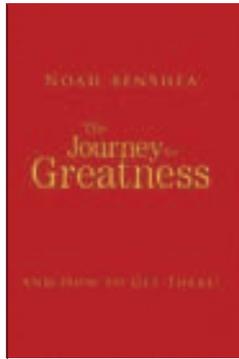


# Greatness Is Within Your Reach

**The Journey to Greatness and How to Get There.** Noah benShea. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2006, 132 pages. *Available from:* Corwin Press, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320, [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com). \$30.95.

**"Y**es, greatness is waiting for you. But there is no telling how long it will wait." In his book, *The Journey to Greatness and How to Get There*, Noah benShea assures you that greatness is within your reach. Through short, simple chapters on communication, charity, resiliency, wellness, solitude, and other ideas, benShea presents his insights on a variety of character, leadership, and organizational traits. Referencing each trait as a



“station” on the journey to greatness, he believes that compiling these traits leads one to greatness. Each chapter offers words of wisdom, inspiring stories, and quotations to support the chapter’s trait. It is these words that prepare you for the most important part of benShea’s book—self-reflection. At each “stop” on the journey, the author presents you with reflection questions in which you consider personal experiences, inspiring people, and personal values as you think about the role of this trait in your life. For example, in the chapter on communication, questions include “What is the most important conversation you have ever had with someone, and what did you learn from it?” and “Who is someone you would like to say something to right now but are

hesitant to talk with?” Through open space, benShea encourages you to record your thoughts and feelings for later reflection as well.

Although it is not a book for gathering new information about greatness or developing a specific action plan for greater success, it is unlike other books in that it provides you with information and questions for self-reflection. Through this approach, benShea helps you uncover your strengths and refocus your efforts as you journey toward greatness.

Understanding the busy lives of leaders, benShea has created a book that you do not need to read cover to cover. Instead, you can select the chapters that will help you the most on your journey. In this way, he has developed a book that is easy to use and worthy of your consideration.

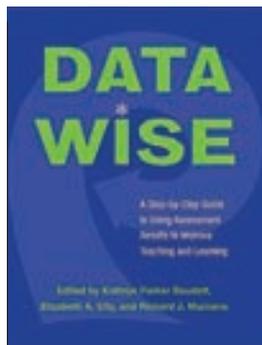
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# Making Sense of All the Data

**Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning.** Edited by Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth A. City, and Richard J. Murnane. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press, 2006, 199 pages. *Available from:* Harvard Education Press, 8 Story St., 1st Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138. \$29.95.

**W**hen I began my career as a principal, data collected to improve student learning could fit in one folder. Thirteen years later, a year’s worth of student data easily fills an entire drawer. The amount of data increased, and so has the amount of time dedicated to analyzing it. In an effort to help schools effectively organize data and overcome this barrier of time, the Harvard Graduate School of Education partnered



with school leaders from three Boston public schools for a two-year collaboration. The result is *Data Wise*, which answers the question, “How do leaders transform mountains of data on student achievement into an action plan that will improve instruction and increase student learning?”

The Data Wise Improvement Process outlines eight steps to help schools prepare, inquire, and act upon available data, including organizing for collaborative work, building assessment literacy, examining instruction, and developing an action plan. Though most of the elements of the improvement process are not novel, the editors organize the information in a well-thought-out plan that results in a culture of inquiry

focused on action above analysis.

The process first requires school teams to create a data inventory and an instructional initiatives inventory. Through the inventories, schools are able to determine whether the data they collect is meaningful and whether their instructional initiatives are focused and cohesive. These steps create the foundation for the remainder of the team’s work of developing, implementing, and monitoring a plan of action.

Through the use of the improvement process, my staff has escaped the trap of being stuck in data analysis and moved toward significant action. We look critically at how data works in concert with instructional initiatives. If you’re interested in creating more time for action while reducing the time spent on the data shuffle, this book is a must-have.

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