



Critical Question & Research Agenda Development

Fall, 2023

Education Research and Data Center

Forecasting and Research

Office of Financial Management



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About the ERDC

ERDC works with partner agencies to conduct powerful analyses of learning that can help inform the decision-making of Washington legislators, parents, and education providers. ERDC's data system is a statewide longitudinal data system that includes de-identified data about people's preschool, educational and workforce experiences.

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Purpose & Background

The State of Washington Office of Financial Management's (OFM) Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) houses the P20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System. This document serves to describe a year-long process that ERDC conducted to update its critical questions and to develop a research agenda

During the 2007 session, the Washington Legislature passed a bill that created the Education Research & Data Center (ERDC) in the Office of Financial Management. The aim of ERDC is to make education data available to policymakers and state organizations that make decisions related to Washington students, while also protecting the privacy of students. As the home for the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS), ERDC works with partner agencies to develop analyses of education systems that can improve student outcomes. These sectors include early learning, K-12, postsecondary, and workforce sectors, which are referred to collectively as P20W (preschool to grade 20 to workforce). In this way, ERDC acts as a kind of "central hub," where partnering agencies, institutions, and organizations can pool their data and seek answers to questions that none of them have the resources or data to answer by themselves.

At ERDC, we build and maintain a P20W longitudinal data system by partnering with other state agencies throughout the state that contribute data to ERDC. The purpose of this longitudinal data system is to enable researchers at ERDC and elsewhere to conduct valuable research that informs policy and decision making at the state level. Individuals and organizations throughout the state, including students, educators, state policymakers, school superintendents, school principals, university administrators, and academic researchers, benefit from the data hosted by ERDC and the research conducted with it.

Vision: To promote a seamless, coordinated preschool-to-career (P-20W) experience for all learners by providing objective analysis and information.

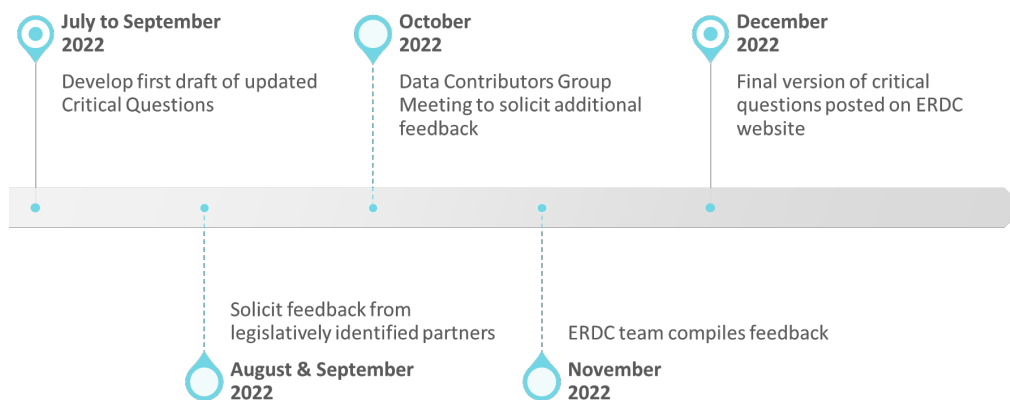
Mission: To develop longitudinal information spanning the P-20W system in order to facilitate analyses, provide meaningful reports, collaborate on education research, and share data.

ERDC Critical Question Refresh

RCW 43.41.400 mandates that ERDC shall, in consultation with the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) and the agencies and organizations participating in the education data center, identify **the critical research and policy questions** that are intended to be addressed by the education data center and **the data needed to address the questions**.

The critical questions are an important guiding framework for ERDC. In 2022, ERDC leadership observed that ERDC’s original Critical Questions created at its inception (see Appendix) could use an update. Some original critical questions were now answered through reports and dashboards, while others were not possible to answer with the data currently housed in the ERDC P20W, were limited in scope. There was also a desire to review questions in light of historic inequities that are still perpetuated between student groups. Hence, ERDC launched a collaborative process to update the critical questions and research agenda that could be updated on a regular cycle.

Process & Timeline



1. Summer 2022: ERDC sent draft version of ERDC Critical Questions to LEAP, relevant legislative committees, Ethnic Commissions, EOGOAC, and Data Contributors and asked for comment within 30 days.¹
2. Fall 2022: ERDC leadership team incorporated feedback and made final determination of the ERDC Critical Questions.
3. December 2022: ERDC Critical Questions posted publicly via ERDC’s website and newsletter.

¹ We received and incorporated feedback from: Council of Presidents, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Evergreen State College, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Professional Educator Standards Board, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, State Board of Education, University of Washington, and Washington Student Achievement Council.

ERDC Critical Questions

The ERDC Critical Questions provide an overarching framework for ERDC’s research portfolio. They are guiding topics that provide clarity about what is (or isn’t) within the scope of ERDC’s purview. When someone asks, “What does ERDC research focus on?” these general topics should come to mind.

The updated critical questions are intended to prioritize the analysis of inequities, examine systemwide practices that lead to disparities, and highlight policies that lead to positive change. They are also meant to encompass ERDC’s [legislatively mandated reports](#). They tie closely to ERDC’s roadmap and inform decision-making about priorities. As ERDC continues to critically examine how we collect, analyze, and report our data in ways that acknowledge historic inequities, challenge the status quo, and reflect ERDC’s commitment to equity, the critical questions are now an important foundational tool for us to articulate and focus our efforts towards equitable outcomes for Washington students.

Critical Question 1: Education Systems & Transitions

[Are resources and access to educational opportunities distributed equitably across the Washington education system?](#)

Because of the longitudinal, cross-sector data housed at ERDC, we are well-positioned to examine how students transition between our state education systems on their educational journey. Rather than focusing on student outcomes, these studies focus on resources and opportunities available to students. Metrics to evaluate education systems and transitions may include funding for resources, teacher qualifications, or access to advanced course offerings. By examining the system inputs, ERDC can investigate how opportunities are distributed and utilized across different student groups statewide.

Studies under this critical question build an understanding of resources available to students as they shape their education pathways to inform what types of policies might support students at key transitions along the way.

Critical Question 2: Student Outcomes & Milestones

[How well is the Washington education system producing equitable educational outcomes, particularly for historically marginalized or underserved student groups?](#)

ERDC compiles data related to student outcomes, as well as key milestones that indicate a student’s likelihood for educational success. Important outcomes include, but are not limited to, Kindergarten readiness, state assessment scores, graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and retention, and workforce wages. By tracking and publicly report student outcomes and milestones, ERDC can highlight how where student success is occurring and where additional supports may be needed.

Studies under this critical question identify disparities that exist between student groups. They may either provide evidence for the need for intentional policies aimed at reversing historic inequities or they might evaluate the success of existing policies implemented by the legislature.

Critical Question 3: Education Workforce

How well does the Washington education system attract, prepare, and retain a high-quality, diverse education workforce that can meet current and future student needs?

ERDC houses K12 educator preparation program data, as well as educator workforce data. This includes information on teachers, paraeducators, and administrators. At this time, the most comprehensive data available is related to the K-12 educator workforce. There may be opportunities to expand the research beyond this group (i.e. administrators, advisors, counselors, school staff, superintendents, etc) with more advanced data collection methods in the future.

Studies under this critical question describe the educator workforce supply to help our state understand how to attract and prepare the next generation of educators.

Critical Question 4: Education & Social Conditions

How do state systems and social conditions in Washington impact student opportunities and outcomes?

Students are not one-dimensional, they are influenced by their local communities, both geographically and socially. They also have interactions across multiple systems that are supported by the state. Given this the approach to understanding student experiences must also be nuanced. The Office of Equity in Washington has identified [15 Determinants of Equity](#), or social conditions, on which the state will focus. Some examples include access to affordable food and housing, public safety, and economic justice. Gathering and analyzing data to examine the intersections of education with these social conditions is a challenge, but a new opportunity for ERDC.

Studies under this critical question provide a better understanding of how data from other fields, such as health or criminal justice, can inform the educational system to lead to increased equity and improved outcomes for students.

Critical Question 5: Education Data Availability and Usability²

What is the availability and utility of data to answer current and emerging education research questions in Washington?

Data and data analysis are central to ERDC's mission and legislative mandate. ERDC is responsible for developing, maintaining, and ensuring the quality of the P20W data warehouse. ERDC also works closely with other agencies across that state that hold or maintain non-education administrative data. In this unique role, ERDC can identify gaps and opportunities in data collection, availability, quality, and use. By

² This critical question was not originally part of the discussion of the RAWG. Rather, it emerged as a new critical question through this process and was adopted by ERDC after the conclusion of the working group.

evaluating the availability and usability of administrative data across state systems, ERDC can bring together these disparate data sources, determine the quality of the data, and identify analysis approaches that illuminate student experiences across the state while protecting student privacy. Ultimately, this comprehensive view of Washington’s data can identify resources and opportunities to improve student outcomes, particularly for students who might be less visible or historically excluded from education data systems.

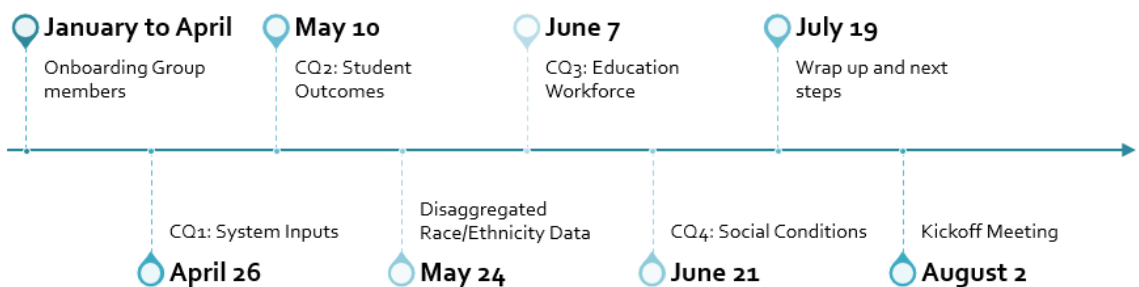
Studies under this critical question will evaluate the quality, reliability, and validity of education data and explore innovative analysis approaches to enhance the usability of that data. Studies under this critical question will also explore data availability from both education and non-education agencies to determine whether additional elements exist that can enrich the education data and research infrastructure.

Research Agenda Development

Partner Engagement

Once the Critical Questions were finalized, the ERDC team began outreach to develop a research question using the Critical Questions as a framework. ERDC reached out to over 40 organizations to establish a cross-sector coalition comprising researchers, state education agency representatives, and community-based organizations. See the appendix for the complete list of organizations that participated in the project.

Process & Timeline



1. Winter 2023: ERDC started outreach to potential research agenda working group members. There was an intentional focus on identifying representatives from organizations that serve students of color, students experiencing homelessness, students from immigrant backgrounds. Other considerations included variety in geographic region, sector, relationship to ERDC (data partners, data requesters, funders, new organizations). Given the timing of outreach (January to March, 2023), ERDC agreed to follow up with legislative staff and committees after the legislative session.
2. Winter 2023: After an initial email, an ERDC staff member set up a special onboarding one-on-one with each prospective RAWG participant. In this meeting, we covered the purpose of ERDC, the

critical question refresh, and started to learn more about each organization's research interests and capacity.

3. Spring-Summer 2023: Research Agenda Working Group Sessions (described in detail in next section)
4. Summer 2023- Fall 2023: ERDC staff will consult with interested individuals that could not participate in the working group, such as legislative staff and committee members.
5. Fall 2023: ERDC leadership team will make the final determination of the 2024-2026 **ERDC Research Agenda** by incorporating the working group ideas with feedback from partners, legislative recommendations, current ERDC reporting requirements, federal grant projects, and staff capacity.

Purpose, Goals, & Outcomes of the Research Agenda Working Group

The ERDC Research Agenda Working Group (the RAWG) convened seven times between April 26th and August 2nd, 2023. See the Appendix for the meeting schedule and topics.

Purpose: The purpose of this group is to engage in a collaborative process to identify educational research priorities and needs related to P20W data.

Guiding Principles: In addition to the purpose, ERDC articulated several guiding goals that directed not just the "what" of the project, but also addressed "how" ERDC hoped to engage with partners. These goals included:

- **Relationships.** New people means new perspectives and new ideas. We want to connect with organizations and build relationships that strengthen the education research and data ecosystem in the state. The connections and relationships built help provide and spread new perspectives and ideas.
- **Collaboration.** We believe that coming together to engage in a collaborative process will help ERDC (and all of us here) to identify research priorities and data related needs. We might be well suited to answer some questions, while others questions might be better addressed by individuals or organizations outside of ERDC through partnerships.
- **Sustainability.** Participant insights will inform a coherent research agenda that will guide our work in the next three to five years. Beyond that, we envision a new governance structure that sustains our partnerships with researchers, school leaders, and representatives of community-based organizations.

Short Term Outcomes: We can use the P20W data warehouse to better serve students in WA by:

- Identifying a ERDC research agenda
- Improving ERDC data dashboards and resources
- Identifying collaborative research projects that ERDC may support

Long Term Outcomes: We can contribute to the Washington education research ecosystem through:

- Internal improvements to data collection and data dissemination
- Research collaborations with other agencies and organizations in Washington (and outside of the state)
- Creating a new ERDC data governance structure
- Providing recommendations to other agencies about data collections

Technical Tools: The ERDC hosted a SharePoint site created by the Office of Financial Management. Each RAWG participant had access to the site for the duration of the project. All agenda, notes, and project landscape scans, as well as resources provided by partners during the project were housed in the SharePoint site. All virtual meetings were hosted by OFM on Zoom. After each session, participants were asked to complete a short exit ticket survey via Microsoft Forms. Padlet was also used during one session to brainstorm and collect research ideas related to critical question #4.

Notetaking & Facilitation: We did not record any of the sessions, but did use the transcription features at times. Additionally, we used a group of pre-identified notetakers who were willing to support ERDC. This allowed ERDC staff members more freedom to facilitate and actively participate in the conversations.

Group Agreements: During the kickoff session, ERDC proposed several group agreements and invited participants to offer suggestions of additional agreements. The group reviewed the agreements at the start of each subsequent meeting (see Box 1).

Box 1. Group Agreements

Center the lived experiences of people of the global majority that have experience with –isms (systems of oppression like racism, sexism, classism, ableism, cis-heterosexism)

For participants with privileged identities, particularly White people: Do not expect people with lived experiences of oppression, especially specific to racism, to explain, justify, or teach you about their experiences. Do the work of understanding systemic racism on your own and with other White colleagues. Make knowledge accessible, prioritize curiosity, collaborate as equals, elevate equity.

Very clear rules and expectations (sign posts) throughout the process
Recognize and challenge the limitations of administrative data

Acknowledge that different students have different preferences and paths- don't make

assumptions about what is "right" or "best" for all students

Hold a brave space rather than "safe" space. Without having challenging and disruptive conversations, we can't grow and have honest and authentic conversations.

If conversations get tense?

- Direct folks back to the norms of the group
- Speak from your own personal truths/lenses/experiences. What are you believing /thinking/ doing right now? Give space for people to do that- not shut it down.

Overview & Themes from Group Working Sessions

This section captures the notes and key takeaways from each of the seven sections.

Kickoff Meeting (April 26):

This meeting was a three hour in-person and virtual meeting. Around 20 participants attended in person in a room provided generously by the Foundation for Tacoma Students. We were welcomed by Dr. Tafona Ervin, who reminded the group of the importance of data and remembering the impact our work can have on student lives.

In the kickoff session, we spent a significant amount of time doing introductions and setting expectations for the group. After introductions, we wanted to build the foundation for the working group by naming the purpose, goals, and outcomes discussed in the previous section. Although we had provided an overview of ERDC in each of our one-on-one sessions during the onboarding process, we again reiterated ERDC’s role in the education landscape, our relationship to our data contributing partners, our equity roadmap, and our Critical Questions. After facilitating a group conversation as a “practice session” to prepare for the future sessions, we transitioned into sharing the outcomes that we hoped to achieve to the group. Finally, ERDC came to the meeting with a few group agreements and facilitated a conversation across group members about what additional agreements/norms they felt were important to include.

Agenda for Launch Meeting

9:05	Introduction Activities
10:05	Purpose & Goals
10:15	What is ERDC?
10:25	ERDC's Critical Questions
10:40-10:50	Break
10:50	Group Activity: Deeper Diver into a CQ
11:20	But really, what are we doing here? (Short and long term outcomes)
11:40	How do we want to engage with each other? (Group Agreements)

Session 2: Education Systems (May 10)

For this session, ERDC provided an overview of the research questions that was provided by the RAWG participants prior to the first session. Then, we broke into 6 small groups using the zoom breakout function. We designated one notetaker/facilitator per room. We tried our best to group individuals with similar organizational structures/purposes. For example, one group was comprised of primarily community-based organization representatives, one of K12 focused organizations, one of academic researchers, and one of postsecondary focused organizations. While we planned for more cross-sharing at the end, our rich conversations meant that we had less time to do that in this session. Small groups focused on the following prompts:

I was inspired by a very human conversation regarding how hard and exhausting this work can be - especially for individuals of color. This provided a space to share some frustration and be supportive of each other. Another thing that came up that I feel is so important is 'how are we holding ourselves accountable to actually do something with the data we already have?' We are not always good with using data to make improvements. Better use of data can help us ask better questions, and there was some discussion regarding whether or not we are answering the right questions. – RAWG Participant

1. From your perspective, what research topics need to be further investigated to understand and describe systemic inequities in education?
2. Rather than focusing on student outcomes, what type of system inputs do you think contribute to inequities across the system? How would you communicate this to different audiences (legislature vs. state agencies vs. Schools vs. families)?

Emerging Research Questions from Session #2:

- **Access:** Need to understand gaps in access across the education trajectory from access early learning programs to access to courses in secondary and postsecondary settings
- **Student supports:** Questions around the relationship between student supports including advising, counseling, family supports, etc. on student learning and opportunities
- **Classroom experiences:** Relationship between course curricula, particularly culturally responsive curricula, and pedagogical models and student learning, well-being, and outcomes
- **Career pathways:** Interest in economic returns for different credentials or pathways as well as identifying other measures of success beyond employment and earnings that can be used to measure career success
- **Education workforce:** Considerable discussion about the distribution and retention of education personnel across schools and districts in terms of number, demographics, and quality, particularly with respect to teachers and school counselors
- **Funding:** Considerable discussion around funding allocation to schools, districts, and students; need to consider total funding from all sources; and understanding variation in how schools spend their funds

Data Recommendations from Session #2:

- Recommendation for data on curriculum and pedagogical models, student experience in the classroom, and student well-being and mental health
- Recommendation for incorporating more data into the warehouse including census tract and community-level data; parental data; birth, health, and social service data; and data from the office of homeless youth
- Desire for more information about education workforce data and funding data
- Need for greater or different disaggregation of data beyond typical demographic or program enrollment data, as well as assistance in how to use disaggregated data
- Need for common definitions of measures and need to redefine measures used for research that better align with the students, families, and communities served
- More information about how data are collected and what barriers might exist in data collection, particularly language barriers or trust barriers that might lead to data being less complete or accurate for some communities

The group also noted opportunities for research partnerships and the need to include students and families when developing research and when reporting on findings.

Session 3: Student Outcomes (May 24)

In this session, ERDC again provided an overview of the research questions that were provided by the RAWG participants prior to the first session. Then, we broke into roughly the same small groups as in session #2, some individuals were moved around to create similar group sizes.

Emerging Research Questions from Session #3:

Many of these were grounded in the prior conversation about the influence of systemic level/root factors that cause inequity in our education system:

- **System-level inputs and policy levers:** Continued discussion of system-level inputs and policy levers and how these impact student outcomes and exacerbate or compensate for inequities. These include questions about access, teachers, student supports, gentrification as well as discussion about examining the effects of policies, programs, and practices on alleviating or exacerbating inequities.
- **Root causes of inequities and point at which they occur:** Numerous groups discussed a need to identify factors that are most important drivers of inequitable outcomes. This importance was discussed both quantitatively—e.g., what measures have strong correlations with outcomes?—and qualitatively—e.g., what measures matter most to students and families served by schools? Many also discussed a need to understand at what point in the life course inequities grow or shrink examining both the student and their families.
- **Skill development:** Questions arose around need for more research on what skills students develop generally in both high school and postsecondary courses and specifically in CTE courses.
- **Student groups:** Discussion of student groups that might need increased attention to understand the drivers of inequities and outcomes. Groups included immigrants and refugees, multilingual students, students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness. Also discussion of a need to understand the programs that serve these students and whether they are effective.
- **Intersectional factors:** Students with multiple identities or participating in multiple programs. How can we understand the relationship between these intersectional factors and outcomes?

Data Recommendations from Session #3:

- **More data:** Workgroup participants pointed out that data availability drives what we can say or examine with respect to student outcomes and inequities. Participants noted need for more data on non-academic outcomes and measures, student experiences, birth to five, other social systems and program, student programs and participation, apprenticeships, and teacher quality. Many also highlighted the need for qualitative data on students and families, teacher quality, and student experience.

- **Data quality and missing data:** Some students might be missing from analyses on purpose (e.g., ERDC high school outcomes dashboard includes only high school graduates) or might be missing for systematic reasons (e.g., language or trust barriers that limit data complete or accurate data for some students). Missing or lower quality data can create an incomplete or biased picture and/or harm students. Participants also discussed how the same roles or programs might behave or be implemented differently across schools and districts. This can make research more challenging because we might lump together unlike things.
- **Technical assistance and leadership:** Participants discussed desire for assistance and leadership from ERDC as it relates to data on students with multiple identities and how these interact, disaggregated race and ethnicity data, data definitions, common data methodologies, and approaches to disaggregation.

Finally, participants raised questions regarding the broader education research landscape and ERDC's role for ERDC and the workgroup to consider. Specifically, participants provided ideas for how ERDC can lead in the state education research space; discussed how to prioritize what research we, as a state and our individual organizations, should work on; and questioned how we conduct research that helps, and does not harm, students.

Session 4: Race & Ethnicity Data (June 7)

Prior to this session, we conducted an online survey of participants so that they could choose the topic for this meeting. Based on the survey results, we chose to facilitate a large group conversation on the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data.

To ground everyone on the topic and data availability, ERDC provided an overview of the national and state context related to the collection of race and ethnicity data. The content for this overview was pulled from ERDC and OSPI's joint presentation on collection and reporting race ethnicity data presented in February 2023 at the National Center for Education Statistics SLDS P- 20 Best Practices Conference.

Emerging Research Questions from Session #4:

Themes included the numerous benefits to more detailed race and ethnicity data:

- **Accurately counting students** is important to understanding experiences of students from different racial and ethnic groups, ensure equal access to resources, and understand disparities in access and outcomes. It's critical to holding the system accountable, directing funds, and understanding student needs.
- **Detailed race and ethnicity data** can empower students and allow them to be seen and see themselves in the data.

There are also challenges to consider when reporting or analyzing detailed data:

- **Analysis Techniques.** How to report counts or categorize students when they identify multiple races, specifically whether counts should be duplicated, unduplicated, or some other approach
- **Maintain privacy.** Student privacy and issues of small counts increase with more disaggregated data. This can especially be a concern in dashboard displays.

- **Collaboration.** Need for researchers and collaborators to work with agencies to understand race and ethnicity data and how it is collected differently across agencies

Some specific student groups that were highlighted due to known data challenges:

- Native American students are often undercounted because they may identify as more than one race or Hispanic. This can limit access and funding and have other implications.
- In OSPI's new detailed race and ethnicity data, students who report that they are from a Latin American country and do not identify as Latino/Hispanic will be coded as Black in the Federal Race category. This change might have implications for reporting and research.
- IPEDS does not collect race data for international students (See Appendix for more details on IPEDS Reporting Categories.)

The group also discussed some approaches for how to use detailed race and ethnicity data in reporting and research and some tradeoffs:

- Counting each racial group that a student reports. This will report students as they identify but will also lead to counts that are greater than total enrollment (i.e. duplicate counts).
- Count students who report more than one race as multiracial or two or more race. This allows for mutually exclusive categories and counts that will equal total enrollment, but this approach masks differences across students that report more than one race.
- Creating some other assignment rule and assigning only one race to each student based on that assignment rule. There are different assignment rules that can be used with different trade-offs. DCYF uses one based on disproportionality and disparity.
- Using maximum representation approaches which is a way of counting students in each category in which they identify. This is used in some reporting by University of Washington and is being considered in other spaces, particularly around reporting for Native American students.

Hearing how different organizations and agencies do race/ethnicity disaggregation and linking to their various reports and resources was really helpful. I think it would be neat if there was more info on the different techniques and examples of their usage. Ideally, there would be some best practice resources and trainings for data collection, database design and reporting that could be shared with research and program partners. – RAWG Participant

Session 5: Education Workforce (June 21)

In this session, Dr. Kaori Strunk of OSPI and Dr. Jisu Ryu of PESB provided an overview to the large group about the education workforce data collected at a state level by OSPI. They also discussed challenges in educator recruitment and hiring and how a universal application system could address some of these challenges.

Emerging Research Questions from Session #5:

We also covered the different types of topics surrounding educators that are of interest to workgroup members. Topics included the following:

- **Teacher pathways:** Participants discussed a desire for more information about pathways for future teachers, what factors predict educator trajectories and placements, and how teacher pathways and certifications impact teaching placement.
- **Educators outside K-12:** Participants had an interest in examining pathways and characteristics of early learning teachers and postsecondary faculty. Questions related to understanding the flow between early learning and K-12 teachers as well as interest in starting to examine postsecondary faculty.
- **Teacher retention:** Participants are interested in understanding more about teacher retention including what factors might explain retention, particularly for educators and leaders of color, and what happens to teachers after they exit.
- **Educator shortage:** Greater information is needed to understand supply and demand of educators. Shortages are currently measured by teacher with limited certificate or out of placement endorsement. Recruitment and job postings to measure demand are decentralized at the district level while more information is needed about teacher vacancies and candidate pools.

Data Recommendations from Session #5:

While there was much discussion about data availability during this session, we did not collectively identify potential data gaps. More collaborative work could be done in the future to identify new data collection recommendations.

Session 6: Education & Social Conditions (July 19)

In this session, we recognized that we could have a broad range of participant interests. We again opted for a large group format for this session based on participant feedback. After providing an overview of the research questions that participants submitted at the start of the working group, we invited participants to quietly brainstorm for 10 minutes and record their research questions on a group Padlet. Our goal was to record responses from our participants that were less likely to talk in a large group setting. Headers in the Padlet included: Health; Housing; Income/Economic Conditions; Criminal/Legal System; Child Welfare; Family Conditions; Community/Neighborhood/Regional Conditions; Other Social Conditions; and general thoughts/comments.

Emerging Research Needs from Session #6:

- There is ample opportunity and need for research on the relationship between non-education systems and student experiences, opportunities, and outcomes. Overall, participants identified seven questions each related to child welfare and health, six each related to criminal/legal system and income/economic conditions, five on community/neighborhood/regional conditions, three on housing, and one related to family conditions (not including those that are part of the income/economic conditions).
- The group has interest in understanding characteristics of students who participate in state programs and how different state programs can impact education outcomes (e.g. how Medicaid

receipt impacts attendance).

- The group discussed the many student populations that receive support from the state, districts, or schools, and how these populations require focused attention in order to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed. The group identified some specific student populations including students with low incomes, students receiving TANF, Medicaid, or free or reduced price meals, students experiencing homeless, students and teachers of color, justice-involved youth, students in the foster care system, and students at tribal compact schools.
- The group spent a significant amount of time discussing how to prioritize research questions. Here are some factors the group suggested ERDC consider when prioritizing research questions:
 - **Will the research provide rigorous descriptive analysis that provides base knowledge?** This type of research can help us to understand the current state of affairs and identify areas where further research is needed.
 - **Can the research provide convincing causal analysis about program or policy effectiveness?** This type of research can help us to understand the impact of different programs, policies, and supports and make informed decisions about how to allocate resources.
 - **Is the research associated with an existing policy or intervention?** If so, the research can help to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy or intervention and identify areas where it can be improved.
 - **Can the research support the creation or adoption of effective policies or programs?** This type of research can help to identify the needs of populations and develop solutions that can make a real difference.
 - **Does the research center populations who are furthest from opportunity?** This is an important consideration, as these student populations are most affected by social and economic inequities within and outside the education system.

Data Recommendations from Session #6:

- The group discussed the value of developing a small infrastructure that links data from the Integrated Client Database with education data from ERDC that can be used for multiple projects rather than recreating these linkages for each project.
- Many participants had interest in linking birth record data with ERDC's data warehouse. Birth record data is incredibly rich and linking with student data can strengthen current research projects and offer new opportunities to evaluate policies and programs.
- The group also discussed how broadening data linkages or datasets can carry data security risks and should be done with caution.

In addition, the group highlighted the value ERDC can provide in convening groups like our research agenda workgroup and connecting people who are working on similar projects or have data that can be useful in research. We plan to explore more ways to do so as we move forward with this work.

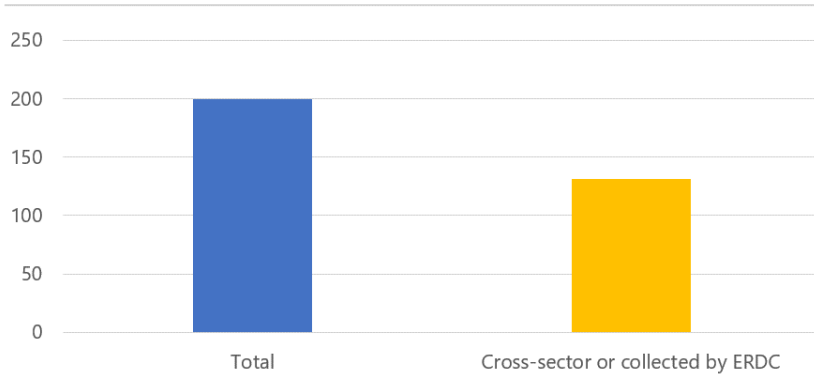
Session 7: Wrap up and Next Steps

In this session we provided an overview of key deliverables and takeaways. We introduced Critical Question #5, data recommendations to OSPI, and an outline of the Research Agenda and discussed feedback on these items. We also shared the full list of research questions and topic areas that arose during the previous sessions. These questions were either directly stated during discussions with ERDC or were derived by ERDC from themes throughout the sessions. In addition to the research questions, we also shared a proposed rubric for prioritizing the research questions. We invited the group to provide feedback on the question list and prioritization rubric within the session and in the documents on the SharePoint site. Finally, we discussed proposals to maintain the collaboration and engagement achieved during the workgroup through a new governance structure that included research roundtables, research advisory committees, and through a request for workgroup participants to review a draft of the Research Agenda.

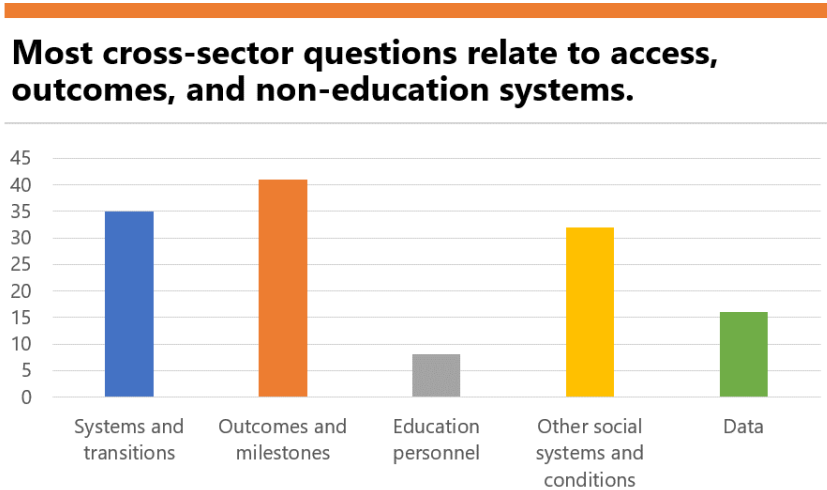
Characteristics of the Identified Research Questions:

The full list of research questions included more than 200 questions across various topics. Of those, about 130 questions had a cross-sector focus, utilized data collected directly by ERDC, or fell under Critical Question #5. These research questions fall most directly within ERDC’s research mission to focus on cross-sector research, research utilizing ERDC data, or research on data availability, quality, and validity.

Most questions utilize cross-sector data or data ERDC collects directly.



Of the research questions directly related to ERDC’s research mission, most fell under Critical Questions 1, 2, and 4. Questions under CQ1 often revolved around dual credit or dual enrollment programs. Participants also raised many questions about school funding, though these questions typically were not cross-sector questions. ERDC has produced numerous reports examining student outcomes that fall under Critical Question 2 and will continue to do so with a focus on questions that arose during workgroup discussions.



The majority of questions under Critical Question 3 from the workgroup discussions focused on K-12 education personnel, particularly around the distribution across schools and districts. These questions tend to have a single sector focus and thus are best addressed by the relevant sector, often with support from ERDC staff. Questions related to educator training are included in the figure below because ERDC collects data on educator prep programs as are questions related to the impacts of education personnel on student outcomes and faculty at higher education institutions. All CQ4 questions had a cross-sector focus by definition—they related to linking education data with data from non-education sources. Criminal legal system, child welfare, parental characteristics, and neighborhood factors were common questions under Critical Question 4. Finally, questions under CQ5 related to data availability, data construction, and measures.

Research Prioritization Review Questions

Does this align with ERDC’s role and mission?

Is the question cross-sector? Does it use data that ERDC collects directly (PCHEES, EPP)? Is it legislatively mandated or in statute?

Does this have potential to fill knowledge gaps?

Has this research question already been answered in Washington or elsewhere? Is anyone currently working on this question?

Are populations who are furthest from opportunity centered?

Are BIPOC students, students in need of state or school supports, or students from historically marginalized or underserved communities centered in the research question?

Will the research advance student learning, opportunity, or outcomes?

Will the research provide rigorous descriptive analysis that provides base knowledge? Can the research provide convincing causal analysis about program or policy effectiveness?

Is it actionable?

Is the research associated with an existing policy or intervention? Can the research support the creation or adoption of effective policies or programs? Is it timely and relevant?

Is it feasible in terms of expertise, staff capacity, cost, and time?

Does ERDC have the expertise and staff capacity? Is there funding and time? If important but not currently feasible within ERDC, are there potential partners to improve feasibility?

Project Outcomes

Finalizing the Research Agenda

In order to prioritize the list of research questions generated by the group, the ERDC first turned the list back to the working group for help with prioritization. Then, the ERDC team reviewed each question across the following components: (see the Research Prioritization Review Questions on previous page).

The final research agenda will be posted on ERDC's website. ERDC will also consult with several other groups as agenda is finalized.

Introducing a Fifth Critical Question

Conversations with the RAWG revealed that participants had a wide range of questions. One recurring theme that emerged were research projects related to data validity, quality, and/or the ability to match cross sector data with sectors outside of education. These questions did not tie directly to one of the pre-identified four critical questions. As a result, ERDC turned back to our data contributing and legislatively named partners to propose the addition of a fifth critical question to encompass and provide a framework for this type of research moving forward. This fifth question about data availability and usability, has now been adopted by the ERDC after review from our partners.

Recommendation Letter to K12 Data Governance Group

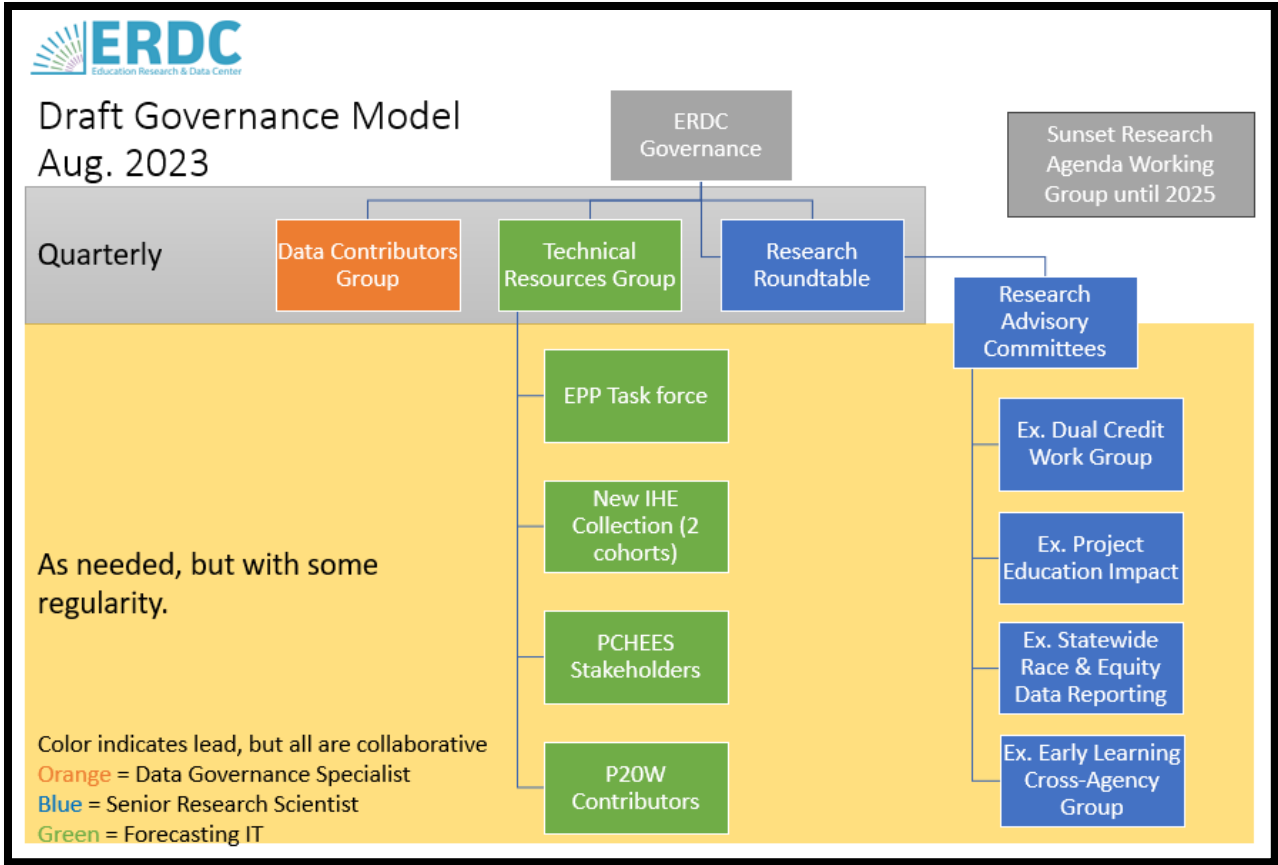
Under RCW 43.41.400, the ERDC is required to make recommendations to both the legislature and the K-12 data governance group regarding data elements and data quality improvements that are necessary to answer pressing research and policy questions. The data recommendations solicited from the RAWG will be used to inform this year's (2023) letter.

Updating the ERDC Governance Structure

The Research Agenda Working Group convened at the same time as an external P20W Data Systems Study. Together, analyzing the technical environment and related needs with the research and data use needs led the ERDC staff to envision a new structure of data governance moving forward. The diagram below is a draft of the proposed restructure.

RAWG participants expressed a desire to have a continued forum to learn about data availability, hear how others are using the data, and contribute feedback to ERDC's research projects. The proposed structure would provide state agency partners, academic researchers, school partners, and community based organizations with two spaces to contribute to ERDC work. One, the "Research Roundtable" would be a quarterly meeting hosted by ERDC with guest presenters to share about P20W research/ The second, "Research Advisory Committees" would be more project focused. Members of these committees would provide feedback, inform research questions, and provide reviews of ERDC research projects.

The final structure is still to be determined as of August 2023, but is included here to demonstrate how the Research Agenda Working Group participants informed the future vision of ERDC governance.



Appendix

ERDC Critical Questions, 2007-2022

Student Profile

- What are the demographic, mobility, program, class, grade, and course-taking profiles of students who do and do not achieve and what are their outcomes?
- Are students working while in school? What are the characteristics of working students?

Quality/Achievement

- How do the performance profiles of high mobility students compare to those of other students, e.g., attendance, proficiency, graduation, and post-secondary enrollment?
- Is there a relation between college major and time-to-degree?

Transition/Advancement Outcomes

- What are the education and workforce outcomes of low-income students (Free or Reduced Price Meal-eligible students)? What are their postsecondary financial aid profiles?
- How are students from specific high schools performing at the post-secondary level, and what are the strongest predictors of post-secondary success?

Program Effectiveness & Costs

- What are the characteristics of districts/schools that meet or do not meet accountability requirements?
- What programs, services, and instructional models have shown the most success in improving the performance of students in special education and ELL programs in similar districts/schools?

Teachers

- What are the most common characteristics of the teacher workforce in schools that show the greatest success with students?
- What are the common characteristics of teachers who leave the teaching workforce? What are their subsequent employment characteristics?

Research Agenda Working Group Meeting Schedule

Session	Time	Description	Agenda Items
Session 1: April 26	9:00- 12:00	Launch meeting (Hybrid)	Expectations, agreements, goals, ways to engage; Overview of ERDC Data and Critical Questions
Session 2: May 10	10:00- 11:30	CQ #1: Education Systems & Pathways	Discuss current and potential project topics related to Education Systems & Pathways
Session 3: May 24	10:00- 11:30	CQ#2: Student Outcomes & Milestones	Discuss current and potential project topics related to Student Outcomes & Milestones
Session 4: June 7	10:00 – 11:30	Special Session: Race & Ethnicity Data Collection and reporting	
Session 5: June 21	10:00- 11:30	CQ#3: Educator Workforce	Discuss current and potential project topics related to Educator Workforce
Session 6: July 19	10:00 – 11:30	CQ#4: Education & Social Conditions	Discuss current and potential project topics related to Education & Social Conditions
Session 7: August 2	10:00 – 11:30	Wrap up & Next Steps (if needed)	Extra time for conversations, reoccurring themes, determine next steps, preferred ways for continued involvement and communication

ERDC Research Agenda Working Group Organization Membership

The following individuals volunteered their time and knowledge to attend at least one virtual session, offer valuable insight, and guide ERDC's work. We are incredibly grateful for their participation and partnership.

Name	Organization
Dave Wallace	Workforce Training Board
John Kreig	Western Washington University
Daniel Oliver	Washington Student Achievement Council
Min Hwangbo	Washington STEM
Mikel Poppe	Washington STEM
Jenee Myers Twitchell	Washington STEM
Stephanie Kane	Washington State University
Rebecca Goodvin	Washington State Institute for Public Policy
Julia Cramer	Washington State Institute for Public Policy
Chasya Hoagland	Washington State Institute for Public Policy
Deleena Patton	Washington State Department of Social and Health Services: Research and Data Analysis
Andrea Cobb	Washington Education Research Association; Gates Foundation
Pooya Almasi	University of Washington College of Education
David Knight	University of Washington College of Education
Amanda Shi	Tubman Center for Health & Freedom
Danisha Jefferson-Abye	Tubman Center for Health & Freedom
Brandon Joachim	Treehouse
Kayleen Stutts	Treehouse
Andrew Parr	State Board of Education
Randy Spaulding	State Board of Education
Summer Kenesson	State Board of Community & Technical Colleges
Liz Trautman	Stand for Children
Kia Franklin	Stand for Children
Shelby Cooley	Seattle Public Schools
Jisu Ryu	Professional Educator Standards Board
Radu Smintina	One America
Darby Kaikkonen	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction- Student Information
Kaori Strunk	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction- Educator Growth & Development
Cindy Rockholt	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction- Educator Growth & Development
Heather Rees	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction -Center for Improvement of Student Learning
Shea Hamilton	Office of Financial Management Senior Budget Assistant (Education)
Erin Okuno	Office of Education Ombuds
Avery Kirsten	Kinetic West
Sieng Douangdala	Kandelia

Erin Vincent	Innovia/Launch NW
Matt Bumpus	Innovia/Launch NW
Ben Small	Innovia/Launch NW
Etienne Rios	Independent Colleges of Washington
Rachel Worsham	Harvard GSE Center for Education Policy Research
Alyssa Reinhart	Harvard GSE Center for Education Policy Research
Devin Kelly	Graduate Tacoma
Alan Foote	Graduate Tacoma
Jocelyn Mejia	Equity in Education Coalition
Sharonne Navas	Equity in Education Coalition
Melissa Bowen	Equity in Education Coalition
Logan Endres	Equity in Education Coalition
Sarah Veele	Department of Children, Youth, & Families
Julie Garver	Council of Presidents
Natasha Rosenblatt	Community Center for Education Results (Road Map Project)
Phyllis Harvey-Buschel	College Success Foundation
Yi-Chun (Eva) Chen	College Success Foundation
Danette Knudson	College Success Foundation
Dan Goldhaber	CALDER at American Institutes for Research, CEDR at the University of Washington
Betsy Naymon	Building Changes
Kalyn Yasutake	Building Changes
Steve Smith	Black Education Strategy Roundtable
Munira Sheriff	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Isabel Munoz-Colon	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Exit Survey Collated Response

(This survey was used in Sessions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

1. The overview provided by ERDC was valuable today.

Strongly Agree	28
Agree	17
Neutral	1
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0



2. The conversations in my breakout room were valuable today.

Strongly Agree	29
Agree	6
Neutral	5
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0



3. This meeting met my expectations.

Strongly Agree	26
Agree	17
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0



Qualitative Responses were collected for the following additional questions:

4. What advice do you have for how ERDC can improve the next meeting?

5. What questions do you have that were not answered today?

6. Do you have any ideas that inspired you that you'd like to follow up on?

Research Agenda Working Group Final Survey

21 respondents. Blank responses or responses that could be used to identify individuals have been removed. Not all respondents answered each question.

1. How many working group sessions did you attend?

● 1-2	1
● 3-4	10
● 5-6	9
● All 7 sessions	1



2. What are you personally taking away from participating in the RAWG?

Depth of knowledge across system

Edu. researchers across the state are eager to address wide variety of research/data related to ERDC.

That ERDC has transformed into a much more transparent and collaborative organization!

It was collaborative, informative and brought to fruition some synergy around this type of work.

Very optimistic about the work going forward and appreciate the outreach and collaboration. I heard a lot of shared concerns and ideas.

better understanding of what ERDC does and where you are going, connection with other researchers at various institutions

Lots of great questions. Ideas on how to structure these kinds of conversations.

Getting to hear others' perspectives and ideas

Understanding of questions being addressed and who is looking into what

It is a good idea to convene every now and then as a centering/reset for all research and policy ideas across the state sectors, particularly with turnover in agencies.

I think this group connected me back to the education research space in Washington and gave me a sense of the landscape including data contributors, researchers, CBOs, etc. and what other folks are really invested in researching. I also think it highlighted the potential for collaboration or at least coordination across research and data partners.

for me -- first, the who's who -- some of the folks in the room i work directly with, others I hope to in the future. I've made a few connections already. I've learned a few things as well when it comes to facilitating these kinds of conversations im taking back to my organization.

Your strong desire for collaboration is a real positive.

That there are a lot of smart, thoughtful folks interrogating these important questions in collaboration with ERDC and each other, and that a lot of our work intersects with deeper system-level issues that we're all increasingly able to effectively identify, but that we face major system constraints in how to act on them.

A network of like-minded people and lots of food for thought (for example the discussion around maximum identification one)

ERDC is undergoing several important changes that will improve a number of different processes; many folks are interested in and using ERDC resources; the center processes its own high-quality research reports.

There are many other partners/orgs facing similar data challenges.

As a new educational data analyst, I learned a lot about the possibilities and frameworks of thinking that can be applied to educational data analysis. I greatly appreciated the perspectives and information supplied by my more experienced and passionate attendee's, and greatly admired ERDC's organization of focus on concepts.

3. What is your organization taking away from participating in the RAWG?

Hope for improving data systems and data quality

Continuous partnership and providing continuous technical support would continuous benefit everyone in our group.

Information, connections and awareness of research work around the state.

There is a need to engage CBOs and families around data and research; also, really happy to have been included. Thank you!

Heightened awareness of the interests and needs in this space

Appreciate being part of the conversation, and getting to learn about questions on others' minds.

Potential areas for collaboration going forward

Knowing where people are and what they are thinking about

I don't know that I can speak for my organization, but at a very high level, these sessions indicated ERDC's desire to communicate and potentially collaborate both around setting their agenda and potentially working with external partners which did not seem to be the case previously.

It's enormously helpful to be aware of where ERDC is in their process -- it informs our work as well. I can't tell you the number of times where we get asked whether we have information that is really cross-sector and we're not set up to tackle but ERDC is set up to play a role. Its helpful for us to have a gauge on where you all might be going so we can make sure we're in alignment and it's also to know who i should reach out to with specific (or vague) questions

That there are numerous thought and data partners within this group and that we should coordinate more intentionally on sharing ideas, best practices, and research/policy agendas.

Some representation, albeit limited.

Understanding of interests around education research

There are several ways ERDC might be a partner in our efforts to measure the impact of our program services.

We had the pleasure of networking with likeminded individuals within like-purposed organizations across our state and region. We will also be taking new observations with us as we go forward with our mission to address education disparities across our focus of Pierce County.

4. When ERDC creates our next Research Agenda (in 2 to 3 years) what recommendations do you have for how we should approach the process?

Would like to see increased capacity that addresses research projects that are not just tied into the legislative mandates.

I think the process was well done on this round, but it might be good to have more information on existing research/research agendas before the start of the agenda process.

Similar process

Data need and review process of the products

please include statutory requirements in addition to the broader research agenda. What questions are already addressed through required elements and how are those questions supplemented by the research agenda (I think it's implied but I want to see explicitly how these tie together)

Engage researchers, but also families, students, and practitioners around data and findings.

Will be interesting to add updates on progress.

I agree with your current considerations, and do think it's important to filter by what you are well-aligned to do, while highlighting what others could do and also where we could come together to advocate or collaborate from our different roles

Start with a very deep evaluation of what all was accomplished with this one first. Highly recommend waiting a minimum of 3 years and preferably 5 before engaging in this kind of work again to give time to this current work.

I wonder about bringing in voices of people in the data. If you attended any school in WA or are a teacher here, you are in the data. What are those people's priorities in how their data is put to work. Could be interesting!

focus on action and impact at the systems level -- also, work that highlights the needs of those most compromised nearly always has positive effects for all students.

be open early on with method and limitations

Circulate the agenda to the working group members prior to a public release.

I like how this was done and think most of it should be reproduced. I am curious about how to better ensure that organizations and individuals participating see themselves in the process (whether it's design, recommendations, ETC.). I don't necessarily have suggestions, but it's something to be mindful of, as emerged in some of the conversations.

I also hope that ERDC is better equipped coming out of this round to directly address some of the concerns around systems of racism and oppression, not to minimize the conversation next time, but to treat it as a foundation so we can collectively more quickly move into ideation and strategy around shared agendas.

None

Follow a similar engagement model.

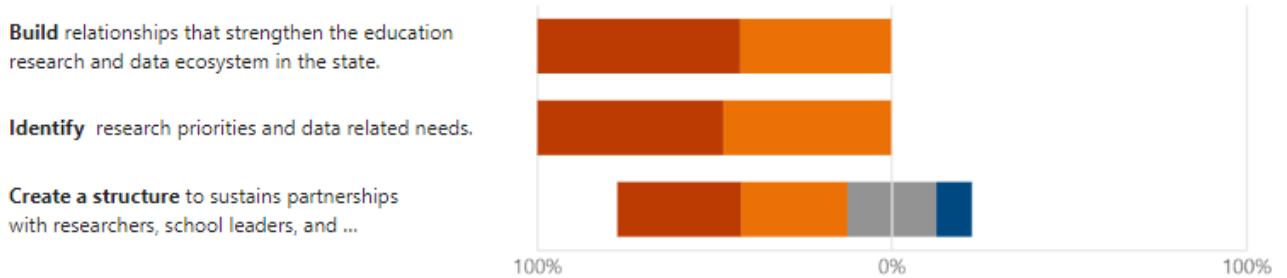
I thought the process was great - I wonder if EdWeek or another outlet would be interested in writing something up?

ot su

I have none to contribute. These work shops were very professional and inspiring.

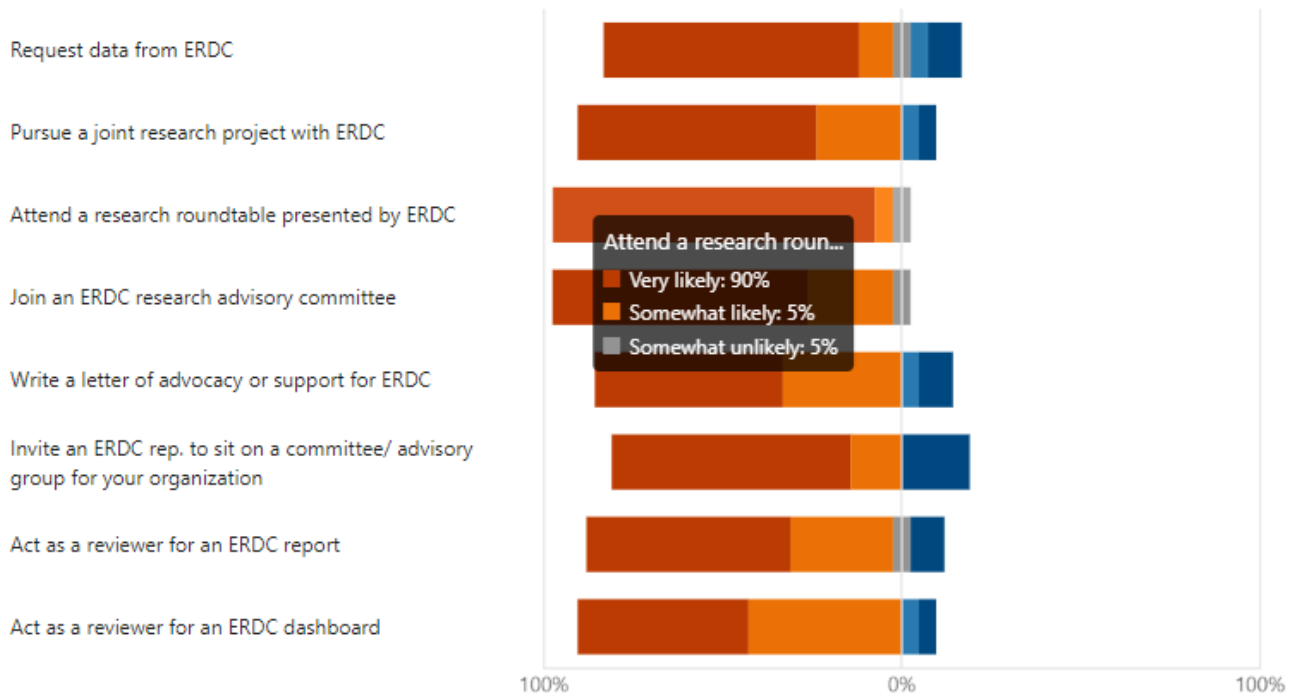
5. To what extent do you agree that ERDC met the following goals for facilitating the RAWG?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Undecided



6. After this engagement with ERDC, how likely are you to:

Very likely Somewhat likely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely Undecided



7. Do you have any additional education research questions OR P20W data recommendations that you we didn't capture during this process?

(Responses included NA or that the participants had already directly reached out to ERDC)

8. Any final thoughts, observations, or questions that you'd like to share with us?

Thank you for hosting us in the past three months!

Really appreciated ERDC's work.

It was worth the effort participating in this work.

As noted above I would like to see the long research agenda and the required reporting for ERDC reflected on a single master list so they are both reflected in the priorities.

Great job!

The purpose of this work was to think big, broad, and visionary. This is a method, but the danger with it is that it can create the conditions for losing sight of the fact that everyone in our datasets are people first, with a fundamental right to privacy. That must continue to be the most core principle at the forefront of any idea for collecting data about people. It is their information, their lives, and they have a right to not only not disclose whatever they choose about themselves, but they also have the right to live with a level of trust that public stewards of their data keep their interests as human beings above and beyond a research question.

Keep it up! its rough getting folks interested in different issues to participate but we need it! The data roundtables sound great -- one other thing that comes to mind is King County's better starts for kids has a "Learning circle" that meets quarterly that has had mixed results but they recently created like a basecamp collaboration /news sharing board and it's helped increase participation. folks will share initiatives/opportunity for collab, etc. it's kind of tough since we all work with proprietary data with tons of restrictions on how we can collaborate but it does allow folks to participate asynchronously -- these meetings are usually right when we schedule our team meetings so we havent been able to go to many and i'm sure others feel the same way.

Appreciated the opportunity to engage.

Just that I appreciate the hard work of the ERDC team, their openness to feedback and pivots, and the commitment of many organizations and individuals to stick with it. I only wish I could have attended more of the meetings.

Thank you for demystifying ERDC

I'm grateful I was able to sit in on these discussions and look forward be having a better arsenal of knowledge and questions to contribute to future discussions.

IPEDS Reporting Categories

Provided by a RAWG Participant

