



Connect School and District Leaders to the Information They Need to Ensure That Their Students Thrive

K–12 students need in- and out-of-school support to meet their academic and nonacademic needs. To provide this comprehensive academic and social support, district and school leaders need access to information for decisionmaking. But right now, state data systems provide insufficient access to the data that helps individuals, the public, and policymakers answer their questions and make decisions.

Aggregate tools for policymakers, community organizations, and researchers are necessary to assist them in providing insights and addressing emerging and longstanding cross-sector challenges. But individuals need more; they need tools that pull in information from across the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) and are tailored to their specific needs and the specific questions they are trying to answer. To meet this goal, states must modernize their SLDSs so those systems use information from across agencies and sectors to facilitate access to the information district and school leaders need to support their students' success. For example:

- Data from agencies that administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help connect eligible families to SNAP benefits.
- Data from foster care agencies can help school counselors, teachers, and case workers work together to better coordinate and support students.
- Connecting K–12 education and Medicaid data can enable schools to more easily seek reimbursement for school-based medical and mental health services, reducing burden and decreasing the potential for errors.

A VISION

to Transform State Data Systems to Inform People's Pathways through Education and the Workforce

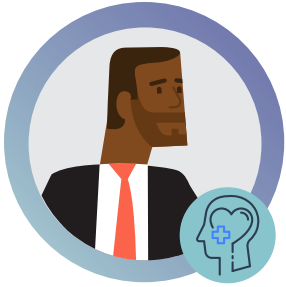
State leaders have an opportunity to build and maintain data systems that meet people's current access needs, including the needs of K–12 students and those who support them. Read the Data Quality Campaign's full vision for data access, [What Now? A Vision to Transform State Data Systems to Inform People's Pathways through Education and Workforce](#), for information on various data users and their needs, four other use cases that show what's possible when SLDSs provide tailored access to individual-level data, and recommendations for state and federal leaders to make this vision a reality.

HOW TO USE THIS USE CASE

This resource offers leaders a place to start by detailing a use case in which SLDSs are uniquely positioned to support K–12 decisionmaking. Specifically, the use case includes:

- Stories showing what's at stake;
- What different data users should be able to accomplish with the right access to data;
- The types of resources that data users should have access to;
- The policies and programs that will be possible when this use case is realized; and
- Examples of states that are getting started on making data access possible.

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ERIC, A MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, WANTS TO MAKE ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES AND OTHER RESOURCES EASIER FOR HIS STUDENTS.

Over the years, students and their families have asked Eric about accessing mental health services. And he has noticed that the students who get those services can engage more robustly in school. When students and their families reach out, Eric turns to a resource that includes contact

information for mental health service providers, specific services and resources, and insurance requirements and fees for each service.

Because Eric has this resource, **he can assist students and families in identifying which mental health services are available to the students based on their needs and access to insurance.** He saves his students and families time, energy, and the frustration of trying to navigate multiple social service agencies by helping them quickly locate the services that are most relevant to them. Families can then determine which services are the best fit for students' needs so they can better engage in school and thrive out of school.



JASMINE, A DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT, WANTS TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN POLICIES THAT HELP STUDENTS THRIVE WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL AND BE SUCCESSFUL AFTER THEY GRADUATE.

As a superintendent, Jasmine needs access to data on enrollment, retention, and persistence in postsecondary pathways as well as employment and earnings outcomes. Cross-referencing K–12

data with postsecondary and employment data will allow her to assess the data she has on students' course taking and high school completion to ensure that the academic and supportive programs offered within her district are preparing students for postsecondary success. Jasmine also understands from her own experience and input from her school leaders that students who have access to health, social, and wraparound services to support their academic needs are more engaged and likely to complete school. Thus, Jasmine wants to develop district policies and procedures that help school leaders provide their students with access to both the academic services and the health, social, and wraparound services they need.

Jasmine is able to **access and compare K–12, postsecondary, and employment data** for the graduates of her district; she is **also able to access de-identified health and social services data for students in her district to determine programs school leaders can share with students and families.** She uses both academic and social data to improve districtwide curricular programming and intervention programming that support students in accessing the academic, health, and social services they need.

Everyone should have access to the information they need to ensure that K–12 students receive necessary support in and out of school. Right now, people like Eric and Jasmine cannot meet the information needs of the students and their families who need it most.

When states change their data systems to enable access, individuals will be able to use data to access, facilitate, and deliver comprehensive educational, health, social services, and other wraparound supports to students.

WHAT DOES ACCESS LOOK LIKE IN ACTION?

Robust state data systems that prioritize meaningful access to data will meet current and future information needs in the following ways.



DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEADERS have access to data that helps them:

PRIORITIZE programs and interventions that best support students by:

- Examining outcomes for their schools and identifying where they need to increase access to counselors, advisors, social workers, financial aid, and other benefits designed to support students in K–12 as they prepare for the future.
- Identifying (and facilitating student enrollment in) academic support programs for which the student is eligible early enough to help them thrive in secondary school and have the ability to explore a variety of postsecondary education and career options that align with their interests or goals.
- Matching the student’s postsecondary interests with the necessary credentials, skills, prior learning, and social supports to make exploring those interests possible.
- Determining targeted investments that will help students and their families navigate the patchwork of education and career development programs, support services, and other opportunities available to them as they make decisions about postsecondary education or career preparation programs.

- Understanding whether the postsecondary pathway the student chooses to pursue affects the academic, health, social, and economic support services for which the student is eligible.

FACILITATE student and family access to services by:

- Identifying health services that meet individual and family needs related to nutrition, substance use disorder, and physical and mental health.
- Identifying programs and supports to assist with housing stability.
- Identifying and supporting student enrollment in need-based social and economic support programs that are available to them, such as SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Identifying and supporting student enrollment in health, social, and wraparound support services that are available from local nonprofit organizations partnering with the school district.

ADVOCATE for access to varied academic, economic, and social supports, whether offered at the school or through school-based partnerships with providers.

INDIVIDUAL ACCESS CHECKLIST

States must provide access to data that is:

- ✓ Specific to the individual’s role and the questions that they are trying to answer;
- ✓ Timely;
- ✓ Able to be manipulated and help them take action;
- ✓ Translated into languages other than English;
- ✓ Secure; and
- ✓ Longitudinal.



SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STAFF (counselors, social workers, case managers, and health care professionals) have access to data that helps them:

- **AID** students and their families working to identify, assess their eligibility for, and enroll in any public benefits programs (e.g., nutrition, health care, housing, transportation) that might be available to them or their families and could help support them.
- **REFER and ENROLL** students into different kinds of support programs offered through education and other sectors based on students' individual needs to keep them on track for educational, social, and emotional success.
- **MONITOR** changes in eligibility or enrollment for certain federal, state, or locally funded services to ensure that individual students and their families receive the full range of possible benefits. These benefits might include students being eligible for school-based Medicaid or students who are experiencing homelessness being eligible for supports specified in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- **COORDINATE** with external state agency staff, such as foster care case managers, to understand and provide additional services for students and their families.

Tools and information are available to other **individuals and organizations that play a role in facilitating school-based support** for students, including but not limited to:

- Social workers;
- Case managers;
- Health care professionals;
- Foster youth organizations; and
- Disability services staff.



THE PUBLIC (community members) has access to data that helps them:

- **HOLD** the government accountable for providing access to all the academic and nonacademic supports students need to thrive, including connections to workforce, health, housing, transportation, economic, and nutrition resources.
- **EFFECT** change in a manner that supports the areas of greatest student need in their community.
- **IDENTIFY** and learn from areas of promising growth in supporting students' academic and nonacademic needs.
- **ANSWER** questions about different school-based youth programs and their impact on students' academic and social-emotional outcomes.

PUBLIC ACCESS CHECKLIST

States must provide access to open data, aggregate data, and dashboards that:

- ✓ Are easy to understand and navigate;
- ✓ Are available in languages other than English;
- ✓ Are disaggregated by different groups of students and by program/school;
- ✓ Are dynamic and able to be queried and customized; and
- ✓ Include best practice indicators, such as those in the [Education-to-Workforce Indicator Framework](#).



POLICYMAKERS

(agency leaders, legislators, local school boards, and district leaders) have access to data that helps them:

PLAN, allocate resources, and answer questions, such as:

- What are students' primary academic, health care, and housing needs, and which investments and partnerships will fulfill those needs?
- How do school-based support services and programs affect comprehensive student growth (e.g., academic, social, emotional)?
- How can our school district better prepare middle and high schools for the scheduling adjustments, additional supports, and staffing needed to best support students as they transition from one school level to the next?
- How can our school district better prepare middle and high schools with the scheduling adjustments, additional supports, and staffing needed to best support students who transfer from one school to another?
- How does access to safe and healthy housing affect students, and what state or federal funding streams are available to assist students with access to safe and healthy housing?
- How does access to free or low-cost public transportation affect access to additional academic, health care, and housing resources that can provide support to students and their families?
- What health care services do students have access to in schools? How can states assist school districts in using Medicaid funding or data on additional health care services to fill gaps in existing school-based health care services?
- Which support services and out-of-school programs should have additional resources directed toward them to account for increased demand and positive outcomes?
- What college and career pathways do students explore after leaving the K–12 system? What academic and nonacademic programs and supports did those students receive?

POLICYMAKER ACCESS CHECKLIST

States must provide access to data that:

- ✓ Can be viewed statewide and tailored to answer policymakers' specific questions;
- ✓ Enables policy creation, evaluation, and adjustments as needed; and
- ✓ Enables effective management of programs.

WHAT WILL REALIZING THIS VISION MAKE POSSIBLE?

Access to data helps people make decisions and improves state and local investments in education and workforce pathways and the supports necessary to make those pathways a reality for all individuals.

When state leaders give people tailored, individual access to the data they need, they also support the success of:

- Cross-agency support for students and their families based on their education, health, and other social service needs;
- One-stop-shop and “no wrong door” enrollment approaches, which provide families with assistance in accessing support and wraparound services (e.g., health care, social safety net programs like TANF and food support, afterschool programs) in a simplified, easy-to-navigate manner;
- Needs assessments conducted by school and district leaders so they can identify additional in-school support services based on their student population; and
- Easier access to programs and services facilitated by community-based organizations.

STATES GETTING STARTED

This work is ambitious. While some states and districts have created resources that allow individuals, the public, and system leaders to use data to **make decisions about comprehensive supports for K–12 students**, leaders must go farther to give people the kind of data access they need. Examples of how cities and states have gotten started include the following:

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS AND TOOLS

- The [Appalachian Cradle to Career Partnership](#) is a partnership of Partners for Rural Impact, Save the Children, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Fahe, the Brushy Fork Leadership Institute, the Appalachian Educational Service Agency, and the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation. It provides cradle-to-career academic support, workforce development opportunities, and access to social services for students and their families in Eastern Kentucky.
- [Growing Up NYC](#) is a tool created by the New York City Mayor’s Office of Economic Opportunity and Children’s Cabinet that provides families a way to find public state and local programs that satisfy their needs and are available to them based on student age, developmental or educational needs, family income, and more.
- The [Nashville After Zone Alliance \(NAZA\)](#) is a partnership of the Nashville Public Library, Metro Nashville Public Schools, the Mayor’s Office, and more than 20 youth development organizations that provide out-of-school-time learning opportunities for Nashville youth. NAZA’s website provides an interactive map that allows anyone to look up program offerings by school, including information about transportation and enrollment requirements.
- [Wisconsin’s Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer](#) is a partnership of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Department of Children and Families, and the Division of School Nutrition at the Department of Public Instruction. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this program was able to use and share existing data to distribute new electronic benefit transfer cards to families not already enrolled in assistance programs (e.g., SNAP) and directly transfer meal stipends via those cards without requiring any actions from families.

LOCAL INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEMS

- The [Allegheny County Data Warehouse](#) is a countywide data system containing more than 20 categories of data—including child welfare, public benefit, housing status, and education data—that allows providers and decisionmakers to better target programs and supports to students in need. For instance, integrated attendance data makes uplifting students who are involved with both the child welfare and K–12 systems easier.
- The [Baltimore City Youth Data Hub](#) is an integrated data system that is hosted by [Baltimore’s Promise](#) and brings together data from across agencies, including community-based organizations. Connecting data from community-based organizations provides a more complete picture of the experiences of youth and their families, allowing providers and policymakers to effectively and equitably support them.
- The [Santa Clara DataZone](#) is a countywide data system that incorporates data from multiple agencies, with some agencies providing nightly updates to equip educators and support staff with timely data. Santa Clara’s Foster Vision tool pulls data from juvenile justice and children and youth services systems, among others, to provide educators and case workers with up-to-date information about impacted students, including attendance, behavior, and academic data.

SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

- The [Ohio Healthy Students Profiles](#) leverage data linked between the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Medicaid to publish school-level aggregate data about health care interactions, needs, and educational measures for students participating in Medicaid. These profiles are available to the public and can help school leaders understand the needs of their students and make decisions about future programming and partnerships that can better support student well-being.
- Louisiana’s [School-Based Medicaid Services](#) leverage data linked among state education agencies, local education agencies, and the state Medicaid office to streamline billing and simplify reimbursement, freeing up additional funding for school-based services. For example, creating this linkage in the East Baton Rouge School District allowed the district to hire another 188 mental health counselors, providing increased services to students.
- The [Virginia Department of Education](#) is piloting a tool that provides practitioners working with foster care youth with access to those students’ education records when they move schools so they are able to get the support they need faster. With a connected P–20W data system, this tool could expand even further to connect with social services data, providing important placement and eligibility data that school counselors could use to coordinate with foster care case managers.