

THE POWER OF STATE DATA: MESSAGE MAP

Talking about data, and especially the value of a data system, can be tricky. The list of reasons to **not** invest in data can include concerns about local control, diminishing budgets, and big government. Whatever the realities are in your state, you need to ensure that your messages about data are linked to policy and are clear, concise, and memorable.

“Message maps” help clarify the value of and messages around a product or idea. Creating message maps is a valuable process that helps leaders address the gaps and weaknesses in their strategy. Creating the maps around key policy initiatives will help you ensure that your messages about data and policy are effective.

Message maps have three critical components:

① The Big Idea

You should be able to boil your message down into one succinct phrase.

② No more than four supporting subpoints

These points should add to and reinforce the value of your Big Idea.

③ Factual support for your subpoints

Have facts, or even stories, in your back pocket to support and reinforce your main message when given the opportunity.

The message map on the following page displays a tried and true Big Idea and supporting points about the value of data to improve system performance and student achievement. You can use these ideas as a launch point for developing message maps for key policies and work in your state.

As you develop message maps, distribute them generously. Make sure everyone in your office, agency, and other offices has access to these clearly defined messages. And as demonstrated here, visuals help!

Take Action

Create your message map about key education data and policy areas in your state. Go to www.DataQualityCampaign.org/CommunicatingData for a downloadable template to help you get started.



Example Message Map

