



Forum Guide to Core Finance Data Elements

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This publication is intended to help readers—including educators and managers using school finance data, as well as researchers, policymakers, and the general public—to better understand common finance data elements and the measures derived from these data elements. It contributes to the series of NCES Forum guides that address elementary and secondary education data-related topic areas to help state and local educators and policymakers better understand key education data and their uses.

Designed to accompany the *Financial Accounting for Local and State School Systems: 2003 Edition*, which provides more extensive and detailed definitions of finance data elements categorized by account code as well as more detailed accounting information and guidelines, this guide establishes current and consistent terms and definitions used to maintain, collect, report, and exchange comparable information related to education finances. It is intended to serve as a reference for public and private education agencies and schools.

The data elements in this guide represent the most basic essential information concerning education finance that could be maintained at a school or district level for purposes of financial reporting and to make finance-related decisions. Rather than rigid protocol, its content is presented as sound practices or principles that should be interpreted and applied according to local, regional, state, and federal needs and requirements. Each school or administrative unit should determine its own information requirements and specific processing procedures with guidance from its state education agency and in support of the policies of its governing board and administrative officers.

This publication is available electronically at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2007801.asp. Instructions for ordering print copies are also available on the National Forum on Education Statistics website.

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