

# EDUCATION DATA Squad

## NEWSLETTER



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### WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Back to school is such an invigorating time of year. I would like to say that this year is no different, but it is. It is quite different. Some of our counties saw severe devastation by the June flooding. We saw homes and facilities completely wiped out and lives changed in an instant. But we also saw the state as a whole – and the educational community in particular – rally around our schools, our teachers and our students to ensure that children in those counties still have a safe place to go each day. So this year, I am not only invigorated by the start of the school year, I am inspired.

As the year continues, let us not forget that sense of community that we all felt as we worked together for the good of the children in our state. It is easy to recognize that our students' education is vitally important to their success. However, I also know that it can be a challenge for the educators, administrators and staff to do great work on a day-to-day basis when they cannot access the tools they need to improve student performance. But over the past several years we have seen real progress. Our county and state data staff are working around the clock to make accessing records and using ZoomWV and ZoomWV-e as easy as possible, and through your hard work, our state has made gains in graduation rate and overall student performance.

The education of our children takes extraordinary commitment, skills and dedication, but most of all it takes a great deal of heart. Continue to put that heart into your classrooms, and the West Virginia Department of Education vows to continue to support your efforts with our data-based tools. Let's make this year the best one yet.

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

### DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN CHECK YOUR DATA FOR DISCREPANCIES? DATA QUALITY MATTERS!

Did you know clean data has proven to be a critical component in driving use of data? When the term “clean” is used to describe data, it means stakeholders have taken responsibility to certify their data are accurate. WVDE works to help local staff ensure data quality through data entry education and data edit check tools that report inaccuracies and allow the district to correct errors before data are reported. Education and data edit checks confirm that data are meeting a high quality data standard for future discussion makers. The level of quality found in the data is driven by ownership of the data. Our education system, from the classroom to the state department, relies on good valid information about our students, schools and districts to drive improved educational results. When we have high quality data we can then work in better more focused ways to obtain an improved educational experience for our students.

How to avoid data quality issues and ensure data use

- Work with front-line data Stewards who enter data to ensure they have trained about data quality and relevant policies and procedures.
- Guarantee access to up-to-date online documentation
- Strive for consistency among all data Stewards
- Read and Forward automated edit check email messages
- Run data edits in WOW on a regular basis
- Implement Metadata – Metadata provides an underlying definition that describes and gives information about data making it easier to retrieve, use, manage or locate. Metadata is often called information about information saved in a centralized location.
- Check for discrepancies in the Data Quality dashboards in ZoomWV-e

To discuss or if you have questions about data quality, checking for data discrepancies or data governance, please contact the WVDE Data Governance team, by phone at 304.558.7881, or by email at [zoomwv@help.k12.wv.us](mailto:zoomwv@help.k12.wv.us).

Jeff Pitchford, WVDE Data Governance Specialist

## **CERTIFIED COLLECTIONS**

The WVDE began implementing certified data collections during the 2013-2014 school year. Four years later, district staff are becoming more familiar with the process of certified collections, and every year improvements have ensured continued progress toward better data quality. As we move through our fourth year of these procedures, it is helpful to review why certified collections matter and how WVDE plans to provide relevant, quality data to help districts make high-stakes decisions.

### ***Certified data are important for funding and resource allocation!***

Certified data are imperative for districts to evaluate each school's performance and needs. Whether the data are used for funding and resource allocation, determinations about school and district accountability, or to meet federal or state reporting mandates, quality data are vitally important for administrative decisions that ultimately impact schools and students.

### ***Certified collections provide better accuracy and consistency in the information that we report.***

Clear, consistent, deadline-driven procedures allow schools and districts to thoroughly review the necessary information. Districts and the WVDE share responsibility to ensure that accurate data is submitted in a timely manner. To ensure equity and fairness across the state, all districts must adhere to the same timelines and procedures for submitting data. Further, following a standardized process within a specified timeframe greatly reduces the risk of errors compared to unstructured data collection efforts.

### ***Certification deadlines are important.***

Deadlines for data certification are set according to school calendars as well as state and federal statutory requirements. The purpose of deadlines is not to provide additional hurdles; rather, it is to ensure standardization in data across all of our districts. If a data collection application in the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) has not functioned as expected, or when data system users statewide have experienced extraordinary challenges in using an application, WVDE may occasionally announce the extension of a certification deadline. Extending the deadlines in these cases shows how the WVDE strives to support districts and schools.

### ***Certification processes are designed to be consistent over time.***

The primary focus of districts and schools should be helping students achieve. The WVDE can help districts focus on their students by easing the burden of administrative requirements and making the data collection process clear and consistent. Clear expectations during each certified collection window reduces stress and ensures districts maintain focus on the needs of their students.

### ***WVDE strives to improve our processes with Data Edits.***

Educational stakeholders must have access to meaningful data to continue to improve education in West Virginia. Every day, districts make important decisions to support student achievement and staff development. Quality is key for making timely, data-driven decisions for improving educator and administrator practice—from classroom instruction to district-level management of resources. WVDE provides Data Edits to the appropriate personnel using email reminders, affording each district data ownership. The edit check validation provides informational, warning, and error levels to the districts daily during process windows.

If you would like to discuss certified data collection, check for data discrepancies, or have questions about data governance, please contact the WVDE Data Governance team, by phone at 304.558.7881, or by email at [zoomwv@help.k12.wv.us](mailto:zoomwv@help.k12.wv.us).

*Jeff Pitchford, WVDE Data Governance Specialist*

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF CERTIFIED DATA COLLECTIONS

The Office of School Finance utilizes several certified data collections during the calculation and distribution of state aid funding each year: Certified Student Enrollment, Certified Adult Enrollment, Certified List of Personnel, Certified School Bus Fleet and Certified School Bus Mileage. It is critical that the certified data be complete and accurate in order to maximize the state aid funding for each county. Below are some potential financial implications if the data reported is NOT complete and accurate:

- Failure to include the proper FTE of all students results in a lower number of professional and service personnel positions funded through the state aid funding formula.
- Failure to report all personnel employed or failure to include substitutes filling vacant positions on October 1st could result in the county being "under formula" and therefore funded at the lower reported staffing level.
- Failure to include all buses owned at June 30th results in lower bus replacement funding.
- Failure to include all of the mileage driven by school buses during the school year could not only impact your own county's transportation funding, it could impact the funding for the entire state. Transportation funding per county is capped at 1/3 above the state average cost per mile multiplied by the mileage driven by your county. If a county's mileage is underreported, it impacts the state average cost per mile and could result in other county boards of education being capped.

The various certified data collections are also utilized for other financial purposes. For example, Certified Enrollment data is also utilized by various other offices as part of their formulas for the allocation of federal and state grant funds. Certified Personnel data is utilized by the CTE Division to determine grant amounts for certain programs and is also used by the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure to determine the mentor grant amounts. Certified Student Ridership counts are utilized in the Medicaid cost settlement process.

It is also very important to note that data from the certified collections is routinely utilized in response to legislative inquiries and could impact decisions made by the Legislature.

*Submitted By: Office of School Finance*

### CHECK THE WVEIS CALENDAR FOR THESE AND OTHER DATA COLLECTIONS!

- » October 1 – Certified Enrollment
- » October 1 – Certified List of Personnel
- » November 20 – Special Education Child Count

### CONTACT US...

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## STUDENT DATA SMART SEVEN

### TIPS FOR RESPECTING PRIVACY

1. USE ONLY LIMITED PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS; NEVER PUBLISH STUDENT E-MAIL ADDRESSES, STUDENT PASSWORDS, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, OR OTHER SUCH INFORMATION.
2. CAUTION STUDENTS AND PARENTS ABOUT PROVIDING PERSONAL INFORMATION IN FORMS, SURVEYS, POLLS, OR E-MAILS. IF THEY ARE UNSURE, THEY SHOULD ASK THE PRINCIPAL, TEACHER OR COUNSELOR AT THEIR SCHOOL.
3. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE BEEN PROPERLY TRAINED ON STUDENT PRIVACY SO YOU CAN SHARE WITH COLLEAGUES WHY IT IS IMPORTANT AND WHAT TO DO TO PROTECT STUDENTS. MAKE SURE YOU KNOW REQUIRED PROCESSES AND CHECKS AND BALANCES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY.
4. MAKE SECURITY A PRIORITY. MAKE SURE TO KEEP PASSWORDS CONFIDENTIAL AND LOCK YOUR COMPUTER IF YOU ARE AWAY FROM YOUR DESK.
5. SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS SHOULD RESTRICT DATA USE TO ONLY AUTHORIZED USERS WITH LEGITIMATE EDUCATION-RELATED PURPOSES.
6. THE BEST WAY TO DISPOSE OF SENSITIVE MATERIALS AFTER THE APPROPRIATE RETENTION SCHEDULE IS TO SHRED BOTH PHYSICAL FILES AND ELECTRONIC ONES.
7. QUICKLY REPORT ANY STUDENT PRIVACY BREACHES TO WVDE'S DATA GOVERNANCE TEAM.