



National  
College  
Access  
Network

*Building Connections. Advancing Equity. Promoting Success.*



# Driving Toward Program Improvement

**PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR  
GETTING STARTED WITH DATA**

*The first in a series about college access data management*



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
What does being data-driven mean?.....	3
What benefits do data-driven organizations see?.....	4
<b>How Data-Driven Am I Now?</b> .....	5
<b>Planning for Success</b> .....	6
Have a sense of what you want to do with your data before you collect it.....	6
<b>Start Somewhere</b> .....	8
Rome wasn't built in a day. Your data capacity won't be either. ....	8
Collecting data for the sake of saying they are being collected is not the goal.....	9
<b>Earning Buy-In</b> .....	10
Bad quality data do nothing to gain the trust of staff members. ....	10
Data are most useful when staff see them being used and used in a <i>valuable</i> way.....	10
Everyone on staff needs to have both access to and ownership of data and be talked with about them..	11
The assumption that everyone knows how to work with and interpret data is a bad one. ....	11
Respect the idea that some people didn't enter this field to work with data. ....	12
Frontline staff who input data daily often have valuable insight for data teams.....	13
Everyone can be a data person, but everyone doesn't need to be <i>the</i> data person. ....	13
<b>Check and Re-Check</b> .....	14
The system is just as important as the staff, and it is important to test the system.....	14
<b>This Is Just the Beginning</b> .....	16
<b>About Us</b> .....	17



# Introduction

## What does being data-driven mean?

*The phrase “data-driven” has been used with increasing frequency in the college access and success field in recent years. However, as with many frequently used phrases, its importance can get lost or written off as a buzzword. Being data-driven revolves around decisions being shaped by information and evidence rather than hunches, gut feelings, and guesswork. Being data-driven isn’t a binary state; it isn’t as if an organization either is or isn’t data-driven. Every organization collects, manages, and uses at least some kind of data. Instead, it is better to think about this as a matter of degree. Some organizations are relatively more data-driven than others, and over time an organization can become more data-driven than it was in the past.*

*Many programs profess a desire to be data-driven but may lack the knowledge of where to start or are intimidated by the process. When program staff already have their hands full and it isn’t clear how to proceed, it is understandable that data-related activities get put on the back burner. This can turn into a frustrating chicken or the egg situation. A program could use data (both in theory and practice) to improve program performance, scale capacity, and find efficiencies that free up time for staff. However, because that program is not already using data, it often does not have the time (or willpower, or resources) to begin incorporating data into its decision-making.*

*Fortunately, even small steps toward becoming more data-driven can pay dividends in terms of staff time, program performance, and general day-to-day practice. With that assertion in mind, this brief considers some principles of being data-driven that programs across the spectrum of experience can put into practice. It is the first in a two-part series produced in collaboration with [Exponent Partners](#), a mission-based B Corp leading social change by helping education and other nonprofit organizations manage their data and results using technology. Its companion paper, [Roadmap for Tracking Your Student Results: Program Data & Systems](#), follows this one.*

*Throughout the brief, members of NCAN’s Common Measures Learning Community (whose activities are generously supported by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation) weigh in with their programs’ experiences related to working with data and implementing a data-driven culture. Thank you to CollegeTracks, the Options Center at Goddard Riverside Community Center, the Emily Krzyzewski Center, and the SEED Foundation for their specific input for this brief as well as to all of the members who have weighed in on the data conversation over the past three years.*

*NCAN will continue to produce briefs and resources related to research, data, and evaluation. This is not for data’s own sake but always with an eye toward changing the futures of the low-income, first-generation*

students that we serve. Members, thank you for your commitment to our collective work. Non-members, we would love to work with you to grow the work of college access and success.

To better understanding,

**Bill DeBaun**  
**Director of Data & Evaluation**  
**National College Access Network (NCAN)**

## What benefits do data-driven organizations see?

*It's inspiring for us to watch college access and success organizations transform the lives of their students. Through 10+ years of working with organizations, we've seen the benefit of a data-driven mindset, coupled with a supporting system, in enabling them to deliver better program results at greater scale.*

*Organizations using data to help them make better decisions have benefited in many ways, including:*

- *Prioritized student support for those who need it most*
- *More effective engagement informed by years of student observation*
- *Better advising for college applications based on real probabilities*
- *More clearly defined baselines, results, and outcomes*
- *An increased focus on the program work that matters most*

*OneGoal is one such college access and success organization that we've served since 2012, and we've seen them thrive with data-driven decision-making. Their increasingly sophisticated use of data has led them to move from determining best-fit colleges for their students manually, with a borrowed algorithm, to using a system that auto-calculates best-fit colleges based on nuanced information that varies by region.*

*OneGoal offers personalized student support using unified and comprehensive data they store on student records in their data management system. These include statuses that display higher-level views such as "green": on-track, "yellow": within reach, and "red": off-track. They've been able to prioritize what really matters, delegate resources with confidence, and serve their students even more effectively.*

*It's also worth noting that OneGoal's results took time. When we first met them, they were storing data in Google Docs and disconnected spreadsheets. It was challenging for them to see the full picture of their programs or analyze historical data. But they had the intention of using data to better serve students. With great strategy, determination, planning, and patience, they leveled up in their data collection and usage.*

*We've seen it happen. We know that, with a concerted effort, you too can become data-driven and see tremendous gains for your programs and your students. We hope this report will help you on that journey.*

To your impact,

**Kristi Phillips**  
**Education Solution Consultant**  
**Exponent Partners**



# How Data-Driven Am I Now?

Confused about the degree to which your organization is now data-driven? A quick test is to look at a decision you made recently.

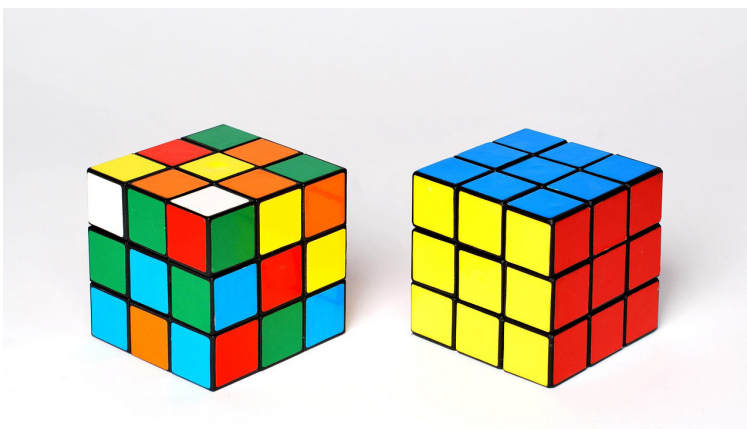
Here are some examples:

## Question: Why did you hire an additional advisor?

- **Not Very Data-Driven:** Because you had a feeling that it would make life easier and it seems like your existing advisors were overextended.
- **Very Data-Driven:** Because looking at your service data revealed that your four existing advisors have 50 students each to manage and you would like to see that caseload reduced to 40.

## Question: Why are your information sessions at 7pm instead of 3pm?

- **Not Very Data-Driven:** You guess a lot of parents will be willing to come after work and dinner rather than take time off from work.
- **Very Data-Driven:** In past years, you tried to have information sessions at different times, and sessions at 7pm were the best attended.



Moving toward being more data-driven improves the process through which decisions are made and often improves the decisions themselves. Using data in your process is more rational, replicable, testable, and fixable than making decisions based on hunches. “Because I said so” may be an acceptable response for parents to give to their children, but it is seldom well-received by staff, board members, funders, or external partners, all of whom tend to respond better to evidence.

It is worth an organization’s time to challenge its own inertia by asking itself how often it does things because it has always done them. That questioning should also include an examination of how often it is consulting, analyzing, and reporting on data.



# Planning for Success

## HAVE A SENSE OF WHAT YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR DATA BEFORE YOU COLLECT IT.

Logic modeling can help you understand the difference between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

When heading out on a road trip, you get to decide whether or not to look up directions to your destination. On the one hand, not looking up directions may lead to some unexpected sights and feel more adventurous. But there's a downside: you may not take the most direct route, wasting time and resources along the way. Additionally, at any given point you may not be sure of your current position and how much progress you're making.

On the other hand, looking up directions feels more methodical. There are concrete actions to take (turn left here; proceed on this road for X miles). A set of directions tells you exactly where you came from and exactly what to do next to get to where you would like to be. Using directions is efficient for your time and resources. The process of deciding which data to collect, manage, and analyze is similar, but the stakes are much higher. A program's effectiveness with using data can have a substantial impact on its students' experiences and outcomes. On a road trip, not knowing where you're going might lead to some wrong turns and lost hours; in college access, not knowing where you're going (and how you got there) might lead to lost student potential and futures.

NCAN has long discussed the importance of mapping out a logic model. Using a logic model, which breaks down everything a program does into categories like inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, programs can map out what it is that they do and how these actions contribute to achieving the program's overall goals.<sup>1</sup>

Programs should undertake a similar process with their data. By first identifying the questions they want to be able to answer, programs can then

<sup>1</sup> For more on logic modeling, consult the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Logic Model Development Guide: <https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2006/02/wk-kellogg-foundation-logic-model-development-guide>



**On a road trip, not knowing where you're going might lead to some wrong turns and lost hours; in college access, not knowing where you're going might lead to lost student potential and futures.**

source metrics that lead to those answers. For example, if a program’s main mission is to “prepare every student for high school graduation and beyond,” and if the program begins services in middle school, some metrics the program can collect are: middle school grades and attendance, high school GPA and attendance, whether or not the student has taken AP exams, etc. These are all proxies along the way to graduating high school and being prepared for college or career. [NCAN’s Common Measures](#) are particularly useful here, and there are webinars in NCAN’s archive that also discuss how to ask the right questions of data. Once a program has a logic model in hand, they should create an overlay of it that describes where data will be sourced for each input, activity, outcome, or output. This will reveal where proxies are needed and where gaps exist in data collection.

“We know where we want to go with our students,” says Dalia Wimberly, Director of Program Administration at the Emily Krzyzewski Center. “It’s helping us figure out which metrics are important enough to want to track, and that will help support the overarching program. We’re hoping it has enabled us develop a more structured lens to then identify and refine the types of data that we want to collect.” The Emily Krzyzewski Center serves students 1st-through-college and so has a well-defined model of indicators for students at each grade level that has been developed based on research before students even enter some of these grade levels.

The SEED Foundation, however, like many other programs, codified its goals and determined program-wide indicators after providing services for a number of years. This can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they have more organizational experience with what has worked and what has not; on the other hand, they face organizational inertia that must be overcome to set indicators midstream.



**We know where we want to go with our students. It’s helping us figure out which metrics are important enough to track...**

**—Dalia Wimberly, Emily Krzyzewski Center**

“We’ve gotten to the point now where we’ve come up with four key goals for the network as well as indicators for each of these goals,” says the SEED Foundation’s associate director of college success, Melissa Freedman. She says although “we’re still figuring out how to integrate data into our day-to-day work,” they are getting to the point where there is agreement around the same goals. “I think you need to get to that point before you can get to utilizing data to impact programming on the ground level.”

It is valuable for a team to build consensus around what its goals are, what its program does, and how and why it does these things. Logic modeling can be a group activity, if at the very least to hear differing viewpoints about an organization’s mission and mechanisms for achieving it. Buy-in, which this brief discusses later on, is critical for becoming data driven. That buy-in is procured at least in part by showing staff that they have a voice.



# Start Somewhere



You have to accept that [it takes time] and move forward as best you can without expecting everything to happen overnight.

—Lauren Phillips, SEED Foundation



## ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY. YOUR DATA CAPACITY WON'T BE EITHER.

It can be tempting to rush to collect everything, but a little bit of good data is better than a lot of bad or incomplete data.

“Doing data work in education is not easy,” says Phillips. “You have to accept that building a data-driven culture and the systems it requires takes time.” Programs can collect and manage many kinds of data to try to answer a number of questions. Developing the capacity to collect that data and answer those questions is an ongoing process.

Vicki Turner at the Center for Urban Initiatives Research (CUIR) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee suggests going “cyclical and deeper” with data. Consider a situation where ACT and FAFSA renewal data are the only consistent metrics currently available to a program or collective impact effort. The “cyclical and deeper” approach calls for tracking these metrics in year one and in the next year circling back and collecting both these metrics and something new. The success of analyzing a small number of metrics may build internal support for devoting additional resources toward collecting new metrics. Similarly, as partners in the field (be they community-based organizations, school districts, IHEs, etc.) see the value of the data that is being collected, they may become more willing to volunteer their own data and ultimately grow a richer data system collectively.

If the prospect of growing a data system incrementally, point-by-point seems slow-moving, tedious, and frustrating, consider the humble corkscrew. Although there are a lot of ways to get at the contents of a corked bottle (e.g., a hammer, dropping it on the floor, etc.), these are not optimal as the integrity of those contents will be lost with these methods. Using a corkscrew, however, we can tunnel methodically, purposefully, and incrementally deeper toward our goal in a cyclical fashion. The process of expanding a program’s data collection can function the same way. Rather than despairing about the data that is unavailable or not collected, start with what is at hand and work from there.



“We had this lengthy list of all the things we’d love to collect, but we’ve had to force ourselves to stop and really reflect on what core data we need right now,” say Phillips and Freedman. “The idea is that you start smaller and can then roll out and expand. Part of the work we have been doing this summer is working with the core set of indicators and then working with the schools to see what else they’re interested in looking at, but we had to look at that core group first.”



Doing data work in education is not easy. You have to accept that building a data-driven culture and the systems it requires takes time.

—Lauren Phillips, SEED Foundation

**COLLECTING DATA FOR THE SAKE OF SAYING THEY ARE BEING COLLECTED IS NOT THE GOAL. PUTTING THAT DATA INTO ACTION IS.**

If a program is going to go through the effort and expense of collecting and managing data, those data need to be used effectively and put to work. In this case, work means shaping or informing program practice or decisions. Data are not being put to use if they are sitting unviewed in an Excel file on a network drive or, far worse, in paper form in boxes in a closet.

“If the data you’re asking people to collect are not useful for them in their day-to-day work, I don’t know how you convince people to do it,” says CollegeTracks founder Nancy Leopold.





# Earning Buy-In

## **BAD QUALITY DATA DO NOTHING TO GAIN THE TRUST OF STAFF MEMBERS.**

“It’s most helpful to stress the importance of using your data systems with fidelity and also making sure program staff have a chance to review the data before they are reported,” says Phillips. “Accuracy is key, for when it’s inaccurate, it erodes trust and buy-in!”

If a program’s data say 90 percent of students in a given class enrolled in postsecondary education, and a National Student Clearinghouse report finds that only 40 percent of those students enrolled, that program’s assumptions and resulting actions are likely both incorrect. (This does assume a reasonable match rate from the National Student Clearinghouse, a condition that some programs struggle to achieve for various reasons.)

Another scenario: consider student service data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, which says that 40 percent of the Hispanic female students at a given school came to a FAFSA night, but the target was 80 percent. Your program plans a campaign to reach out specifically to this group of students, but it turns out two of the sign-in sheets were lost and that these had a disproportionate number of Hispanic female students.

That campaign, because of bad or incomplete data, has now cost staff time, energy, and also probably a modicum of belief in the data on which they are being asked to act. Identifying the right variables to collect is important, but some care and thought also need to be placed on the process for the actual collection, management, and quality assurance of those data. That doesn’t need to be complicated: in this case all it takes is a clear and communicated understanding of who is bringing sign-in sheets to an event, who is taking them away, and who is entering those data and where and by when.

“We model good data hygiene,” says Leopold. “I don’t want to just be data-driven, I want to be driven by really good data that are as accurate and reliable as we can make them.”

Maintaining high-quality data are important, even if it means compromising on which data points to collect or how quickly to collect them. Phillips notes that SEED “sacrificed speed for accuracy in a lot of areas for data collection. It’s more important for the data to be right, even if it means going a little more slowly.” Her SEED colleague data analyst Corin Collier adds, “We realize our effort to create systems around data has not been perfect, but establishing clear expectations on how data are captured and outlining the process for reporting them has been crucial in developing a solid foundation.”

## **DATA ARE MOST USEFUL WHEN STAFF SEE THEM BEING USED AND USED IN A VALUABLE WAY.**

Readers of this brief are likely among the more data-informed at their organization or are managers of those who are data-informed. A person’s access to and/or understanding of data should not become a blind spot that keeps them

from delivering those data to the rest of the program. It is the responsibility of the most data-literate to present data to their colleagues that are relevant in their day-to-day work. “You can have all kinds of great-looking dashboards and data saying these students[...]are doing X, Y, or Z,” says Wimberly, “but being able to marry what the data say with what the advisors who are working on the ground day in and day out know about that family is critical.”

“How do we [frame the issue] so that it’s perceived by the people who have to enter the data and interact with the data to add more value than it creates work?” asks CollegeTracks’ Nancy Leopold. “There’s always a cost as well as a benefit to [collecting data], and it’s important to make sure that we’re asking the appropriate people to perform the appropriate tasks so people don’t feel burdened beyond the value they’re getting.”

### **EVERYONE ON STAFF NEEDS TO HAVE BOTH ACCESS TO AND OWNERSHIP OF DATA AND BE TALKED WITH ABOUT THEM.**

Because everyone “isn’t,” “doesn’t want to be,” or “doesn’t have time to be” a “data person,” there is a tendency for the work of collecting, managing, and analyzing data to become insular and shared among a few staff members who specialize in working with the data and translating them to the rest of the organization. This is a serious obstacle toward an organization becoming truly data-driven. The more unusual or foreign an organization makes working with data for its average frontline staff member, the less likely it is that the organization will get to a tipping point where everyone trusts, uses, and takes ownership of data day-to-day.

“That has been a big challenge for us in that some people have access to data but not everybody,” says Freedman. “There needs to be a shared responsibility. For me, the lesson is [having data be] integrated into the full community and being part of one same team.”

Her colleague Lauren Phillips concurs. “Something we’re learning is that sharing something with leaders isn’t enough. You have to make it accessible to the community overall.... It’s important for data to be available throughout the school community, as it’s really difficult for people to feel ownership over something they’ve never seen.”

### **THE ASSUMPTION THAT EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO WORK WITH AND INTERPRET DATA IS A BAD ONE.**

Even if the data are clear to the data-informed, demonstrating that value to others is critical for obtaining their buy-in.



[D]ata don’t always trickle down from leaders to the rest of the school community, and it’s really difficult for people to feel ownership over something they’ve never seen.

—Lauren Phillips, SEED Foundation



It's easy for some to look at a chart or table and quickly glean some insights from what is presented, but this is hardly the case for everyone. Presenting data in an accessible form will go a long way. Think about how you would react to what you were seeing if you weren't seeing it on a constant basis. This goes back to the idea that everyone in an organization needs to see data regularly.

"People are more willing to give you the data, and then more willing to look at the data once you've analyzed them. I never realized how much of a difference it makes when you put something together in a form that is easy to digest," admits Phillips. "I think it's really important for people to see them put into use quickly and for them to be put into a form that makes them digestible...It's a little more work on the front end, but it has led to less confusion and more reliable data on the back end so I think it's well worth it."

It's beyond merely advisable for data analysts and similar positions to put data in an approachable form: it's a responsibility, says the Emily Krzyzewski Center's Dalia Wimberly. "It's incumbent on me to then translate that information in a way that's reusable for the folks who are working more closely with the students than I am." Translating the information, in turn, reaps the benefit of buy-in. "I think the buy-in comes on that side where [staff] don't necessarily have to manipulate the data; the buy-in comes from seeing a report and knowing they can see exactly where their individual students are performing...and that's awesome."

## **RESPECT THE IDEA THAT SOME PEOPLE DIDN'T ENTER THIS FIELD TO WORK WITH DATA.**

This brief has not surveyed NCAN programs' staff members on their motivations for doing college access and success work, but based on conversations at conferences and other convenings, discussions with program leadership, and knowledge of the education field, a reasonable hypothesis is that the draw of the college access and success field to those it employs is not the opportunity to work with data. Although the field has become more data-driven in recent years, there are many people whose careers started and thrived before this trend did. For many, the draw of access and success work is the opportunity to work with students interpersonally, not to perform data entry, look at spreadsheets, or undergo rigorous evaluations.



**It's being firm but kind. We are going to do this. We are going to try. If you really don't understand, it's really my responsibility that what I'm asking you to do matters.**

**—Nancy Leopold, CollegeTracks**

It's important to understand that people's appetites for using data vary widely. Staff members have lives beyond their work, and understanding how they might see data as a burdensome addition and how to shift that view toward the positive is both difficult and important. Couching the message to staff as "how can we get you on board" rather than "get on board or else" is critical.

SEED's Phillips explains that it is important not to get frustrated. "You have to assume that staff are at varying levels of experience and comfort with data, and sometimes they don't know where to put it or they don't know how to use the system, but there's no malintent. Approach it with an outlook of good will."

Echoing that sentiment, Leopold notes that, “It’s being firm but kind. We are going to do this. We are going to try. If you really don’t understand, it’s really my responsibility that what I’m asking you to do matters.” She adds that “the person who is your best coach may not be anywhere close to your data maven, but they can learn enough to do what they have to do.”

### **FRONTLINE STAFF WHO INPUT DATA DAILY OFTEN HAVE VALUABLE INSIGHT FOR DATA TEAMS.**

Even if they are not making day-to-day decisions on what data to collect or how, frontline staff like advisors, who are often inputting data, can provide critical feedback about what is and is not working. These staff often serve as an important check on any potential blind spots held by data specialists, who may think that everything is going well overall because it is going well for them in particular. Relying on staff to serve as this check, and more importantly as partners in the data work, is an important part of building a data-driven culture and promoting staff-wide ownership of and involvement with data.

Leopold emphasizes that it is important for everyone to know and understand the data being collected and the system being used to collect it so “that you can trust your staff when they say, ‘let’s hide that field.’ They now say to us throughout the year, ‘Could you please add X?’ ‘Could we get a field for Y?’” That buy-in is critical and shows that as the program evolves, staff members are automatically thinking about where to capture new data points and whether or not existing systems are sufficient.

It can, of course, also be a breath of fresh air to get new perspectives, says Freedman. “We were happy to have the chance to share our framework and our goals and indicators with all staff and give them a chance to say, ‘Why aren’t we measuring this or that?’ and just have a chance to engage in the data. I think that was a really big step forward for us.”

### **EVERYONE CAN BE A DATA PERSON, BUT EVERYONE DOESN’T NEED TO BE *THE* DATA PERSON.**

This heading may seem odd given that this brief has emphasized the importance of being inclusive around data work. But there is an important distinction between being a data person, someone who is reasonably comfortable with them, works with them day-to-day, and understands their importance, and being the person responsible for shepherding the data, someone who has specific professional training or experience with data and is responsible for overseeing or managing data systems, program evaluation, analysis, and other reporting.

“I’m not turning anybody into a data wizard,” says Leopold. “If someone thinks they are being asked to be *the* data person, that upsets them. And it should, because that’s not what they signed up to do.”

Instead, reasonable expectations and clear communication about who has what responsibilities can make the distinction between a data person and *the* data person painless. “I want people to be able to input data that reflects what they do with students, and I want them to be able to glean knowledge from that that helps them do whatever task they do,” says Leopold.



# Check and Re-Check



I think a lot of times people put in systems they don't understand, and they wind up just doing stuff because they were told to, and they have no idea why, and that's bad. People have to be trained in context. We do *this* because it gives us *that*.

—Nancy Leopold,  
CollegeTracks

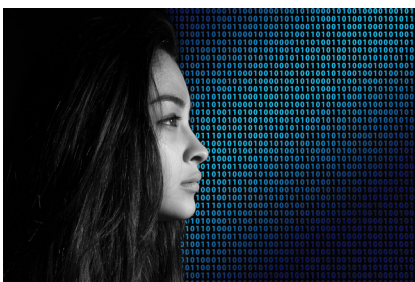
## THE SYSTEM IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE STAFF, AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO TEST THE SYSTEM.

This brief has focused heavily on motivating individuals, getting them on board, and changing people's perceptions about working with data. Programs should not lose sight of the fact that a staff that is motivated to work with data day-to-day for program improvement still has to have a system that is not tedious to work with, that demonstrates value, and that helps to further the program's goals rather than serving as an obstacle. That system includes the actual data platform a program uses and the processes that staff members have to use to record data (e.g., Do data go on paper forms? Who enters it into a computer? How often? Does the form reflect the right data to record?). The processes a program has in place can make or break the prospect of staff engaging in data-related work with fidelity or grumbling about having yet another form to fill out. If you are ready to start thinking about how a system can support your data tracking and management processes, see the second paper in our series, [Roadmap for Tracking Your Student Results: Program Data & Systems](#).

Leopold's CollegeTracks program has continually refined the process that staff members use to record student data. Each student has a paper folder with relevant forms and status updates. Data recorded in these folders are then entered into the organization's Salesforce system periodically during the week. This serves as a quality control mechanism (data are always checked before being entered into the system) but also allows staff members to not be distracted by a computer while interacting with students.

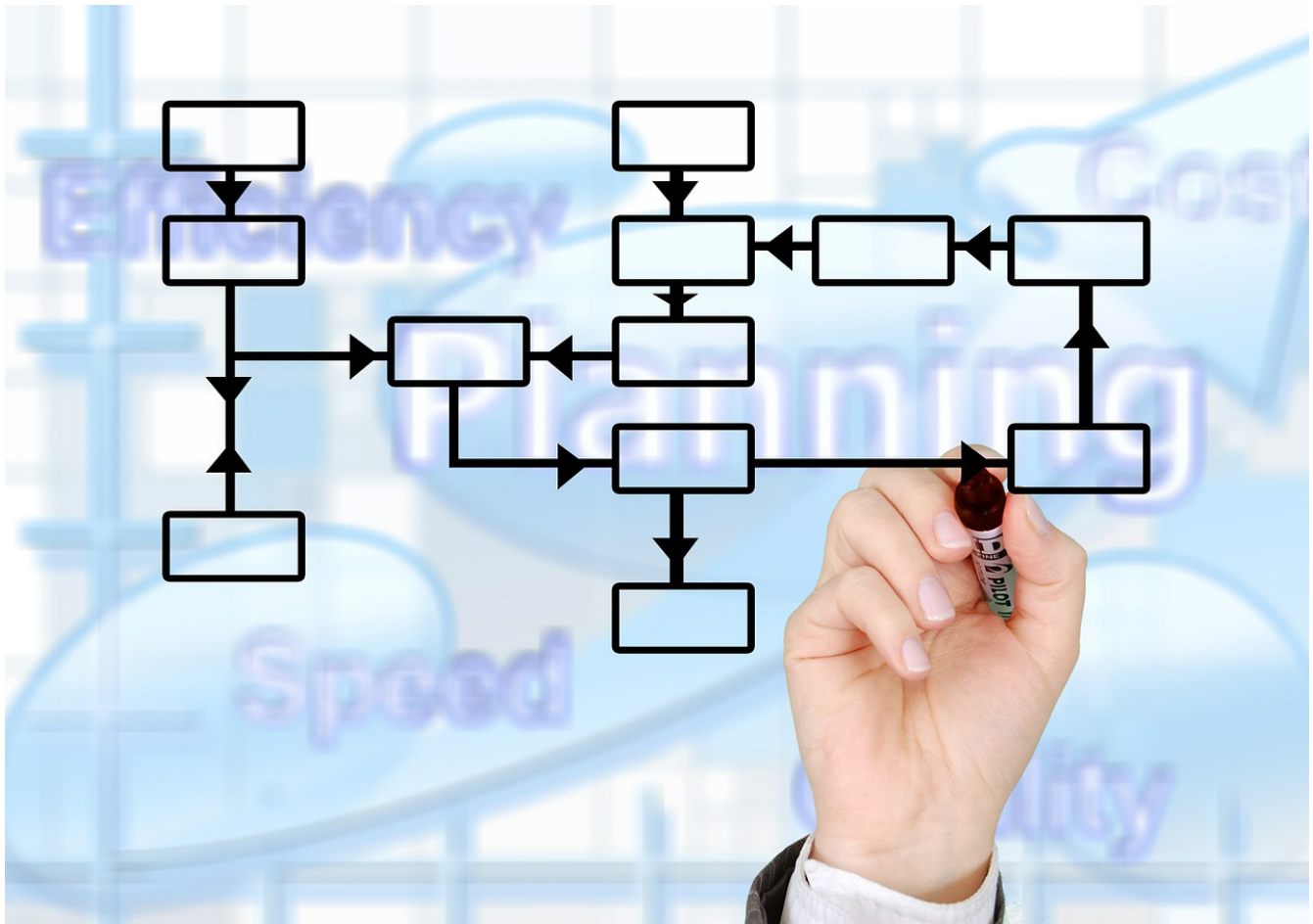
"I think a lot of times people put in systems they don't understand, and they wind up just doing stuff because they were told to, and they have no idea why," she says. "And that's bad. People have to be trained in context. We do *this* because it gives us *that*."

Leopold recommends that managers and staff members both beta test whatever system they are going to implement and make sure that the user experience is one that is going to hold up. If a form seems onerous to fill out



once, chances are that staff is not going to want to go through that process dozens of times a week. She continues:

“There’s no substitute for [using a system or going through a process] to understand how it’s going to feel to do it.” That includes for program leadership: “If you don’t do it yourself, you’re never going to figure out what’s wrong with it. And when your staff says, ‘You know when we enter it this way, it goes that way.’ You need to be so intimately familiar with your system that it makes sense to you, or you have to have someone on your staff who is and can make it make sense to you.”



“It’s really easy [for a manager] to say, ‘Oh suck it up, it’s not that hard.’ You just don’t get that when you have to do this 50 times a week, it gets really old. I don’t think that the staff are the problem. My guess is that an organization that is finding its staff members don’t want to [work with data] has got a problem in its design of how the program is doing data, or has other issues.”

“Have a good system that’s elegant enough that you’ve taken out the really annoying stuff. [For example, if staff are] entering the same data in three different places, there’s no excuse for that. You need to be respectful of the highest and best use of your staff’s time, and it’s not entering the same data over and over.”



# This Is Just the Beginning

## But remember, we have to start somewhere.

No brief, report, or blog post is going to make a program data-driven overnight. NCAN members vary widely, and their different contexts are important for determining the paths that they can take to become more data-driven. This brief is the first in a duo that includes insights from NCAN members about their experiences. Its companion brief, [Roadmap for Tracking Your Student Results: Program Data & Systems](#), focuses on data collection, management, and analysis techniques with more advanced principles for using a system. Beyond this series, consult NCAN's constantly-updated [Data and Evaluation Toolkit](#) for research and resources to grow more effective in this area.

Whether your program is full of data newbies or has had a system in place for years, the hope is that the principles contained here serve as starting points for discussions about what could be improved or modified at your organization. Through it all, remember that the idea is not to work with data for data's own sake. Instead, the mission is to increase program capacity and improve program performance to better serve students and increase postsecondary attainment rates for underrepresented groups.







# About Us

## National College Access Network

National College Access Network (NCAN) is dedicated to improving the quality and quantity of support that underrepresented students receive to apply to, enter, and succeed in college. NCAN members touch the lives of more than two million students each year and span a broad range of the education, nonprofit, government and civic sectors. NCAN provides member organizations with professional development, networking, benchmarking, resources and news from the field so they can deliver college access and success services more effectively and to more students. NCAN also advocates at the national level for policies to improve college access and success.



Want to find out more about how NCAN can help you advance your mission, create learning opportunities, grow your capacity, and connect with nearly 400 NCAN members who span the education, nonprofit, government and civic sectors?

Learn more about NCAN membership here:

[http://www.collegeaccess.org/Join\\_NCAN](http://www.collegeaccess.org/Join_NCAN)

## Exponent Partners

Exponent Partners builds technology for education organizations to build capacity, improve reporting, understand organizational results, and direct resources to better programs and services. Our solutions help you manage people, processes, and outcomes on the Salesforce platform. Through our technology, education organizations manage student and alumni data tracking, recruit staff and teachers, track applications and program enrollment, integrate with HR and accounting systems, evaluate student outcomes, and more. As a B Corp and a California Benefit Corporation, we pursue our mission to make the social sector more effective by delivering insights that create impact.



To talk with us about how you can gain more insights from your data, contact us:  
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