



## EVIDENCE

MAKING THE CASE FOR  
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

This is an effective  
and efficient way to  
ensure higher student  
achievement in our  
classrooms



Watch our online videos  
showing how to use  
electronic data to make  
instructional decisions

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**D**ata-driven decision-making can improve the efficacy of teaching. When teachers take student assessment data into account as they plan and deliver instruction, they are better able to respond to the needs of their students. They understand students' past strengths and weaknesses and can provide instruction that results in higher achievement.

Most educators have heard about data-driven decision-making, but very little professional development has been provided on this topic. Yet in this era of limited education resources, examining student data is more valuable than ever before. Here's why:

- **Our student population has changed.** Most Sonoma County classrooms no longer have a homogeneous population of learners. Students are jumbled together regardless of language proficiency or special needs. Some students are well prepared for grade-level learning, but others don't have the academic skills needed for their grade placement. By examining student data, teachers can clarify individual skill levels and plan instruction to suit their heterogeneous classrooms.
- **Our work in education has evolved.** The notion that students progress through school following standard curves of distribution for success and failure was widely accepted in the past. But in recent years, this idea has been challenged as we've learned to use curriculum measures that are standards-based and criterion-referenced. We've found that we can markedly increase student achievement by adjusting instructional variables—curriculum, instructional strategies, grouping, and time. Along the way, we've also discovered that daily/weekly progress checks can guide and inform our work, leading to more targeted instruction and greater student success.
- **Technology has made data analysis easy and accessible.** Today's computer-based student information systems allow teachers to gather information, analyze it, and use it in new and powerful ways. Data can be sorted to show individual or group performance, then organized to highlight the information from different perspectives. Charts and graphs can illuminate trends. All of this information is useful to individual

