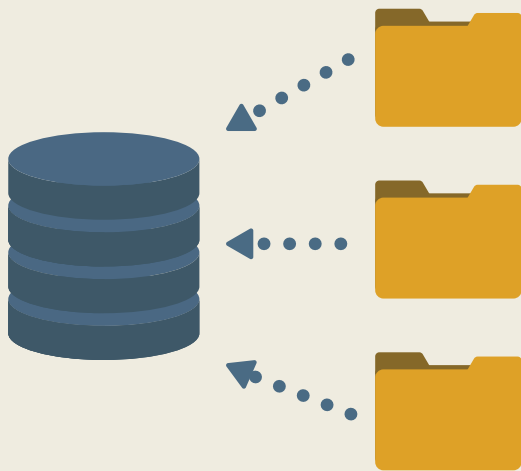


Best Practices for Postsecondary Outcomes Data Use: Connect Data from Multiple Sources

States can help districts and schools use postsecondary outcomes data effectively to develop and improve programs that positively affect students’ transitions to higher education and the workforce.

QIP interviewed states that are in different stages of using postsecondary outcomes data, including making these data available to districts. These conversations provided information on five best practices to support the use of postsecondary outcomes data at all levels. To learn more about states' best practices on using postsecondary outcomes data, please see [Best Practices on Using Postsecondary Outcomes Data](#) and an [infographic](#) that expands on best practices for using postsecondary outcomes data.



This resource focuses on the best practice of connecting data from multiple sources, including the potential benefits and real-world examples from states.

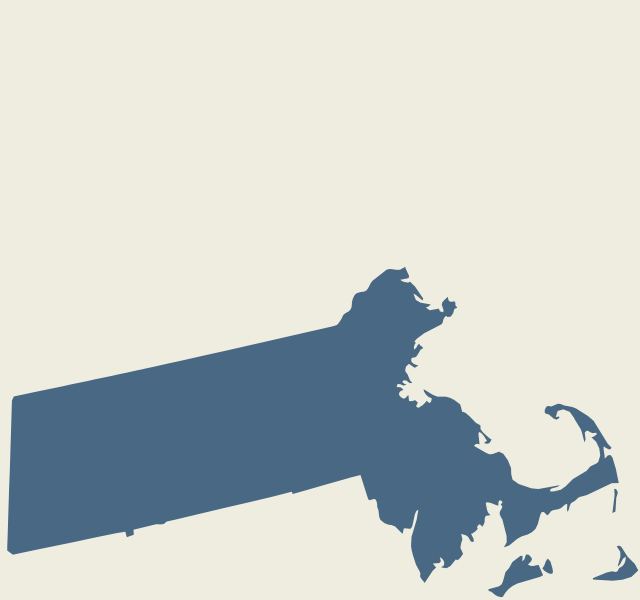
Why Connect Data from Multiple Sources?

Connecting students’ K-12 and postsecondary data can show which aspects of their education may have contributed to certain postsecondary outcomes:

- **Postsecondary institutions** can match the courses a student has taken in K-12 with any needed postsecondary remedial courses.
- A **high school counselor** can see the different postsecondary institutions that their graduates attend and examine trends in postsecondary success rates based on students’ race/ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics.
- A **district or school leader** can track student success and program alignment with state workforce and equity goals.

When states provide reports on postsecondary outcomes data, educators can strategically adjust their practices to improve student outcomes.

States that successfully connect data from multiple sources first standardize data according to established rules or conventions. Standardization ensures that data from different sources or in different formats can be compared for meaningful interpretation.



Connecting Data Sources to Show Postsecondary Trends
Massachusetts uses multiple sources to create robust and high-quality datasets that provide detailed insights into postsecondary trends. Massachusetts combines National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and public higher education data for state and district-level data analyses and provides feedback to districts on how they prepare students for postsecondary education programs. Massachusetts stores both sources in the Massachusetts Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). NSC data are matched with data from the student information system and fed back to districts through [Edwin Analytics](#), a reporting and data analysis tool that gives authorized school, district, and state level users access to reports that specifically support improvements in teaching, learning, and educational outcomes. Data included in Edwin come from state agencies such as the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Department of Higher Education. Edwin also uses NSC data on college enrollment, persistence, and, completion; and from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submission and completion.

Connecting Data to Create Useful Postsecondary Reports for High Schools
Michigan’s Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)—the agency responsible for collecting, managing, and reporting education data in Michigan—links data from Michigan's K12 system, public Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), and NSC in the Michigan SLDS. The state’s SLDS allows data users to connect data in powerful ways—grade to grade, school to school, level to level. These connections, which can span from early childhood into the workforce, help ensure [Michigan’s public education system](#) meets the needs of all students. CEPI uses these data to create the following postsecondary reports that can be viewed by individual high school:

- [College Enrollment by High School](#)
- [College Opportunities for High School Students](#)
- [College Remedial Coursework](#)
- [On-Track College Progress](#)
- [Postsecondary Trends by High School](#)



Connecting Data to Identify Student Barriers to College Success
Minnesota’s system of state colleges and universities—known collectively as Minnesota State—produces reports for high schools that highlight the percentage of graduates who take developmental education courses during their initial years in college. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (MNOHE) connects the postsecondary data in the Minnesota State reports to the K-12 data in the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDs).

Connecting these data showed that a significant portion of students enrolled in developmental courses in their first year of college had struggled with math in high school, were not proficient in state math standards, and had low ACT scores in math. These data also revealed that half of these students successfully completed their developmental college math course and stayed enrolled in college.

These discoveries allowed MNOHE to identify barriers that impact student success in their first year of college, enabling districts and high schools to use these postsecondary outcomes reports to adjust math curricula to match college-level expectations more closely. Colleges are also able to use these reports to provide support that helps students succeed in developmental math courses and stay enrolled in college.

Want to continue this conversation with other data professionals? Join the K12 Community of Practice Forum (www.k12usingpsdata.com) to share strategies and resources around using postsecondary outcomes data to improve student outcomes.