

Section 4

Moving Decisively Toward Data Eye on the Dashboard

- 4:1** Whetting Your School's Appetite for Data
- 4:2** Developing a School-wide Database
- 4:3** Learning from Perception Data
- 4:4** Learning from Process Data: Time for a Tune-Up
- 4:5** Mapping Your School's Resources

Most of us wouldn't move a vehicle very far if our dashboard gauges were on the fritz. We wouldn't know our speed, how much gas we had left, or whether our engine was overheating. But as educators, we've driven for years without data gauges... cruising blind on untested assumptions. It's not that our judgment is bad—we're professionals with hands-on experience and accumulated instincts and wisdom, and lots of times our assumptions are right on the money and empirically verifiable. But sometimes "common wisdom" runs right through counter-intuitive facts, and steers us down familiar dead-end alleys just because we've always "assumed it this way." And we'll never know which assumptions to trust if we don't light up our dashboard with a continuous flow of information we can steer by.

This cluster of packets encourages you to begin looking for data that is *school-wide but classroom-accessible and relevant*. Then build systems that pass the information along from year-to-year and teacher-to-teacher so individual student's progress can be followed. This allows us to assess our own teaching-and-learning systems for their effectiveness in moving *all* learners toward the goal.

Start by finding data you trust. Then steer by it.

