

# DATA BACKPACKS TO POWER PERSONALIZATION AND PROTECT PRIVACY

For more information, see the full report “Data Backpacks: Portable Records & Learner Profiles,” available at: <http://digitallearningnow.com/policy/publications/smart-series/>



A series of interactive papers that provides specific guidance regarding the adoption of higher standards and quality assessments focusing on the shift to personal digital learning.



## DATA BACKPACKS: PORTABLE RECORDS & LEARNER PROFILES

<b>2015</b>		The Shift From Cohorts to Competency	Funding Students, Options, and Achievement	Improving Conditions and Careers: How Blended Learning Can Improve the Teaching Profession
Online Learning: Myths, Reality & Promise	Blended Learning Implementation Guide 3.0	Smart Series Guide to Edtech Procurement	Personalizing and Guiding College & Career Readiness	Using Prizes and Pull Mechanisms to Boost Learning







## What's wrong with the current system?

**1** The current official transcripts do not provide enough information to allow teachers to personalize learning from the first day of school. Students arrive into each new grade or school with little or no information, requiring every teacher to essentially start from scratch to build an understanding of each student's needs and capabilities. Most information is summative in nature and gives teachers little insight into the learner's individual strengths and weaknesses over time.

**2** Customized learning for college and career readiness requires an enhanced and expanded **Learner Profile**. Learner Profiles are needed for differentiated instruction at the most basic level, and particularly for systematic methods such as Response to Intervention (RTI). Next generation adaptive platforms enhance instructional practice with smart recommendation engines that are based on a comprehensive profile of each student. This expanded Learner Profile portrays a holistic view of the student's unique learning preferences that gives context to student progress, such as his or her best learning modality (such

as, "does the student learn best through visual representations in some cases and with hands-on learning in others?") and learning environment (such as, "does the student perform better in small-group or whole-class settings?"). The ability to better understand student progress toward goals through an expanded learner profile can boost student agency, motivation and persistence. Parent/guardian understanding of progress toward college and career readiness can help guide family decision-making.

**3** The system must balance the need for access to student data with privacy management tools that empower families. Parents who wish to access their children's student records are often met with complicated systems of forms, fees, and long waits. The current system is not set up to accommodate easy access to student data, and parents have little or no control over the information that is collected or shared about their students. There is no mechanism for parents to grant access to (and accept contributions from) multiple providers, but that can change through parent- managed learner profiles.

## Imagine...

What if students came to each course or classroom with a **data backpack** about their learning levels, preferences, motivations, and personal accomplishments?

How would this improve each teacher's ability to **tailor learning** to meet the needs of individual students?

What if parents and students could **easily access** their child's records to share the information with afterschool providers of their choosing?

How would all of the **personalization** this affords add up to **deeper learning** and improved **college and career readiness**?

## It's possible...

**Data Backpack:** an expanded common electronic student record that follows students through every transition—grade to grade and school to school. Each student's Data Backpack would be populated by a set of common elements for all students at a new minimum level.

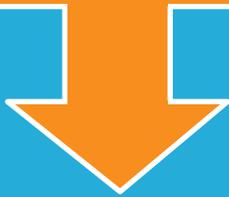
**Learner Profile:** building on the "official transcript" of the data backpack to provide additional clues that unlock learner needs, preferences, and potential. The components of each student's Learner Profile could be customized based on student needs, platform data requirements, and family decisions.

## Recommendations to Power Personalization

**Personalized  
Learning  
*From Day One***



**Personalized  
Learning  
*To College and  
Career Readiness***

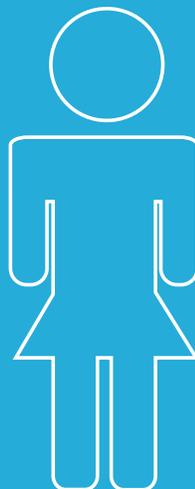


### Student Data Backpack

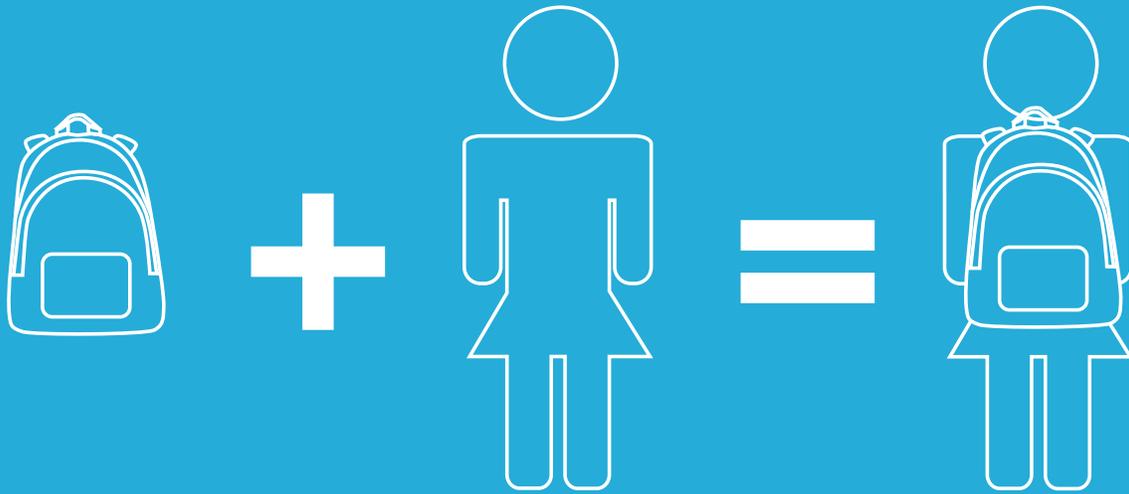


- Demographic data
- Standards-based gradebook (computer and teacher entered items)
- Grades and transcript data (for secondary students)
- Portfolio of personal bests (e.g., current writing sample)
- State testing data
- Attendance and behavior data
- Supplementary student supports

### Expanded Learner Profile



- Expanded achievement data
- Motivational profile that predicts persistence and performance
- A narrative description of student assets and challenges
- Recognitions and badges
- Full portfolio of student work
- Student goal statements
- College and career readiness tracker
  
- Optional Additions to Profile:
- Non-cognitive variables
- Self-management skills
- Behavior and character education
- Record of community service



We believe the Student Data Backpack and Expanded Learner Profile address both the potential of student data to personalize learning and a path to protecting student information.

**The Data Backpack ensures that personalized learning begins on day one.**

**The Learner Profile powers a personalized pathway toward college and career readiness.**

Customized learning, informed by enhanced and expanded student data, will boost motivation and achievement—keeping more students on track for college and career readiness.

But, beyond describing a vision we must explore important implementation challenges

that weigh heavily on the field. These issues include clarifying ownership of student data, addressing technical and translational issues, acknowledging collaboration concerns and considering potential unintended consequences. Making the Data Backpack and Learner Profile a reality for every child in America will require bringing multiple stakeholders together to adopt this approach as well as advancing this model in a way that builds in security and privacy protections up front to [build trust](#) with teachers, students, and parents.

**This is not just a huge problem to solve, but a huge opportunity to seize.**



**See [Data Backpacks: Portable Records & Learner Profiles](#) for more information such as:**

---

- the potential of student data to personalize learning and protect student privacy;
- a summary of current efforts such as learning analytics, profiles and platforms;
- implementation considerations and challenges; and
- policy solutions.

**Additional Student Data Privacy Resources from the [Foundation for Excellence in Education \(ExcellinEd\)](#) include:**

---

- The [Student Data Privacy, Accessibility and Transparency Act](#), this model legislation built on the fundamental principles, provides protections to ensure student data is used responsibly, by addressing data collected by the government, data collected by vendors and parental access to their child’s data. This model was recently used by Georgia lawmakers to craft legislation that unanimously passed the House and Senate and ultimately signed into law.
- [Building a Trusted Environment: a Snapshot of State Laws on Student Data Use, Privacy and Security](#) serves as a resource for policymakers and advocacy organizations as they examine the wide-variety of state-specific data privacy practices from across the country and work to find the right balance in their state.
- An online course “[Data Privacy? Get Schooled.](#)” that discusses the value of data and offers recommendations for safeguarding student data while using it to improve student success.