



EIMAC Report to the Chiefs

Annual Policy Forum, November 2007

EIMAC Overview and Mission

Since the 1960s, the Council of Chief State School Officers has had a committee of state education agency staff focused on education data concerns. The most recent restructuring of this committee occurred in 2004, at which time the group was renamed the Education Information Management Advisory Consortium (EIMAC). Its mission is to:

- Represent and advise SEA chiefs and staff on national data issues, both current and future.
- Collaborate in the planning of national data initiatives by building partnerships with national data collectors, including federal program offices.
- Review and provide feedback on 1) national data collections and reports, 2) national assessments and related research studies.
- Provide networking and professional development opportunities for SEA directors and managers of data and assessment.
- Provide resources and leadership to states in building student-level data systems.

The CCSSO president-elect serves as the CCSSO Board liaison to EIMAC.

All CCSSO member states are eligible for EIMAC membership (dues are \$9800 per year; up to three state reps can attend the biannual EIMAC meetings in DC with travel paid by CCSSO). EIMAC membership is at 46 states. Rhode Island, Alaska, and Vermont are not currently participating. The Consortium has four subcommittees focused on the topics of: Assessment, General Statistics (data issues), Special Education, and Longitudinal Student Data Systems.

Recommendations and Information Items from the 2007 Fall EIMAC Meeting

Assessment

Peer Review

Chiefs should seek further clarification from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding what constitutes a change in the standards and assessment systems as discussed in the September 5, 2007, USED letter on peer review. (Some examples are provided in the letter, but states needs further clarification on the degree of change that requires an additional peer review and the scope of that review.)

Collaborative Effort with Association of Test Publishers

EIMAC is working collaboratively with the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) to establish guidance on best practices related to operational processes in state testing; EIMAC may be able to subsidize some of these travel costs; state participants may need to absorb some of the costs. EIMAC is looking for additional sources of funding to assist in this effort.

NAEP Mapping Studies and Participation of Students with Disabilities

EIMAC will be sending a letter to the National Center on Education Statistics to outline concerns and recommendations regarding two upcoming studies on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) due for release in 2008. EIMAC requests that chiefs encourage NCES to use EIMAC to gather input from SEAs early in the process of developing methodologies for NAEP-related studies. In addition, NCES should re-examine the framework for decision-making concerning NAEP participation for students with disabilities. NCES should include the following groups in this effort: The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP); CCSSO's Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) Statewide Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS), and special education state leadership.

Education Information Management Advisory Consortium
A service of CCSSO to provide up-to-date information on national data and assessment issues to chiefs

New Policy Makers' Guide to Assessment

EIMAC has released a new *Policy Makers' Guide to Assessment*, designed as a primer for policy makers and other individuals at the state, district, and school levels on state assessments. A PDF is available at www.ccsso.org/eimac under reports.

General Statistics

New Racial and Ethnic Reporting Categories

USED has released guidance on new racial and ethnic categories for data collection and reporting for all USED collections. This guidance comes about 10 years after the Office of Management and Budget required all federal agencies to collect race/ethnicity data in a way that would allow for individuals to identify themselves as Hispanic of any race, or multiple races. The USED guidance is consistent with the guidance used by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), which is responsible for collecting staff data. States have three years (as requested by EIMAC) to comply with new reporting guidelines. *These new reporting categories may impact accountability reporting decisions in some states.*

Office of Civil Rights Survey Changes

States (through EIMAC) must stay engaged with the Office of Civil Rights in discussions on proposed changes to the OCR survey. OCR has indicated it wants to move from a biennial, sample survey of districts to an annual, universe (all district) survey, with data collected from state education agencies (through ED Facts). EIMAC feels strongly that this is not the right approach. *[Through EIMAC, states were able to make known to OCR (and the Office of Management and Budget) that this would not be the right approach, and OCR has delayed requesting 'transition' plans from states. But they have not reconsidered their plans for changing the survey.]*

National Education Association Class-Size Database

The National Education Association is supporting an effort to collect class size at the school level. EIMAC will be providing guidance to the organization building the class size database on how best to consistently and accurately collect this data; EIMAC does not support their current plans for collecting this information directly from schools as it will result in inaccurate and contradictory reports on class size.

ED Facts Consistency Needed

Continue to urge USED to resolve duplications and misalignments in data definitions used by the various program offices. As ED Facts merges existing program collections, these disparities will result in poor data quality used at the federal level to evaluate programs. In addition, continue to urge USED to provide flexibility and extend timelines for states to prepare submission plans for how they will provide data to ED Facts.

Longitudinal Student Data Systems

E-Transcripts

States should collectively and individually establish their vision and promote their requirements regarding electronic student transcripts (e-transcripts). In some states, vendors are approaching other agencies with e-transcript products that SEAs will be expected to use. EIMAC will be producing guidance on this issue in the coming year.

Systems Sustainability

Chiefs should be aware of sustainability requirements (including LEA efforts) of their state longitudinal data system, and be an effective advocate at the state and federal levels for ongoing support of these systems.

Systems Should be Built to Address Key Questions

Chiefs should develop a core set of questions they would like answered by their state longitudinal data system, rather than simply allowing reporting requirements to drive the development of the data systems.

Special Education

NCLB/IDEA Data Requirements Should Be Aligned

Chiefs should continue to advocate that the Office of Special Education Programs, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and ED*Facts* work together to align their data collections under No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These two pieces of legislation are not totally consistent in the data/data definitions required of states.

State Determinations Under IDEA Need Review

Chiefs should review their own state's determinations under IDEA, consequences for funding, and help build LEA awareness of the importance of accurate and timely data submissions to the state for on-time reporting to USED.

IDEA Reauthorization

Chiefs should also be aware that IDEA is scheduled to be reauthorized within the near future, and a collective advocacy approach to IDEA will be useful.

Additional Topics Discussed at Fall EIMAC Meeting

- Data governance
- Growth models
- Critical linkages with child welfare and early childhood agencies
- Exclusion rates on NAEP
- *Education Week's Quality Counts* report
- Data security
- Systems interoperability
- OSEP state performance reports
- OSEP data collection requirements

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Questions?

Questions regarding EIMAC can be directed to Rick Melmer, Secretary of Education in South Dakota and the EIMAC liaison to the CCSSO Board (2006-2007); Deborah Newby, director of data quality at CCSSO (Deborahn@ccsso.org); or Maureen Matthews, EIMAC associate (maureenm@ccsso.org).