



INTERACTIVE INSTITUTE 2021

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURE OF HIGH-QUALITY DATA

Communication Is Key to Improving Data Quality: It Starts With State Directors of Special Education

April 13–15, 2021



IDEA DATA
CENTER

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





Presenters

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Activity:
Submit one
word that
describes how
your SEA
communicates
with LEAs.



Intended Outcomes

- Participants will learn about the benefits of SEAs working with LEAs to ensure high-data quality at the local level
- Participants will understand the importance of developing a communication plan to improve data quality
- Participants will learn the principles of engagement for working with LEAs to improve the quality of their data
- Participants will learn strategies to help in engaging LEAs
- Participants will learn how other states have been successful and met challenges with LEA collaboration

Agenda

- Benefits on an effective communication plan
- States tell their stories
 - Virginia
 - Wyoming
 - State panel Q & A
- Developing a communication plan

SEA Benefits of Developing an LEA Communication Plan

- Consistent communication from the SEA to the LEA can lead to improved LEA data quality
- Improved data quality at the LEA level leads to improved data quality at the SEA level
- Effective communication with LEAs improves relationships, collaboration, and credibility
- Collaborating with the LEAs creates transparency

LEA Benefits of an SEA Communication Plan to Improve Data Quality

- A communication plan will help establish overall consistency across LEAs to improve data quality
 - Processes for data collection, validation, analysis, and use will be standardized, reliable, valid, and available from year to year or for new staff
- Educators directly involved in making decisions about children can be confident the data they used are of high quality
- Local special education and data staff who work and communicate with the SEA will have the support to affect change at the local level
- Increased communication and collaboration can lead to mutual trust and better understanding of the need for high-quality LEA data

SEA Communication to LEAs

- Developing an effective communication plan from the SEA to the LEA is vital to improving data quality
- Intentional communication that starts with the state director of special education and flows to the local director of special education and data staff contributes to consistency in practices and increased data quality
 - Sometimes communication does not flow from the local director or superintendent to the local data staff effectively
 - High-quality state data depends on high-quality data collection at the local level
 - LEAs need accurate and up-to -date information regarding data collection and use as part of data quality practices

Activity

What is your state's consistent practice of supporting local special education directors in effective communication with LEA data staff?

Pre-meet to review what will be presented

Supply data in graphs and charts for easy absorption

Webinar overview and then individual reach out

Data dashboard

Statewide collaborative data network, including administration, program, and data staff from state, regional, and district organizations

We always include the LSS director and each LSS manager in all communications. Our phone lines are always open, LSS are encouraged to call first and not be worried about asking for help early, before due dates.

Activity

What are your state strategy(ies) for ensuring local special education directors consistently communicate with local data staff?

Regularly scheduled meetings

Have a time limit for when to follow up

Ask for trends- open discussions

Having targeted outcomes to follow up on

Share an agenda ahead of time

Ask WHY?!

Make them have something tangible to share out or present

Special education conference sessions for special education staff, with a “bring a friend option” to bring data partners with no additional registration fees

Bring their data teams to SEA data retreats

Have engaging activities

Samantha Hollins, Virginia Department of Education



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Margee Robertson, Wyoming Department of Education



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State Panel Q & A



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Developing a Communication Plan



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Developing a Communication Plan

What is a communication plan?

A communication plan can be defined as a tool that enables SEAs to effectively deliver information to LEAs to improve data quality at the local level and ultimately the state level. The plan will identify the messages you need to promote, to whom you're targeting those messages, and how you will deliver the message. Communication plans can be a vital tool in delivering consistent information across LEAs.

Developing a Communication Plan (cont.)

Five Considerations for SEAs Engaging With LEA Data Staff

- Planning
- **Communication**
 - Developing a plan
- Collaborating
- Reflecting
- Celebrating

Developing a Communication Plan (cont.)

Planning

- Defining the work
- Assessing readiness
- Selecting LEAs

Developing a Communication Plan (cont.)

Communicating

- **When communicating initially with LEAs, be sure to share**
 - The benefits of doing this work
 - The importance of the LEA input
 - What investments the LEA needs to make
 - The timelines for completing the work
- **Work with the LEA to develop a communication plan that is tailored around its needs and communication preferences**

Developing a Communication Plan (cont.)

- **Determine important objectives of SEA plan**
 - Examples
 - Establish the purpose, goals, and desired outcomes of consistent communication across LEAs
 - Ensure that data are collected, aggregated, and submitted in the required timeframes
 - Create LEA ownership and engagement
- **Identify participants, roles, and responsibilities**
 - Examples
 - Determine who will plan, facilitate, or have supporting roles
 - SEA level
 - LEA level
 - Include LEA data and program staff as important data quality stakeholders

Developing a Communication Plan (cont.)

- **Consider engagement activities**
 - Examples
 - A mix of both information sharing and collaboration
 - Introduce new ideas and professional learning platforms for virtual engagement
- **Establish data literacy and discussions**
 - Examples
 - Determine participants' level of data knowledge
 - Prepare to effectively share data with participants with multiple data literacy skills
 - Display data in easy-to-understand formats or simple data visualizations
 - Share data quality protocols, federal requirements, and desired local practices

Communication Plan Example

State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-Based Practices (SISEP)



Communication Plan Template

The purpose of the Communication Plan is to identify and authentically engage with an organization’s diverse stakeholders. A carefully crafted plan allows for sharing of information with staff, families, students, and relevant community entities. It seeks to celebrate successes, inform, prevent misunderstandings to reduce barriers, and build the collective commitment of the organization’s diverse stakeholders. It facilitates gathering of valuable input and expertise for continuous quality improvement. A carefully designed and used Communication Plan validates how stakeholders are included in the development of the organizations implementation capacity for systemic change “so everyone can see they have a role to play.”

Mission and Purpose of Communication Plan What is the clear purpose and mission of the communication plan?
Click here to enter text.

Practice-Policy Communication Cycles Who is responsible for ensuring feedback and information gathered through communications are used to inform, reduce barriers, and celebrate successes?
Click here to enter text.

Information or Messages <i>What needs to be communicated? How does the information change over time as the organization goes deeper into practice?</i>	Audience (Diverse Stakeholders) <i>Who needs to be communicated with?</i>	Methods <i>Are a variety of modes used: conference key notes, presentations, meetings, Webpages, Webcasts, etc.?</i>	Frequency <i>How often? Is there a schedule?</i>	Responsibility <i>Who is responsible? What is the role of leadership?</i>	Indicator of Success <i>What data is used and how often to determine effectiveness of communication?</i>
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/communication-plan-template>

Activity: Submit one word to describe the importance of having a communication plan for SEAs to engage with LEAs.



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For More Information



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