Quality data, like quality students, come from schools. While it is undeniably harder to teach a student than it is to collect statistics, there are procedures that can help us achieve our goals in both cases. Recently, there has been a growing awareness that effective teaching, efficient schools, and quality data are linked. The quality of information used to develop an instructional plan, run a school, plan a budget, or place a student in a class depends upon the school data clerk, teacher, counselor, and/or school secretary who enter data into a computer. With that in mind, the focus of this guide is on data entry — getting things right at the source.

The Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data recommends a practical process for developing a “Culture of Quality Data” within schools and school districts. It accomplishes this by providing one-page “Tip Sheets” that describe the roles of the various individuals and groups involved in developing a culture of quality data. These tip sheets have been developed for principals, teachers, office staff, school board members, superintendents, data stewards/coordinators, and technology support personnel. They are intended to be used in professional development meetings and as a way of reminding personnel of “best practices” with regard to quality data.

This publication is available electronically at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2005801.asp. Instructions for ordering print copies are also available on the National Forum on Education Statistics website.

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