



Building Capacity for your State Longitudinal Data System

Elizabeth Dabney, Data Quality Campaign

Jenna Leventoff, Workforce Data Quality Campaign

Ross Goldstein, MLDS Center

David Seith, Heldrich Center at Rutgers University



Why This Matters

Securely linking data between K–12 and workforce data systems can help both agencies:

- Answer critical policy and practice questions
- Analyze workforce needs
- Understand the quality and benefits of work-based learning opportunities and job placements
- Calculate the return on investment for programs (e.g., CTE, career academy programs, apprenticeships)





Roadmap for K–12 and Workforce Data Linkages

Key Focus Areas to Ensure Quality Implementation



Where are we going?

Alignment between K–12 education and the workforce is critical because jobs are changing. Students must be prepared not only for the jobs of today but also for the jobs of the future. The American public [wants](#) schools to prepare students for work as well as higher education, and many states are working toward this goal. With access to current, accurate, and robust data, state education and workforce agencies can work together to support students to successfully transition out of high school, no matter what path they choose.¹ Securely linking data between state K–12 and workforce data systems can create a bridge between these agencies as they develop shared career readiness goals for students and the state. Data can help the K–12 agency understand what training and skills students require to meet employers' needs and help the workforce agency make the best use of students' educations.

Having high-quality data linkages between K–12 and workforce data systems allows states to answer questions such as the following:

- How do we prepare students for the jobs of today and the jobs of the future? What jobs are in demand now, and what jobs will be in demand? What skills, credentials, and degrees are required for those jobs?
- What are the workforce outcomes (e.g., employment rates) of career and technical education (CTE) participants? Which CTE programs are tied to high-paying and high-demand jobs?
- How do workforce outcomes differ among students from different groups (e.g., rural/urban, race/ethnicity)?
- Are students obtaining certification or employment near where they attended high school?
- What are the employment patterns and workforce outcomes of recent high school graduates during the years after graduation?
- In what industries do graduates work after high school? Are students successfully prepared to work in these industries? Is the teaching workforce prepared for workforce-related instruction?

- Are work-based learning opportunities (e.g., apprenticeships, internships) for high school students aligned with industry needs? Are industry needs listed, and if so are they easily accessible?
- How do workforce outcomes vary for high school students who participated in different work-based learning opportunities?
- What are the workforce outcomes of high school noncompleters or adult learners?
- What supports are needed for successful transitions from K–12 to the workforce?

Sharing aggregate data among workforce and state and local education agencies can improve the work of these agencies in the following ways:

- providing policymakers with evidence to demonstrate the value of work-based opportunities for students
- helping state and local policymakers identify how to use linked data for policymaking
- helping stakeholders such as educators, families, and employers advocate for better laws, better policies, or increased funding
- increasing accountability among state and local agencies
- supporting policymakers in evidence-based decisionmaking and resource allocation
- acting as a catalyst to encourage other kinds of data sharing (in compliance with privacy laws), including student-specific sharing and real-time data exchanges to better monitor and support improved outcomes for students

While data linkages can be used in many ways to inform the design of programs at the K–12 level, the value of linkages goes beyond improving program outcomes. Linkages should be leveraged to ensure that students are being best served and that schools and districts are continuously improving.

¹ *Most self-sustaining work requires some form of postsecondary education or training, and high schools should prepare students for those postsecondary paths. Many high-priority industries in states require two-year degrees, so states will want to know how many students enroll in those career pathways and programs of study through postsecondary. The ideal program of study is one that spans secondary and postsecondary. However, it is possible for students to prepare for meaningful work immediately after high school through career and technical education or work-based learning. The focus of this roadmap is securely linking data between K–12 and workforce agencies to better understand and support students' paths from high school directly into the workforce. For additional information, see [Roadmap for K–12 and Postsecondary Data Linkages](#).*

Six Key Areas to Focus On

1. Shared Vision
2. Cross-Agency Data Governance
3. Data Matching and Sharing
4. Data Analysis and Use
5. Capacity Building
6. Privacy and Security

QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAPS

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Key Focus Areas to Ensure Quality Implementation



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Shared Vision

Establish up front a **shared vision** between the education and workforce agencies to ensure that the agencies enter the data sharing agreement with an understanding of the **unique role and perspective** each has in providing information to better support students.

Cross-Agency Data Governance

Develop a structure in which to define the **roles and responsibilities** of each agency needed to ensure **clear processes** and a **reasonable timeline** for collecting and reporting data and to ensure accountability for **data quality and security**.

Data Matching and Sharing

Develop a deliberate process for **securely sharing data** between K–12 and workforce data systems to ensure a sustainable linkage. These linkages should include a **high-quality matching process** that allows data about individual students to be **accurately and securely shared** between data systems and only with authorized users.

Data Analysis and Use

Determine which entities have **access** to the linked data (including **differentiating access** to individual student-level data and aggregate data).

Determine how the linked data will be **analyzed, reported** (in a readily accessible format), **and used** to answer critical policy questions and support student success.

Capacity Building

Ensure that all agencies involved have the **structure** and **staffing** in place to **effectively manage, analyze, and share** linked data to **take action** to support all students.

Privacy and Security

Develop **strong, multifaceted, and transparent** processes to ensure that shared data is **safeguarded** consistent with federal and state information sharing laws.