

National Forum on Education Statistics

PUTTING NUMBERS

TO WORK FOR SCHOOLS

Mission

The National Forum on Education Statistics develops and recommends strategies for implementing national education standards that will support local and state efforts to improve elementary and secondary education throughout the United States.

Goals

The National Forum on Education Statistics is dedicated to fulfilling the following goals:

- Developing a comprehensive system of comparable local, state, and federal basic data elements useful to policymakers and educators at all levels of government.
- Improving coordination, integration, and consolidation of the collection and dissemination of quality education data.
- Becoming a widely recognized cooperative body addressing issues of education data policy; and a leader in promoting the use of effective and innovative practices in education data collection and reporting.

A valuable resource to count on.

Effective decisionmaking requires the best information available, and no education system can be effective today without accurate data at its fingertips. In addition to the need for good decision support for schools and districts, some data must be collected and maintained to fulfill state and federal requirements. Yet collecting, maintaining, and even using such information is a challenge to individual schools, districts, administrators, technology staff, and states. In response to the need for comparable and useful data at all levels, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education established the National Forum on Education Statistics.

A representative organization of state and local education agencies, U.S. Department of Education offices, other federal agencies, and national organizations and associations, the Forum is dedicated to improving the collection and dissemination of education data, developing a comprehensive system of basic data elements, and addressing important issues affecting education data policy. To fulfill these goals, the National Forum on Education Statistics hosts conferences and meetings each year, develops and disseminates practical guidelines and best practices in data collection and reporting, and publishes a wide variety of user-friendly resources—available at no cost.





Building a framework for the future.

In addition to these hands-on, idea-generating meetings, the Forum and the National Center for Education Statistics also offer a Cooperative System Fellows Program, which is a week-long overview of NCES data collections, products, and standards for researchers and data managers from local and state education agencies and libraries, and postsecondary institutional researchers.

For more information about any of these activities, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/conferences>

The National Forum on Education Statistics is committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive and dynamic set of basic data elements—with common definitions—in order to improve accuracy

and simplify communication among the many providers and requesters of education data.

The Forum also seeks practical, cost-effective,

and appropriate ways to help put technology to work for education organizations at the local, state, and federal levels.

To discuss new and emerging education data policies, as well as help end-users implement these policies, the Forum hosts a variety of meetings and conferences on timely issues each year. Representatives at the local, state, and federal levels join other stakeholders at these important events:

Management Information Systems (MIS) Conference

For anyone who works with education information technology, the three-day MIS conference offers best practices, innovative ideas, current issues, and practical how-to advice. Hosted by a different state each year, the conference focuses on work by practitioners from state and local education agencies.

Forum Meetings

Forum members meet twice a year to discuss timely issues regarding the collection, reporting, and use of elementary and secondary education data. Meetings also address education data policy, innovations in data collection and reporting, and technical assistance for state and local data systems.

Summer Data Conference

Elementary and secondary education data users and providers from state education agencies, local education agencies, and schools; researchers and policymakers; and federal representatives participate in this conference dedicated to improving the quality and uses of elementary and secondary education statistics.

Online or in print, these resources add up.

The National Forum on Education Statistics has developed a wide variety of practical and user-friendly publications to help address timely topics that affect schools and districts every day. Developed by education professionals for education professionals, all Forum publications are available free online. Some publications are also available in print.

For more information about these and other Forum publications, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/forum/publications.asp>

Data Handbooks

NCES and the Forum continue to develop comprehensive handbooks defining data elements to improve communication, reporting, and accuracy among local, state, and federal education organizations. Available publications include

- *Basic Data Elements for Elementary and Secondary Education Information Systems*
- *Staff Data Handbook: Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education*
- *Student Data Handbook: Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education*
- *Financial Accounting for Local and State School Systems (coming soon)*

Technology Issues

From security basics to automating records, the Forum offers handbooks on a variety of issues relating to technology and schools. These include

- *Weaving a Secure Web Around Education: A Guide to Technology Standards and Security*
- *Technology in Schools: Suggestions, Tools, and Guidelines for Assessing Technology in Elementary and Secondary Schools*
- *Building an Automated Student Record System*

School Management

The Forum has published several handbooks and guides on school management, construction, security, and similar timely issues. These include

- *Safety in Numbers: Collecting and Using Crime, Violence, and Discipline Incident Data to Make a Difference in Schools*
- *Facilities Information Management: A Guide for State and Local School Districts (coming soon)*
- *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities*
- *Protecting the Privacy of Student Records: Guidelines for Education Agencies*





Coming together for America's schools.

Through the National Forum for Education Statistics, many individuals and organizations have contributed time, resources, and expertise to improving the quality and usefulness of education

data. In addition to the conferences, training opportunities, and

publications, the Forum maintains a web site that highlights current issues and state activities in information technology. The web site provides an opportunity to review publications in development, find synopses of state data projects, and learn the current status of selected practices in data collection and reporting. Learn more about Forum activities at <http://nces.ed.gov/forum>. For more information, e-mail ghedam.bairu@ed.gov or write to

NCES/Forum

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