Who uses student data?

Most personal student information stays local. Districts, states, and the federal government all collect data about students for important purposes like informing instruction and providing information to the public. But the type of data collected, and who can access them, is different at each point. From schools to the U.S. Department of Education, see how student data are—and are not—accessed and used.

What are the types of data?

1. Data are used in classrooms and schools to make changes in instruction and decide what students need to increase learning.

2. Districts use the data they collect from schools to make decisions about what resources each school needs to support its students. They send a small amount of the data that they collect to the state department of education.

3. States use the data to measure how districts are meeting goals for students, provide tools back to districts to inform instruction, assess how state funds are improving education, and provide aggregate information to the public.

4. The US dept receives the least data of all. States send it a small amount of aggregate data, and it uses them to provide information to the public about how all districts are performing. It also uses them to measure how federal funds are helping to improve education.

Parents have access to information about their own children, using it to help them learn.

Teachers have access to information about the individual students in their classroom. They use it to understand how their students are learning and help each student be successful.

Schools and districts rely on service providers to manage instructional tools and some critical functions, like transportation. These third parties sometimes need PII, but only get access to the data directly relevant to their work.

With a clear plan, researchers can get access to de-identified and aggregate data to study what is helping students learn in a district or state.

Members of the public, including neighbors, future employers and elected officials, only get to see aggregate reports—never information about individual students. They use the information to understand how districts and schools in their community are performing.