



# What four states are doing to support local data-driven decisionmaking: policies, practices, and programs





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Summary

**November 2011**

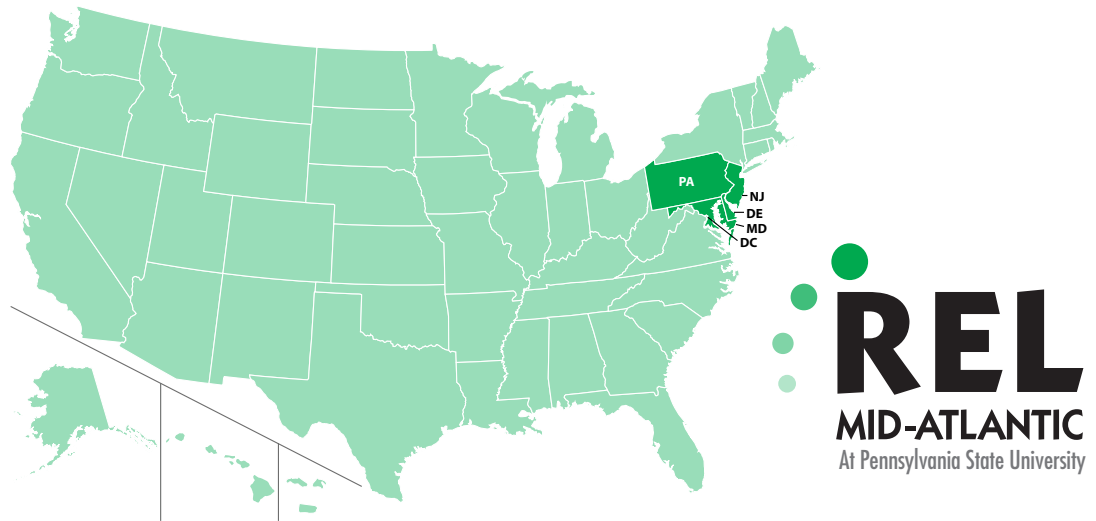
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This report is available on the regional educational laboratory website at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

# What four states are doing to support local data-driven decisionmaking: policies, practices, and programs

**This report documents how four state education agencies are supporting local data-driven decisionmaking through their policies, practices, and programs for creating data systems, improving data access and use, and building district and school capacity to use data.**

The broad implementation of standards-based accountability presents new opportunities and incentives for data use in education. The increase in data for districts and schools has intensified interest in data-driven decisionmaking at all levels of the education system. Data-driven decisionmaking—systematically collecting and analyzing an array of data, from administrative to achievement—guides decisions that improve student and school performance.

This report, responding to District of Columbia Office of State Superintendent of Education and Pennsylvania Department of Education requests, describes how Arkansas, Florida, Texas, and Virginia are supporting local data-driven decisionmaking. These states were chosen because they reported implementing the largest number of features of state longitudinal data systems and associated supports for local use (U.S. Department of Education 2009). The study documents statewide policies, practices, and programs for creating data systems,

improving access to data, and building district and school capacity to use the data.

Two questions guide this study:

- What policies or practices in Arkansas, Florida, Texas, and Virginia support local use of data for education purposes?
- How do Arkansas, Florida, Texas, and Virginia support local use of data in selected state education agency–administered programs?

Data were collected over May–July 2010, and the study included systematic reviews of the four state education agencies’ websites and interviews with 16 state administrators (8 administrators of statewide data policies and systems and 8 of data-driven decisionmaking support to local users). Data collection and analysis were guided largely by an analytical framework developed by Data Quality Campaign (2009), a national initiative to improve the collection, availability, and use of high-quality data.

This study found that the four states have implemented a range of policies and practices in all three categories of the study’s analytical framework:

- *Creating, expanding, and linking data systems.* The four states have created and

built state repositories and are expanding the types of data collected and warehoused to better equip districts and schools to rigorously assess whether students, schools, and districts are meeting state college readiness requirements and career readiness expectations.

- *Ensuring data access and use.* The four states have implemented policies and practices to help local educators and administrators access, understand, and use data effectively. In doing so, they are making data and analyses timely, readily available, and easy to understand for parents, educators, and policymakers.
- *Building district and school capacity to use data.* The four states have focused on strengthening local human resource capability, mainly through partnerships and professional development. By building local capacity to access and analyze data stored in state longitudinal data systems, the states intend to help local

policymakers and practitioners use data to inform key policy questions on performance and improvement.

In addition to state policies, the study also identified five state programs supporting district and school use of data (one in Florida, two in Texas, and two in Virginia).

## References

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