WASHINGTON STATE
OFM
Office of Financial Management

September 4, 2025

ERDC Postsecondary Data Strategy – Partner Feedback Session #2

Agenda Points

Introduction

- The session began with a welcome and outline of objectives.
- Education Research & Data Center (ERDC) staff explained the purpose of the meeting:
  - To provide background on the Postsecondary Data Strategy.
  - Gather partner input on updated recommendations and review refinements to the proposed Postsecondary Data Framework.
- The session was structured to be interactive, including polls, breakout discussions, and opportunities for open feedback.

ERDC Background

- The ERDC, housed in the Office of Financial Management, was created in 2007. Its role is to identify policy-relevant education and workforce questions, link data from multiple sectors, and provide actionable insights for partners.
- ERDC manages the P20W Data Warehouse, which integrates data from preschool through higher education and into the workforce, allowing for longitudinal research and 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.

Roadmap & Goals

- The Postsecondary Data Strategy initiative, launched in late 2024 with Gates Foundation funding, continues to expand ERDC's ability to track diverse postsecondary pathways.
- The current focus is refining draft recommendations and the data framework with partner input.
- Longer-term goals include developing new data resources, dashboards, and expanding data coverage for non-traditional education and career pathways.

Recommendations and Roles

- ERDC outlined ten potential recommendations for the postsecondary data strategy:
  - Investigate new postsecondary data sources to include in P20W
  - Produce more detailed documentation about ERDC postsecondary data
  - Refine existing ERDC postsecondary data dashboards
  - Create new ERDC postsecondary data dashboards
  - Streamline annual legislative reporting of postsecondary data into more accessible data products
  - Create a postsecondary data mart
  - Release an aggregate postsecondary dataset
  - Launch a postsecondary data users work group
  - Serve as central location for and curator of postsecondary data resources
  - 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 a postsecondary data users work group, valuable for making impact with like-minded individuals
  - Interest in new data sources, important for capturing missing outcomes, especially for those not enrolling in college or apprenticeship, and for measuring training program effectiveness
  - Interest in the data mart, as a time-saver enabling efficiency and as a way to access data more easily
  - Interest in dashboards, for making data accessible to all, especially students and families
  - Interest in ERDC as central location for resources, "one place for it all" and "one starting point" was attractive, especially for those under deadlines or new to postsecondary work
  - Interest in trend spotlighting, as educating the public on postsecondary trends in WA and nationally is a common need
  - Interest in streamlined legislative reporting, especially better displays and easier-to-find resources
  - General comments:
    - Appreciation for both technical fixes as well as capacity building in the recommendations – both are needed to drive data use
    - Appreciation for aggregate data – while it has limitations, it also has advantages
    - Many of the recommendations blend together, and some participants were torn on their top choices
- ERDC presented updated recommendations built around three primary roles:
  - **Collector:** Expand and maintain emerging data sources, ensuring sustainable data stewardship.
  - **Developer:** Build tools, dashboards, and publications that translate data into actionable insights.

- - **Convener:** Provide spaces and forums for stakeholders to engage in shared interpretation of data.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of balance between these roles, with emphasis on the need for both strong data infrastructure and active engagement with partners.

Data Framework Overview

- The [proposed Postsecondary Data Framework](#) was introduced as a navigation tool for understanding existing and potential data resources. It builds upon national models and aims to make information more accessible to users.
- The framework maps current ERDC holdings while also identifying aspirational data sources that could be added in the future.

Partner Feedback & Open Discussion

- Partner responses were constructive and supportive. Key themes included:
  - Strong interest in capturing non-linear and alternative career pathways more fully.
  - Desire for better alignment between the framework and research topics.
  - Suggestions for clear timelines on when additional data elements may be integrated.
  - Questions about ERDC's capacity to link non-traditional data sources (e.g., local project-based data).
- ERDC emphasized that while its permanent system focuses on administrative data, it has experience linking external sources on a project basis under formal agreements.

Closing & Next Steps

- The meeting closed with a reminder for participants to continue submitting feedback through online forms and upcoming office hours. Details on how to do so available at: https://erdc.wa.gov/postsecondary-data-strategy
- ERDC confirmed that additional partner sessions are scheduled, and that refined materials will be shared with stakeholders following this review cycle.