California Education Policy, Student Data, and the Quest to Improve Student Progress

Campaign for College Opportunity’s Blueprint for Higher Education Capitol Briefing Series
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Colleen Moore
Assistant Director, EdInsights
Education Data Systems: What does California have?

- 4 Longitudinal Student Data Systems
  - CDE (CALPADS)
  - CCCCCO
  - CSU CO
  - UCOP
- Data collected (end-of-term/year)
  - Demographics
  - Course enrollments
  - Testing
  - Graduation/certificates/degrees
  - Financial aid
  - Transfers (NSC)
  - Wages (EDD)
What’s Wrong With 4 Good Data Systems But No SLDS?

1. Disconnected
   • Reinforces siloed planning
   • Data fragmentation
   • Creates confusion among stakeholders

2. Inaccessible
   • Reliant on the systems for information
   • Data for compliance; system framing

3. Inefficiencies
   • Duplication of effort/costs

Biggest problem:
Disconnected + Inaccessible = Unanswerable Questions
Some Questions Policymakers Can’t Answer

• Impact of policy initiatives
  • Local Control Funding Formula
  • Associate Degree for Transfer

• Consequences of funding/policy choices
  • Capacity constraints in universities
  • ROI of different college pathways; cost per degree
Some Questions Practitioners Can’t Answer

• K-12
  • College-going/first-year success rates of HS grads
  • Outcomes of CTE students

• Higher ed
  • Teacher training outcomes
  • Drop-out outcomes
Some Questions Students and Parents Can’t Answer

• College choice decision-making
  • Time-to-degree
  • Employment/average wages
  • Average loan debt

• Can’t compare options/pathways
Equity Questions Abound

• How do access/enrollment, progress, and outcomes vary by students’ race/ethnicity, income level, region of the state, or other important factors?

• Does the impact of policy choices/initiatives vary?

• Which schools/colleges are having more success getting good outcomes for underserved students?
What are the Barriers to a Statewide Data System in CA?

• Mostly political/cultural factors
  • Leadership
  • Trust/relationships
  • Deciding on governance for a system

• Capacity/time

• A few technical issues
Things to Consider Moving Forward

• State’s context and history:
  • Pretty good existing data systems at the segments
  • No natural “who,” and trust is an issue
  • Segments want control, but need cross-sector data
  • Appetite for information in the field, but little capacity
  • Analytical capacity in research centers/universities

• Make decisions in the context of values/policy criteria
Now’s the time!

- California lagging far behind other states
- Focus of the new Administration, willing to invest
- Start with what we have
- Develop other systems to add (early learning, private postsecondary)
- Build system that can be expanded beyond education (social services, health, etc.)
Questions?

Colleen Moore, Assistant Director, EdInsights
cvmoore@csus.edu
(916) 278-3920