

National Forum on Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics

Update. John Q. Easton, July 27, 2014.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Lee for that introduction as well as for your leadership of the Forum this year.

As you know, the Forum is a major component of the National Cooperative Education Statistics System, established by the Hawkins-Stafford Education Improvement Amendments of 1988 (Public Law 100-297) to produce and maintain comparable and uniform education data in cooperation with the states. This responsibility is retained under the Education Science Reform Act of 2002. [SLIDE 2]

The Forum plays a unique role in facilitating collaborations between states, school districts, the Department of Education and other agencies. The Forum's goals for these collaborations are to address problems, develop resources, identify best practices, and consider new approaches to improving data collection and utility, all while remaining sensitive to privacy concerns and administrative burden. As a result, IES, NCES and the department as a whole depend on your collective expertise and perspectives to contribute to major activities such as the Common Education Data Standards, virtual education data, education data privacy, education data use and College and Career Ready education data collection.

In addition to your recent publication on School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED), I am aware of the large collection of products you have developed over the years. IES, NCES and I appreciate the work you do at the Forum.

I would also like to note how much we appreciate the Forum for inviting the RELs to become associate members. I know RELs Midwest and Northeast and Islands will present at PPI on “Predictors of College Readiness Using State Data” and on “Data Catalog Tool for College and Career Readiness Indicators” this week.

We would like to know your perspective on what is working with the RELS. In preparation for the next REL program competition, IES needs feedback about what is working well in the current REL contracts, what can be improved, and the kinds of resources and services related to data and research that are most needed by educators and policymakers. Please send feedback to Comments.REL@ed.gov by September 5, 2014. All responses received by this date will be considered during the development of the new competition.

NCES DATA COLLECTIONS: NEW INITIATIVES AND ONGOING SURVEYS

Now, I will talk about several new K-12 data collection initiatives at NCES and then I will highlight NCES school-based data collection activities planned for the next year. We understand that each of our school-based studies requires additional time on the part of teachers, administrators and students. Mindful of these demands, we are taking substantial steps to reduce burden in some of our ongoing studies. We are also

conducting a number of pilot and field tests involving small numbers of respondents that allow us to be confident that we are asking the right questions before launching a full scale data collection. We are excited by some of our new initiatives and hope that your will find them interesting.

NEW INITIATIVES:

1.) SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY (SCLS) [SLIDE 3]

Overview

As part of the Department's initiative to help schools "create safer and more nurturing school climates," the Office of Safe and Healthy Students provided funds to NCES to develop a school climate measurement platform. The School Climate Survey (SCLS) will provide valid and reliable measures of school climate for schools, school districts, and states. Cognitive testing is under way, and in the Winter and early Spring of 2015 we will field test the school climate measurement platform in 25 middle schools and 25 high schools.

The platform is targeted for release in the fall of 2015. It will be downloadable free of charge for schools, districts, and states to use to collect and process data, and to provide user-friendly school climate reports. Educational systems administering the survey can store the data locally on their own data systems if they would like to link the students' SCLS data with other data from student record systems. There will be include surveys for middle school students, high school students, teachers, non-instructional

staff and administrators. In the Winter and early Spring of 2016, NCES will survey a national sample of 500 schools to create nationally-representative school climate benchmark scores. By the Fall of 2016, the national benchmark scores will be added to the platform to enable comparisons between local and national scores.

Content

The SCLS is built around the Office of Safe and Healthy Students' model of school climate, created from current school climate research. It includes 13 topics within 3 domains of interest.

Engagement Domain

- *Cultural and linguistic competence*
- *Relationships*
- *Participation*

Safety Domain:

- *Emotional safety*
- *Physical safety*
- *Bullying/cyberbullying*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Emergency readiness/management*

Environment Domain

- *Physical environment*

- *Instructional environment*
- *Physical Health*
- *Mental Health*
- *Discipline*

Reporting

The school climate platform will provide domain and topic-level climate scores for schools administering the surveys. Administrators can examine these scores for the entire school, by grade level, race, or gender. Districts administering the survey will be able to disaggregate by school. States administering the survey will be able to disaggregate by schools and district. Item-level distributions will be available at the school-level, but will be unavailable for subgroups to minimize respondent disclosure risk.

Technology

The school climate platform technology is being developed to:

- Allow for the local storage of data, accessible only to authorized users
- Minimize disclosure risk
- Process data and provide survey results to the administering education agency
- Allow for importing and exporting data such that schools can deliver data to districts or states
- Allow for users to add user-created items

- The platform is being developed as license-free technology
- Education agency technology staff will be able to run the platform on Windows or Linux servers to maximize compatibility.

Forum Presentations

Isaiah O’Rear, the program officer for this survey, will be talking about this data collection platform with the PPI and Tech Standing Committees Wednesday morning.

2.) CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION (CRDC) [SLIDE 4]

Overview

As you all know, the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a biennial survey required by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) since 1968. The CRDC is intended to obtain data from the nation's public school districts related to their obligations to provide equal educational opportunity. The data are used by the Department’s Office for Civil Rights to ensure that recipients of the U.S. Department of Education’s federal financial assistance do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and disability. Data from the CRDC are also used by federal, state, and local agencies, policymakers and researchers to identify models of success, to craft and revise educational policies and to identify possible civil rights concerns in our nation’s schools.

Issue

With the recent move of the CRDC from a sample survey to a universe data collection of all school districts, several issues emerged that may affect the quality of the CRDC data. CRDC administrators asked EDFacts and NCES to assist in addressing some of them. For example, respondents report:

- that some of the requested data are already submitted to their SEAs (although these data items may not be submitted by their SEAs to ED).
- content issues such as a lack of clarity around definitions of key terms.
- the previous CRDC data collection tool had performance issues; in particular, respondents mentioned that there are not enough built-in edits and that some of the edit messages they receive are unclear.
- concerns about the quality of some questions or items collected as part of the CRDC, especially the items collected for the first time by the 2009-10 CRDC.

Goals

Through EDFacts, NCES is working with OCR to improve the CRDC data collection process and the quality of the resulting data, through minimizing respondent burden, improving the clarity of the questions, and increasing the ease of navigation through the data entry tool. NCES is reducing the overlap between questions asked in the CRDC and NCES data collections such as the new National Teacher and Principal Survey (formerly SASS) and school based data collections of data on crime. Instead NCES, with CRDC, is planning on supplementing these data collections with data collected through the CRDC.

To this end, NCES is working to develop a new data collection tool for the 2013-14 CRDC that will improve data quality, reduce burden, and improve the usability of the data collection tool and data feedbacks reports.

Progress

To date, site visits and cognitive interviews have been used to redesign some of the CRDC business rules and to develop a new CRDC submission tool. LEAs are validating the lists of schools required to report CRDC data. During the month of August, we hope that 40 to 50 state education agencies and school districts will participate in a pilot test intended to provide early feedback about survey items and help text design and other aspects of the software's usability before launching the survey in October 2014 to all of the LEAs being surveyed. The 2013–14 and 2015–16 CRDC will collect data from a universe of all public LEAs and schools, including long-term secure juvenile justice facilities, charter schools, alternative schools, and schools serving students with disabilities.

Forum Presentations

Ross Santy and Abby Potts are meeting with NESAC Tuesday afternoon to discuss these updates.

3.) SCHOOL LEVEL FINANCE SURVEY (SLFS) [SLIDE 5]

Overview

There is a significant demand for finance data at the school level. Policymakers, researchers, and the public have voiced concerns about the equitable distribution of school funding across and within school districts. In response to this demand, NCES is launching a pilot study of a new school level finance collection. Rather than initiate an entirely new study, the pilot collection will essentially expand the School District Finance Survey (the F-33) for the 2013-14 school year (Fiscal Year 2014) by including some additional school-level variables.

Content

The following data items will be collected:

- Teacher salaries for total FTE teachers
- Instructional aide salaries for total FTE instructional aides
- Instructional staff salaries (teachers and aides) for total FTE instructional staff
- Instructional and pupil support services staff salaries for total FTE instructional and pupil support services staff
- School administration salaries for total school administration
- Total personnel salaries for total FTE all personnel
- Non-personnel expenditures

Adult education, pre-K, and summer school expenditures will be excluded.

Goals and Plans

NCES and the Census Bureau will collaborate on this data collection. “School-level expenditures” will be defined using expenditure classifications that are already used in existing NCES fiscal data collections at the state and district level. NCES will not request school-level expenditure data for functions that are commonly accounted for at the district level, such as transportation and food services.

NCES and Census have extensive experience training SEA respondents on reporting school finance data and can expand the annual training sessions to provide SEA respondents with guidance on how to report school-level finance data.

NCES will leverage the expertise of Census Bureau staff and procedures currently in use for the National Public Education Financial Survey (NPEFS) and the F-33 survey. Since many of Census’s current school district finance edits and processing procedures can be applied to school-level finance data, Census can modify their current system to add capability to process finance data at the school level.

The existing software gives survey staff the ability to compare data across the state, district, and school levels. Having the capability to cross-check school-level finance data at both the school district and state levels will be a very useful tool in detecting data errors and ensuring data consistency across the surveys.

Data Collection and Improved Information Technology

As a first step, respondents for the initial pilot survey will include up to nine SEA survey respondents from which the finance data for schools will be centrally collected as part of the School District Finance Survey for the 2013-14 school year (Fiscal Year 2014). SEAs would follow the School District Finance Survey model and submit electronic data files to the Census Bureau via FTP upload. To minimize respondent burden, the Census Bureau will accept data in a variety of formats in order to allow respondents to use the format that is most convenient for them.

Reporting

The results of the school level finance pilot collection will be released in an R&D report that will describe the challenges inherent in collecting school level finance and the response of SEAs, NCES, and the U.S. Census Bureau to these challenges. The report will provide an overview of school level finance data; a comparison of state administrative records containing school level finance with other sources of data; and a discussion of the data availability and quality, as well as advantages and limitations of collecting school level finance data.

4.) NATIONAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL SURVEY (NTPS) [SLIDE 6]

Overview

The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), the Department's primary source of information on the teacher labor market and on teachers' and administrators'

perspectives of K-12 topics, is being redesigned and will become the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS). SASS, while rich in data, had many components and a relatively large sample. In addition, SASS was difficult to release in a timely manner and was only conducted once every four years.

Goals and Benefits

The redesigned NTPS will be:

- ***Highly flexible***—Use core surveys of teachers and principals, with rotating modules to provide the Department and researchers with trends on key topics and the ability to quickly collect information on hot topics
- ***Timely***—Collect data every two years instead of every four years, with quick turnaround of datasets and reports within 12 months of end of data collection
- ***Integrated with other ED data sources***—Use administrative data from ED Facts, the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) or other trusted sources to reduce multiple requests for the same data from SEAs, LEAs and Schools

In comparison to SASS, NTPS has a ***lower burden*** to schools and districts due to:

- ***Fewer surveys***—We will no longer have dedicated District and Library Media Center Questionnaires
- ***Reduced length***—the remaining questionnaires are shorter

- ***Smaller sample***—NTPS will produce nationally representative data rather than the state representative data SASS produced.

Progress

The NTPS items have undergone cognitive testing. Pilot testing will begin in October of 2014, and will continue through April. Current plans are for a full scale administration of NTPS starting in August of 2015 and running through May of 2016.

5.) MIDDLE GRADES LONGITUDINAL STUDY (MGLS) [SLIDE 7]

Overview

NCES has conducted a longitudinal study of high school students each decade—starting with the National Longitudinal Study in 1972, through the current High School Longitudinal Study of 2009. In 1990, NCES initiated a series of postsecondary longitudinal studies. Then in 1998, NCES started the first Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS: K), starting with a cohort of kindergarten students who were followed through their elementary years. The second ECLS: K (2010-11) is underway. Realizing that the suite of NCES longitudinal studies left a gap in the middle grades, NCES is currently designing the Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017 (MGLS) to collect data on the educational and developmental experiences of students in grades 6, 7, and 8.

Available data show that while American students perform relatively well on international assessments in the elementary grades, their relative performance slips in

later years when our students are weak academically compared to students in countries that are significant economic competitors with the United States. This results in questions as to what is happening in the middle grades; specifically,

1. How do our students lose competitiveness as they progress from elementary through secondary school?
2. When do our students start to lose competitiveness;
3. Why do some students with characteristics associated with falling behind academically ultimately excel in school?

To help study these questions, the new MGLS will follow children as they move through the middle grades of the educational system.

Progress

A Sample Survey Design Contract is currently underway as part of the planning for MGLS: 17. Plans are for field testing a variety of instruments from February to June 2015 in schools at five sites throughout the U.S. These sites are purposively sampled in order to obtain adequate psychometric information on item performance for both general education students and students in three disability categories, autism, emotional disturbance and specific learning disabilities. (If successful, the inclusion of students with these disabilities will provide the data previously collected through the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS).)

Respondents will include students in grades 6, 7, and 8, their math teachers, applicable special education teachers, parents, and school administrators. For the pilot test, an additional sample of 5th graders will be included in order to test lower measuring items in the mathematics assessment.

The planned instruments include an innovative reading assessment based on work from IES's Reading for Understanding initiative; a mathematics assessment; executive function measures of working memory, inhibition, and cognitive flexibility; and socioemotional functioning. Questionnaires will capture information on activities, services, background, family resources, classroom instruction, school supports, and school climate. Student information will be abstracted from school records and field staff will complete an observation checklist on the school physical plant and resources.

6.) NAEP'S TRANSITION TO TECHNOLOGY-BASED ASSESSMENTS (TBAs) [SLIDE 8]

Overview

In 2015, NAEP will start transitioning its current paper-based assessments to technology-based assessments (TBAs) in Mathematics, reading, and science in grades 4, 8, and 12 with the goal of transitioning all NAEP assessments to TBA by 2020.

Goals and Plans

The first TBA transition step will be to study the implications of this transition for NAEP trend. The results of this study will inform decisions regarding future administration and trend reporting of NAEP TBA at both the national and state

levels. In 2015 we will administer the current paper-based version of an assessment at the same time a technology-based version of the same content is administered. The TBA version of these assessments will be administered on tablet devices. Our intent is to share lessons learned with the states regarding our transition to TBA.

In addition to the TBA studies, NAEP will also pilot science performance tasks on tablets, specifically our Interactive Computer Tasks (ICTs) and Hands-on Tasks (HOTs). The interactive and in-depth nature of these tasks allows us to make connections between content knowledge and science practices. The “Hybrid HOTs” will present task directions on a tablet device, requiring students to manipulate physical tools and materials to conduct investigations. The ultimate goal is to integrate these science performance-based tasks with the rest of the science assessment content.

7.) NAEP HIGH SCHOOL ELECTRONIC TRANSCRIPT STUDY (e-HSTS) [SLIDE 9]

Overview

The NAEP High School Transcript Study (HSTS) provides information about the types of courses that graduates take, how many credits they earn, their grade point averages, and the relationship between coursetaking patterns and achievement on NAEP. In the summer of 2015, the NAEP program will conduct a feasibility study on the electronic collection of high school transcript information.

Goals

This feasibility study will prepare NCES to use electronic data collection methods to the furthest extent possible in future transcript studies. The study is designed to answer the following questions:

- What is the current capacity of states and localities to provide transcripts or course records electronically?
- To what extent is it feasible for NCES to collect transcripts or course records electronically for a nationally representative sample of public high school graduates?
- Can state databases provide the same quality and completeness of transcript data as district or school sources?

Electronic data collection methods include transfer of student records that are in digital form, but do not include scanned PDF forms or other digital transfers of hard-copy records. Although, they may require additional coding to prepare the information for use, they do not involve data entry or keying into a database. The study will be conducted in the summer of 2015.

8.) PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL READING LITERACY STUDY (PIRLS) [SLIDE 10]

NCES participates in an international assessment of reading at grade 4, PIRLS. The results provide international comparisons on average student performance, the percentage of students at various proficiency levels, and how student performance is

associated with students' reading experiences and other characteristics of students and schools.

In the Spring of 2015 PIRLS will field test new assessment and survey questions to determine their applicability across countries. PIRLS will also field test operations involved in the administration of the assessment and questionnaires. This effort will include 1,000 students in 40 schools.

ONGOING DATA COLLECTIONS

1.) *EDFacts* [SLIDE 11]

With last year's reorganization, *EDFacts* moved to NCES. *EDFacts* centralizes performance data supplied by K-12 SEAs with other data assets, such as financial grant information, within the Department to enable better analysis and use in policy development, planning and management. The purpose of *EDFacts* is to:

- Place the use of robust, timely performance data at the core of decision and policymaking in education.
- Reduce state and district data burden and streamline data practices.
- Improve state data capabilities by providing resources and technical assistance.
- Provide data for planning, policy, and management at the federal, state, and local levels.

EDFacts collects data year round on behalf of approximately 20 Department discretionary and formula grant programs.

- EDFacts reporting includes over 100 file specifications, with most files at the SEA- and LEA-level, and some at the school-level.
- In addition to metric and status files, EDFacts also collects metadata via online surveys that allow ED to better use the data files.
- Files are submitted by 60 State Education Agencies; metadata surveys are completed by state staff closest to program implementation practices (e.g., IDEA Data Managers, Assessment Directors)

Forum Presentation

Ross Santy, the NCES Associate Commissioner for Administrative Data, will discuss EDFacts updates with the NESAC Standing Committee Tuesday morning and the PPI Standing committee Wednesday Morning.

2.) EARLY CHILDHOOD LONGITUDINAL STUDY, KINDERGARTEN CLASS OF 2010-11

(ECLS-K:2011) [SLIDE 12]

The ECLS-K:2011 is collecting national data on elementary school students as they progress from kindergarten in the 2010–11 school year through the spring of 2016, when most of the students will be in fifth grade. The study includes one-on-one direct assessments that measure children’s knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics,

science, and executive function, as well as their height and weight. It also includes interviews with parents, and self-administered questionnaires completed by teachers and school administrators.

Data from ECLS-K:2011 can be used to address a number of policy-relevant topics, including for example: differences in outcomes for children in full-day kindergarten compared to those in half-day kindergarten; the effects of grade retention; STEM-related knowledge, skills, and experiences as early as kindergarten; and how childhood obesity may be related to children's experiences both in and outside of school. Also, the ECLS-K:2011 data can be compared to data from an earlier cohort study of kindergartners in 1998-99 to gain a better understanding of how the student population schools are serving has changed over time.

3.) NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) [SLIDE 13]

NAEP reports statistical information about student performance and factors related to educational performance for the nation and for specific student groups in the population (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender). It includes students drawn from both public and nonpublic schools. In the winter of 2015, NCES will conduct NAEP assessments at grades 4, 8, 12 in Reading, Math, and Science. This includes state level assessments at grade 4 and 8 in all three subjects, and national assessments at grade 12.

Forum Presentation

Wednesday morning, Peggy Carr, the NCES Associate Commissioner for Assessments, will discuss NAEP and the Race to the Top Assessments in the closing session of this meeting of the Forum.

4.) 2015 NAEP NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION STUDY [SLIDE 14]

The National Indian Education Study (NIES) is designed to describe the condition of education for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students in the United States. The study provides educators, policymakers, and the public with information about the academic performance in reading and mathematics of AI/AN fourth- and eighth-graders as well as their exposure to Native American culture. Conducted in 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011, NIES provides data on a nationally representative sample of American Indian and Alaska Native students in public, private, Department of Defense, and Bureau of Indian Education funded schools. The study is sponsored by the Office of Indian Education (OIE) and conducted by the NCES for the U.S. Department of Education.

5.TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY (TIMSS) [SLIDE 15]

NCES also participates in an international assessment of mathematics and science at grades 4 and 8. TIMSS provides international comparisons on average student performance, the percentage of students at various proficiency levels, and how student performance is associated with students' learning experiences and other characteristics of students and schools.

In 2015 NCES will participate in TIMSS Advanced, which is an international assessment of calculus and advanced physics at grade 12. TIMSS Advanced provides international comparisons on the performance of top mathematics and science students as they prepare to enter higher education.

CONCLUSION [SLIDE 16]

I know that this seems like a lot of information to digest, and indeed like a lot of data collections that will be coming to your schools, districts, and states. I would like to reiterate that several of the studies described involve efforts to reduce burden and to improve data quality. Although we anticipate having a 13 K-12 studies in the field over the next 13 months, 8 of these are pilot and field tests, and have smaller sample sizes. This graphic summarize the anticipated field work, with a depiction of the months that each study will be in the field. Please note that the blue entries represent pilot and field tests, while the green entries are our major data collections that will be in the field in the next 13 months.

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