KNOWLEDGE PAPER
P20W Data Access and Use by Community Partners

P20W DATA COALITION PROJECT OVERVIEW | SEPTEMBER 2023

Washington state is one of the most data rich states when it comes to P20W (pre-kindergarten through college/workforce) data and data security and governance. However, the data is often inaccessible to practitioners, educators, researchers, policymakers, and community leaders and advocates. To address the needs of our community partners, Washington STEM, with support and leadership from regional networks, convened 739 local, regional, and state education partners between October 2022 and June 2023 to discuss the bright spots and existing challenges related to accessing and utilizing the preschool to postsecondary (P20W) data system and resources. Through 43 in-person and remote convenings, each partner shared a different aspect of access in early learning, K-12, and postsecondary data use.
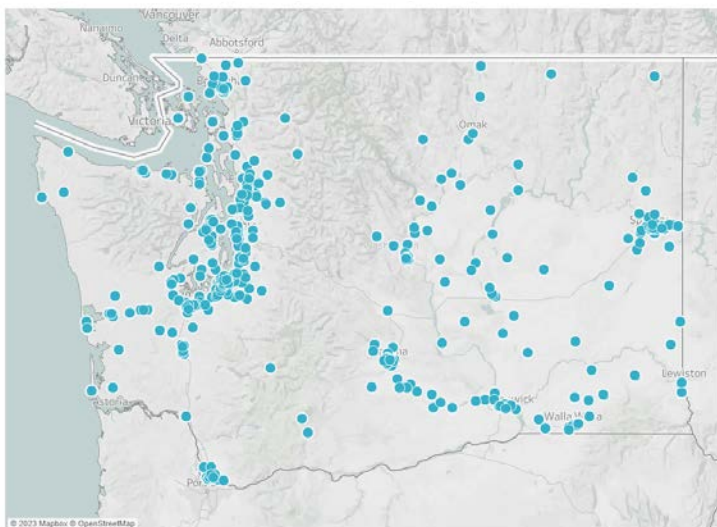

Figure 1. 739 partners were participating in the regional P20W landscape analysis. More than 91% of partners (675/739) have shared data to set and monitor organizational goals and drive strategies in multiple levels.

FINDINGS

What we learned from these convening is that cross-sector partners are actively accessing and using data for the purpose of monitoring, tracking, and strategizing organizational and educational objectives. However, their data capabilities and understanding of the P20W system is mostly limited to reporting and monitoring, rather than iterating and visualizing data in custom reports or

storytelling, according to the needs of the region. This relates particularly to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), the Office of Financial Management (OFM), the Office of Public Instruction (OSPI), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), which are mostly single-sector data systems.

Partners are asking for more technical assistance, training sessions, and workshops to help them access and use data, and they also want opportunities to share what they are learning about data use with other organizations in their region so they can make stronger regional partnerships. The purpose of this potential engagement would be to empower partners to utilize these data resources effectively, encompassing skills like data querying, visualization, and the creation of customizable reports and dashboards. Moreover, there is a strong emphasis on building data literacy capacity to enable partners to harness these data resources for informed, data-driven decision-making processes.

Finally, regional networks and local partners report that they already have convenings in their regions, including leadership tables and convenings to strategize next steps for investing in early care and education, local business trends, engaging out-of-school youth, enhancing student resources in college, completing financial aid processes, monitoring high school and college graduation rates, bolstering college retention rates, addressing data knowledge gaps, developing strategic data capacity, and overall data utilization strategies have been key topics addressed in the discussions.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Design data enterprise map:** Early data collection synthesis indicates the need for a single, one-stop map that shows both single-sector and cross-sector data sources. This includes identifying an appropriate organization to house this, reviewing the specifications required, and encouraging agency cooperation around this effort across the state.

- **Invest in agency data and research staffing:** Demand for data is increasing, especially demand by data intermediaries and high-capacity users, such as individual-sector agencies like the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families as well as cross-sector agencies like the Washington Student Achievement Council and the Washington State Education Research and Data Center. There is a need to increase staffing, skills, and capacity to meet demand.

- **Need for greater State funding and incentivizing of cross-sector data intermediary support in each region:** This would not only increase the data use among the regional partners, but also help them to **align with collective initiatives** and build regional capacity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are truly grateful for the support and collaborative efforts of our regional partners who have offered invaluable insights and contributions to enhance data utilization and accessibility within the P20W system.