Figure C: **Leading Measures**

1. Alignment of board actions to board policy.
2. Policy quality.
3. Quality of curriculum as determined by PDK criteria.
4. Student engagement in instruction aligned to content in an approved course of study.
5. Number of building safety code violations.
6. Percent of program enrollment capacity achieved.
7. Budget within board budget parameters.
8. Percentage of positions filled with qualified personnel as determined through an annual audit.
9. Percentage of required data in official data systems.
10. Students with documented personal and social barriers receiving necessary support services.

Our approach of always coming back to student success as the only measure of excellence keeps the leading measures a useful feedback system for improving processes. It also assures we don't forget what is most important—our students.

with a better approach. Anyone who looks back on their work with satisfaction is either a fool or someone who hasn't learned anything. Ellen Glasgow once said, "No idea is so antiquated that it was not once modern. No idea is so modern that it will not someday be antiquated." By focusing on improving leading measures instead of pushing the latest reform initiative, we are able to deeply imbed continuous improvement practices.

Our Results

Butler Tech has been able to improve its student performance results from near the worst in Ohio to among the best in six years. This dramatic improvement in student success occurred at the same time the district doubled its full-time equivalent student enrollment from 1,615 to nearly 3,400. The district continues to be one of the lowest cost (per pupil) career-technical districts in Ohio as well. All of the hard work is paying off: The institution earned the prestigious Achievement of Excellence Award from Ohio's Baldrige Quality program for its work in organizational quality and student performance improvements. We are currently using the National Baldrige Quality Award program as a feedback system to further improve our processes and our performance.

Staying Focused on Student Success

We evaluate our work by the number of students who succeed. We assure student success by using leading measures to monitor the quality of our work. Our approach of always coming back to student success as the only measure of excellence keeps the leading measures a useful feedback system for improving processes. It also assures we don't forget what is most important—our students. T

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STATES DEVELOP QUALITY DATA SYSTEMS

BY JASON KIKER

Quality data is a phrase that has quickly become part of administrators', teachers' and policymakers' vocabulary. With federal and state legislation increasing the amount and types of data that schools, districts and states have to collect, new questions are being asked that include what is the best data to use for improving student performance in secondary and postsecondary education; how to link data so students can be followed from secondary to postsecondary and into the workforce; how are privacy concerns of students and parents met; how can information best be shared; and what impact can data have on high-stakes testing and other skill assessments.

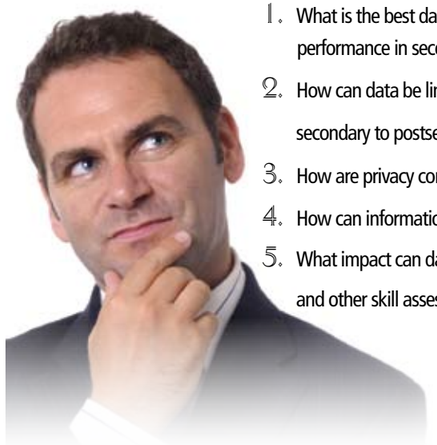
While there is no doubt that data systems can improve the managment of secondary and postsecondary education systems and are necessary for other state reporting requirements, the potential uses of these systems—from linking students' course-taking patterns to remediation enrollment in college, identifying best practices in classroom instruction and tracking students' success in the workplace—far surpass the basic state and federal reporting requirements that inform much of a state's use of P-20 education data.

Quality data and data systems are also important to states when trying to decide which educational programs to fund. Being able to see the effectiveness of a career and technical education (CTE)/academic skills integration program or a class size reduction pro-gram means the state will not continue to spend money on programs that are not helping students, teachers or schools improve.

QUALITY DATA

Questions to ask:

1. What is the best data to use for improving student performance in secondary and postsecondary education?
2. How can data be linked so students can be followed from secondary to postsecondary and into the workforce?
3. How are privacy concerns of students and parents met?
4. How can information best be shared?
5. What impact can data have on high-stakes testing and other skill assessments?



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Florida

The state of Florida has been a leader in educational data systems since the late 1960s. Early efforts to evaluate and hold educational programs accountable began with legislation passed in 1968 instructing the Department of Education (FDOE) to improve educational effectiveness. The Florida Statewide Assessment Program was created as a result of the 1971 Educational Accountability Act. This important element in the state's accountability effort was designed to assess the academic strengths and weaknesses of students, particularly in core academic skills, and to collect and analyze that data to help schools perform better.

Since 1984, accountability for CTE, especially at the postsecondary level, has also been a focus in Florida. Accountability systems for community colleges and all public universities have been required by state statute since 1991. The Florida legislature has a history of being supportive of the creation, implementation and expansion of statewide student longitudinal data systems for informing and improving public education. Currently, a portion of the funding allocated to school districts from the legislative budget must be used for data and information services.

In 1986-1987, Florida piloted the collection of individual student-level data through the Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN), which was a mechanism provided for districts to transmit data from the systems they were using locally. The data collected through FIRN were compared to the aggregate data collected in summary reports. Over the next several years improvements to FIRN helped to increase the confidence of data collected and the confidence of teachers, administrators and policymakers who used FIRN data; it replaced the existing summary data collection system. In 1990, the FDOE began to use the data collected through FIRN for reporting on the P-12 education system.

In 1988 the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) was created and implemented. The FETPIP is a data collection system that obtains follow-up information on students after they exit high school; it includes employment, postsecondary education, military, public assistance participation, and incarceration data.

Also in 1988, the state started using an electronic transcript system, the Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records (FASTER). By 1994, Florida had one of the most progressive, comprehensive and efficient systems for transferring student records in the nation. In 2001, more than 900,000 electronic transcripts were exchanged. Around the same time that the FASTER system was beginning, work had begun between Florida and other states to develop a nationwide student record transfer system, currently known as SPEEDE/ExPRESS (Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange/Exchange of Permanent Records Electronically for Students and Schools).

The Florida Education Data Warehouse (EDW) was started in 2002 and has provided Florida teachers, administrators and policymakers a single repository of data extracted from multiple sources available at the state level on students, education facilities, curriculum, and instructional staff in the P-20 public education system. The EDW allows longitudinal data analysis at the student and staff levels from 1995-1996 and onward. Student level data include demographics, enrollment, course completion, assessment results, financial aid and employment. (The privacy of the students is ensured by the removal of personal information.) Future plans for the EDW include collecting SAT, ACT and AP data, and obtaining information on private school students.

Building on the EDW, the FDOE has partnered with Microsoft to facilitate discussions with school districts and a community college in the development of a Web-based teacher tool called Sunshine Connections to assist teachers, school leaders and parents in using up-to-date, relevant data to better individualize teaching and learning and ultimately improve student achievement. Sunshine Connections will provide Florida's teachers with tools that link them to student data, curricular materials, and even other colleagues in ways that support their everyday classroom activities.

Quality data can be a powerful tool for teachers, administrators and policymakers to use when trying to improve schools or individual programs. Data can show if a dropout prevention program is working; if students are entering postsecondary programs ready to learn; and how students are doing once they leave the P-20 educational system.

Wisconsin

While Florida has been collecting longitudinal data since the late 1960s, Wisconsin began its statewide student level data collection and analysis in 2005. The state, however, has quickly created a robust system to use this data to inform students, parents, teachers, administrators and policymakers about how their local schools and districts compare to the state and national averages in a variety of areas, and on how schools can continuously improve to better serve students, teachers and other stakeholders.

The main source of resistance to the collection of student-level data from parents, students, policymakers and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction was the protection of students' privacy. To help ensure the security of confidential student information, the state in 2004 began to assign each student a Wisconsin Student Number (WSN) using the Wisconsin Student Number Locator System (WSLS)—instead of using social security numbers. Use of the WSN and the WSLS helps ensure that the WSNs stay with students if they move from school to school and district to district and for updating and correcting WSLS data as needed.

The state has created the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) to help teachers, administrators and policymakers use the data that has been collected. This Web site is organized into four areas: standards and assessment, data analysis, continuous school improvement, and best practices. Standards and assessment outlines the state's expectations for students and how teachers and administrators will know if students are meeting expectations. Data analysis provides data on the state's 426 school districts comparing schools and districts to state and national averages. Continuous school improvement describes how schools can collect and use data to assess where they need to improve and offers tools on how to implement the improvements. Best practices offers exemplary programs and practices for each of the successful school characteristics.

Within the data analysis section of WINSS, teachers and administrators can find data to answer questions such as:

- "How are students performing academically?" This data can help focus schools' efforts on important knowledge and skills that might otherwise go unlearned. Looking at data over time provides clues about whether new strategies are having an effect. Looking at other similar but more successful schools or districts may provide ideas to try.
- "What programs, staff and money are available?" This data can help schools develop improvement plans and provide information about the connections between the schools' programs and resource allocation decisions.
- "What about attendance and behavior?" This data can be used to gauge the climate of a school from the perspective of a student.
- "What are student/school demographics?" This data about student diversity may have an impact on strategies and programs to help all students meet standards.

Serving a Need

Quality data can be a powerful tool for teachers, administrators and policymakers to use when trying to improve schools or individual programs. Data can show if a dropout prevention program is working; if students are entering postsecondary programs ready to learn; and how students are doing once they leave the P-20 educational system. Data systems like the ones in Florida and Wisconsin are necessary to provide the right information to schools to best serve their students through effective programs. T

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