

## Better Data on the Horizon: An Analysis of Evolving Student-Level Data Legislation

January 2019

By: Karen Bussey, Amanda Janice Roberson, and Mamie Voight<sup>1</sup>

*This brief describes the growing interest in strengthening postsecondary data quality and provides an overview and detailed analysis of proposed legislation that would create a federal student-level data network.*

As reauthorization of the Higher Education Act awaits consideration, the House of Representatives and the Senate have crafted legislation that would improve and modernize the national postsecondary data infrastructure. This bicameral emphasis on data system enhancements reflects a growing recognition that access to and use of high-quality data by students, institutions, policymakers, and researchers can advance student success. But currently available data do not sufficiently demonstrate the experience and outcomes of today's college students. In fact, the current federal data infrastructure is insufficient to answer core, student-centric questions about colleges and universities, such as:

- How many low-income, adult, transfer, and part-time students earn a postsecondary certificate or degree from a particular institution?
- How much do students borrow, and can they repay their loans?
- How long does it take students to complete college, on average?
- How many non-completers from a particular college never reenroll, and how many transfer to finish their degree at another institution?
- Do students go on to succeed in the workforce?

One proposal for strengthening data systems to promote student success more effectively is a federal student-level data network. Despite a 2008 ban in the Higher Education Act reauthorization on the creation of this type of system, interest has re-emerged and grown in recent years. Six pieces of legislation—the Higher Education Affordability Act, four versions of the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act, and the College Transparency Act—call for student-level data collection in varying forms.

### The 2008 Ban and Ongoing Calls for Better Data

Section 134 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) prohibits a federal student-level data collection.<sup>2</sup> The legislative language lists exemptions to this ban, including systems required for the operation of programs (e.g., the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) and Central Processing System), existing federal student-level data collections, and state longitudinal data systems (SLDS). In fact,

---

<sup>1</sup> This brief builds upon an earlier brief written by Colleen E. Campbell, a former Research Analyst at IHEP.

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Opportunity Act, Public Law 110-315, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, (2008). Retrieved from <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>; For a more detailed account of how the student unit record ban came to fruition, see New America's report, *College Blackout*.

Congress recognizes the critical role that these systems play to inform educational policy and practice and has made over \$600 million in grants to almost every state through the Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant Program to develop a SLDS.<sup>3</sup>

Access to higher quality postsecondary data on institutions, and in some cases programs, has become a priority for federal policymakers, who recognize the importance of data in answering key national policy questions that will help advance postsecondary opportunity and success for students. Leaders have lamented the gaps in federal postsecondary data, and, over the past five years, many co-sponsored legislation that would markedly improve available federal data for consumer information, policymaking, and improvement purposes. To further explore this issue, many have held hearings and issued white papers on this topic. In particular, Senator Alexander released a series of white papers in early 2015, one focusing on consumer information, and held a follow-up hearing.<sup>4</sup> Congresswoman Foxx (R, NC-5) introduced the Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act (H.R. 3178), which would create the College Dashboard for consumer information and include measures like disaggregated graduation rates, net price, and salaries by region from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>5</sup> Representative Foxx included an updated version of the College Dashboard proposal in her HEA reauthorization proposal, the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act in 2017 (H.R. 4508).<sup>6</sup> The Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development also held a hearing on May 24, 2017 entitled “Empowering Students and Families to Make Informed Decisions on Higher Education”, which focused on the importance of transparency and data in higher education and ways to improve data systems.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> As of 2018, 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have received at least one SLDS grant, and 45 agencies in 39 states link or plan to link K-12 and postsecondary data in their systems. Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Grantee States. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/stateinfo.asp>; and State Higher Education Executive Officers Association and Complete College America. Retrieved from [http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/resources/building\\_a\\_student-level\\_data\\_system.pdf](http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/postsecdata/docs/resources/building_a_student-level_data_system.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Senator Alexander’s white papers and request for comments can be found here: <https://www.help.senate.gov/chair/newsroom/press/alexander-seeks-input-from-higher-ed-community-on-accreditation-risk-sharing-and-consumer-information>; The Senate HELP Committee has held 2 hearings that either focus on, or relate to data. The first was on May 6, 2015, entitled “Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: The Role of Consumer Information in College Choice”. The second was held on August 5, 2015, entitled “Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Opportunities to Improve Student Success”. <https://www.help.senate.gov/chair/newsroom/press/alexander-seeks-input-from-higher-ed-community-on-accreditation-risk-sharing-and-consumer-information>;

<sup>5</sup> Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act, H.R. 3178, 114<sup>th</sup> Congress (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3178>

<sup>6</sup> Committee on Education and the Workforce. “PROSPER Act”. Retrieved from: <https://edworkforce.house.gov/prosper/>

<sup>7</sup> “Empowering Students and Families to Make Informed Decisions on Higher Education”, May 24, 2017. Retrieved from <https://edworkforce.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=401652>

## Crafting Federal Legislation on Student-Level Data Collection

The six bills proposing federal student-level data collection have evolved over time, beginning with an initial focus on linking SLDS, and later evolving into the most recent bipartisan, bicameral strategy of developing a federal student-level data network.

2012: *Student Right to Know Before You Go 1.0*

House	Senate
Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ)	Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)
Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA)*	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)

Note: "\*" denotes a current member of the Senate Health, Labor, Education & Pensions (HELP) Committee or the House Education and Workforce Committee

To address the lack of comprehensive data on postsecondary students, Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act of 2012 (S. 2098; SRTKBYG 1.0), which capitalized on the development and strengthening of state longitudinal data systems. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) introduced a companion bill (H.R. 4061) in the House. Both pieces of legislation require institutions that receive Title IV funding to report student-level data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) via a state longitudinal data system or "another administering entity."<sup>8</sup> The legislation specifies that no personally identifiable information shall be disclosed in the system and requires all student components of the IPEDS data collection to be populated and calculated using individual-level data. It also mandates a data governance system that assesses the "data quality, validity, and reliability" of state systems, a component that also would be incorporated into future iterations of this bill. SRTKBYG 1.0 was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) before the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress ended its session, but did not receive comment from the committee.

2013: *Student Right to Know Before You Go 2.0*

House	Senate
Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ)	Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA)*	Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
Rep. Thomas Petri (R-WI)	Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)
	Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI)
	Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA)
	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)

Note: "\*" denotes a current member of the Senate HELP Committee or the House Education and Workforce Committee

<sup>8</sup> Student Right to Know Before You Go Act, S. 2098, 112<sup>th</sup> Congress (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112s2098is/pdf/BILLS-112s2098is.pdf>

In 2013, Senators Wyden and Rubio, joined by Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), introduced the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act of 2013 (S. 915) and Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) introduced a companion bill in the House (H.R. 1937). SRTKBYG 2.0 took another tack to improving postsecondary data. Instead of stitching together state data systems, it created an exception to the HEOA ban on new unit record systems and established a federal student-level data collection. This exception allows the student-level data to replace IPEDS reporting and establishes more robust progress and outcome measures, including remedial status, transfer rates, outcomes disaggregated by federal aid receipt, and loan debt.

Like the 2012 version of the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act, this legislation also allows the calculation and publication of metrics at the program and institution levels. The legislation streamlines reporting, allowing states to report student-level data on behalf of institutions, and specifies additional measures, such as rates of subsequent enrollment in postsecondary education, as well as earnings data populated from the Social Security Administration.<sup>9</sup> This legislation was referred to the Senate HELP Committee, but was not taken up by the committee.

**2014:** *Higher Education Affordability Act*

<b>Senate</b>
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)

The second draft of Senator Harkin’s Higher Education Affordability Act (HEAA), released in November 2014, also calls for the collection of student-level data at the federal level. This legislation does not strike the ban on a unit record system; rather, it creates an exception that requires federal student-level data to replace IPEDS surveys and data elements, and to populate additional, more robust, outcome measures. Senator Harkin’s bill borrows significant portions of SRTKBYG 2.0, in places providing more specificity. For example, instead of stating only “student components” of IPEDS be replaced with student-level data, HEAA specifically lists the surveys to be replaced by the new collection. It also specifies several new data measures to be calculated with the new student-level data, including outcome measures disaggregated by enrollment in remedial education, military/veteran status, and financial aid status.

**2015:** *Student Right to Know Before You Go 3.0*

House	Senate
Rep. John Carney Jr. (D-DE)	Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)
Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA)*	Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)
Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-SC)	Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA)
Rep. Joseph Heck (R-NV)	Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA)
Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA)*	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)
Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA)	

<sup>9</sup> Senator Ron Wyden. “The Student Right to Know Before You Go Act of 2013.” Retrieved from <http://www.wyden.senate.gov/download/?id=2c03a032-15bc-48b4-8f80-db3729103a6b&download=1>

Rep. Mia Love (R-UT)	
Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)	
Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO)*	
Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)	
Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH)	

Note: "\*" denotes a current member of the Senate HELP Committee or the House Education and Workforce Committee

Senators Wyden, Rubio, and Warner introduced the third iteration of the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act (S. 1195) in the Senate in May 2015 and were later joined by Senators Cotton and Toomey. A bipartisan group, including Representatives Hunter (R-CA), Carney Jr. (D-DE), Davis (D-CA), Gowdy (R-SC), Heck (R-NV), LaMalfa (R-CA), Love (R-UT), Peters (D-CA), Polis (D-CO), Ryan (R-WI), and Stivers (R-OH) co-sponsored a companion bill (H.R. 2518) in the House. This bill is very similar to its SRTKBYG 2.0 predecessor in replacing the student components of IPEDS with individual data collection and mandating specific disaggregates and additional measures, with a few notable differences. Compared with earlier versions, it includes more specific language about privacy, requiring the Secretary of Education to issue guidelines to institutions regarding the amendments for annual privacy notices required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

This legislation explicitly defines personally-identifiable information (PII),<sup>10</sup> lists allowable uses of student-level data, and increases the penalty for willful disclosure of PII. The bill describes how the data would be protected, prohibits the sale of data, and prohibits PII in the system from being used to take action against students. For researchers, the law would make available a non-PII dataset for studies or evaluations approved by the Institute of Education Sciences. SRTKBYG 3.0 was referred to the Senate HELP Committee before the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress ended its session, but did not receive comment from the committee.

2017: *The College Transparency Act*

House	Senate
Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC)*	Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)*
Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE)	Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)*
Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI)	Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)
Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)*	Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)*	Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)

<sup>10</sup> Personally Identifiable Information is defined as: student name, name of student’s parents or other family members, address of student or family, personal identifier (Social Security number or biometric record), indirect identifiers (date of birth, place of birth, mother’s maiden name), “other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty”, or “information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates”. This language is consistent with the regulatory definition of PII under FERPA (34 CFR § 99.3).

Rep. André Carson (D-IN)	Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO)	Sen. Margaret Wood Hassan (D-NH)*
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO)	Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT)*
Rep. Susan A. Davis (D-CA)*	Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL)*
Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA)*	Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)*
Rep. Neal Dunn (R-FL)	Sen. Christopher Murphy (D-CT)*
Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY)*	Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS)*
Rep. A. Drew Ferguson (R-GA)*	Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)*
Rep. Thomas Garrett (R-VA)*	Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC)
Rep. Jody B. Hice (R-GA)	Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)*
Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN)	Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)	
Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)*	
Rep. Brenda L. Lawrence (D-MI)	
Rep. Jason Lewis (R-MN)*	
Rep. Thomas MacArthur (R-NJ)	
Rep. Roger Marshall (R-KS)	
Rep. Paul Mitchell (R-MI)*	
Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA)	
Rep. Stevan Pearce (R-NM)	
Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)	
Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO)*	
Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA)*	
Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)*	
Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH)	
Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA)*	
Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI)	

Note: "\*" denotes a current member of the Senate HELP Committee or the House Education and Workforce Committee

Senators Hatch (R-UT), Warren (D-MA), Cassidy (R-LA) and Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced the [College Transparency Act \(CTA\)](#) (S. 1121) in May 2017, and were later joined by co-sponsors noted in the table above. Representatives Mitchell (R-MI) and Polis (D-CO) introduced a companion bill in the House ([H.R.2434](#)) shortly thereafter, with above referenced co-sponsors. Importantly, this bill is sponsored by 10 members of the Senate HELP Committee and 15 members of the House Education and Workforce Committee, creating a foundation of committee support for the bill.

The legislation removes the ban on a federal student-level data collection, creating a secure, privacy-protected network that would be housed at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The network would replace the student components of the IPEDS survey and create more

complete measures of student outcomes. It also explicitly states that with this system, the Department of Education (ED) should coordinate and create secure data matches between other federal agencies, like the Department of Treasury, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Office of Federal Student Aid, and the Bureau of the Census, with the intention of streamlining data collection and reporting requirements to the federal government. CTA requires that ED develop, at minimum, a user-friendly consumer information website with aggregate data to help students and institutions inform their decision-making. Like SRTKBYG 3.0, CTA places a heavy emphasis on privacy and security, limiting data disclosures and policing permissible uses of the data, as well as prescribing data security measures.

2017: *Student Right to Know Before You Go 4.0*

House	Senate
Rep. André Carson (D-IN)	Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)
Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL)	Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)*
Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)	Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA)
Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA)	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)
Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)	
Rep. Thomas Rooney (R-FL)	

Note: "\*" denotes a current member of the Senate HELP Committee or the House Education and Workforce Committee

Senators Wyden (D-OR), Rubio (R-FL), and Warner (D-VA) introduced the fourth iteration of the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act (S.2169) in November 2017. Representatives Carson (D-IN), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Hunter (R-CA), Peters (D-CA) introduced a bipartisan companion bill (H.R.4479) the following month. This newest version of the bill made notable changes including a requirement to use secure Multi-Party Computation (MPC), a relatively new security technology. MPC is an emerging technology that allows for the computation of values or metrics using data from multiple encrypted data sources, without revealing private data to other entities.<sup>11</sup> It has been used in a few small-scale contexts but has not been tested at a larger scale yet.<sup>12</sup> SRTKBYG 4.0 defines and requires use of secure MPC, grants oversight to the Commissioner of the NCES, and establishes new education outcome metrics and disaggregations, shown in *Table A4 and A5*.

The legislation directs institutions, ED, and other federal agencies to submit encrypted data, the system would run pre-determined algorithms and produce an output of aggregate data, and no

<sup>11</sup> Sadler, C. (January 2018). "Protecting Privacy with Secure Multi-Party Computation". New America. Retrieved from: <https://www.newamerica.org/oti/blog/protecting-privacy-secure-multi-party-computation/>

<sup>12</sup> Roberson, A., Voight, M., McCann, C., & Laitinen, A. (November 2017). "Six Unanswered Questions About the 2017 Student Right to Know Before You Go Act". IHEP. Retrieved from: <http://www.ihep.org/postsecdata/data-at-work/six-unanswered-questions-about-2017-student-right-know-you-go-act>

Sadler, C. (January 2018). "Protecting Privacy with Secure Multi-Party Computation". New America. Retrieved from: <https://www.newamerica.org/oti/blog/protecting-privacy-secure-multi-party-computation/>

party in the system would have access to unencrypted underlying data, other than the information they originally submitted. Additionally, the bill requires legislative action to alter or add any existing or new metric definitions.

2018: *Aim Higher Act*

House	Senate
Rep. Alma S. Adams (D-NC)*	
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)*	
Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT)*	
Rep. Susan A. Davis (D-CA)*	
Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA)*	
Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY)*	
Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH)*	
Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ)*	
Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)*	
Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ)*	
Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO)*	
Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)*	
Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-MP)*	
Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA)*	
Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH)*	
Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA)*	
Rep. Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL)*	

Note: "\*" denotes a current member of the House Education and Workforce Committee

Representatives Scott (D-VA) and all Democratic members of the House Education and Workforce Committee, referenced above, introduced the Aim Higher Act (H.R.6543) in July 2018 to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. The bill has gained the support of 70 additional House Democrat co-sponsors, shown in *Table A1. Congressional Support*. The Aim Higher Act removes the student unit record ban and requires the development of a secure postsecondary data system, reducing institutional reporting burden while allowing students, institutions, and policymakers access to better, more complete data to make informed decisions. The legislation would make aggregate information, derived from the student-level data submitted by institutions, publicly available and user-friendly.

The data system would ensure that student data are kept private and secure by requiring adherence to federal standards, developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and would exclude the collection of certain data elements like health data, citizenship or national origin status, student discipline records, course grades, and religion. Data collected is prohibited



to be sold to any third-party or used for any law enforcement activity or activity that would result in adverse action against any student, including Federal immigration or debt collection activity.

## **Detailed Comparison of Student-Level Data Collection Legislation**

These seven pieces of legislation represent an evolution of student-level data collection policies. To inform ongoing conversations about national student-level data collections, the descriptions below detail system purpose, Congressional support, governance and data privacy and security, data standards, data measures, and data disaggregates.

### *Purpose of Proposed Data Systems*

Each piece of legislation expresses the interest of policymakers to begin federal collection of student-level data to streamline collection and reporting to answer questions about higher education. All seven bills propose using the data collected to fulfill some IPEDS reporting requirements and to provide robust information for consumers. However, the bills differ in how they allow access to data for improvement and evaluation purposes. SRTKBYG 4.0 limits the use of data to consumer information outside of fulfilling some IPEDS requirements. Five bills allow institutions access to the data at some level for improvement and evaluation purposes. Other proposed uses for the data collection include policy development and statistical reports and research studies. CTA also limits ED's use of data by prohibiting a federal ranking system or a system that results in a summative federal rating of postsecondary institutions.

### *Congressional Support*

Since the introduction of SRTKBYG 2.0, bipartisan, bicameral support to strengthen the national postsecondary data infrastructure has grown. Federal student-level data collection is now at the forefront of policymaker conversations as a means to replace components of IPEDS and provide higher quality data. Notably, every version of the SRTKBYG has had both Republican and Democratic support; co-sponsors not only represent both parties, but also many regions of the United States. CTA boasts bipartisan, bicameral co-sponsors, many of which are members of the Senate HELP and House Education and Workforce committees. It is clear that sound data policy is not, and should not be, a partisan issue. A crosswalk of bill sponsors is available in Appendix Table A1.

### *Governance and Data Privacy and Security*

The SRTKBYG legislation, CTA, and HEAA share similar governance structures. In particular, SRTKBYG 2.0, 3.0, CTA, and HEAA are very similar, even providing the same timeframe within which data components in the system must be reviewed and subsequently made available publicly. SRTKBYG 3.0 adds more specific provisions designed to protect students and their data and CTA requires that security protections be designed in accordance with the most recent federal standards, developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. CTA also prohibits the collection of especially sensitive data including disciplinary records, religion, citizenship or national origin, and health data. SRTKBYG 4.0 is the most restrictive legislation, requiring the use of secure MPC technology or other technology that is at least as

restrictive as MPC. Several stakeholders have raised questions about the viability of this technology as a means of reporting for more than 5,000 institutions of higher education.<sup>13</sup>

Other common governance themes between the legislation include:

- FERPA Compliance
- Allowance for states to report institutional data
- Robust data governance and audit systems
- Prohibitions for use of data
- Penalty for data misuse
- Public access only to aggregate to data

For more information, see Appendix Table A2.

#### *Data Standards*

Required data standards vary by approach to a federal student-level data collection (see Appendix Table A3 for a detailed crosswalk). SRTKBYG 1.0 requires the use of the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS), a voluntary initiative within ED that facilitates the exchange and comparison of data from various systems.<sup>14</sup> Mandating CEDS or another similar system would be necessary in a federated system, where multiple databases are being stitched together. However, the CEDS mandate was dropped in subsequent legislation, as federal student-level data collection standards would define data elements for all participating institutions.

To signal the importance of inclusive data components and community input, SRTKBYG 2.0, 3.0, HEAA, CTA, and Aim Higher require ED to seek input from stakeholders in developing the system. Additionally, each piece of legislation requires coordination within ED and with other agencies, including the SSA, Departments of Defense and VA. SRTKBYG 1.0 also includes language on linkages with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Perkins Career and Technical Education Act systems. Leveraging data already collected by the federal government can alleviate the burden on institutions and create data commonality across legislation and agencies. SRTKBYG 4.0 takes a different approach by outlining the specific metrics to be included in the system. Any changes to the existing metrics or additions must be approved by all participants of the system.

#### *Additional Data Measures Beyond Current IPEDS Collection*

In addition to those already collected in IPEDS, each piece of legislation outlines additional data measures that must be collected and published via the student-level data collection system. Many similarities exist between the SRTKBYG 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, HEAA, CTA, and Aim Higher and Appendix Table A4 outlines the metrics in detail. Metric categories are generally consistent across many of the bills, including:

---

<sup>13</sup> Roberson, A.J., Voight, M., McCann, C., Laitinen, A., & Miller, E. (November 30, 2017). "Six Unanswered Questions about the 2017 Student Right to Know Before You Go Act". Retrieved from: <http://www.ihep.org/postsecdata/data-at-work/six-unanswered-questions-about-2017-student-right-to-know-you-go-act>

<sup>14</sup> Common Education Data Standards. What is CEDS. Retrieved from <https://ceds.ed.gov/whatIsCEDS.aspx>

Enrollment

Completion  
Rates

Transfer Rates

Financial Aid

Post-College  
Outcomes

### *Disaggregated Outcome Data*

The term “outcome data” in SRTKBYG 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 HEAA, CTA, and Aim Higher is broadly construed to mean any additional measures that are added to the IPEDS data collection by the student-level data legislation. While SRTKBYG 1.0 does not specify disaggregates, it allows the Secretary of Education to determine additional data elements necessary “to address alignment and adequate preparation for and success in postsecondary education.”<sup>15</sup>

Some disaggregates of interest across these five bills that do specify disaggregates include:

- Enrollment status
- Attendance intensity
- Federal aid receipt (including Pell Grant receipt status)
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Veteran or military status

Additional details can be found in Appendix Table A5.

### **Next Steps**

The introduction of this series of bills calling for federal student-level data collection signals that policymakers on both sides of the aisle agree that existing data are insufficient to answer critical questions about the American postsecondary system. Lawmakers also have identified a pressing need to strengthen our data systems in ways that reduce institutional reporting burden and promote more effective data use to serve students. Additionally, established by bipartisan legislation, the Commission on Evidence-based Policymaking released a strategy and set of recommendations for increasing the availability and use of existing federal administrative data to build evidence and inform policymaking efforts.<sup>16</sup>

The strongest Congressional and field support lies with the College Transparency Act. More than 130 organizations, representing a wide range of interests and stakeholders, have signed a [letter](#) in support of CTA, demonstrating the groundswell of support outside of Congress.<sup>17</sup> With both sides of the aisle and both chambers introducing bills that promote better public information about our higher education

---

<sup>15</sup> Student Right to Know Before You Go Act, S. 2098, 112<sup>th</sup> Congress (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112s2098is/pdf/BILLS-112s2098is.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> For more information on recommendations from the Commission on Evidence-based Policymaking, visit their website: <https://www.cep.gov/content/dam/cep/report/cep-final-report.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Postsecondary Data Collaborative and Workforce Data Quality Campaign statement on the College Transparency Act. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/press/opinions-and-statements/postsecondary-data-collaborative-and-workforce-data-quality-campaign>

system through student-level data collection, policymakers must continue engaging in robust conversation about how our national data infrastructure can be improved to best serve students.

**Appendix:**

<b>Table A1: Congressional Support</b>							
<b>Co-Sponsors</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 1.0 (S. 2098/ H.R. 4061)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 2.0 (S. 915/ H.R. 1937)</b>	<b>HEAA</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 3.0 (S. 1195/ H.R. 2518)</b>	<b>CTA (S. 1121/ H.R. 2434)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 4.0 (S. 2169/ H.R. 4479)</b>	<b>Aim Higher Act (H.R.6543)</b>
<b>Senate</b>							
Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)*					X		
Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)*					X		
Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)					X		
Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)				X			
Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)					X		
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)					X		
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)		X					
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)					X		
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)†			X				
Sen. Margaret Wood Hassan (D-NH) *					X		
Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT)*					X		
Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL)*					X		
Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)*					X		
Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)		X					
Sen. Christopher Murphy (D-CT)*					X		
Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS)*					X		
Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)	X	X		X		X	
Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI)		X					
Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)*					X	X	
Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC)					X		
Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA)				X			
Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA)		X		X		X	

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)*					X		
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)					X		
Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)	X	X		X		X	
<b>House of Representatives</b>							
Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ)†	X	X					
Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC)*					X		X
Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE)					X		
Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragan (D-CA)							X
Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA)							X
Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI)					X		
Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)*					X		X
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)*					X		X
Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (D-PA)							X
Rep. Anthony G. Brown (D-MD)							X
Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA)							X
Rep. G. K. Butterfield (D-NC)							X
Rep. Salud O. Carbajal (D-CA)							X
Rep. John Carney Jr. (D-DE)†				X			
Rep. André Carson (D-IN)					X	X	
Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL)							X
Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA)							X
Rep. David N. Cicilline (D-RI)							X
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY)							X
Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO)							X
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO)					X		
Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-SC)							X
Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO)					X		
Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)							X
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)							X
Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT)*							X
Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-NY)							X
Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD)							X

Rep. Carlos Curbelo						X	
Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-IL)							X
Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA)*				X	X		X
Rep. Peter A. DeFazio (D-OR)							X
Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-WA)							X
Rep. Val Butler Demings (D-FL)							X
Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA)*					X		X
Rep. Theodore Deutch (D-FL)							X
Rep. Neal Dunn (R-FL)					X		
Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN)							X
Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY)*					X		X
Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL)							X
Rep. A. Drew Ferguson (R-GA)*					X		
Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)						X	
Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH)*							X
Rep. Thomas Garrett (R-VA)*					X		
Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)							X
Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-SC)				X			
Rep. Gene Green (D-TX)							X
Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ)*							X
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI)							X
Rep. Joseph Heck (R-NV)				X			
Rep. Jody B. Hice (R-GA)					X		
Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN)					X		
Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA)*	X	X		X		X	
Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA)							X
Rep. Hakeem S. Jeffries (D-NY)							X
Rep. Henry Johnson Jr. (D-GA)							X
Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)					X		
Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH)							X
Rep. Robin L. Kelly (D-IL)							X
Rep. Daniel Kildee (D-MI)							X

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)*					X		X
Rep. Ann M. Kuster (D-NH)							X
Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA)				X			
Rep. James R. Langevin (D-RI)							X
Rep. John B. Larson (D-CT)							X
Rep. Brenda L. Lawrence (D-MI)					X		X
Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)							X
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)							X
Rep. Jason Lewis (R-MN)*					X		
Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)							X
Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)							X
Rep. Mia Love (R-UT)				X			
Rep. Alan S. Lowenthal (D-CA)							X
Rep. Thomas MacArthur (R-NJ)					X		
Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY)							X
Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY)							X
Rep. Roger Marshall (R-KS)					X		
Rep. Doris O. Matsui (D-CA)							X
Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)							X
Rep. A. Donald McEachin (D-VA)							X
Rep. James P. McGovern (D-MA)							X
Rep. Paul Mitchell (R-MI)*					X		
Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI)							X
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)							X
Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA)							X
Rep. Richard M. Nolan (D-MN)							X
Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ)*							X
Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)							X
Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA)					X		X
Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-NJ)							X
Rep. Donald M. Payne Jr. (D-NJ)							X
Rep. Stevan Pearce (R-NM)					X		

Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)				X	X	X	
Rep. Thomas Petri (R-WI)†		X					
Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO)*				X	X		X
Rep. David E. Price (D-NC)							X
Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)							X
Rep. Thomas Rooney (R-FL)						X	
Rep. Bobby L. Rush (D-IL)							X
Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH)							X
Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)				X			
Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-MP)*							X
Rep. Linda T. Sanchez (D-CA)							X
Rep. John P. Sarbanes (D-MD)							X
Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky (D-IL)							X
Rep. Robert “Bobby” Scott (D-VA)*							X
Rep. Jose E. Serrano (D-NY)							X
Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH)*							X
Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA)*					X		
Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL)							X
Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)*					X		
Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH)				X	X		
Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA)*					X		X
Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS)							X
Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI)					X		
Rep. Nydia M. Velazquez (D-NY)							X
Rep. Schultz Debbie Wasserman (D-FL)							X
Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA)							X
Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT)							X
Rep. Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL)*							X

Note: “\*” denotes a current member of the Senate HELP Committee or the House Education and Workforce Committee.  
 “†” denotes that the member is no longer serving in Congress.



<b>Table A2: Governance and Data Privacy and Security</b>							
	<b>SRTKBYG 1.0 (S. 2098/ H.R. 4061)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 2.0 (S. 915/ H.R. 1937)</b>	<b>HEAA</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 3.0 (S. 1195/ H.R. 2518)</b>	<b>CTA (S. 1121/ H.R. 2434)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 4.0 (S. 2169/ H.R. 4479)</b>	<b>Aim Higher Act (H.R.6543)</b>
<i>Privacy and Security</i>							
Defines personally identifiable information (PII)				X		X	
Protects PII by limiting access to the unit record system	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Complies with FERPA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Privacy controls are reviewed periodically to ensure protection of data and limited access, use and disclosure				X	X	X	
<i>Reporting</i>							
Allows states to report data for institutions	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Provides public access to de-identified and/or aggregate data		X	X	X	X	X	X
Creates a public information website and hotline about the system			X				
<i>Data Governance</i>							
Establishes data audit and governance systems	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Requires Secretary/Commissioner to review the categories of data collected or guidance around collection every five years		X	X	X	X	X	X
Houses the system at NCES					X		X
<i>Prohibitions</i>							
Prohibits use of unit record data for action against students		X	X	X	X		X
Prohibits sale of student data to third parties to use for marketing			X	X	X	X	X
Specifies penalties for misuse of data		X	X	X	X		

Prohibits the inclusion of health, disciplinary, K-12, citizenship, or religious data					X		X
Prohibits the use of data for a federal rankings system					X		

<b>Table A3: Data Standards</b>							
	<b>SRTKBYG 1.0 (S. 2098/ H.R. 4061)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 2.0 (S. 915/ H.R. 1937)</b>	<b>HEAA</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 3.0 (S. 1195/ H.R. 2518)</b>	<b>CTA (S. 1121/ H.R. 2434)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 4.0 (S. 2169/ H.R. 4479)</b>	<b>Aim Higher Act (H.R.65 43)</b>
Specifies that information may be collected from other federal education and job training programs, such as Job Corps	X	X					
Requires use of the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS)	X						
Involves stakeholders in developing calculation and reporting standards		X	X	X	X		X
Calculates information at the program and institution level		X	X	X	X	X	X
Reduces duplication in data collection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Requires interdepartmental and interagency coordination	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table A4: Additional Data Measures Beyond Current IPEDS Collection							
	<b>SRTKBYG 1.0 (S. 2098/ H.R. 4061)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 2.0 (S. 915/ H.R. 1937)</b>	<b>HEAA</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 3.0 (S. 1195/ H.R. 2518)</b>	<b>CTA (S. 1121/ H.R. 2434)</b>	<b>SRTKBYG 4.0 (S. 2169/ H.R. 4479)</b>	<b>Aim Higher Act (H.R.6543)</b>
<b>Degree/certificate-seeking status and level</b>		Degree-seeking or certificate-seeking		Degree-seeking or certificate-seeking	Credential-seeking status, by credential level	Degree-seeking or certificate-seeking	Credential seeking status; credential level
<b>Enrollment in remedial or developmental education</b>	Rates of remedial enrollment by high school completion status	Participation in remedial education at that institution		Participation in remedial education at that institution	Remedial status, may be included through regulation	College-ready status, as determined by the institution of higher education	
<b>Financial aid information</b>		Percent of students receiving federal grants and loans, state grants and loans, institutional grants and loans  Average total federal debt of completers and non-completers	Dollar amount and number of students receiving federal, state, institutional, and private grants and loans  Cumulative debt, disaggregated by undergraduate and graduate and completion status	Percent of students receiving federal grants and loans, state grants and loans, institutional grants and loans  Average total federal debt of completers and non-completers	Typical grant amounts and loan amounts received by students reported separately from Federal, State, local, and institutional sources, by completion status and all other required disaggregates (see Table A5)  Cumulative debt, by completion status and all other required disaggregates (see Table A5)	Percent of students receiving federal grants and loans, state grants and loans, private loans, private scholarships, and institutional grants and loans  Mean and median amount of Federal loan debt, including accrued interest, of completers and non-completers	Grant and loan aid by source, cumulative student debt, loan repayment status, and repayment plan
<b>Credit accumulation/ Progression</b>	Rates of credit accumulation by high school completion				Gateway course completion, may be included		

					through regulation		
<b>Persistence rates</b>			100%, 150%, 200% of normal time				Persistence for all credential levels within and across institutions of higher education and disaggregated
<b>Transfer rates</b>		Disaggregated by sector of receiving institution	100%, 150%, 200% of normal time; disaggregated by level of receiving institution	Disaggregated by sector of receiving institution	Disaggregated by federal grant recipient status, federal loan receipt status, and all other required disaggregates (see Table A5)	Disaggregated by sector of transfer	Transfer for all credential levels within and across institutions of higher education and disaggregated
<b>Completion rates</b>	Disaggregated by high school completion status	Percentage of students who receive the degree level initially sought	100%, 150%, 200% of normal time  Separate rates for master's, professional, and doctoral-level students	Percentage of students who receive the degree level initially sought	Disaggregated by federal grant recipient status, federal loan receipt status, and all other required disaggregates (see Table A5)	100%, 150%, and 200% of normal time completion rates  Percentage of students who receive the degree level initially sought  Percentage of students who drop out of the institution without receiving a degree or credential  Transfer student completion rates by sector of transfer	Completion for all credential levels within and across institutions of higher education and disaggregated
<b>Subsequent enrollment</b>		Only in higher levels of education	Any level; disaggregated by undergraduate/graduate	Only in higher levels of education	Further education rate	Including lateral, higher, and lower levels of degree or credential	Postgraduate education

						progression, disaggregated by credential sought	
<b>Earnings data (published at the program, institution, and state levels)</b>	Average annual; disaggregated by degree received and employment sector	Median annual; 2, 6, 15 years after completion; disaggregated by credential received	2, 5, 10 years after completion; disaggregated by completion status and undergraduate/graduate level	Median annual; 2, 6, 15 years after completion; disaggregated by credential received	Median earnings, immediately after leaving postsecondary education and at appropriate intervals	Annual earnings 2, 6, 15 years after completion or exit (mean, median, and 10 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> , 75 <sup>th</sup> , and 90 <sup>th</sup> percentiles); disaggregated by program of study, credential received, state of employment, and completion status	Earnings
<b>Loan repayment rates</b>			Disaggregated by completion status and undergraduate/graduate level		Immediately after leaving postsecondary education and at appropriate intervals  Repayment plan	Loan repayment rates of students who enrolled in the institution, as of 2, 6, and 15 years after the date of program completion or exit	Loan repayment plan and status included

*Note: Empty boxes in this table indicate that the measure was not explicitly outlined in the legislative language. In all seven pieces of legislation, existing IPEDS elements would be populated with student-level data.*

Table A5: Disaggregated Outcome Data							
	SRTKBYG 1.0 (S. 2098/ H.R. 4061)	SRTKBYG 2.0 (S. 915/ H.R. 1937)	HEAA	SRTKBYG 3.0 (S. 1195/ H.R. 2518)	CTA (S. 1121/ H.R. 2434)	SRTKBYG 4.0 (S. 2169/ H.R. 4479)	Aim Higher Act (H.R.6543)
Disaggregates		<p>Enrollment status: First-time, full-time; first-time, part-time; non-first-time, full-time; non-first-time, part-time</p> <p>Enrollment intensity: full-time only, part-time only, mixed enrollment</p> <p>Financial aid status: Pell receipt, Stafford Loan but no Pell receipt, and no Stafford Loan or Pell receipt</p> <p>Veteran status</p>	<p>Enrollment status: First-time, full-time at entry; first-time, part-time at entry; transfer, full-time at entry; transfer, part-time at entry</p> <p>Race and ethnicity</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Degree/certificate-seeking status</p> <p>Enrollment in remedial education</p> <p>Disability status</p> <p>Financial aid status: Pell receipt, Stafford Loan but no Pell receipt, and no Stafford Loan or Pell receipt</p> <p>Age range</p> <p>Veteran or military status</p> <p>Undergraduate/graduate level</p>	<p>Enrollment status: First-time, full-time; first-time, part-time; non-first-time, full-time; non-first-time, part-time</p> <p>Enrollment intensity: full-time only, part-time only, mixed enrollment</p> <p>Financial aid status: Pell receipt, federal loan under part B or D but no Pell receipt, and no federal loan under part B or D or Pell receipt</p> <p>Veteran or military status</p>	<p>Enrollment status as a first-time student</p> <p>Attendance intensity, full-time or part-time</p> <p>Credential-seeking status, by credential level</p> <p>Race or ethnicity</p> <p>Age intervals</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Program of Study</p> <p>Military or veteran status</p> <p>Status as a postsecondary athlete</p> <p>Federal Pell Grant receipt status</p> <p>Federal loan receipt status (for some metrics)</p> <p>Completion status (for some metrics)</p> <p>First generation status*</p> <p>Economic status*</p>	<p>Enrollment status: First-time, full-time; first-time, part-time; non-first-time, full-time; non-first-time, part-time</p> <p>Race and ethnicity</p> <p>Age or age intervals</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>First-generation</p> <p>Credential type</p> <p>College-ready or non-college-ready</p> <p>Completion status</p> <p>Financial aid status: Pell receipt, federal loan under part B or D but no Pell receipt, and no federal loan under part B or D or Pell receipt</p> <p>Veteran or military status</p> <p>Recipients of educational assistance benefits provided directly to veterans</p>	<p>First-time enrollment status</p> <p>Attendance intensity, full-time or part-time.</p> <p>Distance education enrollment status</p> <p>Credential-seeking status</p> <p>Credential level</p> <p>Race</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Program of study</p> <p>Military or veteran status</p> <p>Federal Pell Grant eligibility.</p> <p>Federal Pell Grant recipient status.</p> <p>Federal loan recipient status under title IV.</p> <p>Disability status.</p> <p>First-generation status</p>
<p>Note: "*" denotes that the measure can be added through regulations.</p>							

