

State Board of Education & Early Development
September 23, 2013

Unapproved Agenda

**Norton Sound Regional Hospital Building
1000 Greg Kruschek Avenue
Conference Room 212
Nome, AK**

***Mission Statement:** To ensure quality standards-based instruction to improve academic achievement for all students.*

Board Retreat

Monday, September 23, 2013

2:00 PM	Call to Order, Introductions, agenda review
2:10 PM	Topic 1. Use of Data.....Erik McCormick, Director
2:40 PM	Topic 2. Roles & Responsibilities..... Rebecca Hattan/Marcy Herman
3:10 PM	Break
3:25 PM	Topic 3. Board ResolutionsJim Merriner, Chair
3:50 PM	Topic 4. High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) Erik McCormick, Director
4:30 PM	Adjourn

Topic 1. Use of Data

- Board members have asked for an overview of how the department uses data collected.
- Behind the cover memo are:
 - 1) Four Level Reporting Protocol (*How we suppress data to protect individual student identity while still allowing information to be reported*)
 - 2) Forum Guide to Privacy of Student Information (*Resource developed for schools*)
 - 3) FERPA Condensed (*Three single-page briefing sheets*)
 - 4) Forum Guide to Data
- Erik McCormick, Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management, will be present to brief the board.

Protocol for Reporting Results Four Categories of Achievement

No results will be reported if less than 5 students are tested.

If 3 of the 4 Proficiency Levels have values then all values will be reported.

If only two Proficiency Levels have values reported, and Proficiency levels contain 0,1, or 2 the number of students will be eliminated in all proficiency levels and the percentage of students at each achievement level will be reported as a range. In reporting a range of performance the following rules will apply.

Number of Students Tested	Achievement Level Reported
5	60% or more proficient (or not proficient) 40% or fewer not proficient (or proficient)
8	75% or more proficient (or not proficient) 25% or fewer not proficient (or proficient)
10	80% or more proficient (or not proficient) 20% or fewer not proficient (or proficient)
20	90% or more proficient (or not proficient) 10% or fewer not proficient (or proficient)
40 (or more)	95% or more proficient (or not proficient) 5% or fewer not proficient (or proficient)

If only one Proficiency Level has a value, that value is suppressed and the percentage of students at that level will be reported as a range. All other values are suppressed.

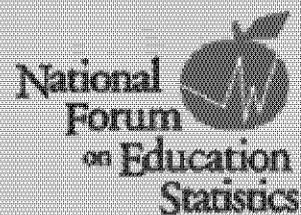
Note: A sample of this protocol can be found in the State Report Card files for Mentasta Lake School found at site:
http://www.eed.state.ak.us/DOE_Rolodex/schools/ReportCard/RCDetails0102.cfm?School_Number=30030&School_Year='200102'

FORUM GUIDE TO

The Privacy

Of Student Information

A RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS



National Cooperative Education Statistics System

The National Center for Education Statistics established the National Cooperative Education Statistics System (Cooperative System) to assist in producing and maintaining comparable and uniform information and data on early childhood education and elementary and secondary education. These data are intended to be useful for policy-making at the federal, state, and local levels.

The National Forum on Education Statistics, among other activities, proposes principles of good practice to assist state and local education agencies in meeting this purpose. The Cooperative System and the National Forum on Education Statistics are supported in these endeavors by resources from the National Center for Education Statistics.

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July 2006

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Ghedam Bairu

202–502–7304

ghedam.bairu@ed.gov



FERPA Toolkit Action Plan Team

This document was developed through the National Cooperative Education Statistics System and funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. A volunteer Action Plan Team of the National Forum on Education Statistics produced this document.

Chair

Levette Williams

Georgia Department of Education

Members

Eva Chunn

District of Columbia Public Schools

Mary Gervase

Blaine County School District (*Idaho*)

Bruce Dacey

Delaware Department of Education

Angela Hagans

Georgia Department of Education

Mary K. Hervey DeGarmo

Brooke County Schools (*West Virginia*)

Wanda Jones

Georgia Department of Education

Judy Fillion

New Hampshire Department of Education

Polly Sorcan

Eveleth-Gilbert Public Schools (*Minnesota*)

Consultant

Beth Young

Quality Information Partners

Project Officer

Ghedam Bairu

National Center for Education Statistics

Forum Review Procedures

Development team members review all products iteratively throughout the development process. Documents prepared, reviewed, and approved by development team members are posted to the Forum website prior to publication so that other interested individuals or organizations can provide feedback. After development team members oversee the integration of public review comments and review the document a final time, all publications are subject to examination by members of the Forum standing committee sponsoring the project. Finally, the entire Forum (approximately 120 members) must review and vote to formally approve the document prior to final publication.

Publications of the National Forum on Education Statistics do not undergo the formal review required for products of the National Center for Education Statistics. The information and opinions published here are the product of the National Forum on Education Statistics and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the U.S. Department of Education or the National Center for Education Statistics.

Acknowledgments

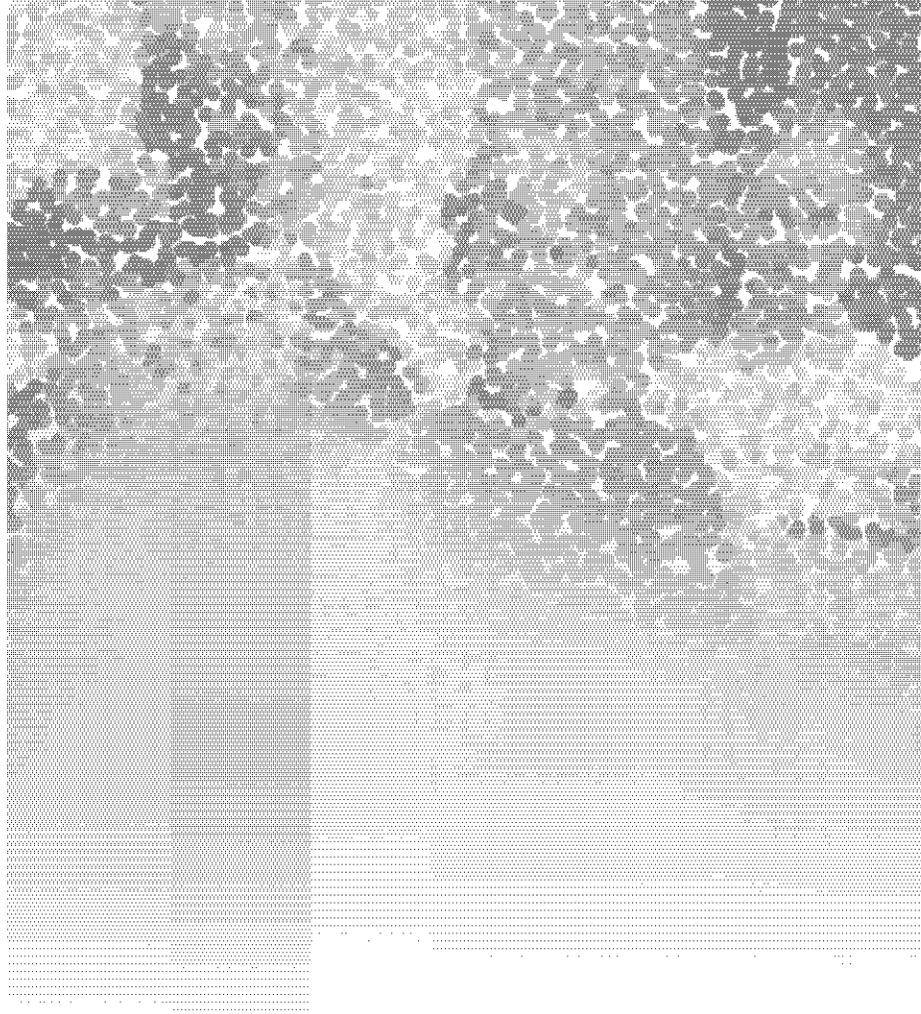
The members of the FERPA Toolkit Action Plan Team of the National Forum on Education Statistics would like to thank everyone who reviewed drafts of this document or otherwise contributed to its development. In particular, thanks are due to Lee Hoffman, Marilyn Seastrom, and Ellen Campbell of the U.S. Department of Education; Tom Ogle, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Brad James, Vermont Department of Education; Raymond Yeagley, Northwest Evaluation Association; Sonya Edwards and Bruce Gordon, California Department of Education; Jan Rose Petro, Colorado Department of Education; David Weinberger, Yonkers Public Schools; and Bob Beecham, Nebraska Department of Education. Frances Erlebacher edited the document and the Creative Shop provided layout and design services.

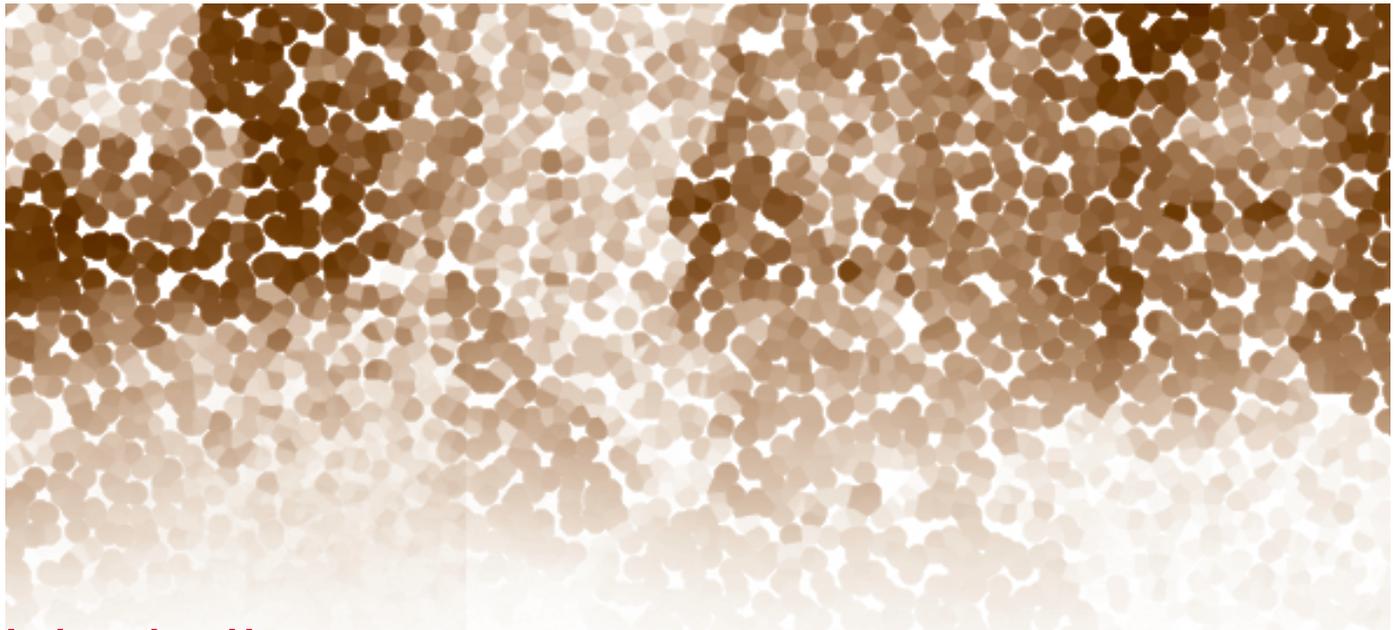
Finally, the Action Plan Team members would like to thank their tireless leader, Levette Williams, and her staff at the Georgia Department of Education, including Wanda Jones and Angela Hagans. They went above and beyond the call of duty by preparing a preliminary draft of this document. Without their hard work, this document would not have been published in such a timely manner.

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Introduction

As an employee of a school or other education institution, you may sometimes access individual student records while performing your official duties. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you are legally and ethically obliged to safeguard the confidentiality of any information they contain. This guide provides a general overview of the legal and related issues you may encounter while carrying out your duties.

The *Forum Guide to the Privacy of Student Information: A Resource for Schools* was written to help school and local education agency staff better understand and apply FERPA, a federal law that protects privacy interests of parents and students in student education records. The Forum has developed full reports on student (and staff) privacy guidance, but a shorter document was needed to provide a quick overview and links to other resources when more information is needed. This guide defines terms such as “education records” and “directory information”; and offers guidance for developing appropriate privacy policies and information disclosure procedures related to military recruiting, parental rights and annual notification, videotaping, online information, media releases, surveillance cameras, and confidentiality concerns related specifically to health-related information. Additional references to related resources from both the federal government and private organizations can be found in the online document, “FERPA Facts for School Staff,” which is available at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/ferpa_links.asp.

For a more in-depth review of privacy laws and professional practices that apply to information collected for, and maintained in, student records, see the *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies* (NCES 2004).

The school district is responsible for ensuring that all parents and eligible students are afforded all the rights provided them by FERPA.

FERPA-related violations may have serious repercussions. A school district found to have violated FERPA will be required to implement a plan of action to ensure compliance, and schools that refuse to comply risk losing federal education dollars. Therefore, it is essential to train school staff in FERPA requirements, especially since the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) investigates entire school districts even when complaints are filed against individual school officials.

FERPA and Its Protection

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy interests of students. It affords parents the right to access and amend their children's education records, and gives them some control over the disclosure of the information in these records. FERPA generally prevents an education agency or institution from sharing student records, or personally identifiable information in these records, without the written consent of a parent. A "parent" is defined as a natural or adoptive parent, a legal guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of the parent or guardian. When students reach the age of 18, or attend a postsecondary institution at any age, they are considered "eligible students" and all of the rights afforded by FERPA transfer from the parents to the students. (34 CFR § 99.3)

Although student files are protected under the law, FERPA does allow the disclosure of student data without parental consent under certain, specified conditions. For example, schools may reveal information from student records to school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

As employees of a school and education institution, you may have access to individual student records in performing your official duties. You are legally and ethically obliged to safeguard their confidentiality. This guide provides a general overview of FERPA and related issues you may encounter while you carry out your job duties.

Education Records

The term "education records" is defined as all records, files, documents and other materials containing information directly related to a student; and maintained by the education agency or institution, or by a person acting for such agency or institution (34 CFR § 99.3). This includes all records regardless of medium, including, but not limited to, handwriting, videotape or audiotape, electronic or computer files, film, print, microfilm, and microfiche.

In addition, for students who attend a public school district, all records pertaining to services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are considered "education records" under FERPA. As such, they are subject to the confidentiality provisions of both Acts.

For PreK–12 students, health records maintained by an education agency or institution subject to FERPA, including immunization records and school nurse records, generally would be also considered "education records" and subject to FERPA because they are:

- directly related to the student;
- maintained by an education agency or institution, or a party acting for the agency or institution; and
- not excluded from the definition of education records as treatment or sole-possession records, or on some other basis. (See Health Records: FERPA and HIPAA.)

Personal notes made by teachers or other staff, on the other hand, are not considered education records if they are:

FERPA applies to any education agency or institution that receives funds under a program administered by the U. S. Department of Education.

- kept in the sole possession of the maker;
- not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute, and
- used only as a memory aid.

Records created and maintained by a law enforcement unit for law enforcement purposes are also excluded.

More on FERPA can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html>

Directory Information

The term “directory information” is used for the portion of the education record that, if disclosed, would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy (34 CFR § 99.3). This may include the student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance.

Under FERPA, school systems have flexibility in deciding what information will be considered directory information. A list of the types of data that may be designated and disclosed as directory information is listed under the definition of “directory information” in the Code of Federal Regulations (34 CFR § 99.3). While school systems designate varying types of information as directory information, most include a student’s name, family members’ names, home address, and school activities. The height and weight of athletes may also be included.

School systems should give careful consideration to designating data as “directory information” because once this designation is given, school officials may distribute the information to anyone who requests it—in or outside the school.

School systems that disclose directory information must give “public notice” of this policy and explain what is included in such information. The notice must also indicate that parents may refuse to allow the school to designate any, or all, of their child’s record as directory information. Several ways public notice can be given include: a notice in the registration package sent home to parents, a notice in the local newspaper, a notice in the school handbook distributed each year, or a posting on the school system’s website. FERPA requires the notice to specify how much time parents have to tell the school or school system what, if any, directory information they do not wish released.

If a school system discloses directory information, it must give “public notice” of this policy and explain what is included in such information. FERPA does not define “public notice,” and the means of notification is left up to the school.

Annual Notification and Rights of Parents

FERPA regulations require that local education agencies give annual notification to parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA (34 CFR § 99.7). The law does not require agencies to notify parents and eligible students individually, but agencies must provide notification where they are likely to see it. In addition, education institutions must make provisions to effectively inform individuals with a disability or whose primary language is not English.

The annual notification process must ensure that parents understand that they have the right to:

- inspect and review their child’s record;
- seek to amend the record if they believe it to be inaccurate;
- consent (or not) to disclosures of personally identifiable information; and
- file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning the district’s failures to comply with FERPA.

Either parent has the right to review an education record unless there is evidence of a court order or state law revoking or restricting these rights. Parents may access the education records of eligible students if they claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes. However, agencies may require verification of the requester’s relationship with the child before providing access to records.

The right of parents to access information is limited to their own child or children. If the education record includes information about other students, that information must be removed prior to disclosure so that parents do not have access to any other child’s records. (34 CFR § 99.12)

When parents (or eligible students) request to review their records, the education institution must respond within 45 days, even if these records are kept by an outside party acting for the school. During these 45 days, the education institution cannot destroy any of the requested records.

For more in-depth information on directory information, disclosure of student information, and annual notification to parents, see the *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies* (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2004).

Disclosure of Student Information

Generally, schools must have written parent (or eligible student) permission to release any information from a student’s education records. However, in addition to properly designated “directory information,” FERPA allows disclosure, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (except as noted, conditions are listed in 34 CFR § 99.31):

A legitimate educational interest

School officials with a “legitimate educational interest” may access student records under FERPA. Generally, this refers to individuals in the school district who need to know information in the student’s education record in order to perform their professional responsibility. Interest in students that “fit” a profile or category is not a legitimate educational interest. The school’s criteria for appropriate “school officials” and valid “legitimate educational interest” must be included in the annual notification to parents of their FERPA rights. A sample notice of rights, including suggested language can be found at the Family Policy Compliance Office’s website:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcolferpa/lea-officials.html>.

Other schools into which a student is transferring or enrolling

Schools that submit a records request or in which a student has enrolled are eligible to receive information from that student's education records. This includes postsecondary institutions to which the student are applying. A parent (or eligible student) may also request a records transfer.

Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes

This category exception refers to federal, state, and local education agencies that must collect data or student information to audit, evaluate, or enforce educational programs. State agencies other than those responsible for education are not included. This exception is commonly used by state education agencies to justify state-level student records systems.

Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid

Information required to determine student eligibility for financial aid, the amount of aid to award, and the conditions under which aid is to be granted may be disclosed under this category; access to information needed to enforce those terms and conditions is also allowed. This exception typically applies to postsecondary institutions.

Organizations conducting certain studies for, or on behalf of, the school

The purpose of the study conducted for, or on behalf of, a school has to be to: develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction. Even if these conditions are met, the school may only disclose information if: the study methodology does not permit the personal identification of parents and students by anyone other than the researchers and their representatives; the information is not used for any purpose other than to complete the study; and the information is destroyed when it is no longer needed for the stated purposes of the study.

Accrediting organizations

Disclosure of personal information is permitted to an accrediting organization if it is needed to carry out the accreditation.

Judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas

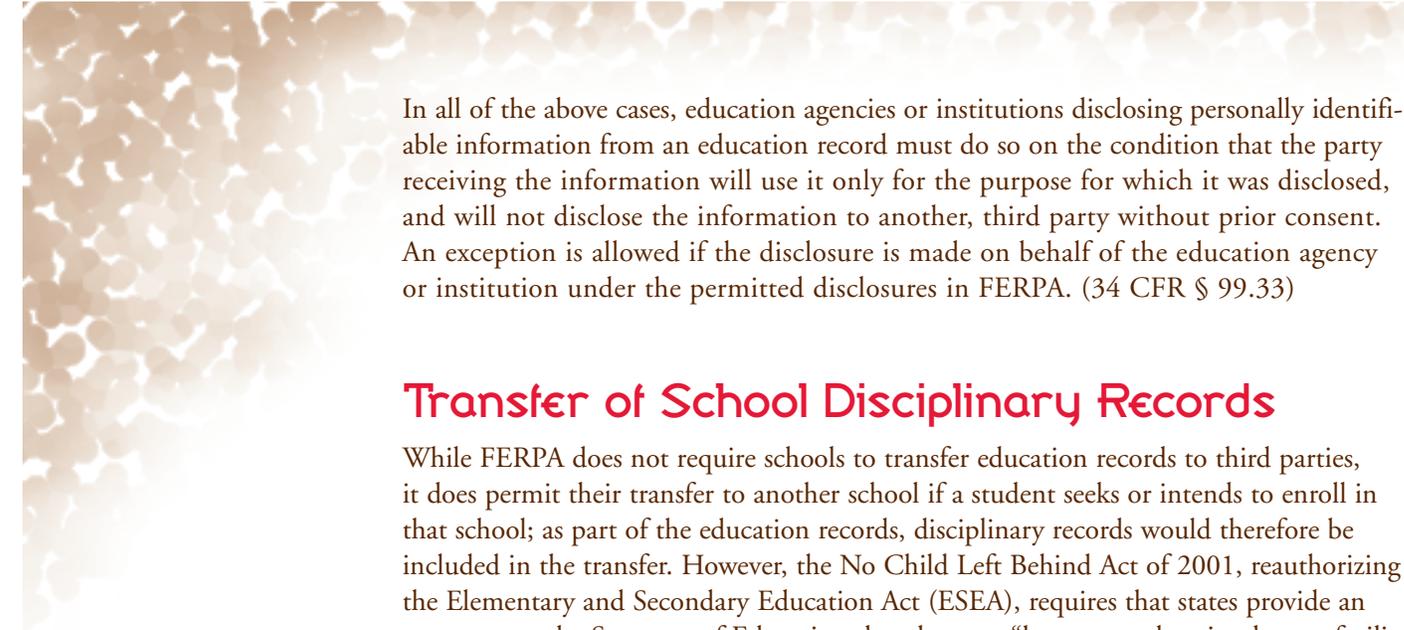
Schools must release information requested by a judicial order or legal subpoena. However, the school must make a reasonable effort to notify the parent (or eligible student) in advance of compliance, unless the court or other issuing agency has ordered that the contents of the subpoena not be disclosed, or that the protected education records not be included. [34 CFR § 99.31 paragraph (a)(9)(1)]

Health and safety emergencies

Disclosure to appropriate officials is valid if the information contained in the education record is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals (34 CFR § 99.36).

State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law

If state law permits, schools may release information to state and local juvenile justice authorities after receiving written certification that the information will not be disclosed to any other agency, organization, or third party without the parent's permission, except as allowed in state law.



In all of the above cases, education agencies or institutions disclosing personally identifiable information from an education record must do so on the condition that the party receiving the information will use it only for the purpose for which it was disclosed, and will not disclose the information to another, third party without prior consent. An exception is allowed if the disclosure is made on behalf of the education agency or institution under the permitted disclosures in FERPA. (34 CFR § 99.33)

Transfer of School Disciplinary Records

While FERPA does not require schools to transfer education records to third parties, it does permit their transfer to another school if a student seeks or intends to enroll in that school; as part of the education records, disciplinary records would therefore be included in the transfer. However, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), requires that states provide an assurance to the Secretary of Education that the state “has a procedure in place to facilitate the transfer of disciplinary records, with respect to a suspension or expulsion, by local education agencies to any private or public elementary school or secondary school for any student who is enrolled or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll, on a full- or part-time basis, in the school.”

Health Records: FERPA and HIPAA

In 1996, Congress enacted the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to ensure continued health insurance coverage to individuals who change jobs, and to establish standards regarding the electronic sharing of health information. For purposes of HIPAA, “covered entities” include health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers that transmit health information in electronic form in connection with covered transactions (45 CFR 160.103).

Technically, schools and school systems that provide health care services to students may qualify as “covered entities” under HIPAA. However, the final regulations for the HIPAA Privacy Rule exclude information considered “education records” under FERPA from HIPAA privacy requirements. This includes student health records and immunization records maintained by an education agency or institution, or its representative; as “education records” subject to FERPA, these files are not subject to HIPAA privacy requirements. In addition, school nurse or other health records maintained on students receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are considered “education records” and also subject to that Act’s confidentiality provisions. Consequently, these records are subject to FERPA and not the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

Nevertheless, certain activities, when performed by a school, could be subject to other provisions of HIPAA that concern electronic transactions. According to the preamble to the December 2000 final rules, “the educational institution or agency that employs a school nurse is subject to our (HIPAA) regulation if the school nurse or the school engages in a HIPAA transaction.” HIPAA transactions are defined in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) as “the transmission of information between two parties to carry out financial or administrative activities related to health care,” including

submitting claims. However, consent must still be secured under FERPA before the records are disclosed.

For more information on the intersection of HIPAA and FERPA, see *Health and Healthcare in Schools*, “The Impact of FERPA and HIPAA on Privacy Protections for Health Information at School: Questions from Readers” (2003, Volume 4, Number 4) at <http://www.healthinschools.org/ejournal/2003/privacy.htm>.

Data Requests and FERPA

Information requests from the press, researchers, and the general public are fairly common in most school systems and state education agencies. In this regard, the FERPA statute provides that an education agency or institution may not have a policy of disclosing education records or personally identifiable information from education records, without prior consent from the parent or eligible student, unless it is considered directory information or falls under one of the other consent exceptions contained in the law [20 U.S.C. §1232(g)(b)(1)]. (For exceptions to consent guidelines, see Disclosure of Student Information.) Agencies should determine whether requests for data meet these exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Nothing in FERPA prohibits a school from disclosing information in aggregate, or in another form that is not personally identifiable. Personally identifiable information includes:

- the student’s name;
- the name of the student’s parent or other family member;
- the address of the student or student’s family;
- a personal identifier, such as the student’s social security number or student number;
- a list of personal characteristics that would make the student’s identity easily traceable; or
- other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.

In circumstances that may lead to the identification of an individual, the disclosing education agency or institution must ensure that student-level information is not personally identifiable by removing the student’s name and ID number, as well as any “personal characteristics” and “other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.” This includes, but is not limited to, such factors as physical description (race, sex, appearance, etc.); date and place of birth; religion and national origin; participation in sports, clubs, and other activities; academic performance; employment; and disciplinary actions or criminal proceedings. “Other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable” may also exist in the form of small cell sizes in aggregated or statistical information from education records.

In cases where personal information cannot be removed, school officials must secure written parental consent before disclosing the data to outside organizations. The

required consent form should specify:

- the records that may be disclosed;
- the purpose of the disclosure; and
- the identity of the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

[34 CFR § 99.30(b)]

Military Recruiters

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 both require high schools to provide military recruiters with access to directory-type information on secondary school students. Upon request, and after notifying parents, schools must release to military recruiters the name, address, and telephone numbers of high school juniors and seniors. (The disclosed information is used only for armed services recruiting and to inform high school students of scholarship opportunities.)

To minimize their administrative burden, some schools notify parents of the military recruiters' right to student data by utilizing the same notice they use to inform parents of directory information disclosure. A sample directory information notice with reference to disclosures to military recruiters can be found on the Family Policy Compliance Office's (FPCO) website: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcol/hottopics/ht-10-09-02a.html>.

Schools that normally do not disclose directory information and, therefore, may not have a directory-information disclosure policy under FERPA, must nevertheless release to military recruiters the student information listed above unless parents (or eligible students) disallow disclosure.

Confidentiality and Privacy Concerns

Until recently, the main concern regarding confidentiality and privacy of education records centered on individuals hacking into central computer systems or otherwise illegally accessing records through other security breaches. With technology increasingly used to ensure the availability of timely and accurate information, however, the scope of this issue has expanded to include portable storage devices (flash drives), handheld computers, electronic information transfers (e-mail), and other tools and devices used to store or transfer data.

Today's information portability makes performing many school-related tasks more convenient; however, it also increases the risk of unauthorized access to protected information. As school administrators, teachers, and support staff find new ways to store and access student records, they must still ensure the information's confidentiality and privacy.

For example, if an administrator misplaces a handheld computer, any personally identifiable information it contains becomes potentially accessible to anyone who finds the device. Teachers carrying grade files home on a flash drive or storing other personally identifiable student information on home computers create the risk of unauthorized access to protected education records. Likewise, education records transferred through electronic mail could potentially be intercepted by unauthorized

"Confidentiality"
is a person's obligation to not disclose or transmit information to unauthorized parties.

"Privacy"
is a uniquely personal right that reflects an individual's freedom from intrusion.

individuals. Since such situations occur daily in schools across the country, local education agencies must take precautions to guard against the unintentional release or unauthorized disclosure of education records.

Each education institution subject to FERPA should consider establishing policies, procedures, and best practices to address the following questions:

- What are the current legal restrictions for disclosure and nondisclosure?
- Does the potential risk to the confidentiality and security of education records outweigh the benefit of using certain electronic devices poses?
- Does the teacher or staff member have a legitimate educational interest in the information that meets the exception rule for prior consent (see Disclosure of Student Information)?
- Is prior consent required since the ability to carry education records off school premises changes the physical context in which the education records were originally used?
- What jobs or roles include responsibility for the safety and maintenance of education records?
- What is the ethical and legal responsibility of staff in terms of preventing unauthorized use or disclosure of information?
- What is appropriate and inappropriate use of data, and how can information be protected against unauthorized access?
- What type of training will individuals who access and/or use the information require?
- Do individuals with access to personally identifiable information take an oath of nondisclosure?

Establishing policies, procedures, and best practices is not a cure-all, but it sets the foundation for ensuring a deliberate effort to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of education records.

Updated resources can be found on the FERPA page of the Forum website:
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/ferpa_links.asp

Surveillance Cameras

According to *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2005* (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 2006), schools continue to implement a variety of tools to improve safety and monitor activities. In fact, the report notes that “in 1999–2000, 14 percent of primary schools, 20 percent of middle schools, and 39 percent of secondary schools used one or more security cameras to monitor the school.”

School cameras are typically placed in areas that do not infringe on students’ right to privacy, such as classrooms, hallways, common areas, and building perimeters. However, recent reports of cameras in bathrooms have sparked a debate over the appropriate balance between student privacy rights and the need for school security. While FERPA does not specifically address this issue, school systems should have a surveillance camera policy

outlining the rights and responsibilities of students, teachers, administrators, and other school staff. As a best practice, the policy should include the following:

- a clear statement of appropriate reasons for using surveillance cameras;
- the role and responsibilities of individuals with access to the cameras;
- who will have access to any footage;
- how long will any footage be kept and how will it be destroyed; and
- a consent provision.

For FERPA purposes, surveillance videotapes (or other media) with information about a specific student are considered education records if they are kept and maintained by the school system. If the school's law enforcement unit controls the cameras/videos and it is doing the surveillance for safety reasons, the ensuing videos would be considered law enforcement, rather than education, records. As soon as school officials use them for discipline purposes, however, the tapes become education records and are subject to FERPA requirements.

For more information, see "Fact sheet 29: Privacy in Education" (Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, 2005) at <http://www.privacyrights.org>.

For more in-depth information on directory information, disclosure of student information, and annual notification to parents, see the *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies* (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2004).

Videotapes and Online Information

When created and kept by the school or education agency, videotapes or photographs directly related to a specific student are considered part of that student's education records and, therefore, subject to FERPA. For instance, if the tape captured an altercation, it would be included in the involved students' education record, and the school has to obtain consent before publishing or disclosing its contents to unauthorized individuals. However, authorization would be needed only for the students actually involved in the altercation; other students in the video would be considered "set dressing" (not relevant to the incident) and not covered.

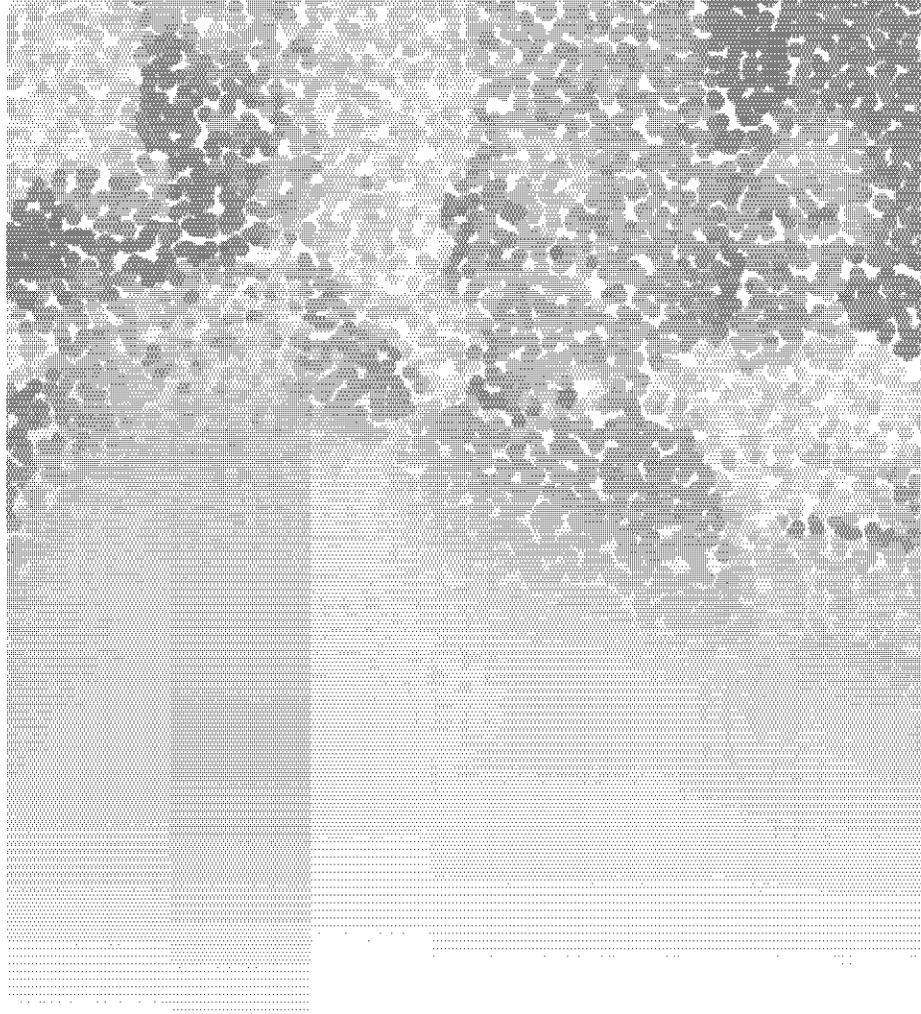
Information on the Internet is treated in a similar way. Posting information is considered "disclosure" and must, therefore, comply with FERPA guidelines. Even without FERPA, school officials should consider safety concerns and exercise caution when displaying information (such as identifiable pictures) about students on the Internet, even if the information is designated as directory information. Including parents in any decisions about how much student information is appropriate might be a good practice, especially for younger students.

More information on this topic can be found in *The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools: A Guide for Schools and Law Enforcement Agencies* (U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs 1999), which is available online at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/school/home.html>.

Conclusion

Safeguarding the confidentiality of individual student information is the responsibility of any and all organizations and individuals who collect, maintain, access, transfer, or use education records. This guide reviews federal privacy laws, defines related terms and concepts, summarizes organizational and individual responsibilities, and describes appropriate responses to privacy-related concerns that commonly arise in a school or district setting.

This document is meant to serve as a resource for schools and school districts, but is not a substitute for the detailed direction provided in local and state privacy laws, regulations, and procedures. For a more in-depth review of privacy laws and professional practices that apply to information collected for, and maintained in, student records, see the *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies* (NCES 2004). Additional resources about FERPA and other privacy issues can be found in the online document, “FERPA Facts for School Staff,” available at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/ferpa_links.asp. Schools and districts should also consult all local and state privacy laws, regulations, and procedures to which they are subject.



Appendix A. Key Terms and Definitions

Source: *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies*. (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2004). Terms marked with an asterisk (*) indicate a consistent definition with FERPA.

Confidentiality: a person's obligation not to disclose or transmit information to unauthorized parties.

Directory Information*: information contained in a student's education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

Disclosure: access, release, or transfer of personally identifiable information about an individual.

Education Agency: a state or local education agency authorized to direct and control public elementary and secondary, or postsecondary, institutions.

Education Institution: an institution or school that provides educational services or instruction, or both, to students.

Education Record*: any information recorded in any way—including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, videotape or audiotape, electronic files, film, microfilm, and microfiche—that are maintained by education agencies or institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf. Personal notes by teachers or other staff, kept in the sole possession of the maker, used only as memory aid, and not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute are not considered part of the education record.

Eligible Student*: a student who has reached the age of 18; or has attended a postsecondary institution, regardless of age.

Informed Consent: an individual's agreement in the context of a written account of why personal information is requested and how it will be used.

Legitimate Educational Interest: information is used within the context of official agency or school business and its use is consistent with the purpose for which it is maintained; access to the information is necessary for school officials to perform tasks related to their position.

Parent*: a natural or adoptive parent, a legal guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian.

Personally Identifiable Information*: includes the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family member; the address of the student; a personal identifier, such as the social security number or student number; a list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable; or any other information that would make the student's identity easily traceable.

Privacy: a uniquely personal right that reflects an individual's freedom from intrusion.

School Official: a person employed by the agency or school in an administrative, counseling, supervisory, academic, student support, or research position; or a person under contract to the agency or school to perform a specified task.

Security: the process that focuses on the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information systems and data.

Student*: any person who is or has been in attendance, about whom an agency or institution maintains education records or personally identifiable information.

Appendix B. References and Other Resources

References

National Forum on Education Statistics

Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies (NCES 2004–330). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2004330.asp

Privacy Issues in Education Staff Records: Guidelines for Education Agencies (NCES 2000–363). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2000363.asp

Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

Policy Guidance—Access to High School Students and Information by Military Recruiters. (2002). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: Family Policy Compliance Office.
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Ensuring Quality School Facilities and Security Technology. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: The Safetyzone. Retrieved February 2006 from <http://www.safetyzone.org>.

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The Impact of FERPA and HIPAA on Privacy Protections for Health Information at School: Questions from Readers. *Health and Healthcare in Schools* (2003, Volume 4 Number 4). George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, Washington, DC: The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools. Retrieved December 2005 from <http://www.healthinschools.org/ejournal/2003/privacy.htm>.

Other resources

National Forum on Education Statistics

Home page: <http://nces.ed.gov/forum/index.asp>

FERPA information website: http://nces.ed.gov/forum/ferpa_links.asp

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). *Code of Federal Regulations (Title 34, Part 99)*. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) main page: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>

Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) at U.S. Department of Education

Home page: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcol/index.html>

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse (2005). “Fact Sheet 29: Privacy in Education.” Retrieved December 2005 from <http://www.privacyrights.org>.

Rules and Regulations, Federal Register (Vol. 68, No. 34, 20 February 2003).

The Federal Register (FR) main page: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr>

Fact Sheet: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." The provisions of FERPA are as follows:

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - school officials with a legitimate educational interest;
 - other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - accrediting organizations;
 - to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information, such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (e.g., special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information or technical assistance, call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Or write to the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Exhibit 2-2

Fact Sheet: Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 USC § 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) applies to education agencies and institutions that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education. PPRA is intended to protect the rights of parents and students in the following two ways:

- It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors make instructional materials available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with a Department of Education-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate.
- It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors obtain written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any Department of Education-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:
 - political affiliations;
 - mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family;
 - sexual behavior and attitudes;
 - illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior;
 - critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 - legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
 - religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; and
 - income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

For surveys not funded by the Department of Education, schools must notify parents and provide them with an opportunity to review the survey and opt their child out of participation. In addition, schools must work with parents to develop local policies regarding arrangements to protect student privacy relative to surveys, the administration of physical examinations or screenings, and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing purposes.

Parents or students who believe their rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint with the Department of Education by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

For additional information or technical assistance, call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Or write to the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Exhibit 2-4

Model Notification of Rights Under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to students’ education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education record that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal [or appropriate official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

[NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

[NOTE: In addition, an institution may want to include its directory information public notice, as required by § 99.37 of the regulations, with its annual notification of rights under FERPA.]

Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data



National Cooperative Education Statistics System

The National Center for Education Statistics established the National Cooperative Education Statistics System (Cooperative System) to assist in producing and maintaining comparable and uniform information and data on early childhood education and elementary and secondary education. These data are intended to be useful for policymaking at the federal, state, and local levels.

The National Forum on Education Statistics, among other activities, proposes principles of good practice to assist state and local education agencies in meeting this purpose. The Cooperative System and the National Forum on Education Statistics are supported in these endeavors by resources from the National Center for Education Statistics.

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November 2004

This publication and other publications of the National Forum on Education Statistics may be found at the National Center for Education Statistics website.

The NCES World Wide Web Home Page is <http://nces.ed.gov>

The NCES World Wide Web Electronic Catalog is <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>

The Forum World Wide Web Home Page is <http://nces.ed.gov/forum>

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Technical Contact:

Ghedam Bairu

(202) 502-7304

Ghedam.Bairu@ed.gov

Task Force Members

This document was developed through the National Cooperative Education Statistics System and funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. A volunteer task force of the National Forum on Education Statistics (an entity of the National Cooperative Education Statistics System) produced this document. Following is a list of task force members:

Chair

Blair Loudat
North Clackamas Schools
Portland, Oregon

Consultant

Andy Rogers
Education Statistics Services Institute
American Institutes for Research

Members

Annette Barwick
Hillsborough County Florida School District
Tampa, Florida

Project Officer

Ghedam Bairu
National Center for Education Statistics

Bethann Canada
Virginia Department of Education
Richmond, Virginia

Bill Smith
Sioux Falls School District
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Susan VanGorden
Lakota Local School District
Liberty Township, Ohio

Publications of the National Forum on Education Statistics do not undergo the formal review required for products of the National Center for Education Statistics. The information and opinions published here are the product of the National Forum on Education Statistics and do not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Department of Education or the National Center for Education Statistics.

Task force members review all products iteratively throughout the development process. Documents prepared, reviewed, and approved by task force members undergo a formal public review that is designed to reflect the nature of the product. Public review can consist of focus groups (of representatives of the product's intended audience), review sessions at relevant regional or national conferences, or technical reviews by acknowledged experts in the field. In addition, all draft documents are posted on the Forum website prior to publication so that other interested individuals and organizations can provide comments. After task force members oversee the integration of public review comments and review the document a final time, all publications are subject to examination by members of the Forum standing committee that sponsors the task force. Finally, the entire Forum (approximately 120 members) must review and vote to formally approve a document prior to final publication.

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Steve Carlson
Beaverton School District
Beaverton, Oregon

Betsy Franklin
Ashtabula Area City Schools
Ashtabula, Ohio

Karen Gantzer
Lakota Local School District
Liberty Township, Ohio

James Harrington
Hillsboro School District
Hillsboro, Oregon

Theresa Reid
Fairfield City Schools
Fairfield, Ohio

Scott Robinson
Portland Public Schools
Portland, Oregon

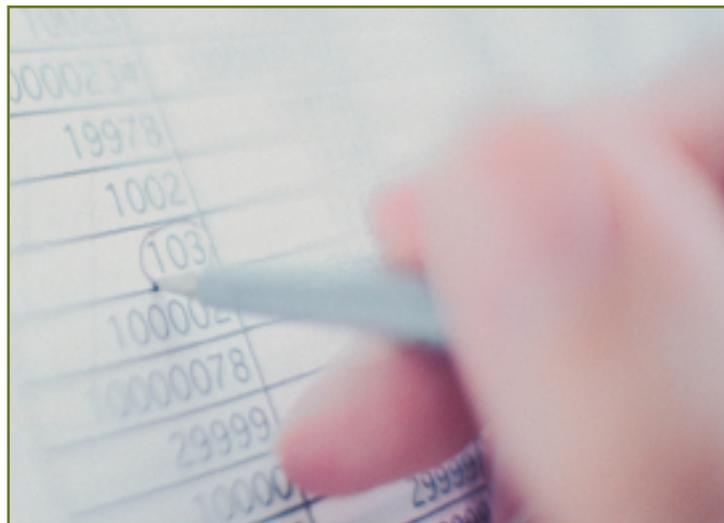
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Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data



Introduction

Quality data, like quality students, come from schools. While it is undeniably harder to teach a student than it is to collect statistics, there are procedures that can help us achieve our goals in both cases. Recently, there has been a growing awareness that effective teaching, efficient schools, and quality data are linked. The quality of information used to develop an instructional plan, run a school, plan a budget, or place a student in a class depends upon the school data clerk, teacher, counselor, and/or school secretary who enter data into a computer. With that in mind, the focus of this guide is on data entry – getting things right at the source.

Orderly Information From Disorderly Settings

Data often enter electronic systems from a school or school district office, which may not be an optimal setting for paying careful attention to numbers. Office staff members are expected to perform many tasks, from greeting parents to answering the phone, sorting the mail, producing memos, and bandaging wounded knees. While all these things are going on, often simultaneously, staff members are expected to fill out forms and enter data into computers. During conference periods in classrooms when teachers are trying to enter attendance information or grades into computers, the situation can be just as busy.

We want trained data entry personnel who work in an environment that assists, not hinders, data entry. When people are doing important work, we want them to concentrate on the task. We do not expect, for example, the person preparing our tax returns to be eating lunch or talking on the phone with clients while entering our itemized deductions into a computer. However, those may be the conditions of a school secretary's life. And remember, bad data about a student or school can cause bigger problems than a lost tax refund.

It is important to understand that "quality data" is not something that just occurs when an office clerk hits the right number on a keyboard. It is a process. We need to pay attention to the process involved because the information derived from school data is vital. The intent of data entry and collection is to produce information that reflects reality – that lets us know what is actually happening in a school. It is important for all staff members to understand the issues involved in data collection and data entry and to recognize that those issues reflect the values of the organization. Based on an analysis of these processes, we can work toward developing a "Culture of Quality Data" that will result in good information.

What Is a Culture of Quality Data?

A Culture of Quality Data is the belief that good data are an integral part of teaching, learning, and managing the school enterprise. Everyone who has a role in student outcomes – teachers, administrators, counselors, office support staff, school board members, and others – shares this belief. Because good data are as much a resource as staff, books, and computers, a wise education system is willing to invest time and money in achieving useful information and respects the effort taken to produce it.

Who Has to “Buy Into” a Culture of Quality Data?

Everyone in the education community has a stake in getting and using reliable information. Decisions made from the classroom to the principal's office to the state legislature depend on the quality of the data. For example, good information makes it possible for

- teachers to make the right decisions about their students' instructional needs;
- principals to track student and teacher progress, and feel confident that goals are being met or that they are alerted to problems that impede progress;
- district personnel to apportion staff or other resources where and when they are needed most;
- relocating families to select communities with schools that meet their expectations;
- state legislatures and the U.S. Congress to know when resources actually make a difference in education; and
- state departments of education to plan and manage effective programs.

What Are the Components of a Culture of Quality Data?

Everyone whose job touches students has a role in ensuring data quality. When a school or district embraces a Culture of Quality Data, it shows its concern in the following major areas:

- *Accuracy.* The information must be correct and complete. Data entry procedures must be reliable to ensure that a report will have the same information regardless of who fills it out.
- *Security.* The confidentiality of student and staff records must be ensured, and data must be safe.
- *Utility.* The data have to provide the right information to answer the question that is asked.
- *Timeliness.* Deadlines are discussed and data are entered in a timely manner.

Collaborating Across Agencies

Schools and districts aren't the only players with a stake in quality data. State education agencies (SEAs) also need quality data to assist in the decisionmaking process. Usually, an SEA does not have complete control over the quality of the data received. We aren't recommending that more rules and regulations will improve the quality of data! We believe instead that good data flourish where there is collaboration among staff in SEAs, districts, and schools. Through this collaboration, SEAs will receive greater cooperation from data providers, and data providers will find their lives to be a little easier.

Data quality will improve when

- SEAs collaborate with district data coordinators to establish sound, practical procedures for data collection and reporting;
- departmental data requirements are reduced by consolidating requests for reports through interagency cooperation within SEAs; and
- new data elements are created using interagency standards.

Some SEAs have published guidelines to assist their districts. For example, in 1999, the Virginia Department of Education produced *Procedures for Data Collection and Reporting*. The procedures in this manual emphasize careful planning before responding to requests for information, with a concerted effort on the state's part to reduce redundant data collections. Virginia recognizes that it is important for the SEA to consider the burden of data collection on districts and schools whenever requesting additional information.

The task force that produced this document recognizes the importance of SEAs and federal program offices in setting policies and establishing procedures for collecting data from districts. However, the focus of this guide is a little different. This guide highlights the roles of school and district personnel in achieving quality data at the point where data are initially gathered and entered.

Putting the Pieces Together

Individual staff members within your school or district hold the pieces of a puzzle that can fit together to develop a Culture of Quality Data. The following pages suggest some processes a school or district can institute to foster a Culture of Quality Data. We do not believe that a "one-shot" directive to staff telling them to be more accurate will be successful. Building quality data is a process that requires collaboration and a clear understanding of interdependent roles.

It is the intent of this guide to point out some common principles that can increase the likelihood that data will be secure, accurate, and useful. There is no magic in our suggestions, but we can promise that attention to details at the point of data entry will improve data quality. Getting there deserves the effort because quality data ultimately lead to better education.

This guide includes tip sheets describing the roles of various school district personnel who are prominent in providing and using information. You may want to duplicate the tip sheets or print additional, individual copies from the Forum website at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2005801.asp so that each person can retain a copy of the appropriate suggestions. Additionally, the website has a PowerPoint™ presentation that can be used to supplement the report and the tip sheets.

Helping a School Achieve Quality Data

The best place to start looking at the data collection process is the moment of data entry. Most of us understand that, in the education community, this moment usually takes place in a school. We also know that data entry happens at many places inside the school. Data entered into a computer system might include teacher demographics, certification, attendance, and grades — all entered in a busy environment such as a school office, classroom, or conference room. Nurses enter health information; school officials often enter budget, food services, or transportation data from various places around the campus; and teachers and other staff members enter student enrollment information, attendance data, and test scores.

It is important for everyone in a school to understand that, in all cases, data are entered into a computer so that information can be developed and used. One of the tasks of school administrators is to work with staff so that they can see the relationship of the information to the data entered into a computer and understand how that information supports the school's instructional program and business operations.

The goal is to establish conditions that will instill confidence among the users of the data. People who rely on reports must be able to trust that information is accurate, that the confidentiality of student records and the integrity of the data are secure, and that they're getting the right information to answer their questions. In this document, the environment that makes this happen is called a "Culture of Quality Data." It all starts with the data entry process in a school. It exists where people believe that good information is important enough to warrant the resources needed to produce it.

A Culture of Quality Data begins with the data entry process in a school.

Policies and Regulations

Schools are bound by district policies as well as by state and federal regulations that address what data must be reported and how these data must be reported. A common thread of these policies and regulations is the school's responsibility for the children it teaches and the resources it is given to do the job. Some of these policies and regulations exist to protect the expenditure of public funds. Others are in place to ensure that students receive services or to protect students' rights as citizens. Schools and districts are accountable for the financial support and services they receive as well as the children under their care.

When we say that schools are the entity responsible for upholding these regulations, we are really talking about the demands made on school principals. School principals are ultimately responsible for the information created from the data entered by staff, and they have an ethical responsibility to report data as accurately as possible. To that end, principals work with their staff to develop and distribute the onsite data quality policies needed to meet federal, state, and district data requirements.

In larger schools, the principal may be able to appoint a staff member to act as a data steward to manage the data and to work toward achieving a Culture of Quality Data. In other schools, the principal might be the only administrator on site and may have to depend on an overworked office secretary to enter much of the required data. In any case, the principal is responsible for ensuring compliance with policies and regulations and for making sure the data allow achievement to be measured accurately.

If you have a Culture of Quality Data in your school, it is easier to meet the policy and regulatory demands of the various agencies that require information. When you have confidence in the data provided, you are more likely to survive an audit, for example, because you will have

- clear standards and guidelines for data quality;
- school staff with the needed skills and information to enter data correctly;
- workable calendars and timelines to make sure the data are available when needed; and
- technology and technology support in place to support these efforts.

Sample Question: Is it acceptable to use parents/aides to enter student data?

Sample Guideline: Confirm that such individuals are considered "school officials with a legitimate educational interest."¹

Sample Volunteer Code of Confidentiality: See the sample volunteer code on p. 36.

Standards and Guidelines

To build a Culture of Quality Data in a school, administrators and coordinators will want to establish standards and guidelines that encourage respect for accurate data. Standards are the values or principles followed as a school moves toward achieving a Culture of Quality Data. Some of the issues the standards might address include what is considered an acceptable error rate, what turnaround time is acceptable for information requests, and what security measures must be in place.

Guidelines describe procedures for meeting the standards. For example, a standard might require that 100 percent of the items on an enrollment form be completed, while a guideline might describe the process followed when data are found to be missing. While policies and procedures usually originate outside the school, school personnel can also be involved in their development.

People who have done data entry work are able to give appropriate and important feedback about the work that they do. Data clerks are probably the best people to judge if a data entry screen is set up efficiently, to assist programming staff in determining the placement of an item on a screen, or to help the technical support personnel provide appropriate assistance.

Data entry personnel can also be involved in establishing the guidelines for addressing issues. For example, what happens if the ethnicity field is left blank on the enrollment form? Does the data entry clerk guess based on the student's last name, or is the parent called? If the parent is called, who in the office makes that call? What happens if the parent objects? The fact that the ethnicity field might have to be completed may or may not be a policy issue. Guidelines will assist your staff in addressing the problem.

When we talk about building a Culture of Quality Data, we believe that all staff need to know

- what data are entered at the school;
- who enters the data; and
- the purpose of the data.

¹ The task force responsible for this document questioned the legality of having someone not directly employed by a school or district entering student data. The federal office responsible for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act responded that this is acceptable if the school has defined and published its criteria of "school officials with a legitimate educational interest" broadly enough to cover such nonemployees. The U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office has published suggested language that can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcr/doc/ferparights.doc>.

It may seem that involving teachers in developing standards and guidelines for data entry is not a good use of their time. However, during the past few years, data-based decision-making has become a mantra for the education community, and teachers make the instructional decisions. It is not enough to show teachers reports with numbers representing student achievement. Teachers also need to know how the data get into the reports they review and, where possible, to ensure that the data are entered accurately.

An effective data quality program involves all the staff. Everyone depends on the accuracy of the data.

Rarely is any database perfect, so how do you know that the data entered are correct? Even with adequate training, additional vigilance is necessary to monitor data entry. You might

- where possible, assign one person to act as your data steward;
- spot-check the data by hand, using the actual forms from which the data were entered;
- use returned mail to flag out-of-date addresses; and
- put your return address on all routine mailings so that, if an address is entered incorrectly, the envelope will be returned and the data corrected.

You will want to write the guidelines and standards your staff members have developed and post them where data entry takes place. Generally, guidelines will be followed much more reliably when the staff who are directly responsible for data entry are involved in creating the guidelines that apply to their work. And, when teachers and administrators understand the relationship between data entry and the reports they rely upon, a greater appreciation for the data entry staff will develop.

Training and Professional Development

Both training in specific skills and broader professional development are important in ensuring accurate, responsible data entry. In most cases, the district provides professional development programs. However, some training and professional development within a school will go a long way toward creating a Culture of Quality Data. It helps when school administrators

- encourage staff to attend professional development or training sessions;
- allow attendees to discuss findings and new directions at staff meetings or in written communications;
- hold discussions that include all staff members so that everyone understands the importance of data in the school; and
- involve those responsible for data entry and security within the school in discussions about what changes in procedures may be needed.

Professional development programs need to be more than a demonstration of new software to clerks and other staff responsible for entering data. A Culture of Quality Data is inclusive. Data clerks, teachers, and administrators need to know the impact of the data, that is, how the data will be used.

An effective professional development program can link the entry of data to reports created and to the instructional program. For example, teachers, administrators, and other staff need to know the relationship of

- enrollment data to appropriate placement in classes;
- timely reporting of student attendance to the ability of the school to notify parents of absentees;
- accurate and timely entry of grades to the ability of the school to generate reports to parents; and
- free and reduced-price lunch data to schools' eligibility or funding for student nutrition programs, Title I services, and the E-Rate telecommunications program.

Timelines and Calendars

People who work at schools have to meet multiple deadlines during the year, and these deadlines often fall on the same date. Therefore, it is important to control the workflow and to make sure that the entire staff knows what is expected during the school year. You can work with staff to develop a specific data entry plan for those times of the year when an "enrollment crush" will take place or when student grades must be entered.

The principal, or an appointed data steward, can develop a calendar of due dates and timelines that will provide the necessary information. You can develop this calendar by using any number of simple software programs. You want to pick one that can

- set up monthly templates;
- indicate due dates for reports;
- indicate due dates for data entry;
- designate holidays;
- designate days or weeks set aside for testing; and
- identify the staff person responsible for implementation.

The data entry and reporting calendar will be helpful to the school's technology staff. The calendar will let staff know when to expect a greater use of the computer systems for data entry. This alerts them to schedule server maintenance before or after times of peak activity and to augment help desk personnel to meet increased needs.

Every school has to contend with those times of the year when there is a spike in the data requirements. It is important for everyone who works with the data to participate in determining the calendar. This includes the technology department and the data clerks. Planning for the "crunch times" will make the entire data quality process go more smoothly.

Technology (Hardware + Software + Network)

Schools don't usually manage the hardware or software that supports data entry. However, as users of the technology, school personnel do have a role to play. Data quality depends on how user-friendly the systems are. When the data entry screens are confusing, there is a greater possibility of data entry errors.

When you think about data entry systems, realize that they do not need to be static. There is always room for improvement. When the people entering the data have recommendations for change, support those requests. It is often up to the administrator, or the data steward, to help the technology department understand the changes recommended by data entry staff. Data entry staff are able to give good advice, for example, when it comes to data entry screen design or software augmentation.

The use of passwords is important for securing the privacy and confidentiality of student and personnel information. Guidelines for the use of passwords might include the following:

- Make sure that your password consists of both alphabetic and numeric characters.
- Do not share or "loan" your password to another person.
- Change your password frequently.
- Memorize your password instead of writing it down.

Memorize your password.
Don't write it down.
Don't tape it to your monitor or keyboard.
Don't hide it under your desk.

Security has to be an overriding concern when personal data are considered. However, security systems don't have to be obstacles for the people who use them. One purpose of technology is to make it easier for people to do their work. Data entry needs drive the development of technology, not the other way around!

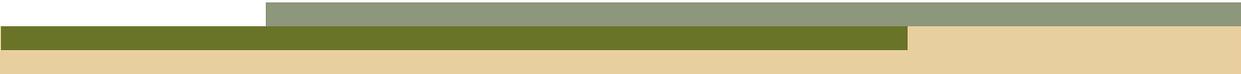
Data Entry Environment

A perfect data entry environment would consist of enough space to work comfortably, that is, enough space to enter data into a computer and display the documents that contain the information to be entered. The area would be quiet, so that the data entry clerk can concentrate. Data entry can also be made more efficient and accurate if the administrator

- sets aside a regular time of day for data entry work; and
- locates the data entry area away from traffic patterns.

However, we know that schools are very unlikely to have an ideal space for data entry. There is always something happening to distract attention from any one task. When is an office, workroom, or classroom free from interruption? The best that we can hope for is that staff will try to limit interruptions and that the school will provide an appropriate space for the person who is entering the data.

When we talk about creating an appropriate environment for data entry, we mean much more than the physical conditions for data entry. By examining the process of data entry in a school and looking at the roles of all the staff that are part of this process (see the tip sheets that follow in Part II), a school can create an environment that supports data entry and leads to quality data. When such a climate exists, and when data entry staff are given the support they need, data will be more accurate. Trusted, accurate information is likely to be used to make informed decisions about the instructional program. This is a Culture of Quality Data.



Helping a District Achieve Quality Data

Districts play a key role in ensuring quality data. Districts respond to the policies and regulations set by state and federal programs as well as their own internal policies. District personnel are usually responsible for training data collectors and for ensuring that the data gathered are of high quality. Districts may also be responsible for dedicating resources to provide the best data collection environment possible for their schools.

Policies and Regulations

Districts are expected to comply with a wide array of policies and regulations set by federal programs, state legislatures, and state departments of education. It is easier to meet the policy and regulatory demands of the various agencies if you have confidence in the data you provide. And it is more likely that you will have confidence in the data if there is a Culture of Quality Data in your district.

Districts usually have policies or regulations of their own that require validation of data. We recommend that any process involving the transfer of data be developed collaboratively. In the development of the data transfer process, you will want to include

- staff responsible for developing the reports or information;
- representatives from the technology group;
- representatives from the schools involved; and
- staff who are responsible for data entry.

By including everyone affected by a data collection in the planning stage, the district data steward can create a collaborative environment that fosters a Culture of Quality Data. In this environment, the people responsible for all aspects of the reporting cycle will carry out their work with a full understanding of what is to be done, and why it is important. Including staff in planning the process that will be used to meet the reporting requirements makes it much more likely that the data will be complete and accurate.

Standards and Guidelines

Standards and guidelines tell us how to implement policies and regulations. They can also point the way toward more effective data practices within the district and schools. Guidelines for reporting and data entry will be most effective when they are developed with the active participation of those responsible for quality data, including data entry staff.

Many of the items that are important in building a Culture of Quality Data within a school are also important in building a Culture of Quality Data within a school district. For example, to build a Culture of Quality Data in a district, administrators and coordinators will want to establish requirements for timely, accurate data; develop standards and guidelines that encourage quality; and use the resulting information to make data-based decisions.

Just as the existence of a data steward at a school can bring a focus to data, the same is true at the district level. The district data steward can create an environment in which staff can develop workable guidelines for meeting the data standards. The data steward's role here is to encourage collaboration by involving representatives of data entry staff, technology staff, district research staff, and data users. Among the support that such a group could provide are guidelines that

- describe the process to follow when an error is discovered in a report;
- state who will be responsible for notifying the school if errors are discovered;
- determine who will follow up on the initial notice of a problem; and
- determine what reports or other assistance will be provided to schools as they try to correct errors.

The data steward is key to the development of an atmosphere where quality data are valued.

The foundation for a Culture of Quality Data rests on the ability of staff to collaborate.

This is true within agencies and schools and across agencies. When guidelines are developed collaboratively, districts and schools can create real-world procedures that enhance the quality of information across the state as well as within the district. As an added benefit, state department of education staff will have a greater understanding of the needs of districts and schools when additional data collections are proposed.

Training and Professional Development

Training and professional development provide an important opportunity for a district to have an effect on data quality. A consistent, comprehensive professional development program, stressing the importance of the process to all staff, will go a long way toward developing a Culture of Quality Data. If professional development for staff responsible for data entry is to be effective, the training will consist of more than a recitation of the keystrokes needed to complete a rote task. Staff responsible for data entry, from the office clerk to the nurse to the teacher, will value the process leading to quality data when their role in the process is valued.

The superintendent and board of education can send a strong message about the importance of data quality and those who are responsible for it. You will want to instill a belief system that will enable those who enter data to understand why they are asked to do this seemingly rote task. Consider the impact of a training program that includes

- respect for the intelligence of the people responsible for data in the school;
- hands-on training to get staff used to using the data entry screens;
- handbooks or guidebooks that are inclusive, with copies of data entry screens, systematic instructions, and the rationale for entering the data;
- procedures for obtaining assistance (e.g., help desk phone number, website, online and/or e-mail query process);
- copies of the reports created from the data in the training handbook so that the people entering data will have a sense of how their work affects the operation of the school; and
- an opportunity for structured feedback about the training program and general data entry issues.

While providing training directly to personnel responsible for entering data is most effective, sometimes it is not possible. In larger districts, it may be necessary to train school administrators or data stewards, who will, in turn, be responsible for the hands-on training of their staff members. Under these circumstances, you may want to offer a presentation program on a CD-ROM or website. Reliable training materials will help to make sure that a consistent message is delivered. In addition, the tools can serve as a reference for the data entry staff. The presentation program has to be well designed in order to

- convey the value top leadership places on the skills/practices being taught;
- provide the opportunity for practice; and
- advise people how to get additional help.

Sharing copies of reports with the personnel responsible for data entry allows them to see the results of their work. You may want to schedule follow-up discussions after the completion of new or major data efforts to see what worked and what needs to be improved. If individuals in the district are aware of the importance of the collection of quality data, it is more likely that they will put out the effort to ensure that the data collected are of the highest quality possible.

When it is necessary to hire part-time staff, pay particular attention to the appropriate training necessary to achieve quality data. Investing resources in formal training pays benefits that justify the expense. It shows that the work is important and establishes consistency. The training doesn't have to be elaborate; in addition to a demonstration of the keystrokes necessary to enter the data, include an explanation of the importance of the work and a sample of the information that will result from the data entry.

Sharing reports with the personnel who enter data allows them to see the results of their work.

Timelines and Calendars

Districts, like schools, are often at the mercy of deadlines that others have set. The district also has its own data needs and schedules. Therefore, it is critical to develop a district data calendar that will help track the times when reports are due and when schools must provide data to meet these deadlines. You will want to use the calendar to identify what data are required from schools and when the district, state, or federal programs need the information.

The district data steward can be responsible for maintaining this calendar. Involve the program offices, including the information technology staff, in planning the data calendar. Through this collaboration, you can avoid overlapping dates. Moreover, these meetings can evolve into discussions about reducing redundant data requests.

And, of course, it is very important to distribute the district data calendar, with timelines and deadlines, to all district staff. This will enable the school data steward to work with his or her staff to develop a calendar that will ensure data are entered in a timely manner at schools.

When asking for information from schools, explain the purpose of the information requested and link the request, wherever possible, to the instructional program. If the data request does not directly relate to the instructional program, but is needed to qualify for financial or other resources or to satisfy a federal regulation, it is more important for school personnel to understand the reason for the collection. When staff are informed, their understanding of the process will enable them to perform at a higher level of competency.

In a smaller school, it might not be possible for the principal to appoint a data steward or coordinator. In this case, it is necessary for the principal or someone else in the school to be responsible for tracking the due dates of various reports and working with staff to ensure that data are entered in time to meet deadlines. Additionally, the district data steward may want to assist the principal and work directly with school staff to develop appropriate data entry procedures.

Technology (Hardware + Software + Network)

A computer infrastructure exists to serve the needs of the people in the organization. This is true even though it may seem at times that the needs of the machines take priority over getting the work done. This situation can be avoided if you involve the information technology staff in the decisionmaking process about data collection and reporting.

We have discussed the importance of timelines and calendars. The participation of the information technology staff in the development of a data entry or data reporting calendar allows them to adjust schedules to meet the needs of the greater school community. Working with the district data steward and other members of the staff, the information technology coordinator or director can schedule extra support personnel, as needed, and can arrange for maintenance to be carried out at times of low system use.

An important role district personnel play is to ensure the accuracy of data received from schools. Technology can help here through the automation of quality control. Mistakes can be corrected before they are made when the computer system prevents entry of obviously incorrect data. This also frees teachers, nurses, food service personnel, and other data enterers from a lot of number checking. Data entry staff, administrators, and technology personnel can work together to produce and implement the specific "edit-checks" that serve the needs of your district. These edit-checks can correct errors before they occur.

It is a standard business practice to use passwords to secure the privacy and confidentiality of student and personnel information. You will want to write password security procedures and distribute them to all staff. In addition to the security guidelines for schools described above (see p. 10), the district might consider additional guidelines to ensure that

- passwords are of a sufficient length (e.g., a minimum of eight alphabetic and numeric characters); and
- procedures require passwords to be changed frequently (e.g., every 30 to 60 days).

When implementing security procedures, it is best to include a help desk or another process for staff to use if they forget their password. Password restoration procedures should include a method to verify the identity of the person calling the help desk. This might include asking for the staff member's social security number, mother's maiden name, or some other item.

Data Entry Environment

The importance of the physical area in which data entry takes place was discussed above (see p. 11). While building campuses with appropriate spaces for necessary activities is a long-range solution, there are more immediate steps the district can take to improve the data entry environment.

Every district has programs that compete for a limited amount of money. Program funding is tied to accountability measures that, in turn, are based on data collected by schools and districts. It is in the best interests of districts to provide the resources needed to produce quality, on-time data.

In some cases, overtime pay for office staff responsible for data entry may be an effective way to meet data entry deadlines. In other situations, you will want to measure the productivity of overworked staff against the difficulties of hiring more people to do the work. You may want to examine hiring part-time staff at those times when a great deal of data entry is expected — for example, at student enrollment time.

When enough staff members have the time to dedicate to data entry, in a place where interruptions are minimal, data quality will increase. Districts may not have the funds to provide the number of personnel or the physical conditions needed for optimal data entry. Nevertheless, working toward these goals even if they cannot be met in full, and recognizing the importance of data entry in the life of a district, will help to bring about a Culture of Quality Data.

Sample edit-checks:

If 1=male and 2=female for a particular field, allow only a "1" or a "2" to be entered in that field.

If a telephone number field requires an area code, do not allow a phone number with fewer than 10 numbers to be entered.

Summary

Effective policies, guidelines, professional development, and efficient environments are all earmarks of a school or district that values data quality. It is understandable that these conditions will not develop overnight. Like the creation of any other successful program, the creation of a quality data system takes time and requires the development of a systematic process.

Throughout this guide, the emphasis has been on the contributions of those school staff members who enter data. Some members of the staff enter data as a primary responsibility. Others enter data only when there is an urgent need for the data. Still other members of the staff, such as teachers, administrators, or nurses, are required to enter data for part of a day or for a few days during the year. All of these staff members, and the data entry process, need to be treated with respect and understanding since they represent the foundation of quality data.

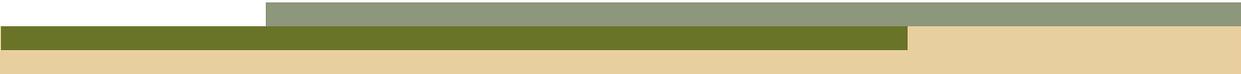
Some of the questions you might want to ask when you think about data quality include the following:

- Are data entry and collection valued tasks?
- Do staff understand why data are being collected?
- Do staff see the reports that are created from the data that are entered?
- Do the data entry staff understand how the teachers use the data to enhance the instructional program for individual students?
- Do staff know how much money is brought into individual schools and the district because of the data that are entered?

The Introduction in Part I of this guide noted that the components of a Culture of Quality Data include the need for data to be accurate, to be secure, and to serve a specific purpose. It is clear that “the quality of the data becomes increasingly important as decision makers at all levels inside and outside the organization begin to use data to inform decisions” (Consortium for School Networking 2003).

The authors recognize that quality data require an investment of time and money. The investment can create an environment where the data collected result in informed decisions, from the office of the superintendent to the classroom teacher.

When an effective data entry and collection environment exists, staff will spend less time and money correcting data errors and more time on other tasks, such as the instructional program. This can happen when all those involved in the collection and use of data are communicating, when all those involved respect the contributions of the staff who enter the data, and when all staff understand how the data are used. In fact, it depends upon building a Culture of Quality Data.



Tip Sheets on the Roles of Key Players





Quality Data: The Role of the Principal

Responsibility

As the chief instructional leader, you are ultimately responsible for data collection and reporting in the school. You have the responsibility to report data as accurately as possible.

Things to Think About

- How do you and your staff use data to measure student achievement?
- When you place your signature on a report, how certain are you that the data are correct?
- What data are collected in your school?
- What can you and your staff do to produce quality data?

Things to Do

- Check reports for accuracy and reasonableness before "signing off" and sending to the district.
- With staff, periodically spot-check source documents against data entered to ensure that required data (e.g., medical information) are actually being entered.
- Ensure that your staff have access to appropriate technology tools.
- Stay current by attending meetings and training about data requirements.
- Provide district data personnel with recommendations for improvements in data collection procedures.
- Allow and encourage staff to attend training in their areas of expertise.
- Consider using a variety of training strategies, including the "train-the-trainer" model, where necessary.
- Work with your staff and the district to develop and use standard procedures for data entry and reporting.
- Provide trained staff to back up data entry personnel during peak periods (enrollment, scheduling, etc.).
- Understand and communicate laws and regulations that affect data at your school (e.g., the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 [FERPA] and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 [HIPAA]).
- Support and monitor district data security policies and procedures.
- Encourage the use of data to make daily instructional decisions.
- Provide an environment conducive to accurate data entry.
- Develop a calendar for data reporting deadlines.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

You have many diverse responsibilities within your school; among these is the responsibility to ensure that what is happening at your school is accurately reflected in the data. It will take time and effort to develop a Culture of Quality Data within your school. By helping staff to understand the importance of data entry and data collection, as described above, the quality of instructional and operational decisions will improve.



Quality Data: The Role of the Teacher*

Responsibility

You are responsible for entering timely and accurate data about your students, as required.

Things to Think About

- Who uses the data that you enter (e.g., parents, students, school board members, the principal, other teachers, payroll staff, the news media)?
- How do you use data to make important individual and group instructional decisions (e.g., progress toward content standards, need for remediation/intervention)?
- What is the effect of the data you enter on students' educational experiences?
- What is the impact of incomplete or inaccurate data?
- What can you do to increase the accuracy of data?

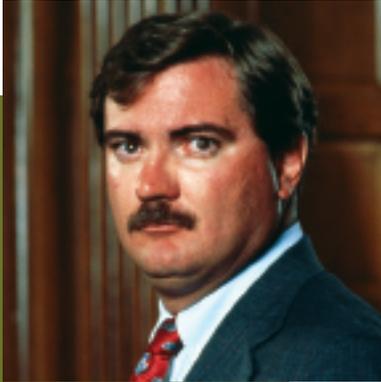
Things to Do

- Ask for and attend training on the use of data in the instructional program.
- Ask for appropriate instructions and documentation.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions about your data responsibilities.
- Identify barriers to effective data entry and communicate these to the principal or other appropriate personnel.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of student data by protecting data from students and unauthorized personnel.
- Follow your district data security policies and procedures (e.g., change passwords frequently, do not share passwords with colleagues or students, etc.).
- Enter data accurately and in a timely manner.
- Check your work for accuracy and completeness.
- Ask for help if you make an error.
- Share good ideas and best practices about data entry with your peers.
- Check your calendar for data reporting deadlines so that you can allocate time for data entry.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

Your ability to make sound educational decisions about your students will be improved because those decisions will be based on quality data. You will be able to improve students' educational experiences because the instructional program will be based on accurate data.

*The suggestions in this Tip Sheet may apply to others in the school, such as a counselor or nurse.



Quality Data: The Role of Office Staff

Responsibility

You are responsible for entering important data accurately and completely, maintaining data security, and understanding how the data will be used.

Things to Think About

- Who uses the data that you enter (e.g., school board members, the principal, parents, teachers, students, payroll staff, the news media)?
- How are data used to make important instructional decisions (e.g., student placement)?
- What is the effect of the data you enter on schools or programs?
- What can you do to ensure the accuracy of the data you enter?

Things to Do

- Enter data accurately and in a timely manner.
- Ask for and attend professional development programs.
- Ask for appropriate instructions and documentation.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions about your responsibilities.
- Identify barriers to effective data entry procedures and communicate these to the principal or other appropriate personnel.
- Implement the district data security policies and procedures (e.g., change passwords frequently, do not share passwords, treat data confidentially, etc.).
- Check your work and run appropriate edit reports.
- Ask for help when you make an error.
- Identify a peer who does work similar to yours so that you can share ideas and best practices.
- Check your calendar for data reporting deadlines so that you can set aside time for data entry.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

You are at the center of any effort to build a Culture of Quality Data in your school. You take pride in and ownership of your work. You understand the importance of the data you are working with and have taken steps to raise the level of data quality in your school. As a side benefit, working more efficiently means that your data entry tasks will be easier and less frustrating.



Quality Data: The Role of the School Board Member

Responsibility

As a school board member, you are responsible for setting policy.

Things to Think About

- What information do you need?
- How does your district use data to demonstrate achievement in educational programs?
- How do you know that the data are accurate?
- What do personnel in a school do to enter and gather data?
- What is a school required to do when you request nonmandated data?

Things to Do

- Understand the impact data has on funding programs.
- Allocate appropriate resources to enable schools to meet the ever-increasing need for data collection and data entry.
- Invest in computer hardware and software as a routine cost of doing business.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

Pressures on school board members are always increasing. By becoming knowledgeable about the data entry process and the district's procedures for ensuring data quality, you can rely on the information you use with more confidence.

Improving data quality is an investment. If the resources used to produce accurate, timely data result in information to justify programs or secure additional needed funds, it is money well spent.



Quality Data: The Role of the Superintendent

Responsibility

As a district superintendent, it is your responsibility to enhance the educational program of students, to improve student achievement, and to see that district policies are implemented.

Things to Think About

- How does your district use data to demonstrate achievement in educational programs?
- How do you know that the data you review are accurate?
- What data are schools responsible for entering into computer systems?
- Is there an inventory of data collected in your district?
- Do personnel in your district understand the use of data in the instructional program?
- Do personnel in your district understand the use of data in funding programs?
- How do you deal with redundant requests for data?
- Are personnel available to enter data into computer systems at schools?
- Are staff responsible for data entry receiving appropriate professional development?
- Is there a process in place to resolve discrepancies in information?

Things to Do

- Set education benchmarks that use data to measure student achievement.
- Support the development of a Culture of Quality Data in your district through an effective professional development program.
- Encourage principals to make data-driven, building-level decisions.
- Support your information technology director in the promotion of more efficient data collection procedures, the use of technology to decrease data entry errors, and the movement toward applications that are "interoperable" (i.e., that interact with each other using a minimum amount of programming resources).
- Support the allocation of funding to provide schools with the appropriate resources to enter data.
- Assign a member of your staff to be a data "steward" or coordinator.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

A Culture of Quality Data in the district will result in reliable data that are useful for evaluating the instructional program and student achievement and for pointing out areas of success and places where improvements are needed.

A Culture of Quality Data will enable you to have confidence in the information that you review and, most importantly, will allow you to make effective decisions.



Quality Data: The Role of the Data Steward or Coordinator

Responsibility

You serve your administrator by ensuring that the statistical information reviewed by senior staff represents data that have been entered accurately and collected systematically. Furthermore, you enhance the information reporting process through staff development and collaboration with the various offices and programs responsible for producing data and information.

Things to Think About

- Does the information reviewed by your superintendent and senior staff represent facts based on accurate data from programs and offices?
- Does everyone in your school district understand how data are used to benefit the instructional program and provide funds for services?
- Are data collected systematically in the school district?
- Are the staff responsible for entering data trained to do an effective job?
- Is there a process in place that allows "end-users" to request or modify reports?
- Are you and the information technology (IT) director operating collaboratively?

Things to Do

- Coordinate the data collection process.
- Provide professional development for staff members leading toward a Culture of Quality Data in the school.
 - The sessions might include
 - demonstrations that incorporate hands-on training, enabling data entry personnel to become used to the actual data entry screens;
 - examples that actually reflect situations that will be encountered;
 - handbooks or guidebooks, with copies of data entry screens, systematic instructions, and the rationale for entering the data;
 - descriptions of the procedures for obtaining assistance (e.g., help desk phone number, online and/or e-mail query process); and
 - copies of the reports created from the data, enabling trainees who enter information to have a sense of how their work affects the operation of the school.
- Resolve discrepancies in information before reports are forwarded to senior staff.
- Develop a process that allows staff to request new reports or modifications of existing reports.
- Collaborate with the district technology director or coordinator to enhance the ability of computer programs to determine effective editing procedures for reports and other information.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

By helping staff members to understand the importance of data entry and data collection, and to see the process that leads to data-driven decisions, you are directly involved in courses of action that lead toward improved student achievement and increased services provided to the district and schools.



Quality Data: The Role of Technology Support Personnel*

Responsibility

You maintain and secure the hardware, software, and network that allow staff to enter, store, secure, and transfer data.

Things to Think About

- Are the data and the hardware secure?
- Do you have the appropriate hardware and software to allow efficient data entry and storage?
- Are standard data definitions used in the software?
- Are the computer applications "interoperable" (i.e., able to interact with each other using a minimum amount of programming resources)?
- Are you and the data coordinator operating collaboratively?
- Do you have an effective help desk process in place?

Things to Do

- Ensure that effective security measures, including password protection, are in place. (See *Weaving a Secure Web Around Education: A Guide to Technology Standards and Security* [National Forum on Education Statistics 2003], which deals with system security in detail.)
- Work with the data coordinator and other staff involved with data entry to develop efficient editing and data verification procedures.
- Work with the data coordinator to provide technical assistance with professional development and dissemination programs. The assistance could take the form of a
 - CD-ROM with training information that can be duplicated;
 - website address, with frequently asked questions (FAQs) that can be distributed to trainees; and/or
 - a PowerPoint™ presentation.
- Provide a help desk and/or an online help area for data entry staff.
- When selecting computer applications, you might want to ask the following questions:
 - Does this application comply with our district data standards?
 - Can the application "talk" to other computer applications (i.e., interoperability) in the district?
 - Does the application use the same keystrokes to move around screens as our existing applications? Alternatively, can the new system be modified so that the same data entry keystrokes are used in both new and legacy systems?
- Develop an electronic audit trail so that people are able to determine potential flaws at each of the various stages of data collection.

Outcomes (What's in it for me?)

Your involvement in data entry and data collection, including training and professional development, does pay dividends in both the instructional program and the services you are able to provide to the district and schools. Through your involvement in these areas, staff will be more responsive when you request funding to improve the technology infrastructure.

*The suggestions in this Tip Sheet may apply to the information technology director, coordinator, technician, etc.

References

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Further Information

- ESP Solutions Group (www.evalsoft.com) has a great deal of information on data quality and provides detailed processes for examining data flow within an education organization.
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- National Forum on Education Statistics. (2004). *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies* (NCES 2004-330). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved September 30, 2004, from http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2004330.asp.

Sample Volunteer Code of Confidentiality

North Clackamas School District is committed to maintaining the security and confidentiality of all student records and information. Selected volunteers with access to student records or information must adhere to the Volunteer Code of Confidentiality as outlined in the guidelines below. Violations of these guidelines may result in a reassignment and/or restriction of the volunteer's responsibilities by the administrator or designee.

All student records should be considered confidential.

Directory information, including student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, student's photograph, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and previous educational agencies or institutions attended, can only be shared with administrative approval.

Records should not be left in a place where they can be viewed by others.

Copies of records can only be shared with administrative approval.

Volunteers should not discuss or repeat information overheard while in the staff lounge, classrooms, offices, school grounds, hallways, school or extra curricular activities.

Volunteers should not discuss information obtained while in a classroom, such as a student's grade or behavior, with anyone other than the student's teacher.

Concerns or questions regarding student records or issues of confidentiality should be brought to the attention of the staff member that supervises the volunteer, and/or school administrator.

Any knowledge of a violation of this Code of Confidentiality should be immediately reported to the staff member that supervises the volunteer, and/or school administrator.

By signing, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and will comply with the Volunteer Code of Confidentiality.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Administrator Signature

Date

Topic 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- EED internal protocols for legislative contact, ensuring all requests are responded to in a timely manner will be reviewed.
- The board's Bylaws can be found behind this cover memo.
- Marcy Herman, Legislative Liaison, and Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorney General, will be present to brief the board

Bylaws

of the State Board of Education
& Early Development

October 29, 2012



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Bylaws of the State Board of Education & Early Development

1. Educational goals

1.1. Vision

The State Board of Education & Early Development is committed to develop, maintain and continuously improve a comprehensive, quality public education system.

Adopted September 2003

1.2. Mission

To ensure quality standards-based instruction to improve academic achievement for all students.

Adopted September 2003

2. Adoption, amendment and repeal of bylaws

2.1. Introduction of bylaws

New bylaws or amendment of existing bylaws may be introduced by voting members of the board or the commissioner.

2.2. Bylaws in writing and on agenda

In order for the board to vote on a bylaw for adoption or repeal, the proposed bylaw or bylaw for appeal must be in writing and must be placed on a board agenda.

2.3. Seven-day notice required

A bylaw scheduled for action must be published on the tentative agenda seven days in advance of the meeting at which the action is scheduled in order to be voted on at that meeting. A proposed bylaw may not be added to an agenda at a meeting and approved by the board at the same meeting.

2.4. Majority vote necessary

The board may adopt or repeal a bylaw by a majority vote of members present at a board meeting.

Adopted March 2004

3. Organization and duties of the state board

3.1. Officers

The officers of the state board are the chair, first vice-chair and second vice-chair.

Adopted March 2004

3.2. Election of officers

The officers of the board are elected at the last regular meeting of the board each school year, and serve one year, July 1 to June 30, and after that, if necessary, until the election of their successors. A board member may serve successive terms as an officer without limit.

Adopted March 2004

3.3. Duties of the chair

The board chair shall

- 3.3.1. Preside at all meetings of the board.
- 3.3.2. Maintain liaison with other members of the board and with the commissioner when the board is not in session.
- 3.3.3. Work with the commissioner and persons appointed by the commissioner to develop meeting agendas.
- 3.3.4. Represent the board when occasion requires, and speak publicly for the board as a whole on positions of the board.
- 3.3.5. Unless otherwise specifically provided by law or motion, appoint board members to committees and subcommittees, and appoint the members of advisory committees that the board establishes.
- 3.3.6. Advise the commissioner at times when the board is not in session.

3.4. Duties of the first vice-chair

The first vice-chair shall act in place of the chair in the chair's absence, or in the case of a vacancy in that office.

3.5. Duties of the second vice-chair

If the first vice-chair cannot serve, the second vice-chair shall assume the duties of the first vice-chair.

3.6. Duties of the commissioner

The commissioner shall keep a record of the minutes of all meetings, shall answer and file board correspondence, and shall perform any other duties that the board directs, in addition to performing the statutory and regulatory duties of commissioner. The commissioner may delegate responsibilities assigned by the board and specified by the board bylaws to one or more employees of the department.

Adopted March 2004

4. Advisory members of state board_____

The number of and selection of state board advisory members will be specified in Title 4, Chapter 03 of the Alaska Administrative Code and adopted by the state board in compliance with the administrative procedures act.

Adopted March 2004

5. Regular meetings_____

5.1. Meetings held quarterly

Regular meetings of the state board will be held at least quarterly, during the first week of each quarter, in Juneau, unless the board specifically selects another time and place.

5.2. Adoption of calendar

At the last regularly scheduled meeting of each school year, the board will adopt a calendar of regular meetings for the following school year, indicating the planned date and location of each meeting.

5.2.1. A majority of the members of the board may alter the calendar if circumstances warrant that action.

5.3. Work sessions

At the discretion of the chair, a regular meeting may be preceded by a work session at which the board may receive information and reports, but may not vote or take any action on any item.

5.4. Public testimony

If a regular meeting is preceded by a work session, the commissioner, in consultation with the chair, will schedule time on the work session agenda for the public to offer testimony on proposed regulations or on any agenda or non-agenda items.

Adopted March 2004

5.5. Order of business; regular meetings

The following is the order of business at each regular meeting:

5.5.1. Call to order and roll call.

5.5.2. Pledge of allegiance.

5.5.3. Adoption of the agenda.

5.5.4. Disclosure of potential conflicts.

5.5.5. If a work session does not precede a regular meeting, a period of public comment will be held to hear testimony on proposed regulations or on any agenda or non-agenda items.

5.5.6. Opening periods of public comment on proposed regulations.

5.5.7. Adoption of proposed regulations.

5.5.8. Other business.

- 5.5.9. Standing reports, including a report from the commissioner and a report from the attorney general.
- 5.5.10. Other reports.
- 5.5.11. Consent agenda, which may include general items, including the minutes of the previous regular meeting and any special meetings, and any other action items.
- 5.5.12. Board member comments.

Amended October 2012

5.6. Removing items from consent agenda

At the request of a board member, the board will remove an item from the consent agenda and consider the item separately.

Adopted March 2004

5.7. Amending the agenda

A board member may, at the start of the regular meeting, propose additional agenda items for consideration. Additional agenda items may be added by vote of the majority of the board members present. The chair shall decide the appropriate placement of agenda items so added to the agenda.

*Adopted March
2004*

5.8. Disclosure of Potential Ethics Act Violations

At each meeting, following the approval of the agenda, each member of the board shall disclose on the record whether participation on an agenda item would be a potential violation of the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act as required by AS 39.52.220. The chair, as the designated ethics supervisor, shall determine whether a member's participation on the agenda item violates AS 39.52. If not, the member may participate. If a board member objects to the decision of the chair, the members present at the meeting, excluding the involved member, shall vote on the matter. The board chair shall disclose any potential violations in advance of the meeting to his or her ethics supervisor, and disclose all determinations on the record. If the chair discloses a potential violation at the meeting, the members, excluding the chair, may vote on the matter.

Adopted October 2012

6. Special meetings

6.1. Calling a special meeting

A special meeting of the board may be called by the chair or by at least four members of the board.

6.2. Business limited

The business conducted at a special meeting is limited to matters identified in the official public notice of the special meeting.

Adopted March 2004

7. Participation in meetings _____

7.1. Participation expected

Board members are expected to attend each regular, special and emergency board meeting. However, when it is not possible for a board member to attend a meeting, the member should inform the chair or the commissioner as soon as possible.

7.2. Participation in regular, special or emergency meetings by teleconference

A board member may request to participate in a regular, special or emergency meeting of the board by teleconference when an emergency or other valid reason prohibits the member from traveling to a meeting site. The member must notify the chair, commissioner or commissioner's executive secretary as soon as possible that the member will participate by teleconference to expedite arrangements for teleconference participation.

Adopted March 2004

8. Governance of meetings _____

8.1. Robert's Rules used

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10th Edition, will govern proceedings of the board, unless a procedure is otherwise governed by state law or regulation, or by a specific board bylaw.

8.2 Majority vote required

All questions pending before the board will be decided by a majority of the members present and voting.

Adopted March 2004

9. Notice of meetings _____

9.1 Notice of regular meetings

For each regular meeting of the board, the commissioner shall no later than 10 days before a regular meeting:

9.1.1. Publish notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting in two newspapers of general circulation in the state, and on the State of Alaska On-Line Public Notice system;

9.1.2. Mail, email, transmit by facsimile machine or by other technology as determined appropriate by the commissioner, written notice of the date, time and place of meeting, and the tentative agenda of the

meeting, to all school district superintendents and any individual or organization that has requested notice of the meeting.

Amended September, 2006

9.2. Notice of special and emergency meetings and work sessions

Reasonable notice shall be given for special meetings, emergency meetings, and work sessions of the board.

9.3. Notice of teleconference and videoconference meetings

If a meeting, or any portion of it, is to be conducted by teleconference or videoconference, the notice must note the location of any teleconference facility or videoconference facility that will be used.

Amended October 2012

10. Agenda preparation and distribution

10.1. The chair and commissioner shall coordinate

The board chair and the commissioner shall coordinate preparation of a tentative agenda for each regular or special meeting.

10.2. Placing agenda items on agenda

To allow for consideration of an item as the agenda is developed, a board member, advisory member, employee of the department, or any member of the public who wishes to place an item on the agenda should submit a request to the commissioner or the chair not less than 15 days before a regular meeting, or not less than 10 days before a special meeting.

10.3. Commissioner's responsibilities for agenda

10.3.1. The commissioner shall prepare and distribute the tentative agenda, agenda packet memoranda, and required supporting material.

10.3.2. Not later than 10 days before a meeting, the commissioner shall cause the agenda and agenda packet to:

10.3.2.1. Be mailed to board members and advisory members.

10.3.2.2. Be made available for viewing in the Commissioner's Office of the Department of Education & Early Development.

10.3.2.3. Be published, to the extent practicable, on the official web site of the Department of Education & Early Development.

10.3.2.4. If the meeting is held over teleconference, be distributed to teleconference sites so that the material will be available in accordance with AS 44.62.310(a).

10.4. Distributing supplemental materials

The commissioner may distribute supplemental agenda packet memoranda and required supporting material if necessary. When the board is to consider the supporting material at a teleconference meeting, the supporting material, if practical, must be distributed to the teleconference locations.

- 10.5. The commissioner may request an extension of the 10.3.2 distribution deadline from the board chair. The commissioner reserves the right to make additions to the materials distributed.

Amended October 2012

11. Polling of board members_____

If directed by the chair, the commissioner shall poll board members:

- 11.1. To authorize altering a regular meeting from the date and location of the meeting set in the calendar of regular meetings previously adopted by the board.
- 11.2. To convene a special meeting and to establish or change its time, date, and location.
- 11.3. To insert or delete an item on a tentative agenda for a regular or special meeting.

Adopted March 2004

12. Commissioner Appointment and Evaluation_____

- 12.1. Appointment of Commissioner. The board will interview a candidate who meets the requirements of AS 14.07.145 before appointing that candidate. The interview may be in-person, telephonic, or by video. If the board receives more than one application, the board may select one or more finalist for an interview. The board is not required to advertise for or solicit applications. In reviewing a qualified candidate's application and interview answers, the board will consider all relevant evidence of the candidate's fitness to be commissioner, such as a candidate's
- a. knowledge, experience, and understanding of current best practices in education;
 - b. understanding of education reform;
 - c. understanding of the educational issues facing Alaska, including both urban and rural schools and school districts;
 - d. ability to work with all stakeholders and the administration;
 - e. overall ability to lead the department and accomplish the board's goals.

Following the interview of one or more candidates, the board will deliberate. If only one candidate has demonstrated fitness to be commissioner, the board may appoint that candidate or consider additional applicants. If more than one candidate has demonstrated fitness with regard to educational and leadership ability, the board may appoint the candidate the board considers most capable of accomplishing the board's goals or may consider additional applicants.

After appointing a commissioner, the board shall forward the name to the governor under AS 14.07.145. If the governor rejects the appointment, the board may appoint another qualifying candidate whom it has already interviewed or may consider additional applicants.

Adopted October 2012

12.2. Commissioner Evaluation. The board annually will conduct a performance evaluation of the commissioner in executive session. The results of the evaluation will be discussed in executive session with the commissioner present. The original copy of the evaluation will be given to the commissioner, and a copy forwarded to the Governor.

Amended October 2012

Topic 3. Board Resolutions

- Board members have asked to have a discussion regarding the procedure for doing board resolutions.
- Jim Merriner, Chair, will lead the discussion.

Topic 4. High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE)

- Board members have asked for an overview of the HSGQE.

- Behind this cover memo are:
 - 1) The Un-codified law affecting the HSGQE
 - 2) Guide to High School Diploma in Alaska
 - 3) HSGQE relevancy document

- Erik McCormick, Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management will be present to brief the board.

Action Date: July 6, 2001

AN ACT

Relating to a two-year transition for implementation of the public high school competency examination and to establishing a secondary student competency examination as a high school graduation requirement; relating to certain reports regarding academic performance of schools; and providing for an effective date.

* **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

PURPOSE AND INTENT. (a) As part of the state's quality schools initiative, the purpose of this Act is to maximize the opportunity for the success of all public school students by (1) continuing to measure student performance through appropriate testing based on specific standards; (2) allowing the Department of Education and Early Development to continue to develop and perfect the competency examination to allow measurement of minimum competency in essential skills and to perfect the testing method; (3) ensuring that school districts and families receive performance data from standards-based assessments of students; and (4) encouraging schools and school districts to develop and promote endorsements and awards that document high levels of academic, artistic, and vocational achievement by graduating students. The performance data is to be used to better determine appropriate academic intervention and support for students.

(b) The purpose of the change of date made by sec. 7 of this Act is to

(1) allow for specific high standards to be set and maintained for public schools in the state; and

(2) ensure maximum opportunity for all students to learn and for school districts to improve.

(c) It is the intent of sec. 2 of this Act to establish a secondary student competency examination that focuses on the minimum competencies in essential skills in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics that a student should have to know in order to function in our society.

(d) It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Education and Early Development, through its existing federally required monitoring program of district special education programs, review the potential for an individualized education program team's inappropriate lowering of individualized education program goals and objectives for the purpose of providing a diploma to a student who has not achieved the state performance standards to the maximum extent practicable and take appropriate corrective action.

Alaska Earning a High School Diploma

Alaska Law (Sec 14.03.075) requires students to pass a competency exam in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics, or receive a waiver from the local governing body, to earn a diploma. Students must also meet all local requirements. The exam, called the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE), is first administered to students in the spring of their sophomore year. Students who are not proficient on portions of the exam must retake the exam at least once yearly while in school until they have passed. A student who is a child with a disability and who does not achieve a passing score, with or without accommodations, is eligible to receive a diploma if the student successfully completes an alternative assessment program. The HSGQE alternative assessment program is the Modified HSGQE and/or the Nonstandardized HSGQE. A student who meets local requirements but does not pass the exam can earn a Certificate of Achievement rather than a diploma. Students who have earned a Certificate of Achievement may continue to take the HSGQE Retest after they are no longer students.

The following chart is a summary guide to provide information about high school graduation options for students, but is not intended to provide detailed understanding of the regulations. Special Education directors, high school principals, and high school special education teachers should read the regulations regarding special education students and the HSGQE and become familiar with the Participation Guidelines.

Exam or Methodology	Leads To	To Qualify	Who Determines	Participation Guidelines (PG) & Regulation Reference
HSGQE	Diploma	All students take in the spring of their sophomore year, and continue to take portions on which they are not proficient at least once yearly while they are in school.	This assessment is required for all students. Students with disabilities or those who are LEP may take this assessment with or without accommodations.	4 AAC 06.755
HSGQE with Accommodations	Diploma	A student with a disability on an IEP or 504 plan, or students who are limited English proficient, may take the HSGQE with accommodations. Students may take the exam with accommodations the first time the exam is administered, and continue to take the exams with accommodations until they have passed all portions.	For a student with a disability on an IEP or 504 plan, the decision is made by the team and documented in the plan. For a student who is LEP, a team determines and documents the accommodations. The team should include the child's teacher and input from a parent. If an accommodation is actually a modification, the test will be invalidated and not scored.	PG – pages 5 – 17 4 AAC 06.775(c) 4 AAC 06.776(b)
Modified HSGQE	Diploma	A student with a disability who does not pass a portion of the HSGQE may take the Modified HSGQE if the student requires modifications in addition to the accommodations already provided.	The IEP or 504 team indicates the student needs an alternative assessment program for the HSGQE on the student's plan. The team completes the Modified HSGQE application and submits it to EED for approval. If EED denies approval, the team may request reconsideration of the denial from the commissioner.	PG – pages 19 - 22 4 AAC 06.775(g) 4 AAC 06.775(h) 4 AAC 06.775(j)

Exam or Methodology	Leads To	To Qualify	Who Determines	Participation Guidelines & Regulation Reference
Nonstandardized HSGQE (Juried assessment of student work)	Diploma	A student with a disability who does not pass a portion of the HSGQE may take the Nonstandardized HSGQE if the student meets the qualifications outlined in the Participation Guidelines. (Further details regarding the qualifications follow this chart)	The IEP or 504 team indicates the student needs an alternative assessment program for the HSGQE on the student's plan. The team completes the Nonstandardized HSGQE application and submits it to EED for approval. If EED denies approval, the team may request reconsideration of the denial from the commissioner.	PG – pages 22 - 25 4 AAC 06.775(i) 4 AAC 06.775(j)
Waivers from passing the HSGQE	Diploma	Students may receive a waiver from the local governing body if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The student arrives in the AK public school system within the final two semesters of his or her year of intended graduation. ▪ Parent dies within the last semester of the student's year of intended graduation. ▪ A serious or sudden illness, or a physical injury, prevents the student from taking the exam in the final semester of his or her year of intended graduation. ▪ A disability arises too late in the student's high school career to develop a meaningful and valid assessment. ▪ A student has passed a competency exam in another state that assesses the same content areas, and is a high school exit exam. ▪ A student takes, with approval, and passes the Modified HSGQE or the Nonstandardized HSGQE in 10th grade. 	To qualify for a waiver a student must meet the criteria established in state regulations, complete the application, and receive approval for the waiver from the local school board that serves as the governing body. If a student is denied a waiver, the student may appeal the denial to EED.	PG – pages 24 - 25 4 AAC 06.772 4 AAC 06.773 4 AAC 06.774 4 AAC 06.775 (l) 4 AAC 06.777 4 AAC 06.780
Alternate Assessment	Certificate of Achievement	The student's significant cognitive disability prevent completing the standard academic curricula, even with modifications and accommodations. The student requires extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to apply and transfer skills. The student is involved in an education program based on alternate achievement standards.	The student's IEP or 504 team must document reasons in the IEP for placing the student on the non-diploma track, which is the Alternate Assessment.	PG – page 7 - 9 4 AAC 06.775(b)

Nonstandardized HSGQE

The Nonstandardized HSGQE is available only to disabled students who

- are working at or near grade level;
- have taken but are not proficient on the HSGQE; and
- have a documented history of being unable to demonstrate proficiency on a standardized assessment because of one or more of the following conditions:
 - the student has a severe emotional or behavioral impairment or a pervasive developmental or other disability that causes the student to be unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in standard testing, even with accommodations or appropriate modifications;
 - the student cannot cope with the demands of a prolonged test administration because of multiple physical disabilities, severe health-related disabilities, or a neurological disorder; or
 - the student has a significant motor or communication disability that causes the student to need more time than is reasonable or available for testing, even with the allowance of extended time.

Definitions

504 Plan - a plan that meets the requirements of 29 U.S.C. 794 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

Adaptation – a device or change provided to a student for testing: “Adaptation” includes an accommodation or a modification.

Accommodation – a change in format, response, setting, timing, or scheduling, that does not alter in any significant way what the test measures or the comparability of scores.

Commissioner – Commissioner of Education and Early Development

EED – Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

HSGQE – High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

IEP – Individualized Education Program

LEP – Limited English Proficiency

Modification – a change in the content, format, and/or administration of a test that alters what the test is designed to measure or the comparability of scores. Generally, a modification makes an assessment invalid. The HSGQE may be taken with approved modifications because it is a special case.

Participation Guidelines (PG) – This document is adopted by reference, and communicates who can take statewide assessments with accommodations and modifications, and who can take the Nonstandardized HSGQE. Page numbers referred to in this document are from the Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments, 2011 edition, available online as a PDF which includes a foreword and table of contents.

HSGQE Relevancy

National Comparison

- 26 states have current or planned high school exit exam policies (*25 current, 1 planned - RI*)
 - o In 2012 this represented 69% of the nation's public high school students (*25 states*)
 - o 4 states have recently decided to phase out exit exam requirements (*AL, NC, GA, TN*)
 - o 18 states, including Alaska have Comprehensive exit exams (*aligned to state standards and generally targeted to the 9th or 10th grade level*).
 - Of the 18 states with Comprehensive exit exams 7 also assess at least one end-of course (EOC) exams (*FL, GA, MA, NM, SC, TX, WA*)

- States are moving away from minimum-competency (*below H.S. skills*) and comprehensive exams to new EOC exams.
 - o In 2002 there were 2 states using EOCs
 - o In 2008 there were 4 states having policies requiring EOCs
 - o In 2010 there were 7 states utilizing EOC exit exams
 - o In 2012 there were 9 states utilizing EOC exit exams
 - o In 2015 up to 18 states will be utilizing EOCs (*some required to take (3); some required to graduate(15)*)
 - o Reasons for EOC shift include increasing rigor, improving accountability and improved alignment between standards and curriculum

Alaska Summary

- Passage of the HSGQE to obtain a diploma became effective in 2004
 - o Students must pass 3 separate subtests – Reading, Writing, Mathematics
 - o Individuals can participate twice a year
 - o Grade 10 students take a combined SBA/HSGQE in Spring
 - o Grade 11-12 students take HSGQE Retest in either Fall or Spring

- Skills tested by HSGQE
 - o Reading
 - Reading comprehension, identification and support for main ideas, application of multi-step directions, ability to make and support assertions, and analysis and evaluation of themes
 - Multiple-choice questions target specific skills, and constructed response questions allow students to elaborate on and to make comparisons among

various aspects of the texts. Excerpts from published literature are the basis for evaluating reading skills.

- Writing
 - Writing compositions, using conventions of Standard English (spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation), and revising writing to improve expression.
 - Multiple-choice questions evaluate specific aspects of writing skill, and constructed-response writing prompts ask students to write and edit narrative, descriptive, and persuasive essays on various topics.
 - Math
 - Computation skills; reading, interpreting, and constructing graphs; and principles of geometry and measurement
 - Students will use a ruler and a protractor for a portion of the subtest. Procedures such as estimation and mental computation are interwoven throughout this examination.
-
- Current Grade 10 HSGQE Pass Rates (2013):
 - Reading – 84%
 - Writing – 72%
 - Math – 77%
 - All Three – 65%
 - The 2012 senior class cohort group had a combined cumulative passage rate of over 90%
 - This means that over 90% of the students in the 2012 senior class passed all three parts of the HSGQE in their high school career
 - There were 1,597 seniors in 2010 that completed the school year but did not receive a diploma
 - Over 53% of those seniors had already passed all three parts of the HSGQE
 - There were 1,325 seniors in 2013 that completed the school year but did not receive a diploma
 - Over 62% of those seniors had already passed all three parts of the HSGQE
 - 16% of this group were LEP students
 - 21% of this group were IEP students
 - Our statewide graduation rate increased by 2.1% to 71.7% in 2013. This is the fifth consecutive year showing an increase.

Historical Graduation Rates

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Grads</u>
2004	62.9%	7,290
2005	61.4%	6,905
2006	61.6%	7,361
2007	63.0%	7,666
2008	62.6%	7,855
2009	67.5%	8,008
<u>2010</u>	<u>67.7%</u>	<u>8,245</u>
2011	68.0%	8,064
2012	69.6%	7,989
2013	71.7%	7,795

Current High School Graduation Requirements

21 total units of credit

4 units – language arts

3 units – social studies (*0.5 credit must include Alaska history*)

2 units – mathematics

2 units – science

1 unit – health/physical education

- Twenty states require more than 21 credits, five others require 21, eighteen require less than 21 and six other states did not have requirements.