



**Education Data Advisory Committee (EDAC)
2014-15 Annual Report to the State Board of Education and the
Education Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives**

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

EDAC Summary

The Education Data Advisory Committee (EDAC) is a statewide representative group of school district volunteers, which reviews all Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and other state agency PK-12 data collections including grant applications, surveys, plans, reports, assessments, evaluations and automated data exchange systems. EDAC determines whether the benefits derived from a data collection outweigh the administrative burden of producing the data, determines and recommends the most efficient ways of collecting data, determines if recommendations for new data collections are redundant and proposes alternatives, and reviews data collection procedures and recommends improvements. Each EDAC-approved data collection is given a stamp which informs districts and BOCES whether the form is mandatory, required to obtain benefit, or voluntary. Collections without an EDAC stamp are not required to be completed.

In 2014-15, EDAC formally met ten times, conducted four emergency reviews (via e-mail or phone conferences) and in total reviewed 147 CDE data collections, about 5.8 percent increase from the 139 collections reviewed in 2013-14. Accomplishments include aligning calendars for the regular and special education human resources collections and undertaking a consultative role for Special Education's Colorado Continuous Improvement Process. In a special section at the end of this report, EDAC highlights the need for increased privacy protections for education and related data, and provides recommendations for both the General Assembly and CDE.

Accomplishments

- Reviewed 147 data collections, eight more than in 2013-14. Of these, 60 collections were closed or one time only collections from the previous year and 68 collections were new.
- Aligned the calendars for Special Education December Count Staff and Human Resources.
- Provided consultation to the Exceptional Student Services Unit regarding Special Education results driven accountability through the Colorado Continuous Improvement Process.
- Coordinated closely with the newly created Data Pipeline Users Group.
- Increased cooperation with the Office of Legislative Legal Services for EDAC's legislative review process.
- Continued an intensive schedule to meet the April 1st advance notice requirement of 22-2-306(3)(a), C.R.S. Under half (46%) or 67 collections were reviewed in March.

Future Focuses

- Emphasize education data privacy and security at state and local levels.
- Concentrate on the value and benefit of data collections versus the time and effort expended.
- Monitor local education agency assessment data and submission processes to minimize duplication and amount of data provided to vendors. Contribute to departmental process improvement efforts to that end.
- Maintain focus on collection redundancy.

Forms Review

Form Compliance. EDAC spends the bulk of its efforts on forms review. EDAC has two levels of review. A full review is for any collection which has not been previously reviewed or to which programmatic or substantial changes are being made since its last review. An update approval is for any collection which has previously been reviewed and only has date and other minor changes. A collection may only have a maximum of three consecutive update approvals before it must return to EDAC for a full review. Stamps are attached to each data collection declaring whether a form is mandatory, required to obtain benefit or voluntary. The definitions of these labels are:

- **Mandatory.** This form must be completed by all appropriate agencies. Funding may or may not be attached to this collection but it is statutorily required. Any funding that an agency would otherwise receive may be withheld if this form is not completed.
- **Required to Obtain Benefit.** Funding or services are attached to the completion of this form. An agency may choose not to complete the form but the related funding/services will then not be available.
- **Voluntary.** The collection is not a direct requirement of state or federal legislation but may yield useful data with sufficient and representative sample size.

More than half (51 percent) of collections which EDAC reviewed in 2014-15 are labeled ‘Required to Obtain Benefit’. One-third (32 percent) are ‘Mandatory’ and one-sixth (17 percent) are ‘Voluntary’. If districts or BOCES are interested in securing particular funds or services, then some amount of data collection is associated with the benefits derived. In exceedingly rare circumstances, the EDAC chairman may issue a small collections stamp to an extremely small data collection without EDAC review. For example, the confirmation of local education agency contacts for a particular program would fall in this category. Sixty collections were discontinued from the prior year.

Form Compliance	Mandatory	Required to Obtain Benefit	Voluntary	Total
• Full Review	17	47	19	83
• Update Approvals	30	28	6	64
Total Reviews	47	75	25	147
• Review Approval Withheld/Revoked	0	0	0	0
• No Approval Required				3
• Informational Briefings				11
• Small Collection				7
• Closed Collections	5	49	6	60

Review Outcomes. EDAC is tasked with making recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of data collection instruments. Very few collections move through the EDAC full review process without some suggestions for improvement. Most are approved unanimously with some minor adjustments, others with more detailed issues are invited to resubmit the collection before a stamp is issued, and in extremely rare circumstances, a data collection is not approved. A collection may not be approved because the collection was distributed prior to EDAC review, the requested data is already available, the survey is poorly designed or the collection is withdrawn for later EDAC reconsideration. EDAC also encourages the automation of data collection.

	Approved No Changes	Approved With Changes	Not Approved Resubmit	Not Approved (No stamp issued)	Total
Review Outcomes	110	35	2	0	147

Review Preparation. EDAC posts its meeting schedule well in advance of the upcoming school year so that CDE staff can schedule an EDAC review as part of their regular routine within their data collections. EDAC must be given the review materials in a timely manner so that members have sufficient time to prepare judicious input to share with the data collector. EDAC acknowledges that in extremely rare circumstances, department data requestors may need to submit reviews during periods for which no regular meetings are scheduled. Emergency conference calls or electronic mail reviews are available if a change in state statute or some unforeseen circumstance occurs which prevents the collection from being presented at a regularly scheduled EDAC meeting. EDAC conducted eighteen emergency reviews on four separate occasions in 2014-15, decreasing from nineteen emergency reviews on six separate occasions in 2013-14. EDAC is committed to keeping emergency reviews to a minimum.

	Meeting Materials Submitted On-Time	Meeting Materials Submitted After Deadline	Emergency Reviews	Not Reviewed	Total
Review Preparation	122	7	18	0	147

Type of Collection. The majority of EDAC reviews centered on existing CDE data collections. Less than half (46 percent) of the data collections EDAC reviewed in 2014-15 were newly required through legislation or rule. The number of new collections increased to 68 in comparison to 46 new collections in 2013-14. EDAC is continuing to make every effort to identify and bring to the table those CDE data requestors who are not yet familiar with the EDAC review process. There were no delayed reviews in 2014-15.

	New Collections	Existing Collections On-Schedule Reviews	Existing Collections First Time or Delayed Reviews	Total Reviews
Type of Collection	68	79	0	147

2015 Legislative Follow-up

There were four legislative recommendations highlighted in the *Education Data Advisory Committee 2013-14 Annual Report*. EDAC recommended 1) a moratorium on major education legislation, 2) providing financial resources for local education agency (LEA) data collection and reporting, 3) limiting specific conditions to obtain financial benefits, and 4) eliminating ‘first come, first serve’ grant stipulations. Continue to give LEAs the opportunity to implement recent educational initiatives such as financial transparency, Data Pipeline, educator effectiveness, accountability alignment, and Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) with fidelity before burdening them with additional requirements. Supplemental financial resources for increased data collection and reporting demands would benefit LEAs, as well as decreasing the conditions for obtaining grant monies. Distribution of monies based on which LEA submits an application first, does not make sense. Members of the Colorado General Assembly should continue to consider each of these recommendations as the next legislative session ensues.

Additionally, each of the eight short- and mid-term CDE recommendations within the special section entitled ‘Implementing the Data Pipeline- Challenges and Celebrations’ have been addressed by the department, whether directly or indirectly. Data Pipeline has stabilized and progressed since its 2013-14 inception. CDE regularly consults with EDAC and a Data Pipeline Users Group to identify and examine system issues. One long-term recommendation for 2016-17 focused on increased data collection and reporting resources for local education agencies and is carried forward below.

2016 Legislative Recommendations

- **Make financial resources available to fund data collection and reporting.** With the combination of 2013-14 Data Pipeline implementation and recent legislative data demands, local education agencies feel overwhelmed by new submission processes and increased requirements. Districts and BOCES need additional financial resources to stay on top of new reporting requirements such as the data burden created by teacher-student data link (TSDL) as required as part of Senate Bill 10-191.
- **Require vendor protections for data.** Data is foundational to education. In this age of data-driven decision making, data is fundamental to the success of the process. Whether discussing student achievement, program monitoring, education funding, accountability or any other education-related conversation, data is at the center of the discussion. The Colorado Department of Education and local education agencies must have the tools in place to most effectively protect the privacy of data collected, used, shared and stored. Legislative requirements for vendors to protect data will vitally assist the department and districts in ensuring that all personally identifiable information is utilized properly and ultimately, secured.
- **Provide a governance structure for the full spectrum of education and related data.** Starting strong and graduating ready are two of the department’s strategic goals. Education is a lifelong process and extends past the boundaries of K-12, from early childhood, to college and career, and beyond. Whether building a solid foundation in preschool through grade 3, or ensuring students are postsecondary and workforce ready, the services and strategies the state utilizes to enhance an individual’s life journey are important in determining pathways to success. A preschool to workforce data governance body statutorily charged with managing the cross-departmental data needs of state government would help to serve the greatest good for the people and state of Colorado.

Strengthen Privacy Protections for Education and Related Data

Education is more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. It is one of the most important investments Colorado can make in its people and its future. Data is essential to the educational mission and is a valued resource in determining if specific programs or entities are effective, monies are spent wisely, educators are efficaciously instructing, and students are learning. But with the data that is collected, comes the obligation to ensure that the information is safe and secure, and does not fall into the hands of anyone who should not have access.

Educational data privacy is a current and timely topic in Colorado. Increased scrutiny of education data management practices, and concerns about privacy and confidentiality have prompted Colorado's General Assembly, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education to create additional privacy requirements and resources for the state. House Bill 14 -1294 directed the department to implement several privacy, security and transparency-related items. Additional privacy legislation was considered in 2015 as well. Parents have expressed their concerns to policymakers and educational administrators about what education data is collected, where it is stored, how it is protected, and with whom it is shared. CDE has an increased focus on privacy. Employees have been trained in data privacy and security, privacy-related policies and procedures have been created and strengthened, a privacy team has been appointed, and CDE's website has been reinforced. Colorado is seen as a leader across the country in data privacy and security, and must continue to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to safeguarding and governing the use of valued education and related data.

While privacy and security policies and practices have been strengthened in recent years, additional steps can be taken. Suggestions are provided below for the members of the Colorado General Assembly as well as for the Colorado Department of Education.

Legislative Recommendations

- ✓ **Require vendor protections for education data.** Prohibiting vendors from selling student information, targeting advertisements based on data obtained, or, disclosing student data or creating a student profile outside of contracted agreements would give the department and local education agencies needed leverage, and also assist to assuage parent and community concerns about the privacy and use of student data.
- ✓ **Provide a governance structure for the full spectrum of education and related data.** Define and clearly communicate the authority, responsibility, and accountability for decision-making, management, and security of Colorado data. An empowered early childhood to workforce data governance body can ensure that data statewide is used wisely and securely to provide for and improve the well-being of the Colorado citizenry, including each individual's educational path.

CDE Recommendations

- ✓ **Provide additional privacy tools and resources to local education agencies.** While local education agencies appreciate the improved and expanded privacy items CDE has available on its website, products like a listing of policies and practices that every agency should have in place, and privacy and security best practice checklists have been suggested.
- ✓ **Re-examine existing policies and practices to further protect personally identifiable information.** Affirm that student and human resources data are being secured, used and shared in the most efficient and effective manner. Solicit improvement ideas from local education agencies. One such LEA-offered suggestion, for example, is to improve the Student Biographical Data process by limiting the amount of student data shared with assessment vendors.