

**Goal 5. Continuous Improvement of the U.S. Education System:
Enhance the education system’s ability to continuously improve
through better and more widespread use of data, research and
evaluation, transparency, innovation, and technology.**

Overview

Achieving the President’s 2020 college attainment goal will require better and stronger data, research, and evaluation systems, powered by information and innovation. The Department aims to foster a culture of continuous system improvement at the national, state, and local levels. To achieve this goal, the Department will support robust and comprehensive data systems; a strategic use of research and evaluation; transparency in sharing results; increased flexibility and innovation; and effective and systemic use of technology.

In May 2010, the Department launched a new agency-wide evaluation planning process to better align its investments in knowledge building with the Department’s strategic plan and its budget and policy priorities and to support appropriate resource allocation.

The process—led jointly by the Department’s Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)—was developed to identify the Department’s key priorities for evaluations that can provide reliable measures of the impacts of programs, policies, and strategies, as well as for a range of research and evaluation activities that build knowledge important to inform policy and practice more broadly (e.g., performance measurement, grantee evaluation, and support).

This planning process includes regular discussions with program and policy offices within the Department and reviews of existing research and recent and ongoing evaluation investments in the Department. While the planning process is informed by the knowledge generated through the Department’s investments in long term programs of research, it focuses on knowledge building activities initiated and carried out by the Department.

In FY 2011, the Department developed and approved a set of priority research questions that will help shape its future investments in knowledge building. Planning for FY 2011 investments was completed this spring and planning for FY 2012 is underway. The evaluation planning process consists of the evaluation planning team meeting with the Department’s policy and program offices and based on their input, developing recommendations for the evaluation activities the Department will support.

Goal 5: Details

Continuous Improvement of the U.S. Education System Indicators of Success		Results				
		FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
5.A. Increase in the number of states implementing comprehensive statewide longitudinal data systems*	Link students with teachers	NA	NA	30	36	41
	Link P-12 with college	NA	NA	28	34	40
5.B. Increase in the number of high-value datasets that are published through data.gov or ED.gov websites		NA	NA	NA	NA	9
5.C. Increase in the percentage of state report cards that include student achievement, school climate, college enrollment, and teacher and school leader measures		NA	NA	NA	NA	Estab. BL
5.D. Increase in the number of Department programs with awards made based on the strength of the evidence (strong or moderate) provided in grant applications		NA	NA	NA	1	5
5.E. Increase in the number of Department programs, practices, or strategies that are adopted as a result of Scale Up, Validation, or Development grants		NA	NA	NA	NA	Estab. BL
5.F. Increase in the percentage of parents and teachers who believe that the effective implementation of technology within instruction is important to student success	Parents	NA	NA	NA	NA	52%
	Teachers	NA	NA	NA	NA	37%
5.G. Increase Departmental priorities to address equity-related issues in the Department's grants and awards		NA	NA	NA	NA	Estab. BL

* This indicator of success aligns with a Department Priority Goal.

NA = No data available for the period

Sources:

5.A. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/features_summary.pdf

5.B. www.data.gov or www.data.ed.gov

5.C. Search of report cards on state educational agency websites

5.D. Department of Education program office spending plans

5.E. Investing in Innovation Fund grantee reports

5.F. Speak Up for K12, <http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup>; Project Tomorrow Teacher Survey

5.G. U.S. Department of Education, internal analysis.

Explanation and Analysis of Progress: Measures 5B, 5C, 5E, 5F, and 5G will establish a baseline using FY 2011 data. Measures 5A and 5D have existing data prior to FY 2011. Data for measures 5C and 5E are collected from states or grantees. Data for measures 5B, 5D, and 5G are collected and reported by the Department. Data for measure 5A are reported by the National Center for Education Statistics. Data for measure 5F are reported by a non-federal organization.

Data for measures 5B, 5D, and 5G are most influenced by actions taken by the Department, but also are influenced by factors that are beyond the control of the Department. Data for measures 5A, 5C, 5E, and 5F are most influenced by actions taken by local educational agencies or grantees in response to state and federal policy initiatives, but also are influenced by factors that are beyond the control of the local educational agencies, the states, or the Department.

Efforts to develop robust, integrated data systems will be constrained by the amount of time, financial resources, and support available to states and local educational agencies. Wide variations in state and district data systems present unique challenges for each state. Some district data systems, for example, far surpass their own state's data system. Efforts to ensure that data systems lead to data-driven decision-making also need to address privacy concerns.