

The Forum Voice

Winter 2017

Volume 19

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EDITORIAL BOARD

[Ray Martin](#), Connecticut Department of Education

[Marilyn King](#), Bozeman School District #7 (MT)

[Steve Smith](#), Cambridge Public Schools (MA)

[Georgia Hughes-Webb](#), West Virginia Department of Education



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Forum Members:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Forum for what promises to be another productive and engaging year.

The success of the Forum is based on the hard work, collaboration, and expertise you contribute as Forum members. This year, we welcomed many returning members as well as 28 new members who share the Forum's commitment to developing education resources that support local, state, and national efforts to improve K-12 education in the United States. I am eager to engage our new members in the work of the Forum, and I encourage established members to reach out and welcome them whenever you have the opportunity.

I would like to congratulate you all on the Forum's recent accomplishments. In the past year, the Forum has responded to the need for new resources on a wide variety of topics, including virtual education, data privacy, course codes, disaggregating racial/ethnic data, and data visualization. We've also expanded our outreach by developing two videos: an overview of the Forum and an introduction to the School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED).

Our members help ensure that Forum resources are widely available to staff in federal, state, and local education agencies by sharing resources with colleagues, delivering presentations at meetings, and traveling to conferences. We recently learned that in Virginia, Susan Williams and Rachel Johnson include information on Forum publications

in e-newsletters to colleagues. In Montana, Marilyn King shares information at school administrators' conferences, and she and Brett Carter from the Montana Office of Public Instruction recently delivered presentations on both SCED and the new *Forum Guide to Education Data Privacy*. TECH Chair Mike Hopkins represented the Forum at the Conference on School Networking, and PPI Vice Chair Steve Smith represented the Forum at the Council of Chief State School Officers' National Conference on Student Assessment. These are only a few examples of our members' dedication to sharing the work of the Forum.

We have several new projects underway for the upcoming year. The SCED Working Group has begun development of SCED Version 5, the Civil Rights Data Working Group is developing a new resource on state and local approaches to reporting civil rights data, and the Attendance Data Working Group is updating the 2009 Forum resource, *Every School Day Counts: The Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data*. These new projects, as well as our completed projects, are described in this volume of *The Forum Voice*.

Thank you for reading this issue of *The Forum Voice*, and to the Editorial Board members for their assistance. I look forward to working with you during my term as Chair and seeing you all at our annual summer meeting in Washington, DC.

Laurel Krsek, Forum Chair
San Ramon Valley Unified School District (CA)



NEW FORUM RESOURCES

- *Forum Guide to Data Visualization: A Resource for Education Agencies*

The Forum's Data Visualization Working Group published the *Forum Guide to Data Visualization: A Resource for Education Agencies* in October 2016. It is available on the Forum's website at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2017016.asp and it is featured on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Blog at <http://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/data-visualization-helping-education-agencies-communicate-data-meaning-to-stakeholders>. This new publication recommends sound data visualization practices to help education agencies analyze the meaning of data and, subsequently, present data in a format that is appropriate for public audiences. It introduces the concept of data visualization and explains the ways in which data visualization can improve how education data are viewed, analyzed, communicated, and understood. It also describes key data visualization principles and practices that can be applied to education data and explains how the data visualization process can be implemented throughout an education agency.

- *Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Disaggregated Data on Racial/Ethnic Subgroups*

The Forum's Data Disaggregation of Racial/Ethnic Subgroups Working Group published the *Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Disaggregated Data on Racial /Ethnic Subgroups* in September 2016. It is available on the Forum's website at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2017017.asp and is featured on the NCES Blog at <http://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/new-release-forum-guide-to-collecting-and-using-disaggregated-data-on-racial-ethnic-subgroups>. This new publication was designed to help state and local education agency (SEA and LEA) personnel learn more about data disaggregation in the field of education and determine whether and how to implement or continue a data disaggregation project. It identifies some of the overarching benefits and challenges involved in data disaggregation and recommends practices for disaggregating racial/ethnic data in SEAs and LEAs. The document is informed by and includes real-world examples from SEAs and LEAs that have disaggregated data for various racial/ethnic subgroups in order to improve education outcomes.

- *Forum Guide to Education Data Privacy*

The Forum's Education Data Privacy Working Group published the *Forum Guide to Education Data Privacy* in July 2016. It is available on the Forum's website at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2016096.asp and is featured on the NCES Blog at <http://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/a-new-guide-to-education-data-privacy>. This publication presents an overview of education data privacy and features 11 case studies designed to assist schools and education agencies in protecting the confidentiality of student data. The case studies address common challenges schools face in a variety of situations, such as using online instructional apps, responding to requests for student contact information, sharing student data within schools, sharing data among community school partners, using student data in presentations and training materials, and using social media. Each case study includes information on how districts managed the challenge and what lessons were learned, and identifies action steps for other agencies to consider.

- *School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Version 4 and Related Resources*

The Forum's SCED Working Group released SCED Version 4 in September 2016. This new version focused on updates to Subject Areas that had not been reviewed since SCED Version 1. Throughout the revision process, the Working Group collaborated with subject matter experts in federal, state, and local education agencies, as well as other groups including the College Board, the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, the International Baccalaureate Organization, the National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Language, the National Coalition for Family and Consumer Sciences Education, the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language, and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

Following the release of SCED Version 4, the Forum also updated the SCED Finder tool, which helps users select SCED codes and then assign elements and attributes to those codes. The tool was originally released with SCED Version 3 and has since been revised to reflect new and updated SCED Version 4 courses. Users can search SCED using keywords or browse the entire SCED to find the appropriate course code. The tool allows users to create, edit, and export lists of courses with the selected course code and user-identified SCED elements. SCED Finder was developed through the collaboration of the Forum and the NCES Transcript Studies.

SCED Version 4, SCED Finder, and other SCED resources are all available at <http://nces.ed.gov/forum/SCED.asp>.

- *SCED Video*

The SCED Working Group developed an introductory video that explains the benefits of SCED and provides information on SCED resources. It begins by identifying the need for common course codes and then describes the development of SCED and the ways that SEAs and LEAs have used SCED to benefit their agencies. It includes a demonstration of how the SCED Elements are organized to provide course information and briefly discusses the use of optional elements, called attributes, which SEAs and LEAs can add if they need to communicate additional information about a course. The video is intended as the first in a series; the second video will focus on course coding. The video is available on the Forum's SCED webpage at <http://nces.ed.gov/forum/SCED.asp>.

- *Forum Video*

The Forum developed a new video, *About the Forum*, to provide information on the work of the Forum to Forum stakeholders in federal, state, and local agencies, as well as associates and others interested in Forum resources. The video opens by identifying the legislation that led to the creation of the Forum and then discusses the Forum's purpose, membership, organizational structure, and work processes. It highlights the resources produced by the Forum and includes the Forum website address where viewers can access and download these resources.



CURRENT WORKING GROUPS

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. Forum working groups are established to address specific issues and develop resources. The Forum is currently supporting three working groups:

- The Forum convened the Civil Rights Data Working Group to identify best practices that SEAs and LEAs have developed to collect and report civil rights data. The group will develop a new resource that complements the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) technical assistance resources currently available from Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and NCES. This resource will provide SEAs and LEAs with a better understanding of the importance of collecting high-quality civil rights data and techniques for improving collection and reporting practices while also reducing LEA burdens. The group, which includes representatives from SEAs, LEAs, NCES, and the OCR, held a kickoff meeting at NCES on December 12, 2016.
- The Forum convened the Attendance Data Working Group to continue discussions held at the 2016 annual Forum meeting on the topic of chronic absenteeism. The Working Group determined that a Forum resource could assist SEAs and LEAs with attendance data collection and reporting. The Working Group is developing a resource that will identify best practices in attendance data collection and reporting; discuss the effective use of data to inform interventions; provide case studies from schools, districts, and states that have successfully improved attendance rates; and update the information in *Every School Day Counts: The Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data*, published in 2009. The group plans to have the resource ready for Forum review in summer 2017.
- The Forum's School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Working Group met at NCES on November 14, 2016 to continue developing new SCED resources and to begin planning SCED Version 5. SCED must reflect up-to-date course offerings to remain relevant, and updates must be implemented in a manner that maintains the structure and integrity of the established SCED. The SCED Working Group regularly reviews and updates SCED based on the needs of SCED users. The Working Group is currently finalizing three new resources that will assist SCED users: a Frequently Asked Questions document, a second video, and a master list of all courses used in every version of SCED. The Working Group is also planning a new series of case studies that will focus on SCED implementation and use.

As part of the SCED Version 5 revision, the Working Group has reached out to Forum members for assistance in determining whether there are interdisciplinary or early childhood education courses that should be considered for inclusion in SCED. The group also plans to reach out to subject matter experts in other fields to identify any needed updates to SCED courses. The SCED Version 5 revision will also include a review of standardized courses, including Project Lead the Way, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses, to ensure that these courses are accurate and up-to-date. The complete SCED Version 5 revision is expected to be completed in Fall 2017. Upon Forum and NCES approval of the revision, the Working Group will update SCED Finder.



PAST EVENTS

- NESAC Virtual Meeting, December 14, 2016
Members of the NESAC committee, led by Chair Susan Williams, Virginia Department of Education, and Vice-Chair Marilyn King, Bozeman Public Schools (MT), met on December 14, 2016, from 2-3 pm (EST). The chairs began the meeting by inviting members to introduce themselves and discuss whether their SEAs and LEAs are tracking and measuring out-of-school learning. The group then reviewed the NESAC mission and devoted time to discussing data inventories.
- PPI Virtual Meeting, December 9, 2016
Members of the PPI committee, led by Chair Levette Williams, Georgia Department of Education, and Vice-Chair Steve Smith, Cambridge Public Schools (MA), met on December 9, 2016, from 2-3 pm (EST). The group reviewed the Summer Forum Meeting and the PPI mission before discussing the CRDC, student data privacy, and other topics of interest to PPI members.
- TECH Virtual Meeting, December 8, 2016
Members of the TECH committee, led by Chair Mike Hopkins, Rochester School Department (NH), and Vice-Chair Georgia Hughes-Webb, West Virginia Department of Education, met on December 8, 2016, from 2-3 pm (EST). Topics included a discussion about how SEA and LEA technology partnerships relate to data, as well as a review of the TECH mission and a Forum update.
- New Member Virtual Meeting, December 5, 2016
In the past year, the Forum has welcomed 28 new members. The Steering Committee is committed to engaging these new members in Forum work and held a virtual meeting with them on Monday, December 5, 2016, from 1-2 pm (EST). The meeting began with a review of the Forum mission, followed by a discussion of the Forum website. New members were encouraged to share their thoughts on ways to make the website more user-friendly. Steering Committee members also discussed the methods they use for disseminating information about the Forum and its resources and encouraged new members to promote Forum resources in their education agencies.
- TECH Virtual Meeting, May 19, 2016
On May 19, 2016, then-TECH Chair Dean Folkers, Nebraska Department of Education, and then-Vice-Chair James Hawbaker, Appleton Area School District (WI), ran a virtual meeting in anticipation of the upcoming Summer Forum. Dean first led a discussion on the challenges each call participant faces in their daily work. This conversation informed the second half of the meeting, an overview of TECH agenda topics. Planned presentations and discussions included topics such as *EDFacts* and ESSA, out-of-school access to digital learning resources, virtual education data in NCES surveys, and personalized learning. Additional topics of interest to TECH members included insight into new reporting requirements under ESSA and integration between virtual and “brick-and-mortar” schools with respect to the exchange of data.
- NESAC Virtual Meeting, May 17, 2016
On May 17, 2016, then-NESAC Chair Kristina Martin, Macomb Intermediate School District (MI), and then-Vice-Chair Susan Williams, Virginia Department of Education, led a presentation and discussion on the NESAC summer agenda topics. The NESAC agenda included committee discussions on topics such as chronic absenteeism data, keeping data systems up-to-date, and LEA approaches to school climate. In addition, speakers were invited to discuss topics such as ESSA, *EDFacts*, CRDC, Office of Educational Technology initiatives, and

privacy protections in public data reporting. NESAC members put forth a number of areas for future meetings, including new collection and reporting requirements under ESSA, the issue of military connectedness, the federal response to issues relating to transgender students, the digital divide, and guidance on new privacy protections.

- PPI Virtual Meeting, March 4, 2016

On March 4, 2016, David Weinberger, Yonkers Public Schools (NY), and Levette Williams, Georgia Department of Education, gave an update and presentation on the *Forum Guide to Education Data Privacy*. David reviewed the purpose of the Privacy Working Group and the structure, content, and timeline for completion. The PPI Committee discussed topic areas from the Guide, including whether or not SEAs and LEAs have privacy programs in place to provide guidance and training to school staff, how SEAs and LEAs manage online learning applications, and how SEAs and LEAs train school staff on directory information.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The *Forum Voice* is released as an electronic publication. To contact the Forum, email [Ghedam Bairu](mailto:Ghedam.Bairu).

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