



Stewarding Data: Subject Matter Expertise and Data Governance

What does it mean to steward data?

Every data group in *EDFacts* has an identified stewarding office. Stewards are offices across the U.S. Department of Education (ED) who support data definition, acquisition, review, as well as data use for a defined set of data. The *EDFacts* team manages the standardized and centralized preK–12 data collection system for ED. *EDFacts* is the technical tool; stewards are the subject matter experts.

All ED offices that steward *EDFacts* data have a representative on the *EDFacts* Data Governance Board (EDGB). Stewards actively participate in the development and implementation of data management policies and procedures overall and are also responsible for representing their unique set of data in data governance discussions.

Role of Data Stewards in Data Governance

Main areas of responsibility

Define: Stewards provide subject matter expertise that allows the *EDFacts* team to present standardized reporting requirements in the *EDFacts* Information Collection packages that are approved by the Office of Management and Budget. In this role, stewards:

- Ensure that reporting requirements for data that are collected via *EDFacts* are consistent with statutory, regulatory, and/or policy requirements;
- Are responsible for identifying new data reporting requirements; and
- Notify EDGB of changes in reporting requirements.

Acquire: When states submit data to ED, ED is acquiring data. The *EDFacts* team manages the operations of the data collection (acquisition) system, including system accreditation and security. During data acquisition processes, states frequently submit questions to ED about the reporting requirements. Stewards are responsible for providing timely and accurate responses to state questions about policy or other implementation issues that come in through the *EDFacts* Partner Support Center.

Validate: The *EDFacts* team provides basic data quality reports for all data files that summarize grantee timeliness against due dates, as well as completeness and accuracy information about the data. Stewards provide subject matter expertise that supports additional pre- and post-submission data quality work to prevent bad data from entering the submission system (e.g., graduation rates can never be >100%), as well as to identify poor quality data after submission. Both the pre- and post-submission work support ED's monitoring efforts and yield information about the quality and usability of the data. Stewards ensure programs have access to quality data information and provide documentation needed for ED formal and informal data products.



Improve data usage: The *EDFacts* team provides technical support to program offices to ensure access to data needed for program office use. Stewards work within and across ED offices to use data to meet monitoring and performance goals, respond to internal and external data requests, and develop products targeted to stakeholder groups. Stewards actively participate in EDGB workgroups to address data use issues, improve efficiencies, and identify files for retirement.

EDFacts Data Governance Board Meetings

What happens in a Board meeting?

EDGB is a member-driven decision making body that conducts its business through monthly board meetings. In a typical meeting, the Board reviews proposed data collection changes, presents newly identified data quality issues that could impact nonsteward data use, shares information about data releases, discusses new data requests, and identifies stakeholders needed for resolving data collection issues. The Board must have a quorum present to take action and makes decisions via consensus. Board members are not required to participate in a vote. However, a quorum or greater number of members must participate in the vote for it to be recognized as valid.

Who participates and why?

The Board is facilitated by the *EDFacts* team; membership of the Board comprises one representative from each of the ED offices that steward data, offices that advise the *EDFacts* initiative, and offices that use data in *EDFacts*. Members are appointed by the leadership of each representative office. See *EDFacts* Handout: *Introduction to ED Data* for a list of the program offices that are part of EDGB, by stewarding status.

What Are Indicators of Effective Stewardship?

EDFacts is a centralized data collection system. To reduce reporting burden, a goal of data governance is to collect data once and use it many times. Each data file is collected under the authority of one primary statutory, regulatory, or policy requirement. The effective steward of a data file knows who is using the data, when they use it, and can anticipate what decisions will impact a nonsteward data user. When stewards are actively engaged in data governance, they know when to raise issues at EDGB and are committed to timely issue resolution that aligns with Board-adopted operating procedures. Nonsteward data users actively reach out to data stewards when a new data use is proposed to ensure the new use is informed by the office with the most knowledge about the data. Stewardship is working when stewards are knowledgeable and clear about reporting requirements, but are also cooperative and collegial with nonstewarding offices that are dependent on the data.

 EDGB general inquiries: EDFacts@ed.gov

 ED's Data Governance:
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html>