

Handout 2: Cross-State Research Agenda

The members of the Cross-State Partnership on Using Data and Evidence to Facilitate Action have convened around a shared goal of building capacity among local data users to access, understand, and use state data resources, including state longitudinal data system (SLDS) data, to facilitate action at the local level.

Proposed research agenda

Based on feedback from the February meeting, staff from Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia (REL AP) revised the logic model to include proposed linkages between state strategies to support data use and their subsequent outcomes. The research questions and proposed activities below align with strategies and outcomes listed in the logic model.

Based on the goal above, the REL AP staff have developed a set of activities that will support partner states in developing capacity to use data to inform strategic decisionmaking at the local level. The approach proposed below includes broad research questions and activities that can be tailored and focused to each state's unique data systems. Each activity will also have a core set of items or protocols that will be used across states for which they need additional information while maintaining some core components that are similar across states. Each broad question may have sub-questions that align with a state's particular need.

High-leverage need or problem to be addressed

Stakeholders across the Appalachia region have reported that they are data rich and information poor—and they are motivated to change that reality. The Cross-State Partnership on Using Data and Evidence to Facilitate Action is designed to bolster the ability of state agency staff to support local stakeholders and others in using data to develop and monitor policy and practice. The primary motivation for this partnership was state and local stakeholders' wish to

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use the data already being collected through, for example, statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) to produce information and supports that better meet users' needs and to strengthen their own ability to use statewide data in data-based decisionmaking efforts.

During a series of workshops, the team from the REL AP and partnership members developed a logic model and a research and training, consulting, and technical support (TCTS) agenda to guide the partnership's work for the next three to five years.¹

¹ As of this writing, the partnership is finalizing its logic model and research and TCTS agenda.

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Topic	Logic model link	Questions	REL activities	State activities
Needs/ characteristics of users	<p>Short-term outcome: (1) Local decisionmakers have increased awareness of available data reports and tools and their purposes. (2) Local users have increased capacity to analyze data across multiple sources.</p>	<p>Research question 1: Do local leaders understand the connections among available data, results, and their inferences and actions?</p> <p>Sub-questions What are the differences between state data users and non-users? Ways they use data, inferences made, programs implemented, and so on?</p> <p>In the judgment of local users, are state staff providing the necessary data for district staff to make decisions that meet their needs?</p> <p>In what ways are district staff making connections across non-academic and academic outcomes?</p> <p>How do district staff perceive their role in changing non-academic outcomes (such as health outcomes)?</p>	<p>Support survey development across states. This will include core questions and individual state questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe which state data sources local staff use more and least often. Describe the type of result that state data use most often produces. Describe the results that state data cannot produce. <p>Support protocol development for interviews with current non-users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document reasons for non-use. Document additional data sources/elements that would increase use. <p>Support analysis and interpretation of survey and interview data.</p>	<p>Identify ownership of survey administration, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.</p> <p>Identify data users and non-users to whom the survey would be administered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer survey according to protocol. Analyze survey and interview data. Identify dissemination strategies within state.

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How and why of data use	<p>Short Term Outcome: Training professionals have the knowledge, skills, and materials needed to train local data users.</p> <p>Long Term Outcome: Local actors perceive state-level data and tools as resources for continuous improvement rather than for compliance/accountability.</p>	<p>Research question 2: What skills, structures, and supports do district and state leaders need to create a culture of data-driven decisionmaking?</p> <p>Sub-questions What are effective decisionmaking models for data use and action at the district level? Which districts are using them and for what decisions? What tools and resources would facilitate both training for data use and the process of strategic planning</p>	<p>Conduct literature scan and landscape scan of tools and resources used by other states.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify evidence- or research-based practices for leaders' use of data in strategic planning. Identify tools that may support strategic planning using data. Catalog tools for states to consider using. <p>Support states in identifying resources and audiences for effective tools, including affordances and shortcomings of the tools.</p> <p>Support protocol development for cognitive interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the utility of currently available data tools. Which tools do interview participants find most useful? What can REL AP staff do to improve current data tools? <p>Support analysis and interpretation of cognitive interviews.</p>	<p>Conduct scan of state's internal tools and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify tools that local leaders identify as effective in supporting strategic planning using data. Identify affordances and shortcomings of the tool (that is, implementation challenges). <p>Conduct cognitive interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the utility of currently available data tools. Which tools do interview participants find most useful? What can state staff do to improve current data tools?

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Outcomes associated with data use	<p>Short-Term Outcome: Local users have increased capacity to use data to answer questions, identify trends across multiple data sources, and develop actionable recommendations to guide planning.</p> <p>Long-Term Outcome: (1) Local decisionmakers incorporate data from multiple sources into their annual plans and decisionmaking processes.</p> <p>(2) Local data users improve the root cause analysis underlying their strategic planning.</p>	<p>Research question 3: In what ways do local users improve their capacity to use student, classroom, and schoolwide data to improve their instructional program? How do they determine what works?</p> <p>Sub-questions How do we track instructional programs and initiatives and their impact? How do we determine what works, what doesn't, and why?</p>	<p>Professional learning community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with state staff to create practical measures around data usage for program improvement. • Participate in co-design activity to create data collection tools or platforms that allow for easy collection and recording of these measures. 	<p>Professional learning community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together to create practical measures around data usage for program improvement. • Participate in co-design activity to create data collection tools or platforms that allow for easy collection and recording of these measures. <p>Establish communication strategies and venues for disseminating information.</p>