Build Shared Mindsets Through Data Conversations

Unlocking the Power of Data to Drive Student Success

GRAD Partnership Community of Practice

November 5, 2026

THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP

Advancing Student Success Systems

The GRAD Partnership for Student Success

1 WHAT

Partnering with communities to use high-quality student success systems so that schools are empowered to graduate all students ready for the future.

2 WHO

3 HOW

- Providing multiple types of technical assistance to schools, districts, and states
- Building capacity of local Intermediaries to support schools/districts
- Developing tools and resources

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- **Plan a team data conversation to mine for implications for adult practice.**
- Utilize student experience data to strengthen your understanding of the problem before identifying solutions.
- Design solutions and plan action-reflection cycles.
- Reflect on progress and refine actions for the future.

Our Team



Andrea Cortes

Transformation Coach



Lauren Musial

Senior Transformation Coach

UChicago Network for College Success

Proud

GRAD Partnership

Organization

GRAD Partnership Community Members

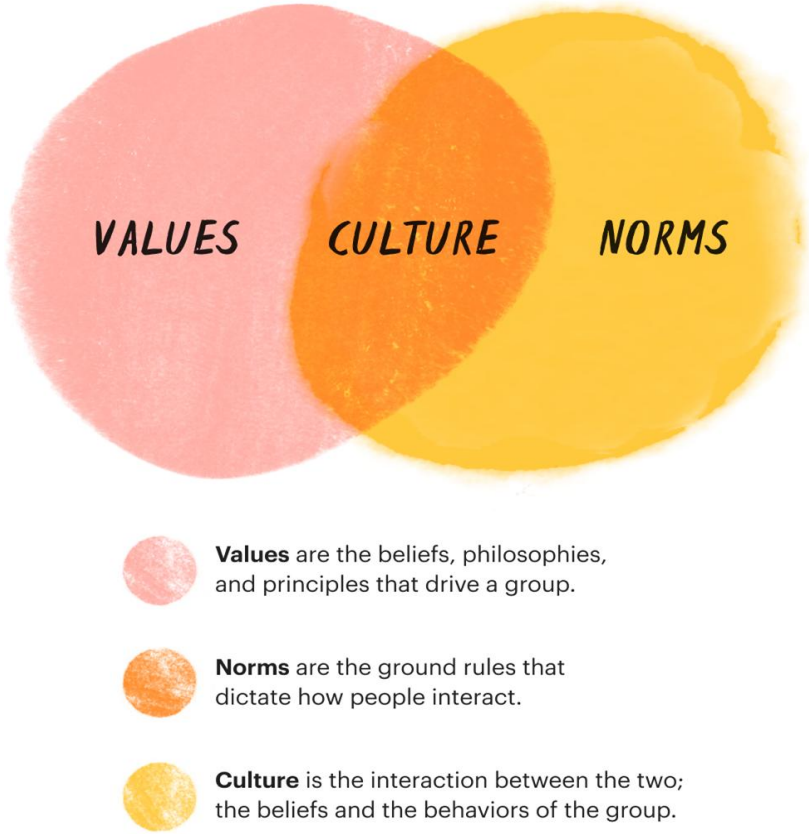
Welcome!

In the chat, please share your name, organization, and location.



Community Agreements

- **We, not me**: Share stories and air time
- **Accept non-closure**
- Chatham house rule: **Use the ideas, keep details in the community**
- **Share to learn**
- **Make room for joy**



Activity Guide

Link in chat

- Protocols
- Resources



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October 30, 2025

Build Shared Mindsets Through Data Conversations

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Community of Practice Learning Arc 2026-2027

Unlocking the Power of Data to Drive Student Success

Nov 5

Build Shared Mindsets Through Data Conversations

Have the necessary data-driven conversations to build a learning community with common language, purpose, attitudes and beliefs..

Jan 14

Deepen data conversations with voice data

Harness the power of voice data to understand the problem from the user perspective.

March 11

Design Strategic Student-Centered Actions

Turn insights into manageable, impactful actions.

Apr 29

Reflect to Refine and Sustain Success

Evaluate the use and impact of the actions and supports, and decide whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon a strategy

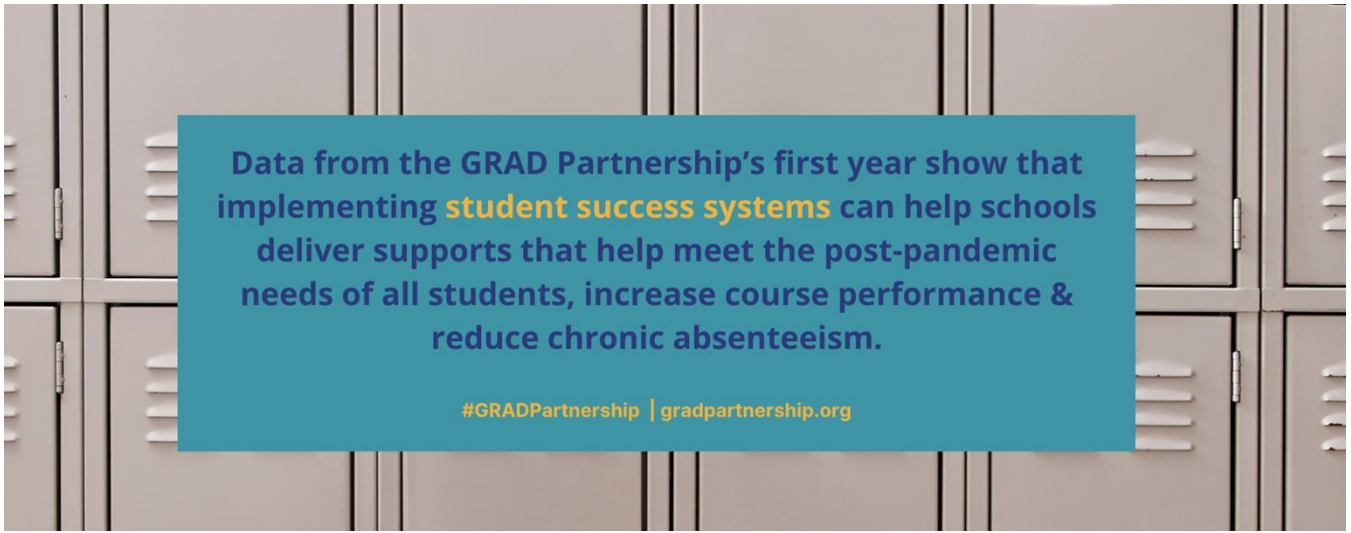
Student Success System

- A way to organize a school community to help address **school-wide** achievement patterns and school culture issues, increase school connectedness and a sense of belonging among students, and meet **individual** student needs.

- Combines a focus on building strong **relationships** with real-time, actionable, holistic **data**, result in strategic improvement **actions**, and are shaped by student-centered **mindsets**.

Impact

After 1-2 years of implementing student success systems, schools saw **reductions in chronic absenteeism** and **fewer course failures.**



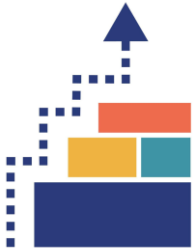
Four Components of Student Success Systems



Student-Centered Mindsets



Real-Time, Actionable, Holistic Data



Strategic Improvement Actions



Strong, Supportive Relationships

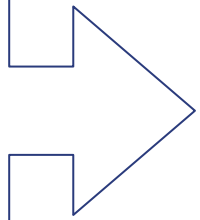
What makes a good data conversation?

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| Holistic, Real-Time, Actionable Data

- Research-based predictive indicators
- Insights from teachers, school staff, students, and families/caregivers
- Information about student well-being, belonging, school connectedness, and experiences in their classrooms.



- Continually available throughout the school year in as real time as possible
- Available at the student and teacher level,
- Actionable by school- and district-level personnel.

What is data for?



Data for Accountability

- School ratings
- Educator Evaluations
- Common lens with which educators view data



Data for Improvement

- Student data that informs PLC practice
- Non-evaluative
- Shared



Data for Transformation

- Undergird both Accountability & Improvement data
- Least served students in every school (who are they & what are their experiences & outcomes)
- Varied data: Outcome, voice, street data

What is data for?



Data for Accountability

How are we doing?



Data for Improvement

What can we do differently?



Data for Transformation

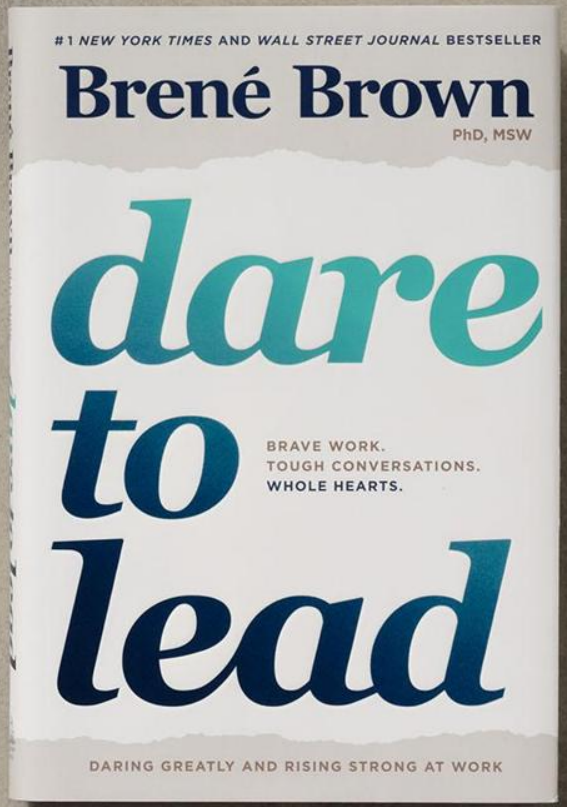
For whom are our systems working, for whom are they not, and what needs to change?

| Student-Centered Mindsets



- A collective understanding of purpose and commitment to centering students
- Adults work together with shared focus on, for example:
  - Equity
  - Inclusion
  - Empathy
  - Proactivity
  - Student agency

Armoring Up


#1 NEW YORK TIMES AND WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER
Brené Brown
PhD, MSW
dare to lead
BRAVE WORK.
TOUGH CONVERSATIONS.
WHOLE HEARTS.
DARING GREATLY AND RISING STRONG AT WORK

Understanding Our Armor

Self Doubt
I'm not enough

Fear of Vulnerability
If I'm honest, they'll think less of me.

Self Protection
No way I'm putting myself out there.

Resentment
Why would I be vulnerable when no one else is?

Blame
This is their fault.

Superiority
I'm actually better than them.

Armor In Data Conversations

Defending or Justifying
We're already doing everything we can.

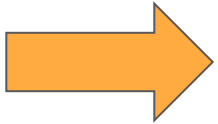
Shifting Blame to Students or Circumstances
Students just aren't motivated.

Dismissing or Discrediting Data
Those numbers are misleading.

Withdrawing or Disengaging
There's no point in having this conversation.

From Armor to Curiosity

Armored Up
We're already doing everything we can.
Students just aren't motivated
Those numbers are misleading.
There's no point in having this conversation.



Staying Curious
What might we need to do differently?
What might be shaping students engagement?
What can we learn from this data, and what might be missing?
What might we discover if we explore this together?

What might help you move from self-protection to curiosity in a difficult data conversation?

Courageous Leadership in Data Conversations

Notice our Armor - Our emotional responses can signal when we need to pause, reflect, and make a conscious choice about how to engage

Model Vulnerability - Lowering our armor creates opportunities for honest, connection, and learning

Create the conditions - Leaders shape whether teams feel safe enough to engage honestly, challenge assumptions, and learn together



| Student-Centered Mindsets

NCS Core Values of Practice Driven Data

Data strategy is a **social process** – the data is only as good as the **learning that supports it**.

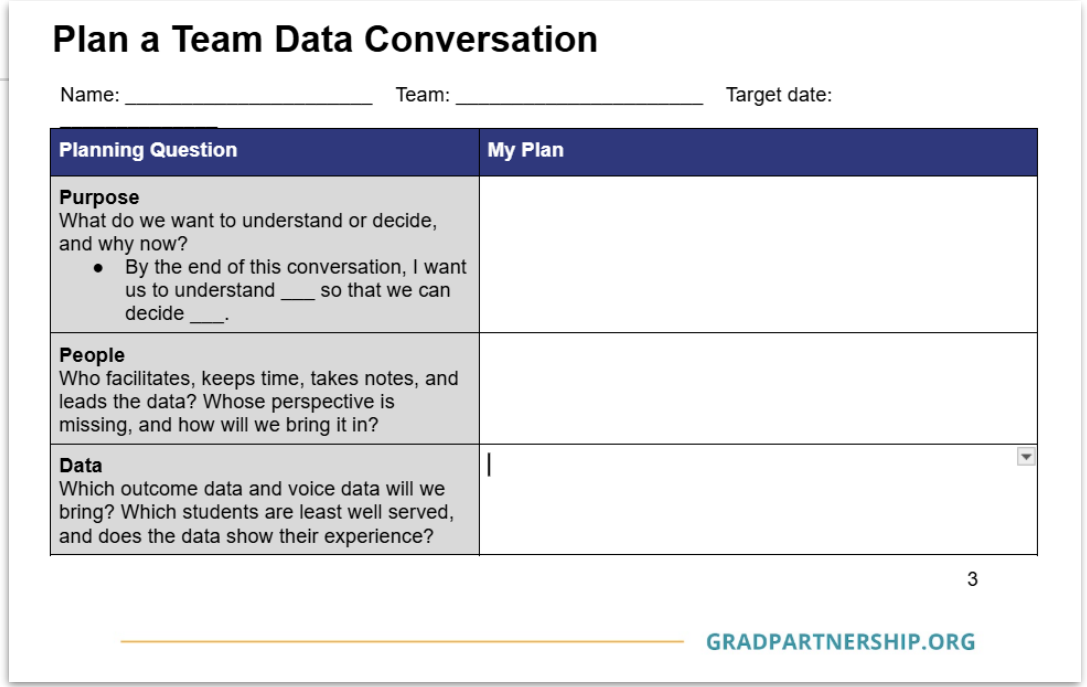
Plan the Data Conversation

1	**Purpose**	What do we want to understand or decide?
2	**People**	Who leads, who helps, and who is missing?
3	**Data**	What will we bring, and who might it leave out?
4	**Mindsets and Armor**	Which mindsets will we name? Who might armor up?
5	**Conversation Structure**	What steps, in what order, and for how long?
6	**Adult Practice**	What do adults do that shapes what we see?
7	**After the Conversation**	Who does what by when? How will we share back?

Choose a real conversation coming up in the next month.

Draft Your Plan

On Your Own in Activity Guide



Plan a Team Data Conversation

Name: _____ Team: _____ Target date:

Planning Question	My Plan
Purpose What do we want to understand or decide, and why now? • By the end of this conversation, I want us to understand ___ so that we can decide ___.	
People Who facilitates, keeps time, takes notes, and leads the data? Whose perspective is missing, and how will we bring it in?	
Data Which outcome data and voice data will we bring? Which students are least well served, and does the data show their experience?	

3

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Stuck on Purpose? Try this:
By the end of this conversation, I want us to understand ___ so that we can decide ___.

Pair Share

Take turns. Share your plan for about a minute, then get feedback.



What would you keep?



What question would you add?



Where might someone armor up?

Facilitators will hop in and out of breakout rooms.

Debrief the Process

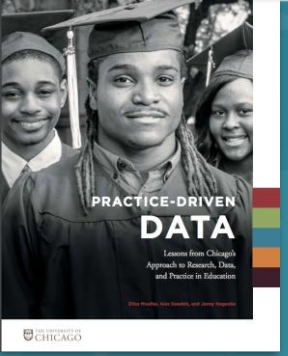
What did planning surface that you wouldn't have noticed in the moment?

Drop it in the chat!

Debrief today's Community of Practice

What is one main takeaway from today or possible next step you are now considering?

Drop it in the chat!



Data for Transformation

"Efforts to use data for improvement begin to create a culture where educators take data for accountability as a given, but where ***data for improvement becomes a core part of the culture*** *… It is a mistake to focus solely on either function for data … committing to using data for improvement requires committing to* ***openness, reflectiveness,*** *and some amount of* ***risk-taking*** *on the part of leaders who must be* ***willing to learn alongside*** *their systems and schools."*

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"Practice-Driven Data: Lessons from Chicago's Approach to Research, Data, and Practice in Education",

Closing Moves

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Share Your Feedback!



Grad Partnership Community of Practice (SY26-27)

Thank you for being part of our community and for offering honest feedback and input to create engaging community meetings.

https://tinyurl.com/GPcop2627

Looking forward…

Register for Jan. 14 CoP:
Session 2: Deepen Data Conversations with Voice Data

Subscribe to our newsletter for the latest CoP details!

Find us on:

- LinkedIn (The GRAD Partnership)
- X (@GRADpartners)

Thank You

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