

Aligned Issue Brief: Empowering Decisions with Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems

Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) provide a secure resource to transform how Kansas strengthens its education-to-workforce pipeline. These systems empower employers to anticipate workforce trends, help leaders evaluate program investments, and identify strengths and weaknesses in the pipeline. By tracking college and career readiness, monitoring outcomes, and enabling high-quality research, SLDS improve decision-making and program effectiveness. Students and parents benefit from clearer pathways to success, while educators gain insights to better prepare learners for life beyond graduation. By leveraging a SLDS, Kansas can drive data-informed solutions to enhance education, workforce readiness, and economic growth.

STATE EXAMPLES

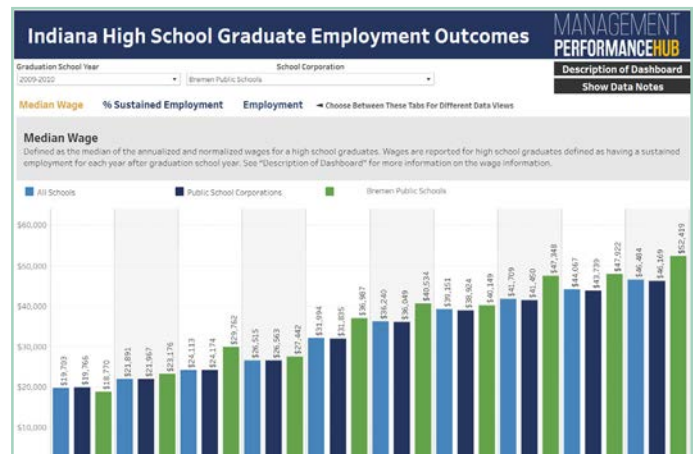
Iowa

[Iowa's SLDS](#) integrates education and workforce data to support personalized learning plans, track K-12 to career pathways, and provide tailored guidance to students and parents, enhancing readiness for degrees or credentials. For example, the [Beyond K12 dashboard](#) empowers high school students to explore community college and university programs by comparing graduation rates, post-graduation employment outcomes, and earning potential across dozens of fields, such as welding or other in-demand careers. This data equips students to make informed decisions about their education and career paths.



Indiana

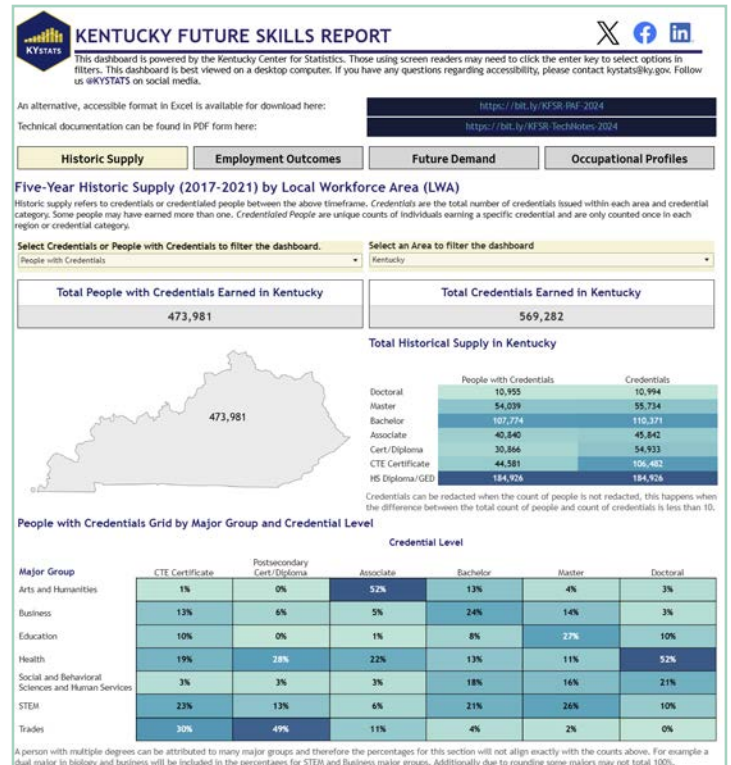
[Indiana's comprehensive SLDS](#) equips state and local policymakers with detailed district- and county-level insights, including public school attendance, high school graduate employment outcomes, third grade reading proficiency, teacher compensation, and more. Beyond education, Indiana has [invested](#) in integrating data across diverse policy areas such as public safety, health and human services, and workforce and economic development. This interconnected system enables policymakers to make informed decisions, evaluate program effectiveness, and craft data-driven policies that address the state's most pressing challenges.



Kentucky

A long-heralded example of a SLDS is [Kentucky's Center for Statistics](#). Like Iowa and Indiana, the state has developed an annual report to analyze students' postsecondary decisions and see how that fits into future labor market expectations with their [Future Skills Report](#). This report provides data on employment outcomes and anticipated future demand for a variety of occupations. Kentucky agencies and the legislature use this data to drive decisions regarding workforce and economic development, education policy and pathway alignment projects. In addition to this report, the state is also known for the following:

- [Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions](#)
- [Career and Technical Education Employer Connector](#)
- [Occupational Outlook](#)
- [Kentucky Apprenticeship Report](#)



Tennessee

Tennessee uses its SLDS to conduct in-depth research in key areas identified by state policymakers. The [Tennessee Education Research Alliance](#) is a collaborative partnership between Vanderbilt University, the Tennessee Department of Education, and educators across the state, dedicated to leveraging high-quality state data to inform policymaking. The alliance produces insightful reports on critical topics such as student success, teacher and leader effectiveness, school turnaround initiatives, and college and career readiness. Through case studies, program evaluations, and policy analyses, the partnership [provides](#) Tennessee policymakers with actionable findings to shape data-driven decisions and improve educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems are a proven resource for driving impactful policy and improving outcomes for students, families, educators, and employers. As demonstrated by Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee, SLDS empower states to make data-driven decisions that enhance educational pathways, align workforce needs, and optimize program investments. For Kansas, adopting and leveraging a robust SLDS presents a significant opportunity to address current challenges, foster economic growth, and ensure that students are prepared for success in a rapidly evolving workforce. By investing in SLDS, Kansas can build a stronger, more informed future for all its residents

Aligned is the only nonprofit, nonpartisan business group working across Kansas and Missouri removing educational barriers impacting the full development of our children, supporting early education, and investing in the workforce of tomorrow.

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