Engaging Stakeholders With State Data

This example illustrates use of the protocol for a broad stakeholder meeting using summary data. The SEA designed the meeting to increase stakeholders' understanding of SEA data and engage them in the SEA's broader data-informed decisionmaking process. The SEA selected stakeholders to ensure a wide variety of perspectives on the topic; experience working with data was not a prerequisite for participation. (The sample data used in this example may or may not be relevant to your objectives. The example is presented as a guide only and is not inclusive of all specific content that you could include in a data meeting.)

Before the Meeting	
Data Meeting Protocol Steps	*Example: Engaging Stakeholders With State Data*
Determine the Objective	A state education agency (SEA) has a priority focus on improving graduation rates. In the review of data, the SEA identified some trends over time but is struggling to determine the reasons students are not graduating on time. The SEA decided to establish a Work Group, led by key staff from the special education and general education departments, to conduct a root cause analysis and determine evidence-based solutions for improving graduation rates. As a first step, the SEA will hold a preliminary data meeting inviting a broad group of stakeholders to review the data and provide input related to relevant barriers and challenges. An SEA staff member serving as the protocol lead is coordinating the meeting. SEA staff used the *Before the Meeting Planning Document* to collect their thoughts about planning for this meeting. The SEA group identified three objectives for the meeting: • Introduce stakeholders to graduation data, including data for students with disabilities. • Gain a clearer understanding of the barriers and challenges that prevent students with disabilities in the state from graduating within 4 years. • Identify key stakeholders to participate in subsequent activities of the Graduation Work Group.
Identify the Data	Graduation data were available for the preceding 12 years, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, disability category, and local education agency (LEA). After looking at the available data, the SEA decided to share state-level graduation rate trend data for years 2008–2017 for all students and students with disabilities, as well as state-level graduation rates for students with disabilities, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and disability category for 2017. SEA staff also conducted a literature review on barriers to graduation and mitigating factors and decided to present a summary of the barriers and challenges the research suggested in addition to the quantitative data to stakeholders during the data meeting.

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Identify Participants and Key Responsibilities	**Identify Participants.** The SEA staff discussed which stakeholder voices they needed to include in the discussion and documented their rationale and decisions in their planning notes. In addition to the SEA staff making up the planning group, the SEA staff invited additional SEA staff: • additional special education department staff; • additional general education, curriculum, and instruction staff; • an *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) team member; • English Learner consultant; and • Title I consultant. The planning group invited other key stakeholders from across the state: • special education and general education teachers, school and district leadership, and other school district staff; • students, parents, and members of family support groups; • members of disability advocacy groups; • member of child and family-serving agencies (mental health, social services, juvenile justice); and • community partners (community service and faith-based organizations). **Key Responsibilities.** In addition to the protocol lead, SEA staff took on roles for the meeting including • facilitator, • notetaker; and • timekeeper. The SEA invited stakeholders to be active participants in the data meeting, without added responsibilities, allowing them the opportunity to observe the data and provide their input based on their experiences.
Organize the Data to Present	The protocol lead selected and presented the data in simple visualizations to show state-level graduation rates in multiple ways across the key areas of disaggregation: • Trends in the graduation data over time from 2008 to 2017 for students with disabilities (SWDs), chart 1; and • How these data look when the SEA disaggregated them by race/ethnicity and disability category for the most recent data year (2017), charts 2 and 3.

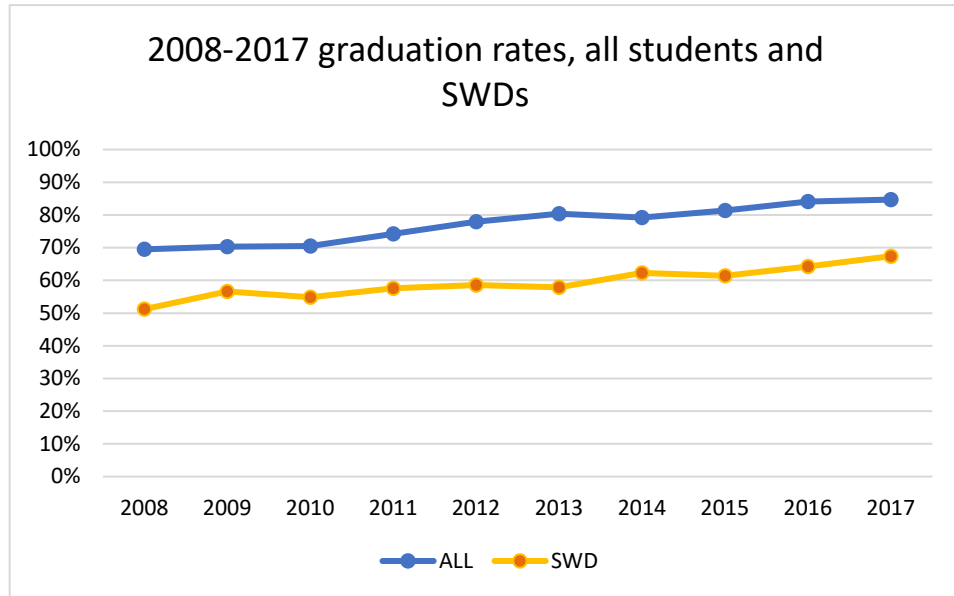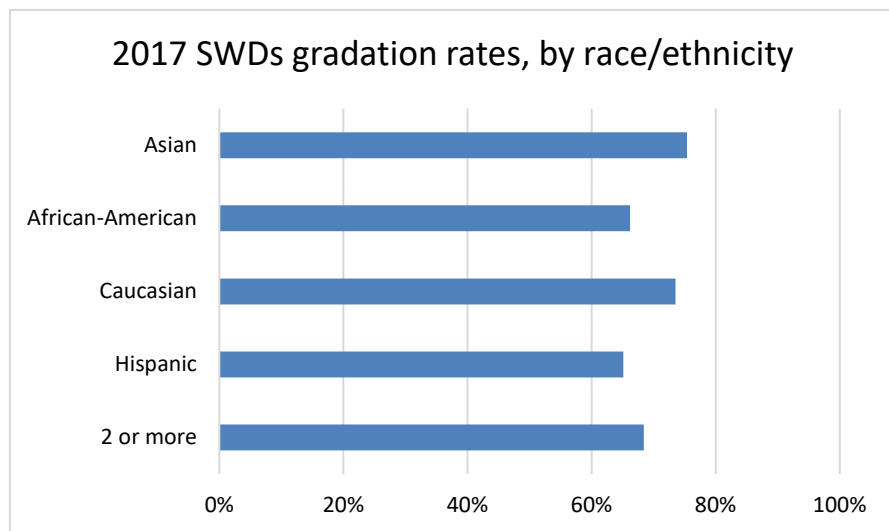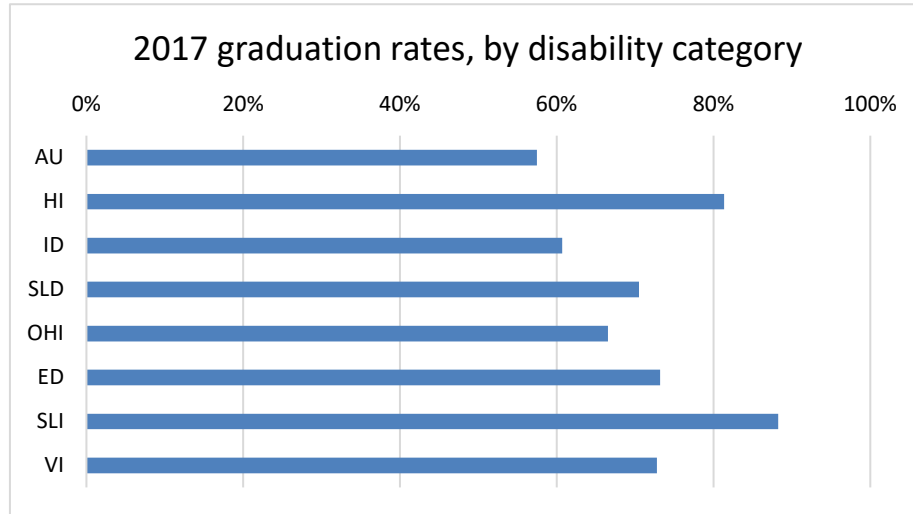| Before the Meeting	
Data Meeting Protocol Steps	**Example: Engaging Stakeholders With State Data**
Organize the Data to Present (continued)	Chart 1 **2008-2017 graduation rates, all students and SWDs** *(line chart: ALL and SWD graduation rates, 2008–2017. ALL rises from ~69% in 2008 to ~85% in 2017; SWD rises from ~51% in 2008 to ~67% in 2017.)* Legend: ALL, SWD Chart 2 **2017 SWDs gradation rates, by race/ethnicity** *(horizontal bar chart: Asian ~75%, African-American ~66%, Caucasian ~73%, Hispanic ~65%, 2 or more ~68%; x-axis 0% to 100%)*

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Organize the Data to Present (continued)	Chart 3 **2017 graduation rates, by disability category** _(bar chart: categories AU, HI, ID, SLD, OHI, ED, SLI, VI shown with horizontal bars ranging across a 0%–100% axis)_ The protocol lead also organized the list of barriers and challenges the SEA identified in graduation and dropout studies into a summary document, with space available for meeting participants to note comments and responses related to the barriers and challenges.
Prepare and Distribute the Agenda	The protocol lead created both participant and process agendas (see _Data Meeting Templates_). The participant agenda included - location, - start and end times; - meeting objectives; and - contact information for additional information. The process agenda included - process to be used for each agenda item, with prompts to remind the facilitator of key information to highlight; - anticipated time frame for each agenda item activity; - suggested materials, such as – chart paper and markers; – internet-connected computer, data projector, and screen; – copies of graduation data for participants; and – copies of list of barriers and challenges to high school graduation from the research. The protocol lead determined that he or she would not send data in advance in order to provide context and answer any questions for stakeholders during their initial viewing of the data. Protocol lead emailed the participant agenda to participants with their invitation to the data meeting a month before the event.

During the Meeting	
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Do Introductions and Review Key Messages	The meeting facilitator began the meeting by having participants introduce themselves, including how they were connected to education. In addition, the facilitator assessed the knowledge of the group by having participants rate their familiarity with graduation data by using a "Fist to Five" strategy, in which a fist indicated no familiarity, three fingers represented partial understanding with a need for further clarification, and an open hand indicated complete understanding. The facilitator shared the meeting objectives as well as three key messages: • The SEA has been reviewing data related to graduation. • Improving graduation rates is a priority. • The SEA desired stakeholder input about these graduation data to assist the state in interpreting the data and determining next steps.
Present the Data	The facilitator presented the data and shared important information: • These graduation data were from 2008 to 2017 and taken from state submissions to ED*Facts* and the Consolidated State Performance Report. • The data represented the percentage of students who graduated in 4 years with a regular high school diploma. • The blue line represented graduation rates for all students. • The orange line represented graduation rates for students with disabilities. • The data for "all students" included students with disabilities (it is not "all other students"); including students with disabilities depressed the graduation rate for all students. Stakeholders viewed color graphs that the facilitator projected and received paper copies of the graphs for later reference. Stakeholders also received paper copies of the organized information on research about graduation and reasons students drop out.
Discuss Observations of the Data	Once the facilitator answered any participant questions about the data presented, the facilitator engaged the group in some large group discussion to prompt their observations: • What do you see? • What are your initial thoughts and reactions? • Are there particular data that catch your attention? • How is this what you expected to see? How is this different from what was expected? Responses included the identification of a persistent trend: students with disabilities have graduated at lower rates for the last 10 years. The gap in graduation rates was steady at about 18 percentage points over this period.

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Discuss Interpretations of the Data	The facilitator prompted stakeholders to interpret the graduation data from their perspectives, asking stakeholders: What do the data tell you? The facilitator also prompted participants to share feedback about how the summarized research reflected the issues stakeholders were seeing within the state. In small groups, stakeholders discussed the graduation data and summary of current research related to graduation and identified, from their experiences, the barriers and challenges preventing students with disabilities from graduating within 4 years. Groups recorded their interpretations on chart paper.
Discuss Implications of the Data	Given the groups' interpretations of the graduation data and barriers and challenges to graduation, the facilitator prompted stakeholders to consider implications: ● What did you learn about the issue? ● What are the implications for the work at the state, district, school, and community levels? ● What are the implications for subsequent activities of the Graduation Work Group? The notetaker recorded implications discussed by the group.
Determine Next Steps for the Group	The group identified possible next steps as well as specific activities for the Graduation Work Group. The facilitator asked stakeholders to consider, based on the potential next steps they identified, who would be willing to participate in the subsequent activities of the Graduation Work Group. The facilitator told meeting participants that the protocol lead would summarize and distribute information and ideas from the day's discussion to all.
Reflect on the Meeting's Effectiveness	As the meeting closed, the facilitator asked stakeholders to share what went well during the activity as well as any suggestions they had for improving future similar activities. The facilitator provided contact information for the protocol lead should participants want to speak individually or send further feedback.

After the Meeting	
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Distribute Notes From the Protocol Process	After the meeting, the protocol lead reviewed and sent summary notes from the group discussion to all meeting participants, along with the outline of recommendations and next steps.
Confirm Next Steps and Timeline for Additional Actions, as Appropriate	Using the *Follow-up Checklist*, SEA staff debriefed on key outcomes of the meeting and discussed next steps for follow-up communication with participants. They identified key stakeholders to participate in subsequent activities of the Graduation Work Group and sent specific information to those individuals regarding next steps for the Work Group. SEA staff also determined that, though they might not assemble this group again, there would be value in keeping the remaining stakeholders updated on the status of the work. The SEA discussed opportunities to add information to the existing department updates to keep stakeholders engaged in graduation rate data.