Making Data Meaningful

Report cards are a state's most public-facing resource; however, these resources remain hard to use and understand. States make data meaningful for families when they provide all of the tools that families need to interpret and act on the data in state report cards—including translations, context, and visualizations. Over the six years that the Data Quality Campaign has reviewed report cards from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, we have found that states have made little progress toward ensuring that families have the information they need in the ways that are most useful. States must prioritize ensuring that families can use their state's report card to make decisions for their students.

IN OUR REVIEW OF 2021 REPORT CARDS, WE FOUND:

25 STATES included translations, but only **seven states** offered *high-quality* translations—which were not provided by Google Translate and had translations for all labels and descriptions.[1] When report cards lack translations, parents who do not speak English are unable to interpret the data and cannot make the most informed choices about their child's school.

16 STATES provided guiding questions for users. Parents and public audiences visit their state's report cards with particular questions in mind—but sifting through all of the data to find answers is challenging. Report cards that are organized by guiding questions provide parents with a more direct path to the information that they need.

48 STATES included data visualizations, such as graphs, charts, infographics, and other displays that were not tables or plain text. Data visualizations allow users to see what the data looks like in context without having to interpret the numbers.

Bright Spots

Delaware's report card provides users with links to quickly find what they are looking for and even includes contact information so users can ask for help. The resource provides clear definitions, including regularly used acronyms and terms, and is translated into Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Hindi.

Translated into Spanish, Somali, and Hmoob, **Minnesota's** report card leads with guiding questions, including:

- "Who are the students?" (demographics and early childhood education data)
- "Are students safe and engaged?" (school climate and civil rights data)
- "Are English learners progressing?" (disaggregated achievement data from multiple assessments)

Michigan's report card provides tailored links for educators, parents, policymakers, and the media. The parent portal provides definitions, links to additional information, easy-to-understand graphics, and a way to provide feedback on how the dashboard can be improved.

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1   Google Translate translates only text, not graphics or images that provide important context for families. For more information, see the disclaimer on Rhode Island's report card: https://dedi.ri.gov/disclaimer.