

The LCAP Data Almanac: An Evidence Base and Comparative Context for District Planning Teams

Challenge

School district staff who are creating Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) have been struggling with data as they prioritize goals, choose progress markers, and set timetables for the rate at which they attain progress. The data they need to make these decisions is difficult to find and assembling it into a form that reveals patterns is both difficult and time-consuming. In addition, districts are able to refer only to their own data, leaving them unable to see districts like their own, which would put local goals and aspirations into a new light.

Solution

The **K12 Data Lab**, a project of the National Laboratory for Education Transformation (NLET), has brought its vault of historical data about California schools and districts together with its team's extensive knowledge of the real-world circumstances of school district staff, and created a visual environment for districts to use to examine their own results in the context of 15 comparable districts. The evidence base spans a 10-year period of time, from 2005-2015. In brief, it's designed to enable LCAP teams to **select fewer goals of higher impact, set evidence-based objectives for improvement, improve the accuracy of data interpretation, and speed up the analytic conversation**, while adhering to the planning standards of the S.M.A.R.T. goals methodology.

Partnership with the Monterey County Office of Education and Status of Work

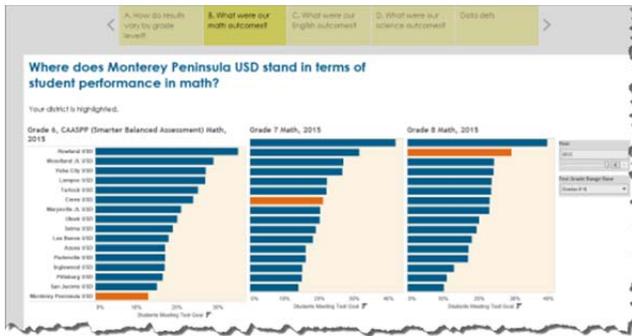
The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) is delivering 24 comparability workbooks, one for each school district in the county, plus additional workbooks for charter schools. MCOE's commitment to better plans and smarter LCAP planning teams takes two forms: (1) funding the investment in the LCAP Data Almanacs, and (2) developing a training and professional development curriculum to help district teams put it to work. The first of three modules was delivered on December 3. The second delivers February 18. The third delivers mid-March.

Deliverables

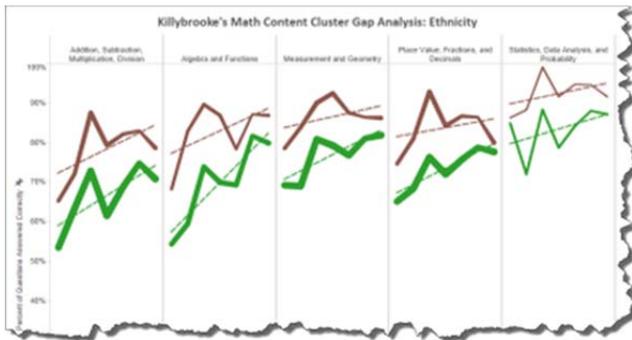


The Comparability Workbook contains a set of 15 districts most similar to each client district, based on type of district, enrollment size, and three factors outside the control of the district: the education level of students' parents; the proportion of students receiving subsidized lunches; and the proportion of students who are learning English. Interactive elements allow the client to exclude districts by name, and to limit

the comparable districts by enrollment or any of the three student related factors. A selective presentation of co-variables is included, among them are CAASPP results, graduates meeting A-to-G requirements, student-teacher ratios and measures of district spending.



financials. About 25 dashboards will present the patterns and inherent in the data, framed in a comparative form.



community conversations about possible bias in districts' allocation of resources, we expect that our base of higher quality evidence will add light, not heat, to the discussions.

Support

The K12 Data Lab and MCOE are building presentations and training materials that are intended to introduce district staff to the method of comparative effectiveness analysis, the visual vocabulary used in our dashboards, and the S.M.A.R.T. goals methodology that this work adheres to. Together we are writing a curriculum that will include a case study, as well as exercises which new users can follow in our lab work sessions.

People, Technology and Data

The K12 Data Lab is working with SHERLOCK, a well groomed Microsoft SQL database from School Wise Press that contains more than 14 years of data published by the California Department of Education. The data has gone through extensive quality control checks before being published. The team has over 15 years of experience managing this resource, and has won six state and national awards for the quality of their work in accountability reporting. The data environments are customized Tableau 9.2 workbooks, software that is recognized by the Gartner Group as the leader in the category of business intelligence software.

Contact for Further Information

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 Steve Rees, NLET's K12 Data Lab: steve.rees@nlet.org

The LCAP Data Almanac, Phase 1 is contained in two forms: a Tableau workbook for data visualizations and interactive inquiry, and an Excel workbook for referencing the data itself. About a thousand rows of data for each of 15 districts comprise each workbook, organized into sections that correspond to the LCAP itself: students, outcomes, student engagement, course offerings, staffing, and

The LCAP Data Almanac, Phase 2 will extend the work to add the dimension of gap analysis, centered on intra- and inter-district variations in opportunities to learn and outcomes (graduation, test results, course participation). These variations – by gender, ethnicity and program participation -- will be represented with new data visualizations. Resource gaps will become visible, as will their trends over time. Given the intensity of

The K-12 Data Lab Team (a project of NLET)

The founding team of NLET's K12 Data Lab brings a combination of experience and knowledge that put us at the nexus of education and data science. Our goal is to find and bring together partners to work with us to help improve K12 outcomes.

Steve Rees, Co-Director of the K12 Data Lab, is the founder and CEO of School Wise Press. He built the company into a pioneering school information business, and in 1999 launched the first professional reporting service for district leaders facing new state and federal transparency requirements. By combining talent in the fields of analytics and data visualization, together with database publishing technologists, Rees brought to education leaders professional data, analytics and reporting skill previously available only in the financial and scientific fields. The firm won both state and national awards for the quality of its work. Mr. Rees sits on the advisory board of the Institute for Evidence Based Change, which encourages higher education leaders to use data to manage their enterprises more wisely. Before launching the company in 1995, Mr. Rees worked in magazine publishing management, most recently at InfoWorld, a technology weekly. He also consulted to magazine publishers in strategic planning for five years.

Mary Perry, Co-Director of the K12 Data Lab has extensive experience in policy and education research; interpretation and clarification of complex education issues for educators, policymakers and community leaders through writing, presentations and seminars; and project management. Her work in K-14 state and federal policy issues includes finance and accountability; the nexus between policy and implementation; secondary education and transitions to postsecondary; Common Core implementation; and areas of educational innovation such as STEM education, school community partnerships, and high school reforms. From 1993 to 2011, Perry was Deputy Director at EdSource.com and in that capacity served as executive editor of the organization's research and policy briefs. She also was the agency lead for the Education Data Partnership. As an independent consultant since 2011, Perry has followed closely the state's transformation of its funding and accountability systems, worked on various research and editorial projects for independent organizations, advises the California State PTA on policy issues, and teaches a policy course at SF State University's educational doctorate program.

Gordon Freedman, President of NLET, speaks and writes about change and technology in education and serves as an advocate for advanced information systems, smart technologies, and big data analytics as agents in transforming individual learning and institutional education. Along with his responsibilities at NLET, Freedman is owner and general manager of Knowledge Base, LLC, a higher education strategy consultancy. Mr. Freedman was Vice President of Global Education Strategy for Blackboard, Inc. and Executive Director of the Blackboard Institute. Prior to his work in the education sector, Freedman was a television and film executive. He was executive producer of the Sundance Film Festival award-winning documentary A Brief History of Time. Freedman was a network news producer and a national reporter. He began his career as a Congressional staff member.

The Monterey County Office of Education Team

Jamie Valenzuela-Mumau is the leader of the Educational Services Department and is responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of all aspects of high quality instructional services needed by schools, districts, and MCOE student programs that prepares students for success.

Dr.Valenzuela-Mumau is a groundbreaking educational leader with proven success in supporting the professional growth of teachers and administrators. He brings 18 years of educational experience serving as a teacher and a site and district administrator at both elementary and secondary levels. Further, he has served school districts ranging from 3,000 to 32,000 students in both rural and suburban areas with diverse populations. His K-12 and district administration, expertise and broad educational background, along with his professional experiences and success in improving student achievements have prepared him to serve as Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services of the Monterey County Office of Education.

Dr. Valenzuela-Mumau holds a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Argosy University, a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Oklahoma City University.

Christina Hart, Ph.D. was appointed Coordinator of Assessment and Accountability in 2015. Dr. Hart is responsible for coordinating assessment and accountability services to school districts in Monterey County. In this position she will facilitate the administration of Monterey County's testing program and the preparation of resulting statistical data reports.

Dr. Hart has served as an educational leader locally as a Curriculum Specialist at North Monterey High School and as the Director of Student Activities at Salinas High School. Additionally, while serving as a military spouse for twenty-three years, she worked in various education positions in multiple states. In her recent position as a Data Coach for Metro Nashville Public Schools, Dr. Hart worked collaboratively with school leaders to create a culture focused on incorporating data into instructional decision-making.

Dr. Hart's interests and skills in assessment and accountability are rooted in her graduate work at Vanderbilt University where she recently earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy. She also taught courses in School Finance and participated on several research and assessment teams while studying at Vanderbilt University. Her Master's Degree in School Business Administration was earned at San Diego State University.