The Forum Voice

National Forum on Education Statistics

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings, Forum Members!

Happy New Year! As we turn the calendar to a new decade it is important to pause and reflect on what has been accomplished in an amazingly successful year of Forum work.

I am proud to share some of the Forum's many accomplishments over the past year, including the five new resources released in 2019. Published were the *Forum Guide to Personalized Learning Data*; the *Forum Guide to Planning for, Collecting, and Managing Data About Students Displaced by a Crisis;* and the *Forum Guide to Technology Management in Education*. All resources will provide great assistance to education agencies interested in enhancing their collection, management, and use of data, as well as management of technology. The Forum also

released *SCED Version 7*, updated the SCED Finder tool and Master List, and updated the SCED web pages. In addition, a new online course on data visualization was published that will help education agency staff learn how to communicate data in visual formats that are accessible, accurate, and actionable for a wide range of education stakeholders. The Forum has also hosted several webinars over the past few months on topics of interest to members.

This past fall, a team of current and past Forum leaders came together to update the Forum's strategic plan. The last update to the strategic plan was in 2006, and after reviewing the original, the team took some time to discuss how the work has evolved and reflected on the many projects the Forum has embraced. In addition, the team reviewed the number of publications that have been created and the cadence of that development over the years. The reflection on the Forum's accomplishments allowed the team to focus on where we should be in the future. Three goals were created that charts a path toward the future and supports the Forum work currently underway.

- Goal 1: Improve the quality of education data.
- Goal 2: Identify information management best practices related to current education topics and emerging trends.
- Goal 3: Promote the Forum and its tools as leading best practices.

Our leadership team looks forward to the adoption and implementation of the new strategic plan following NCES review.

In addition, it is my pleasure to recognize 23 new Forum members. Some members will attend their first Forum meeting this summer and I am confident will be embraced by Forum members when we meet in person.

- Libby Bonesteel, Montpelier Roxbury School District (VT)
- John Chadwick, New Mexico Public Education Department
- Jeff Dase, Decatur Public Schools District 61 (IL)
- Caitlin Davis, New Hampshire Department of Education
- Brenda M. Dixon, Illinois State Board of Education
- Amy Feygin, Regional Educational Laboratory—Midwest
- Michael Gerszewski, Bismarck Public School District (ND)
- Kathi Grossenbacher, Kansas State Department of Education
- Matt Hastings, Nebraska Department of Education
- John Jones, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
- Peggy Jones, Pasco County Schools (FL)
- Rachel Kruse, Iowa Department of Education
- Anita Larson, Minnesota Department of Education
- John Lindner, South Washington County Schools (MN)
- Kyle McKinney, Laramie County School District 1 (WY)
- Brent Nelson, Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education
- Rich Nye, Ogden School District (UT)
- James Richardson, Virgin Islands Department of Education
- Adam Steel, School Administrative Unit #39 (NH)
- Melanie Stewart, Milwaukee Public Schools (WI)
- Teri Ushijima, Hawaii State Department of Education
- Debbie Yedlin, Arizona Department of Education
- Shashi Yellambhatla, New Jersey Department of Education
- Steve Young, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

As we start the New Year, the Forum is currently focused on several exciting projects that reflect the interests and needs of Forum members as well as the broader education data community. New resources on data governance and exit codes are planned for release in the coming months. In addition, working groups are developing resources

on the topics of cybersecurity, data collection and reporting strategies, and education staff records. The Communications Subcommittee and the SCED Working Group also continue their work to develop new resources that will benefit Forum members and so many more.

Penultimately, I would like to thank you all for your time and commitment to the Forum. Our collective success reflects the commitment, contributions, and combined expertise of Forum members like yourself. Each of us plays an important role in advancing the Forum's mission to plan, recommend, and develop education data resources that support local, state, and national efforts to improve education throughout the United States. I am indeed honored to serve as Chair of the Forum, and I look forward to working with each of you as we continue to develop excellent products, resources, and services that will benefit the education community.

Dean Folkers, Forum Chair
Nebraska Department of Education

🍎 NEW FORUM RESOURCES

- ***Forum Data Visualization Online Course***
  The *Forum Data Visualization Online Course* is intended to help education agencies communicate data meaning in visual formats that are accessible, accurate, and actionable for a wide range of education stakeholders. The online course introduces the foundational concepts and practices of data visualization, describes how to apply key data visualization principles and practices to education data, and explains how the data visualization process can be implemented to support effective data analysis and communication throughout an education agency. It builds upon the *Forum Guide to Data Visualization: A Resource for Education Agencies*, published in 2016. The course is available on the Forum Online Courses web page at https://nces.ed.gov/forum/online_courses.asp.

- ***Forum Guide to Personalized Learning Data***
  The *Forum Guide to Personalized Learning Data* is designed to assist education agencies as they consider whether and how to use personalized learning. It provides an overview of personalized learning and describes best practices used by education agencies to collect data for personalized learning; to use those data to meet goals; and to support the relationships, resources, and systems needed for the effective use of data in personalized learning. It also highlights case studies from states, districts, and schools that have implemented or are transitioning to personalized learning. Because personalized learning is still a developing prospect in many locations, the concepts and examples provided are intended to help facilitate idea sharing and discussion.

- ***Forum Guide to Planning for, Collecting, and Managing Data About Students Displaced by a Crisis***
  The *Forum Guide to Planning for, Collecting, and Managing Data About Students Displaced by a Crisis* provides timely and useful best practice information for collecting and managing data about students who have temporarily or permanently enrolled in another educational setting because of a crisis. This resource updates the information included in the 2010 publication *Crisis Data Management: A Forum Guide to Collecting and Managing Data About Displaced Students*; highlights best practices that education agencies can adopt before, during, and after a crisis; and features case studies and real-world examples from agencies that have either experienced a crisis or received students who were displaced by a crisis.

- ***Forum Guide to Technology Management in Education***
  The *Forum Guide to Technology Management in Education* is designed to help education agency staff understand and apply best practices for selecting and implementing technology to support teaching and learning in the classroom. It addresses the widespread use and integration of technology in modern education systems, including administration (such as human resources and finances), reporting, infrastructure, student information systems (SISs), classroom software, and apps. This resource consists of a series of web pages to

allow users to quickly access the section or sections they need and to allow the Forum to easily update the text as information changes.

- ***School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Version 7* and Related Resources**
  The Forum's SCED Working Group released *SCED Version 7* in September 2019. This new version includes new and updated courses that were suggested by SCED users and subject matter experts in federal, state, and local education agencies. Following the release of *SCED Version 7*, the SCED Working Group also updated the SCED Master List and the SCED Finder tool with new and updated courses. SCED Finder helps users select SCED codes and assign elements and attributes to those codes; search SCED using keywords; browse the entire SCED; and create, edit, and export lists of courses. The working group added new search options to SCED Finder to improve search results. *SCED Version 7*, SCED Finder, SCED videos, and other SCED resources are all available at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/SCED.asp.

FORTHCOMING FORUM RESOURCES

The Forum has had a productive year, with projects on data governance and exit codes nearing completion. Two new Forum resources will be published in the coming months:

- ***Forum Guide to Data Governance***
  The *Forum Guide to Data Governance* highlights how data governance programs benefit education agencies and provides timely and useful best practices, examples, and resources for agencies implementing or updating their data governance programs. This resource provides an overview of data governance; discusses effective data governance practices, structures, and essential elements; and describes how to meet privacy and security requirements while also meeting data accessibility and sharing needs. It includes detailed case studies that offer an in-depth look at the challenges, successes, and lessons learned from education agencies in their data governance efforts.

- ***Forum Guide to Exit Codes***
  The *Forum Guide to Exit Codes* provides best practice information for tracking data about when students transferred, completed high school, dropped out, or otherwise exited an education agency. It defines exit codes and reviews their use in an education agency; provides an updated, voluntary, common taxonomy for exit codes; discusses best practices and methods for addressing specific challenges in exit codes data collection; and features case studies that highlight different education agencies' approaches to and experiences with exit coding. This resource updates the information included in the 2006 publication *Accounting for Every Student: A Taxonomy for Standard Student Exit Codes*.

CURRENT SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Forum subcommittees address ongoing issues beyond the scope of regular committee work, and Forum working groups address specific issues and develop resources. The Forum is currently supporting one subcommittee and four working groups:

- Communications Subcommittee

- Cybersecurity Working Group

- Strategies for Education Data Collection and Reporting (SEDCAR) Working Group

- Education Staff Records Working Group

- SCED Version 7 Working Group

Much of the Forum's work is collaborative, and resources are often developed in partnership with national, federal, regional, state, and local education agencies and stakeholders. To support the engagement of the full Forum in the

development of Forum resources, Forum working groups may share resource outlines and drafts with the Forum for feedback. Forum members are encouraged to review and comment on drafts and contribute applicable case studies and real-world examples from their agency.

UPDATES AND EVENTS

- **Summer 2019 Forum Meeting**
  The 2019 Summer Forum Meeting took place on July 22-24 in Washington, DC. Past Forum Chair Allen Miedema, Northshore School District (WA), welcomed Forum members to the meeting and introduced the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Commissioner James "Lynn" Woodworth, who provided an update on NCES work that focused on useful information for SEAs and LEAs. Joint session presentations addressed several timely topics in education data: Patrick Rooney, U.S. Department of Education (ED), DeDe Conner, Kentucky Department of Education, Lee Rabbitt, Pawtucket School Department (RI), and Linda Roska, Texas Education Agency, participated in a panel presentation on state, district, and school report cards; Frank E. Miller, Jr., and Tracy Koumare, ED, provided an update on federal student privacy; Steven Hernandez, chief information security officer at ED, discussed cybersecurity in SEAs and LEAs; and Georgia Hughes-Webb, West Virginia Department of Education, Marilyn King, Bozeman School District #7 (MT), Jan Petro, Colorado Department of Education, Dean Folkers, Nebraska Department of Education, Steve Smith, Cambridge Public Schools (MA), and Susan Williams, Virginia Department of Education, delivered a panel presentation on the Forum's new and forthcoming resources. Standing committees met to discuss topics of interest to committee members, including report cards, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), cybersecurity, student data privacy, data use, communication and reporting, ED*Facts*, social-emotional learning, and more. Detailed meeting notes—including notes and presentations for all joint sessions, standing committee, and Steering Committee meetings—are available on the Forum website at https://nces.ed.gov/forum/summer_19.asp.

- **Steering Committee and New Members' Virtual Meeting**
  The Steering Committee hosted a virtual meeting for new Forum members on September 6, 2019. Meeting attendees reviewed the summer 2019 Forum meeting, shared feedback on the Forum mentoring program, and discussed how to encourage new member engagement in Forum activities.

- **NCES Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates (EDGE) Program Webinar**
  Douglas Geverdt, NCES, delivered a virtual presentation to the Forum on September 25, 2019. Douglas provided information on the EDGE program and showed a live demonstration of the EDGE website and tools. A recording of the presentation is available on the Forum360 website at https://forum.grads360.org.

- **Data Privacy Virtual Training**
  The Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) led a virtual training session for the Forum on October 24, 2019. PTAC addressed several timely data privacy topics, including data deletion and destruction, data back-ups, third-party data use, and research requests. A recording of the presentation is available on the Forum360 website at https://forum.grads360.org.

- **Building Capacity for Local and State Education Agencies (LEAs and SEAs) to Support Personalized Learning Webinar**
  The Forum and the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Program joined efforts to deliver a virtual presentation on December 4, 2019. Forum members Dean Folkers, Nebraska Department of Education, Wendy Geller, Vermont Agency of Education, and Marilyn King, Bozeman Public Schools #7 (MT), were joined by their agency colleagues to share their agencies' experiences with personalized learning. The presentation highlighted the *Forum Guide to Personalized Learning Data* and provided helpful information for SEAs and LEAs who are considering implementing or have already implemented personalized learning within their agency. The webinar recording and presentation slides are available on the SLDS website at https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/18416.

- **Forum Website and Forum360 Webinar**
  Dean Folkers, Nebraska Department of Education, and Marilyn King, Bozeman School District #7 (MT), delivered a virtual presentation to the Forum on January 15, 2020. Dean and Marilyn provided an overview of the many resources available on the Forum website and provided information on Forum360.

- **Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Program Webinar**
  Chris Boccanfuso, Erin Pollard, and Janelle Sands, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, delivered a virtual presentation to the Forum on March 4, 2020. They provided an overview of the REL Program and an update on major projects and current activities of the RELs.

- **SCED Webinar**
  The Forum and the SLDS Program will join efforts to deliver a virtual presentation on April 8, 2020. SCED Working Group Chair Susan Williams, Virginia Department of Education, and SCED Working Group member Rachel Kruse, Iowa Department of Education, will share their agencies' experiences with SCED. The presentation will also provide an overview of SCED, including recent updates included in SCED Version 7, and demonstrate how to use the SCED Finder tool.

- **Planning for, Collecting, and Managing Data About Displaced Students Webinar**
  The Forum and the SLDS Program will join efforts to deliver a virtual presentation on May 20, 2020. Crisis Data Management Working Group Chair Jan Petro, Colorado Department of Education, and Crisis Data Management Working Group members Frank Cernik, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and Terri Hanson, Texas Education Agency, will provide best practice information on collecting and managing student data before, during, and after a crisis. The presentation will also include an overview of the *Forum Guide to Planning for, Collecting, and Managing Data About Students Displaced by a Crisis* and highlight practitioner perspectives on managing data on students who move into and out of their state, district, or school due to a crisis.

- **Upcoming Events**
  The Forum is currently planning Forum webinars and virtual meetings on topics of interest to Forum members. Event details, including dates, topics, and speakers, will be posted to the Forum360 website as more information becomes available.

- **Summer 2020 Forum Meeting**
  The Summer 2020 Forum meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 6th through Wednesday, July 8th in Washington, DC.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The *Forum Voice* is released as an electronic publication. To contact the Forum, email Ghedam Bairu.

LINKS TO PAST ISSUES OF THE FORUM VOICE