

TIME TO ACT 2019

Connecting Policy to Practice to Make Data Work for Students



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The most effective state efforts to improve student outcomes don't exist in a silo; they cut across multiple policy priorities to make data work for students. And while their crosscutting data initiatives can still be strengthened, some states are supporting schools with efforts that reach across the Data Quality Campaign's (DQC) Four Policy Priorities to Make Data Work for Students. As state leaders seek to use data to improve school quality and support student success, they must push past solutions that address only one policy priority and tackle changes that solve multiple policy implementation challenges.

DQC's **Four Policy Priorities** identify how states can transform the use of data from a tool of compliance to one that empowers people and fuels continuous improvement:

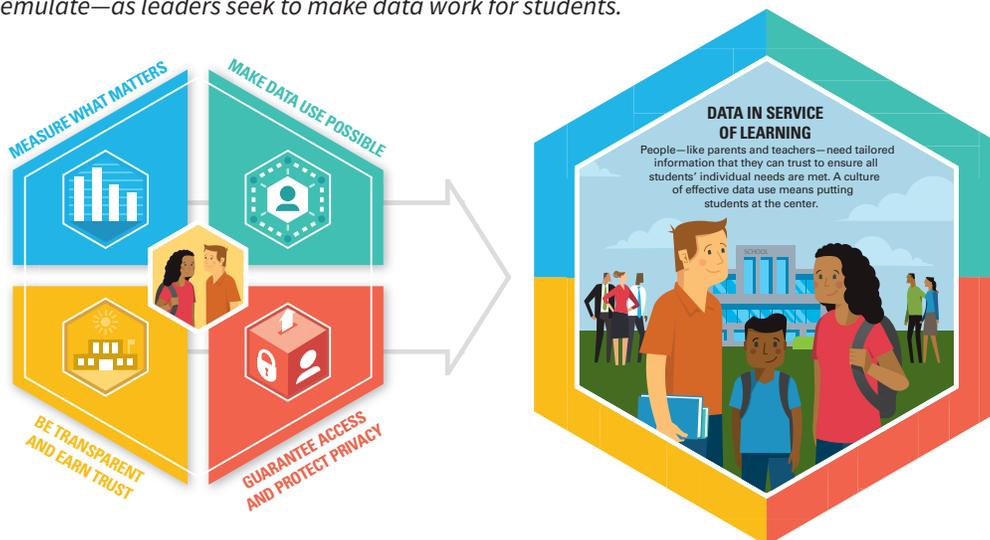
MEASURE WHAT MATTERS. Be clear about what students must achieve and have the data to ensure that all students are on track to succeed.

MAKE DATA USE POSSIBLE. Provide teachers and leaders the flexibility, training, and support they need to answer their questions and take action.

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.

GUARANTEE ACCESS AND PROTECT PRIVACY. Provide teachers and parents timely information on their students and make sure it is kept safe.

The following pages highlight state initiatives that reach across policy priorities to take a step forward in using data to make sure that all students excel. These are states to watch—and emulate—as leaders seek to make data work for students.



Stakeholders Value Education Data

Results from DQC's 2019 parent and teacher polls show that both groups value and use data to help support students. More than 90 percent of parents say that they support teachers using data to ensure that students are getting the support and enrichment they need, and 86 percent of teachers agree that using data is an important part of being effective in their jobs. With these attitudes about data in mind, states should prioritize supporting families, educators, school leaders, and community members with the high-quality data they need to help students excel.

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State to Watch: Idaho



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Idaho's report card redesign process included rethinking how to make the resource valuable to local leaders for continuous improvement of Idaho schools.



STATES MEASURE WHAT MATTERS BY . . .

Ensuring that stakeholders get a complete picture of school performance.

Idaho is rounding out the picture of student performance on its report card by including a number of nonacademic indicators of school quality, including teacher workforce data and measures of student, parent, and staff engagement.



STATES MAKE DATA USE POSSIBLE BY . . .

Giving educators and school leaders the training and support they need to take action with data. Idaho makes certain that local schools are supported by aligning the data in its report card with the needs of local leaders. Traditionally, local leaders would collect and share data with the state education agency and then engage at the local level in continuous improvement planning. Now the report card provides data that local leaders need so they can reflect on their schools' performance and jump straight into continuous improvement planning. By equipping local leaders with the data they need and eliminating an unnecessary reporting step, state leaders have decreased the burden on local leaders and allowed for more targeted decisionmaking.



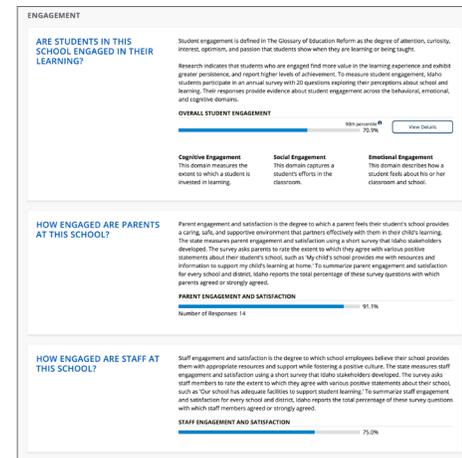
STATES ARE TRANSPARENT AND EARN TRUST BY . . .

Making sure all stakeholders understand how their schools are performing and how data is being used to help students. Idaho seeks to reach all communities by publishing a range of data about school quality, above and beyond what is federally required, in an easy-to-find and easy-to-navigate report card. The report card is translated into languages other than English and features performance data for newly required student groups, including military-connected students, students in foster care, and students experiencing homelessness.



STATES GUARANTEE ACCESS AND PROTECT PRIVACY BY . . .

Ensuring that students' information is protected even as the state is transparent about how schools are serving students. Idaho uses different strategies to display data to maximize transparency and protect student privacy. For example, the state may not report the performance of a group that has fewer than 10 students. But if this information is not reported publicly, users are able to hover over those specific fields and receive detailed explanations about why the data is not displayed. The new format gives the state flexibility to use different techniques that both ensure student privacy and provide communities with more detailed information than ever before about how schools are serving all students.



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State to Watch: Texas



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Texas uses data to shine a light on the state's teacher pipeline.



STATES MEASURE WHAT MATTERS BY . . .

Ensuring that those closest to students have the right information to help all students succeed. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) sheds light on the performance of educators across the state by collecting a variety of information about its teacher workforce. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following information about individual educator preparation programs (EPPs):

- ▶ program acceptance rate
- ▶ number and percentage of admitted teacher candidates who graduate fully certified
- ▶ number and percentage of program graduates who remain in the profession for five years
- ▶ the five districts in which the largest number of program graduates teach

Measuring indicators that span a teacher candidate's preparation experience, from EPP to the classroom, helps leaders answer a variety of questions about their teacher pipeline and ultimately supports more nuanced and informed policymaking.



STATES ARE TRANSPARENT AND EARN TRUST BY . . .

Making data publicly available. TEA gets important data to potential educators through its [annual performance report dashboard](#), which allows users to search for programs by accreditation type, certification area of interest, and geographic location. The reports themselves are available by EPP so users can better evaluate individual programs through information about the program's admitted students and their trajectories after graduation. By making a variety of data available in different formats, the dashboard meets different users' needs and helps prospective teachers make more informed decisions.

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State to Watch: Tennessee



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Tennessee is helping its districts and schools meet goals by providing a data-rich tool that helps them plan strategically.



STATES MEASURE WHAT MATTERS BY . . .

Prioritizing data that answers questions and informs action. InformTN, Tennessee's data dashboard, pulls data from the state's P-20W system into a centralized location for school leaders to view all at once. The state includes a wide variety of indicators that provide districts and schools with the academic and nonacademic information that is most relevant to them for planning for student success. This information includes data about academic achievement and growth, school climate and access, educators, and college and career readiness.



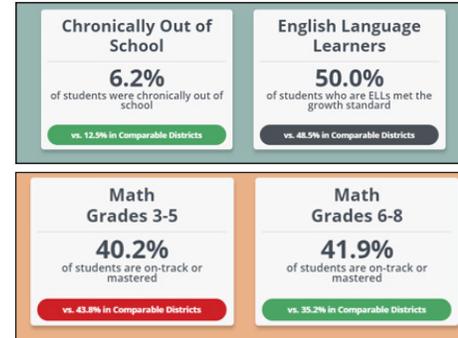
STATES MAKE DATA USE POSSIBLE BY . . .

Getting actionable data into the hands of local schools and districts. Tennessee supports local school leaders with information through its reboot of InformTN. Schools and districts can also create plans within the tool using data supplied by the state. Creating the plans within InformTN allows school leaders to access useful data visualizations that aid in the planning process and more easily collaborate with colleagues in their districts and schools.



STATES GUARANTEE ACCESS AND PROTECT PRIVACY BY . . .

Ensuring that educators have access to data based on their role. Tennessee prioritizes appropriate access to data for school leaders involved in strategic planning. Through InformTN, approved users access the system with a single sign-on and are supported by the state with any access issues. Additionally, Tennessee provides guidance on which leaders are best suited to use the data in InformTN for planning to better ensure that student needs are met while data is being kept safe.



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More States to Watch



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While the strongest initiatives to make data work for students cut across policy priorities to tackle bigger change, states are also pursuing strategies within a policy priority that open up opportunities for quick wins and lay the ground work for bigger initiatives. Here are three more states to watch:



GEORGIA measures what matters by including relevant stakeholders in its data governance committee to make sure the state is gathering information that is useful to educators. The state's governance committee includes teachers who are asked specifically about their data needs, which then informs changes to the system.



WISCONSIN makes data use possible by providing district leaders with the easy-to-understand data and continuous improvement planning tools they need to use data for continuous improvement. The WISE Dash for Districts dashboard supports districtwide use of student data by sharing information in a timely manner and aligning existing district programs with a local university to create a research partnership that helps the dashboard's users take action.



KENTUCKY guarantees access and protects privacy through its Digital Driver's License program, which empowers students and educators across the state to get smart about accessing and using data safely. The program uses a series of cases to teach important digital citizenship skills that help ensure safe data use in the state's schools.

Conclusion

States cannot meet their goals for student success in the K–12 classroom and beyond without data. These state examples demonstrate some of the ways state leaders can work across big policy priorities to make data work for students. More exemplars like these are needed. State policymakers—including state education agency leaders, state boards, legislators, and executive leadership—must prioritize investments in data access and use now.



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).