



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

2007 NASCIO Recognition Awards Nomination
Category: Data, Information & Knowledge Management

Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data Portal

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This project created a one-stop shop for data, information, and research about postsecondary education in Kentucky. It provides a method for organizing, explaining, and presenting data so that it can be understood by many different audiences, putting it in the hands of those who have the ability to make changes and thereby allowing for full transparency.



Executive Summary

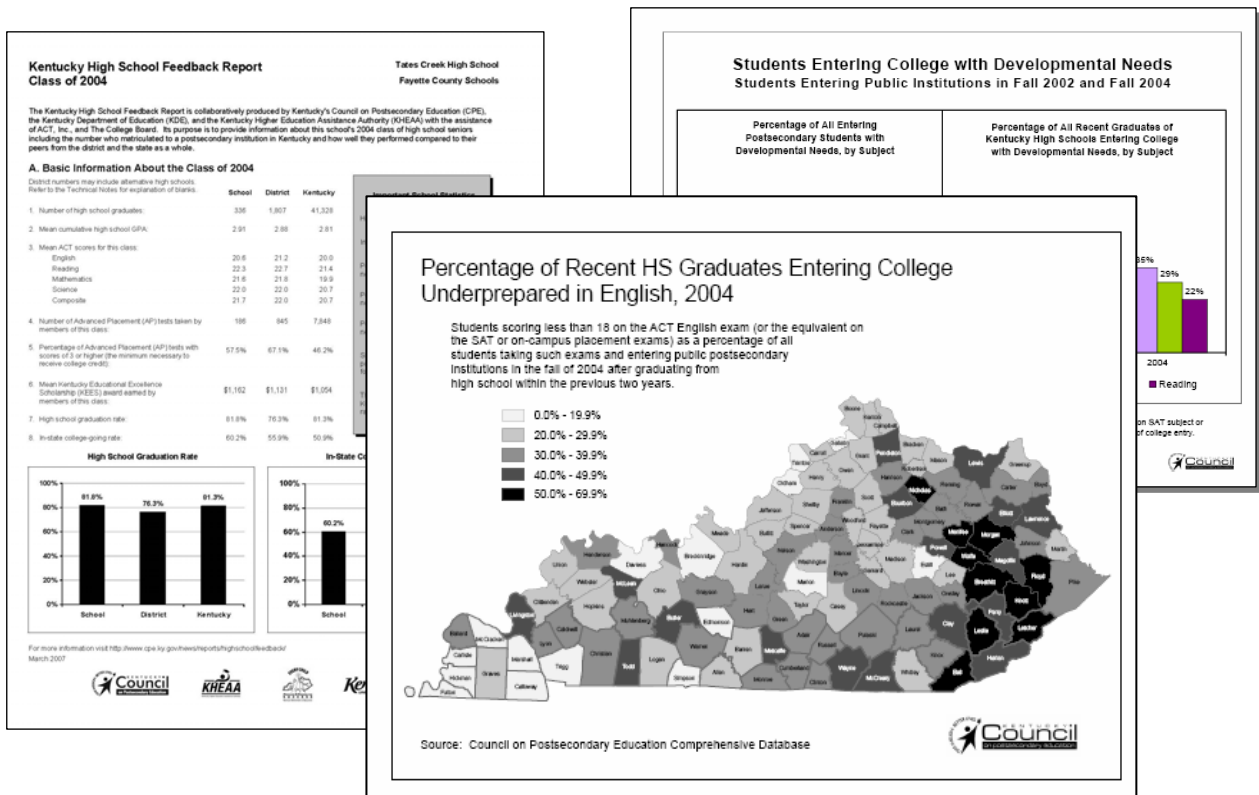
The Council on Postsecondary Education's office of information and research launched the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data Portal in October 2006 as a central location for data and research about postsecondary education in the Commonwealth. It has rapidly become one of the top 3-4 links when searching for postsecondary education data terms on Google and other search engines and has become regarded as one of if not "the" best state level site for college and university data and research.

The Council had a web site with a few pages of information, but it was dated and only included approximately 15 individual reports. It was replaced with the Portal which now includes several hundred individual reports, analyses, maps, and graphs. The state's legislative research area had chastised the CPE for not providing enough information about postsecondary education. The Portal has helped to change that and they are some of the heavier users of the information. One of the most important features of the Portal is that it provides a higher level of accountability through transparency.

The site was designed from the ground-up to provide information in ways that the average user could easily navigate while having an extensive collection of tables, reports, graphs, and maps covering all aspects of college preparation, participation, and success. It houses information about postsecondary education as well as information that impacts it including the Census, workforce development, high school feedback reports and other helpful items. The high school feedback reports have recently been acknowledged as one of the best examples of K12 and postsecondary collaborations in the country. In addition to putting information in the hands of the public and other stake holders who have the ability to make decisions and hold institutions accountable, the site has also provided the outcome of reducing the number of individual data requests to the staff by approximately two-thirds. This gives them time to focus on improving the quality and availability of more information and begin work on a new data warehouse.

In April 2007 the Data Portal won the Best of Kentucky award for the most innovative use of technology in education as part of the 2007 Digital States awards from Government Technology magazine.

<http://cpe.ky.gov/info>



Project Description

Prior to the Portal, very limited information was available about postsecondary enrollments, degrees granted, developmental needs, etc. Moving to the Portal allowed the information and research staff to publish several hundred reports in a way that makes it easy for people to access without contacting the staff directly.

The staff can spend a greater amount of their time on development of a new data warehouse, enhancing the Portal with more information, and conducting actual research instead of tabular reports. It allows the staff to better utilize their time turning data into information that can be used for decision making.

Significance to State Government

The Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data Portal is one of the more comprehensive web sites from Kentucky's state agencies. It serves as an example to other agencies within the state who may need to operate on a more transparent basis in terms of making information not only available but also accessible in a way that people can understand.

As the Portal continues to expand, it will encompass information from other sources including additional state and federal agencies. Education is clearly a factor in determining the health of a state's fiscal well being and it is impacted by a number of other factors. By bringing all of this information into a single, easy-to-use location, it helps citizens and decision-makers alike to make more informed choices.

Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state

The primary benefits that have been realized to date include:

- Time savings for the CPE information and research staff so they can build a new data warehouse instead of contracting it out with a tangible savings of a few hundred thousand dollars.
- Increasing the trust with other government agencies and state leadership through transparency. In the long-term this will lead to more informed funding decisions and policy development of a magnitude never before seen.
- Information about student success in college related to their high school preparation is causing changes to be made throughout the education pipeline that will help more students go to college and have a higher quality of life. As this happens, the state will see significant benefits both fiscally through increases in revenue from a more-educated population but also through the improved health and civic involvement.
- Institutions are held to a much higher level of accountability because the information is readily accessible to their constituents.

Realized return on investment, short-term/long-term payback

The most readily apparent return on investment is immeasurable. The Council developed the Portal without any external resources. It was using existing technology and staff in new ways. Though it was very time intensive to develop, the update process occurs twice a year utilizing approximately two weeks of staff time. In the past, half or more of their time was spent on data requests that are now being answered through the portal so the overall ROI is that we are able to undertake several projects that in the past would not be possible or that would have had to be done through the use of consultants and contract workers. For example, this year the CPE was able to develop its own High School Feedback Report which in the past was contracted with a third-party. They are also now able to take over the data needs of their GearUp Kentucky program, which used to be contracted out at \$40,000 per year. The staff is also developing a new data warehouse using existing resources plus approximately \$230,000 for equipment, software and training. This warehouse was initially funded at \$600,000 just to pay for the initial design phase with the expectation of another \$4-6 million in actual development charges. The staff itself will be implementing one for a small fraction of that initial expected cost.

The Kentucky Long Term Policy Research Center estimates the value of raising the Commonwealth's level of educational attainment to the level the Council strives to be approximately \$5 billion.