

Shining a Light on Equity

Opportunities to Use Data to Serve All Students



Data is a powerful tool to highlight inequities in education and help identify solutions. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that states include information aligned with the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) on their annual report cards, including measures of school climate, quality, safety, and student enrollment in programs like prekindergarten and Advanced Placement (AP). Because minority, low-income, English language learner, and other student populations are often underserved, this information is critical to understanding and ameliorating inequities in access to high-quality schools, teachers, and coursework.

State education agencies and policymakers must take advantage of this opportunity in ESSA to go beyond compliance with federal reporting requirements. States can collect their own timely data on issues related to equity, publicly report it in meaningful ways, and act

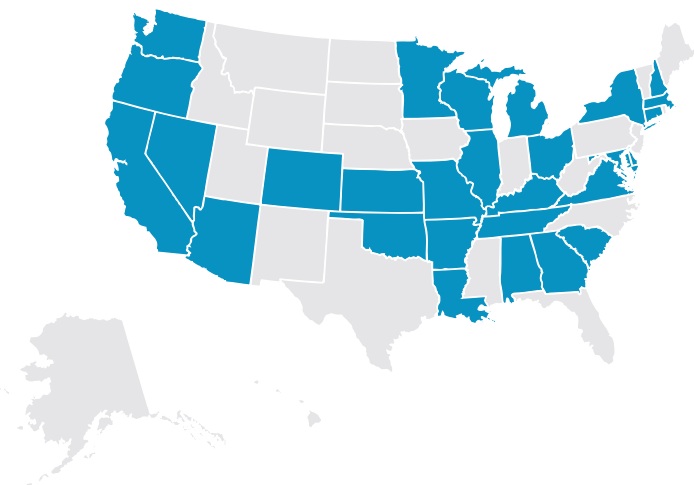
on it to make policy decisions that support all students' success and transform data from a tool of compliance to one that fuels continuous improvement in addressing education inequities.



States Must Invest in Reporting Data on Education Inequities

Several states are already making efforts to report and use data on topics similar to those addressed by the CRDC.

According to a 2016 review, 28 states and Washington, DC, already publicly report data about education access and equity on their state report cards.



The most commonly reported indicators include measures of the following:

1. Attendance (i.e., attendance rate, chronic absence)
2. Discipline (i.e., suspensions, expulsions)
3. School safety, climate, and environment
4. Student mobility
5. Advanced coursework (AP, dual or concurrent enrollment)

What Is Civil Rights Data and the Civil Rights Data Collection?

The US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is charged with enforcing the nation's education civil rights laws, investigating potential civil rights violations, and providing technical assistance and guidance to schools and districts to help address and prevent discriminatory practices based on race, national origin, gender, or disability. As a part of these efforts, OCR conducts the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), a biannual survey of every school district in the country on "indicators related to access and barriers to educational opportunity" including school climate, teacher experience, advanced course availability and enrollment, and discipline practices.

The data collected through the CRDC is used for investigation and enforcement purposes by OCR, but the aggregated findings are also reported back to districts and states and are made publicly available. State and local policymakers and education leaders rely on the CRDC data to understand and improve inequities. For example, chronic absence data can uncover underlying barriers to school attendance like transportation shortages, community safety concerns, student mobility, homelessness, and community health problems.

SPOTLIGHT: Washington, DC's Equity Reports Provide Transparency and Lead to Action

Washington, DC's Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is one agency that has invested in making data about education equity transparent and actionable—and using it to make positive changes for its students. Each year, Washington, DC, publishes citywide and school-level Equity Reports with data on school demographics, student movement in and out of the school, attendance, discipline, graduation rates, and student achievement and growth as a complement to the state's report card. The annual release of these reports has helped spark several conversations about equity—

Bright Spots

Other states, including Kentucky, Nevada, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Tennessee, also include detailed equity information as a part of their public reporting. While acknowledging educational inequities can be difficult, these states are ensuring that they have the information they need to understand their state practices and challenges and make decisions that support all of their students.

particularly around the high rates of suspensions and expulsions for minority students—and led OSSE to issue recommendations on reducing inequities in these practices.

Take Action

The CRDC ensures that every state and district has meaningful data on outcomes that help identify equity challenges. States have a unique ability to ensure that this data is accurate and timely, shared with the public, and used to spur change.

Collect Useful Data and Reduce Burden

Districts are responsible for collecting and submitting CRDC data, but they are often stretched thin by data collection and reporting requirements. Since states are now required to report information included in the CRDC, states should seek to reduce the burden and support districts—for example, by partnering with them to submit the needed data or submitting the CRDC data directly so that districts do not have to report the same information to both the state and federal governments.

Publicly Report Timely Civil Rights Data

The CRDC occurs biennially, and the data is not released until two years after collection. States can go beyond compliance by collecting and reporting the data in the years when the CRDC is not conducted.

When reported more regularly, and reported side by side with other measures of school performance, this information will round out the picture of student and school success and provide state and local policymakers, education leaders, and communities with an up-to-date picture of whether schools are meeting the needs of all students.

In addition, states can engage diverse education stakeholders including families, educators, and community partners like afterschool and tutoring providers to decide what other data they can report that would be meaningful and useful to their own community and schools.

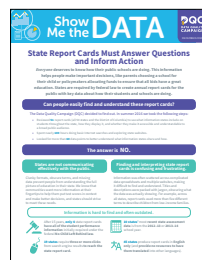
Act on Data to Support Learning

Policymakers and communities should use information about education barriers and inequities to inform their decisions about policies and supports for students and schools such as their disciplinary practices, how they staff teachers and other educators like counselors, or what advanced courses they offer and whom they encourage to enroll.

Learn More



Empowering Parents and Communities through Quality Public Reporting



Show Me the Data



Opportunities to Make Data Work for Students in the Every Student Succeeds Act



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 and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (@EdDataCampaign).