



Parent Resource on Education Data

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the federal law governing K-12 education, includes provisions to ensure states, school districts and schools collect and publish data that helps parents, educators and policymakers make decisions and take actions that lead to student achievement. This is an overview for parents that explains the type of education data being collected by schools and the importance of collecting certain data to ensure the clearest picture of student learning.

Education Data

Education data refers to any type of information—student attendance, academic achievement on assessments, teacher observations, demographics, or success in college and the workforce—that helps parents, educators and policymakers make more informed decisions about education to help students excel. Education data provides policymakers and school leaders with a fuller, clearer picture of student learning that can be used to improve instructional design and remedial supports to help all students reach their full potential—while not identifying individual students.

Information is Power—and You Deserve It

All parents deserve to have a robust picture of their children's successes and challenges, the educational options available to them, and how the school system is performing overall. And because data doesn't always speak for itself, families deserve clear information and training and support to understand what they can do to help their children once they have this information. It is PTA's mission to ensure that parents and families are meaningfully supported and engaged in their child's education. Schools can improve family engagement and outreach when they work with parents and families to analyze and better explain education data to improve academic outcomes for all children.

ESSA and Education Data

ESSA requires states and school districts to collect and publish certain educational data sets by student groups (such as homeless students, students with disabilities and students of color). States and schools must put out clear and easy-to-find annual public report cards about school and student achievement, separated by student subgroups/categories. These reports should be easy to understand and give a broader and clearer picture of how the individual school is doing compared to other districts and within the state.

Questions to Ask Your School Leaders

1. Where can I find more information about publicly reported education data on my child's school, such as report cards?
2. How does our school help educators and personnel understand education data and use it to personalize learning for my child?
3. Does our school offer professional development opportunities each year for teachers, principals, and other school employees to learn how to use education data to improve academic outcomes for students?
4. Does the school or school district provide training or workshops for parents that I can take to better understand and use education data?
5. When our school gets annual test results back, how do you use that information to improve student success and academic outcomes?

Your Child's Data is Protected

Education data allows schools to better understand student learning and improve academic outcomes and schools and districts take seriously keeping it safe. Access to your child's data is role-based, which means that only designated educators and personnel have access to the student data that is appropriate for their position and relationship with the student. There are also [federal](#) and [state](#) laws that protect student data from being misused. When parents and educators have secure access to data, we can all help students succeed.

For more information on the use of education data in schools, visit [Data Quality Campaign's Frequently Asked Questions](#) and to learn more about ESSA, visit [PTA.org/ESSA](#).