
How State Education Agencies in the Northeast and Islands Region Support Data-Driven Decision-Making in Districts and Schools

Data-driven decision-making (DDDM) has received growing attention from the education community because of federal and state accountability requirements and increased understanding of the importance of DDDM in improving instruction and student achievement. Officials at State Education Agencies (SEAs) in the Northeast and Islands Region requested from REL Northeast & Islands additional information on how jurisdictions in the region support systematic DDDM in districts and schools.

— JESSICA BRETT, MICHELLE LAPOINTE, EMILY MIDOUHAS, MARÍA TERESA SÁNCHEZ, EDC, AND MELISSA KAGLE, LEARNING INNOVATIONS AT WESTED, PROJECT TEAM

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To document and compare the way eight SEAs in the Northeast & Islands Region support DDDM in districts and schools.
- To describe service providers that work with these SEAs to support educators in their DDDM practices.

AUDIENCE & APPLICATION

- This project is intended for SEA policymakers and researchers as well as district and school administrators interested in learning about SEAs' DDDM support in districts and schools.

METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative analysis.
- Data will include:
 - Publicly available information from SEA and service providers' web pages.
 - Interviews with key respondents from each SEA and from three service providers.
 - Supplemental documents offered by respondents.
 - When possible, observations of professional-development activities.

FINAL PRODUCTS

- Issues & Answers Report published by the Institute of Education Sciences, which may be found at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2009072.pdf

What Are Fast-Response Projects?

Fast-Response Projects are short-term projects that respond to regional and national needs and priorities and provide research-based knowledge to inform policy and practice. They use methods such as research syntheses, mining of existing data sets, and descriptive studies.



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SEA Initiatives Findings. Analysis of the SEA DDDM initiatives in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Vermont indicates they have implemented one or more of the following four components to support data use by schools and districts:

- **Centralized data system or warehouse:** A centralized data system or warehouse combines data from multiple sources into a centralized repository. Data can include a range of evidence including classroom assessment data, school-level information about students and staff, demographic data, and state test scores.
- **Tools for data analysis and reporting:** Data tools allow users to collect, organize, and analyze data to transform it into actionable knowledge.
- **Training on data systems/warehouses and tools:** Training helps educators learn to effectively and efficiently use the analysis tools provided to facilitate understanding the available data.
- **Professional development in the process of using data for decision-making:** Teachers and administrators initially require extensive professional development to build their expertise in identifying and analyzing relevant data and adjusting instructional practices and school processes in response to relevant data.

Reviewing each SEA initiative, only New Hampshire appears able to provide all four components to every school in the state. Despite a dearth of comprehensive initiatives, SEA officials across the region mentioned the importance of providing a range of DDDM supports to schools but noted that limited funding and a lack of capacity force them to make choices about which components they can provide.

Service Provider Findings. To augment their ability to support DDDM, SEAs contract with outside service providers. According to SEA officials, the following service providers support the implementation of DDDM initiatives in the region: Center for Assessment, Cognos, the Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers (CT RESC Alliance), ESP Solutions Group, Measured Progress, the New York Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Pearson School Systems, Performance Pathways, and TetraData. From these nine service providers, the research team selected three to profile in depth: the Connecticut RESC Alliance, Measured Progress, and Performance Pathways. These service providers assist SEAs in implementing the four components of DDDM. Two (Performance Pathways, Measured Progress) create a centralized data system. The same two also create online tools to access and analyze data and provide training on those tools. All three provide some professional development on the process of DDDM.

Contact Information

For more information about this project, e-mail Rebecca Carey (rcarey@edc.org) or visit REL-NEI online (www.relnei.org).

