Five Pressing Challenges for Effective Data Use

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Stakeholder access and the capacity to use quality data will make or break successful implementation of education policies. To ensure effective implementation, parents, teachers, and policymakers must have access to robust, quality data—including information beyond summative test scores. Quality data must include longitudinal data that are linked across the P-20/W spectrum. Access alone, however, is not enough. Stakeholders will never be empowered to make important decisions if they do not have the capacity to use data effectively.

By advocating for your state to address the five most pressing challenges to effective data use, your state will begin to see a culture shift in which data are used to meet your goal of improved student outcomes.

#1 Challenge: **Teachers lack the skills and strategies to effectively use data** in the classroom to improve student learning. Educators need skills in data interpretation and use to support their professional judgment and improve classroom practice.

Recommendation: **Provide training that incorporates the appropriate use of data into practice.** Targeted, quality professional development that emphasizes data and their use empowers educators to better define problems and identify strategies. It improves instructional practices and in turn student performance, as well as builds the trust of educators in data.
Inform your advocacy: **Evidence of Impact in Oregon**

Recommendation: **Establish clear, statewide expectations for educators' data use through certification and program approval policies.** Establishing policies that ensure that teachers and principals receive pre-service training on the

#2 Challenge: **Parents do not have access to quality data about their children and schools**, and lack context necessary to make decisions based on the data they are given. Timely, actionable information can help parents impact their children's learning, take advantage of school resources, and inform their education decision-making.

Recommendation: **Empower parents with actionable data**. States have a responsibility to collaborate with districts to ensure that parents have access to actionable data about their children's and school's performance, and knowledge on how to use those data. While states may not be best positioned to provide parents with all the data they need, they can focus efforts to equalize access across districts and provide longitudinal data to augment data from school districts.
Inform your advocacy: **Empowering Parents with Data**

Recommendation: **Support early warning systems to keep students on track to graduate college and career ready.** Research shows that most students at risk of dropping out can be identified as early as elementary or middle school and can graduate if they are provided with timely appropriate support. These systems also help educators ensure that all students, not just those at risk, are on track for success. States can play a critical role in supporting local efforts by leveraging investments in statewide data systems to provide key local stakeholders such as parents timely access to early warning data in a useful format.
Inform your advocacy: **Supporting Early Warning Systems**

#3 Challenge: **States do not have a good understanding of the quality of their**

educator workforce. Stakeholders across the education pipeline have not yet leveraged available data to better understand the connection between student performance and teacher preparation, qualifications, and practice.

Recommendation: **Implement the policies and practices necessary to support a high-quality teacher-student data link (TSDL).** A quality TSDL is *necessary* to effectively implement teacher effectiveness policies, such as data-driven teacher evaluations. Recommended practices for implementation of a high-quality TSDL include: a statewide definition of teacher of record, the ability to link multiple teachers to a student for a particular course, and a roster verification process.
Inform your advocacy: **Effectively Linking Teacher and Student Data**

Recommendation: **Share teacher performance data with teacher preparation programs.** Sharing performance data with preparation programs provides these programs with the critical information necessary to improve their practice and prepare more effective educators.
Inform your advocacy: **Inform Teacher Preparation and Continuous Improvement**

#4 Challenge: **High schools lack the evidence on how their students performed after graduating**. Armed with critical postsecondary and workforce data on *their* students, high schools can better prepare all students to graduate college and career ready.

Recommendation: **Engage stakeholders to develop actionable high school feedback reports.** States are best positioned to develop high school feedback reports that provide local stakeholders timely information about their students' pathways after high school graduation. Engaging educators to better understand their information needs is a critical first step in the development of these reports.
Inform your advocacy: **Providing High School Feedback**

Recommendation: **Link student-level data across K–12, postsecondary, and workforce.** Stakeholders at

every level increasingly have questions that demand a richer set of data that draws from across the P-20/W spectrum. State agencies must work together to collect and link the data necessary to inform local stakeholders. Creating the necessary feedback loops to answer those critical questions begin with linking data across sectors and agencies.
Inform your advocacy: **Preparing Every Citizen for the Knowledge Economy**

#5 Challenge: **Data are largely siloed and sharing data across agencies is hampered** by a lack of policy leadership. Meeting expectations to graduate every student college and career ready requires unprecedented alignment of policies and practices across the early childhood; elementary, secondary and postsecondary education; and workforce sectors (P–20W).

Recommendation: **Establish a P–20W data governance body with authority**. States will only ensure data are fully leveraged when they identify what data to collect and link, who will have access, and how data will be used. Establishing a P-20W data governance body to guide these decisions will improve efficacy of data use in states if it is empowered with the authority to make the necessary decisions and is led by the state's policy leadership.
Inform your advocacy: **Preparing Every Citizen for the Knowledge Economy**

Recommendation: **Prioritize and document critical policy questions.** P-20W data systems are most effective when properly aligned with the state's policy priorities. Policymakers can guide the development of state data systems from across the P–20W spectrum by prioritizing the critical policy questions.
Inform your advocacy: **Connecting Policy and Data**

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