Begin with the End in Mind: Using Data-Folders to Increase Students' Accountability

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ABSTRACT

This project investigates one important aspect of the conditions and practices that directly impact the growth and attainment of the students at Azuela Elementary School: student data folders. Trusting that, to increase students' achievement, schools need to upsurge students' agency and accountability towards their learning. To this end, students and teachers were first surveyed and interviewed to gain an insightful understanding of the systems and structures in place. Then, using the communication styles and the "Ways of Knowing" we were able to gather teachers' feedback and perceptions towards the students' data- folders. Finding out that our data folders' system needed to be restructured and refined, we then created templates and documents for different grade levels for teachers to utilize when facilitating goal-setting, conferencing and monitoring of students' progress. When students are not only able to articulate their data, but also demonstrate a clear understanding of what their scores mean, and when teachers are using the data folder system with fidelity, eventually, a dynamic community of learners will be established and sustained.

INTRODUCTION

Mariano Azuela School was established in 2010 and serves a community that celebrates family bonds and traditions. Our teachers are fully dedicated to serving our students and families to high-levels, and our students are well-behaved and very capable and responsible. Our school is located on the southwest side of Chicago and serves roughly 950 students in Pre-k to eighth grade. At Azuela, we have about 95% of students who identify as Hispanic, 2.4% as White, and 0.4% as African-American, 0.7% as Native American, 0.1 % who identify with more than one race and 0.3% who come from Asian descendants. Our school serves 88% students from low income families and 0.1% who are considered homeless. 29.5% of our students are identified as English Language learners and 9.4% have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In terms of stability, Azuela has a student mobility rate of 6%, low teacher-turnover, and our overall attendance rate is roughly 95.5%.

At Azuela, we are committed to providing a safe, respectful and nurturing environment where all students, teachers, staff and families are held accountable to high expectations. Moreover, we are intentional in preparing our students to be college and career ready and become contributing citizens in their own way by connecting them with high-quality learning opportunities and community engagement activities.

To this latter point, we have many successful initiatives that include a STEM program, international traveling programs (Santiago, Chile; Busan, South Korea and Monteria, Mexico) an architect club, music, sports, arts and cultural extracurricular activities, as well as dual and world language and social emotional learning programs. What's more, we have established

strong partnerships with local and international organizations that promote our mission and vision of excellence; our motto is "I am Azuela!" In sum, we strive to ensure that all students' academic and social needs are met through a variety of meaningful experiences.

Importantly, we cannot overstate the importance of our parents and community partners. To this point, we involve families and the community in a variety of meaningful ways. For example, we have a number of different committees that our parents participate in, such as our Bilingual Advisory Committee (BAC), Parent Advisory Council (PAC), Local School Council (LSC), and other informal social contexts, such as Coffee and Donuts with the Principal and a Parent Book Club.

Since our beginning, we have established systems to ensure that our school maintains a high-quality rating. For example, every year we hire highly-qualified teachers who we train and provide ongoing supports so that they can experience success in their teaching careers. For example, all Azuela teachers are provided with a rich variety of resources and professional learning opportunities that meet their interests and our school's needs. Since we believe that all teachers are writing teachers, this year we started a writing initiative offer individualized, differentiated professional development to meet our teachers' writing interests and school writing priorities. We also supported teachers' integration of our math curriculum by organizing math-centered coaching and professional development opportunities.

With respect to data, at the end of last year, we receive our preliminary normed assessment NWEA scores for our students in grades 2nd through 8th grade, and we observed that our scores are declining in the two areas of growth and attainment. Consequently, we

expected that our school performance level would drop too, but it has not, as Azuela has kept

its level-one designation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As we reviewed our data, we have noticed that our growth and attainment levels are stagnate and not elevating as high or as quickly as they should be. For example, 3rd through 5th grade have been increasing at a slower pace as compared to the middle school grades. In Chicago Public Schools, a school's performance is measured by specific indicators identified in the School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP). See Appendix A for more information. Unfortunately, this year's SQRP shows that our overall scores in growth and attainment have declined from last year. Now, more than ever, we understand that change is needed and have identified possible root causes. This data has prompted us to look inward and ask specifically, how we can increase students' growth and attainment levels in 3rd and 5th grade. More broadly, we are also asking how we can build a community of learners where our teachers and students are able to articulate their understanding of their data, set academic goals and monitor their progress.

Moreover, we want to know what skills we need to sharpen and develop as school leaders to support our teachers and help them build capacity in their practice. If Azuela provides the right resources and initiatives to all teachers, staff, parents and students, the question may be asked, why we are not moving forward in these grade-levels. Upon reflection, we need to rethink our approach.

When we came back from the summer institute last year, we realized that we needed to revisit and rethink how our systems operate at Azuela. We started reviewing and evaluating how things are being done at our school. First, we used the two aspects of system thinking:

"Seeing the whole beyond the parts" and "Seeing the parts in the context of the whole". We then realized that even though we were mostly working as a cohesive team, at times we complete our work in silos. This new realization helped us frame and discuss the problem with more clarity and openness on how the processes and systems we had in place needed to be refined. Using our Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP) to guide our progress, we identified two goals to focus on for this school year: to improve our communication skills to better lead adult learning among our staff and to increase students' agency over their learning.

First, to develop our communication skills, we started the new school year with a communication color survey which the entire staff completed the first week of school. Staff communication colors were then posted on each office and classroom door in an attempt to remind each other of the different ways we receive and process information. This experience helped all of us recognize our communication colors and styles better and has assisted us with becoming more intentional in the way we convey our messages to each other. For example, teachers have been observed saying "I am red, I need more specific details." As a result, we decided to continue utilizing our learning from the "Simply Said: Communicating Better at Work and Beyond" (Sullivan, 2017). Moreover, we have also sophisticated our meeting norms and have emphasized school pride to a greater extent, to ensure that everyone is aware of expectations. Moreover, to deepen our understanding of our teachers' ways of knowing (WOK), we referenced "Leading Adult Learning" (Drago-Severson, 2009). Reading this book, in addition to the training we received during the summer institute, has allowed us to better recognize the readiness levels of teachers and the ways they acquire and process knowledge

and information. This has helped us provide teachers with the appropriate level of challenge and support. Ultimately, we believe that, if we develop our communication skills and better understand our teachers' communication styles, the lines of communication with teachers will be stronger, leading to a more accurate exchange of information and higher-levels of trust.

In addition to improving communication skills with staff, we are also mindful of the need to increase student agency over their learning, our second goal that will hopefully help Azuela reach a higher school-quality rating in the near future. Currently, as it relates to student agency practices, we have data walls and data folders which serve as two powerful practices that can help students take ownership of their learning. Using these two initiatives, students are regularly asked to review and discuss their scores and academic progress in both reading and math. However, we have found that most students are unable to accurately interpret and articulate their scores, making it difficult for them to identify strengths, areas of growth and establish goals for self-improvement.

Having identified our two priority areas, we firmly understand that we, as school leaders, need to be change agents; leaders who can cultivate a school culture that embraces positive change. To this end, we utilized Wagner et al (2006) phases of whole system change: preparing, envisioning and enacting to attain our goals. To design our project, we started with the preparing phase which entails raising urgency. In an effort to increase urgency, at the beginning of the year, we shared and discussed Azuela's data with the entire staff. Teachers worked in teams to discuss grade-level data and identify common strengths and areas of improvement. While doing so, teachers realized that our overall growth and attainment scores

declined. To inspire and motivate teachers to improve their practice, this data was then displayed throughout our school building.

Shortly thereafter, we engaged our teachers in Performance Management data sessions (PMs), and started asking guiding questions to gain deeper understanding into our school data and teacher practices. First, we asked whether we are meeting grade-level standards across K-8 classrooms. Second, we asked whether we have gaps in our curriculum. To answer these two questions, we worked with our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to align our K-8 math curriculum with K-8 math standards, which helped us identify the gaps. We then created a timeline to finalize the process. As this worked unfolded, the administrative team met with the ILT to discuss how we could better use student data folders to increase students' accountability and ownership over their learning. To our surprise, we found out that student data folders were being implemented in different ways in different classrooms. Given this reality, it was confirmed to us that the data folders initiative at Azuela had to be revamped so that, moving forward, there is a common language and expectation for how the student data folders should be used. Accordingly, we met with the ILT to discuss the survey findings, agreed on what documents a data folder should have, and discussed the need of carrying out teacher-student conferences to enhance the benefit of using data folders. We want to continue to trust the process, so to speak, so that we can pay attention to as many details as possible. Now, more than ever, we believe that the data folder project has given us a new lens when looking at student learning and teacher practice.

METHODS

To help us stay organized and focused during this phase of our project, we created an action-plan to help us attain our dual goals of becoming more effective communicators with our staff and increasing student ownership over their learning. (See Figure 1 for details)

Figure 1

Action-Plan for Data-Folder Project

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeframe	Evidence of Completion
Communication Style Survey	Navarro	August 2018	Survey results
Delve Deep into Data	ILT Team	August 2018	Grade-levels delve into NWEA Spring Data
Designing a Staircase Curriculum - Math	ILT Team	Sept. - Dec. 2018	ILT meeting notes and minutes The curriculum staircase for Math K-5 and 6-8
Designing a Staircase Curriculum - Literacy	ILT Team	Sept. - Dec 2019	ILT meeting notes and minutes The curriculum staircase for Reading K-5 and 6-8
Reviewing Lesson Plan Alignment to the Standards, Reviewing Grades in Gradebook	Admin Team	Weekly and Ongoing	Emails, feedback, and revised lesson plans
Organize School Visits -Belmont Cragin -Cullen -Dawes -Clinton	Admin Team	Oct. 2018 Nov. 2018 Nov. 2018 Dec. 2018	Visit notes
Students' Data Folder Questionnaire/survey	Ms. Navarro and Mr. Wester; Ms. Krupa & Ms. White (computer teachers)	Dec. 2018	-Data folder surveys' answers and responses
Share with Teachers Data Folder	Admin Team	Dec. 2018	Data folders

Structure and Protocol			
Performance Management Sessions (PMs) (Meet with individual teachers, provide them with students' data and teacher performance evaluation)	Admin Team	Month of Dec. 2018-January, 2019	Meeting schedules, notes, teachers' next steps
Collect Random Data Folders	Admin Team	Monthly Dec. 18 - May 19	Data folders
Create Standard Based Assessment and Provide to Teachers (Are we meeting the standards?)	Admin Team and Mr. Wester	Ongoing/ quarterly	Student assessments
Cross-reference the Standard Assessment & Students Grades in Gradebook	Teachers' and Admin Team	Quarterly	Assessment & grades
Continue to Connect Data Folders to Lesson Plans and Standards	Admin Team	Ongoing	Data folders
Revisit Communication Styles How to Improve Our Communication?	Navarro & SEL Teacher Lead-Chen	Dec. 12, 2018	PPT, agenda, teachers responses to survey
Interview Students Regarding Their Data Folders	Admin Team	Dec. 2018	Videos
Revamping Students' Data Folders	Admin & ILT team	Jan. - May, 2019	Documents and structures

To gain a deeper understanding of the student data-folder structures and systems, we decided to collect quantitative and qualitative data through surveying and interviewing students and teachers. To this end, we surveyed 461 students in grades 3rd through 8th. (See Appendix B for students' survey questions) We then randomly selected students to interview to

better understand data-folder usage, quality of goal-setting and conferencing between teachers and students.

Following this, we shared our survey and interview findings with teachers during an ILT meeting to discuss areas of strength, areas of growth and to develop an action-plan to streamline the data-folder conferencing process. The results of the survey were then shared discussed with teachers to help them identify next-steps so that students could better understand the value of data folders and use them to expand their growth and academic attainment. In addition to surveying students, we also created a corresponding teacher data-folder survey to better understand the data-folder process from teachers' perspectives. (See Appendix C for teachers' survey questions)

Once the student and the teacher surveys were completed, we compared the results while focusing on four major indicators: having data-folders, who sets academic goals, frequency of conferencing, and having a tracking sheet in the folder.

Guiding our action, we met with the ILT to share findings and gain teachers' feedback around the process they currently use to implement the data folders. We gathered teachers' feedback from grade level meetings and requested samples of data folders. In addition, we met with the ILT to view conferencing videos with the randomly selected students to gain further insight into current practices.

RESULTS

In this section we will discuss our findings from the quantitative and qualitative data: the surveys, the interviews and our informal observations. To deepen the involvement of the ILT in this project, the student survey data was shared in conjunction with the students' interview videos. Afterwards, the ILT discussed the positive aspects of students' articulation of their data and provided suggestions for improving the process of conferencing with students based on their grade level clusters. The survey results are captured in Figure 2 below and interpretation of the data will follow. (The graph is also in Appendix D)

Figure 2

Students' and Teachers' Survey Responses

Students' Responses Vs. Teachers' Responses to the Surveys
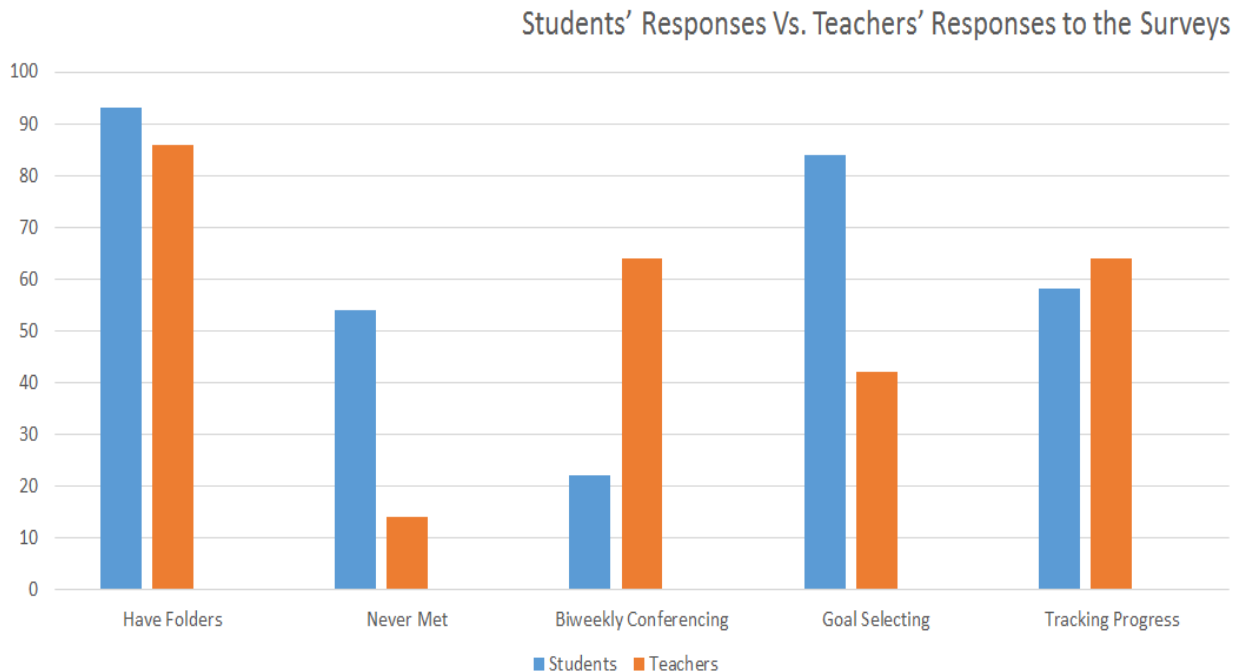
As presented in the graph above, 93% of surveyed students indicated that they have a data-folder. However, only 86% of teachers surveyed in 3rd through 8th grade, indicated that their students have data-folders. Regarding meeting and conferencing with students, 54% of the students responded that they never met with their teachers, which is more than half of the student population at these grade levels. Refuting this, only 14% of the teachers shared that they never met with their students regarding data-folders by the time they took the survey. Looking deeper into how frequently teachers conference with their students, when considering the responses of meeting biweekly and once a week, it was found that 22% of students responded that they meet with their teachers every two weeks, while 24% replied they meet with their teachers weekly. 64% of teachers, however, indicated that meet with their students biweekly to discuss their academic progress while utilizing the data-folders.

To investigate the level of students' accountability and involvement in setting their own academic goals, we asked the following questions: "Who selects your academic goals?" and "Do you have a tracking sheet to monitor your progress in your data-folder?" Based on the survey results, 84% of the students reported that their teachers set their goals for them, while 58% of the teachers said that they cooperate with their students in setting the goals. In addition, 58% of the students replied they do not have a tracking or monitoring sheet in their data-folders, while 36% of their teachers responded that they do not include a tracking sheet in the data-folder to monitor their students' progress towards their intended goal.

When surveying teachers, additional, open-ended questions were provided to capture deeper understanding of their perspectives towards the value of student data folders. We specifically asked the question: "Do you believe that student-data folders help your students

learn? Please explain?" To our surprise, more than 45% of our teachers felt that the data-folders do not help their students learn. Evidently, some teachers believe the skill practice packets given to their students are more beneficial than conferencing with students. On the other hand, there were more teachers who believe that data folders help their students monitor their own progress and boost their self-esteem when they master one of their deficient skills. Teachers also expressed the need to have consistent systems and structures among grade-level clusters with respect to data-folders. Other teachers have suggested that having a sample folder and opportunities to view effective conferencing videos were beneficial.

While reviewing the videos of the selected Azuela students, the ILT observed strengths and areas of improvements. In sum, we found that students were able to articulate their scores and the advantages of having the data folders. However, they were not able to articulate their own strengthens, deficiencies and how they collaborate with their teachers to monitor and track their own progress.

This information led us to discuss and generate possible artifacts to support students' ownership of their data. Furthermore, this discussion has prompted us as a team to discuss the various progress monitoring strategies teachers can use effectively to monitor the mastery of the skill or topic in question, in addition to informing planning, instruction and assessment.

REFLECTIONS

Although our project is around student data folders, we realized early in the inquiry cycle that, in order to delve-deep into the reality of Azuela's student data folders, we had to take time to look at and reflect upon other aspects and factors that were either happening or not happening at Azuela. For example, it was decided that we needed to be consistent with reviewing lesson plans weekly to ensure that the lessons, as well as student classwork and homework, were aligned to grade-level expectations. These actions are imperative since data folders require a conversation between the teacher and the student that is rooted in student work.

At this stage of the project, we feel that the greatest impact has been with the administrative team. Realizing that teachers and students have not been using data folders as originally intended was a big "aha moment" for the administrative team. The collection of data through student and teacher surveys showed that students and teachers were not on the same page with the data folders initiative and expectations. To make matters worse, some teachers that responded to the survey felt that there was no added-value to student learning through the use of data folders.

While learning about the results of the surveys, the PMs were being carried out with teachers. We realized that our approach to analyzing student data during these sessions had to be different; we had to revolutionize our thinking about conversing with teachers about the data, teacher practice and teacher's ratings.

We were not expecting that the student data folders' project was going to help us grow as reflective practitioners as it has. Now, although we still have to discuss data and numbers, we are being more intentional on focusing on teachers reflecting on their practices and how their practices impact the growth of their students. For example, during the PMs, using Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) reports, we asked questions such as: what are some of the conditions that you have created to support student A that you can use to instruct student B, who started at the same level but is not growing at the same rate?, what are some practices that you have been consistent with and know are beneficial to student learning?, what are the practices that you are not consistent with but you understand that, if you were consistent, will help student learning?. Also, to ensure that we were giving valuable and actionable feedback to teachers, we asked them what their preferences were when receiving feedback.

When we started this project, we envisioned our students taking responsibility over their learning, and reaching a point where they could identify and articulate their needs as well as their strengths. During this phase, we also envisioned students saying, "I know how to do this… I can help someone", and "I do not know this I need help with". As an extension, we envisioned our teachers modeling, facilitating and monitoring students' academic progress and grade-level attainment to help our students build on their strengths and address their areas of need. As part of our vision, teachers would use student data folders to inform their own instruction and communicate with parents about their children's progress. As an added bonus, if we could realize both of these ends, the entire school community would better understand student data folders and support the process.

The following chart depicts the actions taken throughout this project and their overall impact on students' attitudes towards data folders and teachers' accountability in supporting students' success and growth. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3

Action- Impact-Evidence Chart

Action taken	Impact	Evidence
Met with whole staff to discuss data	Building awareness and raising urgency	Discussions and GLM notes
Met with leadership team	Team provided input for data folder. We need to create a system	Data folder structure and system
3rd - 8th grade Students' Survey around the data folder and interviews	Students and teachers are paying more attention to conversations about data folders	Survey results and videos
Conducting Performance Management Sessions	Data is used to inform and improve instruction	Teachers' Google document
Teachers' Surveys	Opportunity to provide input	Teachers' Survey
Compare results: Teachers' Survey vs. Students' Survey	ILT builds awareness of the perceptions of students and teachers understanding of the data folder	ILT notes and minutes
ILT will discuss data folder structure	Create a system for data folders	Sample of data folder
All teachers conferencing with students and helping students set goals and reach them	100% of students are able to articulate their understanding and the importance of their data	Videos of teachers conferencing with students
All students are able to discuss their data and identify their	Data folders- student-led conferences	Videos of selected students conversing about

mastery and deficiencies of the standards		their data folders with admin
All students collaborating and helping each other mastering the skills of the grade	Building a community of learners; resulting in a 10% increase in students' attainment in NWEA	Achievement results NWEA

These next steps of the data folder project are extremely important since they will determine the next phase of student data folder implementation at Azuela. They are as follows:

- Create a sample folder

- In collaboration with students, create sample conference questions

- Students share their successes with classmates

- Peer conferencing regarding data

- Students offer to help peers

- Community of learners is continuously encouraged

- Continue to have student led parent-teacher conferences

- Teachers consistently use data folders to inform teaching and learning

- Teachers do frequent check-ins with students to monitor progress of RIT skill

- Discuss with teachers and students how to increase parent awareness about students' data folders

Currently, all our teachers and staff are aware of the ongoing work with the student data folders and they support the restructuring of this initiative. We are confident that with

this new mindset, we will no longer have to discuss the value and benefits of student data folders.

Ally's Refection

It is an honor and privilege to be participating in the Cahn Fellows for Distinguished Principals Program. As David Rockwell says, "Every project is an opportunity to learn, to figure out problems and challenges, to invent and reinvent." This experience has helped me grow as a leader; I learned how to identify problems, overcome challenges and create systems and structures. In addition, learning about leading adult learning and the "Ways of Knowing" assists me in providing meaningful and constructive feedback to our teachers. The most important outcome of this opportunity is working very closely with Ms. Navarro, my principal; I got to know Ms. Navarro as a great person who is humanistic and caring. Our relational trust has deepened and matured. I feel I am empowered with a strong supportive system.

As for our goal for this project, increasing students' attainment and developing students' self-agency toward their learning through the use of data folders, we needed to rethink the systems in place and identify those domains needed to implement our plan with fidelity. After surveying the students and the teachers, we learned that there is no consistency among teachers in using the data folders; there was discrepancy between the students and the teachers' responses. This call for urgency required us to revisit our systems frequently and ensure the effective usage of the data folder. I firmly believe we can accomplish our goal by helping students own their learning and take agency. By meeting this challenge with the leadership team and going through the inquiry process, we have been able to identify the

needs first, to proceed with action-steps and then to create the conditions to attain our goals. Overall, I am confident that Azuela's community of learners will continue to grow in the years to come.

Fellow's Reflection

Becoming a Cahn Fellow has had a tremendous impact on my professional life. During the summer institute I remember that Mrs. Woo said (the words might not be the same as to what she actually said) that the Cahn Fellows helped her refresh and rejuvenate her professional practice to continue being the best principal that she could be. At that time, I thought to myself, "Oh my, I will be satisfied if I only get the energy back". Little did I know that this experience was going to give me an intellectual boost that has permeated all levels of my professional practice.

The Cahn experience has given me more clarity as a global and local thinker. For example, for the different trainings or presentations that we have had in the school, the learning from Dr. Drago-Severson, "Ways of Knowing", has helped me reflect on the different approaches when providing meaningful and actionable feedback to teachers and staff. In particular, one change that I have noticed is that now I do not get "confused" when a teacher tells me, "Just tell me what you want me to do". Before, I would think, "I am not telling you what to do, what is data saying? What do the students need? Now when I hear this, the new Principal Navarro says, "Okay, let's meet so that we can discuss the different strategies that you are thinking of and I will be your thought partner for the next steps". Overall, using the Ways of

Knowing and communication styles, I have a better understanding of how to support the adult learners in my school so that they can advance to the next step of learning.

Selecting the data folders as my Cahn project has been very beneficial to my continued growth and reflection. As this project evolves, I am becoming more aware that one can never take things for granted. I have been able to see the different ideas teachers and students have about data folders which, in turn, has again confirmed to me that I/we must be very clear and transparent about any initiative or expectations that we have in the school. We implemented the initiative of data folders years ago and have made adjustments along the way. But this time around, I was able to discover that I was under many inaccurate assumptions, so I have been able to collaborate and discuss with my administrative team and my Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) the realities of Azuela's data folders and take appropriate actions. Fortunately, the Cahn project has been a tremendous opportunity to refine the folder's artifacts, student-teacher conferences, and inform teaching and learning.

Working with my Assistant Principal as my Ally in this project has given me the opportunity to converse with her in a more focused way about the many aspects of Azuela. Dr. Matari, my Ally, recently completed her Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership and has been a formidable thought partner in this journey. I have taken very seriously the fact that I am also mentoring her for when she becomes a principal. One of the greatest benefits of supporting Dr. Matari in her professional growth has been the discussions that we have about the Cahn learning (presentations, articles…) and her reaction to understanding the information in a different light, enlightened by her doctoral studies.

Being a Cahn Fellow has also given me the great gift of seeing other stellar principals in action. I have visited some of my Fellows' schools and it has been inspiring and humbling. These amazing principals have given me, without them knowing, a new-found sense of pride, responsibility and purpose. Knowing that I can call any of my colleagues when I am feeling either down, confused or just need someone to talk to without judgment, is also a new-found source of energy.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of this priceless Cahn Fellows' journey. The learning acquired through this experience, the new connections with other fabulous principals, and the discoveries of my own way of learning, not only is supporting my growth in my professional practice, but it is also supporting my growth as a humanistic educator and leader.

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Appendix A

City of Chicago, School Quality Rating Policy

https://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/SQRP_Overview.pdf

School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) Overview

Chicago Public Schools

What is the SQRP and what schools does it cover?

The School Quality Rating Policy is the Board of Education's policy for evaluating school performance. Through this policy, each school receives a **School Quality Rating** and an **Accountability Status** every year. Among other things, the SQRP helps to communicate to school stakeholders the academic success of individual schools and the district as a whole; provides a framework for school goal-setting; and guides the Board's decision-making processes around school support and intervention.

All schools receive a rating, including neighborhood schools, magnet schools, charter schools, selective enrollment schools and option schools.

What indicators are included in the SQRP?

Because different schools serve different populations of students, the SQRP uses different indicators for each type of school. The included indicators are as follows:

Elementary Schools	High Schools	Option Schools
• Student attainment on the NWEA MAP test • Student growth on the NWEA MAP test • Student attendance • My Voice, My School survey • Student growth on ACCESS for English Learners • Data quality	• Student attainment on the PSAT/SAT assessments • Student growth on the PSAT/SAT assessments • Student attendance • Graduation rate • Freshman on-track rate • Dropout rate • Students earning early college or career credentials • College enrollment and persistence • My Voice, My School survey • Data quality	• Student growth on the STAR test • Graduation rate • Enrollment stabilization • Student attendance • Credit attainment

How is a school's rating calculated?

For each of the indicators above, a school can score between one and five points. The indicator scores are then averaged (some indicators are weighted higher than others in this average). The weighted average – which will also fall between one and five points – is then used to determine a school's rating and status based on the table below.

Overall Score		Minimum Attainment Percentile	School Quality Rating	Accountability Status
4.0 or more		90th	Level 1+	Good Standing
Between 3.5 and 3.9	OR	70th	Level 1	Good Standing
Between 3.0 and 3.4		50th	Level 2+	Good Standing
Between 2.0 and 2.9		40th	Level 2	Provisional Support
Less than 2.0		–	Level 3	Intensive Support

School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) Overview

What does the school's rating mean?

- **Level 1+** is the highest performance – this is a nationally competitive school with the opportunity to share best practices with others.
- **Level 1** is high performance – this is a good school choice with many positive qualities. Minimal support is needed.
- **Level 2+** is average performance – Additional support from the network team is needed to implement interventions.
- **Level 2** is below average performance. The "provisional support" status requires increased support from the network.
- **Level 3** is the lowest performance; school is in need of "intensive intervention" directed by the district. Charter schools in this category are on Academic Warning List.

What does a school's status mean?

A school's status determines who has decision-making power at the school level.

- **Good Standing** is a school that has met or exceeded the district's minimum performance standards. These schools must follow district policies and mandates, but the LSC retains all normal autonomy.
- **Provisional Support** means that the school needs increased support. The network and CEO may require the school to revise its Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP) and/or budget and may require specific professional development.
- **Intensive Support** means the school needs a high level of support. In addition to the interventions listed for Provisional Support, the Board of Education may – in extreme cases – take actions such as a turnaround or principal removal. These actions will not happen in all Intensive Support schools and require a public hearing.

What is the difference between attainment and growth? Which matters more?

Both attainment and growth measure a school's performance compared to other schools **nationwide.**

Attainment measures performance at a **single point in time** compared to schools nationally. So if a school's *attainment* is in the 85th percentile, that means the school had higher scores than 85 percent of the schools **who took the test at the same time.**

Growth measures performance **from one year to the next**. It evaluates a school's performance based on how much growth occurred compared to other schools nationally with the same pretest score. So if a school's *growth* is in the 85th percentile, that means the school showed more growth than 85 percent of the schools **who started at the same place the previous year**.

Both attainment and growth matter, but growth is weighted more in the SQRP. That is because schools start in different places, and growth takes that into consideration. Attainment is a good indicator of how ready students are for their next step (high school, college, careers). Growth is a good indicator of how much they are learning, and therefore how effective the school is at providing instruction.

Where can I find more information?

Principals, school offices and network offices are always great resources for more information. General information on SQRP can be found at cps.edu/sqrp and school-specific information is available on school profile pages (cps.edu/findaschool). The Department of School Quality Measurement is also available at 773-553-4444.

Appendix B

Students' Data-Folder Survey

Do you have a data folder?

What the data folders for?

Did you set a goal for your learning?

Have you written a goal?

Do you have Reading goal?

Do you have a math goal?

Have you met with your teacher to discuss your data?

(For reading? math?)

How many times do you meet with your teachers to discuss your data folder?

Do you have a tracking form?

Who selects the skills that you are working on?

How do you know if you are learning the skill that you have been practicing?

Do your parents know that you have a data folder?

What to you type of work you keep in your data folder?

Does having a data folder help you in learning more about your skills?

What evidence does the teacher collect to ensure you met your target skills for the week?

In your opinion, what is the reason for having data folders?

If you can add or change one thing about the data folders to help you improve, what would it be? (No, we won't get rid of them.)

Which part of the data folder do you look at the most each day?

How many times a week do you look at your data folders?

Has your teacher talked about why data folders are important?

Has your teacher showed you how to use your data folder?

Appendix C

Teachers' Data-Folder Survey

Do your students have a data folder?

Have you discussed with your students why data folders are important?

Have you showed students how to use their data folder?

Do your students have a learning goal for their data folder?

Have your students written down their goal in their data folder?

Have you met with your students to discuss their data folder progress?

How many times do you meet with each student to discuss their data folder?

Do your students have a tracking form in their data folder?

Do your students have a tracking form in their data folder?

Who selects the skill(s) students are working on for their data folder?

What type of work do students keep inside their data folder?

What evidence do students collect to show that they have met their learning goal?

How do students know if they are learning the skill(s) that they have been practicing in their data

folders?

Do you believe that student data folders help your students learn? Please explain.

Do you have any suggestions or improvements that can be made to student data folders? Please

explain.

Is there anything else about student data folders that you would like to share with the

administrative team?

Appendix D

Graph

Students v. Teachers Responses

Students' Responses Vs. Teachers' Responses to the Surveys

	Have Folders	Never Met	Biweekly Conferencing	Goal Selecting	Tracking Progress
Students	93	54	22	84	58
Teachers	86	14	64	42	64