The Forum Voice

National Forum on Education Statistics

CONTENTS

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Forum Members:

Congratulations on a productive past year of Forum work, and welcome to a new year of exciting developments in education data!

I am proud to announce some of the many accomplishments of the Forum over the last year. We recently released two new Forum guides: The *Forum Guide to Early Warning Systems* and the *Forum Guide to Facility Information Management: A Resource for State and Local Education Agencies*. These resources will be a great help to education agencies interested in developing early warning systems to support struggling students and prevent dropouts, and in learning more about planning, maintaining, and upgrading their school facility information systems. We also released SCED Version 6, and we updated the SCED Finder tool and added new resources to the SCED web page.

Through these new SCED developments, we are keeping up to date with trends in courses and course coding and meeting the changing needs of education agencies.

We have many things to look forward to in 2019. The Communications Subcommittee met in October 2018 and made plans to continue its excellent work this year. We have four working groups that will continue to do a lot of exciting work in the coming year: The Crisis Data Management Working Group, the Data Governance Working Group, the Exit Codes Working Group, and the SCED Version 7 Working Group.

You can look forward to several forthcoming Forum resources during the next year. SCED just published two case studies from states, *Iowa's SCED Regional Course Coding Workshops* and *Virginia's Use of SCED State-Specific Course Codes*. Two Forum guides are on track to be published soon: The *Forum Guide to Education Technology* and a new personalized learning data resource (title forthcoming). Additionally, we will be publishing a new online course, the Forum Data Visualization Online Course. As always, the Forum360 website (https://forum.grads360.org) is a great resource for learning about new developments and staying in touch with other Forum members.

In parting, I would like to say to all Forum members: thank you for your time and commitment to education data. Your time is appreciated, and your work is valued. Keep up the great work in communicating about Forum activities and resources to the other education professionals with whom you maintain contact. I enjoyed seeing many of you in person at the 2018 Summer Forum Meeting, and I look forward to seeing and working with you again in 2019!

Allen Miedema, Forum Chair
Northshore School District (WA)

DISSEMINATING FORUM RESOURCES IN STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (SEAS AND LEAS)

The Forum develops and offers free resources on a variety of issues that affect schools, school districts, and state education agencies, including best practice publications, online courses, and videos. All Forum members are responsible for promoting and disseminating Forum products to staff, members, and subject matter experts within their agency, organization, or home state through relevant activities, networks, and professional meetings. Conferences, training sessions, and other activities provide excellent opportunities to inform colleagues about the Forum and Forum products. The Forum maintains an Outreach Toolkit, which is intended to assist Forum members with resource promotion and dissemination when making presentations and conducting other outreach activities. The Toolkit offers several downloadable promotional tools, including presentations and publication summaries.

The Forum's Communications Subcommittee aims to identify and develop methods for advancing Forum communications, including resource promotion and dissemination. The Subcommittee met most recently in Washington, DC, on October 29, 2018, to address the Forum's evolving communications needs; consider the ways in which the Forum communicates with its members, potential partner organizations, and other audiences; and work to promote the dissemination of information about the Forum and Forum publications. During the meeting, members identified several actions and strategies that could facilitate more effective outreach to member organizations and other audiences that can benefit from Forum resources. Members also shared several methods that they use to disseminate Forum resources to their agency colleagues and professional networks, including

- posting Forum resources to their agency's website;
- referring colleagues to specific Forum resources for guidance on a particular data issue;
- citing Forum resources during meetings and training sessions;
- disseminating Forum resources through relevant email lists;
- sharing Forum resources with agency staff, agency leadership, and peer networks;
- presenting Forum resources at regional meetings, workshops, and conferences;

- sharing draft resources with agency colleagues for feedback;

- publicizing Forum resources through weekly newsletters and social media channels; and

- using Forum courses in staff training.

Since their October 2018 meeting, the subcommittee has been working to update and enhance communications materials that Forum members can use to help raise awareness of the Forum among the broader education community. The subcommittee recently developed two annotated presentations to assist Forum members and others engaged in outreach activities on behalf of the Forum. The first presentation offers an introduction to the Forum; the second presentation provides an overview of the free resources developed by the Forum. These presentation materials are available on the Forum website for use by Forum members. In addition, recommendations from the subcommittee, Forum Steering Committee, and other Forum groups informed recent updates to the Forum website. These updates highlight new Forum resources, aid users in identifying Forum publications, and provide members with easy access to frequently used pages. Additional website updates will continue to help to promote the dissemination of Forum information by improving the overall usability of the website.

🍎 NEW FORUM RESOURCES

- ***Forum Guide to Facility Information Management: A Resource for State and Local Education Agencies***
  The *Forum Guide to Facility Information Management: A Resource for State and Local Education Agencies* is designed to help education agencies plan, design, build, use, and improve their facility information systems. This resource includes a review of why school facilities data matter; recommends a five-step process that an education agency can undertake to develop a robust facility information system around goals, objectives, and indicators; includes selected measures of school facilities quality; and offers a logical approach to organizing facility and site data elements associated with facility identification, condition, design, utilization, management, and budget and finance. It builds upon information included in the 2012 publication *Forum Guide to Facilities Information Management: A Resource for State and Local Education Agencies*.

- ***Forum Guide to Early Warning Systems***
  The *Forum Guide to Early Warning Systems* is designed to help education agencies plan, develop, implement, and use an early warning system in their agency. This resource includes a review of early warning systems and their use in education agencies; explains the role of early warning indicators, quality data, and analytical models in early warning systems; describes how to adopt an effective system planning process; and recommends best practices for early warning system development, implementation, and use. It also highlights seven case studies from SEAs and LEAs who have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, an early warning system.

- **School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Version 6 and Related Resources**
  The Forum's SCED Working Group released SCED Version 6 in October 2018. This new version focused on updates to Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses as well as a new cybersecurity course. Throughout the revision process, the working group collaborated with subject matter experts in federal, state, and local education agencies. Following the release of SCED Version 6, the Forum also updated 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 with the selected course code and user-identified SCED elements. In addition, the SCED Working Group added new search options to SCED Finder to improve search results. SCED Version 6, SCED Finder, SCED videos, and other SCED resources are all available at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/SCED.asp.

🍎 SCHOOL COURSES FOR THE EXCHANGE OF DATA (SCED) CASE STUDIES

The Forum maintains and develops SCED to help education agencies collect and manage student coursetaking data in a way that is easily understood, compared, and exchanged across systems. SCED also supports education research by providing a way to compare course offerings and coursetaking patterns across education agencies. SCED is widely used because it is flexible enough to meet the needs of different agencies. For example, some education agencies adopt SCED in the form in which it is published by the Forum; some adopt SCED with modifications, such as optional attributes; and others use SCED as a map between different course coding systems.

The Forum's SCED Working Group identifies best practices and develops new resources to help SCED users determine how they can use SCED codes to meet their particular needs. Recently, the working group has begun documenting case studies that demonstrate different uses of SCED. The first two case studies focus on Iowa's approach to updating SCED codes across the state and Virginia's approach to developing SCED codes for state-specific courses.

- ***Iowa's SCED Regional Course Coding Workshops***: The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) implemented SCED beginning with SCED Version 1, which included secondary course codes (published in 2007) and prior-to-secondary course codes (published in 2011). While IDOE still uses the original prior-to-secondary SCED codes, it has been transitioning to updated secondary school codes as new versions of SCED are released. This case study focuses on IDOE's process for implementing new high school course codes through the use of in-person, regional course coding workshops.

- ***Virginia's Use of SCED State-Specific Course Codes***: SCED is designed for widespread use, but even with frequent updates, it cannot include codes for every course offered in every state. To accommodate courses that are not included, SCED has a set of designated course codes that states can use for courses that either do not yet exist in SCED or are only applicable to their state. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) uses SCED but found that several courses in the state do not align well with any of the existing SCED codes. This case study focuses on VDOE's development and use of state-specific course codes.

SCED case studies are published on the Forum website at https://nces.ed.gov/forum/sced_case_studies.asp.

🍎 FORTHCOMING FORUM RESOURCES

The Forum has had a productive year, with projects on education technology, personalized learning data, and data visualization nearing completion. Three new Forum resources will be published in the coming months:

- ***Forum Guide to Education Technology***
  The *Forum Guide to Education Technology* is designed to help education agencies with technology decisionmaking, particularly with understanding and applying best practices for selecting and implementing technology to support teaching and learning in the classroom. This resource addresses the widespread use and integration of technology in modern education systems including, but not limited to, administration (such as human resources and finances), reporting, infrastructure, student information systems, classroom software, and apps. It focuses on technology governance and planning, including needs assessment, as well as technology implementation, integration, maintenance, support, training, and evaluation.

- **New Personalized Learning Data Resource**
  This new resource, which has yet to be named, is designed to help education agency staff learn more about personalized learning and consider whether and how to implement and expand personalized learning in schools and districts. This resource reviews key concepts related to personalized learning, provides best practice information on collecting and using data for personalized learning, and reviews strategies to support personalized learning. It also includes case studies from schools, districts, and states that have implemented personalized learning.

- **Forum Data Visualization Online Course**
  The Forum Data Visualization Online Course is a self-paced, interactive online course based on content

published in the *Forum Guide to Data Visualization: A Resource for Education Agencies*. The course explains data visualization and its application in education agencies, introduces the four key principles of data visualization, and explains the six-step process for data visualization. The course also features interactive exercises to help users learn key concepts and characteristics of effective data visualizations. The course includes a voluntary assessment for users who wish to complete the course for professional development.

🍎 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
- Crisis Data Management Working Group
- Data Governance Working Group
- Exit Codes 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 2018 Forum Meeting**
  The 2018 Summer Forum Meeting took place on July 23-25 in Washington, DC. Past Forum Chair Raymond Martin, Connecticut State Department of Education, welcomed Forum members to the meeting and introduced NCES Commissioner James "Lynn" Woodworth, who provided an update on NCES work that focused on future NCES plans and activities. Joint session presentations addressed several timely topics in education data: Steven Hernandez, chief information security officer at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), discussed cybersecurity in SEAs and LEAs; Michael Hopkins, Rochester School Department (NH), led an interactive session on data visualization; and Ken Hutchins, Brandywine School District (DE), and Adrian L. Peoples, Delaware Department of Education, discussed their work establishing and co-chairing the Delaware Education Data Forum. Standing committees met to discuss topics of interest to committee members, including cybersecurity, data privacy, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), federal data policy and collections, Forum products and practices, SEA-LEA collaboration, 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_18.asp.

- **Strategies for Leveraging SCED to Support SEA and LEA Goals Webinar**
  The Forum and the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Program joined efforts to deliver a virtual presentation on December 10, 2018. SCED Working Group Chair Susan Williams, Virginia Department of Education, and SCED Working Group members Marilyn King, Bozeman School District #7 (MT), and Rachel Kruse, Iowa Department of Education, represented the Forum. The presentation provided helpful information for SEAs and LEAs interested in implementing SCED, as well as those with existing SCED implementations that wanted to hear more about innovative uses and efficiencies. The webinar summary, presentation slides, and recording are available on the SLDS website at https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/17590.

- **NESAC Virtual Meeting**
  The National Education Statistics Agenda Committee (NESAC) held a virtual meeting on December 13, 2018. NESAC Chair Laura Boudreaux, Louisiana Department of Education, facilitated a discussion on how to verify student transfers. NESAC is developing a short 1-2-page summary resource on the discussion topic, which will be shared with the Exit Codes Working Group and posted to the Forum 360 website at https://forum.grads360.org.

- **TECH Committee Virtual Meeting**
  The Technology (TECH) Committee held a virtual meeting on December 14, 2018. TECH Chair Ken Hutchins, Brandywine School District (DE), facilitated a discussion on the intersection of cybersecurity and the broader security context. TECH is developing a short 1-2-page summary resource on the discussion topic, which will be posted to the Forum 360 website at https://forum.grads360.org.

- **PPI Committee Virtual Meetings**
  The Policies, Programs, and Implementation (PPI) Committee held two virtual meetings on January 16, 2019, and February 13, 2019. PPI Chair Charlotte Ellis, Maine State Department of Education, facilitated discussions on the topic of data governance. PPI is developing a short 1-2-page summary resource on the discussion topic, which will be shared with the Data Governance Working Group and posted to the Forum 360 website at https://forum.grads360.org.

- **Upcoming Events**
  The Forum is currently planning Forum webinars and standing committee virtual meetings on topics of interest to Forum members. Event details, including dates, topics, and speakers, will be posted to the Forum 360 website as more information becomes available.

- **Summer 2019 Forum Meeting – place and time to be determined**

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

Winter 2018	Spring 2012	Fall 2008	Fall 2004	Spring 2001
Winter 2017	Fall 2011	Spring 2008	Spring 2004	Fall 2000
Winter 2016	Spring 2011	Fall 2007	Fall 2003	Spring 2000
Winter 2015	Fall 2010	Spring 2007	Spring 2003	Fall 1999
Spring 2014	Spring 2010	Fall 2006	Fall 2002	Spring 1999
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Winter 2013	Spring 2009	Spring 2005	Fall 2001	