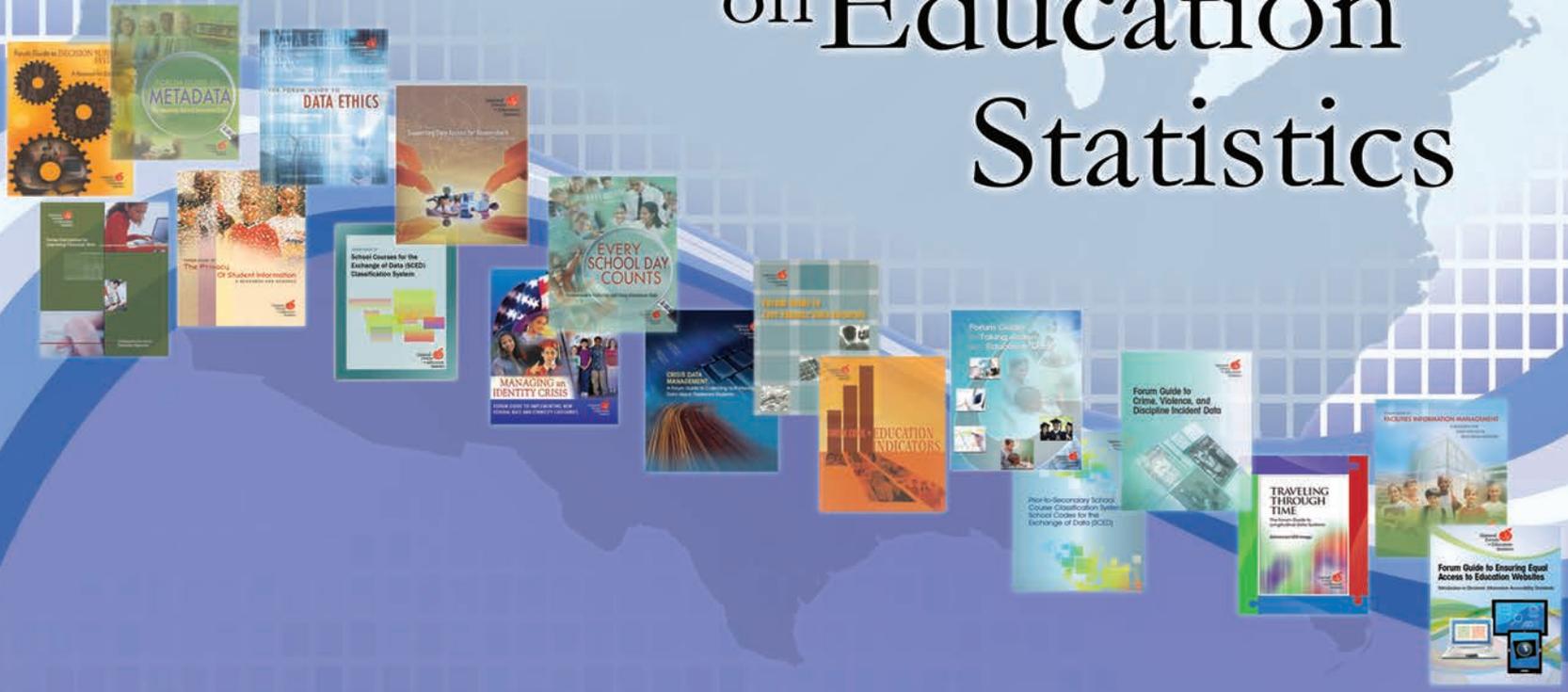


National Forum on Education Statistics



FORUM MEMBER HANDBOOK

Foreword

Institute of Education Sciences

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is the primary research and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2001 (ESRA), the Institute's mission is to expand fundamental knowledge and understanding of education and to provide education leaders and practitioners, parents and students, researchers, and the general public with unbiased, reliable, and useful information about the condition and progress of education in the United States; about education policies, programs, and practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to educational opportunities for all students; and about the effectiveness of federal and other education programs.

National Center for Education Statistics

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to education in the United States and other nations. It fulfills a congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report full and complete statistics on the condition of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports and specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; assist state and local education agencies in improving their statistical systems; and review and report on education activities in foreign countries.

National Cooperative Education Statistics System

The work of the National Forum on Education Statistics (Forum) is a key aspect of the National Cooperative Education Statistics System (Cooperative System). The Cooperative System was established to produce and maintain, with the cooperation of the states, comparable and uniform education information and data that are useful for policymaking at the federal, state, and local levels. To assist in meeting this goal, NCES, within the U.S. Department of Education, established the Forum to improve the collection, reporting, and use of elementary and secondary education statistics. The Forum deals with issues in education data policy, sponsors innovations in data collection and reporting, and provides technical assistance through the development of resources.

National Forum on Education Statistics

Uniform, timely, and accurate education information is essential to quality decisionmaking. Such information is diverse and requires periodic examination and improvement as it is collected by local, state, and federal entities. While this information includes the wide range of general-purpose statistics, some of it is specified in federal and state education legislation. To meet the needs of the potential users and uses of this crucial education information, the mission of the Forum is to plan, recommend, and develop education data resources that will support local, state, and national efforts to improve public and private education throughout the United States. The Forum also discusses, and may state a position on, issues and developments in information technology; promotes national data standards; and provides technical assistance activities and products to improve data quality and use.

Development of Forum Products

Members of the Forum establish working groups to develop best practice guides in data-related areas of interest to federal, state, and local education agencies. They are assisted in this work by NCES, but the content comes from the collective experience of working group members who review all products iteratively throughout the development process. After the working group completes the content and reviews a document a final time, publications are subject to examination by members of the Forum standing committee that sponsors the project. Finally, the entire Forum (approximately 120 members) reviews and formally votes to approve all documents prior to publication. NCES provides final review and approval prior to online publication.

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About the Forum

Welcome to the Forum!

As a member of the National Forum on Education Statistics (the Forum), you are in a position to contribute to the work of an organization that is committed to improving the quality of education data throughout the nation while, at the same time, minimizing data burden on schools, local education agencies, and state education agencies. Accomplishing this task is hard work, as is producing the Forum's free data guides and best practice documents.

This Member Handbook is designed to serve as a single, comprehensive resource about the purpose and operations of the Forum. It is written for Forum members to improve their understanding of the Forum's goals and objectives, the processes and mechanisms the Forum uses to accomplish those goals and objectives, and the resources it develops for the education community.

New members may find the Member Handbook helpful as they prepare for their roles in the Forum, whether as a state education agency liaison, a local education agency liaison, a federal agency member, or an associate member. Typically, it takes some time for a new member to become familiar with the Forum's culture, processes, and opportunities; consulting this Member Handbook should help expedite and simplify that process.

Seasoned members may find the Member Handbook useful as they engage in new activities, serve on committees and working groups, and accept leadership roles in the organization. It may also be a useful tool when mentoring new members and making presentations about the Forum and its resources to outside audiences.

Forum Background and Mission

The National Cooperative Education Statistics System (Cooperative 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 educational information and data." It retains this responsibility under the mandate of Public Law 107-279, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) established the Forum to assist the Cooperative System in achieving its congressional mandate. The Forum held its first meeting in March 1989, and formalized its goals, objectives, functions, organizational structure, and operations in January 1990 with the adoption of a Policies and Procedures Manual by the Forum membership. The Policies and Procedures Manual has since been revised several times.

The Forum provides an arena for local, state, and national leaders in the education data community to discuss issues, address problems, develop resources, and consider new approaches to improving data collection and utility. It is a voluntary, democratic, participative federal-state-local group that identifies and addresses education data needs at the national, state, and local levels. The mission of the Forum is to plan, recommend, and develop education data resources that will support local, state, and national efforts to improve public and private education throughout the United States. It is committed to improving the quality, comparability, and usefulness of elementary and secondary education data while remaining sensitive to data burden concerns.

Forum Members

Forum members include representatives from local and state education agencies, and federal agencies that have an interest in elementary/secondary education data. Federal, state, and local agency representatives are eligible to be full members of the Forum. Representatives of other organizations participate as associate members.

Education Agencies and Their Representatives Who are Members of the Forum

- The education agencies of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (hereafter referred to as “the states”)
- One local education agency within a state selected by each Chief State School Officer
- The NCES Commissioner (ex officio), the Associate Commissioners of major NCES divisions, and the office of the NCES Chief Statistician
- The principal offices of the U.S. Department of Education, or programs within these principal offices that collect or use elementary/secondary education data
- The U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity

State Education Agency (SEA) Liaisons

An SEA representative to the Forum is formally appointed by the Chief State School Officer of each state and is expected to speak on his or her behalf regarding education data issues. SEA representatives contribute valuable perspective and experience concerning state education data needs. The SEA representative may designate a permanent alternate who will attend meetings and manage other Forum responsibilities in the representative’s place. In the absence of the SEA representative, the permanent alternate has the same voting and participation rights as a full member. An SEA representative’s responsibilities include

- acting as a representative in the coordination of federal data collections at the state level and in other matters concerning the Cooperative System to promote the efficiency, quality, and usefulness of data;
- attending meetings of the Forum and voting on any issues that may come before the full Forum for approval;
- participating in the NCES Data Conference;
- designating coordinators for NCES data collection and assessment activities;
- serving as the principal contact for all Cooperative System contracts awarded to states;
- serving as a member of a standing committee;
- volunteering to participate in one or more working groups;
- reviewing Forum/NCES publications as a preliminary step to Forum approval; and
- managing work relating to contracts for basic participation awards.

Local Education Agency (LEA) Liaisons

An LEA representative is formally appointed by the Chief State School Officer of each state and is expected to participate in Forum meetings as a full member. LEA representatives are authorized to vote on issues that come before the Forum and to hold office in the Forum. They are expected to contribute valuable perspective and experiences representing LEA data needs. Other responsibilities include

- representing LEAs in the state on issues of education data and disseminating information gathered from Forum activities to other LEAs;

- attending meetings of the Forum and voting on any issues that may come before the full Forum for approval;
- participating in the NCES Data Conference when possible;
- serving as a member of one standing committee of the Forum;
- maintaining contact with the Forum SEA liaison to maintain consistency within the state on data issues;
- volunteering to work with one or more working groups; and
- reviewing Forum/NCES publications as a preliminary step to Forum approval.

Associate Members

Associate members participate in Forum standing committee meetings and take an active role in committee, subcommittee, and working group activities. They participate in the discussion of issues, but they do not participate in formal decisionmaking of the full Forum, and do not vote for Forum officers or on policies and procedures. They may not hold office. The responsibilities of associate members include promoting the work of the Forum among the membership of their respective organizations and providing the Forum with valuable input from the perspective of their organizations.

Forum Organization

The Forum meets to discuss and work on data issues and specific topics related to education data in schools, districts, SEAs, and the U.S. Department of Education. The Forum achieves its mission and objectives primarily through the deliberations and work of a Steering Committee and three standing committees designed to address major interests of the Cooperative System. The committees may propose and support working groups, which are appointed for a specified time period to develop products about a specific topic (e.g., education indicators and virtual education data elements). The meeting notes of the committees may be accessed on the Forum’s website at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/meeting_notes.asp.

Forum Organizational Hierarchy	
National Cooperative Education Statistics System	
National Forum on Education Statistics	
Forum Steering Committee	
Forum Standing Committees	National Education Statistics Agenda Committee (NESAC)
	Policies, Programs, and Implementation Committee (PPI)
	Technology Committee (TECH)
Current Forum Task Forces and Working Groups	

Forum Committees, Subcommittees, and Working Groups

Forum Steering Committee

The Forum Steering Committee oversees and coordinates all Forum activities. Members of the Steering Committee include the Forum Chair, Vice Chair, and immediate past Chair, and the chairs and vice chairs of the three standing committees. The Forum Chair moderates the Steering Committee.

Standing Committees

The standing committees are designed to address the major mandates of the Cooperative System, to promote long-range planning, and to foster continuity in Forum activities. Membership in standing committees is limited to members and associates of the Forum. The Forum Chair makes committee assignments after inquiry of members as to their preference. The

following sections describe the major focus of each of the three standing committees. While all three committees may often deal with similar topics, each committee discusses and addresses each topic according to the committee's focus.

- 1. National Education Statistics Agenda Committee.** The National Education Statistics Agenda Committee (NESAC) addresses ways to fulfill the Cooperative System's legislative mandate to improve the quality of data at federal, state, and local levels. The committee has as its mission the development of a national education statistics agenda—that is, the identification of issues, concerns, and solutions bearing on the development of common, comparable, and effective nationwide elementary and secondary education data collection, reporting, and use. Agenda items identified and addressed by NESAC may include the development of data elements and indicators, changes to data collections, and issues that impact national, state, and local education such as the major areas of student, staff, achievement, fiscal, institutional, and other information that yields valuable perspective on education in the United States.
- 2. Policies, Programs, and Implementation Committee.** The Policies, Programs, and Implementation Committee (PPI) deliberates on the major functions and general effectiveness of the Cooperative System, focusing on strategies to assist SEAs and LEAs to improve their ability to collect and report comparable, accurate, and timely data and ways to enhance coordination among federal agencies, between federal and state agencies, and between state agencies and local districts. PPI is concerned with issues of implementation, including the development and impact of privacy policy innovations on data exchanges; methods of reducing burdens at federal, state, and local levels; and emerging issues such as data sharing and education record confidentiality.
- 3. Technology Committee.** The Technology Committee (TECH) is concerned with technology strategies to address the collection, management, use, and exchange of student and staff information and the supporting technical infrastructure. TECH promotes the development and adoption of standards for education data; examines the impact of new technologies on information exchange and use; and considers strategies for assisting SEAs and LEAs to make effective decisions about infrastructure and process improvement. TECH also addresses issues such as data security, data quality, data use, sustainability, and the integration of information systems to support effective decisionmaking.

Subcommittees

Standing committees may establish subcommittees to address ongoing issues beyond the scope of regular committee work (e.g., the Forum Communications Subcommittee).

Working Groups

Working groups are convened to address specific issues or develop products according to the resources available. Standing committees may suggest the formation of working groups to the Steering Committee, but often working groups are developed collaboratively when the three standing committees identify a need for additional research or new resources on a topic of joint interest. Working groups may consist of Forum members and associates, non-Forum invited experts, an NCES liaison, and a consultant who is contracted to perform support work. After convening, the working group may decide that additional research about the topic is not necessary (i.e., resources are already available) or not feasible (i.e., the topic cannot be addressed in a timely or cost-effective manner). Should the working group determine that additional work is desirable, it drafts a request to form a working group.

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

The Steering Committee nominates a slate of officers annually to be voted on by the full membership in a Forum election. The slate includes the Forum/Steering Committee Chair, the Forum/Steering Committee Vice Chair, and the chairs and vice chairs of the three standing committees. Nominations for Forum officers may also be made from the floor. A quorum (at least half of the members of the Forum) must be present for an election to be held; officers are elected by a majority vote of those present. Forum and committee officers are elected for a period of one year and take office immediately following the Forum meeting at which they are elected. There is no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve.

Forum Chair

The Forum Chair is elected by Forum members for a one-year term and works with the Steering Committee and NCES staff to oversee and coordinate all Forum activities. Responsibilities of the chair include

- serving for one year as the Forum Chair and representing the Forum as necessary;
- chairing each Forum meeting;
- chairing Steering Committee meetings;
- developing agendas for the Forum and Steering Committee meetings with NCES staff;
- leading special projects at the request of Forum members; and
- serving on the Steering Committee as the “immediate past chair” in the ensuing year.

Forum Vice Chair

The Forum Vice Chair is elected by Forum members for a one-year term and works with the Steering Committee and NCES staff to oversee and coordinate all Forum activities. The Forum Vice Chair is often nominated and elected to become Forum Chair in the year following the term of office. Responsibilities of the Forum Vice Chair include

- assisting the Forum Chair in meetings and in representing the Forum;
- assisting the Forum Chair in developing agendas for the Forum and Steering Committee meetings;
- leading the editorial board for the *Forum Voice*;
- serving as Forum Chair in the absence of the Forum Chair;
- leading special projects at the request of the Forum Chair; and
- reviewing the Forum Strategic Plan and recommending updates as necessary.

Standing Committee Chairs

Standing committee chairs are nominated by their committees and elected by the full Forum. The standing committee chairs work with the Steering Committee and NCES staff to oversee and coordinate the work of their specific standing committee. Responsibilities of standing committee chairs include

- serving for one year as standing committee chair and representing the Forum as necessary;
- chairing standing committee meetings;
- reviewing reports or products of the standing committee’s working groups;
- forwarding requests for creating working groups to the Steering Committee;
- participating in Steering Committee meetings and representing their committees;
- developing agendas for the standing committee meetings in collaboration with the NCES staff; and
- leading special projects at the request of their standing committees and Forum members.

Standing Committee Vice Chairs

Standing committee vice chairs are nominated by their standing committees and elected by the full Forum. The vice chairs work with standing committee chairs and NCES staff to oversee and coordinate the work of their specific standing committees. Responsibilities of standing committee vice chairs include

- assisting the standing committee chairs in meetings and in representing the Forum;
- assisting the standing committee chairs in developing agendas for the committee meetings;
- serving on the editorial board for the *ForumVoice*;
- chairing committee meetings in the absence of the chair;
- leading special projects at the request of the chair; and
- reviewing reports or products of the standing committee's working groups.

Subcommittee and Working Group Chairs

Subcommittee and working group chairs are appointed by their committee chairs. The chair oversees and coordinates the work of specific topics of interest to Forum members. Responsibilities of subcommittee and working group chairs include

- leading working groups at the request of the Steering Committee, standing committees, and Forum members;
- chairing each working group meeting;
- identifying resource needs and establishing project timelines;
- scheduling and facilitating necessary meetings, phone conferences, and other events required for timely progress toward completion of task(s);
- developing agendas for the working group meetings in collaboration with NCES and support staff;
- developing products and promotional materials in collaboration with NCES and support staff;
- selecting outside reviewers for draft products in collaboration with NCES and support staff; and
- presenting final products to the full Forum.

Forum Mentors

Prior to each new Forum member's first Forum meeting, an existing Forum member is assigned as a mentor. Mentor responsibilities include

- calling the new member to welcome him or her, share a personal perspective on Forum membership and meeting experiences, and give a brief overview of his or her role as an SEA or LEA representative;
- answering any questions the new member has about the Forum; and
- attending the new member orientation session at the mentee's first Forum meeting.

Forum Meetings

The Forum holds in-person and/or virtual meetings each year. The Steering Committee and standing committees meet in conjunction with the Forum meetings, and at other times as deemed necessary by their chairs and NCES. Subcommittee and working group meeting schedules are determined by NCES and each group's chair. Forum meetings may include

- a new member orientation session;
- opening and closing general sessions, usually with speakers from the federal government or national associations who update members on current and changing issues related to education data;

- standing committee meetings, in which the ongoing business of the Forum is conducted, major Forum initiatives are planned, and continuity in Forum activities is fostered; and
- professional development sessions, including seminars on important and current education data and technology issues, held on a periodic basis as determined by the Forum Steering Committee.

Consensus Process

The Forum endeavors to work by consensus decisionmaking in which all individuals party to a decision agree to the outcome before it is considered to be approved. To the extent possible, reports from committees, subcommittees, and working groups reflect the views of all their members.

When consensus cannot be achieved for decisions of the full Forum, majority rule as determined by a vote is used. Resolutions, reports for distribution to external audiences, and other actions representing the Forum as a whole must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of members present (a quorum—at least half of all members—must be present at a Forum meeting in order to hold an election or to vote on an amendment to the policies and procedures). Forum voting may also be conducted online via the Forum Voting Tool.

Getting Involved in Forum Activities

The best way for members to get immersed in Forum work is to attend all meetings. By attending Forum meetings, members learn who is doing what (and how and when) in the Forum.

Working group membership provides Forum members with opportunities to contribute their expertise to the topic under consideration and to interact with colleagues from other SEAs and LEAs. Working group members may meet more often than the full Forum to develop reports or products determined to be needed by SEAs or LEAs.

Another way to participate in Forum activities is to disseminate the publications produced by the Forum. Meetings and conferences within member states or districts provide excellent opportunities to discuss the work of the Forum with colleagues and to bring ideas back to the Forum standing committees for discussion and possible action.

Meeting Logistics

How do I plan my travel?

Prior to attending their first meeting, new members should expect to receive very detailed instructions about getting to, and participating in, the meeting from the NCES Forum liaison. These materials will include information about meeting dates, meeting agendas, hotel instructions, and travel instructions.

Who pays for my travel?

Each SEA receives a Cooperative System Basic Participation Award that funds travel for the SEA and LEA representatives (and other staff) to the Forum and Data Conference meetings. The SEA is solely responsible for work relating to the management of this contract and, as such, the SEA Forum representative is responsible for overseeing the submission of the two main deliverables: (1) a list of survey coordinators and an attendance plan for the Forum and Data Conference meetings; and (2) a list of people who actually participated in Forum and Data Conference meetings, including sponsored SEA and LEA staff.

Member Communications

Forum members have several avenues to communicate with each other and with the Forum’s leadership and staff:

- The full Forum and the various working groups meet in person and virtually throughout the year.
- The Forum website (<http://nces.ed.gov/forum>) provides access to Forum publications, meeting notes, and newsletters.
- Email addresses and telephone numbers for current Forum members can be accessed via the membership rosters listed on the website (<http://nces.ed.gov/forum>).
- The Steering Committee, standing committees, and working groups each have closed email listservs to disseminate information their members. Each listserv is restricted to registered members. A list of each group and its listserv address is below.

Group Name	Listserv Address
Alternative SES Measures Working Group	ALTSISM@nceslistserv.com
College and Career Ready Working Group	CCR@nceslistserv.com
Communications Subcommittee	COMMSUB@nceslistserv.com
El/Sec Steering Committee	ELSEC-Steer@nceslistserv.com
Forum Members	ForumMembers@nceslistserv.com
Local Education Agency Liaisons (LEAs)	LEA@nceslistserv.com
National Education Statistics Agenda Committee (NESAC) Standing Committee	NESAC@nceslistserv.com
Policies, Programs and Implementation (PPI) Standing Committee	PPI@nceslistserv.com
SCED Working Group	SCED@nceslistserv.com
State and Local Agency Members	SEA-LEA@nceslistserv.com
State Education Agency Liaisons (SEAs)	SEA@nceslistserv.com
Technology (TECH) Standing Committee	TECH@nceslistserv.com
Virtual Education Working Group	VIRTUALED@nceslistserv.com

Appendix A: Forum Resources

The Forum website, located within the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/forum/>), is a rich resource for both Forum members and the larger education community. It provides information about current Forum activities, the *ForumVoice* newsletter, meeting notes, policies and procedures for conducting Forum meetings and activities, and the Forum's strategic plan.

The Forum's many resources can also be accessed at the website, including publications about education data, best practices, materials for promoting the Forum, and related projects.

Outreach Toolkit

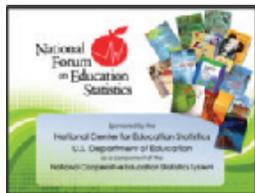
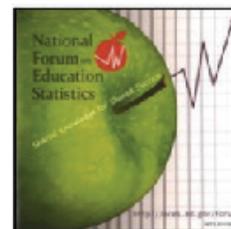
For members who wish to promote the Forum and its resources, the Outreach Toolkit website (<http://nces.ed.gov/forum/outreach.asp>) offers several downloadable promotional tools, including a Forum Overview presentation, publication summaries, publication presentations, and sample articles.

Materials About the Forum

Shared Knowledge for Shared Success

http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2010905.asp

This brochure provides information about the Forum's publications developed to give states, districts, and schools with helpful advice on the collection, maintenance, and use of elementary and secondary education data. The brochure also includes information on the Forum's history, purpose, membership, and resources.



Forum Overview PowerPoint Presentation

<http://nces.ed.gov/forum/index.asp>

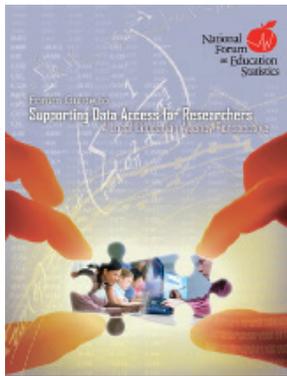
This PowerPoint presentation, available for download, offers an introduction to the Forum and summarizes many of the free resources developed by the organization. It is intended for use (and modification) by Forum members and others engaged in outreach activities on behalf of the Forum.

Recent Publications and Resources

The publications described below can be accessed at <http://nces.ed.gov/forum/publications.asp>.

Forum Guide to School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Classification System

SCED is a voluntary, common classification system for prior-to-secondary and secondary school courses. This guide includes an overview of the SCED structure and descriptions of the SCED Framework elements, recommended attributes, and information for new and existing users on best practices for implementing and expanding their use of SCED.

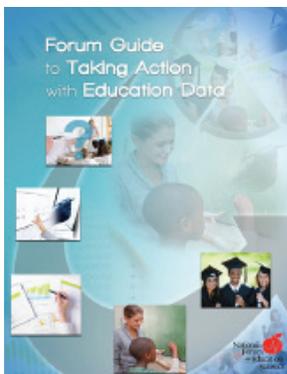
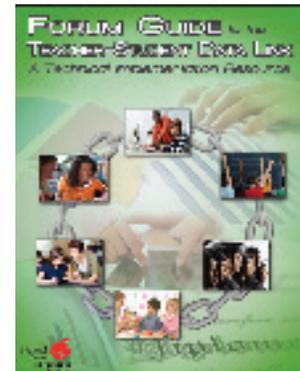


Forum Guide to Supporting Data Access for Researchers: A Local Education Agency Perspective

This publication recommends a set of core practices, operations, and templates that can be adopted and adapted by LEAs as they consider how to respond to requests for both new and existing data about the education enterprise.

Forum Guide to the Teacher-Student Data Link: A Technical Implementation Resource

This publication is a practical guide for implementing a teacher-student data link (TSDL) that supports a range of uses at the local, regional, and state levels. The guide addresses the considerations for linking teacher and student data from multiple perspectives, including governance, policies, data components, business rules, system requirements, and practices. It provides references to promising practices for high-quality data linkages, including TSDL-specific processes such as roster verification and the establishment of the Teacher of Record.

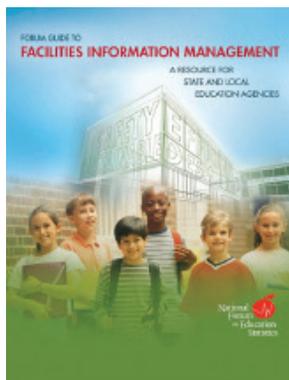
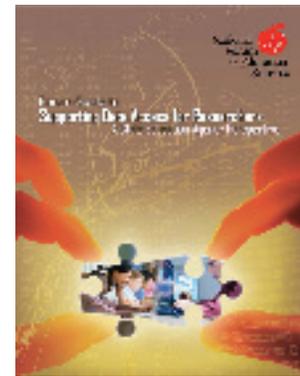


Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data

This document is intended as a guide to the skillful and appropriate use of education data. It includes an introduction and three briefs written for educators, school and district leaders, and state program staff. Each brief is designed to provide stakeholders with practical information on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to identify, access, interpret, and use education data for action.

Forum Guide to Supporting Data Access for Researchers: A State Education Agency Perspective

This guide recommends policies, practices, and templates that can be adopted and adapted by state education agencies as they consider how to most effectively respond to requests for data about the education enterprise, including data maintained in longitudinal data systems. These recommendations reflect sound principles for managing the flow of data requests, establishing response priorities, monitoring appropriate use, protecting privacy, and ensuring that research efforts are beneficial to the education agency as well as the research community.

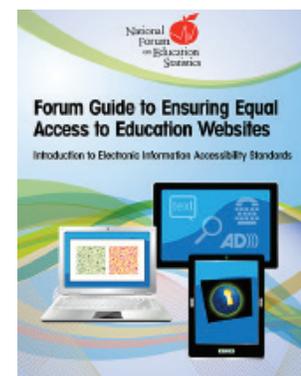


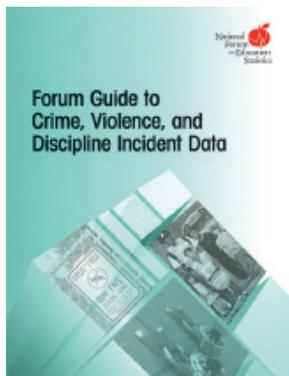
Forum Guide to Facilities Information Management: A Resource for State and Local Education Agencies

This guide is intended to provide a framework for collecting, evaluating, and maintaining education facilities data. It is written to help staff in state and local education agencies, and in public charter schools, design school facility information systems that support policymaking and decisionmaking; management and operation; capital budgeting and project management; public participation in school facilities planning; and the integration of facilities data into other education and municipal datasets. It includes best practices for the design, development, implementation, and use of facilities management information systems, along with a list of standard data elements.

Forum Guide to Ensuring Equal Access to Education Websites: Introduction to Electronic Information Accessibility Standards

This guide is designed for use by information technology administrators, data specialists, and program staff responsible for the content in data reports, as well as education leaders (e.g., administrators who prioritize tasks for technical and data staff) and other stakeholders who have an interest in seeing that our schools, school districts, and state education agencies operate in an effective and equitable manner for all constituents, regardless of disability status. It is intended to raise awareness in non-technical audiences and suggest best practices for complying with Section 508 goals at an operational level in schools, school districts, and state education agencies. It is not intended to recreate technical resources that already exist to facilitate Section 508 compliance.



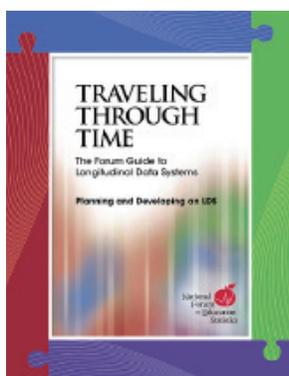
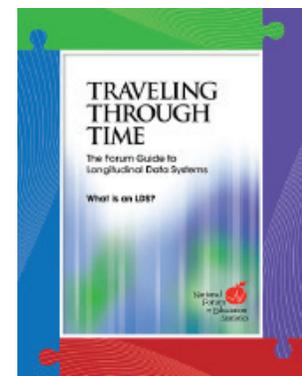


Forum Guide to Crime, Violence, and Discipline Incident Data

This publication focuses on the use of crime, violence, and discipline data to improve school safety. It presents strategies for implementing an incident database, including system design, management, and training; recommends a body of data elements, definitions, and code lists useful for collecting accurate and comparable data about crime, violence, and discipline; and offers suggestions for the effective presentation and reporting of data. This guide was created in collaboration with the Discipline Data Working Group of the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that it will be useful to states and districts reporting data to the Office for Civil Rights, the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and *EDFacts*.

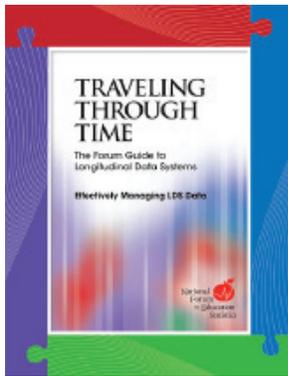
Traveling Through Time: The Forum Guide to Longitudinal Data Systems, Book I: What is an LDS?

By facilitating the collection and use of detailed, high-quality student- and staff-level data linked over time, longitudinal data systems (LDSs) hold promise for enhancing both the way education agencies use data to serve students and the way they do business, from the policy level to the school office and into the classroom. This document, the first installment of a four-part Forum Guide series on longitudinal data systems, focuses on the fundamental questions of what an LDS is (and what it is not), what steps should be taken to achieve a sound system, what components make up an ideal system, and why such a system is of value in education. The full series is intended to help state and local education agencies meet the many challenges involved in building robust LDSs, populating them with quality data, and using this new information to improve the education system.



Traveling Through Time: The Forum Guide to Longitudinal Data Systems, Book II: Planning and Developing an LDS

This document, the second installment of a four-part Forum Guide series on longitudinal data systems (LDSs), discusses the critical planning and development phases of an LDS project. It guides readers through the process of engaging a wide variety of stakeholders to create a vision for an LDS, build support for the undertaking, develop the system, and gauge how well it is meeting intended goals.

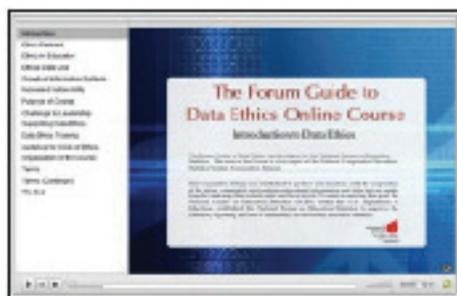


Traveling Through Time: The Forum Guide to Longitudinal Data Systems, Book III: Effectively Managing LDS Data

This document, the third installment of a four-part Forum Guide series on longitudinal data systems (LDSs), addresses the management of data. It focuses primarily on data governance, providing not only a definition and overview of the topic, but also a practical framework to help education agencies implement an effective data governance structure and process to ensure the quality and utility of the data. The book also explores ways to ensure data quality through staff training, validation procedures, and establishment and adherence to data standards. Finally, the document discusses the challenges of securing the LDS to protect individual privacy and the confidentiality of education records.

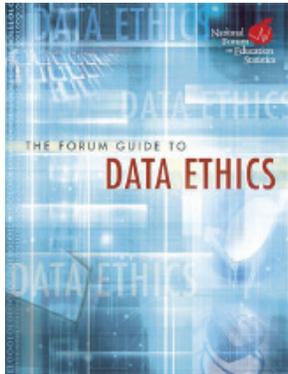
Traveling Through Time: The Forum Guide to Longitudinal Data Systems, Book IV: Advanced LDS Usage

This document, the final installment of a four-part Forum Guide series on longitudinal data systems (LDSs), addresses issues important to the effective use of longitudinal data. It focuses on turning student-level longitudinal data into actionable information at all levels of the education system.



Forum Guide to Data Ethics Online Course

While laws set the legal parameters that govern data use, ethics establish the fundamental principles of “right and wrong” that are critical to the appropriate management and use of education data in the technology age. This online course is based on *The Forum Guide to Data Ethics* and is focused on how ethical principles apply to education data. It is intended for any person who handles data in an education organization, including superintendents, chief information officers, principals, teachers, registrars, counselors, school board members, data managers, technology directors, information systems staff, data stewards, technical staff, office staff, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and vendors. While there is no requirement to follow these principles, the Forum hopes that the contents will prove a useful reference to data handlers and education leaders. Users will receive a certificate within two weeks after completing this course and passing the assessment.



Forum Guide to Data Ethics

Each and every day, educators collect and use data about students, staff, and schools. Some of these data originate in individual student and staff records that are confidential or otherwise sensitive. Even those data that are a matter of public record, such as aggregate school enrollment, need to be accessed, presented, and used in an ethically responsible manner. While laws set the legal parameters that govern data use, ethics establish fundamental principles of “right and wrong” that are critical to the appropriate management and use of education data in the technology age. This guide reflects the experience and judgment of experienced data managers. While there is no mandate to follow these principles, the authors hope that the contents will prove a useful reference to others in their work.

Crisis Data Management: A Forum Guide to Collecting and Managing Data About Displaced Students

This document provides guidelines that can be used by elementary and secondary education agencies to establish policies and procedures for collecting and managing education data before, during, and after a crisis.

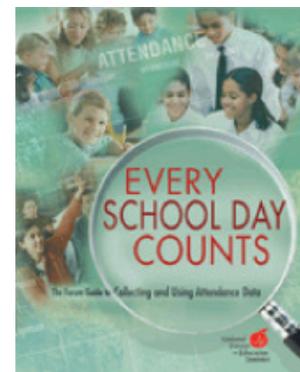


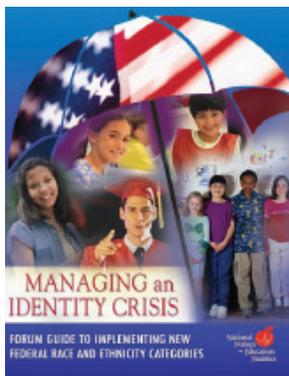
Forum Guide to Metadata: The Meaning Behind Education Data

This document offers best practice concepts, definitions, implementation strategies, and templates/tools for an audience of data, technology, and program staff in state and local education agencies. It is hoped that this resource will improve this audience’s awareness and understanding of metadata and, subsequently, the quality of the data in the systems they maintain.

Every School Day Counts: The Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data

This guide offers best practice suggestions on collecting and using student attendance data to improve performance. It includes a standard set of codes to make attendance data comparable across districts and states. The product also presents real-life examples of how attendance information has been used by school districts.



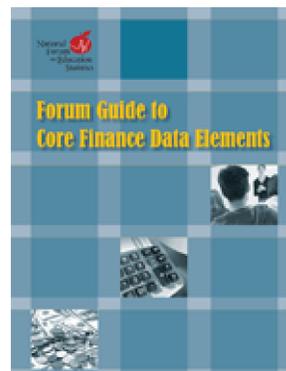


Managing an Identity Crisis: Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories

This best practice guide was developed to assist state and local education agencies in their implementation of the new federal race and ethnicity categories—thereby reducing redundant efforts within and across states, improving data comparability, and minimizing reporting burden. It serves as a toolkit from which users may select and adopt strategies that will help them quickly begin the process of implementation in their agencies.

Forum Guide to Core Finance Data Elements

This document provides an overview of key finance data terms. It also covers the two NCES public school finance surveys: the state-level National Public Education Financial Survey and the School District Finance Survey (or F-33). Differences and similarities between the two surveys are described. Chapter 3 contains definitions for key finance data elements. Chapter 4 contains a listing and definitions of key finance indicators and economic adjustment indexes.

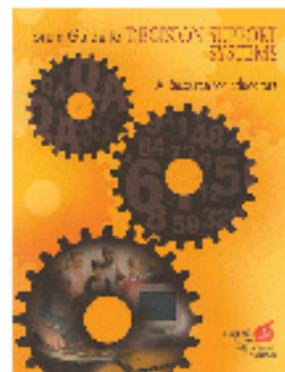


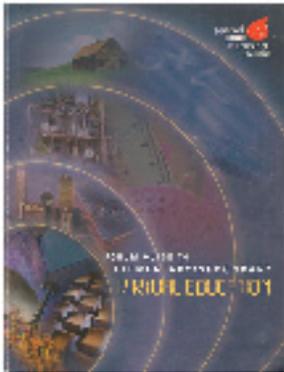
Forum Curriculum for Improving Education Data: A Resource for Local Education Agencies

This curriculum supports efforts to improve the quality of education data by serving as training materials for K12 school and district staff. It provides lesson plans, instructional handouts, and related resources, and presents concepts necessary to help schools develop a culture for improving data quality.

Forum Guide to Decision Support Systems: A Resource for Educators

This document was developed to remedy the lack of reliable, objective information available to the education community about decision support systems. It is intended to help readers better understand what decision support systems are, how they are configured, how they operate, and how they might be developed and implemented in an education setting.



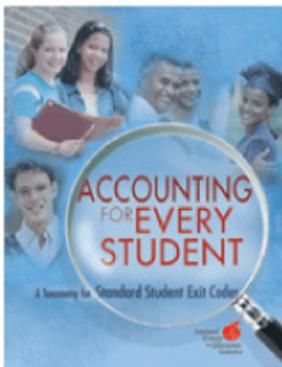
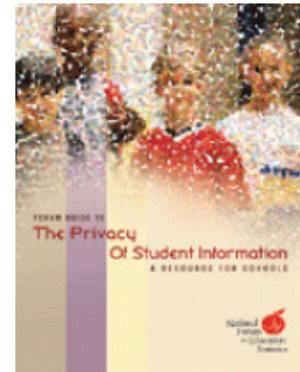


Forum Guide to Elementary/Secondary Virtual Education

This guide provides recommendations for collecting accurate, comparable, and useful data about virtual education in an elementary/secondary education setting.

Forum Guide to the Privacy of Student Information: A Resource for Schools

This guide helps school and local education agency staff to better understand and apply the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects privacy interests of parents and students in student education records.

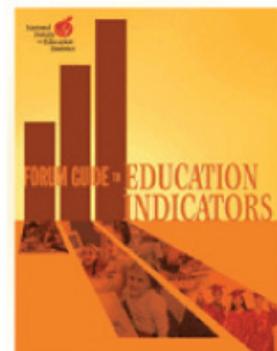


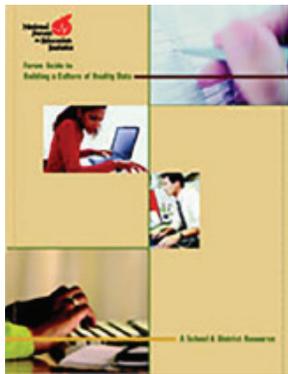
Accounting for Every Student: A Taxonomy for Standard Student Exit Codes

This best practice guide presents an exhaustive and mutually exclusive exit code taxonomy that accounts, at any single point in time, for all students enrolled (or previously enrolled) in a particular school or district. It is based on exit code systems in use in state education agencies across the nation and a thorough review of existing literature on the subject.

Forum Guide to Education Indicators

This guide provides encyclopedia-type entries for 44 commonly used education indicators. Each indicator entry contains a definition, recommended uses, usage caveats and cautions, related policy questions, data element components, a formula, commonly reported subgroups, and display suggestions. The document will help readers better understand how to appropriately develop, apply, and interpret commonly used education indicators.



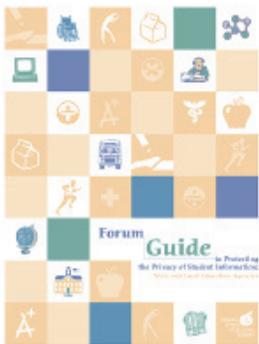


Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data: A School and District Resource

There has been a growing awareness that effective teaching, efficient schools, and quality data are linked. A “culture of quality data” is the belief that good data are an integral part of teaching, learning, and managing the school enterprise. This guide was developed by the Forum’s Data Quality Task Force to help schools and school districts improve the quality of data they collect and to provide processes for developing a culture of quality data by focusing on data entry—getting things right at the source. The quality of data will improve when all staff understand how the data will be used and how data become information. This guide will show how quality data can be achieved in a school or district through the collaborative efforts of all staff.

Forum Unified Education Technology Suite

The Forum Unified Education Technology Suite presents a practical, comprehensive, and tested approach to assessing, acquiring, instituting, managing, securing, and using technology in education settings. It will also help individuals who lack extensive experience with technology to develop a better understanding of the terminology, concepts, and fundamental issues influencing technology acquisition and implementation decisions. This online resource combines and updates four previously existing NCES/Forum publications: *Safeguarding Your Technology* (1998), *Technology @Your Fingertips, Version 2.0* (2001), *Technology in Schools* (2002), and *Weaving a Secure Web around Education* (2003).

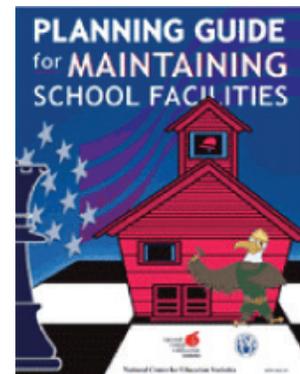


Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies

This guide presents a general overview of privacy laws and professional practices that apply to information collected for, and maintained in, student records. The document also provides an overview of key principles and concepts governing student privacy, summarizes federal privacy laws and recent changes to them, identifies issues concerning the release of information to both parents and external organizations, and suggests good data management practices for schools, districts, and state education agencies.

Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities

This guide was prepared by Forum members to help school facilities managers plan for efficient and effective operations. It provides practical advice on a range of topics, including how to do a facilities audit to know what you have, planning for maintenance that will ensure smooth operations and avoid costly surprises, managing staff and contractors, and evaluating maintenance efforts.





Appendix B: Useful Abbreviations

ED	U.S. Department of Education
EDFacts	EDFacts is a collaborative effort among ED, state education agencies, and industry partners to establish a process for states to directly submit elementary and secondary education data from the state, district, and school levels to ED by electronic means.
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.
Handbooks	The Student Data Handbook, Staff Data Handbook, etc. This body of data handbooks is collectively referred to as the “Handbooks” or the “NCES Handbooks.” They define standard education terms for students, staff, schools, local education agencies, intermediate education agencies, and state education agencies.
LEA	Local Education Agency (i.e., a school district)
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education) NCES sponsors the National Forum on Education Statistics to foster federal-state-local cooperative efforts to improve the accuracy, timeliness, and utility of education data.
NESAC	National Education Statistics Agenda Committee NESAC is a Forum standing committee that supports the development of comparable and effective elementary and secondary education data systems.
PPI	Policies, Programs, and Implementation Committee PPI is a Forum standing committee that addresses the policy implications of the Forum’s work on national education data issues.
SEA	State Education Agency (i.e., a state department of education)
TECH	Technology Committee TECH is a Forum standing committee that considers methods, especially technology-related strategies, for improving data collection and communication within states and between states and the federal government.