



# STRATEGIC DATA PROJECT

## Transform Your Data Strategy: Partner with Us

Education agencies have more data than ever. But decision-making to improve student outcomes requires more than data—*it requires evidence*. To extract meaning from data, education leaders need the **right people** to organize, analyze, and use that data; the **right training** to guide them in asking and answering critical questions; and the **right tools and resources** to make organizational data use sustainable.

The **Strategic Data Project (SDP)**, a program of the **Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University**, works with school systems and education organizations to transform data use and improve student outcomes. Through our **SDP Fellowship program**, we find and develop talented leaders who will elevate your organization's use of data to inform decision-making with evidence.

### IMPACT AREAS

Data Governance and Management

Evidence-Driven Strategic Planning

Analysis and Evaluation

Predictive Modeling

Data Visualization and Dashboard Design

Data Culture and Communication

### BUILD YOUR DATA DREAM TEAM

We collaborate with partner organizations to help them:

#### Increase Data-Use Capacity

Partners hire our data fellows—recruited and screened by Harvard-affiliated researchers for our two-year fellowship program—or they enroll one or more of their own employees as agency fellows to receive tools and training to support the organization's needs.

#### Advance a Critical Initiative

Advised by renowned faculty and mentors, data and agency fellows carry out a transformative data project specific to our partner's strategic priorities. This work results in action-oriented insights to aid practitioners and policymakers in decision-making.

#### Join a Community of Experts

At multiple in-person workshops, partners and fellows have access to a growing network of education leaders, data strategists, and researchers, who exchange best practices, rigorous findings, statistical code, and ideas with one common aim: help all students succeed.

# SDP FELLOWS ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Fellows come from diverse professional backgrounds but share an interest in effecting change in education organizations and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of students across the country. Our partners can **choose from two fellowship models**:

## Model 1: Host a data fellow, recruited and matched for your organization

**Data fellows** are recruited by SDP via a competitive nationwide search. They are matched to an SDP partner organization where they serve as full-time, paid, agency employees for two years. They bring impressive credentials in statistics, data management, and research methods.



### Data Fellow

## ALEX SPURRIER

*Kentucky Department of Education*

**Impact:** Alex built new tools and implemented systems to develop and support more efficient and collaborative analysis. The Kentucky team now produces highly actionable research with greater speed, quality, and reproducibility. In his second year as a fellow, Alex was singled out for commendation by the Kentucky Board of Education.

## Model 2: Enroll one of your own employees as an agency fellow

**Agency fellows** are current employees who have been identified as analytic leaders in their agency. They are the rising stars of their organization who, with additional training and attention, will take on leadership roles.



### Agency Fellow

## JANELL CHERY

*Tulsa, Oklahoma*

**Impact:** In 2015, only 47% of Tulsa area high school senior students were completing the FAFSA, an indicator of college enrollment. Janell implemented a two-year continuous improvement study using various interventions, resulting in a 12% increase in the number of FAFSA forms completed. Tulsa now has evidence these strategies work to help more students go to college.



## RECRUITING AND SELECTING TALENTED DATA FELLOWS

The **SDP Fellowship** is a comprehensive two-year professional development program that provides analytic skill-building and leadership training, while supporting knowledge growth in education policy and practice. Partners may host one or more data fellows recruited by SDP and matched to their needs, or enroll one or more of their own talented employees as an agency fellow. Partners and fellows participate in trainings, work on a project specific to your organization's needs with support from a faculty advisor, and have access to online communities and resources. Before being admitted, **data fellow** candidates must successfully complete a rigorous selection process:



SDP conducts a nationwide search for strong researchers and analysts with a passion for education.



Candidates who demonstrate promise prepare a memo in response to a challenging analytic problem for a phone case interview.



Successful candidates are invited to present findings to a room of Harvard researchers. They also participate in a live case challenge that tests their ability to solve problems.



Only following successful completion of the screening process do fellows interview with SDP partners.

## BENEFITS OF THE HARVARD SELECTION PROCESS

Organizations that partner with the SDP Fellowship program benefit from our thoughtful selection process without having to do the heavy lifting—but have power over final hiring decisions.

Partners are matched with innovative and forward-thinking fellows exhibiting technical expertise in quantitative analyses, excellent written and verbal communication skills, experience and insight in the field of education, passion to drive improvement, and an advanced degree. Our recruitment and selection process is highly discerning, admitting only 12% of applicants.

In addition to the immediate added capacity for data use, partners also gain a two-year job commitment from their fellow, high-quality professional development opportunities for their fellow and team, and a Harvard-affiliated research advisor.

SDP partners include more than 125 schools, systems, and education organizations working to transform the use of data in education to improve student achievement.



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“Knowing what strategies make a difference through the use of data has taken us from 34% to 54% of our students being college and career ready just two years later.”

—Karen Dodd, Kentucky Department of Education  
Learn more about our impact at [sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/our-impact](https://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/our-impact)

## BECOME AN SDP PARTNER

By participating in the SDP Fellowship program, partners will grow advanced analytic capacity, develop clear priorities and plans for data use and data systems, build organizational willingness to use data for decision-making, and uncover valuable insights about performance.

### PARTNER ELIGIBILITY

We're looking for organizations committed to using evidence for change. To date, SDP has partnered with over 125 education agencies, including state and local education agencies, charter management organizations, funders, and nonprofit organizations.

Ideal SDP partner organizations:

- are committed to the use of data to inform decisions and policy
- value the culture of data use
- have an ambitious data project in mind for an SDP Fellow

### PARTNER INVESTMENT

Whether you choose to host a data fellow who has been recruited and matched to your organization or to enroll one of your own employees as an agency fellow, a **partnership fee** supports the enrollment of your fellow in the SDP Fellowship training and advisory program.

Data Fellows, who are employed by your organization, earn a **salary between \$70,000–\$90,000 plus benefits**.

Ready to become a partner? Apply at [sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/apply](https://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/apply)

