

# STATEWIDE DATA CONVERSATION PROJECT

Schools collect, maintain, report and analyze a variety of information related to their students. There is no higher priority than maintaining the privacy and security of student information in all instances.

Additionally, schools take the role that data plays in school accountability very seriously.

*The questions educators are increasingly asking is, are schools making the most effective use of all the information they have to increase student learning? Are all the dots being connected? Does the classroom teacher have regular access to information that will help them make decisions in the classroom based on student need? In the year 2021, and beyond, is there a better way to use information?*

These questions are at the heart of this Statewide Data Conversation Project. The conversations that took place with educators across New York state in 2019 and recent interviews with school leaders, show a growing recognition that there is a better way to use information while protecting privacy and security. New York's schools lack a universal standard for what school leaders and teachers have access to in terms of information systems and analytical tools. There are pockets of success and best practices to build on, but the progress has been slow and uneven.

The purpose of the Statewide Data Conversation Project is to bring new urgency to a conversation that has been around for some time: How do we leverage information that already exists to better help students succeed?

## ► ON DISPARITIES BETWEEN DISTRICTS



"In some places it's a well-oiled machine. And in some places, there is a lot of data, lots of things accessible but the true ability to sort through it, have discussions and utilize it to impact instruction is probably very minimal."

**Kristy McGrath**, Superintendent, Adirondack Central School District

## ► ON TABLEAU



"We're a good school. We're doing great things for our kids. So now we just need to find the small ways that we can fine tune and make sure that all of our students are learning at the level they are capable of. And I think just having the right information to do that is extremely valuable so we know where to look, we know where to work."

**Clifford Bird**, Elementary Principal, Cohoes City School District

## ► ON GATHERING DATA FOR ANTI-RACISM AND EQUITY WORK



"What this revealed for us was we have to come up with a more comprehensive way of collecting that data because it wasn't easy. When we looked at the state data it wasn't always current. Unfortunately, it would only go up to a couple of years ago and we are trying to move forward with the work and how it is being impactful, but we don't have the data yet, so that was a challenge."

**Latisha J. Barnett**, Chief Equity Officer, Niskayuna Central School District

## ► ON MAKING A HIGH-QUALITY SYSTEM AVAILABLE STATEWIDE



"It has to be achievable. At some point we have to equalize the playing field. If we're not doing that then we are doing a disservice to the kids that we are in this business for. We've got to figure out a way that everyone is able to get their hands on something that makes the analysis easy enough that they can make those changes that need to be made. It has to happen."

**Theresa Billington**, Director of Curriculum & Instructional Data, Capital Region BOCES

**About the Statewide Data Conversation Project:** The district superintendents of the 37 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in New York have identified the need for education stakeholders to have meaningful and productive conversation about the best way to use student data to improve education. This paper is a continuation of the conversation, as the BOCES leaders recognize that a failure to come together to ensure best practices, both to improve instruction and ensure privacy and security, will result in missed opportunities to strengthen education for the students of New York. Funding to support this continued conversation was provided, in part, through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Additional financial and staff support was provided by Capital Region BOCES.