



INTERACTIVE INSTITUTES **2020**

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURE OF HIGH-QUALITY DATA

Streamlining Your Data: Special Education Data Management Systems



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Collect, Report, Analyze, and
Use High-Quality Part B Data



Presenters



Fort Worth, TX – March 3–4, 2020

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Nashville, TN – Cancelled Due to COVID-19

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Agenda



- Defining data management systems
- Reviewing system benefits and challenges
- Engaging stakeholders and other issues to consider in system development
- Reviewing state examples of special education data management systems



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Data Management Systems: Where to Begin?



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What Are Data Management Systems?



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Modern Data Management Systems



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Benefits of Statewide Data Systems



- Consolidated location for information
- Enhanced uniformity in the information developed and retained
- Improved data quality through validation processes and business rules
- Increased access to data
- Streamlined reporting functionality



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Challenges of Statewide Data Systems



- Capacity for hosting or managing a data system
- Buy-in from internal and external staff and stakeholders
- Interfacing and integrating data with other state systems
- Confidentiality of data
- System performance issues, such as system bugs or glitches



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Assess Capacity



- Who will manage the data system development process
- Can the data system be developed in-house by existing information technology (IT) staff
- Are funds available to pay for internal system development or establish outside contract
- Will management of the data system be sustainable (e.g., staff allocated to work, funding)



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Engage Stakeholders

- Pull together those the data system will impact
- Ensure a diverse array of participants, such as
 - Educators
 - Agency administrators
 - Related service providers
 - Parents
 - Community organizations
 - IT staff



Engage Stakeholders (cont.)



- Learn what things are important to the stakeholders
- Host stakeholder input opportunities in multiple locations
- Provide updates and keep open lines of communication
- Share system proposal with those who will be impacted



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Data Integration



- Identify existing state data systems
- Determine data communication to and from existing systems
- Ensure data can be interfaced through existing processes
- Document all potential pitfalls of data integration and how the state can mitigate risk



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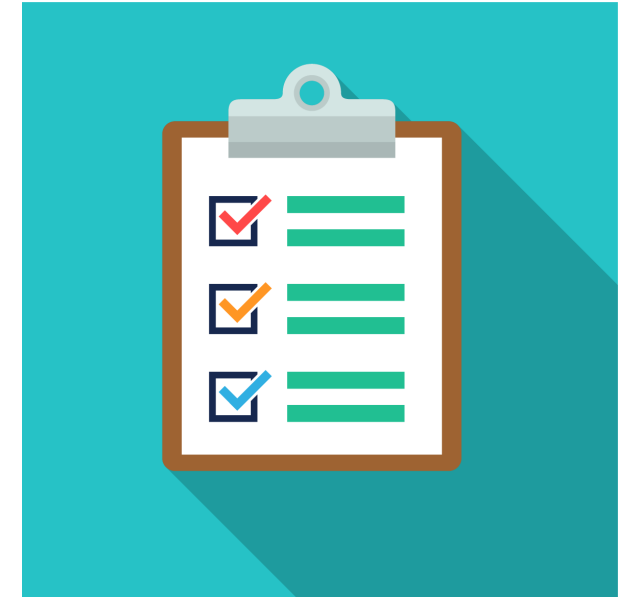
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System Data Confidentiality and Performance Management

- Document all confidentiality requirements [*Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), state-specific requirements*]
- Map layers of data protection, encryption
- Identify how the state will support use of the system internally or externally (e.g., help desk, call line)
- Develop protocol for addressing data confidentiality or system performance issues

Final System Proposal

- Outline all data elements the system needs to capture
- Develop required business and data validation rules
- Create timeline for release that is realistic
 - If system currently exists, consider overlapping years of system implementation
- Determine responsibilities of parties managing the system or system vendor



Example – State A



- Current statewide data system has been in place 4 years
 - Previous data system did not have same robust functionality
- System use is technically voluntary, though all LEAs participate
- Developed Request for Proposal (RFP)
 - Included business rules and validations
 - Based RFP on IDEA requirements
- Selected outside vendor based on internal capacity limitations
- Vendor managed a message board for users to report issues



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Example – State A (cont.)



- Enhancements made annually, informed by state priorities and feedback from system users
- State's final reflections
 - Consider for whom you are developing the system (LEAs and state staff)
 - Don't let fear of change in systems stop you from developing a better process
 - State system can limit time and effort on state and LEA staff, streamline monitoring processes, reduce paperwork burdens
 - Be clear and explicit in the definition of data components, reports, and business rules and/or data validations



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Example – State B

- Just released statewide system this school year (had previous system in place)
- Required all LEAs to use system
- Developed RFP
 - Used specification documentation from previous state system
 - Included business rules and validations
 - Based RFP on IDEA requirements
- Selected outside vendor based on internal capacity limitations

Example – State B (cont.)



- Communicated system issues or questions via a message board
 - State staff answer policy questions
 - Vendor answers system-specific questions
- State's final reflections
 - Glad that the system was developed and appreciative of LEAs' patience
 - Wished we could have overlapped the previous system and the new system for a year
 - Rolled out information in pieces over time, not all at once



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Example – State C



- State system has been in place since 2011
 - Used three pilot sites to release system
- System use is voluntary
 - 75% of state's LEAs use the system
- State developed and manages the system
- State embedded data processes and business rules in the system



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Example – State C (cont.)

- State meets annually with system users to discuss the system and suggested enhancements
- Feedback loops are available for system users
 - Loops include surveys, ticket system to maintain user messages, and system alerts
- State's final reflections
 - State is pleased with the system, best product to manage special education data
 - Making system voluntary has worked overall, high participation rate
 - Housing system in the state longitudinal data system has been beneficial

Questions?



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Contact Us



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