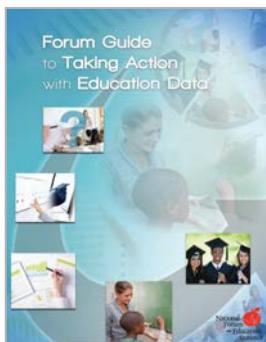


# Publication Summary

## Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data



In an era of diminishing public resources, the effective use of data is about being efficient: once an education organization has gone to the effort of collecting data, failing to use the information to inform instructional, administrative, and policy-related activities is uneconomical, unwise, and a waste of a valuable information resource. Conversely, appropriate action, based on the right data at the right time, can lead education organizations to greater efficiency, educators to greater effectiveness, and students to greater academic achievement. Education organizations often employ professional staff who are skilled in the collection, management, and reporting of education data, but most data users are not data experts—nor do they need to be. Instead, responsible data users need to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to identify, access, understand, analyze, interpret, and use education data as appropriate to perform their respective duties in a school, district office, or state education agency.

The *Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data* provides a series of briefs intended to serve as a guide to the skillful and appropriate use of education data. The guide begins with an overview that explains the evolving nature of data use, outlines the skills required to effectively analyze and interpret data, presents a question-driven approach to data use, and provides data use recommendations for key audiences. The overview introduces the concept of the data use cycle that consists of five primary phases or activities: 1) seek information; 2) access/gather data; 3) analyze/interpret data; 4) act; and 5) evaluate. This framework serves as the basis for systematic data use for education stakeholders and is revisited in each of the audience-specific briefs in the series. Brief 1 presents these steps within the framework of educators at all levels and provides an exercise in which the concepts are applied to a real-world scenario. Briefs 2 and 3 similarly apply the concepts and the exercise through the lenses of school and district leaders and state program staff, respectively. Finally, an appendix provides information on Forum publications and related resources.

The briefs in this guide are written for three key education audiences: educators, school and district leaders, and state program staff. Other likely audiences include early childhood education leaders, higher education leaders, social services agencies, federal education staff, education policymakers, researchers, parents, and other education stakeholders.

The *Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data* is a product of the National Forum on Education Statistics and available on the Forum website at [http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub\\_2013801.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2013801.asp).