

Postsecondary Data Connections: A Primer

There is an increasing focus at the state and federal levels on linking data across the P-20/Workforce spectrum

to help inform policies and practices. This primer is intended to provide policymakers with:

- 1. An overview of the status of states vis-à-vis the linking of postsecondary data to K-12 and workforce data.
- 2. A subset of questions policymakers can begin to address through the linking of appropriate K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data elements.
- 3. Examples of the barriers that limit states ability to link education data across the P20/Workforce spectrum.
- 4. Suggested next steps.

About the Data Quality Campaign Annual Survey

The DQC conducts an annual survey of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to assess state progress toward the implementation of the 10 Essential Elements of a longitudinal data system. State education agencies self-report on the capabilities of their data system. The DQC analyzes state responses to determine if a state meets the requirements for having an Essential Element or a State Action.

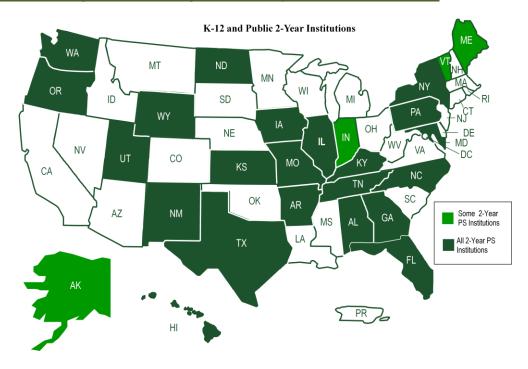
For additional information about your state's progress visit: www.DataQualityCampaing.org/survey/.

The State of the Nation

States have made tremendous progress over the past four years in the development of statewide education longitudinal data systems; however, the systematic linking of education and workforce data is only in its beginnings stages. Results from the Data Quality Campaign 2010 Annual Survey of State Longitudinal Data Systems indicate that:

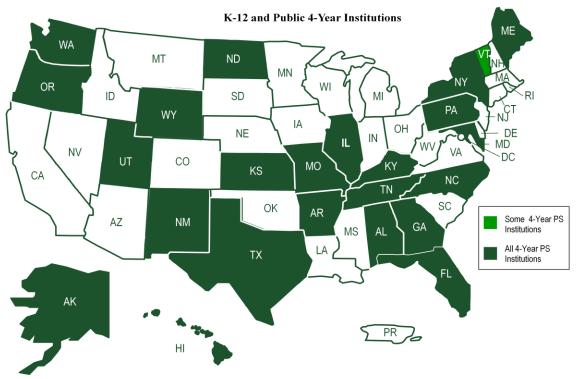
- 26 states link either public 2-year or public 4-year institutional data with K-12 data at least annually;
- 25 states link postsecondary institutional data with at least once workforce program at least annually; and
- Only 10 states link data across the P20/Workforce spectrum.

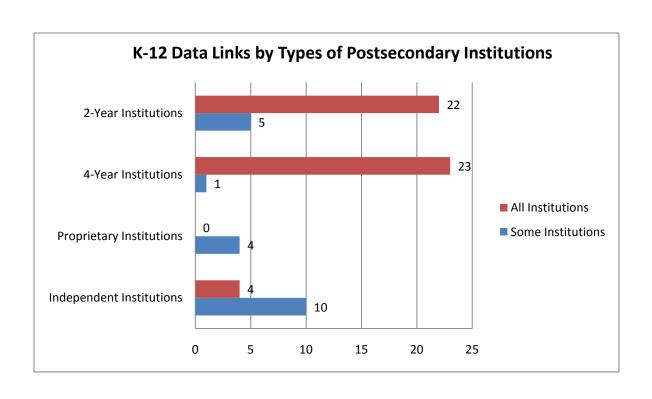
States Status with Regard to Connecting Postsecondary and K-12 data (2010-11)







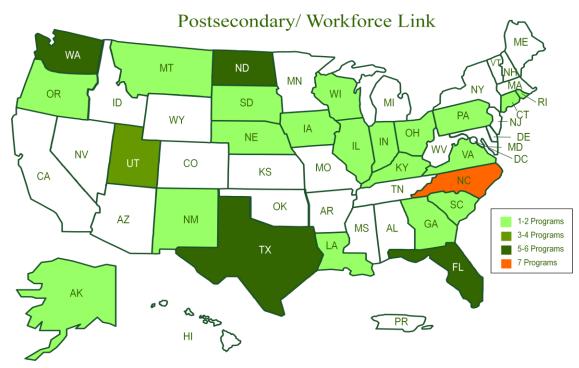


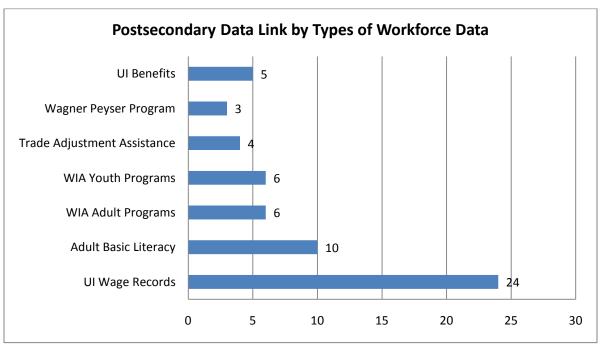




Postsecondary and Workforce Data Links

The DQC surveyed states about seven workforce-related data sources. Of these, many states have begun linking their postsecondary data with data from their state's Unemployment Insurance Wage Record system.







Linking P20/Workforce Data Can Help Policymakers Address Key Policy Questions

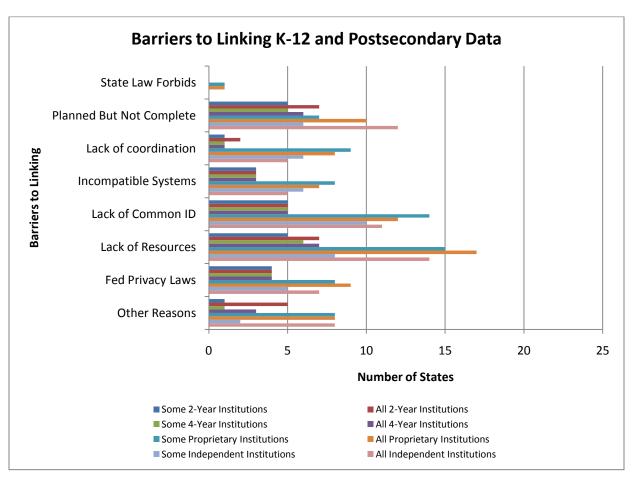
By linking education and workforce data, states increase their ability to answer new questions that affect a broader range of students.

- What high school performance indicators, e.g., enrollment in rigorous courses or performance on state and college entrance assessments, are the best predictors of students' postsecondary success, e.g., postsecondary admission, enrollment, course placement, retention, and completion?
- How does participation in advanced curricular options, e.g., honors, dual credit, or Advanced Placement courses, in high school affect postsecondary admission, enrollment, course placement, and completion?
- What is the employment rate of postsecondary education graduates and in what industries do they work? How do their benefits differ from those of non-graduates?
- What percentage of postsecondary students enter the workforce prior to completing a credential? How do their employment patterns, earnings, and stability differ from graduates?

In addition to developing the capacity to answer these questions, states must also prioritize data access, analysis, and use.

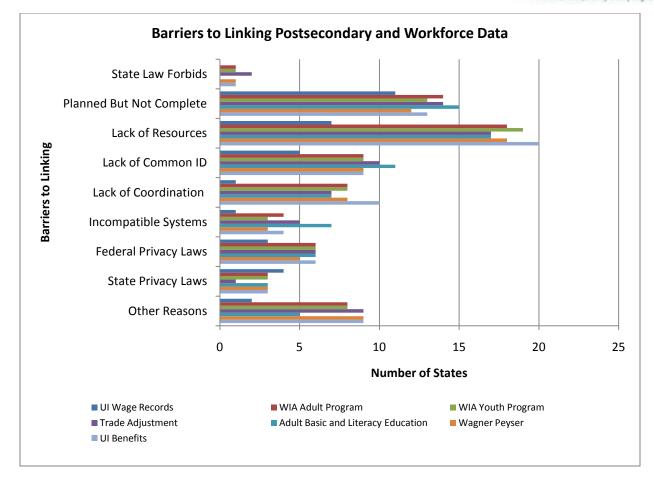
Barriers to Linking Education and Workforce Data

While progress has been made on linking education and workforce data, much work remains to be done to ensure robust links between and amongst the K-12, postsecondary and workforce sectors. States have identified several barriers to linking education and workforce data, ranging from the lack of coordination to resource constraints.









Next Steps

While states are currently working to connect education and workforce data, much remains to be done before the goal of having data systems that can link across the P-20/Workforce spectrum is achieved. To connect these education and workforce databases, states should engage a broad range of stakeholders to:

- 1. Prioritize, through broad-based stakeholder input, the critical policy questions to drive the development and use of longitudinal data systems.
- 2. Ensure data systems are interoperable within and across agencies and states by adopting or developing common data standards, definitions and language.
- 3. Protect personally identifiable information through governance policies and practices that promote information security while allowing appropriate data access and sharing.

About the Data Quality Campaign

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement. The campaign will provide tools and resources that will help states implement and use longitudinal data systems, while providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focused on improving data quality, access and use.

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