



SLDS Issue Brief

Communicating the Value of Data Governance

Data governance is foundational to a sustainable statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS). When programs and organizations understand how data governance benefits their programs and organizations, they are more likely to participate in and provide ongoing support for the data governance program.

This issue brief discusses common benefits that programs and organizations can gain from participating in data governance and how SLDS teams can define the value based on those benefits. It also covers how to craft messages that communicate the value and keep those messages relevant and central to the state's work.

Organizing

Data governance requires organizational and individual support. It involves the creation of common policies and processes, which might require new roles and responsibilities and changes to existing roles, as well as new collaboration among staff members, program areas, and organizations.

Established, documented policies and processes can ensure that data governance remains consistent as changes occur in the organizations and programs. Plans for sustaining data governance should include holding discussions with new state and agency leadership as well as with new staff members about the importance of the data governance program and how its work supports the organization and the state as a whole.

What is data governance?

Data governance refers to the overall management of data, including its availability, usability, integrity, quality, and security. It is the means by which organizations (or groups of organizations) make collaborative decisions about their collective information assets.

Data governance is both an organizational process and a structure. It establishes responsibility for data, organizing program area staff to collaboratively and continuously improve data quality and use through the systematic creation and enforcement of policies, roles, responsibilities, and procedures. Data governance includes establishing governing bodies within agencies as well as across P-20W+ (early childhood through workforce) SLDS partner agencies.

Developing and Implementing a Data Governance Message

Professional marketers use value propositions to help sell their ideas. A value proposition is a statement that summarizes the best reasons for using a product or service. Crafting such a statement can help an organization communicate the importance of data governance to the state or organization.

Craft the value proposition of data governance

A value proposition is a brief statement of the most compelling argument for data governance. It should focus on the highest priority benefits or needs for the organization or state. Do not try to include in your statement all of the good reasons for data governance.

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For more information on the IES SLDS Grant Program or for support with system development, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/SLDS>.

1. Start with some common value propositions for data governance:
 - Common vision for data use aligned with goals of the organization
 - Higher quality and greater trust in data
 - Increase in data use
 - Improved understanding of and transparency around information assets and processes
 - Security and privacy of data are understood, maintained, and enforced
 - Consistent, strategic solutions to address data quality issues
 - Effective communication and coordination with internal and external stakeholders
 - Common definition of “data governance” and defined language around it
 - Decreased staff burden over time
 - More agency-wide processes, rather than separate processes maintained for each program area or department (silos)
2. Identify the most difficult data challenges facing stakeholders and determine how data governance can address them. Stakeholders might include executive leadership, program area staff, local education agencies (LEAs), and information technology staff members.
3. Identify state and/or agency goals that data governance can help support. Refer to strategic plans and mission statements.
4. Involve data governance representatives in developing the value proposition and request their feedback to ensure that it resonates with them and that they feel they have a stake in its message and use.
5. Identify milestones and metrics to quantify the value proposition. Consider milestones and metrics related to ongoing data work that might not be recognized as formal data governance but that contribute to the same goals. Such metrics and milestones might include
 - reduction in unnecessary data collected;
 - reduction in data inconsistencies and errors—and staff time spent resolving them;
 - time saved by eliminating redundancy and streamlining data processes;
 - improved data security and transparency;
 - improvements in data quality (from districts, in federal reporting, etc.); and
 - expanded uses of data due to improved quality and stakeholders’ increased confidence in the data.

Document the value proposition

Once crafted, incorporate the value proposition into the data governance policy and data governance manual. It should be included in data governance training for new participants in the data governance program, including new members joining because of staff turnover, new participating programs and agencies joining the SLDS, and new representatives of existing programs and agencies.

Communicate the message

Develop talking points to communicate the value proposition of data governance. Include milestones and metrics in your talking points and share them with all data governance representatives so that they can effectively communicate data governance value to their stakeholders and coworkers.

Incorporate the talking points into discussions with key stakeholders, such as LEAs or policymakers, and share them as part of data policy and data governance board meetings. Consider the audience, and tailor your delivery to emphasize how data governance supports their priorities. Documenting the value proposition and related talking points helps ensure consistent communication during staff turnover and leadership changes.

Keep data governance messaging relevant

Specific priorities for the data governance value proposition may change due to leadership turnover, changes in partners and programs, shifting priorities, evolution of the data governance program, and current challenges or needs. To keep the value proposition relevant in a shifting environment, review it regularly and revise it as needed.

Follow a simple strategy for reviewing your data governance value proposition:

- Review and, if necessary, update the value proposition annually as part of the data governance policy and data governance manual review process.
- Review and update the value proposition when there is a change in leadership or significant new federal or state regulations that impact data collection and data use needs.
- When changes are made to the data governance value proposition, communicate those changes to all data governance participants as part of regular meetings of the data policy committee, data governance board, and data stewards.

Additional Resources

Data Governance Toolkit

<https://slds.grads360.org/#program/data-governance>

Early Childhood Data Governance Policy Guide & Template

<https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/3085>

Introduction to Data Governance

<https://youtu.be/8SurYfQYeyI>

K12 Data Governance Policy Guide & Template

<https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/3079>

P-20W+ Data Governance Policy Guide & Template

<https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/3082>

SLDS Data Governance Community of Practice

<https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/data-governance>

Stakeholder Groups and Data Governance Groups

<https://youtu.be/VXIKsdX4am8>