Learning from VARIATION
Do you think there are schools in your district who are **bright spots** when it comes to serving students in your equity groups? 
*List them, and note why you predict this.*

Do you think there are schools in need of **special support**? 
List them, and note why you predict this.
LEARNING FROM VARIATION PROTOCOL

Agreements:
● Stay curious… focus on learning, not judging
● Share the air… step up, step back, use the chat
● Lean info discomfort… that is where the learning happens

Individual Reflection before Protocol:
What is “GOOD” for your key metric?

Express it as a mean percentage that is “Electrifying, not Electrocuting” (i.e. 85% complete the FAFSA/CADA)

Note: Define “good” based on what you would be PROUD of. For now, rely on your vision for our kids, not on current data.

The Facilitator leads the group through the following steps:

1. Defining “Good” (2 minutes)
Each person shares what they think “good” would be for your network's key metric (in 30 seconds or less). You don't need to arrive at a shared understanding of this right now - the purpose is just to share and notice.

2. Individual Review of Data (4 minutes)
What do you notice about the mean? What do you notice about the variation - is it all normal/random or are there schools above or below the control limits? Which schools are bright spots? Which schools need extra support?

3. Noticings (5 minutes)
Each person shares one thing that they notice about the chart.
Helpful Sentence Frame: I notice...
### LEARNING FROM VARIATION
PROTOCOL (continued)

#### 4. Equity Pause (3 minutes to individually journal)
How does the data match or challenge your predictions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What <strong>emotions</strong> come up for you when you look at your data? What is evoking these emotions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on a school that <strong>matched your predictions</strong>. What do you attribute that to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on a school that <strong>didn't match your predictions</strong>? Why do you think that is?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Take some time to reflect on what <strong>was behind your hunches</strong> about who would be a bright spot or not. How might your own identity markers, bias, or assumptions about the students/team/school/system have influenced your predictions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5. Equity Pause (3 minutes to share)
Each person shares any feelings that arose and assumptions that may have been at play during their predictions.  
*Helpful Sentence Frame: I felt... I realized...*

#### 6. Wonderings (1 minute of think time, then 5 minutes to share)
Each person shares a question that emerged for them about this data.  
*Helpful Sentence Frame: I wonder...*

#### 7. Hypotheses (1 minute of think time, then 5 minutes to share)
Each person shares possible explanations for the data, careful to identify multiple explanations and focus on systems/conditions rather than teams/individuals.  
*Helpful Sentence Frame: This could be because... OR it could be because...*
LEARNING FROM VARIATION
DECISION TREE

IDENTIFY KEY METRIC

DECIDE WHAT “GOOD” IS

ANALYZE VARIATION

ARE THERE BRIGHT SPOTS? (I.E. MEANINGFUL VARIATION)

YES

GO AND SEE.
Start with the front line.
Interview & observe.

WHAT ARE BRIGHT SPOTS DOING DIFFERENTLY?

NO

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THIS LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE?

YES

CELEBRATE!

NO

SEARCH FOR POWERFUL NEW IDEAS FROM OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM.

HOW CAN WE SPREAD BRIGHT SPOT PRACTICES?
**NEXT STEPS**

**TEAM TIME**

**Twist the Rubik’s Cube:** What questions could you explore with p-charts to understand how different students experience your schools - and to take action?

**Bright Spots:** Who are the bright spots you need to learn from? What are your next steps for learning?

**Sites to Support:** Which schools need extra support right now? What might you do with them, not to them?

**New Ideas:** If your network was all common cause (i.e. random variation), what new ideas might you introduce?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Individual Reflection Before Protocol</strong></th>
<th>When thinking about your key metric, what would be a good outcome? Express it as a percent/mean. <strong>Note:</strong> Define “good” based on what would really be good, NOT based on the current reality or what seems feasible at the moment. Rely on your vision for our kids, not on current data.</th>
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</table>
| **1. Defining “Good” (5 minutes)** | The facilitator asks and drops in the chat: “What would your key metric look like if a school is doing well? When thinking about your metric, what is a “good” result?”  
Waterfall Chat (1 minute) | Each person types their response into the chat. After one minute, the facilitator cues everyone to press “enter” at the same time.  
Verbal Share-Out (4 minutes) | Facilitator invites some folks to expand on their responses. You don’t need to arrive at a shared understanding of this right now - the purpose is just to share and notice. |
| **2. Individual Review of Data (5 minutes)** | The facilitator asks and drops in the chat: “Do you see any bright spots or schools who need extra support? Is the variation all normal or is there some meaningful variation?”  
Waterfall Chat (1 minute) | Each person types their response into the chat. After one minute, the facilitator cues everyone to press “enter” at the same time.  
Verbal Share-Out (4 minutes) | Facilitator invites some folks to expand on their responses. You don’t need to arrive at a shared understanding of this right now - the purpose is just to share and notice. |
| **3. Notice & Wonder (5 minutes)** | The facilitator asks and drops in the chat: “What do you notice about the data in your chart? Stick to what you see, and avoid interpretation at this point in the protocol. What questions emerge for you about this data?”  
Waterfall Chat (1 minute) | Each person types their response into the chat. After one minute, the facilitator cues everyone to press “enter” at the same time.  
Verbal Share-Out (4 minutes) | Facilitator invites some folks to expand on their responses. You don’t need to arrive at a shared understanding of this right now - the purpose is just to share and notice. |
### 4. Equity Pause (5 minutes)

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<th>The facilitator asks and drops in the chat:</th>
<th>“What <strong>emotions</strong> come up for you when you imagine this is your data? What is evoking these emotions?”</th>
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### 5. Hypotheses Part 1 (5 minutes)

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<th>The facilitator asks and drops in the chat:</th>
<th>“What might explain the data we see? Focus on systems and conditions, rather than teams and individuals.”</th>
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<td>Waterfall Chat (1 minute)</td>
<td>Each person types their response into the chat. After one minute, the facilitator cues everyone to press “enter” at the same time.</td>
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### 6. Hypotheses Part 2 (5 minutes)

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<th>The facilitator asks and drops in the chat:</th>
<th>“How do you think that data from our own system would compare to the data in the system represented on this chart? What makes you think that? What might you do to check your hypothesis?”</th>
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<td>Waterfall Chat (1 minute)</td>
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RESOURCES
TO LEARN MORE

Understanding Variation
by Thomas W. Nolan and Lloyd P. Provost

The run chart: a simple analytical tool for learning from variation in healthcare processes
by Rocco J Perla, Lloyd P Provost and Sandy K Murray