

Who We Are

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, national advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. Launched in 2005 by 10 founding partners, DQC now leads a partnership of nearly 100 organizations committed to realizing the vision of an education system in which all stakeholders—from parents to policymakers—are empowered with high-quality data from the early childhood, K–12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to make decisions that ensure every student graduates high school prepared for success in college and the workplace. To achieve this vision, DQC supports state policymakers and other key leaders to promote the effective use of data to improve student achievement.

Why We Advocate

Parents, teachers, policymakers, and other stakeholders are too often forced to make decisions based on anecdote and hunch because they do not have access to high-quality information. In every other sector, stakeholders demand and use data differently to make informed decisions. We can no longer afford to not use data in education. Our students deserve better.

Empowered with education data, stakeholders are better poised to do the following:

- ▶ **Improve system performance:** Inform systemwide management and evaluation decisions.
- ▶ **Increase transparency:** Shine a light onto the education system to see what works and what does not.
- ▶ **Improve student achievement:** Inform all education stakeholders' decisions with quality data to help them make the best decisions to improve every student's achievement.

What We Do

DQC provides a national forum to facilitate cross-state sharing and to make data integral to education policy through a three-part approach:

- ▶ **Advocate:** Provide a credible and challenging voice on data issues in state, national, and federal policy discussions to advance effective data use.
- ▶ **Assist:** Collaborate with states and key partners on data-related policy issues, building champions for integrating data use in state policy.
- ▶ **Lead:** Facilitate important policy conversations with stakeholders at all levels and collect and highlight promising policies and practices that support the effective use of data.

“The state longitudinal data system gives us a very clear picture of a child's life for years prior to the child coming to us and helps us paint a clearer picture for that child as he or she moves forward from us.

— Pam Williams,

2011 Georgia State Teacher of the Year

Data must be used to answer critical questions, not just to check boxes on a list of requirements. The most useful data have the following characteristics:

- ▶ **Longitudinal:** They follow individual students over time.
- ▶ **Actionable:** They are timely, user friendly, and meaningful to users.
- ▶ **Contextual:** They are robust, comparable, and presented as part of a bigger picture.
- ▶ **Interoperable:** They are easily linked, matched, and shared across systems and sectors.

How We Work

Focusing our work on several critical agents of change, DQC does the following:

- ▶ Promotes the development of **state longitudinal data systems** that not only collect data but also transform them into actionable information that answers critical questions at all levels.
- ▶ Advocates for **state policies** that support effective data use and ensure alignment between state and local systems.
- ▶ Calls for **federal policies** that support state and local efforts to use data effectively.
- ▶ Collaborates with **DQC partners** to ensure that policy discussions are informed by high-quality data.
- ▶ Creates **public demand and discourse** among all education stakeholders for better education data.

Our Impact

DQC has identified 10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems and 10 State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use as roadmaps for state policymakers. We annually survey states' progress in building and using state longitudinal data systems through *Data for Action: DQC's State Analysis*. After years of engaging with critical education stakeholders, we are seeing unprecedented progress:

- ▶ **Better data:** In 2005, the average state had between four and five of the 10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems. By 2011, the average state had between nine and 10 Elements, and all states had committed to build all 10.
- ▶ **Improved access:** In 2009, 17 states publicly posted reports using aggregate longitudinal data that could allow teachers, parents, students, and state and local leaders to make informed decisions. In 2012, 42 states were publicly posting reports.
- ▶ **Increased awareness:** In 2009, 16 states provided training to noneducators on how to interpret and use the data to make informed decisions. In 2012, 31 states provided training.
- ▶ **Long-term sustainability:** In 2009, eight states were using state funds to support their P–20 data system. In 2012, despite difficult economic times, 36 states were committing state funds to ensure the long-term sustainability of their P–20 data system.

This isn't a technological problem. It is a political problem. To solve a political problem, you need the chief political power, the executive, the governor in every state to bring together the people from your K–12, from your local school boards, from your colleges and community colleges, lock them all in one room and insist that all of these data flow on one gauge of railroad track.

— Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley,
DQC's 2010 State Policymaker of the Year

Now that the Data Quality Campaign has put data quality on the map, we need to work together to leverage this work and push it to the next level by using data to drive reform.

— U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

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