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## Survey Shows State Makes Progress In Developing Quality Student Data System

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South Carolina has made solid progress in developing education data systems that can track student progress over time, from prekindergarten through 12th grade and into postsecondary education, according to an annual survey by the Data Quality Campaign (DQC).

South Carolina is one of 19 states with at least eight of 10 essential elements needed to follow individual student academic growth, determine the value-added of specific programs and identify consistently high-performing classrooms, schools and systems, the survey said.

The DQC – a national partnership to improve the quality, accessibility and use of data in education – has polled states since 2005. South Carolina had only half of the 10 essential elements in place at the time of the initial survey.

“Education reform is not about sweeping mandates or grand gestures. It's about systematically examining, learning and building on what we're doing right and fixing what hasn't worked for our children,” said federal Education Secretary Arne Duncan. “The Data Quality Campaign has challenged states to focus the national conversation on how data can lay the groundwork for reform.”

The survey found that every state is on track to have a longitudinal data system that follows student progress from preschool through college by 2011. The eight essential elements that South Carolina now demonstrates include:

- A unique student identifier that connects student data across key databases and across years.
- Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information.
- The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.
- A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.
- Student-level transcript data, including information on courses completed and grades earned.
- Student-level college readiness tests scores.
- Student-level graduation and dropout data.
- A state data audit system assessing quality, validity and reliability.

The state needs to go further in tracking untested students and the reasons they did not take state exams. South Carolina also is one of 20 states needing to

improve the ability to match student records from primary school through 12th grade with college-level data.

“We all recognize the need for better data and its vital role in decision-making and teaching to improve student outcomes,” said State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex. “I believe we’re well within striking distance of implementing these last two essential elements.”

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