Best Practices in the Public Reporting and Visualization of IDEA Data

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Webinar Logistics

- Welcome and thank you for joining us

- We are recording this webinar

- Slides and recording from this webinar will be available on the IDC website

- We will be muting all participants

- Please type your questions in the chat box

- Please complete the online evaluation at the end of the webinar

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Where to Find Webinar Slides and Recording

Presenters

- IDEA Data Center (IDC)
  - Fred Edora
  - Dan Mello
- Ohio
  - Kara Waldron, Matt Loesch, and Ashley Rector—Ohio Department of Education
- Michigan
  - Nicholas Armit and Carl Jones—Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)
  - Julie Trevino—Michigan Department of Education, Special Education

Agenda

- Considerations in design and communication of publicly reported IDEA data

- IDC resources for public reporting

- Sharing state examples of tools and processes: Ohio and Michigan

Intended Outcomes

- Increased understanding of the design and communication principles needed to publicly report IDEA data well

- Increased knowledge of available IDC resources to assist with the data visualization and public reporting of IDEA data

- Increased understanding of how states publicly report and communicate their IDEA and special education data to stakeholders and successes and challenges they encountered

Why Is Public Reporting Important?

- Shows the state is providing services required under IDEA law

- Ensures state transparency and accountability

- Provides information to parents, advocacy groups, and stakeholders

IDEA Public Reporting Requirements

- [618 data](): Exiting, Discipline, Dispute Resolution, Assessment, Personnel, Maintenance of Effort Reduction–Coordinated Early Intervening Services (MOE–CEIS)

- [616 data](): Annually; the State Performance Plan/Annual Plan (SPP/APR) and the performance of each LEA on the targets in the SPP as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days following submission of the APR

- Links are to IDC webinar recordings on each topic

Beyond the Requirements

- Design—how can design help us go beyond the requirements
- Communication—how can communication help us go beyond the requirements

Design and Communication Considerations for Data Publications

Design Considerations: By Indicator or by LEA

- Reporting data by Indicator/Report

- Reporting data by LEA

- A hybrid version of the two

Design Considerations: Data Visualization

- Chart Type
- Color
- Fonts
- Format
- Shapes and sizes
- Labels
- Titles and Legends

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Poll

Q1: Do you publish your 616 LEA performance by Indicator or by LEA?

Respond in chat box: Is your state considering a change in LEA/Indicator reporting based on your priorities and initiatives or needs?

Q2: Are you using data visualization in your APR reporting?

Respond in chat box: What APR reporting data visualization challenges are you facing?

Four Critical Elements of Communicating Data Effectively

- Audience: Who views your public reports?

- Message: Other than meeting requirements, what will best serve their needs?

- Dissemination: How do they best access the reports?

- Accessibility: How do you ensure data are accessible?

Other Communication Considerations

- Data integration: What are the benefits, challenges, and opportunities?

- Data suppression for privacy

- Knowledge of state data processes

Benefits of a Thoughtful Process

- Available and accessible data

- Stakeholder and leadership buy-in

- Better decisions made from high-quality data

IDC Resources

Basic Requirements

- *[Section 618 Public Reporting Requirements](#)*

- *[IDEA Section 618 Public Reporting Data Elements Checklist – Part B](#)*

- *[Interactive Public Reporting Engine](#)*

Beyond the Requirements

- *[Improving State Reporting of Local Performance](#)*

- *[Part B Indicator Data Display Wizard](#)*

State Sharing

Ohio's Special Education Profiles

Presenters

Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children

- Kara Waldron, Program Administrator

- Matt Loesch, Social Science Research Specialist

- Ashley Rector, Education Program Specialist

Ohio's Special Education Profiles

- Developed annually for each of Ohio's 1,000+ LEAs

- Both a data tool and a monitoring tool

- Display 5 years of data for each indicator

- Inform LEAs of required activities for specific indicators

[Special Education Profile Demo](#)

Ohio's Special Education Profiles

- Strengths
  - Available to the public
  - Graphs and data tables
  - Trends over time
  - Grouping and nesting

- Challenges
  - Quantity of indicators
  - Outdated data
  - Comparisons across districts
  - Adding disproportionality

Disproportionality Section Demo

Michigan School Data Special Education Public Reporting Visualizations—Processes and Challenges

Presenters

- Nicholas Armit—Michigan School Data Manager at the Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)

- Carl Jones—Data Analyst (CEPI)

- Julie Trevino—Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Special Education, SPP/APR Coordinator

Michigan Perspective—MI School Data

- Review of Current Michigan (MI) School Data Reporting
  - Audience(s) and message
  - Design principles and visualization
  - Communications strategies
  - Resources required
    - Technical
    - Staffing
    - Funding

- Review of upcoming Michigan Special Education Dashboard

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Audience and Message

- The MI School Data Special Education Annual Public Reporting reports are intended for intermediate school district (ISD), local district and school, and general public use

- We have a 2-week preview period for ISDs and local districts to review their data ahead of when we publicly post them

- Information is not new but this gives ISDs and local districts an opportunity to review data and be prepared to respond to public inquiry

Design Principles and Visualization

- Deliberate intent not to diverge too far from the annual reporting documents that ISDs and districts had been using for some time
  - Ensure we had buy-in from district users who were at first reluctant to change. This is compliance-based reporting
  - Ensure that federal reporting mandates were met
  - For example, maintained current spreadsheet for ease-of-use and comparison
- Design principles we considered were:
  - Simplicity: Ensure the reporting was simple and easy to use
    - Retained familiar table structures etc.
    - Did not complicate user interface experience
  - Clarity: Make clear to users what we were presenting (design) and why (documentation)
  - Non-divergence from existing reporting designs: Assist with ease of transition to an online tool

Design Principles and Visualization (cont.)

- Communications
  - Very important to listen to stakeholders
  - Yet had to meet the timeline, so this was a balancing act
- Comparisons of data
  - Important to users to be able to compare against other entities
- Limitations
  - Timeline was relatively short to create product online from scratch
  - Compliance-based nature of the reporting eased development but restricted what we could show with the data
  - Technology was limiting because reports were built in an existing web portal, so designs were restricted to what that technology (Telerik) could do at that time

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Communication Principles

- Know who your audience is!
- Clarity and guidance
  - Provide clear and concise communications but include enough information to offer guidance
  - Avoid acronyms and jargon; this is easier said than done and easy to miss
- Multiple communications avenues
  - There may be different communications for different audiences — school and district personnel need different information at different times than the public does
  - Keep in mind broader communication efforts
    - You may be able to plug communications into other efforts (organizational versus departmental)

Communication Principles (cont.)

- Involve stakeholders in your communications planning
  - Provides an additional layer of buy-in and helps tremendously in our experience
  - Is a good way to ensure the message gets out
  - Assists with plugging stakeholder strategies into the broader communications strategy
- Provide documentation: Include lots of details about where the data come from because we understood that users could get confused with other data sources

Resources—Technology, Staff, and Funds

- The MI School Data project already had a dedicated management and development team available
  - Switching to building a new report was fairly simple as far as existing technical components were concerned
  - However, relationships between new partners had to be started
- There were technical limitations of Telerik
- The project benefitted from having requirements gathering, development, testing processes in place
  - Site was relatively new so the team found barriers to a successful launch as they worked through the report development

Resources—Technology, Staff, and Funds (cont.)

- Open and continuous communications were key
  - Both MDE and CEPI staff spent long hours together to ensure a successful release
  - Personal relationships can help or hinder
- Funding is crucial
  - Where the money is coming from and how much may be available are key to the flow and scope of the work
- Ensuring we were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was also an important consideration

Upcoming MI School Data Special Education Dashboard

- Review of the upcoming dashboard

- *Power BI*
  - Business Intelligence Service by Microsoft
  - Increasing no-code/low-code reporting for analysts
  - Synergy with other state offices and departments
  - Opportunity to create tools and visualizations to empower end users to make data-driven decisions
- Intend to have all of MI School Data using this technology in years to come

Questions?

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Evaluation

The evaluation poll questions will appear to the right.