10 Ways to Use Data to Improve Special Education

QSEF Element	Data Type to Analyze	Insights Provided	Example Improvement Ideas
Element 1: Culture of Inclusion and Collaboration	Engage your leadership team in a visioning exercise / Observe grade level planning meetings, Professional Learning Communities, co-planning sessions and other internal meetings	Generate ideas about what an ideal special education program in your school looks like, sounds like, and feels like / Learn more about how your staff collaborate about student needs.	Work backwards to determine short-, medium-, and long-term goals to help implement that vision / Co-build a standing agenda for one ongoing meeting to ensure shared purpose for collaboration across members of that team
Element 2: Student-Centered Curriculum and Instruction	Exit ticket data. / Cut grades and test scores by student subgroups	Understand what your students know. / Determine whether teachers are reaching their most marginalized students	Guide educators through data protocol to build skill in differentiation and inclusive classroom strategies / Build/refine current instructional coaching and support systems to build teacher skill on specialized instructional practices
Element 3: Shared Understanding and Practices for Special Education	Review a sample of 10 IEPs against a compliance and quality rubric / Shadow a student with a disability	Engage your special education staff in a discussion about strengths and challenges inherent in the documentation / Learn more about how they experience school.	Develop a process for reviewing IEPs and providing ongoing support and feedback during collaborative time / Develop a process for reviewing IEPs and providing ongoing support and feedback during collaborative time / Reflect on the student experience and your vision for Special Education to ensure initiatives align to student needs
Element 4: Equitable Systems and Resource Management	Analyze student grades, assessments and attendance data for students with IEPs in relation to their current programming	Identify areas where students are thriving as well as where they may need additional or different supports	Review existing programming to ensure the necessary supports and resources (e.g., staff, settings, supplemental or related services, etc.) are available to students
Element 5: Meaningful Family Partnerships	Run a parent feedback survey / Visit community meetings/town hall conversations	Gain insight into perspectives of parents from different communities / Gain insight from community members about pressing interests and concerns	Convene a cross-functional volunteer working group to generate a plan to address 1-2 of the common issues raised / Build a coalition of community partners and identify opportunities to collaborate on initiatives aligned to community needs

Our Big Goal: By 2045, 1 million students with disabilities are on track to graduate from school ready to thrive and empowered to take on the world. **www.theabilitychallenge.org**