The College Transparency Act (CTA)

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June 20, 2023

Today's Agenda

Welcome & Opening

Limitations of Current Data Systems
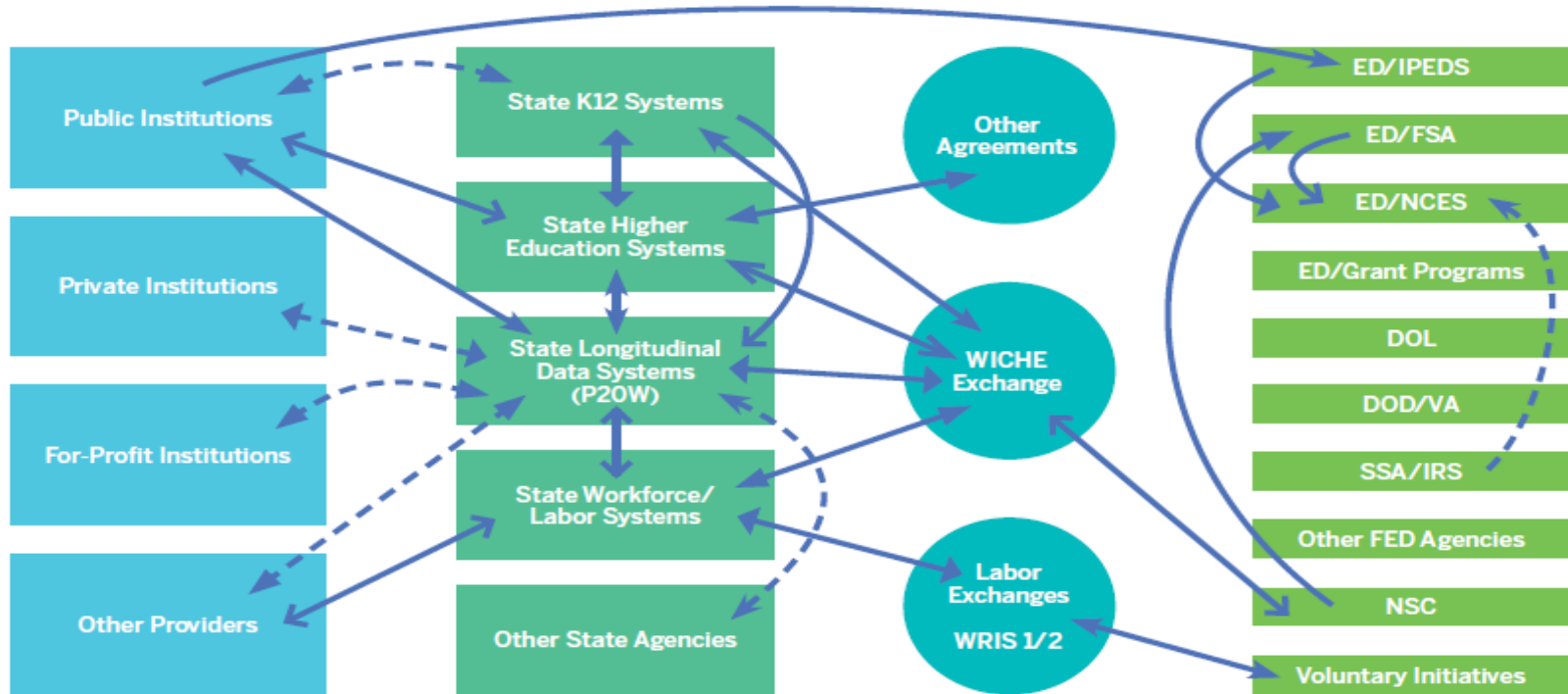
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Additional SLDN Resources

Questions and Comments

Importance of High-Quality, Postsecondary Data

- **Students and families** – to make well-informed decisions about which college/program to attend

- **Policymakers and institutions** – to design and enact evidence-based policies to help students succeed

- **Employers** – to navigate the talent pipeline they need to grow the economy

Current postsecondary data systems are incomplete, duplicative, inefficient, and burdensome

Limitations of Existing Federal Data

We are data rich, but information poor

- **Not all students are counted**
  - IPEDS graduation rates – limited to first-time, full-time students, who make up less than half of all students
  - Earnings data in College Scorecard – limited to Title IV recipients, but nearly one in three college students nationwide don't receive federal financial aid

- **Not all outcomes are counted** – e.g., students who transfer between colleges before completing a credential

State Data Systems

- **Many states have robust state longitudinal data systems**

- **Yet, state data systems typically do not include:**
  - Earnings for students who leave the state
  - Military and other federal employees
  - Private institutions, particularly for-profit institutions

- **Some states and institutions are collaborating and sharing information, but not all**
  - E.g., the Census Bureau's Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO), multi-state data exchanges

Unanswered Questions

Our existing postsecondary data system can't fully answer basic – yet critical – questions about student access, success and outcomes. For example:

How do college access, affordability, and completion vary by race, ethnicity, and income?

How many community college students transfer to four-year colleges?

After students transfer, do they go on to graduate?

Which students go on to succeed in the workforce?

What is the College Transparency Act?

- Creates a secure, privacy protected student-level data network (SLDN)

- Provides accurate and timely information about access, completion, costs, and post-college outcomes

- Leverages existing data at federal agencies and institutional data

- Makes data transparent and accessible to students and families via a user-friendly website

- Provides aggregate information to college and policymakers to inform program improvements

- Reduces reporting burden for colleges

Creating a secure student-level data network

Mechanisms for protecting students in the legislation include:

- Strong security standards and data governance protocols

- A Postsecondary Student Data System Advisory Committe

- Minimizes data collection

- Limits categories of information that can be included in the data system

- Strict penalties for misuse

What CTA/an SLDN will *not* do

- Track students from birth to death

- Create a database with all of a student's information reported across federal agencies

- Contain any information about citizenship status, health, political affiliation, or religion

- Be used for law enforcement

- Provide personally identifiable information to the public

- Permanently increase institutional burden

Support for CTA

The College Transparency Act of 2023 was recently reintroduced by Senators Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R–LA) and Elizabeth Warren (D–MA), and Representatives Raja Krishnamoorthi (D–IL) and Joe Wilson (R–SC).

- **CTA is a bicameral and bipartisan** bill

- **More than 150 organizations support** the bill including the U.S. Chamber, APLU, etc.

- **Strong veteran support** including VES, Blue Star Families, etc.

- In the 117th Congress, **it passed the House** as an amendment to the America COMPETES Act of 2022

- In the 116th Congress, it was cosponsored by more than one-half of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and more than one-third of the members of the U.S. Senate

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SHEEO support for CTA

SHEEOs and state agency officials can play a vital role in advancing CTA by taking the following actions:

- **Strengthen our collective voice**
  - Sign our [statement of support](#)

- **Advocacy** – make direct asks
    - Senators and House Members

- **Communication and Transparency**
    - With institutional leaders, students, and the general public

- **Collaboration and Partnerships**
    - With other states and federal agencies
    - Stay in touch with us

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Additional SLDN resources

IHEP and RTI International co-authored an [SLDN research series](#)

- Implementing a Student-Level Data Network: Advice from Experts

- Implementing a Student-Level Data Network (Part II): Insights from Institutional Representatives

- Implementing a Student-Level Data Network (Part III): Insights from Financial Aid Experts

- Implementing a Student-Level Data Network (Part IV): Exploring Design Options

Questions?

CTA Webinar
June 20, 2023

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