

EIMAC Spring 2008 Meeting
Longitudinal Student Data Systems Subcommittee
April 22-23, 2008
Chair: Corey Chatis, Tennessee
Chair Elect: Tom Olson, South Carolina

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

LSDS Task Force Update

Anne Brinson (IN) and Don Houde (AZ) gave an update on the previous day's LSDS taskforce meeting. The taskforce will be drafting two new EIMAC Briefs geared toward policy makers, one on grad/dropout rates and the other on the implications of the changes to the race/ethnicity collections. The taskforce also plans to post data sharing agreements on the EIMAC website.

SHEEO P-20 Meeting Update

Corey Chatis (TN) updated the committee on a meeting between NCES and SHEEO. The purpose of the meeting was to provide input on next round of IES Longitudinal Data Systems grants. The new round of IES grants will focus on P-20 systems.

System Sustainability Discussion

Once states have started to build or have built their Longitudinal Student Data System the challenge becomes sustaining it. Before the project is even finished states need to consider the aspects of support, outreach and funding they will need to sustain the system.

- States building systems in house need to be constantly learning as the technologies and securities change. States should consider starting with a proof of concept and/or pilot programs.
- Hiring and keeping high quality individuals for the project can be the biggest obstacle. Professional development becomes key to maintaining a quality workforce for the ever-changing system.
- Obtaining buy-in from key stakeholders, particularly local education agencies, is key to a systems success and sustainability. Many LEAs are beginning to recognize data sent to the state as more useful and less of a "black hole". States engaged LEAs in multiple ways:
 - Utah has been able to create buy-in by offering LEAs access to BI tools and standardized reports;
 - Virginia has given LEAs access to decision support tools that include ten years worth of data and revised reports based on feedback;
 - Oregon and South Carolina have both met with stakeholder groups in order to make the most relevant data available at the LEA and school level.
- Quality 21st century education requires sophisticated information systems to track students and allow educators to make data based decisions. Sustaining these systems requires all stakeholders, from students and parents to the governors and legislatures, to understand and buy-into the process.

Highly Qualified Teachers: Reporting Needs for CSPR, EDFacts, and OSEP

Libby Witt, Bonnie Jones and Kelly Worthington of the US Department of Education presented on the reporting needs Highly Qualified Teachers for CSPR, EDFacts and OSEP.

This presentation answers questions surrounding Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) definitions found in NCLB and IDEA and their effects on data collections. Specifically, where do the definitions overlap in NCLB and IDEA data reporting, and how is information on HQT's reported differently for different data collections?

HQT Definition:

- NCLB 9101 (23): applies only to teachers who teach core academic subjects
 - Must have full state certification; hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and demonstrate subject-matter competency in each subject taught
- HQT and Special Education: IDEA 602(10)
 - Special Education teachers who teach core academic subjects must be highly qualified (certified, degree, show subject-matter competency)
 - HQT Special Education teachers who do not teach core subjects or who only support HQTs in core subjects only have to be certified
 - Flexibility under IDEA:
 - IDEA 602(10)(C): Special ed. teachers who teach core academic subjects exclusively to students assessed against alternative academic standards must be highly qualified only at a subject matter level appropriate to the content and achievement standards of the students.
 - IDEA 602(10)(D): Special ed. teachers new to the profession who teach multiple core academic subjects and are highly qualified in mathematics, language arts, or science at the time they are hired, have two additional years to become highly qualified in other academic subjects they teach.

HQT Data Collection: NCLB vs. IDEA

- Data collection:
 - NCLB: OESE collects data via the CSPR;
 - IDEA: OSEP collects via Table 2 and/or EDFacts file specifications N070, N094 and N112
- Unit of analysis:
 - NCLB: classes in core academic subjects—not teachers;
 - IDEA: data are reported in FTE for Fully Credentialed Personnel serving children with IEPs
- NCLB data do not differentiate between regular and special ed. classes; IDEA includes data for personnel contracted or employed to work with children with disabilities (3-21)

Discussion:

- Question regarding provisional certification for new teachers:

Same as full certification; cannot include emergency credentials given to persons who would not normally be certified (usually results from an inability to find a fully-certified teacher to fill a position)

Longitudinal Data Systems Work: What the Forum Taskforce, the EIMAC Taskforce, the Roadmap, and the IES Grantees are doing and how they can work together

Longitudinal Data Systems are the hot topic in education policy and there are numerous groups working on a variety of projects. It is important for these projects to work together and not duplicate efforts.

- NCES Forum's Longitudinal Data Systems Taskforce
 - The Forum taskforce is funded through the National Center for Education Statistic's National Forum on Education Statistics.
 - The Forum's LDS Taskforce will produce a Forum Guide on Longitudinal Data Systems.
 - The taskforce met for the first time during the MIS conference and then again prior to the Spring EIMAC meeting. The taskforce has a time line of up to two years to finish the complete document with the idea that pieces of the document will be released as they are ready.
 - The document will focus on three target groups: policymakers, education specialists, and technical personnel, with sections focusing on governance, sustainability, etc.
- EIMAC's Longitudinal Student Data Systems Task Force
 - EIMAC's LSDS Taskforce is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
 - The group was originally brought together to inform the Data Quality Campaign's 10 Essential Elements survey. The taskforce continues to be the sounding board for DQC activities.
 - In addition to working with the DQC, the LSDS Taskforce members have taken it upon themselves to release "EIMAC Briefs" to inform and assist in the building and sustaining of Longitudinal Data Systems.
- EIMAC Longitudinal Student Data Systems Subcommittee
 - EIMAC Subcommittees are funded by state EIMAC participation dues.
 - The subcommittee is meant to allow EIMAC states to gather and discuss in an open forum the issues and needs of longitudinal data systems. This is an excellent opportunity for open state-led discussion.
 - At the conclusion of each EIMAC meeting the subcommittee issues recommendations to the chiefs.
- The EIMAC Roadmap Project
 - The EIMAC Roadmap is also funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
 - The Roadmap attempts to combine a list of system components (from the DQC, IES, DSAC, PBDMI, etc.), eliminate redundancies and show the percentage of states that are working on or using each component.
 - The current goal of the Roadmap is to identify areas of need and inform CCSSO's technical assistance. CCSSO will host a series of workshops based on the Roadmap.

- Dependent on increased funding for this initiative there may be a print document or a web based resource.
- Institute for Education Sciences Longitudinal Data Systems Grantees
 - IES has issued two rounds of grants to fund state initiatives to build longitudinal data systems. The first round included 14 states and the second round added 13 states to the group.
 - IES grantee states have numerous opportunities to gather and discuss different issues involved in the building of data systems, these discussions are however limited to the 27 grantees.

Interoperability Discussion

Laurie Collins (Schools Interoperability Framework Association) and Michael Sessa (Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council) presented on interoperability.

- The SIFA certification and PESC Seal of Approval give states a guarantee that vendors will meet their needs
 - SIF uses a 3rd party group to certify SIF vendors.
 - Software products are certified only on the desired elements; vendors can choose to be certified on as few as just one element.
 - Functionality profiles are not yet available; however, SIFA is beginning to work on the concept. The first functionality profile will be for electronic student transcripts. The functionality profiles will identify the data elements that states see as common to all transcripts. The profiles will identify both required data element and optional elements. Vendors would be able to that whole list of elements. SIFA is trying to find out what is common between states in order to create a “standard” transcript.
 - SIFA is also working of state SIF profiles. Oklahoma has be a pilot state for this project. State Profiles will show data elements each state expects to be included in SIF agents.
 - The PESC Seal of approval is less stringent.
- SIFA is working on an E-transcript with a pilot project in Indiana. SIFA is taking a transcript from the K-12 space, to a clearinghouse to convert it to PESC’s XML and then providing it to Indiana University.
 - There are currently no standards for e-transcripts across states. SIFA is attempting to gather what states feel is important to include on an e-transcript so that vendors can certify themselves with SIFA and not customize software per state.
- Many states are not using SIF vendors. It is important to understand that SIF is not the only solution when it comes to interoperability.

National Student Clearinghouse Discussion

Jeff Tanner and Richard Reeves of the National Student Clearing house presented to the subcommittee. The National Student Clearing house is a national non-profit organization founded in 1993 to facilitate student record exchange.

- The NSC is led by board of directors and advisory committee. It’s partners include: colleges, students, alumni, commercial users, high schools, student lending orgs, etc.

- The NSC services include enrollment verification, core service, e-transcript, degree verification, student tracker, student services, etc. The clearinghouse assists high schools in tracking the college success of their graduates.
- More than 3,100 colleges, enrolling 91% of US college students, and hundreds of high school districts nationwide participate in the Clearinghouse. NSC receives data 4 times a year.
- The Clearinghouse has a lot of records but not much information about each; the value is in sending the enrollment/degree information back to the institution to combine with the rich student data in state systems to evaluate what is happening to their students.
- The Clearinghouse has maintained the confidentiality and privacy of records covering more than 80 million students since its inception and the Clearinghouse complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Funding for the NSC originally came from student loan organizations. Employers pay a fee to validate the degrees of their potential candidates. The Clearinghouse believes that providers of data should not pay but users of data should.
- The Clearinghouse works with some states on cohort level data. In order to use NSC data a state can pay for all its high schools to have access so they can track their own students.
- NSC has begun offering an electronic student transcript service. Transcripts are a fairly easy venture to move into because the Clearinghouse already has the security built in and agreements with most institutes for higher education.

Interoperability and Cross State Exchange of Data

Many states have found successful strategies for interoperability without the use of SIF. The committee held a discussion on these alternate approaches as well as how to facilitate cross state data exchange.

- All states agree that data needs to be standardized.
- States can use flat file EDI standards and web based applications for batch submissions.
- XML formats do not work for large file submissions; they include stratified submissions by capacity and submission type.
- The value of SIF is around the content and not the technology.
- IN: has had a vendor claim that they're SIF but without the hardware. Doesn't like the cost high maintenance associated with SIF.
- States can use NCES Handbooks for content standards.
- States need to put in place governance structures that standardize how new data elements are introduced and force program staff to own their data elements (definition, impact, etc.).

Subcommittee Election

Tom Olson will begin as the new chair at the Fall EIMAC meeting. The subcommittee elected Shawn Franklin as the new vice chair.

Recommendations for Chiefs

- Chiefs should advocate for and actively participate in sustainability efforts (e.g., funding, resources, stakeholder involvement) for their state's longitudinal data system.
- Beyond compliance reporting, Chiefs should articulate the primary purposes of their state's longitudinal data system, and identify and set priorities pertaining to these purposes.
- Chiefs should advocate at the national level for an Adequate Yearly Appropriation (AYA) to help states maintain the infrastructure for collecting and reporting federally mandated data.
- Chiefs should initiate or continue activities with their higher education counterpart regarding P20 data systems. Student record exchange and e-transcripts are a good place to begin the conversation.
- Chiefs should ensure that all state department offices are involved with the development of the EDEN submission plan and receive a copy of the final plan to support data governance and promote collaboration in the timely submission of data files.