

August 6, 2025

## ERDC Postsecondary Data Strategy – Partner Feedback Session #1

### Agenda Points

#### Introduction

- The session opened with a welcome and agenda overview. ERDC staff outlined the day's goals:
  - To provide background on the Postsecondary Data Strategy, collect partner feedback on draft recommendations, and review a proposed Postsecondary Data Framework.
  - Participation was designed to be interactive, with polls, breakout discussions, and open comment periods.

#### ERDC Background

- The Education Research & Data Center (ERDC), established in 2007, operates under the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Its mandate includes identifying policy-relevant questions, assembling and linking education and workforce data, and producing actionable insights for stakeholders.
- ERDC manages the P20W Data Warehouse, which integrates data from preschool through postsecondary education into the workforce, enabling longitudinal analysis.

#### Purpose of the Postsecondary Data Strategy

- The strategy aims to address the growing complexity of postsecondary pathways, improve data coverage, and ensure more comprehensive tracking of student outcomes.
- Many pathways are currently underrepresented in state data, such as military service, small business ownership, and freelance work.
- The initiative seeks to better capture these trajectories, support evolving credential types, and respond to high demand for postsecondary data from legislators, researchers, and education agencies.

#### Current Work and Roadmap

- This initiative began in late 2024 with funding from the Gates Foundation.
- Completed milestones include:
  - Landscape analysis of existing data and work in other states
  - Review of national best practices and models
  - Development of draft recommendations and a data framework
- The current phase focuses on partner feedback, with future phases including framework finalization, creation of data resources, dashboards, and potential new data collections.

## Recommendations and Roles

- ERDC outlined ten potential recommendations for the postsecondary data strategy:
  1. Investigate new postsecondary data sources to include in P20W
  2. Produce more detailed documentation about ERDC postsecondary data
  3. Refine existing ERDC postsecondary data dashboards
  4. Create new ERDC postsecondary data dashboards
  5. Streamline annual legislative reporting of postsecondary data into more accessible data products
  6. Create a postsecondary data mart
  7. Release an aggregate postsecondary dataset
  8. Launch a postsecondary data users work group
  9. Serve as central location for and curator of postsecondary data resources
  10. Spotlight current and emerging postsecondary trends using ERDC data
- Participants ranked these recommendations in order of most to least priority. They also commented on why they chose their rankings, including:
  - Interest in the data mart, valuable for conducting research and analysis, providing immediate public access to some data, reducing ad hoc requests, and protecting privacy
  - Interest in new data sources, to improve incomplete reporting on high school graduate outcomes and to better understand short-term training opportunities
  - Interest in streamlined legislative reporting, for improved transparency and efficiency
  - Interest in central location for resources, as this aligns with ERDC mission
  - Interest in more documentation
  - Interest in trend spotlighting, useful for committees and workgroups and for increasing public awareness of and use of postsecondary data
  - Generally:
  - Need for actionable insights
  - Balance between institutional priorities and reporting, with external needs
  - Need for increased disaggregation
  - Desire for a statewide public two-year dashboard
- ERDC identified three primary roles that flow from these recommendations:
  - **Collector:** Acquire and steward emerging data sources, manage sharing agreements, and maintain robust collections.
  - **Developer:** Create data products such as dashboards, publications, and data marts to make information accessible and actionable.
  - **Convener:** Bring stakeholders together to discuss, interpret, and apply postsecondary data in policy and practice.
- Participants were polled on which role they considered most critical, with discussion emphasizing the need for balance among all three.

## Data Framework Overview

- The [proposed Postsecondary Data Framework](#) is a simplified navigation tool designed to help users locate and understand available data. It includes both existing ERDC data holdings and aspirational data sources not yet captured.
- The framework draws on models like the Education-to-Workforce Framework and the Institute of Higher Education Policy's Postsecondary Data GPS, with the goal of helping users drill down from high-level overviews to specific datasets.

## Partner Feedback and Q&A

- Feedback was generally positive, with participants praising the clarity of the framework.
- Suggestions included:
  - Linking the framework to research topics and related datasets.
  - Representing non-linear and alternative pathways more clearly.
  - Indicating timelines for future data additions.
  - Exploring integration of non-traditional or locally collected data through project-based linkages.

## Closing Remarks

- Participants were invited to continue providing feedback via an online form and upcoming office hours. Details are available at: <https://erdc.wa.gov/postsecondary-data-strategy>
- Another partner session is scheduled for September 4, 2025.
- Meeting slides and notes will be distributed to attendees.

