number One leaders are inspiring their stakeholders to
actively participate in the standards assessment program and the results have shown to be effective.

Research suggests that the instructional staff of School Number One has embraced the vision of their leaders. It is apparent that these educators have shown a willingness to utilize the standards assessment program in meaningful ways. These teachers along with their leaders and instructional coaches collaborated in reviewing data. Educators perused the data until they had identified the specific standards students were in the greatest need of remediation. Through PLCs teachers collaborated across curriculum content areas in order to plan remediation instruction. School Number One educators inspired their students to participate in achieving their own academic success.

This is significant because School Number One has shown strong student achievement scores in ELA and Math over the past two school years, but School Number Two has seen low scores in ELA and Math over this same time period. Research performed at School Number Two revealed a lack of trust among educators in the standards assessment program, students not taking the assessment seriously, an attitude of indifference among administrators, and an overall lack of understanding the standards assessment program on behalf of faculty.

These findings indicate that School Number Two should take a serious look at how it has embraced the concept of the district standards assessment program. With the school being at or near the bottom of the district schools in student achievement for ELA and Math there should be a better explanation for why the assessment program is not being utilized in a similar fashion as what is seen at School Number One. It would be a serious indictment of School Number One leaders if the perceived lack of commitment to
the district standards assessment program is contributing to the low scores seen for their students on standardized assessments.

It is possible that these results turned out the way that they did because each school has created a culture that is the driving force behind what is seen in their organization. Whether this is by design or not School Number One shows a propensity of embracing the usage of standards assessment data, while School Number Two comes off as if quarterly assessments (QAs) are a waste of time. As we quoted earlier, students embrace the attitudes that they perceive from their teachers. For students, teachers are their leaders, if teachers openly operate with an attitude of distrust towards standards assessments students will operate with this same attitude.

There may be an explanation for why School Number One embraces the district standards assessment program while School Number Two appears not to. School Number One is less than ten years old. It has been only five years since School Number One has been a large enough school that it has qualified to receive a school grade. For schools with smaller numbers of full-time enrollment it does not take a high number of students performing poorly on the state’s annual assessments in ELA, Science, Math and Social Studies, for a small school to have its school grade affected negatively. School leaders from School Number One have worked feverishly over the last few years to ensure that they are providing their students with every tool available in order for their students to be successful, but also for their school to achieve a strong school grade.

It is not as if School Number Two was not concerned with their school grade, but School Number Two has dealt with many challenges over the past ten years that have required leaders to focus on many different areas. School Number Two is the only high
school in its district that is classified as a Title I school, this means that over 75% of its students qualified for free or reduced lunch. School Number Two also has the largest percentage of minority students in the district among high schools. School Number Two has an average of over 10% absence rate each day, and this school sees an average of 20% teacher turnover each year. School Number Two also was less than five years removed (2015) from receiving an I (>95% tested) as its school grade. While School Number One must go to great lengths to ensure its small number of students perform well on state assessments, School Number Two must go to great lengths just to ensure that an appropriate number of its students are present in order that they even be tested.

**Judgments**

Following a thorough evaluation of data collected from School Number One and School Number Two I was able to utilize the data to answer each of my primary and secondary research questions. The responses from participants along with student achievement data from both schools presented me with the opportunity to determine whether there has been a positive or negative effect on the schools through the way they utilize the district standards assessment program. Data collected from both schools allows for the readers of this research to make an unbiased assessment of whether current usage of the district standards assessment program has been a good or bad approach.

In my first primary question, I asked: What do the administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers currently report that is working well in the benchmark data review process? Survey and interview data from School Number One suggests that respondents felt that Horizon Data Assessment’s (HDAs) were able to help them identify standards students were deficient in and therefore needed remediation in
these areas. The response from School Number One to this question was positive as the response is in alignment to what student achievement data from School Number One suggests. Survey and interview data from School Number Two respondents suggest that respondents were split when answering this question. Albeit slim, a larger percentage of participants from School Number Two answered that being able to identify standards students were deficient in as what was working well with the benchmark data review process. This response from School Number Two participants to this question was positive as the response aligned to the purpose of the standards assessment program, even if a large portion of School Number Two respondents are overall not enthusiastic with the assessment program.

In my second primary question, I asked: What do the administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers report is not working well in the benchmark data review process? Survey and interview data from School Number One suggests that respondents felt that the large volume of data available made it difficult for teachers to effectively utilize the data to remediate students. The response from School Number One’s participants to this question was positive due to the fact that in spite of the large amount of data readily available to participants are utilizing the data to attain a high level of student achievement for their students. Survey and interview data from School Number Two participants suggest that respondents felt that students not taking the assessment seriously as what they felt was not working well with the assessment program. The response from School Number Two participants to this question was positive as this response aligns with previously recognized issues at School Number Two that need addressing.
In my third primary question, I asked: what do the administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers in the benchmark data review process report as the greatest challenges in the program? Survey and interview data from School Number One suggests that respondents identified not having enough time to teach and perform remediation for students. The response from School Number One participants to this question was positive due to the fact that in spite of having to teach to the curriculum blueprint and perform remediation School Number One respondents continue to attain a high level of student achievement for their students. Survey and interview data from School Number Two suggests that respondents felt that they are not given enough inclusion in the development of the assessment development as what they felt was the greatest challenge in the benchmark data review process. The response from School Number Two participants to this question was negative as the response does not align to what student achievement data from School Number Two suggests. Achievement data from School Number Two reveals that for some reason students are not displaying proficiency in ELA and Math. Local teachers not developing quarterly assessments (QAs) are not likely to be the sole reason students are not showing mastery in these areas.

In my fourth primary question, I asked: What do the stakeholders, administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teachers in the benchmark data review process report as ways to address these challenges, if any, and improve the program? Survey and interview data from School Number One suggests that respondents felt that having more time to assess data and develop remediation strategies was what stakeholders felt was a way to address challenges within the program. The response from School Number One participants to this question was positive as the response aligns to
the general desire educators have for additional time to perform data evaluation. Survey and interview data from School Number Two suggests that respondents desired to see the assessment program revamped to include more input from teachers in creating the assessments. The response from School Number Two participants to this question was positive. The response aligns to the developing perception that many educators at School Number Two have been hesitant to embrace the district QAP because many educators at School Number Two feel that they are not given the amount of involvement in the developing quarterly assessments (QAs).

Secondary question #1, what do teachers view as the most troubling aspect of remediating their students? Survey and interview data from School Number One suggests that respondents identified not having enough time to teach and perform remediation for students. The response from School Number One participants to this question was positive due to the fact that in spite of the limited amount of time educators have to teach and remediate students at School Number One continue to produce students who attain a high level of student achievement. Survey and interview data from School Number Two suggests that respondents identified not having enough time to teach and perform remediation for students. The response from School Number Two participants to this question was positive as the response aligned to the general desire educators have for additional time to differentiate instruction for students.

Secondary question #2, what are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of progress monitoring can be improved using benchmark data? Survey and interview data from School Number One and School Number Two suggests that respondents were not sure how to answer this question. The response from
School Number One and School Number Two participants to this question was positive as the response aligns to a growing theme in education where many educators feel there is a disconnect between department heads and teachers.

Secondary question #3, what are the perceptions of administrators concerning how the use of benchmark data might be utilized to help raise student achievement? Survey and interview data from School Number One suggests that respondents felt that administrators were confident with how assessment data is currently used at their school to remediate students in areas they were deficient in. The response from School Number One participants to this question was positive as the response aligns with what has been seen while performing research at School Number One. Survey and interview data from School Number Two suggests that respondents felt that administrators were confident with how assessment data is currently used at their school to improve student achievement. The response from School Number Two participants to this question was negative as the response does not align with what was seen while performing research at School Number Two.

**Recommendations**

Based on the analysis that I have taken of the two schools in my research, it is my opinion that school officials should take a closer look at each school within the Horizon School District (HSD). I believe that a closer look should take place specifically in how HSDs schools are currently utilizing the district QAP. Based on the differences in the approaches that I have seen from the two schools involved in my research it has caused me to wonder how the approach to utilizing QAD may vary from school to school throughout the district.
While there are schools within HSD that are attaining high levels of student achievement in ELA and Math, the district average (See Appendix H) for HSD high schools were 49% in ELA and 45% in math during the 2018-2019 school year. I ascertain that this data has a direct correlation with how HDAs schools are currently using QAD to drive instruction in their classrooms. I believe that it is not a coincidence that School Number One and School Number Two student achievement data shows a wide gap between the two in both ELA and Math.

I recommend district leaders step in and assess how each school is currently utilizing the district QAP. Once an assessment is completed, I feel that the district should identify why schools such as School Number Two are not operating their QAP in a similar fashion as what is seen at School Number One. Each school in the district is equipped with personnel who can oversee the effective operation of the district QAP. However, not all schools in the district are choosing to implement using QAD with fidelity.

It is my professional opinion that the first area which should be changed is the direct use of Horizon Data Assessment (HDA) data. I believe that the district should step in and have school leaders who are currently utilizing QAD at their respective schools to be temporarily placed alongside school testing coordinators and work with them on utilizing HDA data. When QAs are given the temporary coordinators should lead the school permanent coordinator, and school administrators in examining student data. As a team they should work together to identify the greatest needs of remediation which is needed by students.
Step one involves teaching school testing coordinators, administrators, and department heads how to aggregate data. Step two would be to create professional development for coordinators, administrators, department heads and teachers. This professional development would be centered around teaching teachers the necessary skill of re-teaching standards students has shown a deficiency, during instructional time students would normally be working on content they have already mastered.

The third step would be to have testing coordinators and administrators from schools who are effectively utilizing QAD to perform professional development for school leaders who are learning to use QAD using the preferred methods of this research project. During this professional development visiting school leaders would teach the necessary practices of getting buy-in from parents, teachers, department heads, administrators and most importantly students. Without buy-in from all school stakeholders it will be difficult for any school to successfully implement an effective QAP.

The fourth step would be to gradually return control of the QAP to the school after it has shown successful operations over the course of a school year. After control has been restored to the school the district should send members of the district assessment team in to assess whether the school is continuing the newly installed practices that have been implemented. Ultimately, student achievement data will be the greatest determinate for how well schools are using QAD to drive instruction in their classrooms.

Following changing the way previous schools were using QAD, I recommend implementing a district policy that expressly states the district expectation for how each school will participate in QA and their application of QA insights. The recommended
policy would be complete with standard operating procedures (SOPs). SOPs will serve as
guidelines, timelines, as well as have a reporting of best practices utilized which will
detail how each school has managed their individual QAs including how they have
utilized assessment data for every student in their school. And, the new policy guideline
will come with a penalty phase for any school failing to follow the district standard
operating procedures for the QAP.

I chose this issue to address with organizational change because student
achievement is awfully close to my heart. I feel that all educators should be passionate
about student achievement. Also, I am an educator who believes that if instructional
practices and programs have been put into place then they should be utilized. In the case
of the HSD quarterly assessment program, it has not only been put into place, but it also
has a track record of successful use at schools across the district. It is my belief that of
each school utilizes the program with fidelity then they will see student achievement rise
at their schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed findings related to the data I have gathered at two
schools within the HSD. It is apparent that there are distinctions between how some
schools within the school district utilize quarterly assessment data (QAD). It is also
apparent that there are varying levels of success between schools who utilize data
enthusiastically and schools which do not. It is my hope that the research I have gathered
will cause the HSD to take a closer look at the practices of each of their schools and
implement policies which require more meaningful guidelines for greater utilization of
the available QAD resulting in higher school performance gains. In the next chapter, I
discussed practical steps district leaders can implement to improve practices utilized at each school across the district.
CHAPTER FIVE

To-Be Framework

I witnessed the positive impact the use of the district QAP had on student achievement at School Number One. This gave me the desire to learn whether it is possible for other schools across the Horizon School District (HSD) to attain success using the QAP in a similar manner. Using Wagner et al. (2006) To-Be chart (see Appendix F) I discussed the purpose of my To-Be planning. In addition, I discussed the positive effect my change plan will have on the district in the areas of context, culture, conditions, and competencies.

Improving student achievement should be the primary goal for all schools. Research suggests that “the capacity of school leaders and teachers to transform traditional schools into organizations able to respond to the feedback of standardized testing represents a significant step in our understanding of the next generation of school leadership practice” (Halverson et al., 2007, p. 9). If in fact the next generation of school leadership practice is the ability for school leaders to implement data driven instruction in their schools, then the HSD must implement a change. The district quarterly assessment program provides multiple layers of student learning data. The change plan I recommend involves the district instituting a policy which explicitly lays out instructions for how schools in the district will utilize the QAP in each school. This plan positions the HSD to reach the desired To-Be state where students are attaining high levels of student achievement.
Envisioning the Success To-Be

In the previous section I discussed the state of performance for the Horizon School District (HSD) with regards to how some schools within the district currently viewed and utilized the district QAP. I utilized Wagner et al. (2006) As-Is chart to express the current context, culture, conditions and competencies as they currently exist within the HSD. In this section I utilized Wagner et al. (2006) To-Be chart (see Appendix F) to examine the necessary changes needed to transform the manner in which the district QAP is viewed and utilized by all stakeholders in the district. And, in this section we will also discuss the positive effect changes implemented in the To-Be chart have made on the Horizon School District.

Context. The context of the HSD is one that currently sees some schools within the district operating the district QAP without specific guidelines or strategies from the district level. It is my belief that when the district adopts my policy recommendation and schools begin to implement the change plan it will begin to lead to student success. There are three specific contextual areas within the HSD I identified in my As-Is chart that are being addressed in my change plan. First, at School Number Two there is a lack of overall confidence in the district quarterly assessment process. It is possible that other schools in the district could lack confidence in the district QAP. This could be a direct contributor to a large contingent of the district schools performing below satisfactory on state standardized assessments.

The second contextual area that needs to be addressed is that I believe, the QAP is not being utilized as effectively as it could be at some schools within the district. While research was performed at School Number One and School Number Two, there are many
schools in the district which are performing well below School Number One with regards to student achievement on standardized assessments. It is possible that some schools in the district are not using QAs effectively. If a school does not utilize quarterly assessments to remediate deficiencies in students, this can contribute to low student achievement. The third contextual problem that needs to be addressed is that School Number Two does not have specific mandates or guidelines for how it utilizes the district QAP, and the school currently the school ranks last among high schools in the district in ELA proficiency, and third to last among district high schools in Math proficiency.

The To-Be chart (see Appendix G) outlines specific areas that have been addressed in my change plan that have helped achieve goals for what HSD will look like, once each contextual problem is addressed. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the first contextual problem. Addressing the need in the first contextual problem has positioned the schools in HSD schools to now have confidence in the district QAP. This attained confidence in the district QAP has led to a greater level of student success across the district. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the second contextual problem. Addressing the need in the second contextual problem now enables the district schools to now utilize the district QAP based on the district policy. The QAP policy has become a direct contributor to greater levels of student performance on standardized assessments. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the third contextual problem.

Addressing the need in the third contextual problem provides a specific mandate for how each school in the Horizon School District is expected to utilize the district QAP. School Number Two which previously ranked last among high schools in the district in
ELA proficiency, now ranks among the top tier of district schools in this category. School Number Two which previously ranked third to last among district high schools in Math proficiency, now ranks in the top five in this same category.

**Culture.** During the time I spent working and performing research at School Number One it was apparent that the culture of the school closely aligned to the culture I envision seeing at each school within HSD as outlined in my To-Be chart. There is a culture at School Number One that exudes a sense of success. There is an air of confidence in and around School Number One stakeholders. While spending time researching School Number One it appears as if the stakeholders take pride in the use of QAD) This was not the sense of culture I noticed while working and performing research at School Number Two. The culture I noticed at School Number Two appeared to exude a belief that the district QAP was a waste of instructional time. In fact, many research participants stated as much. It is my belief that when the district adopts my policy recommendation and schools begin to implement the change plan it will lead to a strong level of confidence in the district QAP.

There are three specific cultural areas within the HDA identified in my As-Is chart that are being addressed in my change plan. The first cultural problem that will be addressed by my change plan is that most research participants expressed a belief that quarterly assessments (QAs), designed by the district, were not reliable in identifying content areas students needed remediation. The second cultural problem I identified in my ‘As-Is chart’ is that many stakeholders at School Number Two have a belief that students do not take the QAs seriously because they have no effect on the students 9-week grade. It is possible that this type of cultural belief could be pervasive across the
district. And if so, this belief could be passed on from teachers to their students. The third cultural problem that needs to be addressed is that School Number Two does not have confidence in the district QAP.

The To-Be chart (see Appendix G) outlines specific areas that have been addressed in my change plan that will help achieve goals for what the HSD will look like, once each cultural problem is addressed. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the first cultural problem. Addressing the need in the first cultural problem has positioned HSD schools to now have confidence in the reliability of QAP. This attained confidence in the reliability of the district QAP has led to a greater level of student success across the district. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the second cultural problem. Addressing the need of the second cultural problem has allowed the district teachers to understand how QAP does have an effect on a student’s performance over the course of a nine-week grading period. The district QAP policy has become a direct contributor to improved student grades over the nine-week grading period, and to greater levels of student performance on standardized assessments.

The third cultural problem is that research suggests that faculty and staff of School Number Two does not have confidence in the district QAP. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the third cultural problem. The change plan implements clear guidelines for how the district expects faculty and staff to utilize the quarterly assessment program. The change plan also educates faculty and staff on the benefits of utilizing the quarterly assessment program. This implementation provides faculty and staff with an understanding of how to connect standards students are struggling in, to the specific areas in which students need remediation. The policy change
also provides faculty and staff an understanding of how remediation can be provided for students during the nine-week period following each quarterly assessment. The district QAP has led to each school seeing gains in student achievement in each core subject area which participates in QAs.

**Conditions.** I noticed certain conditions while working and performing research at School Number One that align with the expectation on conditions listed in my To-Be chart (see Appendix G). At School Number One, stakeholders are introduced to mandated conditions of the school immediately upon introduction to the school. The conditions for participation as a student of School Number One require mandatory participation in QAP. It is my belief that my policy is adopted, and implement my change plan, it will begin to lead to conditions at each school placing a greater emphasis on stakeholder commitment to participation in the district QAP.

There are two specific conditional areas within the HDA I identified in my As-Is chart (see Appendix F) that are being addressed in my change plan. The first conditional problem is that each school in the State is requiring by statute to include student data identifying the number of students who are exhibiting multiple warning signs of failing (The State Legislature, 2019). All schools in the State are required to place an emphasis on academic intervention. The district currently has a vehicle in place to ensure students needing intervention are identified, but research at School Number Two indicates that at least one school in the district is not utilizing these resources effectively.

The second conditional area that needs to be addressed is that while in the performance of research at School Number Two there was a perceived lack of enthusiasm among staff and students for the utilization of the QAP. There exists an uncertainty
whether the administration of School Number Two is pressing the point of utilizing the QAP. This lack of enthusiasm for participation in the district QAP by stakeholders could be a component of the explanation for why School Number Two stakeholders responded less than glowingly in their response to the question regarding their opinion of the district QAP. This lack of enthusiasm seen by stakeholders of School Number Two could explain be a direct contributor to why student achievement scores are so low at School Number Two. The reason I have come to this conclusion is that most of the respondents at School Number Two clearly expressed a strong disdain for using the district quarterly assessment program. Most research participants at School Number Two also expressed a distrust in the validity of the quarterly assessment program.

The To-Be chart (see Appendix G) outlines specific areas that have been addressed in my change plan that will help achieve goals for what HSD will look like once each conditional problem is addressed. The first conditional problem is that each school in the State is required by state statute to include student data identifying the number of students who exhibit multiple early warning signs of failing. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the first contextual problem. Addressing the need in the first conditional problem has positioned the HSD schools to now have a greater understanding of how the QAP serves as an early warning system (EWS) indicator. Now that schools understand the benefit of EWS schools can identify students who need remediation. A greater number of students being identified by EWS have led to a greater level of student success across the district. The second conditional area that needs to be addressed is that while performing research at School Number Two there was a perceived lack of enthusiasm among staff and students for the utilization of
the QAP. There exists an uncertainty whether the administration of School Number Two is pressing the point of utilizing the QAP. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the second conditional problem. Addressing the need of the second conditional problem has now changed the enthusiasm that school stakeholders now have for the use of the QAP. A renewed enthusiasm for the district QAP by faculty and staff has led to a greater level of enthusiasm for students with regards to participating in the QAs.

**Competencies.** The five competencies illustrated in my ‘As-Is chart’ (see Appendix F) currently identify the current skills lacking from stakeholders of the Horizon School District (HSD). It is my belief that a mastering of these skills will lead to successful use of the QAP. While performing research at School Number One I noticed a wide array of competencies demonstrated by stakeholders at the school which I feel ideally align to the expected competencies as outlined in my ‘To-Be chart’ (see Appendix G). There are five specific competency areas within the Horizon School District (HSD) I identified in my ‘As-Is chart’ (see Appendix F) that are being addressed in my change plan. The first competency area that needs to be addressed is exemplary leadership skills. The second competency area that needs to be addressed is for stakeholders to have clear understanding of the quarterly assessments. The third competency area that needs to be addressed is for every stakeholder across the HSD to have a clear understanding how to assess quarterly assessment data. The fourth competency area that needs to be addressed is for each stakeholder across the HSD to have a clear understanding how to identify specific standards for which students require remediation. The fifth competency that needs to be addressed is for stakeholders across the district to master the skills of
collaborating with other stakeholders, and inspiring students to participate in the QAP.

The To-Be chart (see Appendix G) outlines specific areas that have been addressed in my change plan that will help achieve goals for what the Horizon School District (HSD) will look like once each area of competencies is addressed. The first competency area that needs to be addressed is exemplary leadership skills. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the first competency problem. Addressing the need in the first competency problem has positioned each of the HSD school leaders to inspire the use of the district QAP. This inspiration has improved the confidence in each school across the district and has led to a greater level of student success.

The second competency area that needs to be addressed is for stakeholders to have clear understanding of what the QA are. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the second competency problem. Addressing the need in the second competency problem now enables each stakeholder across the district to now have a clear understanding of exactly what QAs are. Knowing exactly what QAs are enables stakeholders to have a clear understanding of their importance and why they are essential for utilization in each school across the district. Stakeholders understanding exactly what QAs are, and why they are vital to student success, has led to a greater level of student achievement at each school across the district.

The third competency area that needs to be addressed is for every stakeholder across the Horizon School District (HSD) to have a clear understanding how to access quarterly assessment data. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the third competency problem. Addressing the need in the third competency problem
provides clarity for every stakeholder across the HSD to have a clear understanding of how to access quarterly assessment data. It is my belief that when every stakeholder in the HDA understands the simplicity of accessing student assessment data the district will see a greater use of assessment data utilized in the class to drive instruction.

The fourth competency area that needs to be addressed is for each stakeholder across the HSD to have a clear understanding how to identify specific standards students need remediation in. The implementation of the change plan will address the need of the fourth competency problem. Addressing the need in the fourth competency educates faculty and staff across the district to understand how to identify specific standards students need remediation in. When each instructional stakeholder understands how to pare down specific standards students are deficient in, they will be able to develop a greater sense of when academic intervention can be performed in the classroom.

Curriculum blueprints are instructional guidelines which are designed to provide timeframes for instructional content to be delivered to students throughout the course of a school year. These blueprints allow teachers to know when specific standards are recommended to be taught to students. Curriculum standards convey the educational requirement for what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn in each subject area. Standards are broken into stems which bridge one content standard to another standard in the same subject. Because content standards are taught in stems many standards stems are able revisited during later nine-week grading periods.

The fifth competency that needs to be addressed is for stakeholders across the district to master the skills of collaborating with other stakeholders, and inspiring students to participate in the quarterly assessment program. The implementation of the
change plan will address the need of the fifth competency problem. Addressing the need in the fifth competency problem prepares each stakeholder across the district to master the skills needed to participate in collaborating with other stakeholders, and inspiring students to participate in the QAP. The goal of the district QAP is for instructional personnel to collaborate and develop intervention plans that are aimed at improving student achievement for all students across the district.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, in this section I discussed the As-Is state of the Horizon School District (HSD) and I discussed the desired To-Be state of the district as we envision it to be. I further examined the necessary changes which are needed in order to accomplish the goal of transforming the district from the state it currently is in, into where we desire it to become. It is my belief that the changes recommended in this section will be difficult to enact. However, I also believe that it is far worth implementing difficult changes in the district quarterly assessment policy. There are currently schools within the district which are utilizing the QAP and utilizing many of the strategies I have recommended for use. The schools which are currently utilizing the QAP in the manner I have recommended, currently are achieving high levels of student achievement on standardized assessments. It is the goal of all school leaders to see every student in their school district achieve high levels of student achievement. Therefore, school leaders should embrace the changes that will be necessary in order to achieve these goals.
CHAPTER SIX

Strategies and Actions

I conducted a research project and program evaluation of the HSD QAP program, and how it is utilized to improve student achievement at two different schools. During this research project I discovered no consistency between the two schools. The district has designed the quarterly assessment program as a tool which is able to provide educators with an assorted array of information pertaining to their students. One provision of quarterly assessments is that the assessments disclose deficiencies students have relating to the mastery of state standards. Another benefit of quarterly assessments is that quarterly assessments can uncover opportunities for student growth. By identifying deficiencies schools can provide remediation for students in the classroom during a period of instruction where students are being taught subject matter they have already mastered.

During my research project I examined two schools (School Number One & School Number Two) usage of the district quarterly assessment program. There was a stark contrast in the manner each school utilized the district quarterly assessment program. School Number One utilized quarterly assessment data to provide remediation for students who were identified as being deficient in certain standards. School Number One also exhibited a school culture where faculty and staff were confident in the quarterly assessment program. Faculty and staff were confident in the reliability of the quarterly assessments, and they also expressed a belief that quarterly assessments provided by the district were beneficial in improving student achievement. At School Number One, remediation was provided for students during periods of instruction these
students would traditionally receive instruction pertaining to subject matter they had already demonstrated mastery learning.

School Number Two also utilized the district quarterly assessment program. However, my research and evaluation of School Number Two revealed, that the school culture was extremely negative regarding the utilization of the district quarterly assessment program. While performing research at School Number Two, it appeared that School Number Two were not convinced that the assessments administered each quarter accurately addressed deficiencies of their students.

There were several differences I discovered at the two schools I evaluated regarding their use of the quarterly assessment program. There was also a large difference between the two schools in relation to student achievement scores on state assessments during the two-year evaluation of student achievement data from the two schools. Due to the contrasting manners which the quarterly assessment program is currently being operated at the two schools in which my research was conducted, I recommend that the Horizon School District adopt my recommended policy of establishing protocols for each school in the district to follow regarding the district quarterly assessment program.

In this section, I will bridge the As-Is and the To-Be conceptualizations with a series of strategies and actions based upon research and best practice in organizational theory, professional development, leadership strategies, and communication strategies. The strategies and actions chart provide three specific steps which are needed to enhance the way schools within the district utilize the quarterly assessment program. The first strategy involves creating a district level quarterly assessment team. The second strategy involves creating an environment at each school which supports the district QAP.
Thirdly, is creating a partnership with community stakeholders. Each strategy will require specific action steps which will be needed in order to implement the strategic plan. Please refer to (Appendix I) for a detailed outline of strategies and actions I have proposed for the Horizon School District quarterly assessment program.

The first strategy I have suggested the Horizon School District implement is to create a district level support team. This support team will be required to oversee the usage of the quarterly assessment program at each individual school. Creating a district level team to oversee usage of the quarterly assessment program erases any perception that “the district is not responsive to the needs of its constituents” (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingstone, 2011, p. 107). This strategy shows an immediate response from the district pertaining to the findings of this research project. This strategy also sends a message to all district stakeholders that district leadership is committed to ensuring that each school is operating the QAP in a manner that serves in the best interest of all students. There are four specific action steps I recommend in order to enact this strategy. The first action step involves the district quarterly assessment team (QAT) developing a system of best practices for schools within the district to utilize. When the district QAP is operated there should be a common system that is seen taking place at each school. There should be a common language that is heard at each school when attempting to build a great system of effectively utilization of the district QAP (Collins & Collins, 2005). This process will require each school to utilize the district QAP in a uniform manner. The second action step requires the district QAT promoting the district vision for the QAP. Herold and Fedor (2008) says that “leaders create a common vision and empower followers to pursue that vision” (Herold & Fedor, 2008, p. 51). In my time as an educator, I witnessed leaders
who created a common vision and inspired stakeholders to embrace that vision. These leaders received ardent support for their vision from faculty and staff. The third action step concerns the district level QAT providing professional development for school leaders. Professional development is essential to introducing change into an organization. A key factor in institutionalizing change is a conscious attempt to show people new approaches, behaviors and attitudes (Kotter, 1995). The fourth action step requires the district QAT to monitor how each school uses the QAP on a monthly basis. Individuals must be able to transition from “seeing a model of excellence in clear detail, to naming the qualifying characteristics that make that model effective and doing those actions repeatedly” (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010, p. 23). Having district level quarterly assessment teams visit each school allows them to see firsthand whether schools are modeling the expectation of district leaders pertaining to the quarterly assessment program. This step is key to ensure that schools are following through with using best practices that are outlined in the change plan. This action step ensures that what school leaders learn from professional development is transferred into daily practice in each school.

The second strategy I have suggested is for school leaders to create an environment that supports the district QAP at each school. This strategy will require school leaders to develop a culture in their school where stakeholders view district QAP in a positive manner. “Having a culture that is conducive to forming community is a most important goal of an administrator who wants to create learning communities in a school” (Daresh, 2010, p. 58). The driving force of a school is school culture. It is imperative for school leaders to create a culture in their schools that inspires stakeholders to embrace the district quarterly assessment program. There are four specific action steps which will help
this strategy become a reality. The first action step is for school leaders to promote the
district QAP vision in each school. Having stakeholders adopt a school district vision is
key for school leaders because “educational leaders cannot make change alone or by
edict” (Wagner, 2001, p. 380). The second action step requires school leaders to provide
professional development for faculty regarding the quarterly assessment program.
Schmoker (2012) identifies professional development that is simplified and focused on
specific priorities as being able to produce swift and unprecedented gains in student
learning. By equipping faculty and staff to utilize the district QAP in a manner which is
consistent across the district will ensure that there is no ambiguity regarding the
expectation for faculty and staff regarding the use of QAs. The third action step involves
school leaders planning for quarterly assessments, aggregation of student data, and
utilizing data in the classroom to drive instruction. Marzano (1998) describes educators
identifying knowledge and skills that are targets of instruction, identifying specific
instructional techniques to address educational goals as essential components to guiding
classroom instruction. Planning for quarterly assessments, examining student data, and
infusing instruction with remediation strategies ensures that educators are utilizing a best
practices approach in line with Marzano’s description of an essential component to
guiding classroom instruction. The fourth action step calls for school leaders to monitor
their school’s use of the district QAP. School leaders monitoring their schools use of the
district QAP allows them to “look internally and ensure that the program implementation
is unfolding, and that faculty and staff are maintaining the qualities” (Patton, 2008, p.
129) of the district vision for the QAP. Monitoring is a key component of management. It
is essential for school leaders to consistently evaluate their schools to ensure that the
attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of faculty and staff align with the vision of the school regarding utilizing quarterly assessments.

The third strategy I recommend to the Horizon School District is to implement and create partnerships with community stakeholders. Creating partnerships with community stakeholders ensures the district is engaging community partners to support the district QAP.

Schools must connect with the outside world for many reasons. First, politically, public schools cannot alienate themselves from agencies that pay high taxes in many communities. Second, at least one function of a school is to prepare students for work in the future. It is critical to maintain effective working relationships with those who will eventually be called upon to employ our graduates. Third, and perhaps most important, there are many things to be learned by listening to insights of those who do not work in the school each day. This does not mean that everything every business representative tout must be adopted as absolute truth. But, as noted with the issue of involving non-educators within schools, it is worthwhile to talk with others to gain new insights. (Daresh, 2010, p. 11)

This strategy allows the district to have essential partners outside of the school arena that can advocate for the district vision regarding the utilization of quarterly assessments to improve student achievement. In order to accomplish this strategy, there are two action steps required in order to implement it as a successful component of the change plan. The first action step calls for the district to identify potential stakeholders in the community to collaborate with in relation to the district QAP. Through collaboration the district and
individual schools within the community can expand the promotion of the QAP outside of the traditional brick and mortar location. Creating partnerships with community stakeholders can become an essential component of improving student achievement. “Any one school’s problem is everyone’s problem, isolation is the enemy of improvement” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 113). The HSD is currently struggling to meet the expectation of student achievement across the district. This is not only the problem at one school, it is a problem that is plaguing many schools across the district; therefore, it is everyone’s problem. It is in the best interest of schools not to isolate themselves from a vast potential source of allies that community stakeholders can serve as. An additional action step requires the district and each local school to identify areas community partners are skilled at and would desire to serve. Once this determination has been made, specific roles for each community partner to serve in can be collaboratively developed by the district, individual school, and community partner. For collaboration “to be effective it requires time, practice, and accountability” (Reeves, 2009, p. 46). Once a commitment has been made by community stakeholders to serve, it is incumbent for school leaders to invest the collaborative time it will take to develop an effective role for partners to participate in. Next, it will benefit the school district to follow the work that is being done by community partners. This will allow the district to evaluate the effectiveness of the roles they have been assigned. Reeves (2009) stresses the importance of school leaders providing ample opportunity for community partners to practice the roles they will serve in, and for each side to hold the other accountable in order to ensure the partnership is performing efficiently and effectively. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of district and community partnerships “will require personal and institutional commitment, but
they will provide students, educators, parents and the community a map to guide them to student achievement” (Muhammed, 2015, p. 109). Community stakeholders are equipped with wide variety of skill sets. It will be beneficial to students throughout the district to allow partners to utilize these unique gifts in service to both the district and each individual school.

**Conclusion**

Based on the program evaluation I have completed; research suggests that the Horizon School District is needed for a uniform approach for how schools will utilize the district quarterly assessment program. Above I have outlined clear cut steps school leaders can follow to produce this needed change. It is my belief that if these strategies and action steps are followed the Horizon School District will see a uniform approach to quarterly assessments being used at each school within the district. It is also my belief that following these strategies and action steps will lead to a new level of student achievement success realized across the district. In section seven I will address policy.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Implications and Policy Recommendations

In section four, I expressed a desire to see Horizon School District (HSD) assessment leaders perform an extensive review of how the school district QAP is being utilized at each individual school throughout the district. While conducting research at two schools within the district, I identified differing opinions concerning the district QAP. I also encountered differing practices of how each school utilized the district quarterly assessments (QAs). Knowing that the goal of the district is for QAP to lead to improved student achievement, it is concerning that each school I performed research at operated with practices involving the district QAP that did not mirror each other. What made this most troubling for me is that the two schools evaluated were on the opposite ends of the spectrum when student achievement scores are taken into the equation.

In the Horizon School District there currently is no specific policy that expressly identifies how the district QAP is expected to be utilized at each school within the district. In this chapter I propose a policy addition that is based on the findings of my research. The policy addition I have proposed will sufficiently address identifying the district expectations for all school’s usage of the district QAs program.

Policy Statement

The policy I recommended is a new policy that updates an existing practice within the HSD. HSD already has an existing practice which instructs each of its schools in grades 6-12 to participate in the HSD’s QAP. However, this practice is not currently listed as a policy which exists on the district outline of policies and practices as seen on the district website. Establishing the QAP as a stand-alone policy will give it credence
when communicating to each school within the district that this policy must be utilized in each school as a component for addressing the need of increasing student learning.

The vision of this new policy is to establish a uniform procedure for how each school in the HSD will conduct and utilize QAs. This vision desires to ensure that the usage of the district QAP is not optional. Participation in the district QAP will forthcoming be mandatory. The vision of this new policy is to establish standard operating procedures that every school in the HSD are expected to comply with. The proposed procedures will outline the entire process of utilizing the district QAP. Each specific step of participating in the program will be included in the procedural guidelines. No ambiguity will exist regarding how the QAP is expected to operate in every school in the district.

The process will begin at the district level with creating a district level QAT to support each school in the district during their use of the district QAP at each school. This support team will be required to oversee the usage of the district quarterly assessment program at each individual school and insure there is no ambiguity regarding how each school is operating their usage of quarterly assessment. The district QAT will lead the charge from the district level regarding promoting the district vision for the QAP. Next, the district level QAT will be responsible for developing a system of best practices for schools within the district to utilize. When the district QAP is operated there will be a common system that is seen taking place at each school. The district team will also provide professional development for school leaders. The next step will require the district QAT to monitor how each school uses the QAP on a monthly basis.
The process will begin at the school level with first organizing a QAT. The QAT will be comprised of administrators, testing coordinators, instructional coaches, support staff, i.e. ESE specialists, and department heads. Following their receiving professional development training from the district level QAT, the school level QAT will be responsible for developing a culture in their school where stakeholders view the district QAP in a positive manner. The QAT will also be responsible for ensuring that each of the following is taking place in its school: (1) Informing teachers, students, families, and community stakeholders of the importance of quarterly assessment and how each of these aforementioned stakeholders are affected by the delivery and practice of QAs, (2) Ensuring that 100% of students participate in QAs during each quarter of the school year, (3) Compiling student assessment data to be aggregated by the QAT to identify specific areas each student needs to receive remediation in during the following quarter of instruction, (4) Meeting with teachers to develop consistent practices of reviewing their individual student QAD, (5) Meet with teachers and developing a plan for how to best perform remediation for students while continuing to deliver instruction as assigned by the district curriculum blueprint.

The school level QAT will meet on a monthly basis to discuss items deemed pertinent to how the QAP is performing. When necessary the QAT will meet to discuss strategies that may need to be refined in order to improve current practices regarding the QAP. When revisions are agreed upon, the QAT is expected to ensure that any changes remain aligned with the stated vision of this new policy.

I am recommending this policy because there is no official policy guideline which is listed among the district existing polices as identified on the district website which
exists within HSD regarding the usage of the district QAP. On the HSD website, under board policies, in the section 2.00 School Board Governance and Organization, subsection 2.26 School Improvement and Education Accountability, category (1), bullet point (a) sub-section 2., the HSD states the district plan to ensure strategies are in place to drive student progress (HSD, 2020). However, no specific strategies are listed that the district identifies as the vehicle which will ensure that students are progressing academically. Neither is there any specific tool that is listed in the district policies regarding District and Statewide Assessments, section 4.60 (HSD, 2020).

Currently, the district QAP is being operated with unwritten rules. No official written verbiage that is readily available to the general public exists regarding how school officials are expected to follow current recommended practices of the program. Further, I am recommending this program because I have seen a school which operates the program with what I consider a level of fidelity, and this school is experiencing a tremendous level of student achievement based on how it currently utilizes the district QAP.

I believe that the policy I am proposing will be effective at meeting the needs of the problem. The reason I am confident in this belief, is because there is already evidence of some schools being successful even without an existing official policy of the district. Adopting this policy removes the ambiguity that currently exists regarding how schools are expected to participate in the district QAP.

**Analysis of Needs**

In this section I will analyze six distinct disciplinary areas they include: educational, economic, social, political, legal, moral and ethical. It is possible that each of these individual areas of interest for the HSD may be affected positively or negatively
depending on how the district chooses to adopt this policy. It is my goal to evaluate these areas in order to clearly identify and alleviate concerns the district may have for adopting this policy recommendation.

**Educational analysis.** If this policy recommendation is adopted and put in place with the HSD it could have a positive impact on improving student learning in the district. Once a thorough examination is performed to determine exactly how each school has previously utilized the district QAP, a determination can then be made regarding next steps. Next steps will involve bringing each individual school up to speed, in comparison to where they are, pertaining to implementing new expectations of utilizing the QAP as it is being recommended in my proposed policy change.

Once schools can fully implement the proposed policy change immediate measurement can be tracked to determine if student learning gains have improved since changes have been made. If this proposed policy is adopted, it will address many educational issues that were discovered during my research. This proposed policy will address helping faculty and staff to identify what specific standards students are deficient in. Another educational issue this proposed policy will address is providing creating a team of stakeholders to identify best practices for teaching blueprint curriculum and remediating students at the same time. A final recommendation would be to provide a support staff for teachers that will be responsible for helping them to pare down the large amount of data provided to them through QAs into a smaller, more usable set of data that is ready to be utilized to remediate students. These strategies will affect Tier 1 instruction by reducing the number of students who are deficient in content standards knowledge.
Students gaining an increase knowledge of content standards will improve the possibility that they will succeed in learning future standards.

**Economic analysis.** If this proposed policy is adopted, it is possible that there could be an economic impact upon the district. We live in a day and age where financial issues facing schools are public knowledge. Many school district across our country have been faced with budgetary shortfalls that have caused them to reduce the number of instructional positions within their schools. One economic issue the HSD would face would be to make a commitment to ensuring that each of the recommended faculty positions which would make up the QAT are in place at every school across the district. Some schools in the HDA have seen their instructional coach positions eliminated. In order to ensure that the assessment team operates smoothly HSD will need to budget itself accordingly. Another thought regarding economic impact is that increased student achievement could possibly lead to a long-term cost savings for the district as there will be a reduction in needed remedial services. “There is no typical remedial student. Understanding that there is no typical remedial student is the first important step to having fewer students who need remedial help” (Abraham & Creech, 200, p. 4). The author of this quote alludes to the fact that all students have areas of strengths and weaknesses, and that all students should be given the opportunity to benefit from the advantages quarterly assessments provide. Utilizing quarterly assessments effectively have the potential of reducing the number of students who need remedial services. Implementing this policy has the potential to reduce the number of student’s needing intensive intervention and provide increased savings for the district.
Social analysis. If this proposed policy is adopted, it is possible that there could be a social impact upon HSD schools. If there are found to be schools which are not operating the district quarterly assessment according to the proposed policy, then these schools would need to make a social adjustment such as changing the way faculty and staff think about the use of quarterly assessments to improve student achievement.

Leading education researchers such as Fisher and Frey (2014) have led professional development workshops across the country promoting the use of quarterly assessments to improve student achievement. In fact, I was fortunate to attend the workshop Fisher conducted in HSD in 2019. One key quote which stands out from Fisher and Frey’s (2014) research states that “Instructional design is meaningless without units of study that possesses the rigor of enduring understandings and a clear structure of formative and summative assessments to check for understanding” (Fisher & Frey, 2014, p. 126). The district has been informed by leading researchers of the benefits of utilizing assessment data to improve student achievement. The time is now for district leaders to put policy in place that requires faculty and staff across the district to embrace using the district quarterly assessment program in a uniform manner.

Many schools have developed a social culture that can easily become a school’s standard way of operating. However, in order to best meet the learning needs of student’s schools would need to make a commitment to operating socially in a manner that addresses following the vision of the district quarterly assessment program. Often clicks have been formed throughout schools, and individual’s sometime band together to defy decrees that have been mandated by the school district. It is essential for school leaders to build a coalition of faculty and staff in their schools who will embrace the
quarterly assessment vision for the school. “Leaders must win the support of employees, partners, investors, and regulators for many types of initiatives. Because you are likely to meet resistance from unexpected quarters, building a strong guiding coalition is essential” (Kotter, 2012, p. 7). In order to fully transition the social functions of the faculty and staff coalition into a collaborative body that works in unison, school leaders will need to enhance the growth mindset of these stakeholders. “Individuals who believe their talents can be developed through hard work, good strategies, and input from others have a growth mindset. They tend to achieve more than those with a more fixed mindset (those who believe their talents are innate gifts)” (Dweck, 2016, p. 215). School leaders will know that a growth mindset is taking root in their faculty which can allow faculty to instill a growth mindset into their students. True social change is taking place in schools when data driven collegial discussions are taking place among staff members that leads to improved student achievement for all students across the district. “The age of accountability has shaped the culture of teaching in significant ways. Decades of research have revealed that collaboration and collegiality are essential for school improvement (Datnow, 2011, p. 148). It will be important for school leaders to deliver a consistent message to faculty and staff regarding the expectation of following the assessment protocol as outlined in the proposed policy.

Political analysis. If this proposed policy is adopted, it is possible that there could be a political impact throughout the district. Oftentimes new policy decisions cause an uproar among individuals especially when they are not in favor of the new policy. Many individuals in the field of education struggle to embrace change. When stakeholders disagree with proposed policy, they oftentimes attempt to make the political climate
difficult, especially for individuals such as school board members who are elected into office. Often, when the political climate is hot for elected education officials, they in turn pressure the school superintendent, who serves at the pleasure of the elected school board.

Superintendents must be cognizant of how potential policies they propose to the school board will play out in the political arena. Thus, gaining buy in for prospective policy recommendations from a superintendent will require the proposers to present the prospective policy to the superintendent in a manner which spells out how the proposed policy will withstand political criticism while also improving student achievement. In order to mitigate the potential political fallout for the superintendent, district and school leaders must present the recommended policy to the superintendent in a manner that reduces the chance that the superintendent will not buy in to the policy recommendation. One way to gain buy in from the superintendent is to present the policy recommendation to the superintendent in a manner that aligns with the “dreams and aspirations the superintendent currently has for her school district. And, presents the recommended policy in a manner that is optimistic” (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005, p. 153) and allows the superintendent to be able to see an ability to accomplish her desired levels of student achievement through adoption of this policy.

In HSD the school board members are elected officials. Elected officials are constantly in the political spotlight when they approve enacting new policies. It will be important for district and school leaders to support the superintendent as he proposes the policy recommendation to the school board. It is essential for the superintendent to present the proposed policies to the school board in the most effective manner possible.
In order to gain buy in from the school board and convince them to adopt the recommended policy, the superintendent and her team will need to present the proposed policy in a manner that discloses how it will insulate the school board from negative political publicity, while informing the board on how the proposed policy will also generate positive political reactions from the voting public. One way to accomplish this is for the superintendent and her team to present the policy proposal to the school district in a tone which reminds the board of their primary responsibility, which is to improve student achievement for all students across the district. The superintendent and his team can carry this out by presenting the proposed policy in a manner that informs the board how the policy addresses the major issues facing each school across the district. There are “multiple demands on the limited quantities of school resources and classroom time, the most essential job of every school leader is the allocation of those finite resources in a way that has the maximum effect on student success” (Reeves, 2009, p. 110). It is possible that the district is unaware that there is a program which is capable of improving student achievement that is already funded by the district, yet there is not an official policy regarding how the program is required to be utilized across the district.

Another political affect this policy may have is the possibility of a negative response from the district teachers and teacher’s union. The superintendent and her team will need to be conscious of how teachers may respond to the proposed policy. A negative response from teachers could trigger backlash from the teacher’s union, which could also create a negative perception from voters on the school board members who approve the policy. One potential way of preventing this is to bring the teachers and teacher’s union representatives to the table as this policy recommendation is being
developed. School leaders bringing teachers to the decision-making table and sharing leadership of how the proposed policy is rolled out will show teachers how committed the superintendent and her team are to allowing teacher’s voices to be heard. “In today’s complex educational world, providing leadership opportunities is important for getting work done well and building school capacity. It is a higher order of conception of common goals, mission, and purpose jointly owned and implemented” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 125). By giving teachers an ownership stake in rolling out the proposed policy should ensure that the likelihood of them creating negative political problems for school board members relating to this policy recommendation should be minimal.

**Legal analysis.** If this proposed policy is adopted, it is possible that there could be a legal impact upon the district. Legal issues could include opposition from union leaders who may feel that what is being asked of their teachers falls outside of the scope for what teachers’ contract compels them to do. The union could challenge the district legally regarding the amount of time that is taken away from teachers’ ability to deliver instruction and provide ample remediation for students.

There could also be legal ramifications for the district regarding whether the district is able to pay teachers for the professional development that will be required to undertake as they learn to master the newly instituted change plan regarding quarterly assessments. The district could also potentially face legal opposition from the teacher’s union regarding the amount of planning time teachers may possibly lose due to their participation in aggregating student assessment data. Another legal issues also could include opposition from individuals who feel that making QAs mandatory are not specifically stated in the State Statutes.
Moral and ethical analysis. The implementation of this proposed policy could potentially have several moral and ethical impacts. Teachers could question whether it is ethically right to mandate their participation in the district QAP. In order to address this possibility, it will be incumbent of district leaders to establish a compelling argument of doing what is right for students and their achievement. This is the thought of supporting student learning over adult convenience or comfort levels. One way to convey this message to teachers is to remind them of the moral and ethical agreement they agreed to when they became educators in the HSD. Two mandates from the state code of ethics that all educators must adhere to require that:

The educator’s primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student’s potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity. And, shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student’s academic program. (DOE, 2019)

Educators who willingly refuse to utilize the district quarterly assessment program in the best manner they know how, willfully disregard mandates from the state board of education which oversees each school district.

Another moral and ethical dilemma school leader could face when implementing this new policy is that stakeholders could possibly question the moral aspects of mandating students with disabilities to participate in the district QAP. Before 2017 this may have been a legitimate moral and ethical argument to make. However, “beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the SAA assessments will be included in the achievement and learning gains components for all schools” (DOE, 2019). It is now a state statute that
requires all students, including students with disabilities to complete either the State Assessments or the SAA, if they are students with cognitive disabilities.

**Implications for Staff and Community Relationships**

When this proposed policy is adopted, it is possible that there could be possible implications for staff and community relationships. One implication could be that staff members could oppose the district mandate of implementing the QAP. Their unhappiness could lead them to deliver their message of opposition to the public. This could possibly cause the public to be unhappy with the district. One way to address the potential issues with staff will be to provide ample training and professional development for teachers from both, the district level and the school level. In section 6 of this research project I discussed a three-step strategy including action plans for implementing the recommended change plan across the district. The first step involves the district level quality assessment team providing professional development and training for school level leaders. The training the district level team provides to individual school leaders includes best practices in utilizing the district quarterly assessment program, and also how to translate the district vision for the program in a manner that gains buy-in from faculty and community stakeholders. The second step requires the school level quarterly assessment team providing training and professional development for all faculty and staff on utilizing a best practices approach when operating the district quarterly assessment program. Thirdly, section six of this research project goes into specific detail for how both the district level quarterly assessment team and the school level team are promoting the program to gain buy in from all faculty and staff.
There are other possible implications, one of these include staff and community relationships could be seen when the QAT begins communicating with community stakeholders. The proposed policy includes the QAT informing the community on the district QAP. It is conceivable that some community stakeholders may not support the district stance on performing quarterly testing on students three times a year, in addition to the state standardized testing that is mandated by state statute. Testing fatigue has become a legitimate concern for parents. In section six of this research project I have identified specific action steps and strategies that address getting community stakeholder buy in for operating the district quarterly assessment program. One specific action that will address community concerns is the district and school directly communicating with community stakeholders. Communication to community partners will go out on a monthly basis notifying them that the school desires to partner with them on improving student achievement. The school advisory council will also be notified about the desired partnerships between each school and all community stakeholders. The school district will utilize all available means of marketing this desired partnership to the community. Community stakeholders are being invited to come into the school and allow school officials to come into community building and facilities so that both sides can participate in dialogue with school officials on how each side can collaborate in order to best meet the needs of students.

**Conclusion**

There are many implications that may arise due to the implementation of this proposed policy. However, each implication that may arises can be addressed by having open and honest dialog in a thoughtful manner. There is no silver bullet answer to fix
every problem that will arose with proposed policy. However, it is possible to ensure that
what is being proposed falls in line with what is in the best interest of students. It is my
hope that the policy I have proposed will be taken into consideration. The district is
currently utilizing a QAP. It is my desire to see the program become an official policy
that exists within the district.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

The concept for this research project and program evaluation began when I questioned whether the way the school, I was serving utilized the district quarterly assessment program and if it was being utilized in a similar fashion at other schools across our district. I began to look at student achievement results across our district and I began to wonder if some schools were not experiencing the substantial growth our school was achieving because they were not maximizing the quarterly assessment program similarly to how my school was utilizing it. I began to think specifically of the time I spent serving at a previous school which has struggled in student achievement for several years. I began to recall my experiences at that school utilizing quarterly assessment data. While pondering these thoughts, I began to realize that the approach I witnessed being taken at that school regarding the district quarterly assessment program was a stark contrast to the school I was presently serving at. This led to me to question how faculty and staff at both of the schools at which I was serving, and the school at which I previously served viewed the effectiveness of QAs in regard the potential of its full utilization as a means to improving student achievement.

Discussion

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of one school district quarterly assessment program. The way the school at which I served during the onset of this research project utilized the district quarterly assessment program should be emulated at each school across the district. I addressed the goals of this project
through acquiring information from administrators, teachers, surveys, interviews, as well as student achievement data from the previous two school years.

The research process I undertook served to address my purpose. During this research project I was able to perform research to gain a clear understanding of the quarterly assessment program. I was able to gain clarity as to the specific procedures the district recommended each individual school undertake when utilizing each component of the quarterly assessment program. This research project also afforded me the opportunity to gain perspective on necessary protocols which need to be in place at the local school level in order to effectively utilize the quarterly data that is gathered following students being assessed in order to utilize the data to improve student achievement.

Based on the findings of my research, I was able to determine that the district quarterly assessment program was effective at improving student achievement if schools utilized the program with fidelity. However, after performing this research project I learned that not all schools in the district were utilizing the quarterly assessment program as effectively as they could be using it. My belief is that the lack of some schools utilizing every component which is available to them pertaining to quarterly assessments has led to some schools not achieving greater levels of student achievement as they could if they were maximizing the benefits of the quarterly assessment program at their disposal.

The goal of this research project was to determine if the manner that School Number One utilized the district quarterly assessment program could become a model for use in all schools across the district. I addressed my goals in this program evaluation by analyzing student data and examining the different levels of student achievement data
between two schools in the district who utilized the quarterly assessment program differently. After conducting surveys and interviews from these two schools I examined the findings from these forms of data. The data revealed that there was a drastic difference between the two schools pertaining to the climate and cultures of the two schools pertaining the district quarterly assessment program. At School Number One the climate was one which exuded confidence in quarterly assessments, and there was an eagerness to receive the assessment data, so plans could be made to utilize the data to remediate students on standards students were revealed as deficient in. The culture of School Number One was one that viewed the district quarterly assessment program positively. Teachers and administrators were on board with the program and there was an air of expectancy for their school to receive high marks each year when school grades came out, in large part because of the dependence on utilizing quarterly assessment data to drive instruction in the classroom.

At School Number Two there was a different climate. The prevailing thought when reading survey data and examining interview data was for respondents of this school was that the district quarterly assessment program was a waste of time. The culture I witnessed at this school was equally negative regarding quarterly assessments. The prevailing response from research participants was that each individual teacher should have an opportunity to decide for themselves how best to assess their students on a quarterly basis. A majority of School Number Two’s respondents stated that they did not regularly utilize data from quarterly assessments to drive instruction in their classrooms.
Following evaluating my research findings it became evident to me why there was such a large difference between the student achievement results from School Number One and School Number Two. The two schools could not have been more different about their opinions of the district quarterly assessment program, and the manner which the two schools utilized the data. The opinions of the two schools regarding the programs, and their confidence in the program also could not have been more different. The research findings at these two schools led me to begin to question if there were other schools throughout the district who embraced utilizing the district quarterly assessment program as either of these two schools did. I understood that if this is so, it could possibly explain why there is a wide discrepancy of student achievement results across the district. The fact alone that there are two schools which widely differ in the manner which they utilize the district quarterly assessment program reveals that there is a need for a comprehensive policy regarding how the district expects each school to utilize their quarterly assessment program.

My organizational change plan addresses the issues identified in my program evaluation following the examination of the data that was gathered. The change plan will require the district to adopt my recommendation for a district policy which outlines the way all schools in the district are expected to utilize the district quarterly assessment program. The change plan will also require the district to create a district level team to oversee the manner in which each school in the district is utilizing the quarterly assessment program. This team will help ensure that each school is held accountable for their usage of the program. The team will also oversee how student assessment data is used to drive instruction in the classroom following student’s quarterly assessments.
The policy I have recommended also addresses the implementation of a uniform approach for how each school in the district uses the quarterly assessment program. The policy also creates a uniform language pertaining to quarterly assessments that is used at each school to prevent any ambiguity in how schools operate the quarterly assessment program. The policy specifically outlines how assessment data is to be used to drive instruction in the classroom.

The key focus of this program evaluation was the differences that were found in the way two schools utilized the district quarterly assessment program. The findings revealed differences in the programs use, differences in faculty and staff perspectives of the program, and most important, the vast difference between the two schools in student achievement data. Based on my research project, the policy I am recommending sufficiently addresses the issue of inconsistent usage of the district quarterly assessment program. The policy can also position each school across the district to see an increase in student achievement data once each component of the change plan is implemented.

Leadership Lessons

There are numerous leadership lessons I have learned during the three years I have partaken in this research project. There are six conspicuous leadership lessons learned during this research project: (a) focus on student achievement, (b) understanding priorities, (c) faculty development, (d) the learning environment, (e) communication, and (f) professional and ethical behavior. Completing this research project has made a profound impact on me. It has forever changed the way I think as an educator. In addition, it has given me new insights on how I should tune my focus as a building leader. This new focus has birthed a continuous reminder in my psyche that has remained
with me for the duration of this project and will undoubtedly remain with me long after this project has ended. For it is a reminder that as a school leader we are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of our students. The undertaking of this project has challenged me to embrace shifting into the role of becoming a leader who is always looking for ways to improve educational initiatives that are employed in our schools. This project has taught me many lessons and helped improve me with many facets of my life. I have gained a better ability to demonstrate perseverance, strength, humility, and compassion.

Performing research for this project has taught me a great deal about focusing on student achievement. Early on during the formative stages of this project I began to share with others where my focus for this project would lay. I received several warnings and cautions from individuals I shared with concerning how this project may be viewed as offensive to some. I took the warnings in stride and walked away from each conversation wondering how this project could be viewed as offensive if our primary focus as educators was on student achievement. From my first experience of receiving the news that the school I served in was an A rated school, I began to have an insatiable desire to see every school in our district become an A rated school. As I stated earlier, this research project began because I questioned whether each school in our district was utilizing quarterly assessment data in a similar fashion as the school I was currently serving. I began to wonder if schools were not using the program similarly, if it would be beneficial for them to do so. These thoughts led me to where I am now with the policy recommendation that I have shared in this project. I struggle to make sense out of any thought processes school leaders may have which does not steer them in the direction of
maximizing every opportunity they have to create an environment in their school that produces optima learning for their students. This is especially true if the preeminent objective for school leaders is to promote an atmosphere of learning for all students, and to produce school environments that are favorable for producing high levels of student achievement.

This project repeatedly taught me lessons on understanding priorities. As I stated earlier all of the decisions that I make on a day to day basis as a school leader must ultimately center on the question, how is this going to help improve student achievement? I even found myself examining every aspect of this research project by asking myself the question, how is this research project going to serve to help improve student achievement. I forced myself to examine every angle of this project, including from the vantage point of others who did not hold my view of the effectiveness of the quarterly assessment program. Each sentence and paragraph that was written in this project has become ingrained in my psyche.

If I had to sum up this dissertation in one paragraph, it would be: It is the responsibility of the school leader to be the instructional leader in a school system. The school system will eventually go the way of the school leader. It is incumbent upon the school leaders to ensure that a climate and culture exists within their school where collaborative practices are embraced by their staff. Finally, it is the responsibility of all school leaders to encourage and insist their faculty and staff utilize a systematic approach of best practices when it comes to instructional framework. In my opinion, this paragraph explains the ideology I have embraced. It all starts and ends with the school leader. The leader must 1) embrace the vision of the district and plan for how it will be carried out in
their school, 2) inspire stakeholders in their school to embrace the district vision and equip them with tools needed to carry out the vision, 3) ensure that best practices in instruction are being utilized by every faculty member in their school.

This project has taught me valuable lessons concerning faculty development. One of the first lessons I learned was that school leaders cannot simply get rid of all faculty members who are not following the instructional vision that has been laid out by the school leader. In a perfect world there would be another faculty candidate waiting in the wings to replace the obtuse faculty member who was let go for non-conformity to the academic vision. However, in the climate where there currently is a shortage of educators who must do all they can to develop the faculty they have into becoming the best versions of themselves as they possibly can. A few key faculty development initiatives that stood out to me during this project were school climate and school culture. School climate refers to the school's effects on students. As I stated earlier, School Number One was an A rated school. One of the things about the school climate that stood out most to me were the teaching practices I witnessed from teachers at this school. Teachers were eager to utilize best practices in instructional strategies that were most beneficial to students. At School Number One, the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students were the type of climate I envision as necessary in order to maximize the benefit being provided of attending school. As I pointed out earlier, School Number Two did not exude this same type of climate. There was no sense of uniformity among faculty and staff concerning best practices in instruction. The relationships among teachers and administrators appeared adversarial at best. In addition, parents and students were viewed as the primary malefactors for why students were not attaining higher levels of student
achievement. These factors have engrained in me an understanding that not all school climates and cultures are going to be the same. However, my belief is that school leaders must have the capacity to develop their faculty in a manner which allows the climates and cultures of their schools to exude the type of educational system where all teachers and staff work together to embrace the beliefs, values, and assumptions that they will do everything in their power to ensure that every student has the opportunity to achieve.

This project has given me a newfound perspective on learning environments. While performing research I began to have a greater understanding that while I believe all students are capable of learning, not all students are going to learn the same in the traditional classroom. Many times, during this project I reflected upon my time in the classroom. I recalled how some students thrived in the traditional classroom setting, while others performed better when instruction was differentiated for them in a manner that was more conducive for their learning style. These thoughts further inspired my belief that all schools should maximize quarterly assessment data because it allows for differentiated instruction in a manner that can allow teachers to adjust the rate of instruction for students based on what data reveals about standards students have already mastered and standards which need re-teaching. Utilizing quarterly assessment data to drive instruction in the classroom can allow educators to design instruction in a manner that maximizes the learning capacity of students.

I have also gained valuable insights and lessons on communication while participating in this project. Performing research for this project taught me valuable two-way communication skills. I have had to learn to communicate clearly and be prepared to ask if the parties I communicated with are understanding of what I was sharing, while
being prepared to restate myself in a manner that would provide a better level of understanding to my audience. Communicating questions in a manner that was understandable by participants and produced the greatest possibilities for candid responses was a major key for getting valuable data from my program participants. I gained valuable insight for utilizing appropriate written skills in order to communicate. Simple steps such as re-reading correspondence before sending, and then reading it again became valuable tools to use in order to ensure that the message I was relaying made sense to the perspective recipient. I also learned the importance of utilizing a second pair of eyes to ensure that my perspective on what was being communicated was not jaded since I was the author of the proposed message being sent. Another valuable leadership lesson I learned about communicating was the art of becoming an active listener. While performing this research project it was of utmost importance for me to actively and intently listen to respondents as they share information with me. Becoming an active listener often meant listening intently to be able to read between the lines for what the speaker was saying. This was especially true when respondents were unwilling to fully disclose their thoughts on what they perceived to be highly sensitive subject matter.

The last leadership lesson I would like to share are the lessons I have learned relating to professional and ethical behavior. This project has taught me a great deal on professional and ethical behavior. Beginning with the early stages of conducting my IRB I was introduced to the levels of professional ethical behavior that would become an essential part of this project. I gained an understanding that I must safeguard all the informational treasures research gleaned in this project would amass. Information ranging from the school district research would be pulled from, the schools that would be studied
during this program evaluation, sources of student achievement data, and the identities of this program's participants, are all a few examples of the essential items I needed to learn how to adequately protect those sources' identities. I learned to use professional behaviors in many ways. Among them were waiting patiently for building administrators to determine a convenient time for me to come to their schools and perform survey research on their faculty and staff. While patience was a critical component of professional behavior, the willingness to be flexible and gracious has also been a lesson learned. There were many instances where potential participants needed rescheduling and some even reconsidered proving participation in the project. I learned that true professional behavior means to accept at face value when potential participants decline to participate in your project. Each professional and ethical lesson I learned in this project will undoubtedly serve to equip me with skills I will need when performing research projects in the future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, quarterly assessment programs at their core are designed to serve to improve student learning. “Quarterly assessments engage students in applying essential and enduring skills and concepts that are expected to be learned over a defined period of time” (Anne Arundel County Public Schools, 2019). These programs are effective, but how these programs are utilized from school to school and classroom to classroom varies. Because quarterly assessment programs are designed to improve student achievement, school leaders should invest in building an infrastructure in their schools to ensure that their school is utilizing quarterly assessments as effectively as possible. It would behoove district leaders to scrutinize how individual schools are utilizing quarterly assessments because district leaders have an obligation to improve the success probability for all
students in the district. To improve student success probability, district leaders must be intentional in their focus on ensuring that protocols for each district school usage of assessments are both established and monitored. This policy change allows for quarterly assessment professional development to be instituted at all school in the district. A key component of this professional development is educating faculty and staff of the importance of monitoring their use of quarterly assessments. If faculty and staff embrace reviewing assessment use it is possible that they will develop effective habits when using the program. Also, reminding faculty and staff of the bonus which comes with school recognition for student achievement is another motivating factor for educators to effectively utilize the assessment program.

The Horizon School District has built an effective model for assessing students, gathering assessment data, and aggregating assessment data. There is ambiguity regarding the district expectation for how this data is expected to be utilized at each individual school. This existing ambiguity presents the district with unique challenges. The results of this research and program evaluation have illuminated the foremost issues facing the district quarterly assessment program. The goals of this program have enabled me to propose a policy shift regarding an official policy being introduced from the district regarding how each school is required to utilize the district quarterly assessment program. This policy will ensure that every school in the district engages the district quarterly assessment program in a meaningful process. The recommended policy is designed to provide assessment structure and streamline the process for how assessment data is utilized to drive instruction in the classroom. As the research project has suggested numerous times the existing elements of the proposed policy change has shown to be
effective at the district school which was researched during this project. It is the goal of this project to ensure that all that can be done is being done to assist the district in supporting each school in their attempt to see every student attain the highest levels of achievement that is possible. “The function of Education is to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society” (King, 1948). Let us now ensure that each school thinks intensively and critically on how quarterly assessment data can be utilized to produce the best and brightest students possible.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher and Administrator Survey
Appendix B: Informed Consent: Adult Survey
Appendix C: Informed Consent: Adult Interview
Appendix D: Interview Questions
Appendix E: Informed Consent: School Site Administrator Consent to Conduct Research at School Site
Appendix F: AS IS Analysis
Appendix G: TO BE Analysis
Appendix H: Lake Horizon High Schools: Student Achievement 2018-2019
Appendix H: Strategies and Actions Chart
APPENDIX A

Teacher and Administrator Survey

*Please circle a number below the following questions to rate your opinion for these questions. Each scale is between 1-4 with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest level of agreement.*

1. Currently, how well do you feel the HDA data review process is working?

Not at All  Somewhat agree  Moderately agree  Strongly agree

2. Currently, how well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process have been identified?

Not at All  Somewhat agree  Moderately agree  Strongly agree

3. Currently, how well do you feel the greatest challenges with the HDA data review process are being corrected?

Not at All  Somewhat agree  Moderately agree  Strongly agree

4. Currently, how well do you feel ideas are being solicited that will provide solutions which will help address the challenges the HDA data review process is facing?

Not at All  Somewhat agree  Moderately agree  Strongly agree
5. Currently, how well do you feel the most troubling challenges of remediating students have been identified?

1 2 3 4
Not at All Somewhat agree Moderately agree Strongly agree

6. Currently, how effective you feel progress monitoring is being supported with HDA data?

1 2 3 4
Not at All somewhat agree Moderately agree Strongly agree

7. Currently, how effective do you feel HDA data is helping to raise student achievement?

1 2 3 4
Not at All Somewhat agree Moderately agree Strongly agree
Please fill in the blank and answer each question to the best of your ability.

8. What do you feel is working well in the HDA data review process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________.

9. What do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________.

10. What do you feel are the greatest challenges involved with the HDA data program?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________.

11. In what areas could we improve the HDA data review process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________.

12. What do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________.
13. What are the perceptions of subject area department heads concerning how the process of performing progress monitoring can be improved using HDA data?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________.
APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. What do you feel is currently working well in the HDA data review process?

2. What do you feel is not working well in the HDA data review process?

3. What do you feel is the greatest challenges in the program?

4. What do you feel are ways to address these challenges, if any, and improve the program?

5. What do you feel is the most troubling aspect of remediating your students?

6. What are your feelings concerning progress monitoring and how it can be improved using HDA data?

7. What are your perceptions for how benchmark data might be utilized to help raise student achievement?

8. Please describe the possible ways that you feel quarterly assessments can be used.

9. In your opinion how well do you feel that the HDA’s are being used to prepare your students for their upcoming SSAs?
10. Do you have an opinion of how concerned district officials are with how in depth HDAs are being utilized to drive instruction at your school? If so elaborate.

11. Are you satisfied with how your students HDA data is used to drive instruction in the classroom? Elaborate.

12. In your opinion, what do think is the reason schools are not thoroughly using quarterly assessment data to drive instruction in the classroom at your school?

13. Has your perception about the effectiveness of using HDA data changed over time? If so, when and why?

14. In your own words, briefly explain how your school currently utilizes HDA data to drive instruction in the classroom.

15. If any, what changes would you recommend be made concerning the utilization of HDA data at your school?
Appendix C

As-Is Chart

Baseline AS IS 4 C’s Analysis Horizon School District QAP

Context
Schools are judged based on students who are expected to master standards.
- HDA’s are not effectively used.
- A lack of confidence in HDA’s.
- Student achievement is low.

Culture
- In our district, many schools are hesitant to trust that HDA’s are reliable tools.
- Students do not take HDA’s seriously.
- Schools distrustful of HDA data.
- Teachers desire to create/compile own quarterly assessments.

Conditions
- Conditions exist within the district where student’s quarterly assessment data can be directed to reveal areas of weakness.
- Lack of confidence/enthusiasm among staff for HDA’s.
- Students not taking assessments seriously.
- Administrators appearing indifferent to assessment data usage.

The problem is that the district’s quarterly assessment program is inconsistently used. This affects student achievement across the district.

Competencies
- Lack of a clear understanding of HDA’s.
- Lack of understanding how to determine areas in need of remediation.
- Lack of understanding how to differentiate instruction.
- Lack of enthusiasm regarding HDA’s.
- Lack of inspiring students towards embracing HDA’s.
Appendix D

To-Be Chart

Baseline TO-BE 4 C's Analysis Horizon: School District QAP

Context
- Schools are judged based on students who are expected to master standards.
- EDA’s are now effectively used.
- Stakeholders now have confidence in HDA’s.
- Student achievement is on the rise.

Culture
- In our district, many schools now trust that HDA’s are a reliable tool.
- Students now take HDA’s seriously.
- Teachers now embrace the district quarterly assessment program.

Conditions
- Conditions exist within the district where student’s quarterly assessment data can be dissected to reveal areas of weakness.
- Stakeholders now are confident and enthusiastic concerning HDA’s.
- Students now take assessments seriously.
- Administrators now are supportive of their staff using assessment data usage.

Competencies
- Staff now have a clear understanding of HDA’s.
- Staff now have a clear understanding of how to differentiate instruction.
- Staff now are enthusiastic regarding HDA’s.
- Staff now effectively inspires students towards embracing HDA’s.

The district’s quarterly assessment program is now consistently used. That has led to increased student achievement across the district.
Appendix E

Lake Horizon High Schools

Student Achievement 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>English Language Arts Achievement</th>
<th>Mathematics Achievement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABC HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>SCHOOL #2 HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABCD HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABCDE HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABCDEF HIGH SCHOOL</td>
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<td>27%</td>
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<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABCDEFG HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABCDEFGH HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>ABCDEFGHI HIGH SCHOOL</td>
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<td>57%</td>
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<td>LAKE HORIZON</td>
<td>SCHOOL #1 HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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## Appendix F

### Strategies and Actions Chart

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create A District Level Support Team</td>
<td>Oversees Usage of QAP at Each School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develops A System of Best Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotes District’s Vision for QAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides QAP P.D. for School Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors Each Schools Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create An Environment That Supports The</td>
<td>Administrators Develop Culture That Embraces The District’s QAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District QAP At Each School</td>
<td>• School Leaders Promotes District QAP Vision in Each School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School Leaders Provide QAP P.D. for Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School Leaders Plan for Quarterly Assessments, Aggregation of Data,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Implementing Data in Classroom Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors Schools Usage of QAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Partnership With Community</td>
<td>Engage Community Partners to Support District QAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>• Identify Potential Community Stakeholders to Participate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop Specific Roles Each Community Partner Can Carry Out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitor the effectiveness of roles community partners have been</td>
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<td>assigned</td>
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