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# Student Information Portal Assessment

## The “SIPA” Project

Southern  
Regional  
Education  
Board

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# Thank You...

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# Purpose of the Project

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SIPA is designed to study state, regional and national level student information portals promoting college access. The overarching goal is to collect information about these portals; to define, document, and categorize the findings; to evaluate the effectiveness of state, regional and selected national portals; and to offer recommendations from these findings for the future development and support of portals.

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# Portal Selection Criteria

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- Site must pertain to multiple institutions (for example site contains information on all institutions in state, or all public institutions, etc.)
- Site must focus on college access (can include focus on traditional high school/college student, graduate student and/or adult learner/degree completion)
- Site must provide at least one service beyond general information on going to college (such as online applications or high school course planning)
- Institutional sites linked from SHEEO agencies or state sites simply were excluded
- Sites could not be commercial (such as [www.u101.com](http://www.u101.com) or [www.CollegeBound.net](http://www.CollegeBound.net))

# Our Portal “N” = 81

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- Includes...
- Statewide sites (can include all institutions, statewide public, statewide private, statewide, two year, etc.); several states with multiple portals
- Private/independent college association sites
- National sites (Methodist, Baptist, Historically Black Universities, etc.)
- Portals were not found for Idaho, North Dakota, Wyoming and Washington, D.C.

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# Portal Categories

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- Portals were reviewed and mined for information themes and categories.
- **10** categories were established and then further divided into sub-categories if necessary.
- Each category or sub-category was then organized into appropriate variables according to the information available on the site.

**115 Variables** we are studying

# Portal Categories

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Categories include:

- Portal Configuration Data (9)
- Middle Grades and High School Planning (12)
- College Pre-planning (24)
- College Admission (10)
- Career Planning (14)
- Financial Aid (15)

# Portal Categories Continued

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- In-College Services (9)
- Other Student Populations (6)
- Distance/Online Learning (5)
- Other (includes any other information that does not relate directly to other categories) (11)

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# Portal Configuration

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- 9 Variables
  - Account Creation
  - Other Language Translations
  - Technical FAQ
  - Handicapped access
  - Portal Services during College
  - Portal Services after College

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# Middle Grades and High School Planning

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- 12 variables
  - Career Information for Middle Grades Students
  - College Aspirations for Middle Grades
  - Personalized Academic Planner
  - College Planning Timeline
  - Information on Dual Enrollment
  - Events/College Fairs
  - Add Your Advisor or Counselor

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# College Pre-Planning

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- 24 variables that apply directly to college admissions (as compared to planning)
  - College Admissions Test Preparation
  - Going to College Overview
  - College Profiles
  - College Criteria Search
  - College Cost Information
  - First Year Transition
  - Student Life

# College Admission

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- 10 Variables
  - General Application Procedures
  - Online Applications (link to the institution's website application)
  - Online Applications (one application that can be submitted to many institutions)
  - Third Party Application Service
  - High School Transcript Service
  - Application Submission Confirmation
  - Application Tracking
  - Application Fee Payment Transmittal

# Career Planning

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- 14 variables
  - General Career Information
  - Career Lists
  - Career Information for Parents
  - Career Self-Assessment Tools
  - State Level Career Data
  - Information on State-Designated “High Need” Careers
  - Resume Tools

# Financial Aid

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- 15 variables
  - Financial Aid Overview
  - Federal Financial Aid Information (loans, grants, scholarships)
  - State Financial Aid Information (loans, grants, scholarships)
  - Scholarship Search
  - College Savings Plans
  - Financial Aid/Loan Calculators
  - Link to FAFSA
  - FAFSA Data Transfer (Transfers applicable data from portal profile to FAFSA Application)

# In-College Services

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- 9 variables
  - Transfer Planning/Articulation Tools
  - General Transfer Student Information
  - Links to Other State Sites/Tools on Transfer Credit
  - College-to-College Transcript Services
  - Developmental/Remediation Services

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# Other Students Populations

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- 6 variables
  - High School Diploma/GED
  - Adult Learners
  - Degree Completion
  - Special Populations
  - Graduate Education

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# Distance/Online Learning

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- 5 variables
  - Distance/e-learning
  - Online course/program catalog

# Other

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- 11 Variables
  - Information for School Counselors
  - Information for Parents
  - Multi-Media Information
  - Workforce Development Information
  - Prior Learning Assessment
  - News or “What’s New” Feature
  - Post-college Information
  - Web 2.0 Technologies (Blogs, Chats, etc.)

# Each Variable

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- Classified as a...
- Tool
  - Performs a function for the user on the portal that provides individuals results which can be retained
- Service
  - Allows a user to interact with information on the portal but does not retain results for later use
- Information
  - Any general static textual or graphic content

# CACG Network

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- Your Six State Network...
  - Alaska
  - Nevada
  - North Dakota
  - Texas
  - Washington
  - Wyoming
- North Dakota and Wyoming – unable to locate a portal
- Alaska has not yet responded to survey
- Nevada, Texas and Washington reported on 7 portals
- Washington and Nevada also reported in on two portals that were identified that belong to a private vendor and are not affiliated with state agencies.

# Preliminary Findings

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- Series of opinion questions
- Respondents asked to rate as
  - Very Effective (3)
  - Effective (2)
  - Not Effective (1)
- Scores between above 2 positive
- Scores below 2 negative

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# Portal Goals

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- Provide easier access to information
  - All (2.5) CAGC (2.2)
- Increase # of students going to college
  - All (1.9) CAGC (1.8)
- Promotion of Higher Education Services
  - All (2.1) CAGC (0.5)
- Centralized information clearinghouse
  - All (2.3) CAGC (1.6)

# Portal Challenges

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- Funding
  - All (1.9) CAGC (1.9)
- Partnerships
  - All (1.7) CAGC (1.7)
- Marketing Awareness
  - All (2.0) CAGC (2.3)

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# Marketing Strategies

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- Online Advertising
  - All (2.3) CAGC (0.9)
- Mailings to parents
  - All (2.3) CAGC (0.6)
- Print Materials
  - All (2.2) CAGC (1.9) <highest>
- College Fairs
  - All (2.2) CAGC (1.6)
- Social Media (Facebook/Twitter)
  - All (2.1/1.8) CAGC (1.6/1.8)

# Institutional Participation

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- Most state portals
  - Include all in-state public institutions
    - Most optional/some required
  - Most in-state private institutions
    - Optional for private institutions
    - Private institution-focused portals do not include public institutions
  - Limited inclusion of proprietary institutions
  - Very limited inclusion of out-of-state institutions

# Portal Metrics

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- Page Views
- Site Visits
- Accounts Created
- Online Applications
- Institutional Participation
- Time spent on site
- Traffic origination points
- Applications Submitted
- Students with degree plans

# Transfer Information

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- Less than half of the respondents indicated they had transfer information
  - Majority simply provided information (not a tool or a service)
  - Information was general in nature
  - Some provided links to tools elsewhere
  - Several noted “in our plans...”
  - Very few with transcript services