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# Hey Shawnta! My Principal Started the Year by Showing Us Student Data From Last Year. We Were Told to 'Do Better,' but Weren't Given Real Strategies. What Do I Do Now?



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by Shawnta S. Barnes [f](#) [X](#) [in](#) [✉](#)

## Hey Shawnta!

**My principal started the year by showing us student data from last year. It was bad. All we were told was 'do better.' No real strategies, just a lot of teacher bashing. What do I do now? Sincerely,**

## Stranded without Strategies

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Hi, Stranded without Strategies —

Teacher bashing has never helped anyone. It doesn't help teachers, and it most certainly does not help teachers improve student outcomes.

Although you may be irritated with your principal right now, at least the principal has looked at the data and is passionate about improving. As a teacher, you are the boots on the ground that will make the learning happen. Since school data is not where it needs to be, there are

apparent skill gaps in instruction or classroom environment if the data is behavior data.

## **Review the Data & Make Connections**

Review the data the principal shared and think about how that data connects to your classroom. Reflect upon where you wanted to do better regarding the data. Next, schedule a meeting with your principal and share that you want to improve students' outcomes. Ask if there will be training or if there is a teacher who is demonstrating success with whom you could speak about strategies.

## **Collaborate With Your Colleagues**

If you don't want to approach your principal or if your principal isn't helpful, talk with other teachers to see what their plans are. They might have found a resource to use that will help with student outcomes.

## **Do Your Research**

Last, do your own research. I know you probably do not want to spend all of your free time searching for resources, but sometimes you have to take the time to find your own solutions when they aren't provided. And, if this is the category you are in, you might consider looking into switching to another school next school year.

Shawnta

## Shawnta S. Barnes

Shawnta (Shawn-tay) S. Barnes, also known as Educator Barnes, is a married mother of identical twin boys. She navigates education from not only the educator's perspective but also the parent's perspective. She has been an educator for nearly two decades. Shawnta works with K-12 schools, universities, & education adjacent organizations through her education consulting business Blazing Brilliance. She is an adjunct college professor, supervises student teachers, Indy Kids Winning Editor-in-Chief, Brave Brothers Books Co-founder, & CEO, and Brazen Education Podcast host. She holds five education licenses: English/language arts 5-12, English to speakers of other languages P-12, library/media P-12, reading P-12, and school administration P-12, and she has held a job in every licensed area. Previously, she has served as a school administrator, English teacher, English learners teacher, literacy coach, and librarian. She won the 2019 Indiana Black Expo Excellence in Education Journalism Award. In 2023, she completed her doctorate in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education with a minor in Learning Sciences. She is an urban gardener in her spare time and writes about her harvest-to-table journey at [gardenershicole.com](https://www.gardenershicole.com). To learn more about Shawnta, visit [educatorbarnes.com](https://www.educatorbarnes.com).

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