

**Measuring and Evaluating Trends for Reliability, Integrity, and Continued
Success (METRICS) Act**
H.R. 5024 & S. 3204

Summary

Our nation's schools must perform better and at higher levels than ever before to prepare every student to graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in postsecondary education and the modern workplace. Educators and policymakers increasingly recognize that better information is paramount in improving policy, practice, and student achievement.

Longitudinal data—data that shows how students perform over time—provides information that is crucial for collecting meaningful results and improving educational processes and outcomes. Establishing robust, longitudinal data systems to gather this type of data is integral to the success of many vital policy solutions currently on the table, including, but not limited to calculating accurate graduation rates, implementing growth models, measuring teacher effectiveness, and leveraging data-driven decision-making.

In the last few years, states have made significant progress in building K-12 longitudinal data systems. According to the national Data Quality Campaign's (DQC) 2009 survey, states have made significant progress in building such systems that include ten essential elements. This progress is due in large part to the recent federal investment. Since 2006, the Institute of Education Sciences' Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant program has been appropriated \$413 million and provided funds to forty-one states.

While collecting vital information through these states systems is a crucial first step, the nation must also have policies and practices in place to ensure that all education stakeholders at all levels are able to access, understand, and use information effectively. Equally important are measures to ensure that the necessary safeguards and policies are in place to protect student privacy. There is much work to be done on these fronts.

There are three specific needs:

- Expand the ability of state longitudinal data systems to link across the P-20 education pipeline and across state agencies.
- Ensure districts and schools develop and implement processes and tools necessary to use both the data in the statewide data system and compliment it with local information that supports daily instruction and safeguards student privacy.
- Build the capacity of all stakeholders, particularly educators, to use data for effective decisionmaking.

The Measuring and Evaluating Trends for Reliability, Integrity, and Continued Success (METRICS) Act (H.R. 5024 & S. 3204) seeks to address these needs through two competitive programs:

Competitive grants to states: The bill authorizes \$65 million in competitive grants to states to improve the use of their statewide data systems. Rather than use grant funding to simply build data systems, grantees will use funds to link data throughout the education pipeline and across state agencies and improve access to and use of statewide data.

Competitive grants to districts: The bill authorizes \$65 million for a new competitive program to low-income local education agencies (or consortia of local education agencies) with low-performing schools to help build the capacity to use data to improve student outcomes. Grantees would use funds to put in place a comprehensive plan to provide stakeholders with access to student education data, regularly analyze and share data, and improve school leaders' and educators' use of data. Grantees could also use funds to develop or improve upon local data systems and content management, instructional, and assessment tools. These activities would be required to be coordinated with state agency efforts and respect student privacy.