

Different Data Purposes

Table 1 is adapted from “Learning to improve” (Byrk et al, 2015; p.102).

Table 1. Difference in Measurement for Different Purposes

Category	Measurement for Accountability	Measurement for Improvement	Measurement for Research
Purpose	Identify whether established criteria have been met	Determine if a change is an improvement	Answer questions or test a theory through recorded observations and collected data
Example questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which teachers should participate in targeted professional development activities? Which principals should participate in a mentoring program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I change my student grouping strategy, will it increase engagement of my multilingual learners? If we invest in facilitation, will it improve the efficacy of our professional learning groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did our take-home reading program improve the reading levels of participating students compared to non-participating students? Does parent understanding of grade-level standards contribute to improved academic outcomes in middle school?
What is measured	End-of-timeline outcomes	The way systems and processes work in relation to the intended outcome	Variables within the questions or theory under study that can provide answers or insight

Category	Measurement for Accountability	Measurement for Improvement	Measurement for Research
Measurement frequency	At the end of a performance period	Frequently, at predetermined intervals	Several times per study, depending on purpose and methods
Essential qualities of measures	Summative, global measure that can apply to most users	Formative value to the improvement effort, signal for actionable changes	Accurate and reliable information and conclusions
Examples of data generation activities and data sources	Attendance rates, mandatory trainings, financial records, implementation of safety protocols	Observations, altering instructional strategies, interventions, academic assessments	Focus groups, interviews, classroom walkthroughs, document reviews, surveys

After reviewing Table 1, reflect on your own data use and use of data in your school or district for each of the different purposes outlined. Which of the three purposes do you focus on most regularly in your role? Select the purpose that is most relevant to you and respond the questions in Table 2 with that purpose in mind.

Table 2. Data Use School/District

Questions	Measurement for Accountability	Measurement for Improvement	Measurement for Research
What activities do you and your colleagues engage in?	{enter response here}	{enter response here}	{enter response here}
What data sources are used?	{enter response here}	{enter response here}	{enter response here}
How are data used?	{enter response here}	{enter response here}	{enter response here}

Reference:

Bryk, A., Gomez, L.M., Grunow, A., and LeMahieu, P.G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America’s schools can get better at getting better*. Harvard Education Press.