Questions researched for the 50 states

1. *Does state policy allow state agencies to share student-level data?*
2. *Is the state required to produce a high school feedback report?*

In the not so distant past, states and local schools did not have the information they needed to ask and answer critical questions about students navigating from high school to college or into the workforce. Beginning in 2006, states began working on statewide longitudinal data systems to better understand both state and local education needs and results. Today, all 50 states are able to link student data between state agencies, helping to bridge this information gap.

"A P-20 data system allows agencies with compatible technology to seamlessly share data."

A P-20 data system allows agencies with compatible technology to seamlessly share data. The statewide systems are able to provide student-level data to the people who need to make decisions about students' education, such as principals, teachers and parents.

These data systems are unique to each state and referred to in a variety of ways, and include student data from preschool through postsecondary education and into the workforce. These systems give states the ability to use data on individual students, such as attendance patterns, discipline records and course grades, to ensure that all students are ready for success after graduation.[1]

Robust P-20 data systems can support both state and local leaders in analyzing the performance and effectiveness of a number of policies and programs. Here are two very tangible uses for data:

- **State level:** High school feedback reports leverage the collective results within the state.
- **Local level:** Early warning systems that use individual student data within the schools and districts.[2]

ECS research found 42 states that produce publicly available high school feedback reports — reports that provide information on how a class of high school graduates fare in postsecondary and the workforce.[3] The following section describes how states use data and public reports to improve student outcomes and transitions across the P-20 continuum.

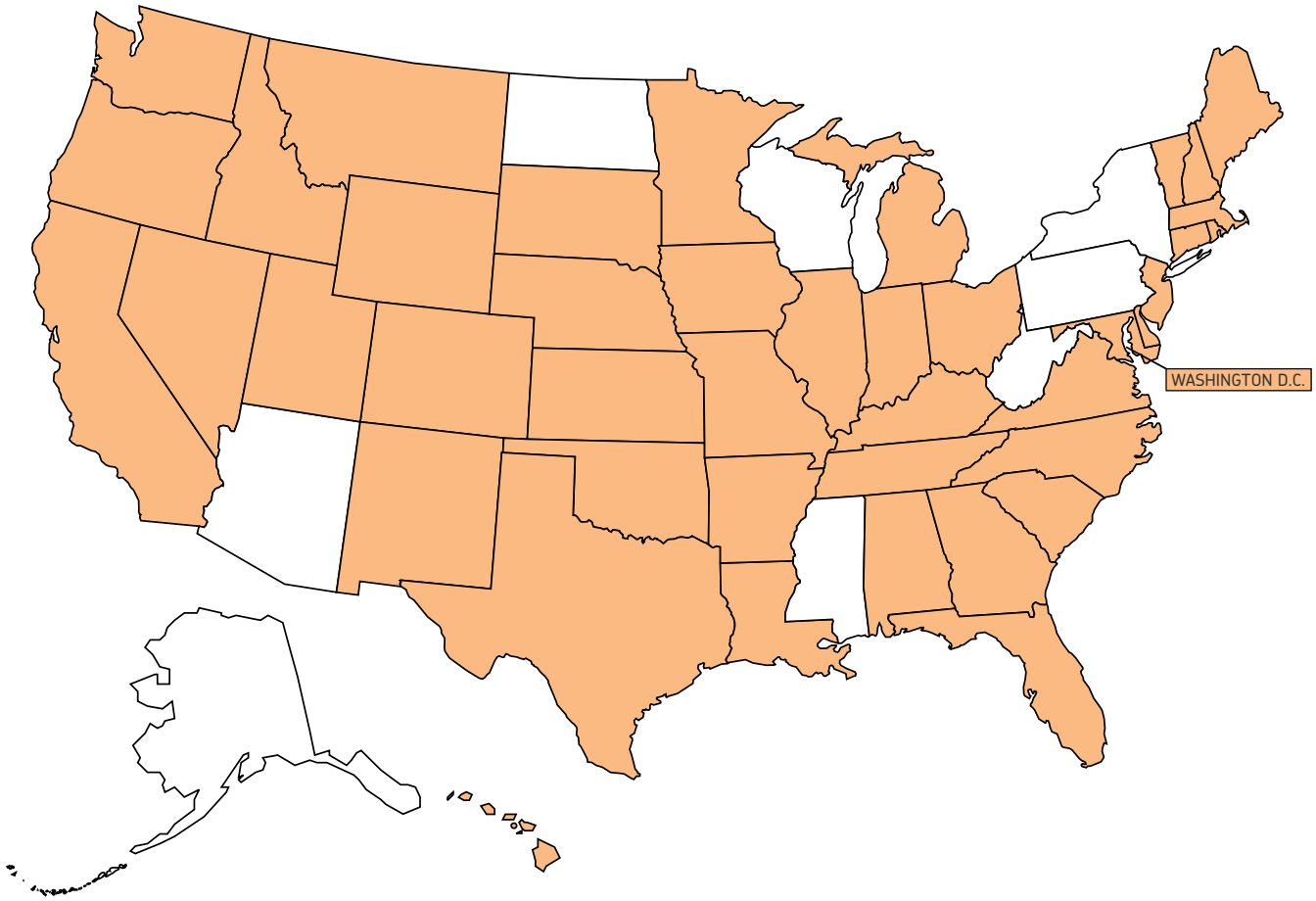
POLICY GOALS

The ability of states to link student-level data is due to the convergence of federal, state and local policies and investments. P-20 data-sharing systems are designed to know if graduates have skills to succeed in postsecondary and/or workforce and to simplify local, state and federal reporting. States are using the systems to improve education and labor data connections. The policy goals most often expressed by state and local leaders focus on:

- Improving pathways and preparedness for high school and adult students.
- Providing meaningful data to help students with 11th- and 12th-grade transition policies.
- Increasing attainment of postsecondary credentials.
- Improving decision-making processes for education leaders and stakeholders. For example:
  - State leaders can use the information to improve funding and policy decisions.
  - School and district leaders can use the data to understand what's working to improve college readiness and student outcomes by comparing and understanding state-level data.
  - Institutions of higher education can use the information to measure college access and readiness issues.
  - Teachers and counselors can identify what is and what is not working with their high school students.

Communicating student-level information beyond test scores is essential to lay the foundation for building tools like **early warning systems**, informing pedagogy and interventions, and evaluating the effects of schools and programs. States produce early warning reports to help educators identify students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. In some states, early warning reports are also used to identify students who should take more rigorous courses or dual enrollment.[4]

42 states plus D.C. produce publicly available high school feedback reports



STATE ANALYSIS

According to the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), every state has established P-20 data systems. The state systems vary widely, in both quality and capabilities. California, for instance has a statewide system but the exchange of data is very limited. The research also identified 42 states and the District of Columbia that use this information to produce high school feedback reports that are publicly available. Some states, such as Pennsylvania, only disseminate the high school feedback report to local district leaders. Others, Wyoming and South Dakota for example, provide publicly available high school feedback reports but do not share the data with higher education or students and families.

The 42 publicly available high school feedback reports are not created equally, as evidenced by the Data Quality Campaign, whose research uncovered state feedback reports with a variety of information. Some had high-quality indicators, such as postsecondary enrollment. Others do not update the data annually, which leads to data quality and timeliness issues.[5] **Hawaii** and **Colorado** have developed excellent high school feedback reports.

According to DQC,[6] a high-quality high school feedback report contains aggregate-level information beyond test scores and includes postsecondary readiness and performance indicators. Some states are pursuing policies that link data between K-12 and other state agencies, such as health, labor and early childhood education. According to DQC, 19 states link K–12 data systems with workforce data systems.[7] No states have implemented an aligned preschool through postsecondary and workforce data system.

KEY POLICY ACTIONS

Data systems can be useful in advancing statewide goals and creating coherence across K-12 and higher-ed indicators of college and/or career readiness. To create or improve a data system, policymakers can consider the following steps:

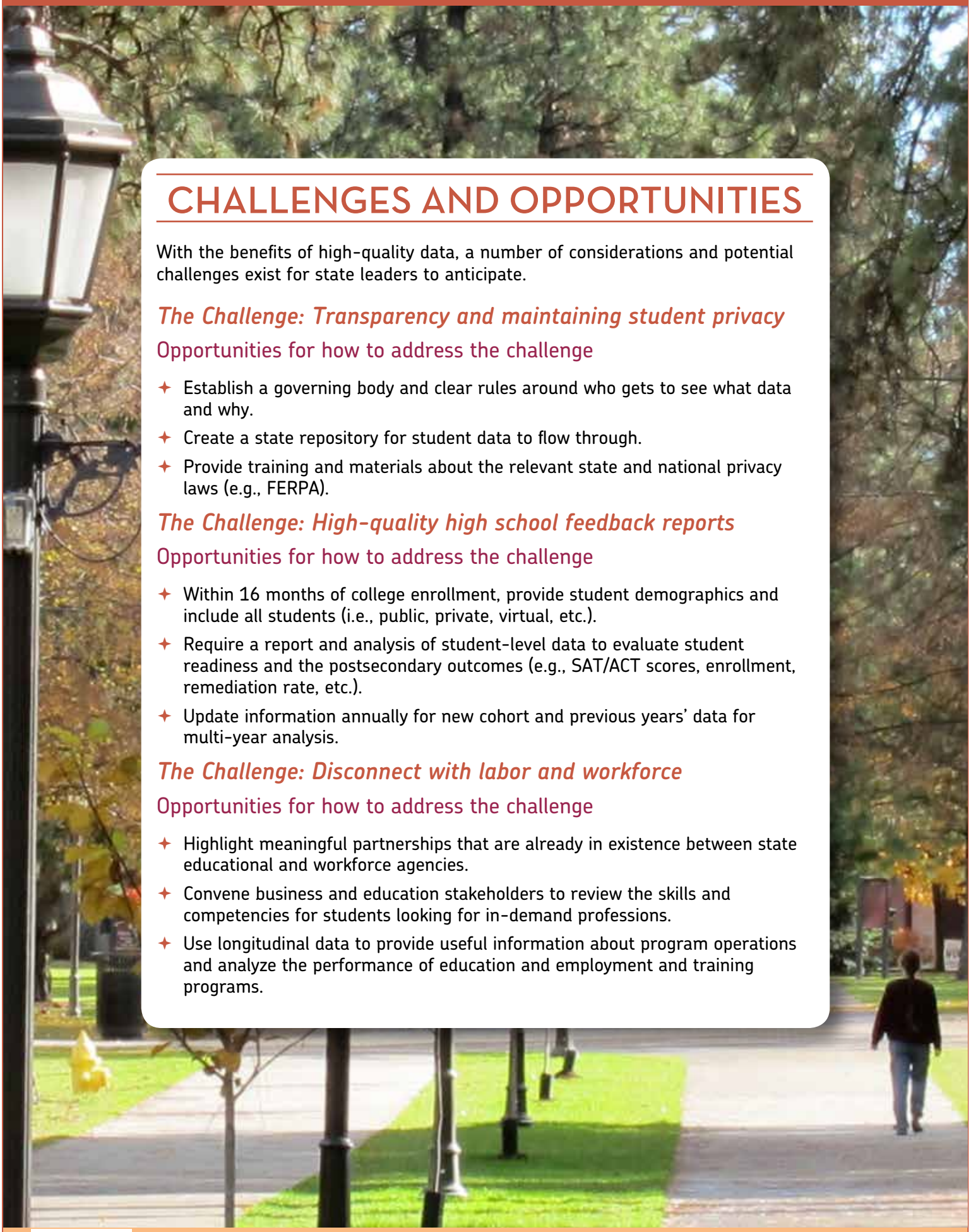
- Provide training and communication with students, parents, K-12 teachers and other stakeholders to improve data literacy and earn the trust of these groups.
- Ensure data and reports are both timely and actionable for policymakers and students.
- Ensure security and privacy of student-related information.
- Enable workforce data to be matched with education data to ultimately create longitudinal data systems with individual-level information, beginning with pre-kindergarten through post-secondary schooling all the way through entry and sustained participation in the workforce and employment services system.
- Improve the quality and breadth of the data in the workforce data systems.
- Provide an annual high school feedback report.

The data can also be used for local needs, such as establishing an early warning system.[8]

With a multi-agency P-20 data system, states could have the information they need to answer critical questions about students navigating from high school to college or into the workforce. Several trends to watch for involve partnering with workforce and labor leaders.

Early warning systems and 12th-grade interventions can be informed by these data and reports. In addition, as federal dollars dwindle, states are relying on little funding to support and sustain their P-20 longitudinal data systems.[9]

Though this research focuses on linkages within states, there are also efforts to improve state-to-state data sharing. One group trailblazing this effort is the WICHE Compact, where cross-state collaboration is underway.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

With the benefits of high-quality data, a number of considerations and potential challenges exist for state leaders to anticipate.

The Challenge: Transparency and maintaining student privacy

Opportunities for how to address the challenge

- Establish a governing body and clear rules around who gets to see what data and why.
- Create a state repository for student data to flow through.
- Provide training and materials about the relevant state and national privacy laws (e.g., FERPA).

The Challenge: High-quality high school feedback reports

Opportunities for how to address the challenge

- Within 16 months of college enrollment, provide student demographics and include all students (i.e., public, private, virtual, etc.).
- Require a report and analysis of student-level data to evaluate student readiness and the postsecondary outcomes (e.g., SAT/ACT scores, enrollment, remediation rate, etc.).
- Update information annually for new cohort and previous years' data for multi-year analysis.

The Challenge: Disconnect with labor and workforce

Opportunities for how to address the challenge

- Highlight meaningful partnerships that are already in existence between state educational and workforce agencies.
- Convene business and education stakeholders to review the skills and competencies for students looking for in-demand professions.
- Use longitudinal data to provide useful information about program operations and analyze the performance of education and employment and training programs.

Approaches to consider

The following represent some of the most interesting ways states are using P-20 data sharing and leveraging data to empower and inform educators with regular feedback reports.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Multi-agency governance and privacy

Every state has a responsibility to protect student privacy by ensuring that data are secure and confidential. Because privacy, security and confidentiality are sensitive issues, protecting students while using data responsibly is of utmost importance. South Carolina has established a multi-agency structure to govern its data system and to ensure student privacy. In addition, they are implementing further data quality controls within the statewide student information system so that data are complete, correct and meaningful. For more information: https://ed.sc.gov/agency/cio/external-technology/documents/SCDEDataGovernanceManual.pdf.

OREGON

P-20 data and early-warning system

Direct Access to Achievement, also known as the Oregon DATA Project, offers a systemic approach to helping districts achieve deep implementation of data literacy, the Common Core State Standards and key elements of educator effectiveness. It was launched in 2007 with a $4.7 million Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant and was supported through the end of the 2013-14 school year by another SLDS grant. The Oregon DATA Project provides the state's educators access to student data and comprehensive, job-embedded training on how to use those data to inform instruction. Education data use in Oregon has been shown to be a key element in increased student achievement.

ENDNOTES

1 Data Quality Campaign, *Cheat Sheet: College and Career Readiness* (Washington D.C.: Data Quality Campaign, 2014).

2 Data Quality Campaign, *Cheat Sheet: P-20/Workforce Data Governance* (Washington D.C.: Data Quality Campaign, 2014).

3 Data Quality Center, *Providing High School Feedback* (Washington D.C.: Data Quality Campaign, 2013).

4 Data Quality Campaign, *Data for Action: Supporting Early Warning Systems Using Data to Keep Students On Track to Success* (Washington D.C.: Data Quality Campaign, 2014).

5 Data Quality Center, *State Analysis by State Action* (Washington D.C.: Data Quality Campaign, 2014), http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/your-states-progress/10-state-actions?action=one.

6 Data Quality Center, *Roadmap for High School Feedback Reports* (Washington D.C.: Data Quality Campaign, 2014).

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., DQC, *Data for Action*.

9 Ibid., DQC, *Data for Action*.

For more information on this section, please contact Emmy Glancy at eglancy@ecs.org.