



**Talk about  
people,  
not systems**

## TALK LIKE YOUR AUDIENCE

# Teachers

Teachers want and need data to support their students' learning, but teachers worry about the burden—especially of time—that collecting and using data can create. Have ongoing conversations with teachers about how they use data and the supports they need to best use it in their classrooms. Teachers have the most direct communication with parents, and they will talk about what they value and use.

Keep in mind:

- Teachers view data as worth it. They generally see data as a valuable tool to improve and inform instruction, assess student and classwide needs, and support individual students' progress.
- Teachers have concerns about data being used to judge them or their school unfairly.
- Teachers value data more when they are provided time and support to use it to help their students.



## GET TALKING

### **Be an advocate for teachers.**

- Acknowledge that teachers know best how to support their students with data and that they already use data in multiple ways to help their students. Messaging should convey that data use and good practice go hand in hand.
- Talk about data as a tool to inform, not replace, teachers' professional judgment.
- Amplify the voices of teachers who already value and use data in the classroom. Teacher-to-teacher communication is a powerful way to share best practices.

### **Acknowledge and address teachers' real concerns.**

- Teachers have valid concerns about the added burden that data use may place on their workload. Communications with teachers should acknowledge these concerns as worthy of being addressed.
- Use these opportunities to highlight priorities and focus on actions the state and district are taking to address concerns, such as easier access to timely, secure data and more opportunities for quality training.

### **Talk about data use beyond accountability and compliance with the law.**

- Illustrate how as a state or district you are making it possible for teachers to use data to support student success.

### **Spell out what you mean by the term *education data* every time you use it, and provide examples.**

- Be specific about the different types of data you're talking about (e.g., ninth-grade course completion, chronic absenteeism) and how they can help teachers in the classroom.
- Data is much more than just test scores. Take the opportunity to show that data can come from a variety of formal and informal sources, including data collected by teachers themselves.

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## Teacher–Parent Communication

Parents trust teachers the most to use and interpret their child’s data, making teacher–parent communication a critical opportunity to garner parent investment and support. Think about whether the teachers in your state or district are equipped to talk with parents about data in accessible language in ways that build trust. (See the “Equip Your Messengers” section of this toolkit.)



### FIND THE RIGHT VEHICLE

**When engaging teachers, dissemination is not enough. Teachers are valuable partners, and your communication must be designed to meet them where they are, not the other way around.**

- ✦ Think about using new channels of communication that teachers may prefer, like social media posts and webinars.
- ✦ Create an online FAQ to help teachers answer difficult data questions with parent-friendly language.
- ✦ Leverage communication avenues already being used by districts as well as less official networks used by teachers.
- ✦ Create a facilitation guide to help teachers effectively lead conversations with families about how they use data.
- ✦ Consider hosting an annual data summit to hear directly from teachers about what’s working and what’s not.
- ✦ Open a space for dialogue for teachers to share their questions and concerns about discussing data use with families.