



Types and Uses of Education Information

The dust has settled; fall reporting is substantially complete. As we sit back and catch our breath, the question is often asked ... “What is all this information used for?”

Types

State and federal reporting requires an enormous amount of detailed information that is used to inform policy and funding decisions. Most data is generated by local school systems through its student, staff and finance reporting systems. That information is used to manage school operations and is reported to the state. The state in turn reports the data to the federal government based on their requirements.

Types of reported information can be broadly categorized as enrollment, organization, personnel, tax levy and financial data.

Uses

The data reported is used for any number of purposes. Student data is a key component in the foundation aid formula for distributing state funding. Organization and staff data is used in the school accreditation and approval processes. Finance and tax data is used in the foundation aid formula and in public and legislative reporting. All data is ultimately used for compliance and accountability purposes. The research community is another major data consumer.

An example of the many types and uses of information reported is [School Finance Facts](#). This publication reports on students, teachers, organization, taxable valuation, mill levy and financial information on every school district in the state. Almost all of this data is reported to the federal government in the format they require. It is used extensively by NDDPI for budget projections, by legislators for policy decisions, by school personnel for comparisons with peers and by the public interested in how K-12 is operated and financed.

Improvements in networking technology have greatly changed the way information is generated, collected and shared. Reliance on paper data collection is, for the most part, a thing of the past. Major efforts continue to eliminate information silos and duplicate reporting. Although there is much room for improvement, systems like PowerSchool and NDSLDS are providing enormous amounts of useful data for the analysis necessary to continually improve the ability of our educational systems to prepare students for the transition into college and the workforce.

These changes have created a need for standard definitions for data elements. Improving these definitions and applying them to our reporting greatly improves the value of the data provided. The concept is to report quality data once and use it everywhere.