



Using Data To Improve Student Achievement

www.DataQualityCampaign.org

The Data Quality Campaign is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to:

- Improve the collection, availability, and use of high-quality education data, and
- Implement state longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement.

The campaign aims to provide tools and resources that will assist states in their development of quality longitudinal data systems, while also providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focusing on improving data quality, access, and use.

GOALS OF THE DQC:

- Longitudinal education data systems in 50 states by 2009
- Increased understanding by policymakers and educators of how to use longitudinal and financial data in their efforts to improve student achievement
- Promotion of data standards and efficient data transfer and exchange

MANAGING PARTNERS:

Achieve, Inc

National Center for Educational Accountability*

Alliance for Excellent Education

National Center for Higher Education Mgt Systems

Council of Chief State School Officers

NGA Center for Best Practices

Education Commission of the States

Schools Interoperability Framework Association

The Education Trust

Standard & Poor’s School Evaluation Services

National Association of System Heads

State Higher Education Executive Officer

The campaign is managed by the National Center for Educational Accountability and supported by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

TOOLS & RESOURCES:

Measuring What Matters: Creating a Longitudinal Data System to Improve Student Achievement—highlights the reasons why state data systems should incorporate longitudinal data to maximize the quality of information used in education

Creating a Longitudinal Data System: Using Data to Improve Student Achievement—explains the essential elements and policy benefits of state longitudinal data

State of the State Data Systems—Provides snapshot of every state’s progress in creating a longitudinal education data system, as well as the policy implications based on the “completeness” of each state system. These snapshots are presented at www.DataQualityCampaign.org

Case Studies on State Approaches to Building Longitudinal Data Systems—Describes the experiences of states that have built longitudinal data systems, including the costs, challenges, pitfalls, and valuable perspectives offered in hindsight. (Spring 2006)

Toolkits on Using Longitudinal Data—Provides specific examples of the information on school/student performance that is made possible from longitudinal data. See how different stakeholders—parents, legislators, administrators—can use this information to support academic achievement. (Summer/Fall 2006)

On-line Resource Center – www.DataQualityCampaign.org is a one-stop resource center on Education Data Quality that synthesizes and catalogs existing resources and provides a map of the current efforts to improve the quality, accessibility, and use of data to improve student achievement.

CONTACT US: For more information on the Data Quality Campaign visit www.DataQualityCampaign.org; for specific questions, please email Aimee Guidera at aguidera@just4kids.org or call at 703-303-6912.

10 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS of a Longitudinal Data System

A complete state longitudinal data system includes the following 10 essential elements:

1. **A unique statewide student identifier.** As students move from grade to grade and from district to district, this ID number will allow states to track the progress of every student over time, from kindergarten through grade 12.
2. **Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information.** This information will help measure which programs are helping students succeed. It also will help account for students who transfer from school to school and ensure that test data are disaggregated correctly.
3. **The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.** Being able to match test records for individual students from last year to this year will provide valuable diagnostic information to teachers and principals and will help educators monitor each student's academic growth.
4. **Information on untested students.** With this information, states can ensure that students from all groups are participating in state tests and account for students who were exempted from the tests.
5. **A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.** Many states collect data on teacher education and certification, but matching teachers to students by classroom and subject is critical to understanding the connection between teacher training and qualifications and student academic growth.
6. **Student-level transcript information,** including information on courses completed and grades earned. States will be able to track course-taking patterns and analyze their relationship to success on state assessments and readiness for college and work.
7. **Student-level college readiness test scores.** Student performance on the SAT, SAT II, ACT, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and other college readiness exams is a good indicator of whether students are prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and work. Some states are going a step further by building college readiness tests into their statewide assessment systems.
8. **Student-level graduation and dropout data.** A majority of states currently collect annual records on individual graduates and dropouts, but to calculate the graduation rates defined in the new National Governors Association compact, states need to be able to track individual students over time.
9. **The ability to match student records between the Pre K–12 and higher education systems.** Opening lines of communication between Pre K–12 and higher education is critical to ensuring that students succeed at the postsecondary level. Connecting student performance in college to what happens in high school will give high schools the information they need to align curriculum and instruction to ensure that graduates are better prepared for college and work.
10. **A state data audit system** assessing data quality, validity and reliability. The decisions made in education are only as good as the information on which they are based.

These 10 elements are essential but not sufficient. Policymakers need to plan for a series of next-generation improvements — in fact, some states are already working on them. In the future, data systems should make it possible to:

- **Connect school performance with spending.** A longitudinal data system identifies which schools and school systems perform well. But to better understand what it costs to improve student performance, states also need to collect financial information at the school and program levels and link it to individual student achievement data over time.
- **Connect school performance to employment.** Educators and policymakers need to know whether schools are preparing students for long-term success in the workplace, not just in college. Obtaining this information requires matching the academic (both Pre K–12 and postsecondary) and employment records of individual students.
- **Transfer records across states.** In an increasingly mobile world, people regularly move across state borders, making it difficult to tell, for example, whether a student has dropped out or has moved to a new state. Therefore, not only do data systems need to be able to exchange information with other systems — such as higher education — within the state, but they also need to be able to exchange information with systems in other states. The key is ensuring that data systems built by different vendors in different states use common data standards and definitions.

In a state-of-the-art data system, it should be possible to transfer student records easily, protect student privacy, develop clear data definitions and requirements, and organize the data system to facilitate data use and user-friendly reporting.

The Data Quality Campaign Partners are poised to help policymakers build, support and use these longitudinal data systems as an invaluable tool to improve student achievement.