

Build Your Own Data Scope & Sequence

A four-step workbook for school and district leaders. Turn a 100-table data warehouse into a structured, monthly rhythm of focused conversations — the kind that move adult practice and student outcomes.

FOR

School leaders, district teams, and data leads who want to map key data-based decisions by month to get schools information when they need it most.

TIME TO COMPLETE

2–3 working sessions. Best done with a small team that includes someone from data, someone from instruction, and at least one principal.

Why a scope & sequence?

Data alone isn't enough — and schools have a lot of it to sift through. A monthly scope & sequence simplifies principal and staff data tasks into relevant, manageable actions, aligning principals to address data analysis strategically and efficiently each month, when the data matters most for their decision making.

What a good scope & sequence does

- Provides school leaders with structured, month-by-month focus of a few critical data tasks.
- Pairs quantitative and qualitative data to drive initial analysis — helps teams ask the right questions and identify gaps.
- Aligns everyone around a shared focus, promoting collaboration and surfacing actionable insights.
- Gives administrators clarity and consistency while preserving authority to make final decisions in context.

The four steps

Each step has its own worksheet in this workbook. Don't skip steps — the order matters. The hardest part is creating one that matches the needs of *this moment*, in *your* district.

01

Data Inventory

Which data are available? When do they become reliable and actionable? How easy are they to compile? Don't force conversations before data are meaningful.

02

Calendar Alignment

Know your school calendar. Map natural rhythms — start of school, assessment windows, semester transitions — to determine when data conversations occur and when key decisions get made. For example, when are master schedules defined? Mentors assigned? Allocations released?

03

Define Patterns to Look For

Specific trends, comparisons, and risk indicators each month. Encourage local quantitative *and* qualitative collection — student and teacher voice, observations, student work reviews, etc.

04

Professional Learning

Don't assume guidance gets used. Schools are busy; data comfort varies. Teach skills, then let staff practice on their own data in real time with support available.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Pull a small team together. Work the four steps in order. Don't try to be exhaustive on the first pass — build a v1, react, iterate. The final page is your starting template.

01 Data Inventory

Which data are available, when, and how easy are they to compile? List what exists, when it becomes reliable, and what you'd actually use it for. Don't force conversations before data are meaningful.

List your district's available data sources, by domain.

For each row, capture the data source, the system of record, the cadence of refresh, the earliest reliable date in the school year, and a quick note on how easy it is to access. Add rows as needed.

DOMAIN	DATA SOURCE	SYSTEM OF RECORD	REFRESH CADENCE	FIRST RELIABLE DATE	EASE (1-5)
Attendance					
Behavior					
Course performance					
Assessment					
MTSS / interventions					
Demographics & enrollment					
Master Schedule					
Climate & SEL					
Family engagement					
HR					
Other					

Where will data *not* be ready in time?

List sources that aren't reliable until later in the year. These are not candidates for early-month conversations.

When is the data most useful for a decision?

For each domain above, identify the moment in the school year when that data carries the most weight — the conversation, deadline, or decision point it should inform.

02

Calendar Alignment

Know your school calendar. Anchor each month's focus to the natural rhythms of the year — start of school, assessment windows, semester transitions, registration cycles. The data conversation has to fit when leaders are already paying attention.

Map the year. For each month, note the natural focus of school leaders' attention.

Things like: enrollment count day, beginning-of-year benchmark windows, parent-teacher conferences, semester end, end-of-year course recovery, IEP cycles, scheduling. The data focus should align with what's already on principals' minds, not compete with it.

AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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Cross-reference: which months have data ready AND leadership attention available?

Those are your high-leverage windows. Other months can hold lighter check-ins or reflection rather than full analysis.

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What competing demands will make data conversations hard in specific months?

Be honest. State testing windows, end-of-semester grading, holiday seasons. Pre-empt these by lightening the data load for those months.

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03

Define Patterns to Look For

Specific trends, comparisons, and risk indicators — month by month. Pair quantitative measures with qualitative collection (student and teacher voice). The patterns are what make data conversations actionable rather than informational.

For one focus area, define what patterns matter at three checkpoints in the year.

Pick a focus area first — attendance, course performance, behavior, family engagement, climate. Then define what specifically you'd look for early, mid, and late year. The patterns sharpen as the year progresses.

CHECKPOINT	GOAL	PATTERN TO LOOK FOR	QUESTION TO ANSWER
Early year (Aug–Oct)			
Mid year (Nov–Feb)			
Late year (Mar–May)			

What other additional data input should be collected that aren't quantitative?

Student work, artifact reviews, walkthrough notes, student voice, teacher voice, family voice. The numbers tell you something is happening; the qualitative tells you what it feels like and why.

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Which sub-groups should the analysis explicitly disaggregate?

Aligned to your district's equity framework. Always with appropriate suppression rules — minimum of 10 students per cell with complementary suppression where required.

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What's the “patterns to look for” guidance you can give a busy principal in *one sentence*?

If a principal can't summarize the month's data focus in a sentence, the guidance is too dense. E.g., "Which students are failing algebra?"

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04 Professional Learning

Don't assume guidance gets used. Schools are busy; data comfort varies. Teach the skills explicitly, then let staff practice on their own data in real time. Quality analytics PD is critical — this is where adoption fails or sticks.

Who needs to learn what?

Different roles need different skills. Principals need pattern recognition. Coaches need root-cause analysis. Teachers need quick lookup. Map skill needs to roles.

How will you know the PD worked?

Don't measure attendance — measure usage. Did educators come back to the warehouse the next week? Did the patterns surface in their team meetings?

What will you teach at the start of the year?

The first PD sets the floor. Cover orientation, search basics, the three flagship reports, the scope & sequence itself. Light on theory, heavy on doing.

What will you teach mid-year?

By mid-year, real questions emerge. Use them. Run a "bring your own question" workshop using the actual reports.

BEYOND THE BASICS

Encourage open dialogue, cross-school conversations, and feeder relationships. De-shame the data and have schools compare strategies, solutions, and results.

Who in your district has time and trust to deliver the PD?

Coaching from peers usually beats coaching from central office. The high-usage schools you identified in your usage metrics are your best PD allies.

What's the single PD habit you'll commit to this year that you didn't have last year?

Worked Example

An illustrative scope & sequence for an Elementary School. Not prescriptive — a model. Adapt the focus areas, patterns, and questions to your district's strategy and your school's context.

MONTH	FOCUS AREA	GOAL	PATTERNS TO LOOK FOR	QUESTION TO ANSWER
Aug	Onboarding & Climate	Establish baseline. Welcome every student.	Enrollment vs. projection. New-student concentration.	Who is new, who needs a connection, and who struggled last year?
Sep	Attendance	Catch the students sliding early.	3+ absences in first 20 days. Tardies trending up. Patterns by grade and section.	Which students need an attendance check-in this month?
Oct	Academic baseline	Use interim assessment to identify need.	Assessment vs. previous year. Below-grade-level concentration by classroom.	Where is targeted support most urgent?
Nov	MTSS & behavior	Confirm Tier 2 placements.	Students with 2+ early indicators (attendance, behavior, performance). Tier 2 caseload composition.	Are our Tier 2 supports reaching the right kids?
Dec	Family engagement	Strengthen partnership before winter break.	Conference attendance. Communication frequency by family.	Which families haven't we connected with yet?
Jan	Mid-year academic	Course-correct on instruction.	Mid-year benchmarks vs. early year. Standards mastery by classroom. Growth above and below median.	Where is instruction working — and where do we need to pivot?
Feb	Attendance recheck	Catch chronic absenteeism in time to act.	Chronic absenteeism YTD. Persistently chronically absent (mathematically locked) cohort.	Which students still have time to recover this year?
Mar	Subgroup & equity	Explicit equity check across the year so far.	Disaggregated patterns by population. Where gaps widen vs. close.	Which students are systems serving well, and which are systems leaving behind?
Apr	Transition planning	Prepare next-grade handoff.	Promotion-readiness indicators. Students at risk of retention.	What does each grade-level team need to know about students moving up?
May	Year reflection	Close the loop. Plan summer and fall.	What worked. What didn't. Cohort-level outcomes.	What do we keep, drop, and start next year?

Note. This is an illustrative example, not a recommendation for any specific district. Use as a starting point for the assembly worksheet on the next page. Source: framework adapted from WCS D's actual scope & sequence guidance, WCS D Department of Accountability.

Your Scope & Sequence

Pull the work from the previous worksheets into this single template. Aim for a v1 your principals can react to — not a final answer. Iterate after one full month of use.

MONTH	FOCUS AREA	PATTERNS TO LOOK FOR · QUESTION TO ANSWER	IMPLEMENTATION
Aug			
Sep			
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			
Jan			
Feb			
Mar			
Apr			
May			

BEFORE YOU SHIP V1

Check three things. **Is each month's focus actually answerable with data you'll have in time? Is the question for each month a real question a principal would care about? Is there a clear pattern to look for — not a vague directive?** If yes to all three, send to one principal you trust and ask: "If I gave you this in August, would you use it?"

The Data Scope & Sequence framework was developed by **Dr. Laura Davidson** and **Dr. JT Stark** at the Washoe County School District.