

Schools Need Better Information to Ensure Students Are Prepared for the Workforce

→ Current Students Lack the Skills for Today's Jobs:

- > Experts estimate that by 2020, 123 million people will be needed to fill the 74 percent of all jobs that will require high-skill workers, yet only 50 million Americans will possess the necessary education and skills to qualify for these positions.
- > The majority of job openings in the next decade will require at least some postsecondary education.
- > Since 2008 even college graduates entering the job market have high unemployment rates.

→ Paths through Education and the Workforce Are Nonlinear, Diverse, and Difficult to Navigate:

 Individuals complete their education and enter the workforce on different timetables—some get jobs after high school, some after postsecondary, some leave the workforce to go back to school, while others enroll in education or training at the same time as they are in the workforce.

- > The current inefficient flow and limited feedback of data between K–12, postsecondary, and workforce leave information gaps.
- > Questions remain about the skills, courses, programs, degrees, policies, and strategies that prepare students for workforce success.

→ Better Data Help Students, Parents, Employers, and Policymakers:

 Linking education and workforce data helps stakeholders understand expectations and standards across postsecondary education, training, and the workforce.

- > Students and parents can better determine what courses, training programs, and institutions lead to desired employment and earnings.
- > Employers can collaborate with high school career preparation programs to align skills and courses to area employer needs.
- > Policymakers can support education policies, practices, and programs that meet current workforce demands and ensure a positive return on investment.

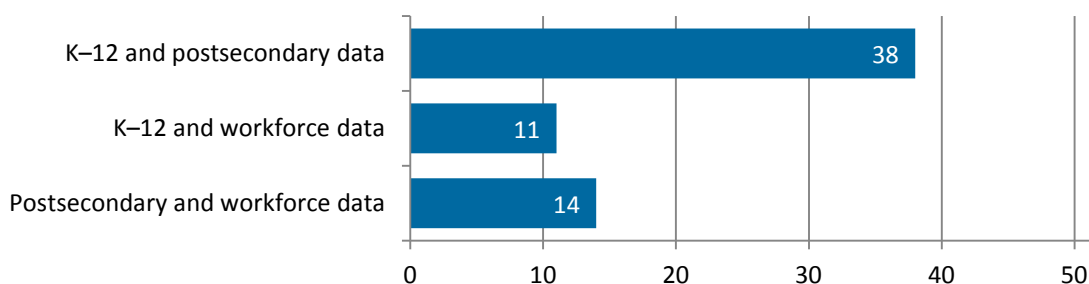
Data for Action 2011: Just the Facts

Q: Are there mechanisms in place to support alignment between education and workforce data systems?

A: **Thirty-nine states** have established cross-agency data governance bodies that can—and must—address turf, trust, time, and technical issues and ensure education and workforce data can be linked, matched, and shared to answer critical questions.

Q: Do states connect education and workforce data to answer critical questions that inform the jobs conversation?

A: In *Data for Action 2011*, states described the extent to which data are annually matched (meaning data from two systems are identified as belonging to the same individual) with a known match rate, and whether that richer data set is then shared between education and workforce systems. This graph shows the number of states that annually match and share data with a known match rate:



Q: What information about workforce outcomes is shared with schools and districts?

A: **Thirty-nine states** produce high school feedback reports that provide aggregate information at the state, district, or school level about students' success after high school. However, most states do not include workforce outcomes in these reports. In 2011 Education Sector found that only **five states** include career-readiness outcomes (such as participation in career or technical education, vocational training, apprenticeship programs, and military enlistment or attainment of professional licenses) based on students' earnings or employment data. States are only just beginning to define the career and work indicators that provide useful feedback and could inform K–12 efforts to ensure students graduate ready for college and career. They are also beginning to identify mechanisms to collect, analyze, and share that information.

Q: What information is shared between workforce and education systems?

A: In *Data for Action 2011*, states reported their progress on sharing specific information types between systems:

	K-12 → Workforce	Workforce → K-12	Postsecondary → Workforce	Workforce → Postsecondary
Enrollment	11 states	n/a	21 states	9 states
Transcript Data	2 states	n/a	9 states	5 states
Financial aid	n/a	n/a	8 states	n/a
Earnings and Wages	n/a	11 states	n/a	31 states
Employment status	n/a	15 states	n/a	29 states
Industry of Employment	n/a	11 states	n/a	27 states
Occupation	n/a	n/a	n/a	11 states

THE BOTTOM LINE

- National efforts are emerging to support this work.
 - > The National Skills Coalition is convening experts to support state efforts in improving the quality and use of workforce data and to launch a workforce data quality campaign.
 - > The US Department of Education finalized updated regulations for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in December 2011, which clarify how to share data responsibly and appropriately across agencies.
- However, significant work remains to better define, align, collect, share, and use students’ postsecondary and workforce information to inform policies, practices, and decisions that will improve students’ success in the economy.
- State policymakers must work with critical stakeholders to identify and prioritize the education and workforce development questions and task cross-agency bodies to produce and link the data to answers these questions.

States to Watch

- **Florida, Indiana, and Texas** are working to link, match, and share education and workforce data. See DQC’s [Profiles from the Field](#) for synopses of their efforts and links to more information.
- Interagency leaders in **Illinois** are collaborating to execute plans around a Workforce Data Quality Initiative and a learning and performance management system designed with critical questions in mind.
- **13 states** received [Workforce Data Quality Initiative](#) grants in 2010 to improve the quality of their workforce data systems, and even more states are using Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant funds to strengthen the link between workforce and education data systems.

Related and Cited Resources

- Data Quality Campaign: [Preparing Every Citizen for the Knowledge Economy: A Primer on Using Early Childhood, K-12, Postsecondary and Workforce Data](#) (2011), [Using Linked Data to Drive Education and Training Improvement](#) (2010), [Measuring the Education Pipeline: Common Data Elements Indicating Readiness, Transition and Success](#) (2011), [Workforce Data Landscape](#) (2011), [Final FERPA Regulations: Advisory and Overview](#) (2011), [Hot Topic: Providing High School Feedback](#) (2011), [High School Feedback Information: An Analysis of States’ Current Efforts](#) (2011).
- Shierholz and Edwards, [The Class of 2011: Young Workers Face a Dire Labor Market without a Safety Net](#) (Economic Policy Institute, 2011).
- Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, [Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018](#) (Georgetown University, 2010).
- Gordon, [“The Global Talent Crisis,” The Futurist](#) (2009).
- National Skills Coalition, [Building Toward a Workforce Data Quality Campaign \(WDQC\): Seeking Input toward a Comprehensive Agenda](#) (2011).

Data for Action is a powerful tool to inform efforts in education to better use data in decisionmaking. It is a series of analyses that highlight state progress and key priorities to promote the effective use of longitudinal data to improve student achievement. For more information, and to view Data for Action 2011: DQC’s State Analysis, please visit www.DataQualityCampaign.org/stateanalysis/about.