



Strategic Plan



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Introduction

The National Cooperative Education Statistics System was established by the Hawkins-Stafford Education Improvement Amendments of 1988 (Public Law 100-297) to “produce and maintain, with the cooperation of the States, comparable and uniform education statistics.” It retains this responsibility under the mandate of Public Law 107-279, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. To assist in meeting this obligation, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) established the National Forum on Education Statistics (Forum). Forum members include state and local education agency (SEA and LEA) representatives appointed by their state’s superintendent, representatives from federal agencies, and representatives from other organizations with an interest in education data.

The Mission of the Forum

The mission of the Forum is to plan, recommend, and develop education data resources that support local, state, and national efforts to improve pre-kindergarten through secondary education throughout the United States. The Forum identifies best practices, addresses challenges, develops resources, and considers new approaches to maximizing data quality and use, all while remaining sensitive to privacy concerns and administrative burden.

The Strategic Plan: Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The Forum has adopted three major goals for organizing its work over the coming years. These are as follows:

Goal 1: Improve the quality of education data.

Identify resources and tools needed to

- improve data collection and promote the use of best education data practices in schools and districts;
- support state and federal program reports;
- improve aspects of data systems including data definitions, collection, dissemination, and reporting; and
- inform and support local and state efforts to adhere to federal requirements.

Objective: Develop best practice guides that address timely education data issues to improve education at the local, state, and federal levels.

To meet this objective, the Forum recommends the following strategies:

- Identify education data resources relating to students, staff, facilities, learning support, accountability, and technology at school, district, state, and national levels.
- Review the relevance of resources previously developed by the Forum.
- Support the development and adoption of standards for data collection, reporting, security, and privacy.

Goal 2: Identify information management best practices related to current education topics and emerging trends.

Propose resources and best practice guides to

- promote accurate, timely, comparable, and uniform education data for informing policy; and
- improve coordination, integration, and consolidation of the collection and dissemination of quality education data.

Objectives:

- Minimize the reporting burden on state and local data providers.
- Improve communication and coordination among the various data providers and requesters.
- Enable the most efficient and secure data collection procedures that are technically feasible.
- Share local, state, and federal projects that demonstrate the use of technology to improve data collection, access, analysis, and reporting.

To meet these objectives, the Forum recommends the following strategies:

- Promote ongoing coordinated reviews of education data collection activities.
- Support the use of standard definitions in education data collections.
- Promote efficiency in data collection and access through the use of new and emerging technologies.
- Promote better integration and coordination of education data collections.
- Work to improve the dissemination and usefulness of education data and promote its use through Forum products.
- Establish linkages with early childhood and postsecondary education to promote coordination and efficiency in data collection and use.
- Promote procedures and practices that ensure data quality and use at all levels of education.

Goal 3: Promote the Forum and its tools as leading best practices.

Promote the Forum as

- a leader in addressing education data needs, including areas such as policy question clarification, indicator development, data quality, feasibility of data collection, data use, and data collection strategies; and
- a widely recognized cooperative body addressing issues of education data policy.

Objectives:

- Design and disseminate Forum products (i.e., best practice guides, online courses, course codes, etc.) to maximize usefulness.
- Share best practices related to the use of standards for data collection and reporting.
- Engage local, state, federal, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of education data resources.
- Promote collaborative partnerships among and between LEAs, SEAs, the federal government, and other education stakeholders.

To meet these objectives, the Forum recommends the following strategies:

- Disseminate Forum products widely.
- Actively seek collaborative relationships with agencies and groups to work toward the identification of common education data issues and goals.
- Promote best practices when engaging in consultation, sharing information, and working with research partners.
- Establish, review, and disseminate guidelines for policies affecting the production, use, confidentiality, release, and dissemination of education statistics.
- Periodically review and update all Forum products as appropriate.
- Report on progress toward Strategic Plan goals.