Tools for Talking about

Communicating about Privacy Concerns and Data’s Value
THE BIG IDEA: When students, parents, educators, and partners have the right information to make decisions, students excel.

What does it mean to use data in service of student learning? Data is one of the most powerful tools to inform good decisions and create opportunities for students along their education journey—and it’s much more than test scores. Data helps us make connections that lead to insights and improvements. Everyone has an important role to play in helping all students succeed in their own individualized ways. Here’s what it will look like when data is working for all students.

STUDENTS
“I know my strengths and where I need to grow. I can shape my own education journey.”

PARENTS
“I know what actions to take to help my child on her path to success.”
“I can be a better champion for her.”

TEACHERS
“I know where my students are succeeding and struggling right now.”
“I can help them grow.”

SCHOOL LEADERS
“I know what’s working and what isn’t in my school.”
“I can make timely decisions and make sure resources support great teaching and improve student learning.”

AFTERSCHOOL PARTNERS
“I know what’s happening with these kids before 3:00 p.m.”
“I can help families and communities create more opportunities for students to succeed.”

Many educators and policymakers are already taking steps in the right direction. See DQC’s Four Policy Priorities to Make Data Work for Students for more on making this vision a reality for all students.
Address Privacy Concerns with Transparency and Proactive Communication
Three components of any strategy for talking about data:

- **Talk about people, not systems**
- **Equip your messengers**
- **Be proactive**
Talk about people, not
Make meaning of the numbers

Give numbers meaning by connecting them back to the community’s priorities
Address concerns

Highlight priorities and actions that address these concerns
Use straightforward language (acronyms are not your friend)

Define your terms, and provide examples
Equip your messengers.
You don’t have to go it alone in communicating about data or privacy.

Identify the best people to talk about data and privacy, and make sure they are equipped with clear, consistent messaging for a productive conversation.
Effective communication is more than a press release

Talk about the value of data to foster trust and build support
Be proactive.
People should not hear about data for the first time when there is a problem.
Find opportunities to communicate
Address Privacy Concerns by Helping People Understand and Trust Data
Q: Where do these numbers come from?

Q: How can I be sure that this data measures what it claims?

Q: Is this data really capturing the full story?

Q: I see two different number reported, which one should I trust?

Q: Can I use this to make decisions?
Policymakers and data leaders have a responsibility to anticipate and proactively address the public’s questions with clear and complete answers.

Releasing data on its own is not enough.

In the absence of clarity and context, people may mistrust information or question the accuracy of what data appears to show.

Building trust in the data helps to build trust and align efforts about the narrative you present about the outcomes and opportunities in your state.
To build your confidence in the data ask questions and share information about how data is collected, communicated, and consumed.
Data reflects a series of decisions made by people.
Data does not create meaning, people create meaning.
Quality data will be met by critical consumers.
- Determine who was a part of the process of generating the data.
- Consider if the narrative being presented captures the whole story.
- Evaluate whether the data is presented with sufficient context.
- Be mindful of what questions the data can and cannot help you to answer.

Has anything been left out?

Are there any other possible explanations for the findings?

Do I have enough information to develop a clear picture?

Can I use this data to make decisions on a larger scale?
Data Privacy and Use Are Two Sides of the Same Coin