**TOOL: ATLAS Looking at Data Protocol**

Collaborating closely with out-of-school time partners? See the [OST-enhanced version of this tool](http://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/2019/01/tool-ATLAS-looking-at-data-protocol-OST.docx).

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This data-reflection protocol is based on the ATLAS Looking at Data protocol developed by the National School Reform Faculty ([www.nsrfharmony.org](http://www.nsrfharmony.org)). It requires a facilitator who leads the team through a discussion of the data. The structure of this protocol encourages team members to describe what they see in the data, make inferences, and share implications for future work. It’s to be used alongside the Continuous Improvement Template to drive continuous improvement and help teams complete the study and act steps of the PDSA cycle.

**Preparing Data to Share**

Data gathered through the continuous improvement process need to be summarized in charts, graphs, or short reports. Schools may be able to rely on district support to provide summaries and visualization of data. In other cases the SEL team will need members who have skills for visualizing data.

**Sharing and Discussing Data**

Structured dialogue is a technique for managing the data discussion and maintaining focus by clearly defining who should be talking when and about what. A clearly defined structure helps orient the team to what’s most important.

Teams are encouraged to record what’s discussed using the *ATLAS Looking at Data Summary* below. The summary can later be transferred to the Continuous Improvement Template.

**1.** **Getting started**

Tips about data conversations include:

* All data conversations should be “blame free,” and individual student data should be kept private by utilizing classroom level or school level data instead.
* Conversations about data are meant to be authentic, challenging, and productive. The data help focus the conversation*.*
* Variability in the data is a source of ideas to improve the innovation. Look for “bright spots” where unusually positive outcomes are occurring.
* Consider how organizational routines could be contributing to the observed results.

The team member who prepared the data gives a very brief statement of the data and avoids explaining what she or he concludes about the data.

**2. FACTS: Describing the data (10 minutes)**

The facilitator asks: “What do you see?”

Team members describe what they see in the data, avoiding interpretations or judgments about the quality of the data. If judgments or interpretations arise, the facilitator can ask the team member to describe the evidence on which they are based.

The team’s observations can be compiled on chart paper. If interpretations come up, they can be recorded in a “parking lot” as they should not be included just yet.

**3. INTERPRETATIONS & WONDERINGS: What does the data suggest? (10 minutes)**

The facilitator asks: “What does the data suggest?”

A follow-up prompt is: “What root causes might best account for what we see in the data?”

The facilitator follows up with: “What are the assumptions we make about how this impacts the effectiveness of the SEL approach we are implementing?” During this section of the protocol, the team tries to make sense of what the data say and why. The team should try to find as many different interpretations as possible.

From the evidence gathered in the preceding section, try to infer what seems to be working and why. The facilitator should encourage the team to think broadly and creatively. As team members listen to each other’s interpretations, they are encouraged to ask questions that help them better understand the perspectives in the room.

**4.** **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE (10 minutes)**

The facilitator asks: “What are the implications of this work for schoolwide SEL?” This question may be modified depending on the continuous improvement aim.

Teams can record the following using the *ATLAS Looking at Data Summary*:

What are ways we can innovate to be more effective?

What else would we like to see happen?

What does this conversation make you think about in terms of your own practice? About teaching and learning in general?

**5. ARTICULATING NEXT STEPS**

The facilitator asks: What steps should be taken next to promote continuous improvement?

The team discussion will collaboratively develop next steps for subsequent PDSA cycles.

When the protocol has been completed, all of the information in the columns from the Data Summary can be transferred to the Continuous Improvement Template.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Facts** | **Interpretations & Wonderings** | **Implications** | **Next Steps** |
| **What do we see?** | What does the data suggest? What might the root cause(s) of these facts be? | What does this mean for our work? | How should we continuously improve? |
|  |  |  |  |