Plenary Session III: 
What’s Up at WICHE? An Update on WICHE’s Multistate Data Exchange

Spurred on in part by federal investment or grant requirements, many states around the nation are working to link their K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data in order to permit a much richer analyses of the development of human capital and to better target policies and practices. But as long as states look only to their own students and workers and don’t take into account the mobility of individuals among states, they will have a limited picture of how educational investments are related to the deployment of human capital to meet their workforce needs. Linked longitudinal data from multiple states within a region provides a much more comprehensive set of data for analyzing the production of educated talent and how it meets regional workforce needs.

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE has embarked on a project entitled Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange. The goal of the project is to pilot a data exchange among several states – initially, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Hawai’i – and to build towards a sustainable resource among these four and potentially other states. This session will address our progress to date. Pending our participating states’ review, we also hope to feature preliminary findings from the initial attempt at creating a combined data set. As the most comprehensive effort to link education and workforce data yet undertaken, this project has the potential to inform policymakers and practitioners over and above what current linked data (based principally on data found within a single state) can do.

Speaker: Brian Prescott, director of policy research, WICHE

Biographical Information on the Speaker

Brian T. Prescott is the director of policy research in the Policy Analysis and Research unit at the WICHE. He comanages the Policy Analysis and Research unit, with primary responsibility for obtaining and analyzing education and workforce data with public policy relevance. Author, with Peace Bransberger, of the most recent edition of Knocking at the College Door, WICHE’s widely used projections of high school graduates by state and race/ethnicity, he also has experience working with states on financial aid redesign, access and success, and data systems development. Prescott earned his Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Virginia.