COLORADO SUCCEEDS

DATA IN EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR COLORADO

Colorado's education and workforce data systems are disconnected. This fragmentation makes it difficult to measure impact, identify equity gaps, or support seamless transitions across education and career pathways. Learners, families, educators, business leaders, and policymakers are left without the full picture.

With strong statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) legislation in place and a cross-agency governance structure established, Colorado now has the opportunity to build a best-in-class system that connects early childhood, K–12, higher education, training, and workforce outcomes in one place—ensuring smarter decisions and stronger outcomes.

AT A GLANCE: THE STATE OF THE DATA

HB24-1364

Established the Colorado Longitudinal Data System (CLDS) and governance board

$5 MILLION
2024 budget allocation for SLDS implementation

PROGRESS TO DATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SLDS

- ▶ Governing board with executive buy-in convened

- ▶ Mission, vision and research agenda approved

- ▶ Data sharing infrastructure established through working groups

- ▶ Project leadership at OIT and initial investment in state-of-the-art technology secured

OPPORTUNITY FOR GUBERNATORIAL LEADERSHIP

1 Champion the sustained executive-level engagement that is needed to translate the vision into measurable impact, empowering Colorado to evaluate return on investment, close equity gaps, and better serve learners, workers, and employers. Despite prior efforts, siloed leadership and fragmented systems have stalled progress in the past.

2 Elevate Colorado Longitudinal Data System (CLDS) implementation by reinforcing cross-agency collaboration through cabinet-level leadership and ensuring visible, consistent support from governor's office.

3 Highlight how this data helps unlock impact at the local level. Promising regional innovations can't be evaluated, scaled, or sustained without connected, longitudinal data.

4 Fix fragmentation in current data to help drive resources and access supporting smooth learner transitions from school to work.

5 Highlight where other states have championed SLDS efforts to drive transparency, align spending, and improve student and workforce outcomes.

THE VISION

A secure, statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) is essential for helping Colorado understand what's working, invest public dollars wisely, and ensure every learner is on a path to success. When fully realized, the SLDS can empower families to make informed decisions, support educators and employers with actionable insights, and equip communities to strengthen opportunity.

Colorado's next Governor has a powerful opportunity to build on existing infrastructure, drive cross-agency alignment, and champion early wins that demonstrate the system's value. By doing so, Colorado can ensure that billions spent on education and workforce development are translating into measurable outcomes for students, workers, and the economy.

WE IMAGINE A SYSTEM WHERE DATA IS CONNECTED AND ACTIONABLE, SO THAT:

► Students, families, and educators can see which programs lead to in-demand, high-wage careers and track long-term outcomes, not just short-term test scores.

► Policymakers and state leaders have the insights they need to understand what drives economic mobility, allocate resources efficiently, and measure public investments based on real outcomes.

► Employers and communities can align training with workforce needs, pinpoint disparities, and advocate for better solutions.

► Researchers and practitioners can access secure, user-friendly data to improve programs and expand access to high-value pathways.

THIS ROBUST VISION WOULD FINALLY ALLOW COLORADO TO ANSWER KEY QUESTIONS:

► Which programs lead to strong workforce outcomes?

► Who is being left out of effective education and training options?

► Are public dollars being invested in programs that work?

THREE STATE MODELS TO LEARN FROM

CALIFORNIA'S CRADLE-TO-CAREER DATA SYSTEM (C2C)

California is building one of the most ambitious SLDS models in the country. The system will link data across early education, K–12, higher education, financial aid, and workforce, offering a comprehensive picture of learner progress and program impact.

- ▶ **Governance:** Overseen by a cross-sector board and shaped through transparent, community-informed design processes.

- ▶ **Equity and Public Engagement:** Prioritizes equity and accessibility from day one, with tools developed alongside users and communities.

- ▶ **Integrated Data:** Links data across early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to track learner progress and outcomes.

- ▶ **Public-Facing Tools:** Builds dashboards and planning resources that support informed decision-making at every level.

KENTUCKY CENTER FOR STATISTICS (KYSTATS)

Kentucky's KYStats offers a strong model for data integration and public accountability. As an independent, state-funded agency, KYStats securely links education, workforce, and health data to inform both policy and practice.

- ▶ **Governance:** Operates as a trusted, cross-agency intermediary with statutory authority.

- ▶ **Data Use and Access:** Produces public-facing reports such as High School Feedback and Postsecondary Feedback reports, used by educators and policymakers alike.

- ▶ **Labor Market Alignment:** Supports supply-demand analyses that help align programs with workforce needs.

- ▶ **Durability and Trust:** Recognized by Data Quality Campaign for building a sustainable infrastructure that empowers decision-makers and fosters public confidence.

VIRGINIA LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM (VLDS)

Virginia's VLDS securely links education and workforce data through a federated model governed by an equal-vote council of partner agencies. By streamlining research access and providing real-time workforce intelligence, it enables policymakers, educators, and researchers to evaluate programs, improve decision-making, and align investments with labor market needs.

- ▶ **Governance:** Overseen by a Data Governance Council composed of representatives from all participating partner agencies, each holding equal voting power.

- ▶ **Research Engine:** Enables cross-agency analysis that was previously too time-consuming, empowering data-driven policymaking.

- ▶ **Robust, User-Friendly Data Access:** The portal provides approved users with streamlined tools for research proposals, querying, and retrieving data, improving usability.

- ▶ **Cross-Sector Workforce Intelligence:** VLDS captures real-time data on employee demographics, retention, credentials, and quality.

HOW COLORADO SUCCEEDS CAN HELP

Colorado Succeeds works at the intersection of business and education.

We supported the passage of HB24-1364, which laid the groundwork for this system, and we co-lead the Better Data for Better Decisions Coalition—a growing partnership of education, workforce, and business organizations committed to data transparency and outcomes-based policymaking.

We are committed to seeing the vision of the CLDS realized and will work to provide the administration with context, expertise, and community engagement to ensure Colorado builds a best-in-class system that serves learners, employers, and the economy.

BETTER
DATA FOR
BETTER
DECISIONS
COALITION

Explore the coalition's full report: Building the Future | Realizing the Vision of the Colorado Longitudinal Data System

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