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Title Slide: Getting Started with the Common Core of Data (CCD)

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This module introduces users to the data collected across the Common Core of Data, or CCD, and the resulting micro-level data files. It describes the available public-use data including files, reports, and tables. The module will identify Restricted-use data files and describe how to apply for the license should these data be needed. In addition, this module will describe the resources available to learn more about the data documentation and data files.

Information presented in this module will be helpful for understanding some of the more detailed information presented in subsequent CCD modules. For this reason, users who are planning to proceed through the modules and use CCD data for analytic purposes are strongly encouraged to complete this module first.

Throughout this module, underlined blue screen text indicates a link to additional resources.

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The Common Core of Data (CCD) is the Department of Education's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States. CCD is a comprehensive, annual, national statistical database of all public elementary and secondary schools and school districts that contains data that are designed to be comparable across all states. The methodology for collecting nonfiscal and fiscal data are similar, but there are some differences to note. For example, each state submits nonfiscal data via ED*Facts* for the CCD. Fiscal data, however, are submitted via the Census Bureau. The data are reviewed using various reports from the analysts, including comparing data from different levels (school compared to district for example). Based on these findings, data files are created that meet NCES quality standards.

Note that individual student-level data are not available through the CCD.

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The CCD Universe comprises five surveys. First, the Public School Universe contains information on all public elementary and secondary schools in operation during a school year including school location and type, enrollment by grade and student characteristics, and the number of classroom teachers. Second, the School district (also referred to as the Local Education Agency, or LEA) Universe has information for the universe of LEAs including phone number, location and type of agency, current number of students, and number of high school graduates and completers in the previous year. Third, State Nonfiscal Data contains information on all students and staff at the state level including number of students by grade level, full-time equivalent staff by major employment category, and high school graduates and completers in the previous year. Fourth, State Fiscal Data maintain detailed data at the state level including average

daily attendance, school district revenues by source (local, state, and federal), and expenditures by function (instruction, support services, and non-instruction) and subfunction (e.g. school administration). And fifth, School District Fiscal Data has detailed data by school district, including revenues by source and expenditures by function and subfunction, and enrollment.

Each of these will be described in more detail after we present some CCD data basics.

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A great deal of information is accessible from publicly available documents and tables from the CCD website. In addition, the Common Core of Data data files can be downloaded as public-use datasets from the CCD web page. For researchers who require access to the Restricted-use files, they are available with a license. Researchers who are uncertain of which data file is right for their analytic purposes should first examine the public-use files. Each of these resources will be described in detail in the next few slides.

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A number of publications and reports are available for researchers. School and Agency reports, State Nonfiscal reports, District Fiscal reports, and State Fiscal reports are published and available on the CCD homepage. **School and Agency reports** give state and national totals from the CCD School and Agency file. These totals include: schools and their characteristics (i.e., Type; Magnet, Charter, and Title I status; Urbanicity; Size), students, federal program participation (e.g., Free and Reduced Lunch, Migrant, English language learners, and Individualized Education Programs), and district size. **State Nonfiscal reports** include state totals for students (totals and by race/ethnicity), graduates, and staff counts. **District fiscal reports** contain data on revenues and expenditures per pupil made by school districts. Median per pupil revenue and expenditure data are included. There are also discussions on the different types of school districts, and other resources that may be helpful in analyzing school district level data. **State Fiscal reports** contain total revenues and expenditures for public education made by states. This includes revenues by source and expenditures by function and object, including current expenditures per pupil and instructional expenditures. Recent HTML versions contain tables that can be downloaded as Excel files. The Dropouts, Completers, and graduation rate reports present the number and percentage of students dropping out or completing public school (among states that reported dropouts and completers).

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Historical publications are also available. Although the **Largest District Reports** has been discontinued, many reports that provide basic descriptive information about the largest school districts (as ranked by student membership) in the United States can still be accessed. The **Teacher Compensation Reports** are brief publications that contain summary data from the research and development effort to collect individual salary and demographic data on public school teachers. Median salaries and counts for different groupings by experience, age, race, and gender are presented. The Directory Reports

publication has also been discontinued, but the information presented in the reports from 1992-93 to 2002-03 is still accessible. **The Directory Reports** provided listings of local public school systems and other education agencies. And **finally, the Historical Overview Reports** have also been discontinued, however the reports from 1993-94 through 2001-02 are still available and include key statistics on public elementary and secondary schools and agencies.

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The Data Tables link will take users to a unique set of CCD data tables that do not appear in other reports or documentation. Tables are available for Dropout/Completers, Nonfiscal data, and Fiscal data.

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The CCD public-use datasets can be downloaded from the CCD home page. While the CCD collect data using five universe surveys, it produces seven data sets, or files, of nonfiscal and fiscal data. Nonfiscal data are available at the school, district and state levels. Fiscal data are available at the district and state levels. Dropout and completer data are available at the district and state levels. In the coming slides, we will describe what is contained in each of these data sets.

The Dropout and Completer files and the Teacher Compensation Survey contain detailed data that could potentially be used to identify individuals. Data in the public use versions of these files have been aggregated to higher levels to minimize this disclosure risk. Restricted-use files provide more granular data, although subject to some perturbation. Restricted-use files are available with a license. Researchers who are uncertain of which data file is right for their analytic purposes should first examine the public-use files.

The Elementary/Secondary Information System, or ElSi, can be used to conduct analyses without accessing data directly. This data tool will be that discussed in detail in the module titled, **Using Elementary/Secondary Information System (ElSi) to Access CCD Data**.

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The CCD nonfiscal data include directory information, enrollment and staff counts. Dropout and Completer counts are also available at both the state and the LEA level.

Fiscal data are available at the state level from the National Public Education Financial Survey, or NPEFS, and at the school district level from the Local Education Agency, or LEA.

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Here we will describe some keys to using the CCD Data files. First, and of critical importance, users should carefully read the documentation that is bundled with each specific data file. The documentation contains information about what is included in the

universe data files, the methodology used to collect and process the data, and information about each of the variables on the file.

Second, when the data file is used, the record layout will give information concerning the naming convention for each of the variables, the position, and a general description. The record layout will show that the variable AS05F, for example, is the count of Grade 5 students - Asian – female where AS means Asian, 05 indicates the grade level, and F means Female.

Third, the data file pages include SAS and SPSS codes to help transform the text file into a formatted SAS or SPSS file. For most years, an unformatted SAS data file is also included.

And finally, the text files from 2007-08 to the present are tab-delimited and should be opened using Excel. DO NOT CLICK on the text file. Notepad will try to open it and the file is not usable in Notepad.

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Each data file set contains the following components: the Data file (which is usually a SAS and tab-delimited TXT file, SAS and SPSS code for processing, Documentation including the methodology as well as details for the data on the file. It also includes a record layout that is a description of the data elements on the file, including name, position, and description. Lastly, the data files contain the Survey forms for the fiscal files. The fiscal data collection utilizes various surveys to collect the data. These forms are a good resource to see what information is collected.

All of the CCD data are organized by school year. Within each school year researchers will find the information for all of the states in a flat file and either one or more statistical languages (e.g., SAS and SPSS when available).

It's very important that users become familiar with the documentation and record layouts. Users will need knowledge of both to ensure that coding is understood. In addition, while naming conventions are fairly consistent across years, it's critical to check the documentation.

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Two data files in the CCD require Restricted-use licenses: the Teacher Compensation Survey and the Dropout and Completer files. It is important to note that the Restricted-use version of the Dropout and Completer file contains more details than the public use file.

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The CCD data may be accessed using the Elementary/Secondary Information System, or EISi. EISi allows users to access CCD data with three tools: *quick*Facts, *express*Tables, *table*Generator. Briefly, *quick*Facts allows researchers to view single

data elements for a state, district, or school. *express*Tables allows users to view created tables for a group of entities (e.g., all schools in a state, all states in the nation, etc.) by level, table, and group. *table*Generator allows for the creation of tables that include every school or district in the nation and files can be exported into Excel or CSV formats as well as having the setting saved for later retrieval.

Each of these tools will be explained in more detail in the module titled, **Using ElSi to Access CCD Data**.

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This module has provided you with an introduction to the CCD and described the study's design, universe, and the methods and years of data collection. Additionally, this module has highlighted topics for which data are available for analyses.

The subsequent CCD training modules contained within this system discuss some of these topics in greater detail and address questions about how to access the CCD data files and effectively use the data for your analytic purposes.

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Important resources that have been provided throughout the module are summarized here for your reference.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series or exit the module.