

Roadmap for High School Feedback Reports

Key Focus Areas to Ensure Quality Implementation



Where are we going?

High school feedback reports—reports that provide information on how a class of high school graduates fare in postsecondary—**let school and district leaders know where their students go after graduation and how well they are prepared for college and career.** The reports help state leaders make programming and funding decisions, and they help students and their families understand how well different schools perform and which schools best prepare students for success after high school.

The state is uniquely positioned to produce these reports because it can analyze data from both the K-12 and postsecondary sectors and has the resources to produce reports for schools and districts with varying capacities.

High school feedback reports do not include data about individual students and can be made available to the public.

How do we get there?

What does great implementation of this work look like? The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) recommends focusing on seven key areas:

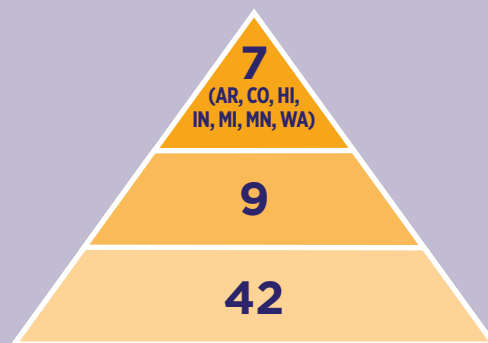
- 1. Data presentation:** Present data to educators and others in a way that allows them to retrieve useful information.
- 2. Timeliness:** Update data with a degree of frequency that enables educators, policymakers, and families to use the data effectively.
- 3. Data linkages:** Ensure comprehensive data connections between K-12 systems and postsecondary institutions.
- 4. Postsecondary preparedness data:** Include measures of postsecondary readiness.
- 5. Postsecondary performance data:** Include measures of postsecondary performance.
- 6. Transparency and public availability:** Indicate all sources of data and make reports available by high school.
- 7. Stakeholder engagement:** Include educators, students and families, and school leaders in the development of the high school feedback reports.

Where are we coming from?

On DQC’s 2013 survey, *Data for Action*, 42 states reported having a publicly available high school feedback report. Based on a review of states’ survey responses and documentation, seven states (AR, CO, HI, IN, MI, MN, WA) met the criteria for great implementation, and nine states (DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, KY, OR, SD, TX) met the criteria for good implementation.

NUMBER OF STATES:

- Great implementation
- Good implementation
- Total implementing work



**One State's Story**

Colorado is one of the states creating high-quality high school feedback reports. The state makes available data on postsecondary enrollment trends, including information on in-state and out-of-state enrollment and institution type, disaggregated by ethnicity and gender. The state also provides information on first-year college students in Colorado, including financial aid status, average grade point average, credit accumulation, and degree level, disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, as well as first-year retention rates. Districtwide and statewide summary data are available to provide context.

A summary of the data is disseminated in a hard-copy mailing to superintendents and in an electronic mailing to a larger group of stakeholders (e.g., high school principals, chief academic officers, chief accountability officers, and directors of secondary schools). The full report is available on the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) website. In addition, data for each high school is available for viewing and downloading from a searchable database. High school feedback reports are available for traditional high schools as well as public charter high schools, virtual academies, and alternative schools.

The CDHE is devoting time to engaging stakeholders around the high school feedback report. CDHE staff members are traveling throughout the state to speak at a variety of convenings of education stakeholders on the availability of and use of the high school feedback report. CDHE is also setting up meetings with individual users (e.g., the chief academic officer of a school district) to see how the report can be better designed, disseminated, and used. Lastly, the report has generated local media coverage. An article was featured in *Education News Colorado*, and Colorado Public Radio ran a story on the report.

Future Considerations

As states develop high-quality high school feedback reports as described above, they can also begin to consider additional ways to increase the quality and usability of these critical data, such as the following:

- conducting high school feedback reporting work that goes beyond producing a single set of reports
- integrating high school feedback report data into state report cards and other public reporting formats
- including adult education data
- including at least one piece of career preparedness data (e.g., completion of career and technical education pathway or performance on *WorkKeys* or other job skills assessment)
- including career preparedness indicators for students continuing to postsecondary institutions
- including financial aid data (e.g., percentage of Pell grant recipients)
- including percentage of students completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- including workforce data (e.g., employment rates, apprenticeships, and military service)
- addressing postsecondary completion in terms of competency-based measures (rather than credits)
- improving the clarity and visual presentation
- addressing how easily the report or data can be found on the state website and through links on the state education agency, local school district, and high school websites
- tailoring different versions of the reports to different audiences

These recommendations were developed by a group of experts including representatives from state departments of education, national organizations, and local school districts. For more information, read DQC's *Data for Action 2013* report.



Data Presentation

The way data are presented can affect whether educators and others are able to retrieve useful information.

Why does data presentation matter?

When data are presented in a manner that is clear, detailed, and comparable, the data can be used by different people to help make the best decisions to improve student achievement. Educators and counselors can identify what is and is not working

with their students and can make meaningful changes to courses, programs, and services. Principals can refer to the reports when making school-level decisions around curriculum and alignment.

What does data presentation look like?

- Data are available at the **school level** for each high school. State-level or district-level reports provide a general picture of student success and are useful to provide context (see below), but they are not detailed enough for a high school to use to inform decisionmaking.
- Data are presented by **student demographics** (e.g., gender, race, and ethnicity) and by **other student characteristics** (e.g., grade point average categories, SAT/ACT performance, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate participation, state assessment performance, proficiency measures, diploma type, and career and technical education pathway) to ensure that the educational needs of all students are being met. Looking at the data for different student groups can provide insight into college access issues. However, states must also keep student confidentiality in mind when releasing data for small numbers of students.
- **Comparison information with districtwide or statewide data** is available to provide context for school-level data.
- **Counts, percentages, and comparison groups** are available. Reporting the number of students as well as percentages makes the data more real and can help educators and school leaders tailor the assistance they provide to students. Again, states must keep student confidentiality in mind when releasing data for small numbers of students.
- **A data file** is available for download for users who want to work with the data.
- **Comparisons by district and school characteristic** (e.g., demographics and size) are available to help high schools understand how they compare to other schools working with similar groups of students.

How can a state achieve this?

States can identify the key student populations in their state (e.g., English language learners and students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch) to ensure that the data included in high school feedback reports are meaningful to users.



Timeliness

Timely high school feedback reports make new data available with a degree of frequency that enables educators, policymakers, and families to use the data effectively.

Why do timely data matter?

With timely data, schools can get a better picture of how their students perform soon after graduation as well as how they progress through college. Schools can use these data to ensure that they are serving

their students well and preparing them for long-term success, making adjustments to courses and programs in time to best serve the next graduating class.

What does timeliness look like?

- **Enrollment** information is available within 16 months of high school graduation.
- One year's worth of **credit accumulation** is available within 24 months of graduation.
- Information on **multiple cohorts** (e.g., class of 2009, class of 2010, class of 2011) is available.
- Feedback reports are produced at least annually with a **new cohort** added each year.
- **Enrollment and persistence** information are monitored for six years.

How can a state achieve this?

States can take advantage of their (c)11 and (c)12 requirement data to report postsecondary enrollment and credit accumulation data. The (c)11 indicator refers to the number and percentage of high school graduates enrolling in a public institute of higher education within 16 months of high school graduation; the (c)12 indicator refers to the number and percentage of students who completed one year of credit within two years of enrollment in a public institute of higher education. Both of these indicators are part of the reporting requirements for states receiving federal funds through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund grant.

FOCUS AREA
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Data Linkages

Data linkages are the data connections between K–12 systems and postsecondary institutions. Comprehensive connections allow schools and state policymakers to see how students perform after high school graduation to ensure that high schools are preparing students for success in college.

Why do robust data linkages matter?

Robust linkages between K–12 schools and postsecondary institutions help schools and state leaders ensure that students from all backgrounds and schools are ready for success after high school.

Policymakers need robust and broad data to create policies that effectively and fairly serve all of the state's students.

What do robust data linkages look like?

All public and public charter high schools are included in the data, as well as **all public and private in-state postsecondary institutions** and at least **some out-of-state postsecondary institutions**.

Although it may be challenging for states to include data from out-of-state postsecondary institutions,

services are available to help states accomplish this. It is important to incorporate data for out-of-state postsecondary institutions to ensure that most students are included in the high school feedback reports, especially in states where many students attend college in another state.

How can a state achieve this?

States can create and support cross-sector governance bodies and policies to ensure that data can be shared effectively and securely between K–12 and postsecondary data systems.



Postsecondary Preparedness Data

Measures of postsecondary readiness include indicators such as SAT/ACT completion rates and scores or Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) participation and outcomes, which are known predictors of postsecondary performance.

Why do postsecondary preparedness data matter?

Postsecondary preparedness data allow schools and education leaders to understand how well high schools are preparing their students for college and contextualize postsecondary outcomes. For example, it would be important for a high school to know

that its students who score highly on the SAT often need to take remediation or developmental courses. The school can then adjust the courses needed for graduation to more closely align with the rigors of college coursework.

What postsecondary preparedness data should be included?

- Feedback reports should include at least one of the two following data points that could be used to understand postsecondary preparedness:
 1. Percentage of **SAT or ACT completion**
 2. Percentage of **AP or IB enrollment**
- Feedback reports also should include at least one of the three following data points:
 1. **Average SAT or ACT score**
 2. **AP, IB, or other state college readiness assessment or course outcomes** (e.g., completion and average assessment scores)
 3. **12th-grade documented decision** (i.e., a student-verified written plan of post-high school intentions)

How can a state achieve this?

States can provide the data points listed above at the state or district levels to provide comparisons with individual school averages.

FOCUS AREA
5

Postsecondary Performance Data

Measures of postsecondary performance include data about high school graduates' postsecondary experiences, such as the universities they attend, the courses they enroll in (including whether remedial coursework is required), and whether they remain in college.

Why do postsecondary performance data matter?

Postsecondary performance data allow high schools to see how their graduates fare in different postsecondary settings and allow education leaders

and policymakers to understand what supports and policies are associated with good outcomes for students.

What postsecondary performance data should be included?

- **Postsecondary enrollment rates**
- **Credit accumulation rates**
- **Persistence or retention rates** (e.g., of the students who graduated high school in spring 2010 and enrolled in college in fall 2010, the percentage enrolled for a second year of college in fall 2011)
 - First-year retention rates are important because students are most likely to drop out of college during or after their first year.
- **Enrollment rates in remediation or developmental courses** in academic subjects, such as English or mathematics
 - High rates of enrollment in these types of courses indicate that students were not sufficiently prepared for the rigors of college coursework. These courses are often not for credit, so students are spending tuition dollars on courses that may not count toward the credits needed to complete their degrees.
- **Transfer rates** (two-year college to four-year college transfers and four-year college to four-year college transfers)
- **Part-time versus full-time enrollment rates**
- **Course grades or other performance data** (e.g., average cumulative grade point average, average cumulative credit hours earned, and professional certifications earned)
- A list of the **most frequently attended postsecondary institutions**
- Data presented by **institution type** (i.e., two year or four year)

How can a state achieve this?

States can create linkages with high match rates (i.e., the percentage of unique individual records that are matched between two databases) between K-12 and postsecondary data systems to ensure that these data are collected and linked accurately.



Transparency and Public Availability

States can provide transparency by indicating the sources of the data in the high school feedback reports and providing resources like technical notes that provide further explanations of the data. Reports should be available on a state-owned website and be available for each high school. States can raise awareness of the reports by publicly announcing their availability and disseminating them directly to users like principals.

Why do transparency and public availability matter?

When reports are transparent and publicly available, their data are trustworthy and are useful to the schools, the students and their families, policymakers, and the public.

How can high school feedback reports be transparent and publicly available?

- Report is publicly available on a **state-owned website**.
- A report is produced **for each high school**.
- States indicate **sources of all data**.
- States provide a **methodology or technical report** (e.g., user guide, technical notes, glossary) so the public can understand how calculations were made and any limitations to the data.
- The report availability is **announced publicly** (e.g., press release).
- The report is **directly disseminated to local stakeholders** (e.g., superintendents and principals).
- The state provides **training and technical assistance** on accessing and using the report.

How can a state achieve this?

States can provide clear access to high school feedback reports by posting them prominently on a state-owned website as well as giving individual schools and districts the autonomy to disseminate and publicize the reports in their own communities. The state can partner with local news media, regional assistance centers, community groups, and others to ensure that families and the public are aware of the reports and how to access them.



Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement refers to including educators, students and families, and school leaders in decisions about the high school feedback reports to ensure that the reports meet their needs.

Why does stakeholder engagement matter?

When states engage local stakeholders in the development, use, and dissemination of high school feedback reports, the report can be designed to

meet their needs. In addition, report users become invested in the use and success of the reports and trust their accuracy and value.

How can states engage stakeholders around high school feedback reports?

States can **consider the following questions:**

- How can stakeholders be best engaged?
- How will the report be used by these stakeholders?
- Should a consumer usability study be conducted?
- What training and technical assistance activities are or should be conducted?

How can a state achieve this?

When deciding to create or improve their high school feedback report, states can develop a stakeholder engagement plan early in the process to ensure that the right stakeholders are meaningfully engaged at the right phases of the project.