

Data Collected Through the Common Core of Data (CCD)

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This module will describe the CCD mission and the associated data. It will also describe how the data are collected and how they can be accessed as well as describing the types and levels of available data. The module will describe how to aggregate data from the CCD and then it will explain important information about how missing, not applicable, and suppressed data are addressed.

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The NCES is committed to providing the public with a complete and accurate accounting of the U.S. public elementary and secondary education system. As such, the Common Core of Data supplies researchers with data from the U.S. public elementary and secondary education system. Rather than having the data users contact each state independently, NCES uses the CCD as a single access point for all of the data. The goal of the CCD is to provide accurate and consistent data in a timely manner.

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CCD is an annual collection of basic data on public school systems in the states and state-level jurisdictions. State-level jurisdictions include the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and five U.S. Island Areas (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). The CCD contains nonfiscal information that is obtained from state-level education officials through the ED Facts data collection system. Fiscal data are collected from the state-level education officials via the Census Bureau.

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

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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, which contains data that are designed to be comparable across all states. Each state submits nonfiscal data to ED Facts, and fiscal data are collected from the Census Bureau. The data are reviewed using various reports from the analysts, including comparing data from different levels (for example, school compared to district). Based on these findings, data files are created that meet NCES quality standards.

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The methodology for collecting the nonfiscal and fiscal data is similar but there are some differences to note.

For both collections, the data come directly from the states. The nonfiscal data are submitted via a data collection system called *EDFacts*. Fiscal data are submitted to the Census Bureau.

Reviews of both sets of data are conducted to ensure data quality. Reviewers note issues such as questionable enrollment counts, differences in the universe when compared to prior years, and other violations that might compromise the data. Concerns identified in the data are reported in error reports.

Once the data have been reviewed, the data files are created based on NCES quality standards.

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Every year NCES determines what changes need to be made to the CCD editing process. The changes are made to improve data quality as well as to reduce the burden on the states. Examples of changes to the process include adding new edits based on additional items being collected or changing the rules for suppression to ensure that data meet NCES data quality standards. The suppression process is explained in a later slide in this module.

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Each year, the CCD collects data about all public elementary and secondary schools, all school districts (or, local education agencies), and all state education agencies throughout the United States. More information regarding the universe design can be accessed by clicking the corresponding underlined screen text.

The CCD contains three categories of information: general descriptive information on schools and school districts, data on students and staff, and fiscal data. The general descriptive information includes name, address, phone number, and type of locale, the data on students and staff include selected demographic characteristics, and the fiscal data cover revenues and current expenditures at the district and state level.

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Most of the data for the CCD are obtained from administrative records maintained by the state education agencies (or SEAs). Statistical information is collected annually concerning approximately 100,000 public elementary and secondary schools and approximately 18,000 public school districts (including supervisory unions and regional education service agencies) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense Schools, and the outlying areas. The SEAs compile CCD requested data into prescribed formats and transmit the information to NCES.

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The CCD is comprised of several components. At the state level, CCD releases the following files: a nonfiscal universe file that includes enrollment and staffing data, a nonfiscal dropout and completer file, and a fiscal file with data from the National Public Education Financial Survey (NPEFS). At the district level, CCD releases a nonfiscal universe file that includes enrollment and staffing data, a nonfiscal dropout and completer file, and fiscal data called the F-33. At the school level, CCD releases a nonfiscal universe file. Each of these universe collections will be described in the coming slides.

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The Public School Universe collects 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.

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The School District Universe collects 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.

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The State Aggregate Nonfiscal Universe collects information on all students and staff aggregated to 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.

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The State Aggregate Fiscal Universe (or National Public Education Financial Survey/NPEFS) collects detailed data aggregated to 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 (for example, school administration).

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School District (or Local Education Agency) Fiscal Data, or F-33, include revenues by source and expenditures by function and subfunction, and enrollment. The expenditure data include total expenditures and current expenditures. The descriptions of the fiscal data are included in the data file documentation.

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Dropout and Completer Information are collected at the district and state level. These files include the numbers of dropouts from each of grades 9 through 12 and the relevant event dropout rates, and the numbers of high school diploma recipients, other high school completers, and the relevant Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR).

The restricted-use data files contain more detailed counts than the public-use data files.

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Most of the CCD data can be linked across files by using the NCES ID. Every school and district on the file has a unique NCES ID for identification purposes. The school NCES ID is 12 digits, while the district ID is seven digits. The first seven digits of the school NCES ID is the district ID, and the following five digits are the school's unique ID. NCES IDs are generally consistent across years unless a major change in the school has occurred.

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There are three levels of data available from the CCD: school, district, and state. Several types of data are also available: basic information, characteristics, enrollments, teachers and staff, general finance, and dropout and completer. Each of these types of data will be explained in the upcoming slides.

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CCD data include information about schools, districts, and state-level information for the following categories: basic Information (including address, telephone numbers, county information (name and ID), and NCES IDs), Characteristics includes charter status, magnet status, and locale codes. For example, locale codes indicate if a school is categorized as a rural or urban school.

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The CCD also includes information about student enrollments. These data cover the total count of students by race/ethnicity, gender, and/or grade. They are also reported for any combination of race/ethnicity, gender, and/or grade (for example, a 12th grade male, a 3rd grade female African American, or a male Hispanic). Enrollment data also include counts of students who are reported as eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch.

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Teacher and staff data are collected at the school level. The data files contain data that reflect the teacher full time equivalent rather than a head count of teachers. The data file also contains district and state level data with information on principals, counselors, and support staff at the schools.

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For the fiscal data files, general finance data are provided at the district and state level. For example, the data files include data about current and total expenditures, revenues by source (in other words, federal, state, or local), and ratios of expenditures per pupil.

Finally, there are district and state-level data files that contain dropout and completer information. These data include rates (such as the average freshman graduation rate), as well as counts of diplomas and graduates. A restricted version of the district level data is available that includes additional detailed information.

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The CCD data are not all available at each possible level (school, district, and state). For example, free-lunch eligibility data are only available at the school level. In addition, staff counts are available at the district level but not the school level.

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If the data are available on a lower level, the counts can be aggregated to a higher level in two ways. First, users can access the data files and aggregate the data using the NCES ID as a key.

The NCES IDs from CCD can be linked to other surveys at NCES, such as the Schools and Staffing Survey. In order to properly link the various data files, researchers will need the restricted use data for the survey. The CCD data files can be linked to provide more information about the school or district, including enrollment, financial, and graduation data. However detailed information about the teachers or staff may not be available.

The Elementary Secondary Information System (or, EISi) also aggregates data. EISi can be accessed by clicking the corresponding underlined screen text. More information regarding how to use EISi will be provided within module 4 titled, Using Elementary/Secondary Information System (EISi) to Access CCD Data.

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This slide provides some cautionary notes about CCD aggregation. When using the data files, be careful about aggregating with data that are missing (indicated as a -1), not applicable (-2), or suppressed (-9). In these cases, the EISi data tool will aggregate the data but only report data where less than 15% of the data elements are missing.

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As CCD data are reviewed, certain elements may be coded as missing, not applicable, or suppressed. In the following slides, we will explain each of these areas for caution.

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Missing data occur when the element exists but it could not be reported. This usually occurs if the reporting agency is not able to report the data, or if the data were not reported to NCES in time. On the data file, missing data are coded as -1. In reports and in data tool output, missing data are reported as a dash.

Some instances when missing data may occur include:

- If the number of teachers at a K-6th grade school could not be split into Kindergarten and elementary teachers;
- If the number of students who are eligible for free lunch could not be reported in time to be used on the data file;
- Or, if the state could not report which schools were magnet schools, but the state does allow for magnet schools.

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Not applicable is used when the element does not apply to the case. For example, 12th graders in an elementary school or dropout counts for a district with no students. Not applicable is coded as a -2 in data files and flagged with a dagger in reports.

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Data may also be suppressed if they do not meet NCES quality standards. Examples include a large inconsistency with the data across years. If a school reported that it had 500 students with 20 teachers one year, then reported that it had 5,000 students with 20 teachers for the subsequent year, the data may be suppressed. NCES contacts the state to resolve the issue but the data will be suppressed if a resolution cannot be found. Suppressed data are coded as a -9 in data files and flagged with a double dagger in reports.

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There are four steps that are key to using CCD files. First, users should read the documentation carefully. The documentation contains information about the methodology used to collect and process the data. It also includes information about each of the variables on the file.

Second, if you are using the data file, 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 is the count of Grade 5 students - Asian - female.

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

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And finally, the text files from 2007-08 to the present are tab-delimited and should be open 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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This module has explained the purpose of the CCD and its mission. It has also described the data and how and where the data were collected. In addition, it provided information on how to access the data, the different types and levels of data, and how to aggregate data. Finally, it provided important information about missing, not applicable, and suppressed data.

Important resources that have been provided throughout the module are summarized in this slide along with the module's objectives for your reference.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series, or click the exit button to return to the landing page.