Identifying Desired Results
School Data Analysis through a Short Term WebQuest

[For information about Webquests, see
http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec596/about_webquests.html]

In designing an effective program for school improvement, we must not only examine our own individual course curriculum/activities, but we must first explore and analyze the "overall" school data. For example, as a high school chemistry teacher, I might discover school data that reveals that our (the entire school) student population does poorly in writing, and therefore I need to incorporate writing exercises into my lessons. I may put an emphasis on research and/or laboratory reports, and therefore rather than simply teach gas laws, I might ask for a report on one of the developers of one of the gas laws.

The Task

You and your School Improvement Team (S.I.T.) have been asked to assemble data, seek patterns, and begin to determine the areas of improvement which are necessary for *your school*. You should
- understand the demographics of your school,
- examine current performance on assessment exams and analyze trends,
- compare your performance to similar schools, and
- understand the infrastructure available at your school.

Background

Current trends call for increasing assessment of schools via standardized testing. However, although testing is being held up as a cure for educational failing, one must be able to access and evaluate the data gained by testing in order to guide your future plans. There are a number of sources of data on schools, which need to be integrated with the assessment data for this process to be worthwhile. For this exercise, each group will focus on one particular school ---either
Adams Elementary
Backus MS

The Process

1. Break up into teams of 3-4 members and assign tasks
2. Each member will explore background information and tasks assigned
3. The group members will come back for debriefing and will draft a "position statement" (notes on paper or in your head will be fine) based on the information gleaned from the relevant sites:
   - Understanding your target population. Possible sources for data are:
     - Explore school data from the http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/curriculum/assess1.html 2005 DCPS Assessment Database (click in the box on the right to see details)

- Profiles of State Education Systems for Use with NAEP (http://www.ccsso.org/naepprofiles/introduction.cfm) may also give insight although the latest survey results is a few tears old.
- http://www.ccsso.org/projects/Accountability_Systems/State_Profiles/ CCSSO
- http://www.census.gov/ Census Data
- Technology stats for DCPS http://hub.mspnet.org/index.cfm/11902
- National Public School and School District Locator Locate individual elementary or secondary schools or school districts by name, district, telephone number, or enrollment Data includes location, number of teachers and students, student/teacher ratio, students by grade and ethnicity/race
- National School Report Arranged by county with composite statistics for individual school districts School population, student-teacher raiot, average elementary and secondary class size, computers in elementary schools, percent of high school students going to college
- http://www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu/statistics.htm For more stats on just about anything—more than you will every need
- You can also try the schools website

- **Explore assessment data**
- **Analyze and interpret this data with particular view toward trends**
- **Discuss possible ways to improve by making use of state content standards and goals. e.g., as an entire unit/organization, what should be the focus for this school in the coming year?**

Conclusion

After completing this WebQuest, the members of your group, and the class as a whole, will **come to a consensus** regarding points of focus for the case study schools. The group members will come back for a debriefing (oral informal presentation), and will discuss a "position statement" based on the information gleaned. Make sure to keep track of particularly good locations for information.