Data on Data: A Resource Guide to Engaging Families with Student Data

Data have the power to be transformative. As the articles in this resource guide suggest, when used by families, data can lead to school improvement and community enrichment. Data also provide a platform that allows parents, students, and teachers to engage in a dialogue about student learning goals, progress, and action steps to achieve these goals. Student data systems that are accessible, understandable, and usable by families promote a pathway of engagement from supporting individual student progress all the way to advocacy for school and community change.

The articles in this guide are grouped into three categories: (1) **perspectives** that offer lessons learned from family and community use of data, (2) **program examples** that illustrate what it takes to make data actionable for families, and (3) **tools** that help everyone understand how data can be analyzed.

Perspectives

Data Quality Campaign: Using Data to Improve Student Achievement. The Data Quality Campaign offers recommendations for states to use data to inform policies and practices aimed to improve system and student performance. One recommendation is for states to promote strategies to ensure that all stakeholders, including parents, know how to access, analyze, and use the information.
http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/actions

Five Big Ideas for Data Rigor…Without Mortis. This guest post on Education Sector's *The Quick and the Ed* blog by Heather Weiss, EdD, Harvard Family Research Project founder and director, highlights the benefits of accessible and usable data systems to support learning in and out of school.
http://www.quickanded.com/2010/03/five-big-ideas-for-data-rigor-without-mortis.html

Learning from Families. This article discusses expanding the scope of family support to include facilitating families' use of data to improve their communities.
http://www.hfrp.org/EE-LearningfromFamilies

When Parents Assess Schools. This article discusses the role that data plays in helping parents assess, and then work to change, the performance of their children's schools.
http://www.hfrp.org/ParentsAssessSchools

Program Examples

New Visions for Public Schools: Using Data to Engage Families. This publication describes how high schools in New York City have begun to engage families in students' academic success and college readiness by helping parents understand student data. Through this case study, it becomes clear that supporting parents in grasping and using this information is a shared responsibility among schools, families, and students.
http://www.hfrp.org/NewVisions

Project Eagle. This program snapshot in *Taking Leadership, Innovating Change: Profiles in Family, School, and Community Engagement* (page 15) by the National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group outlines how one early childhood program uses data to help parents plot the trajectory of their young children's learning.
http://www.hfrp.org/TakingLeadershipInnovatingChange

Using Data to Improve Student Learning and Strengthen School/Community Partnerships. In this presentation, Andrew Hegedus from the Christina School District in Delaware explains how his district used data collection and analysis to improve student achievement and to encourage increased family and community involvement in schools. The presentation focuses on how schools and districts can make data accessible to parents and can communicate more frequently and effectively with all stakeholders about student progress.
http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/details/42

Tools

Becta Schools Using Technology to Engage Parents. Becta, a British NGO that promotes the use of technology in schools, provides information about how schools can use online reporting to help parents understand student progress and to further student achievement.
http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=oe&catcode=ss_es_fam_02

"Cooking with Data" to Target Education Gaps. This article describes several basic ways of analyzing data to reveal a more complete picture of what education offers different groups of students.
http://www.hfrp.org/EE-CookingwithData

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making. This guide offers five recommendations to help educators effectively use data to monitor students' academic progress and evaluate instructional practices. The guide recommends that schools set a clear vision for schoolwide data use, develop a data-driven culture, and make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. The guide also recommends teaching students how to use their own data to set learning goals.
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/