



December 2020

Here's wishing you peace, health, and a [hot chocolate worthy of 2020](#).

Speaking of Health

Although some days it feels like we have been battling COVID19 for an eternity, it has been just ten months. And we have a vaccine. *Three* vaccines. All reporting an [effectiveness rate over 90%](#). It's a remarkable achievement.

How *did* this happen?

- We [shared data](#).
- We collaborated, established an [ecosystem](#) of scientists, researchers, and funders across sectors, institutions, and geographies, and worked [toward a common goal](#).
- We asked people to volunteer for trials and [they did](#). (And yes, [building trust in the vaccines themselves](#) will require [additional effort](#).)

In a wonderfully [hopeful post](#) we recommend you read immediately, Azeem Azhar asks, "What if every day was a pandemic day?" He imagines [collaboration](#) on this scale aimed at a host of similarly complex challenges. Like climate change. Or racial equity. Or our [post-COVID economic recovery](#). Go ahead and take a look at the post. We'll wait.

Goings-On in Workforce & Data

Here's some of what's on our radar in the coming weeks and early in 2021:

- **December 2, 2020: Bureau of Labor Statistics Shares 10-Year Post-COVID Projections.** This one already happened, so you'll be able to access the recording [here](#) in the next few days.
- **December 9, 2020: WDQI Holiday Pair & Share Event.** We're planning a 60-minute event comprising two peer-to-peer conversations: one on data infrastructure and one on data quality. Come share your longitudinal data system (LDS) accomplishments and challenges! No presentation, just sharing. #BYOHotChocolate
- **January 8, 2021: Deadline for applications to present as part of Data & Society's workshop on Trust and Doubt in Public Sector Data Infrastructures.** Interested in sharing what you know? [Data & Society](#) will convene researchers working on combining

government data from multiple sources, data infrastructure, and perspectives on data legitimacy. The workshop is scheduled for March 25, 2021. Work on the research side?

[Apply to present.](#)

- **February 17-18, 2021: Data on Purpose** returns (online). Dubbed "Democracy, Civil Society, and Digital Technology," the event will feature data scientists and researchers, policymakers, nonprofit, foundation, and business leaders, and stakeholders galore—all sharing their insights on data, in the lake and in the wild. 😊 Register [here](#).
- **March 2-5, 2021: Data for Evidence-Based Policy Collaboration Workshop.** Cosponsored by the [Coleridge Initiative](#), the [Ohio State University](#), and [NASWA](#), the event will host state, federal, and philanthropic data leaders sharing strategies for advancing solutions to the COVID19 jobs crisis and beyond. These are our people. [Register here](#).

#ICYMI

- **Connecticut, Illinois & Kentucky!** Thanks for doing us proud as part of the [2020 SLDS Best Practices Conference](#) last month! Rave reviews all around. The session was not recorded so we'll look forward to hosting you luminaries in a future WDQI webinar. 🙏
- The recording, transcript, and slidedeck from our October webinar, **Apples, Oranges & Employment Data: Toward Standardization and Better Quality**, are up on the [WDQI Community of Practice](#).
- The Employment and Training Administration's own [#COVID19 response resources and FAQs](#) is available and continually updated just for you.

Last But Not Least

Finally, our winner in the category of "Most Creative Use of Evidence-Based Methods" goes to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) for its heroic effort to identify the **2020 Word of the Year**. Lockdown? COVID19? BLM? *Anthropause*? Yes! All of these and more. In 2020, the OED cried uncle and selected a whole collection in a range of categories. The BBC [explains](#).

Whew. We wish you a calm, healthy, and reflective holiday season. Next month, we will be looking at 2020 in the rearview mirror, an occasion to (safely) celebrate.

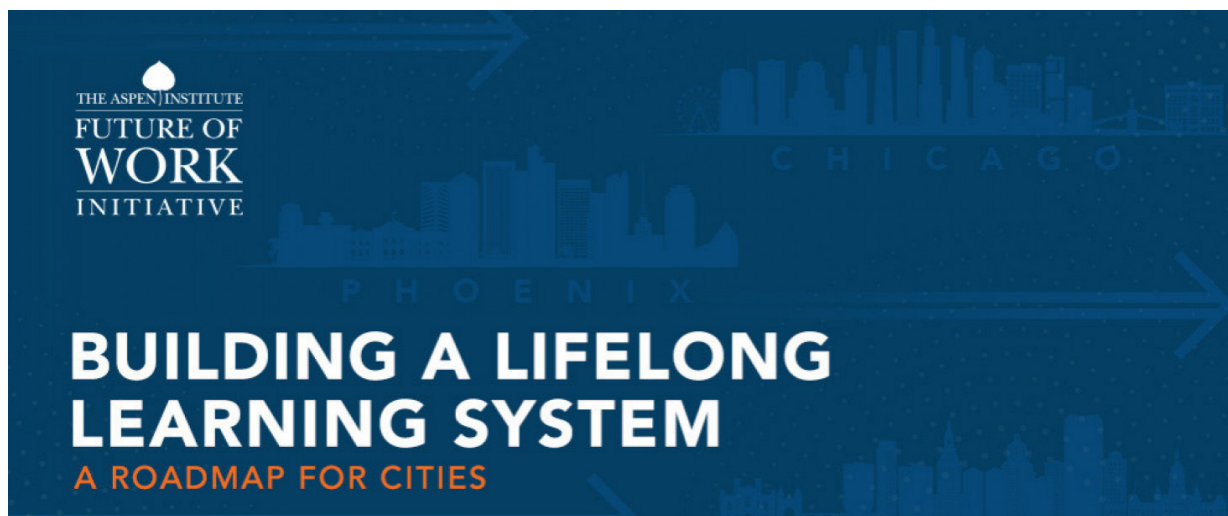
Take care of each other out there.



Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff), Editor

Maureen Sarver (@maureensarver), **Caitlin Grey** & the **SPR/BrightHive Support Team**

One Thing



Challenge #1: Access to Reliable Data

A new roadmap for recovery and a discussion with stakeholders from a social enterprise, a community college, and state and local governments about learning systems and the need for connected data to help address long-standing workforce challenges and boost COVID19 recovery. Think of it as a focus group with your partners and customers.

 aspeninstitute.org

Two More Things



CENTER FOR EDUCATION
CONSUMER INSIGHTS™

Public Viewpoint: COVID-19 Work and Education Survey

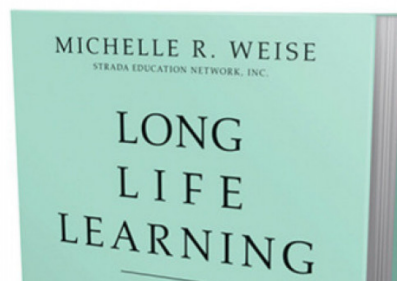
Confidence in Education's Promise: Perspectives on Access and Barriers to Good Jobs

Nov. 12, 2020

Half of Americans Believe a Good Job is Out of Reach

We often feature Strada's surveys in newsletters and webinars. This new data suggests a dire need to offer clearer pathways for students and workers who feel stuck. Data is the foundation of these, as [this accompanying webinar](#) makes plain. Now that we know [millions already have the skills to advance](#), the time is now.

 stradaeducation.org



Preparing for Jobs That Don't Even Exist Yet

We confess to being a bit "meh" at the brand "Lifelong Learning" and *love* this upending—Long Life Learning indeed. We look forward to digging into some of the ideas Michelle shared during our September webinar, now that her new book tops our holiday reading list. Our friends at [@WorkingNation](#) offer a trailer in form of a podcast [here](#).

 stradaeducation.org

Resources for the New Now

Competencies Employers Want

It's time to leave "soft skills" behind. That's the label we once used to describe a whole range of non-technical skills and non-cognitive competencies. Our friends at Georgetown's [Center on Education and the Workforce](https://cew.georgetown.edu) (CEW) have honed the list to the five that yield the highest economic rewards. Problem-solving and complex thinking are on that list. We're in the competency camp too.

 cew.georgetown.edu

How States Can Lend Clarity to the Credential Market

As recovery efforts accelerate next year, states preparing for a rise in demand for short-term credential programs leading to good jobs find that the market is messy. Credential Engine's State Policy Partnership seeks to help. Its new roadmap puts data systems at the heart of a new call to action. More context is provided in the [recording](#) of the partnership's November convening.

 credentialengine.org

Have a Look: CA, CO, IL, IN & NJ

Work on New 'Cradle to Career' Data System Accelerates

California! Have you been holding out on us? You have clearly been working hard on legislation and on cultivating a long list of heavy-weight friends and supporters. Other states might be keen to see the way partners describe the value of the LDS and the risks associated with delaying key investments to support it.

 edsources.org

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Purpose & Talent Development

When you click, you'll find the [Colorado Workforce Development Council's](#) new tool — a playbook aimed at employers, advocating data as a starting point for inclusive talent development. From there, you can access a vast array of posts and resources suited to our new now including a webinar on the [Talent Pipeline Report](#) launching next week. Hurray for longitudinal data!

 cwdc.colorado.gov

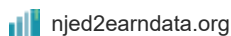
Migration (Data) Stories from the Garden State

New Jersey's LDS (Education-to-Earnings Data System) team has released this new

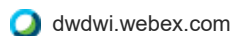
Hot off the . . . Presses?

Holy smokes Wisconsin! Thank you for sharing this terrific recording of your mid-point WDQI project convening, complete with 🎧.

report on student comings and goings. Findings are presented in data-story form—a blend of charts, graphs, images, and a strong narrative. The analysis was cut short due to COVID19 closures, but when data collection resumes, the state will be able to compare pre- and post-COVID patterns. A win for LDS.



For those who have struggled to explain WDQI (or LDS) to colleagues, state legislators, or grandparents, this is your new go-to resource. In fact, we challenge you to make it a meme. Record and send your own version and we'll share it here at #MakingBetterWork. You know what to do.



States Strive for Smarter Data Practices During the Pandemic

As states continue to be focused on data related to the COVID19 pandemic, officials are also becoming better stewards of data assets that can be used to improve policymaking and design more effective programs and services. This podcast episode features experts from Georgetown's [Beeck Center](#) and the State of Illinois. Listen and know you are among friends.



Have a Think

Report Outlines Route to Better Jobs, Wider Prosperity

MIT's Task Force on the Work of the Future summarizes over two years of research on technology and jobs. At the core of the task force's findings: a robot-driven jobs apocalypse is not on the immediate horizon and effective policy could boost job quality and enhance prosperity for workers, families, and communities. That is what we're all about.



Five Strategies for Advancing to the Next Generation of Evidence

Project Evident's *Next Generation of Evidence* campaign calls for a more equitable and effective evidence ecosystem, and sees five key opportunities for improvement. You might also like this [Evidence Toolkit](#) or their [crash-course](#) on open data policy. It's nice to have evidence-based friends.



Invest in Data to Solve Big Challenges

The Data Quality Campaign lays out opportunities for bold action to solve some of our country's largest data challenges and identifies key areas where the next administration can most productively invest.



Time-Out Treasures

COVID19 Safety Planning

You can use this site to mitigate virus transmission in different indoor spaces. Also, transparent choice architecture! The site works like a game. What if workforce data were presented in a similar way? [Choose-your-own-adventure](#) guided pathways?

 indoor-covid-safety.h...

Responsible Data Use Meets Graphic Art

We included a link to [@StoyanoJ](#) & [@FaalahArifKhan](#)'s amazing graphic novel in last month's edition of #MakingBetterWork, but the absence of visual representation did not do it justice. Also, now you have time to take a peek. HT [@Brighthiveio](#)

 dataresponsibly.githu...

Made a List, Checked it Twice: Go-To Holiday Movies

Because everyone needs a good holiday movie. Never more than this year. Enjoy.

 nytimes.com

#PDX Tree lighting & Singalong

A singalong in the city's Pioneer Square usually attracts thousands. This year? #Remote. The upside? We can share the fun with you. It's [Pink Martini](#). Who could say no?

 youtu.be

The #MBW Podcast

Our Very Own #WDQI #MakingBetterWork Podcast Now Has 20 Episodes!

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Search for **Making Better Work** on Google Play (a quirk of the platform).

Again, we hope these new communication channels will bring your work further into the public domain so that kindred spirits in different

parts of the public data ecosystem can find each other. It's a big job but somebody's got to do it. Why not us?

Information Wants to Be Shared

This is the 22nd edition of *#MakingBetterWork*, the perpetual beta newsletter of the longitudinal workforce data community.

We'd love your continued help in making it great (and your generosity of spirit when we don't quite get there). Here's our focus (always subject to change) going forward:

- **COVID-19** (until future notice)
- **Impact** (Products, legislation, key policy decisions, and more – what difference is WDQI making in your state, community?)
- **Governance** (In the words of one of our subject matter experts, "It's everything.")
- **Ecosystem** (How do we better align public data efforts and work with nonprofit, foundation, university, and other partners more effectively to address critical workforce and education issues? How do we do this consistently, ethically, and responsibly?)
- **Themes that run through WDQI events and activities:**
 - Federal legislative mandates (WIOA – and evaluation, HEA, Perkins, etc.)
 - Trends in training: non-degree credentials, work-based learning, apprenticeship, technology and distance learning, dual-systems, stackable credentials, etc.)
 - Future of Work – using data to help policymakers, institutional leaders, and the rest of us navigate it
 - #DataViz – so more people can understand, interact with, and use the data and tools we're all creating.

In case you've received this from a friend or colleague and don't know how to find us, we've provided our contact information below.

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Know someone who needs this newsletter? Forward it or send them here.