

Secretary Duncan, NGA Chair Rendell, Congressman Miller Urge States to Use Data Systems...

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Data Quality Campaign Releases Action Guide for State and Federal Policy Makers; Receives \$4.8 Million From the Gates Foundation

WASHINGTON, March 12 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan urged states and school districts to continue their momentum towards building longitudinal data systems and developing the capacity of educators, policymakers, and other education stakeholders to understand and use this data to proactively drive continuous improvement throughout the education system.

"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," said Secretary Duncan Tuesday at a forum held in Washington, D.C. convened by the Data Quality Campaign. "The Department has made an early commitment to this by providing funding in the stimulus package for data systems so we can assess what's working and what's not. The path to real reform begins with the truth - and we must keep facing the truth and finding the answers until every classroom has a great teacher, and every child has an education that prepares him for college, for work, and for life."

The forum, "Leveraging the Power of Data to Improve Education," brought together hundreds of state and federal policymakers and education leaders to discuss the integral role of data to the national education improvement agenda, the challenges to growing and using these systems, the necessary leadership of state and federal policymakers, and how the newly available stimulus funds can be used to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. The entire forum can be viewed via webcast at <http://ne.edgecastcdn.net/000172/dataqualitycampaign/031009/DQCArchive.htm>

To guide state and federal policymakers in building capacity of education stakeholders to understand and use longitudinal data in effective decision making, the Data Quality Campaign released "The Next Step: Using Longitudinal Data Systems to Improve Student Success." The guide provides ten action steps states need to take to move from collecting data for compliance to using data for improvement. These ten state actions ensure effective data

use will expand the ability of state longitudinal data systems to link across the P-20 education pipeline and across state agencies; ensure that data can be accessed, analyzed and used, and communicate data to all stakeholders to promote continuous improvement; and build the capacity of all stakeholders to use longitudinal data for effective decision making. The guide, with examples of states which have implemented model efforts, is available at <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/384>.

The ten action steps are:

1. Link state K-12 data systems with early learning, postsecondary education, workforce, social services and other critical state agency data systems.
2. Create stable, sustained support for robust state longitudinal data systems.
3. Develop governance structures to guide data collection, sharing and use.
4. Build state data repositories (e.g. data warehouses) that integrate student, staff, financial and facility data.
5. Implement systems to provide all stakeholders timely access to the information they need while protecting student privacy.
6. Create progress reports with individual student data that provide information educators, parents and students can use to improve student performance.
7. Create reports that include longitudinal statistics on school systems and groups of students to guide school-, district- and state-level improvement efforts.
8. Develop a purposeful research agenda and collaborate with universities, researchers and intermediary groups to explore the data for useful information.
9. Implement policies and promote practices, including professional development and credentialing, to ensure that educators know how to access, analyze and use data appropriately.
10. Promote strategies to raise awareness of available data and ensure that all key stakeholders, including state policymakers, know how to access, analyze and use the information.

Chairman of the National Governors Association, Governor Ed Rendell (PA), told the forum that state policy leaders should ensure that all state agencies work together and share vital information to inform a common goal of ensuring individual state citizens are prepared for the demands of the knowledge based competitive economy.

"Longitudinal data is not just a K-12 issue; it requires gubernatorial commitment because all of our systems - from early childhood, to K-12 education, to colleges and universities, to workforce development, to employment databases - must work together to make data collection possible," Governor Rendell said. "And we need to do more to make the data useful, because even the best data collection system is worthless if it does not change what goes on in the classroom."

In 2005, the Data Quality Campaign identified ten essential elements that states must include to build a highly effective longitudinal data system. At that time, no state had all ten elements in place. In 2008, six states had all ten elements, and 48 had five or more elements in place. Within the next three years, 47 states plan to have eight or more elements. To learn more visit <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/elements>.

The recent federal economic stimulus package included \$250 million for funding statewide education longitudinal data systems. The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is developing the competitive grants process to distribute the funds to states which will be used to implement and use statewide longitudinal data systems which include education data for elementary and secondary students as well as postsecondary and workforce information. In addition, to tap into the State Fiscal Stabilization formula funds, a state must assure the USDOE that it is building its longitudinal data system across the P-20 education pipeline and linking it with workforce data.

Congressman George Miller, Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor in the U.S. House of Representatives, also voiced strong support for the new federal investment.

"Congress has stepped up to make this investment a priority, and we will be watching implementation of the data systems very carefully," said Chairman Miller. "It is our hope that states and districts will take a serious and thoughtful approach about how they can use this data to help improve student learning."

This week, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation granted the Data Quality Campaign \$4.8 million to support continuance of its work over the next three years. The new grant will allow the DQC to continue to assist states in developing data systems based on the ten essential elements as well as encouraging states to take actions necessary to help support effective data use. The DQC will continue to survey states and provide resources and assistance around the ten essential elements as well as on the new ten state actions to ensure effective data use.

"Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Data Quality Campaign, educators and policymakers have a much better understanding of the critical role effective longitudinal data systems play in improving opportunities for all students in America," said Stefanie Sanford, Deputy Director, U.S. Program Advocacy, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who also presented at the forum. "The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is pleased to continue its support of the campaign with a new grant to further its efforts."

Other participants in the forum included: T. Kenneth James, Chair of the Council of Chief State School Officers and Arkansas Commissioner of Education; Reggie Robinson, Chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers and President & CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents; Eric Smith, Florida Commissioner of Education; Michael Casserly, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools; Michael Cohen, President of Achieve, Inc.; Kati Haycock, President of The Education Trust; Dane Linn, Education Division Director of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices; and Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. Jay Pfeiffer, retired Florida Deputy Commissioner of Education, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Data Quality Campaign for his leadership in developing Florida's model data system which provides best practices and lessons for other states.

"States have made great progress in building their longitudinal data systems, but now we need a cultural shift to build the political will and take the practical steps needed to ensure that this data is accessed, shared, and used

for continuous education improvement," said Aimee Rogstad Guidera, Director of the Data Quality Campaign. "That's what the Campaign will focus on now - helping states identify and put in place the necessary policies and practices so that key stakeholders actually use longitudinal data to help students succeed."

The Data Quality Campaign (<http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>) (DQC) is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement. The campaign provides tools and resources that help states implement and use longitudinal data systems, while providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focused on improving data quality, access and use. The Campaign has 14 managing partners and 39 endorsing partners. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is DQC's founding funder; additional support has been provided by the Casey Family Programs, the Lumina Foundation for Education and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

SOURCE Data Quality Campaign / National Center for Educational Achievement

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