CORE ELEMENT

5

Practitioners and the public are equipped to understand and leverage data.

CASE STUDY:
KENTUCKY

Kentucky Center for Statistics and Department of Education Data Partnership

In a high-quality career readiness data ecosystem, states do not report data for data's sake but rather to foster understanding and to spur users to action. Meeting these goals requires a thoughtful approach to designing and presenting career readiness data and a robust system of professional development, technical assistance and supports to ensure that practitioners understand how to use the data. Additionally, data elements are integrated into a state's communications strategy to tell a career readiness story.

The Kentucky Department of Education works in partnership with the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)[1] to collect career readiness data in the state and make the data available and accessible to the public. Then, the Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) works to ensure that practitioners and the public have the knowledge to understand and leverage the data to support high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE).
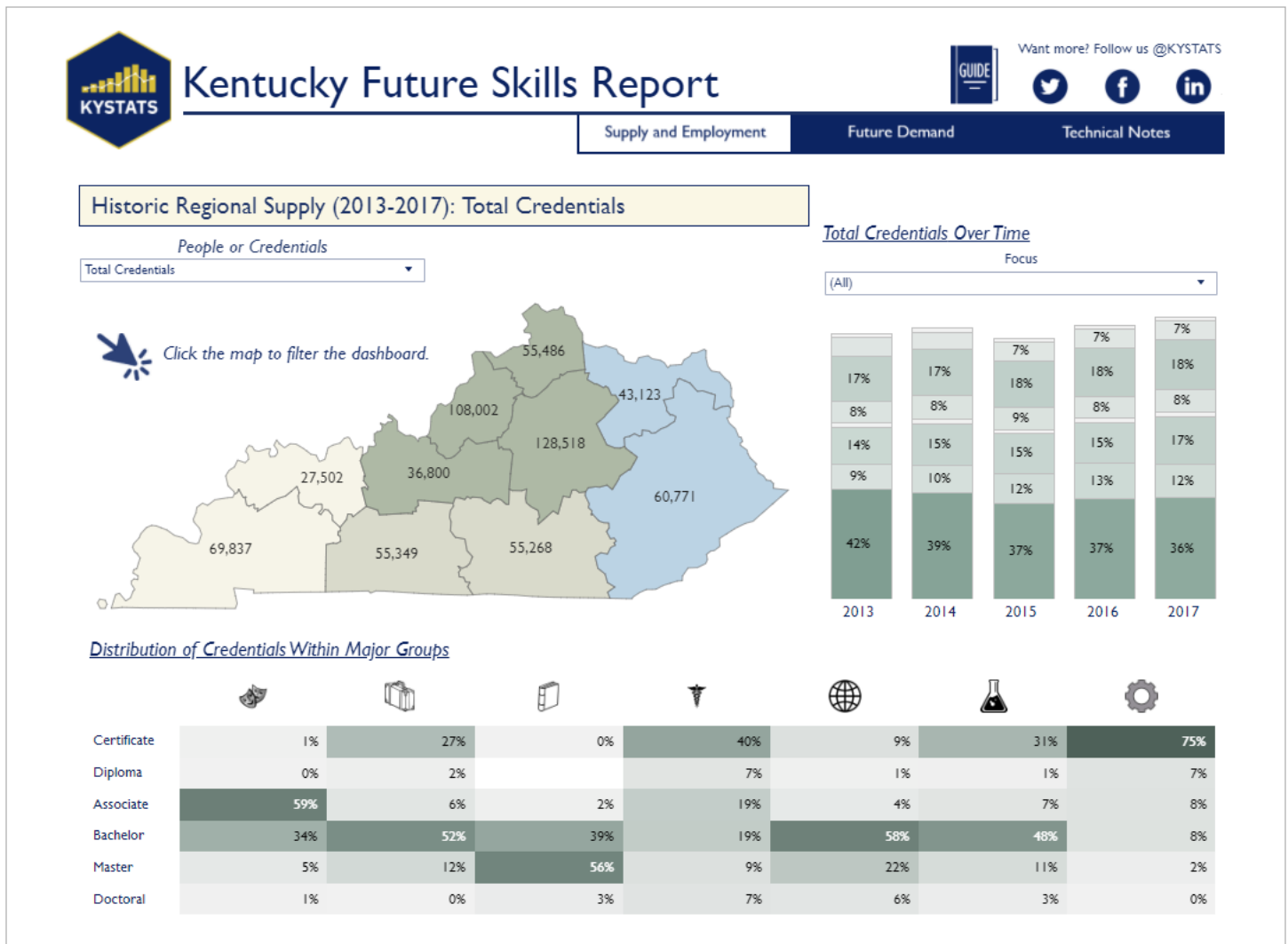
KYSTATS: Data Collectors and Reporters

KYSTATS collects and links learner-level data across Kentucky to evaluate education and workforce programs in the state. The agency uses this data to

develop reports and data dashboards; respond to research requests; and provide statistical analysis to help policymakers, practitioners and the general public make data-informed decisions. For example, the report shown below depicts the total number of credentials held by learners in the state of Kentucky over a four-year period. The data is organized by region (also called local workforce area). Users can interact with the report to learn the number of people who hold credentials in each region, the types of credentials held, the education programs leading to those credentials, and the postsecondary attainment of learners working in industries in which those credentials are valued. The report is accompanied by a guide that can support users as they explore the report.[2]

More Than Numbers: Using Data Literacy

While the focus of KYSTATS is to make data available and transparent to the public, the Department of Education's role is to train practitioners and the public on how to make sense of the data in a way that is meaningful and actionable. The OCTE team travels the state to deliver professional development and training activities at convenings throughout the year. At these events, OCTE staff teach CTE administrators, school counselors and teachers how they can use data at the school and classroom levels. As an example, OCTE organizes regional data sessions with practitioners on how they can analyze and interpret data, examine the root causes

Kentucky Future Skills Report

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Historic Regional Supply (2013-2017): Total Credentials

People or Credentials
Total Credentials

Click the map to filter the dashboard.

55,486
43,123
108,002
128,518
27,502
36,800
60,771
69,837
55,349
55,268

Total Credentials Over Time

Focus
(All)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
			7%	7%	7%
	17%	17%	18%	18%	18%
	8%	8%	9%	8%	8%
	14%	15%	15%	15%	17%
	9%	10%	12%	13%	12%
	42%	39%	37%	37%	36%

Distribution of Credentials Within Major Groups

Certificate	1%	27%	0%	40%	9%	31%	75%
Diploma	0%	2%		7%	1%	1%	7%
Associate	59%	6%	2%	19%	4%	7%	8%
Bachelor	34%	52%	39%	19%	58%	48%	8%
Master	5%	12%	56%	9%	22%	11%	2%
Doctoral	1%	0%	3%	7%	6%	3%	0%

of challenges they may be experiencing, and identify the academic standards that are the most challenging for learners.

Showing practitioners how to use the data to support learners is only half of OCTE's work. The other half is teaching local leaders and practitioners how to use the data to tell a story. Data can be used to challenge the stigmas associated with CTE and convince skeptics that CTE programs are valuable. For example, OCTE uses data to communicate the value of CTE by comparing the percentage of CTE pathway completers who demonstrate college and career readiness to the percentage of non-CTE completers. Kentucky's data shows that that CTE completers outperform nearly every other population on academic benchmarks.

Recognizing that not every state has a KYSTATS to support its work, OCTE advises that any state can leverage its data to tell a story and support practitioners and the public in making data-informed decisions. One of the first steps state leaders can take is to collaborate with other agencies and departments to formally share data through data sharing agreements. Data collaboration is important to tell the story about programs and learner outcomes. The data story should not only demonstrate that programs are helping learners pass tests but also tell how the programs are helping learners be successful in life. Sharing and connecting data and presenting data

in a way that is simple and easy to understand – a visual format using charts, graphs and pointed summaries – can help tell that story.[3]

Conclusion

In a high-quality career readiness data ecosystem, states not only report data to the public but also ensure that practitioners and the public are able to easily access, understand and act on the data. The partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education and KYSTATS allows the public to access many data points that are important to making data-informed decisions. OCTE then teaches practitioners and local CTE leaders how to make sense of the data, respond to what they see in the data, and use the data to tell a story about the value of CTE.

NOTES

[1] Kentucky Center for Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://kystats.ky.gov/

[2] Kentucky Center for Statistics. (2019). *2019 Kentucky future skills report.* Retrieved from https://kystats.ky.gov/Content/Reports/2019_KFSR_TechnicalNotes.pdf

[3] For more information, see Advance CTE. (2020). *Beyond the Numbers: A toolkit for communicating CTE data.* Retrieved from https://careertech.org/resource/beyond-numbers-toolkit-communicating-CTE-data