Improving Data Systems and Reporting

What to Learn from Your State's ESSA Plan

Each state has determined which statewide data must be collected, which includes data to support the state's new "indicators" of school and student excellence and/or progress. SEAs are also required to determine the format and platform for local reporting for that information and must support cross-district uniformity and collaboration around data collection through data systems and technical assistance. In every state, LEAs must ensure fidelity to these standards at the school level and must publicly report required information through state-developed school and district report cards.

See pages 10-13 of the full Handbook for more on Assessing School Climate.

Guidance for School Improvement

LEAs and schools will need to work with their local community to build understanding around reporting systems, as well as ensure that data collection and evaluation tools at the local level are meaningfully developed and/or implemented. LEAs should be proactive in communicating available data to parents and community members — including disaggregated information about student and school performance, teachers, and district administration — in ways that are user-friendly, translated into multiple languages, and accessible for parents with disabilities, students, and rural communities without internet access.

LEAs and schools will also need to describe their plans for use of collected data for coaching, feedback, and continuous improvement. Civil rights groups representing historically underserved populations can be helpful partners by sharing this information and gathering and reporting back any feedback, questions or concerns.

Accurate, comprehensive data is essential for decision-making, so LEAs and schools should consider regular, independent audits or reviews of data systems, and should work with families and community members to ensure that these systems and the presented data are useful.

Find Support for this Strategy in ESSA

TITLE I, PART A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
TITLE I PART C: Education of Migratory Children
TITLE II PART A: Supporting Effective Instruction

Spotlight on Excellent School Reporting
The "My School Info Challenge"

The My School Information Design Challenge was launched by the Foundation for Excellence in Education as a national competition to rethink and redesign the way in which school performance data is presented so that it is more accessible and more actionable for parents, policymakers and the public at large.

Check out their report to see what the winners came up with at myschoolinfochallenge.com.

Essential Stakeholders

✓ Students, families, and school community members, including educators and other school personnel and after-school program leaders

✓ Tribes, tribal education directors, and tribal organizations

✓ Data systems management partners (state coordinators and/or software administrators)

✓ Local community-based organizations and advocates, including those with strong web presences and data presentation or communications expertise

✓ Advocates who can support print and oral distribution of information

✓ After-school and out-of-school learning providers, including early education and child care centers, after-school programs, and youth groups (including faith-based)

✓ Early Learning providers, including childcare centers

✓ Charter Management Organizations (CMO) and charter school leaders

Ask the Experts

✓ Transparency for Families and Communities (Data Quality Campaign)

✓ Communicating Performance: A Best Practices Resource for Developing State Report Cards (CCSSO)

✓ Data Equity Walk Toolkit (The Education Trust)

✓ Building State Capacity for Powerful School Information: Results of the My School Information Design Challenge (ExcelinEd)

Spotlight on Louisiana
An Accessible Report Card System

Louisiana went from theory to action in the development and implementation of a new report card system that meets the needs of their stakeholders. In order to present information in easy-to-understand ways or at the right level of depth for their diversity of stakeholders, Louisiana created two different tools for describing school and student performance. The first, known within the state as the "School Finder," represents Louisiana's federally-required school report card, and allows parents to compare schools and early childhood centers from across the state based on location, performance, and academic and extracurricular offerings. Over time, the state will also add in information about school finance, Free Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, and teacher attendance data.

To address the outstanding needs of school and district leaders, Louisiana also developed a secure data portal for school leaders and superintendents, with plans to expand role-based access over time. The "Louisiana Principal and Superintendent Secure Reporting Portal" enables users to recreate their accountability score based on individual student data, answer core questions about comparative performance and trends, receive "insight" statements based on the data (i.e., your school performed in the top 80 percent of schools in the state on this measure), and download student rosters to target interventions.

Check out "A School Finder to Empower" from CCSSO for more.