

Harvard Data Wise Framework

An Evidence-Based, Equity-Centered Approach to Continuous Improvement

Overview

The Harvard Data Wise Framework¹ is an evidence-based approach to helping schools and school systems make deep and sustained change in favor of greater equity in educational outcomes for all students. It supports school systems to build internal capacity and establish a strong culture for collaboration and using evidence, through a structured approach to continuous improvement that leads to meaningful change for central office leaders, school leaders, teacher teams, and -- most importantly -- the students and families they collectively serve. Koru Strategy Group is an approved service provider and implementation partner for the Harvard Data Wise Project.

About the Harvard Data Wise Project

Based at the [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) (HGSE), the [Harvard Data Wise Project](#) supports thousands of education professionals around the world through a continuous improvement process, shared norms for collaboration, and core habits of mind.

Centered on equity, the *purpose* of Data Wise is to support ALL students to thrive. The *process* of engaging in Data Wise empowers teams of educators with common language and practices to confidently understand their students’ challenges and strengths, identify ways to change specific elements of their practice, and intentionally plan how they will act and assess their own and their students’ growth.

Data Wise is a comprehensive process, supporting all elements of improvement: preparation, inquiry, and action. It focuses teams’ attention on key questions:

- What is most important to focus on?
- What do our students know/understand, what are their current strengths, and what are their growth opportunities?
- What are the many and varied sources of information and data that help us to build this understanding?
- How does this inform our instruction and practice, and what can we do to further advance our students’ learning and growth?

By becoming Data Wise, educator teams begin to shift the culture around collaboration and data in a way that positions them as the experts on their students’ learning and



¹Data Wise, revised and expanded edition: A step-by-step guide to using assessment results to improve teaching and learning by Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth A. City and Richard J. Murnane (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2020)
 Continuous Instructional Improvement at Scale, by Adam Parrott-Sheffer, Carmen Williams, David Rease Jr. and Kathryn Parker Boudett (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2024)

empowers them to surface and solve their own problems of practice in service of their students.

About Koru as a Data Wise Provider

Led by alumni of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and with strong ties to the Harvard Data Wise Project, [Koru Strategy Group](#) is an approved implementation provider for district-embedded Data Wise engagements. Koru has developed an approach to comprehensive, customized engagements that involves:

- planning and sessions with leadership to ensure readiness and coherence
- facilitating workshops for foundational learning
- leading monthly coaching throughout the school year to provide ongoing support as teams enact their improvement cycles.

This approach also builds long-term internal capacity beyond Year 1, through mentorship for Data Wise Coach Certification and the development of strategic sustainability and scaling plans.

Sample Year 1 Scope of Work

We develop and customize each scope of work to be responsive to the needs and priorities for each partner. The scope process begins with listening and learning so we can ensure our services are aligned to your desired outcomes and achieve a shared vision for success.

Many of Koru’s customized Data Wise engagements follow an arc of learning that involves two 2-day workshops (at launch and mid-cycle) and ongoing monthly coaching for teams to provide foundational learning, targeted coaching and feedback, and ongoing support and accountability. Note that timing and format may be adjusted to best fit needs and scheduling.

Timeline	Activities	Outcomes
2 months prior to workshop launch <i>July - Aug</i>	Planning and Pre-Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teams and participants confirmed; completed Enrollment Roster • All teams and participants receive communication re: purpose, process, and pre-work (1 month in advance) • All teams and participants complete pre-work before launch workshop, including needs assessment/baseline survey • Steering Team ensures all teams have access to data sources for workshop • Steering Team adapts content with customization for workshops and coaching to integrate initiatives into coherent common process
Month 1 <i>September</i>	Data Wise Launch Workshop 2-day Zoom workshop for teams to adopt and launch the Data Wise Improvement Process. Teams engage in foundational learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams develop foundational knowledge of the Data Wise Improvement Process, ACE Habits of Mind, and Data Wise Norms • Teams learn and practice key tasks for Data Wise Steps 1-5, the Prepare and Inquire phases, which lead to strong teams, structures, and data/assessment literacy, all through an equity lens • Teams, through dedicated and facilitated meeting time during the workshop, progress through Step 3 to surface a Priority

	and practice on the Prepare and Inquire Phases (Data Wise Steps 1-5)	<p>Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams leave with concrete next steps for progressing through the key tasks of Steps 4-5 after the workshop and with support through monthly coaching sessions
Months 2-4 <i>Oct-Dec</i>	<p>Monthly Data Wise Coaching</p> <p>Zoom coaching sessions to support all teams through the Prepare and Inquire Phases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams have access to a Data Wise coach and regular opportunities to reflect on progress, prepare for next steps, and receive targeted coaching and feedback as they enact key tasks and progress through the Inquire Phase and prepare for the Act Phase Teams document their progress, confirming their Learner-Centered Problem [student focused] and proposing a Problem of Practice [teacher focused] -- Steps 4-5
Month 5 <i>January</i>	<p>Mid-Cycle Workshop</p> <p>2-day Zoom workshop designed to provide targeted coaching as teams reach critical point in school improvement process, and to engage in foundational learning for the Act Phase (Data Wise Steps 6-8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams have opportunity to assess and refine their Learner-Centered Problems and Problems of Practice as they move from Inquiry to Action Teams enact the key tasks for Steps 6-8 of the Data Wise Improvement Process, the Act Phase, and emerge with a written Action Plan, including how they will collect data to assess and inform progress Teams experience a cross-team consultancy to share and receive feedback from their peers on their plans Teams leave with concrete next steps for enacting their action plans, assessing progress, and making adjustments, with support through monthly coaching sessions
Months 6-8 <i>Feb - Apr</i>	<p>Monthly Data Wise Coaching</p> <p>Zoom coaching sessions to support all teams in Action planning, implementation, assessment, and adjustment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams have access to a Data Wise coach and regular opportunities to reflect on progress, prepare for next steps, and receive targeted coaching and feedback as they enact key tasks and progress through the Act Phase Teams document their progress through the full Data Wise Improvement Process and assess changes in mindsets, practices, and student learning through an equity lens
Month 9 <i>May/June</i>	<p>Impact Assessment and Continued Planning</p> <p>90-minute meeting at end of Year 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected from all participants on what worked well and what could be improved/changed Documented action plans with data and artifacts from each team's improvement process over the year Project leaders assess progress and the degree to which year-long engagement met shared vision for success

Recent Continuous Improvement Partnerships

We are proud to have partnered with state-level teams, district executive cabinets, school instructional leadership teams, regional service providers, and other education organizations to help teams make deep

and sustained change in favor of greater equity in educational outcomes for all students. Recent work includes:

- **Pennsylvania Department of Education (PA)**

During SY19-20, Koru was the implementation and service provider for the Harvard Data Wise Project, working with PDE state leadership team, executive teams across 7 districts, and school leadership teams from 21 CSI schools (identified for turnaround) to integrate Data Wise practices into their PA Cycle of Improvement to transform school improvement planning process and action plans toward the goal of moving away from compliance and monitoring and toward meaningful change and improvement. Koru Strategy Group's services include: needs assessment, project design, content/curriculum development, and impact assessment; facilitating a series of 5 onsite workshops; leading monthly coaching sessions with each district; supporting coherence, scaling, and sustainability. In SY20-21, Koru continued to support PDE by mentoring 7 aspiring Data Wise Certified Coaches and training 15 PDE Regional Improvement Team members who support districts across the state. Koru was also engaged to support the Harrisburg School District, in its first year of receivership, to learn and adopt the Data Wise Improvement Process; and to scale the work across Pittsburgh Public Schools, expanding from work specifically with seven CSI schools to all 56 schools across the district.

- **Shelby County Schools (TN)**

Koru was engaged by the Harvard Graduate School of Education to lead a district-embedded engagement of the Data Wise Improvement Process for 25 iZone Schools (identified for turnaround) within Shelby County Schools as they learned and enacted an evidence-based, student-centered, equity-focused process for identifying student strengths and areas for growth to make deep and sustained changes to their instruction and practice. This engagement included needs assessment, customized content development and project design, executive coaching for district and iZone leaders, a series of two 2-day onsite workshops, and ongoing coaching for teams from 25 iZone schools on a monthly basis.

- **Hartford Public Schools (CT)**

Over three school years, Koru served as an implementation provider for the Harvard Data Wise Project and facilitated onsite workshops and ongoing coaching with the HPS executive team and data teams across the district's 40+ schools. Koru also led long-term capacity-building through both 1:1 coaching/mentorship and professional learning communities for ten individuals selected by the district to enter a formal coach certification program to sustain and scale functional data teams and effective instructional leadership across HPS. All ten individuals earned Data Wise Coach Certification in May 2020. Through our work, ILTs and data teams engaged in collaborative data inquiry cycles to make deep improvement in the district's strategic focus of literacy. Since SY18-19, we have coached 70+ teams across 40 schools, 6 executive teams at the central office, and 10 Data Wise Coach Candidates.