

Creating a K-16 Accountability System: Possible Student Indicators

Creating a statewide education data system across all levels is a crucial component of a comprehensive P-16 system. It helps inform policy decisions by ensuring that needs are assessed and understood, helps promote the equitable allocation of resources (when the data are disaggregated appropriately), and is a necessary component of a P-16 accountability system. It is difficult to overcome turf issues that arise when sharing data, such as why should one system share data with another if funds could be in jeopardy – why show weaknesses? Also, states must implement the use of common student identifier numbers to track students across grades and systems, without violating privacy rights. For more information about possible pitfalls and benefits of creating a P-16 data system, please see the Education Commission of the States' website at www.ecs.org. Below, we list a variety of indicators that could be useful when developing a P-16 data system; since our research focuses on student-related issues, this is a student-centered list. It does not include teacher indicators.

The table below sets forth some possible indicators to include in a P-16 accountability system. [Every indicator should be disaggregated \(when relevant\) by race, ethnicity, income, type of high school \(urban, rural, suburban\), Title I status, whether the student completed a preschool program, special education status, LEP status, class rank, grade point average, type of coursework taken \(i.e. whether the student followed a college preparatory curricular path\) and other factors of interest. Only by disaggregating data can states move toward closing their achievement gaps.](#)

Table I: Creating a P-16 Accountability System: Possible Indicators¹

<i>Possible Indicators (all should be reported at the student, educator, district, and state levels, when relevant)</i>
Number and percent of students in preschool (including Head Start, state-subsidized, and other funded programs)
Number and percent of students in fulltime versus half-day kindergarten
Number and percent of students who matriculate from 8 th to 9 th grade
Number and percent of students who matriculate from 9 th to 10 th grade
Number and percent of students who matriculate from 10 th to 11 th grade

¹ To develop a complete P-16 accountability system, teacher-related indicators would need to be incorporated. This paper focuses on student-centered indicators.

Number and percent of students who matriculate from 11 th to 12 th grade
Students' core course-taking patters, grades 8-12
Students' PSAT/PLAN scores
Students' SAT/ACT scores
Students' scores on the state's K-12 assessment(s)
High school grade point average
High school class rank
High school course-taking patterns (honors, nonhonors, college preparation)
Number and percent of high school students who scored a 4 or above on an AP test (s)
Number and percent of students who graduated from high school (collect data every year for each cohort, starting in 8 th grade)
Number and percent of students required to repeat a grade, K-12
Number and percent of students in special education course(s), K-12
Number and percent: student mobility, K-12
Number and percent incarcerated and/or arrested, K-12
Number and percent: teen pregnancies/parents, K-12
Availability of dual/concurrent enrollment programs
Availability of state-sponsored financial aid (grants and loans)
Number and percent of students receiving financial aid (by type of aid program)
Proportion of loans to grants
Proportion of state aid to federal aid
Affordability of public postsecondary institutions
Number and percent of students who applied to a two-year college
Number and percent of students who enrolled in a two-year college
Number and percent of students who graduated from a two-year college
Number and percent of two-year college students who transfer to a four-year

institution
Number and percent of transfer students (from two-year colleges) who graduated from a four-year college or university
Number and percent of students who applied to a four-year college or university
Number and percent of students who enrolled in a four-year college or university
Number and percent of students who graduated from a four-year college or university
Scores on placement exams used by in-state postsecondary education institutions
Performance in the first year of two-year college (credit hours attempted, credit hours earned, grade point average, grades in specific core courses)
Performance in the first year of four-year college (credit hours attempted, credit hours earned, grade point average, grades in specific core courses)
Number and percent enrolled in remedial-level courses in two-year institutions
Number and percent enrolled in remedial-level courses in four-year institutions
College persistence rates (who returned for a second semester, who returned for a second year, disaggregated by major and by students who took remedial-level coursework, in addition to previously-listed factors)

Collecting these data will not only help states close their achievement gaps, but it will also allow them to explore relationships between many factors and assess needs. For example, involvement in high quality preschool programs contributes to school readiness, which is related to later educational success. If states collect the above data, they will be able to address the following question:

- what is the relationship between completing a preschool program and entering college (holding constant nonschool factors)?
- what is the relationship between being eligible for Title I funds and graduating from high school or college (holding constant nonschool factors)?

It is impossible to know what the problems are within and between systems if data are not collected and analyzed properly. A data system such as the one outlined above would be a necessary first step toward assessing needs.