



SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL,  
& BEHAVIOR ACADEMY



# Recommendations and Resources for Equitable Data Use

## OBJECTIVE

Our team can explore and utilize tools, protocols, and supports to support equitable analysis of social, emotional, and behavioral data.

## OUTCOME

Our team will understand and act on social, emotional, and behavioral data in ways that are informed, responsible, and equitable.

### Parts of this Tool:

- [Part 1: Data Equity Questions](#)
- [Part 2: Data Equity Tools](#)
- [Part 3: Considerations for Interpreting Data](#)
- [Part 4: Rapid Round Small Group Data Consultancy Protocol](#)
- [Part 5: Small Group Data Consultancy Protocol](#)



### Resources

- When determining what data is being collected, and what data might be missing, utilize the [Data Inventory](#).

# › Part 1: Data Equity Questions

## DATA EQUITY

According to the [Data Ready Playbook from Digital Promise](#), “**data equity** involves applying an equity lens and mindset to the ways in which districts collect, analyze, interpret, communicate, and make decisions based on data, with the goals of acknowledging and addressing historic and systemic bias and building more equitable policies, practices, and systems.” Details on each phase of this work can be found in the image below.

At every stage of the process, from data collection to data-informed decision making, the following questions can help bring equity to the forefront of the work.

## KEY DATA EQUITY QUESTIONS

- Whose voices are we missing?
- What additional context should we consider?
- How can this data support our bigger “why”?
- What biases might students and staff have brought into the data collection experience?
- What biases might we be bringing into the data analysis?
- What more do we need to know to better understand the trend(s) we are seeing?
- Who do we need to listen to, and collaborate with, to fully understand and act on the data?

## EQUITY QUESTIONS FROM DESE’S COHERENCE GUIDEBOOK

- What progress is being made toward your vision, disaggregated by specific student groups?
- Are certain student populations overrepresented in tiers of support and/or the referral process?
- What potential biases and/or blind spots might be contributing to overrepresentation?
- How do adults examine their own biases and blind spots and their effects?
- What biases and blind spots are coming up as part of the work?

## › Part 2: Data Equity Tools

### Available Tools

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Through a series of three half-day sessions in 2021, REL Northeast & Islands (REL-NEI) staff engaged a group of school and district leaders from a large school district in New England to share concepts and tools, and to offer support for participants to lead asset-oriented and system-focused data conversations in their organization.

Included in [Data Coaching to Examine, Use, and Interpret Data Equitably](#) are four key tools:

- Empathy Interview Development Guide
- Table of Opportunity to Learn Data
- Responding to Bias worksheet
- Data for Equity Conversation Protocol



### Additional Resources

#### Analysis and Action Planning

- [Data Discussion Quick Tips](#)
- [Digging into Survey Data](#)
- [Implementing School Mental Health Supports: Best Practices in Action \(pages 8-10\)](#)
- [School Mental Health Quality Guide \(page 5\)](#)
- ▣ [Ready, Set, Go, Review: Screening for Behavioral Health Risks in Schools](#)

#### Data Discussion Protocols

- [Rapid Round Small Group Data Consultancy Protocol](#)
- [Small Group Data Consultancy Protocol](#)
- ▣ [School Reform Initiative \(SRI\) Data Analysis Protocols](#)

#### Sharing with Stakeholders

- [Coming Back to Climate Student Agenda](#)
- [Coming Back to Climate Staff Agenda](#)
- ▣ [Coming Back to Climate Family Agenda](#)

#### Integrating Equity

- [Learn More About Data Equity \(video\)](#)
- [Speak Out, Listen Up! Tools for using student perspectives and local data for school improvement](#)
- ▣ [6 & 7 Circles Model: A Framework to Guide Discussions](#)

## › Part 3: Considerations for Interpreting Data

### CONSIDERATIONS

To avoid misuse or misunderstanding of student perception data, the following guidance should be considered:

- SEL measurement should be used in a **formative** manner, rather than evaluative.
- A **strengths-based** approach should be used for SEL measurement and data interpretation.
- Individuals interpreting the data should be aware of the ways **implicit and explicit bias** can impact student and staff responses, as well as how data is interpreted.
- Student level data should be kept **anonymous** with the focus being on aggregate data, themes, and trends.
- It is not advised to openly share data for **subgroups with fewer than 5** students, to protect student anonymity and because subgroup data with small n-sizes can be unreliable.
- **Benchmark data** should be used to help guide meaning making.
- Data should be examined **separately by grade** to avoid conflating differences in perceptions with grade-level trends (e.g., students tend to report lower in middle school).
- Data should be examined **separately by indicator** to avoid conflating differences in perceptions with differences in scale difficulty (i.e., scales vary in the "difficulty" of the item asked).

### CONSIDERATIONS MENTAL HEALTH DATA

To avoid misuse or misunderstanding of student mental health data, the following guidance should be considered:

- Make sure mental health data and interpretation is guided by individuals who are trained and certified in the use of mental health screening tools. The process of using data to determine mental health needs, including mental health disorder diagnosis, should be done by a professional mental health staff person.

- Confidentiality: In most cases mental health data is protected by both [FERPA and HIPPA](#).
- Consider your school/district's capacity to act on the data you collect from mental health screening tools. Schools/districts should be prepared to support identified students through mental health services offered through the school or district and/or in collaboration with outside mental health agencies.



## Resources

- [Identifying, Defining, and Measuring Social and Emotional Competencies](#)
- [Toward Transformative Social and Emotional Learning: Using an Equity Lens](#)
- [PBIS: Equity](#)

## › Part 4: Rapid Round Small Group Data Consultancy

### 1. Present a Trend (1 minute)

- a. Presenter describes one or two key trends they saw in the data.
- b. It is helpful to identify where the observation is being made (e.g., *SEL, 5th Grade, Growth-Mindset*) and to use the prompt “*I saw...*”

### 2. Clarifying Questions (1 minute)

- a. Group members ask the presenter clarifying questions.
  - i. Clarifying questions are basic questions about facts that clear up an issue. They provide background and can usually be answered in simple, short responses.

### 3. Probing Questions (3 minutes)

- a. The group tries to make sense of what the data could be saying and why by asking probing questions through an equity lens. The group should try to find as many different interpretations and bring as much outside perspective as possible.

### 4. Discussion: Potential Implications and Next Steps (7 minutes)

- a. The group discusses possible implications and next steps using the [Seven Circles Model](#) as a framework:
  - i. What are the implications of this for this group(s) of students?
  - ii. What steps could be taken next?
  - iii. What strategies might be effective?
  - iv. Who else could be brought into the conversation?

### 5. Presenter Reflection (3 minutes)

- a. Presenter responds to any/all of the following prompts:
  - i. What did you learn from listening to the group that was interesting or surprising?
  - ii. What new perspectives did the group provide?
  - iii. How can you make use of the groups' perspective?

#### If time allows and all have had a chance to share:

- Debrief the Process (5 minutes)
- How well did the process work?
- What about this process helped you to see and learn interesting or surprising things?
- What could be done differently?

## > Part 5: Small Group Data Consultancy

### 1. Setting the Stage (3 minutes)

- a. Group reviews the norms.
- b. The leader presenting takes 1 minute to describe their school context and any critical information.
- c. The facilitator asks: “What struck you in the data?”
- d. The presenter describes one or two key things they saw in the data, avoiding judgments, qualifiers, or interpretations, and avoids explaining what they conclude about the data.
- e. It is helpful to identify where the observation is being made — e.g., “5th Grade, SEL, Growth-Mindset” and to use the prompt “I saw...”

### 2. Clarifying Questions (5 minutes)

- a. Group members ask clarifying questions.
  - i. Clarifying questions are basic questions about facts that clear up an issue. They provide background and can usually be answered in simple, short responses.

### 3. Interpreting the Data (10 minutes)

- a. The facilitator asks:
  - i. What does the data suggest?
  - ii. What assumptions might we make about students or staff based on this data?
- b. The group tries to make sense of what the data says and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence.
- c. As participants listen to each other’s interpretations, they can ask questions that help understand and push each other’s perspectives.

### 4. Potential Implications (10 minutes)

- a. The group discusses possible implications using the following prompts:
- b. What are the implications of this for this group(s) of students?
- c. What are the potential implications for staff?
- d. What are the potential implications for the leaders present?
- e. What steps could be taken next?
- f. What strategies might be most effective?
- g. What are the implications for equity?

## 5. Presenter Reflection (5 minutes)

- a. Presenter responds to any/all of the following prompts:
  - i. What did you learn from listening to the group that was interesting or surprising?
  - ii. What new perspectives did the group provide?
  - iii. How can you make use of the groups' perspective?

### After all participants have had a chance to share, debrief the process (5 minutes)

- How well did the process work?
- What about the process that helped you to see and learn interesting or surprising things?
- What could be done differently?
- What might your next steps be?

