Empowering Educational Excellence:
The Transformative Impact of Results–Driven Teams

SAY WHAT?

In schools, some teachers work in isolation, unaware of what students learned in previous grades, and don't use data to assess their students' current knowledge. They engage students in activities, but struggle to measure actual learning or growth.

On the other hand, teachers in results-driven teams focus on data and continuous improvement. They know what students have learned through assessments and keep their goals in mind. These teachers track progress, adjust instruction based on data, and prioritize outcomes over activities. They collaborate to ensure students reach specific learning targets.

> **So how do we get all teachers to be a part of results-driven teams to make learning a priority for every student?**
>
> **It starts with an understanding of what we mean by a results-driven team.**

What is a Results-Driven Team?

A results-driven team focuses on achieving clear, measurable goals with a shared purpose. In schools, these goals often center on student achievement, equity, and school improvement. These teams prioritize systems that foster sustained success, using data-driven decision-making, continuous improvement, and collective responsibility. When Catalyst for Educational Change partners with schools, we focus on three key areas:

1. **Collaboration** – creating sustainable structures for school-based collaborative teams and teacher-level teams
2. **Learning** – building the capacity of teams to effectively analyze triangulated data to advance high-rigor learning and instructional strategies for all students. Data is analyzed to determine goals and GANS (Greatest Areas of Needs).
3. **Results** – implementing shared accountability practices to monitor data and modify strategies continuously

VERTICAL PLAN ALIGNMENT

1 Strategic Plan
Sets full district vision and goals over multiple years

SP

2 District Improvement Plan
Develops district-wide teaching and learning goals that are aligned with the Strategic Plan and district data

DIP

3 School Improvement Plan
Develops school-based teaching and learning goals that are aligned with the District Improvement Plan and are based on school data

SIP

4 Team Improvement Plans
Develops assessments, teaching, and learning plans that are aligned with the School Improvement Plan, analyzes data, and modifies instruction

TIP

Results-driven teacher teams operate within a school/district-wide continuous improvement system where members at all levels collaborate on an ongoing basis for increased student growth. Improvement plans are developed from identified goals that originate from the data. Research-based strategies are used to address goal areas using the DIAS (Data-Informed Plan, Implement, Analyze, Systematize) cycle. Plans from each team are inter-connected with the others so all teams are heading toward the same destination.

SO WHAT?

Impact of Results-Driven Teams

Why do we want to build in time for collaborative teams to analyze and discuss data? One main reason is that research studies have shown a correlation between collaboration and data-driven teams in improving student achievement (Denny 2020).

The following graphic shows six of the results often seen in schools that incorporate results-driven teams.
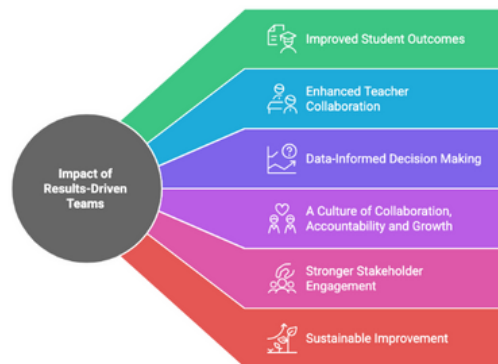
Case Study

An example of the impact results-driven teams is seen in Berkeley School District 87; an Illinois district with whom CEC has worked. Over the past four years, they have developed systems and structures that are data-driven for the purpose of enhancing scholar learning.

They began by developing a collaboratively written curriculum management plan, which created structures for decision-making focused on student learning. An aligned K- 8 ELA and Math curriculum was created, allowing for data-driven discussions around student learning within their PLCs. The alignment of implementation has enabled the development and deepening of collective efficacy within the system.

A structured "feedback cycle" was implemented for meetings, beginning at the PLC level, progressing to the building school improvement team, and culminating in the district leadership team. Each PLC representative shares monthly focus areas (reading, math & SEL), progress toward building goals, student impact, and next steps. Building leaders then present these insights at the district leadership meeting, where districtwide data, student learning impact, and future priorities are discussed.

Berkeley's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the systems and structures they've put in place. These have empowered their leaders and staff to take full ownership of their data and decision-making processes, specifically regarding continuous school improvement. As a result, discussions about data have become more in-depth, and their leaders now have greater confidence in identifying impactful instructional strategies and potential areas for growth during classroom walkthroughs.

Over the past three years, Berkeley has seen steady growth in student achievement, with a 3.3% increase in ELA and 3.0% in Math on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness. In 2023, three schools were in the "Comprehensive" category (lowest 5% of schools) and two in "Targeted" status. By 2024, two schools moved from "Comprehensive" to "Commendable" status, and one moved to "Targeted," confirming that their systems are yielding the desired results.

NOW WHAT?

How do we incorporate results-driven teams into our system?
1. Create Shared Vision and Goals – Develop these through strategic planning process, data analysis, and stakeholder feedback.
2. Provide Professional Development – Equip team members to analyze data and use it to inform instructional decisions.
3. Foster Collaborative Culture – staff should know the strategies effective teams use as part of empowered teams and how to create safe spaces to discuss data
4. Invest in Technology – Use tools that simplify data collection, analysis, and reporting.
5. Celebrate Successes – Recognize and share achievements at all levels to build pride and momentum.

These steps ensure that everyone is aligned and actively involved in reaching the shared goal, fostering a collaborative, goal-oriented environment where success is celebrated together.

Conclusion
The transformational impact of results-driven teams in schools cannot be overstated. By fostering collaboration, leveraging data, and prioritizing accountability, results-driven teams create a foundation for sustained success. As educational institutions continue to face new challenges, results-driven teamwork will remain a cornerstone of effective school improvement.

Call-to-Action
- How will you implement or expand results-driven teams in your organization? What obstacles need addressing?
- What knowledge/skills do team members need for collaboration?
- How do your teams interact and align with shared vision/goals?
- How do you celebrate and share successes?

Learn more about how CEC can help create sustainable results-driven teams on our web page.