

Bernhardt V. (2003). No Schools Left Behind, *Educational Leadership*, (26-30).

In the article “No Schools,” Victoria L. Bernhardt discusses how schools can paint a better picture of how to improve learning for their students by gathering, intersecting, organizing and analyzing four important kinds of data. The four kinds of data are demographic, student learning, perceptions, and school process. Each piece of data is able to answer different questions about the effectiveness of a school, but by combining them you can answer almost all. Most schools begin to improve with the use of data, but it is not easy when the data is unorganized and not easily accessible for analysis.

Bernhardt shows how looking at only one category of data gives you very basic information. It is truly necessary to intersect numerous data categories over time to really be able to gain a complex picture of your students’ performance, but many things factor into this. For data to hold truth it needs to be done well and have the technical support of knowledgeable people. Bernhardt feels that school districts must have data warehouses to store all the information and allow its elements to be quickly and easily accessible. Bernhardt thinks that not having a data warehouse should no longer be an option. The data is there and has been there for years, but for a longtime no one used it. The hard part is not collecting the data but putting it all together, breaking it down by all different categories, and most importantly making it accessible to all teachers all the time. Bernhardt states that teachers should be able to gain access to the data at schools and in the classroom. Just talking about it and looking and bits and pieces of it does not help the educators or the pupils. Data should be able to be viewed in graphs, broken down in all different ways quickly and easily, followed from pre-K through grade 12, and able to be used

without having to follow complex instructions. Teachers need to be able to see their students' data coming into their classroom, during the course of the year, and at the completion of school.

The importance of data is very evident in our schools. It is therefore imperative for districts to provide some means of the analyzing data in a timely fashion so that teachers may study the results, and better prepare themselves to address the deficiencies of their students. Educators must start the school year knowing and understanding what students know and what they need to learn. This is the only way we can push for success in the everyday classroom.