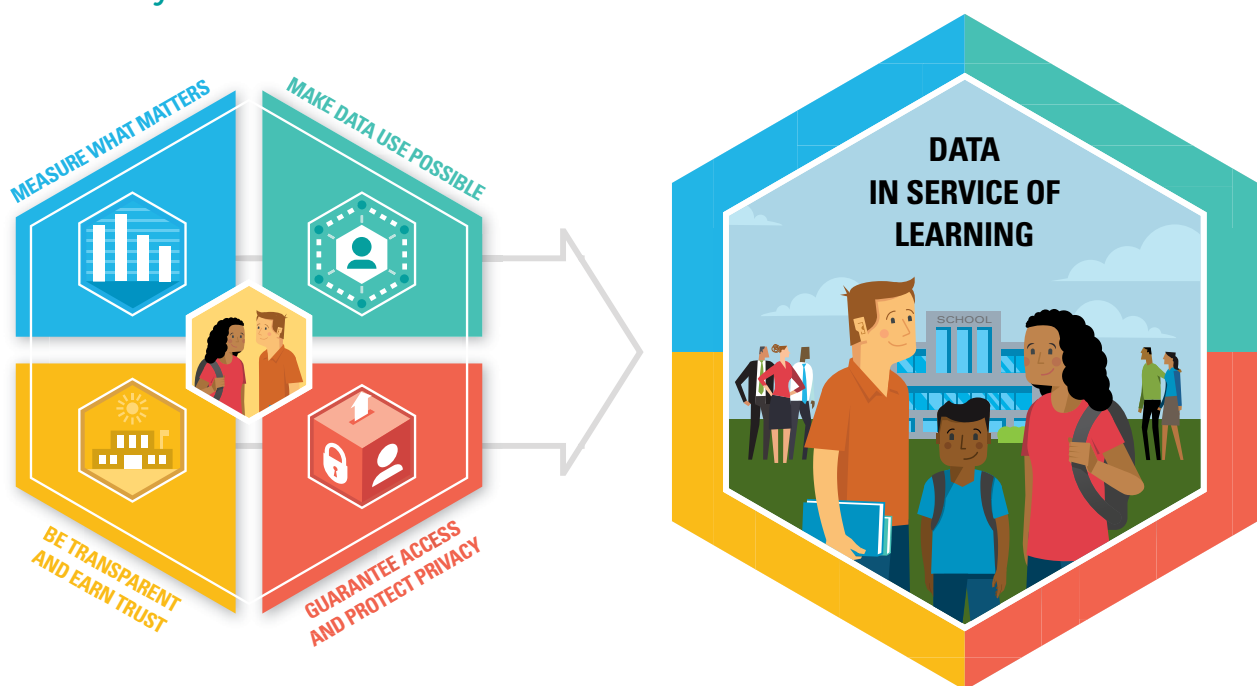


# TIME TO ACT

## Federal Actions to Make Data Work for Students

All students deserve a great education, one that affords them every opportunity to grow into knowledgeable and successful adults. To make this vision a reality, students, parents, educators, and policymakers must have access to the right information to make decisions and support student learning. The Data Quality Campaign's Four Policy Priorities to Make Data Work for Students show how policymakers at the federal, state, and district levels can take action to achieve this vision. The federal government is uniquely positioned to support and incentivize the data practices of state and local education agencies by helping develop best practices, conduct research, provide guidance, and remove policy barriers. Federal leaders must act now and make data work for students.

### The Four Policy Priorities to Make Data Work for Students



### Policy Alignment Is Essential

Policy alignment at all levels creates a culture that values and uses data for continuous improvement and empowers those closest to students with the high-quality information they need to make the best decisions. When all three levels of government work together, families, educators, and decisionmakers get clarity about how to make data work for students. To support this alignment, DQC's Four Policy Priorities provide recommendations for federal, state, and district leaders to make effective education data use possible.

While there are discrete policy recommendations for each level of government, they are all built upon the same **five guiding principles**.

- 1. Students are central.** Data must be used to support student learning and to ensure that each student's individual needs are met.
- 2. Data systems are not enough.** States must shift their focus from building systems to empowering people.
- 3. Data needs to be tailored to the user.** All stakeholders in education require quality information, but the type and grain size of the data they need depend on the needs of the individual.
- 4. Data is used for different purposes,** including transparency, continuous improvement, and accountability. Not all data collected needs to be used for all three of these purposes.
- 5. Stakeholder engagement is critical.** People who need the data—including teachers, principals, and parents—must be involved in the creation of policies for access and use.

# Federal Leaders Must Take Action

Federal policymakers have a unique role in creating a culture that values and uses data for continuous improvement and that empowers families, educators, and education leaders with the high-quality information they need and deserve to make great decisions for students. Federal policymakers must help develop the policies, guidance, resources, collaboration, and expertise needed to reduce state and local data burden, promote purposeful cross-sector and cross-state data linkages, and shine a light on promising practices and important skills. Federal leaders must support these nine recommendations to make data work for students across the country.



## MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

*Be clear about what students must achieve and have the data to ensure that all students are on track to succeed.*

- Be clear what questions you want to answer across federal agencies and collect the data you need—and no more.
- Support the development and use of purposeful data linkages across systems, sectors, and states.



## BE TRANSPARENT AND EARN TRUST

*Ensure that every community understands how its schools and students are doing, why data is valuable, and how it is protected and used.*

- Provide useful information to the public about how the education sector is performing.
- Communicate clearly about how federal data is safeguarded and used to support student learning and incentivize states and districts to do the same.



## MAKE DATA USE POSSIBLE

*Provide teachers and leaders the flexibility, training, and support they need to answer their questions and take action.*

- Lead by example and use data to inform decisionmaking and improve policy alignment within and across federal, state, and district levels.
- Build capacity within state and local agencies to support the effective use of data.
- Ensure that all educators have the skills and supports to use data in service of learning.



## GUARANTEE ACCESS AND PROTECT PRIVACY

*Provide teachers and parents timely information on their students and make sure it is kept safe.*

- Ensure that those closest to students have role-based access to the student data they need to support individual learning.
- Ensure that student privacy is safeguarded at every level as data is used in service of learning.



The Data Quality Campaign is a nonprofit policy and advocacy organization leading the effort to bring every part of the education community together to empower educators, families, and policymakers with quality information to make decisions that ensure that students excel. For more information, go to [www.dataqualitycampaign.org](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@EdDataCampaign).

For more information about the role of federal policymakers in making data work for students and about the Data Quality Campaign's Four Policy Priorities, visit [www.dataqualitycampaign.org](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org).