

# ***District of Columbia***

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## **DC STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM**

**Project Start Date:** 8/1/2007

**Project End Date:** 7/31/2010

**Amount Awarded:** \$5,738,500

Upon assuming office in January, Mayor Adrian Fenty identified education as the top priority of his administration. He joins the District's State Education Agency, the administrators of its multiple LEAs, its university and foundation partners, all of whom have since stressed accountability, transparency, and data-driven decision-making as key tenets of their approach to improving educational outcomes for the District's children. Such an approach relies on a system of comprehensive, accurate, and accessible data, protected by explicit confidentiality measures.

As of today, however, such a data system does not exist. At the most basic level, there is no effective mechanism for tracking individual student movement across publicly funded education programs in the District of Columbia. This inability to follow students as they transfer—or fail to transfer—between schools hampers effective drop-out prevention programs, opens the door to gaps in service delivery, and prevents appropriate allocation of resources, among other things. Beyond the important but basic issue of tracking student movement there is an unmet need to collect and analyze data to determine program effectiveness. Currently there is no easy way to analyze which teacher preparation programs yield the best student outcomes, which curricular reforms lead to increased achievement, or what combination of interventions particular groups of students are enrolled in. Without a unified system that houses comprehensive and accurate data, we risk duplication and gaps in services, non-compliance with federal and local regulations and grant agreements, and a general lack of strategic decision-making.

In the short term, our goals for a student data system are to 1) to effectively track student movement within and across the 56 LEAs in the District of Columbia and 2) to link student achievement outcomes to particular schools, teachers, and programs.

Our ultimate vision is to create a system that tracks students from early childhood through postsecondary and that provides information on the variety of publicly-funded education-related services children are receiving. Such a system would encompass both school-specific information and out-of-school activities and services. This information would allow us to catalogue the array of government-related inputs a child is receiving and better understand the impacts of these various interventions. A longitudinal student data system represents the backbone of this long-term vision.

The District of Columbia has laid some groundwork for this vision, including analyzing the current system and process for creating statewide unique permanent student identifiers, a steering committee comprised of all key stakeholders, a financial commitment from the city government, and the commitment of outside resources eager to provide technical assistance and capacity for

data analysis. At the same time, the development of a longitudinal data system in the District is in its infancy, with respect to the development of both the technical systems, and importantly, the policies and governance necessary to have a fully functional system that meets the vision described above. The District stands to gain significantly, therefore, from the financial and technical support offered from the Institute of Education Sciences.