



*Using Data
to Improve
Student
Achievement*

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New Analysis: States Providing Parents and Educators Better Access to Data

More work remains to make information easier to understand and use

WASHINGTON—November 19, 2013—States have more capacity than ever to use secure education data, but need to place a greater focus on using the right data to answer the right questions to improve student success, according to the Data Quality Campaign’s (DQC) ninth annual state analysis, *Data for Action 2013: Right Questions, Right Data, Right Answers*. Released today, the new analysis of 49 states and the District of Columbia finds that states have made tremendous progress shifting their vision—and the use—of their education data systems from data collection for compliance to data collection for effective use in the state house, in the district office, in the classroom, and at the kitchen table.

For the first time ever, two states—Arkansas and Delaware—have achieved all of DQC’s 10 State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use. These two states have marshaled the leadership, policies, and resources to overcome the barriers of turf, trust, technical issues, and time that many states still face.

“State leaders increasingly recognize that empowering parents, educators, and policymakers with the right data at the right time in the right format better ensures our young people graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education and careers,” said Aimee Rogstad Guidera, executive director of the Data Quality Campaign. “We applaud Arkansas and Delaware and know many states will follow in their footsteps.”

The majority of states (41 states) are supporting data use with funding and policies, an increase from 27 states in 2011, which shows a commitment to sustaining the work over time and adapting systems to the changing needs of the education field and ever-evolving technologies. However, most states have yet to use their data systems to answer the deepest questions of parents, teachers, and other stakeholders, such as “Is my child on track to graduate college and career ready?” or “How do I know if my students are learning the material?” In addition, states take seriously their responsibility to ensure that data are used appropriately and student data are kept private and secure. For example, Oklahoma has passed legislation to establish new procedures and safeguards for the collection and use of student data.

Because of the investment in providing secure access to data:

- **Teachers in 35 states have access to data about the students in their classroom and can tailor instruction to meet their student’s needs**, an increase from 28 states in 2011.
- **Seventeen states share information about how teachers perform with educator preparation programs to improve the quality of training they provide to future teachers**, an increase from only six states in 2011.



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- **Thirty-one states produce early warning reports** to identify students most at risk of academic failure or dropping out, so teachers can intervene. Just 18 states produced these reports in 2011.

Right Questions, Right Data, Right Answers also takes a look at how to measure quality implementation of state education data efforts. A group of state and national education and policy experts determined the criteria and evidence for five areas that focus on teacher effectiveness and college and career readiness. Among the highlights:

- States can look to Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Washington state as exemplars for providing top-notch high school feedback reports that are easy to read and interpret.
- Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky and Ohio provide teachers with access to their students' data via cutting edge secure, Web-based portals that integrate state and local data and are customizable at the local level.

Every state in the nation collects quality data beyond test scores, like graduation and dropout information, but most states have more work to do to ensure the data is being used to improve student achievement. For example:

- Most states cannot determine if their K–12 students have been adequately prepared for the workforce, because only 19 have securely linked K–12 and workforce data.
- Few states (14) have teacher and principal licensing and preparation program approval policies that emphasize data literacy to ensure new educators learn the critical skills needed to effectively interpret and use data when they enter the classroom.

For more information on the Data Quality Campaign, to read the full report and to access individual state fact sheets, please visit our website at <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>.

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The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, national advocacy organization committed to realizing an education system in which all stakeholders—from parents to policymakers—are empowered with high quality data from early childhood, K–12, postsecondary, and workforce systems. To achieve this vision, DQC supports state policymakers and other key leaders to promote effective data use to ensure students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and the workplace. For more information, visit www.dataqualitycampaign.org.