The diagram shows a circular process cycle with the following stages arranged clockwise: **Gather & Analyze Data to Determine Priorities**, **Explore Possible Solutions**, **Assess Readiness & Build Capacity**, **Create & Communicate Improvement Plan**, **Implement the Plan**, **Monitor & Adjust**. At the center are four overlapping circles labeled **Collaborative Leadership & Professional Learning Communities**, **Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment**, **Improved Student Performance**, and **Personalization**.

The Process to Break Ranks in Your School: A Synopsis

At the core, all efforts to change your school must ultimately be focused on improved student performance. To be successful, all steps of the *Breaking Ranks* change process must be based on a **shared vision**, promoted by **collaborative leadership** and supported by **professional development**.

1. **Gather and Analyze Data to Determine Priorities**

   Carefully examine all available data to **determine priorities**. To paint an accurate big-picture look at the school, data must be gathered from a wide variety of sources and used to determine the areas of greatest need. To be effective the data must be personalized—faces must be put on the numbers.

   Gather Data:
   a. *Demographic data:* Ethnic population, mobility rate, poverty indicators, parents' education, housing, etc.
   b. *Academic data:* State test scores; other testing data (SAT, ACT, PSAT, etc); district, school, and classroom assessments; failure rates; interim progress reports; observations of classroom practice—what's actually happening in the classroom; etc.
   c. *Diagnostic assessment data:* Reading, writing, mathematics (RTI)
   d. *Behavioral data:* Attendance, suspensions, referrals, expulsions, interventions, counselor visits, bullying issues, harassment, etc.
   e. *Miscellaneous data:* NASSP's satisfaction surveys (staff, parents, students—visit www.principals.org), surveys of business and community members, exit interviews and surveys, etc.
   f. *Student perception data:* Student shadowing, student forums, for example NASSP's Raising Student Voice and Participation model—RSVP.

Analyze Data:
Sort by subgroups; look for patterns, growth, and declines over time and correlations across subjects; equity of access to challenging classes; etc.

2. **Explore Possible Solutions**
Based on the priorities derived from analyzing the data, **explore possible solutions** that will lead to improved student performance. Consider categories such as curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, equitable access to programs, academic support, and interventions as potential goal areas. Conduct site visits and talk with other school leaders. (See *Breaking Ranks II* and *Breaking Ranks in the Middle*.)

3. **Assess Readiness and Build Capacity**
Determine what must be in place in order to successfully implement the needed changes. **Assess** staff needs, organizational structures, programs, and curricula to determine the school's **readiness** and overall **capacity** to address the identified priorities. **Build capacity** to address these needs through professional development, reallocating resources, and revising schedules.

4. **Create and Communicate Improvement Plan**
Based on stakeholder input and the information gained from the previous step, establish goals for an **improvement plan** that is designed to improve student performance. Incorporate those goals into all aspects of school improvement planning and ensure clear **communication** with all involved parties.

5. **Implement the Plan**
Just do it! (See *Breaking Ranks II* and *Breaking Ranks in the Middle* for proven strategies to guide implementation.)

6. **Monitor and Adjust**
As the plan is implemented, determine regular check points to **monitor** progress. Repeat surveys as appropriate. As additional data is collected and analyzed, make **adjustments** or refinements as needed. Be sure to share results and progress.

Let's take a look at how one school's effective planning of a *Breaking Ranks* strategy and a culture of openness to new ideas fostered far-reaching changes that affected the entire school community and "map" the change to the *Breaking Ranks* Process Circle to give you a better idea of how initiatives can be implemented.

nassp
national association of
secondary school principals