Minnesota Department of Education

Counting All Students and Ed-Fi System Evaluation Report

September 2020

The **Improve** Group

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Evaluation Report Executive Summary

About the evaluation

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is transitioning from its previous student data collection system, Minneosta Automated Reporting Student System Web Edit System (MARSSWES), to a new system known as Ed-Fi. The Ed-Fi system collects more detailed demographic data than has been collected previously. MDE began the transition to Ed-Fi in the 2018-19 school year in five school districts and has since expanded to more districts.

In April of 2020, MDE contracted with The Improve Group to evaluate collection and submission of detailed demographic data in the transition to Ed-Fi. The evaluation's goal is to help MDE understand the transition's progress and to provide suggestions for a smooth transition and quality data collection.

The Improve Group created three surveys to learn about the transition. The three surveys each had a different audience and included state staff involved with Ed-Fi, district staff across the state, and parents/guardians of Minnesota students. The Improve Group also used data from MDE, including de-identified student data from the MARSSWES and Ed-Fi systems, to learn more about how the Ed-Fi system was built and operates.

Overview of Findings

Ed-Fi data submission

There were more detailed data submissions in the 2019-20 school year than there were in 2018-19. In the 2018-19 school year, only the five original partner districts submitted detailed demographic information. In 2019-20, 86 new districts began partnering with MDE to submit student data through Ed-Fi. This resulted in the collection of detailed demographic information for 36,427 students who had not submitted this data previously.

MARSS coordinators have the capacity to manage Ed-Fi and MARSS submissions. Most MARSS coordinators reported that additional data collection and entry through Ed-Fi did not take a significant amount of time in their work weeks.

MARSS coordinators want to learn more about Ed-Fi submissions. While data collection and submission processes differ by district, coordinators across the state want to learn more about the technical aspects of data submission. They also want to learn more about data elements collected through Ed-Fi.

Ed-Fi data use

District staff find Ed-Fi data reports useful. There are two types of reports currently produced by the Ed-Fi system. Most district staff said that reports meet their school and district's needs. Many staff also suggested ways to make reports easier to understand, such as added documentation. Many district staff also shared that reports could be more useful with more ways to manipulate data.

Curriculum directors and research staff are starting to use Ed-Fi data to learn and make changes. About half of the district curriculum directors and research/evaluation staff who took the survey are using Ed-Fi data to discover achievement and opportunity gaps across demographic groups. Most of these staff are also using Ed-Fi data to inform instructional changes. Respondents

shared that more training from the state and more methods of exploring the data would help them better use and understand Ed-Fi data.

Ed-Fi data accuracy and access

Guardians and district staff report that overall, it is clear how to fill out the Ed-Fi demographics form. Almost all parents/guardians who took the survey said they understood the directions and knew which demographic categories to select for their child(ren). Most district staff also thought the form was easy for families to use. Some survey and email responses indicate that there is room to make the demographic form easier to understand and fill out.

State staff can access and use the detailed demographic data provided by Ed-Fi. Most state staff reported that they can retrieve, analyze, and report on Ed-Fi data "very" or "somewhat" effectively. This reflects on the effectiveness of the Ed-Fi data storage system, or Operational Data Store (ODS).

Ed-Fi data is reliable across years and districts and valid based on MARSS submissions. Most students who had Ed-Fi data recorded in multiple years or districts had the same demographic information in each year, meaning that this data is consistent from year to year and reliable. Almost all students who had data in both the MARSSWES and Ed-Fi systems had the same demographic information in both systems, meaning that this data is accurate and valid.

Assistance from MDE has been useful for districts in learning about Ed-Fi and district staff want to keep learning. District staff overall said that various forms of assistance with Ed-Fi from MDE were useful, especially training and documentation. District staff want to learn more about how to collect and submit Ed-Fi information.

Introduction

Project background

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) received a federal grant to fund the Disaggregating Student Data project. As part of this project, MDE is transitioning from a system where information is uploaded through spreadsheets (MARSSWES) to a system of automated submissions, called Ed-Fi. This transition is in accordance with the All Kids Count Act, also known as Counting All Students. The Ed-Fi system collects more detailed demographic data than is collected through the MARSSWES, or MARSS, system.

MDE began the transition to Ed-Fi in the 2018-19 school year. Five school districts across Minnesota partnered with MDE to test the system. Collection of detailed demographic data has now expanded to more districts across the state.

In April of 2020, MDE contracted with The Improve Group to evaluate collection and submission of detailed demographic data in the transition to Ed-Fi. The evaluation's goal is to help MDE understand the transition's progress and to provide suggestions for a smooth transition and quality data collection.

About The Improve Group

The Improve Group is a planning, research, and evaluation firm located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Its mission is to help organizations make the most of information, navigate complexity, and ensure their work leads to meaningful, sustained impact.

Methodology

Design

Prior to the beginning of The Improve Group's evaluation, MDE designed the following evaluation questions to assess their transition to Ed-Fi:

1. To what degree do reports reflect the needs of districts and schools?
2. Did the number of districts/students submitting detailed data increase?
3. To what extent is the data valid and reliable?
4. To what extent have local educational agencies (LEAs) begun to use data to inform instruction?
5. To what extent does MARSS – Operational Data Store (MARSS – ODS) accommodate up to 17 new more detailed groups, including detailed groups within AAPI?[1]
6. How does the additional data collection and entry affect district MARSS submission?
7. What is the capacity of MARSS Coordinators to do dual submission? (i.e., effect on workload of MARSS Coordinators)
8. To what extent does MDE's technical assistance to districts facilitate reliable data collection of the new AAPI more detailed groups?
9. To what extent does the district enrollment form facilitate the valid and reliable collection of more detailed group data?
10. To what extent does the district enrollment form show potential to uncover the hidden achievement and opportunity gaps across AAPI more detailed groups?

The evaluators developed three surveys to answer these evaluation questions. MDE provided input and review of surveys and the overall evaluation plan.

Accessibility was a key concern in survey design. The evaluators wrote surveys in English and MDE provided survey translations in the following languages for the parent/guardian survey:

- o Amharic
- o Bengali
- o Burmese
- o Cherokee
- o Chinese
- o Hmong
- o Karen
- o Korean
- o Nepali
- o Ojibwe
- o Oromo
- o Somali
- o Spanish
- o Tagalog
- o Vietnamese

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[1] This question was misworded, as the MARSS-ODS is not used to store the detailed data collected through Ed-Fi. As a result, the survey question providing data for this evaluation question was re-administered with corrected wording.

Data collection

The evaluators collected data through three online surveys: one for state staff at MDE and Minnesota Information Technology Services at MDE (MNIT), one for district staff, and one for parents and guardians of Minnesota students. All three surveys launched on July 15th and closed on August 4th. The evaluators also received data collected by MDE to incorporate in analysis. The full text of each survey can be found in the Appendices.

Parent and guardian survey

The survey for parents and guardians contained images of the 2- or 3-page demographic form in the same language in which respondents took the survey. The survey asked two questions about the demographic form and a question about the respondent's racial or ethnic identity. Community partners and the evaluator emailed the survey link directly to parents and guardians. Community partners sent weekly reminders asking people to complete the survey.

Surveys were administered in Chinese, English, Hmong, Karen, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Forty parents/guardians completed the survey, although 150 more opened the survey and did not respond to any questions. The table below displays parents'/guardians' responses to a question about their racial or ethnic identity. Some respondents selected more than one racial or ethnic category. This means that the total number of responses to this question is higher than the total number of respondents to the survey.

What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)	n	percent
Asian or Pacific Islander	19	48%
Hispanic/Latinx	13	33%
American Indian	6	15%
White	4	10%

District staff survey

The evaluators emailed the district staff survey to MARSS coordinators, regional center partners, and district curriculum leaders across the state. The survey invitation included a request to send the survey to any other staff at the recipient's district who are involved with enrollment, research, or evaluation and might have input on Ed-Fi. Staff who received the initial email received three reminder emails unless they opted out.

The evaluator initially emailed the survey to 503 staff across the state. Several people chose not to participate in the survey because they had limited experience with Ed-Fi and emailed the evaluator to request that they not be contacted again. After removing these names and failed email addresses from the survey list, 475 staff remained.

Across the state, of these 475 staff on the respondent list and of the unknown number of individuals to whom some staff chose to forward the survey, 207 people responded to the survey.

What best defines your role? (select all that apply)	n	percent
MARSS coordinator	167	81%
District staff involved with enrollment	60	29%
Curriculum director	14	7%
Research or evaluation staff at a school district	8	4%
Regional data center staff	4	2%

What school year did you begin utilizing the Ed-Fi system?	n	percent
2018-19	6	3%
2019-20	91	44%
2020-21	110	53%

[MARSS coordinators only] **How many years have you been a MARSS coordinator?**	n	percent
1-2 years	32	19%
3-4 years	21	13%
5-6 years	21	13%
7+ years	92	55%

MDE and MNIT survey

The survey for MDE and MNIT contained two questions regarding data storage. The evaluators emailed the survey directly to respondents. Due to an error in wording in the first survey question, this question was re-administered in a follow-up survey. The initial survey question asked how effectively the MARSS data storage system stored detailed demographic data from Ed-Fi, however, this system is not used to store detailed data. The follow-up survey asked specific questions about the effectiveness of submitting, retrieving, analyzing, and using detailed data. The full text of these surveys are available in Appendices C and D. MDE staff emailed the follow-up survey to MDE and MNIT staff involved with Ed-Fi on September 13th and the evaluators closed the survey on September 16th.

The evaluator emailed the initial survey to seven MDE staff and four MNIT staff and 11 total responses were recorded. MDE staff emailed the follow-up survey to the same 11 respondents, all of whom responded.

Data from MDE

MDE sent the evaluator materials from the design and implementation of Ed-Fi. These materials included reports, documents from the vendor used to establish Ed-Fi data storage systems, and budgeting information. MDE also provided the evaluator with two sets of de-identified student data from the Ed-Fi and MARSS systems. These datasets contained demographic and district codes for students from the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

Analysis

The evaluators conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis on survey responses. Evaluators also completed a document review of Ed-Fi materials from MDE to supplement survey data.

Evaluators analyzed open-ended survey responses in Microsoft Excel, looking for themes within each question's replies. The evaluators then used the statistical software R to analyze close-ended survey responses by creating frequency tables for each question. Evaluators cross tabulated responses where the amount of experience a respondent had in their job or with Ed-Fi may affect responses.

Evaluators also used R to analyze MARSS and Ed-Fi data from MDE. They created code to check each student's Ed-Fi demographic labels across years and districts, and to compare demographic

labels between the MARSS and Ed-Fi datasets. The evaluators also used R to count the number of students submitting MARSS or Ed-Fi data in each year.

All percentages reported are calculated using the number of people who responded to each question, not the number of people who responded to the survey overall. This means that the frequencies for each question do not reflect that number of people taking the survey, only the number of people who answered each question.

Evaluators met with MDE to discuss and contextualize initial findings after finishing analysis.

Limitations

The evaluation process faced several limitations and challenges, including:

- The COVID-19 pandemic changed the project design, shifting plans from in-person parent/guardian engagement through focus groups to conducting online surveys.
- Contract limitations of the evaluation prevented increases to the project timeline and budget to allow for broader community engagement or other adjustments for conducting the evaluation under COVID-19.
- A community partner informed evaluators that the translation of the Karen language version of the parent/guardian survey needed improvement and was difficult for guardians to understand.
- Many parents/guardians opened the survey but did not complete it. One possible reason for this is the inclusion of the 2- to 3- page demographics form. Including the demographics form was a method to gain input about the form from parents/guardians who had not yet used or did not remember the demographics form. However, the form may have felt overwhelming, and some parents believed they needed to fill out the form in addition to the survey questions. These factors may have contributed to people opening but not completing the survey.

Findings

Data submission process for schools and districts

Detailed data submissions increased in 2020.

In the 2018-19 school year, only the five original partner districts submitted detailed demographic information. In 2019-20, 86 new districts began partnering with MDE to submit student data through Ed-Fi. This resulted in the collection of detailed demographic information for 36,427 students who had not submitted this data previously.

The table below displays detailed data submissions from the five original partner districts in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. The counts of "Students submitting Ed-Fi data" only includes students submitting detailed data for the first time. This means that students who submitted data in 2018-19 are not included in 2019-20's numbers, even if they re-submitted data. Students typically submit enrollment data once during their time in a district, and would only re-submit data if they change districts, decide to make a change to their demographic information, or if there is a change in the demographic categories listed on the demographic form. The numbers of "Students who could submit detailed data" is the count of students who identified as American Indian, Asian, Black, or Hispanic/Latinx in MARSS demographic data. Because there are no options for detailed data submission for Pacific Islander and White students, students who only identified with these demographic categories are not included in the count.
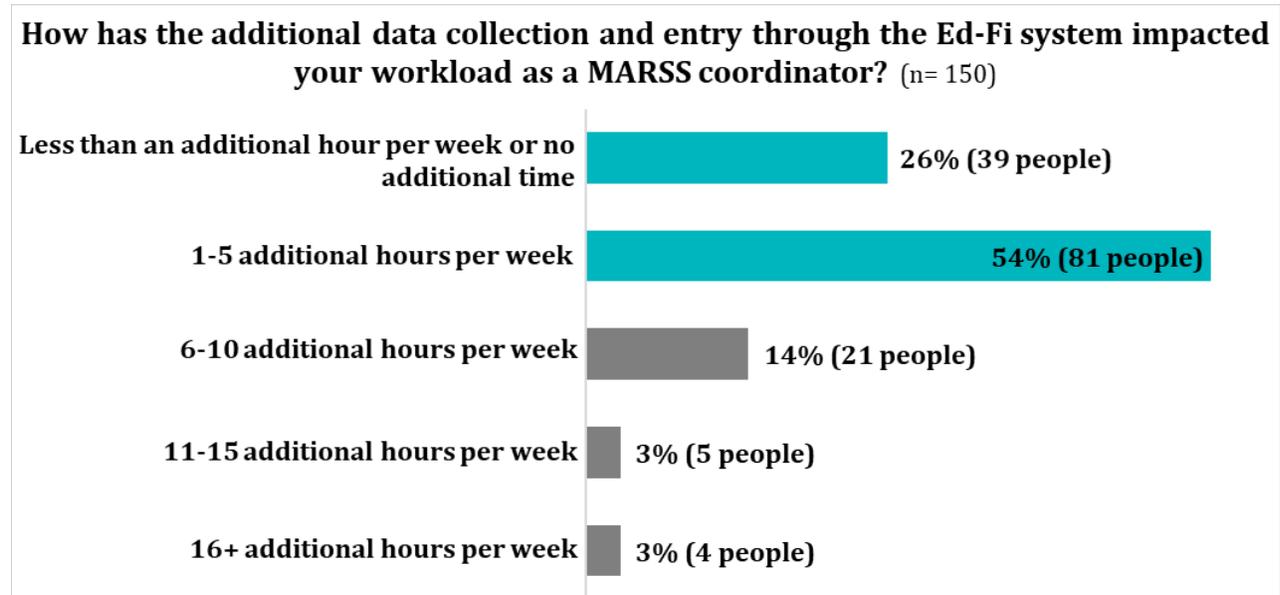
District name	Students submitting Ed-Fi data in 2018-19	Students submitting Ed-Fi data in 2019-20	Students who could submit detailed data in 2018-19	Students who could submit detailed data in 2019-20	Enrollment 2018-19	Enrollment 2019-20
Community of Peace Academy	589	0	740	742	800	781
Minnetonka Public School District	561	15	1,830	2,081	10,970	11,168
Schoolcraft Learning Community Charter	37	9	61	48	202	198
St. Paul Public School District	1,481	14,845	29,195	28,322	36,888	36,004
Worthington Public School District	1,968	704	2,569	2,733	3,904	4,024
Combined partner districts	4,636	15,575	34,395	33,926	52,764	52,175

Some difference in the counts of student data submissions may be due to variations in the way each district collects information. Some districts collect information through paper forms, while other districts have parents submit data online. There are also a range of times when districts collect this information. Most districts collect data during their enrollment periods, which generally last from January to August of a given year. Collecting data at different points in this enrollment period may change response rates. Student to staff ratios can also impact data collection rates, as it may be harder for staff to follow up directly with individual families about data in districts with larger class sizes. For these reasons, differences in the numbers recorded in the table above do not indicate a judgement on the district but reflect the differences in districts and the impacts of their different data collection methods.

MARSS coordinators have the capacity to manage dual submissions, but would like to learn more about the Ed-Fi system.
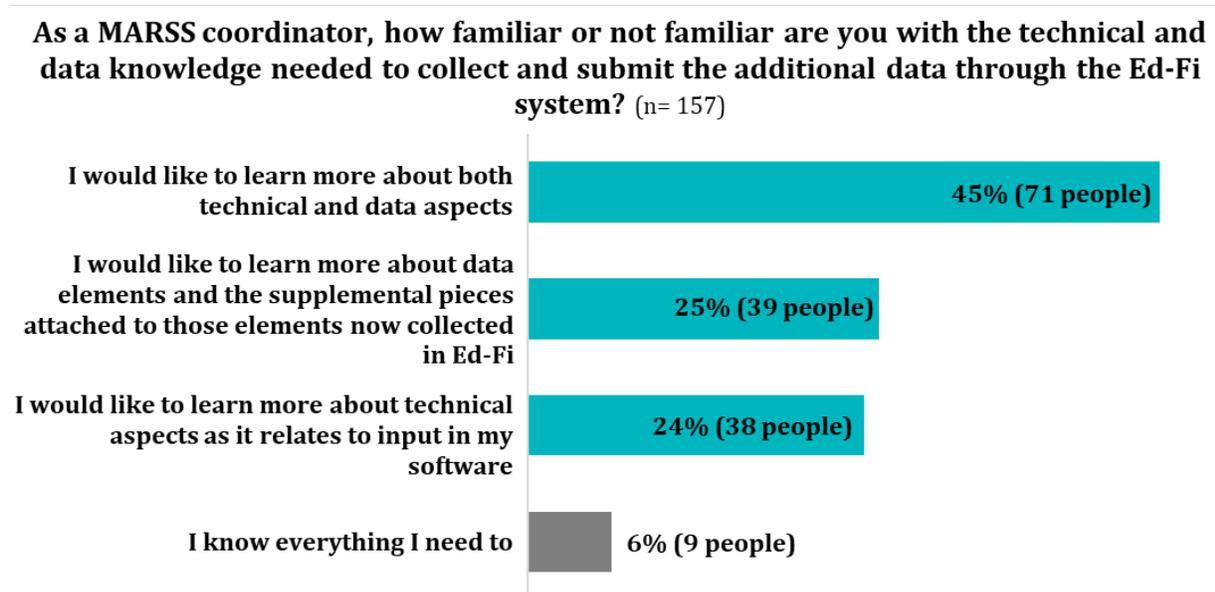
Most MARSS coordinators do not report a large time burden from Ed-Fi.

Overall, most MARSS coordinators reported five or fewer hours of additional work time due to Ed-Fi data collection and entry. Very few reported ten or more additional hours of work. When examining these responses in connection to the length of time respondents had worked with Ed-Fi or had been MARSS coordinators, no notable differences emerged.

How has the additional data collection and entry through the Ed-Fi system impacted your workload as a MARSS coordinator? (n= 150)

Less than an additional hour per week or no additional time	26% (39 people)
1-5 additional hours per week	54% (81 people)
6-10 additional hours per week	14% (21 people)
11-15 additional hours per week	3% (5 people)
16+ additional hours per week	3% (4 people)

MARSS coordinators want to learn more about Ed-Fi submissions.

Almost all MARSS coordinators had interest in learning more about Ed-Fi submissions. The level of experience MARSS coordinators had in their roles or with Ed-Fi did not make a difference in their level of interest in learning more.

As a MARSS coordinator, how familiar or not familiar are you with the technical and data knowledge needed to collect and submit the additional data through the Ed-Fi system? (n= 157)

I would like to learn more about both technical and data aspects	45% (71 people)
I would like to learn more about data elements and the supplemental pieces attached to those elements now collected in Ed-Fi	25% (39 people)
I would like to learn more about technical aspects as it relates to input in my software	24% (38 people)
I know everything I need to	6% (9 people)

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While there is interest in learning more about collecting and submitting data through Ed-Fi, this may be a different process in each district. There are multiple Student Information System (SIS) vendors throughout the state. These vendors are responsible for programming the systems districts use to collect and submit student data. This can lead to large differences in the way districts collect and submit data. Because SIS software is unique to each vendor, vendors must provide training to districts on how to collect and submit data.

In an open-ended question in the original MDE and MNIT staff survey, some staff reported problems in the way vendors send district data to the state systems. The follow-up survey taken by 11 MDE and MNIT staff asked how effectively districts submit detailed racial and ethnic group data via Ed-Fi. Most respondents said that districts submit data "very" or "somewhat" effectively, while one person responded "not very effectively."
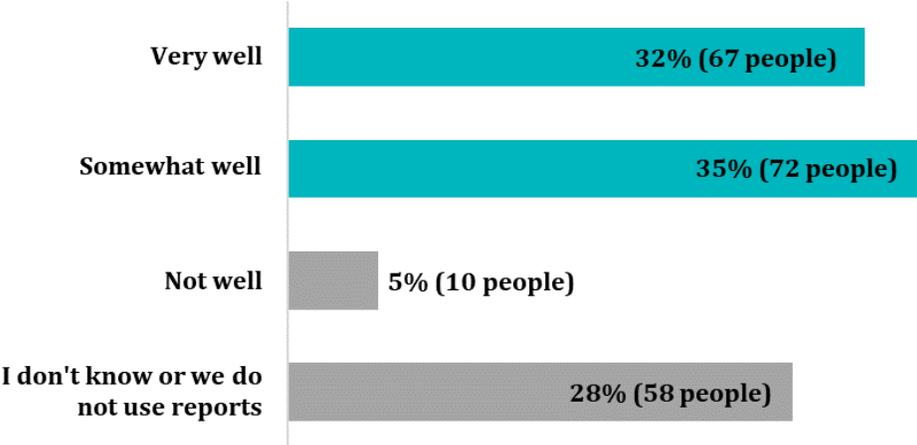
District Use

District staff have been able to use reports from Ed-Fi and MDE, but believe the reports and reporting system could be improved.

District staff access reports through a website called EDIAM, which contains a comparison report for districts. Comparison reports generate information about differences between data submitted using the Ed-Fi system versus data submitted through spreadsheet uploads in the original MARSSWES system. If there is a pattern of errors, MDE coordinates user groups of districts and Student Information System vendors which work to understand where differences in the report may have come from and how to fix them.

Recently, MDE has rolled out "dynamic reports" through the EDIAM site. This gives districts a variety of options to customize reports for data elements, including tailoring the data included in the reports (including data elements and year of submission when appropriate). Because the dynamic report is a recent addition, not all districts have had the opportunity to use them.

The survey asked all respondents how well these reports meet their school and district's data needs. Responses were overall positive. An important consideration in examining these responses is that survey respondents have different levels of experience with Ed-Fi. They may not have the same levels of familiarity with comparision and dynamic reports.

How well do reports meet your school and district's data needs? (n= 207)

Very well	32% (67 people)
Somewhat well	35% (72 people)
Not well	5% (10 people)
I don't know or we do not use reports	28% (58 people)

In open ended survey responses, respondents shared confusion about what is in the reports and how to use them. Responses fell into two main categories: suggestions on ways to make reports easier to understand, and suggestions on ways to make reports more useful.

Suggestions on making the reports easier to understand include:
- More training on data and reports
- Detailed documents on the contents of reports
- More documentation on what each code or key in the data means or represents
- Information on how reports are created and what data they use
- Updating data more quickly - respondents believe that the data in the reports is too out-of-date to be useful
- New ways of storing reports so they are easier to access

Suggestions on ways to increase reports' usefulness include:
- Adding (or explaining) ways to export data into Excel so it is easier to manipulate and merge with other data for more customized reporting
- Ways to customize the data, including being able to pull data from past years
- New or different ways of communicating errors in data, especially across districts

In reviewing survey responses, MDE staff noted that some of these suggestions are available in the dynamic reports. However, because dynamic reports are new, some survey respondents may not have used these reports yet. These responses may also indicate a need for further training on reporting systems. For example, problems with out-of-date report data may be due to a misunderstanding on how to update Ed-Fi data.
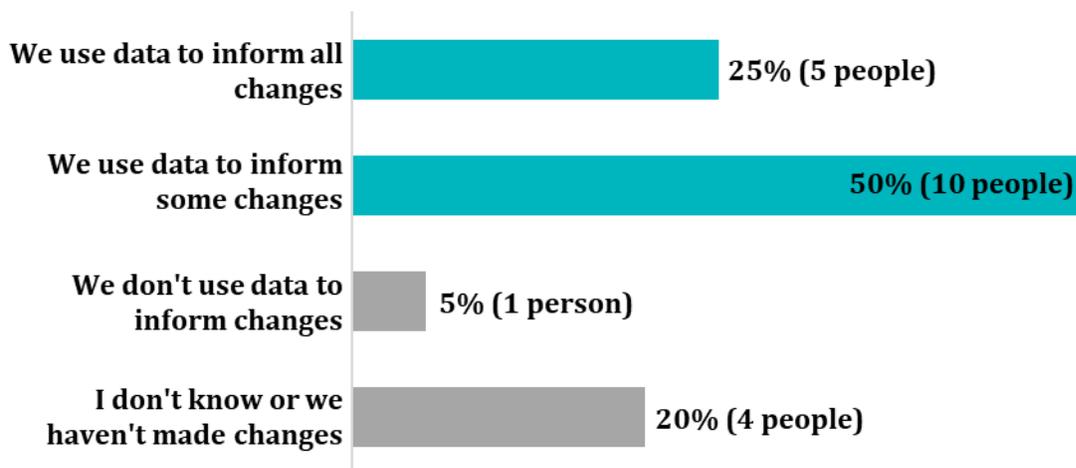
Curriculum directors and research/evaluation staff at districts have begun to use disaggregated data from Ed-Fi to inform changes and uncover gaps.

The district staff survey included two questions about using disaggregated enrollment data from Ed-Fi to uncover achievement and opportunity gaps across demographic groups. These questions were directed specifically to curriculum directors and district staff who work in research and evaluation.

- Disaggregated Ed-Fi data has been useful for *55%* of respondents (11 people) in discovering **achievement gaps** across demographic groups.
- Disaggregated Ed-Fi data has been useful for *45%* of respondents (9 people) in discovering **opportunity gaps** across demographic groups.
- In each question, 30% of respondents (6 people) responded that they did not know or did not use data in this way.

The survey asked these same staff about using disaggregated enrollment data from Ed-Fi to inform instruction. Most respondents reported using disaggregated demographic data from Ed-Fi in making some or all instructional changes.

When making changes to programming and instruction, to what extent do you use detailed demographic data to inform those changes? (n= 20)

We use data to inform all changes — 25% (5 people)

We use data to inform some changes — 50% (10 people)

We don't use data to inform changes — 5% (1 person)

I don't know or we haven't made changes — 20% (4 people)

In open-ended survey questions, respondents requested more training and advice from the state about data use to help them better understand and use this data. While the state is providing additional information about this data through user guides, survey responses show that district staff are interested in further learning. Respondents also suggested that the state provide more options for pulling and exploring this data, such as downloading data to Excel. Data from dynamic reports can currently be downloaded as a '.csv' file, however, data from comparison reports is only available in the report's web application. Making comparison reports available in more formats may help district staff use and manipulate data.

Data accuracy and access

Guardians, and the district staff surveyed report that the form is overall clear and understandable.

Both the parent/guardian and district staff surveys included questions about families' ease in filling out the demographic form.

Of parents/guardians who **responded to each question**:

- o *93%* (37 people) agreed or strongly agreed that "I understood the directions on the form."
- o *100%* (21 people) agreed or strongly agreed that "it was clear which demographic categories to select for my child."

Additionally, *63%* (38 people) of district staff involved with enrollment thought it was very or somewhat easy for guardians to fill out the demographic form.

Areas for growth

MARSS coordinators and regional staff requested further assistance in understanding how parents/guardians are supposed to fill out the form.

A few district staff and parents reported difficulty in filling out or understanding the form. One guardian sent an email to the evaluator about the survey that communicated a misunderstanding in the demographic form's directions. This guardian believed that they understood the form, but they

read the directions to mean that they could only select one demographic option. The directions tell parents/guardians to select "at least one" of the demographic categories that available on the form.

State staff can access and use the detailed demographic data submitted through Ed-Fi.

A 2019 report from MDE notes that a new server was created to store Ed-Fi data. The report marks the development and configuration of Ed-Fi's Operational Data Store (ODS) as 100% completed. There is currently one data storage location for Ed-Fi and one for MARSS. MDE plans to eventually integrate systems and only use the Ed-Fi ODS.

In open-ended survey responses, staff reported that the Ed-Fi data storage system is effective, and preferable to storing Ed-Fi data in the MARSS system.

To pinpoint the effectiveness of the Ed-Fi ODS, the follow-up survey asked 11 MDE and MNIT staff how effectively or not effectively state staff are able to retrieve, analyze, and report on detailed demographic data from Ed-Fi. Most staff reported that they are able to do all three things "very effectively." A few staff also responded that they are able to do each task "somewhat effectively." Only one person said that reporting on Ed-Fi data is "not very" effective.

Overall, Ed-Fi data is valid based on MARSS submissions and is reliable across years and districts.

To test Ed-Fi data's reliability, evaluators explored the demographic codes submitted for students who had data recorded in multiple years or school districts. Students who submitted the same demographic data in different districts or years are considered to have reliable data. Of the 3,384 students who submitted Ed-Fi data in multiple years or in multiple districts, 87% (2,936 students) submitted the same demographic information in each year or district for which they had data.

In measuring Ed-Fi data's validity, evaluators checked if demographic categories for students were the same in the Ed-Fi system as in the MARSS system. Students with the same demographic categories across systems are considered to have valid data. Because Ed-Fi does not collect detailed demographic information on students identifying as Pacific Islanders or White, only the data reported for students identifying as American Indian, Asian, Black, or Hispanic/Latinx could be checked for validity. Of 40,395 students with demographic data available in both MARSS and Ed-Fi, 99% (40,057 students) had Ed-Fi demographic codes which matched their MARSS identifiers.

District staff see assistance from MDE as useful and would like to continue learning about Ed-Fi data collection.
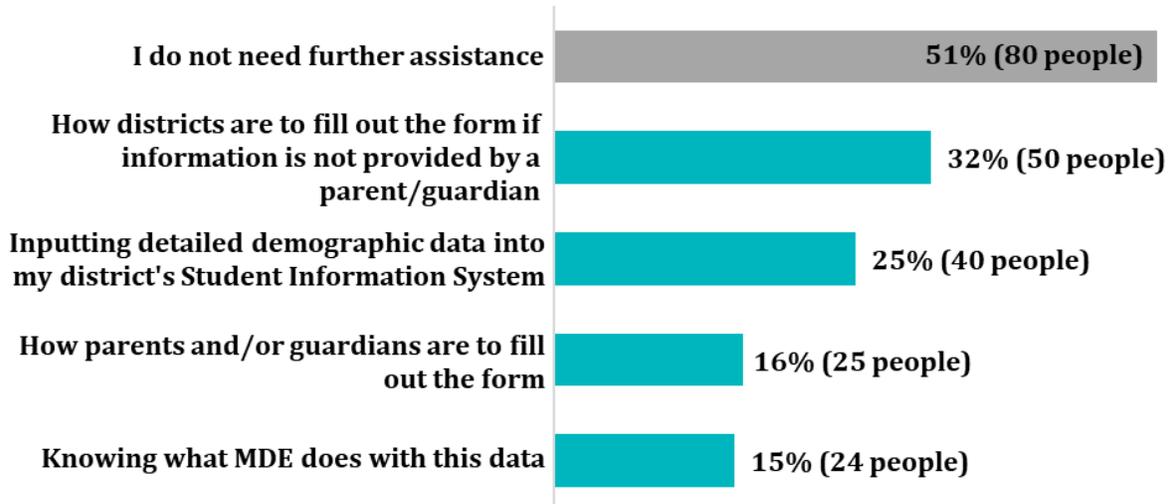
The survey asked MARSS coordinators and regional data center staff to rate how useful, or not useful, various forms of assistance from MDE are in learning about and transitioning to Ed-Fi. The top three forms of assistance rated "very useful" are:

- o Training modules (47% of respondents, 81 people)
- o Manuals or written documentation (42% of respondents, 72 people)
- o Technical assistance from MDE (35% of respondents, 59 people)

Day-to-day emails received the most "not useful" ratings at 9% of respondents (16 people). Overall, few people marked any forms of assistance as "not useful."

Just over half of MARSS coordinators and regional data center staff said that they did not need further assistance with Ed-Fi data collection. Despite this, there is interest from many staff in learning more about Ed-Fi and related processes.

In thinking about the collection and submission of the more detailed racial/ethnic groups, where would you like to have further assistance? (n= 158)

Category	Value
I do not need further assistance	51% (80 people)
How districts are to fill out the form if information is not provided by a parent/guardian	32% (50 people)
Inputting detailed demographic data into my district's Student Information System	25% (40 people)
How parents and/or guardians are to fill out the form	16% (25 people)
Knowing what MDE does with this data	15% (24 people)

A quarter of district staff who responded requested assistnace with inputting demographic data into their district's Student Information System (SIS). Districts may have different vendors for their SIS software. As a result, inputting data might be a very different process for staff across the state. Vendors have a responsibility to train the districts they work with on inputting data.

Recommendations

Demographic form

Because some guardians expressed confusion about the demographic form, it may be helpful to emphasize in the instructions that guardians can select as many demographic options as apply to their student.

Reports and data

District staff gave the following suggestions for MDE about reporting and data use:

- Create a way to export report data into different formats, especially Excel, so district staff can explore and manipulate data in whatever way best meets their needs
- Provide more documentation and guides on the data and codes included in reports

Some of these suggestions are already in place in the dynamic reports, which not all survey respondents may have had access to because these reports are recently introduced. That district staff are requesting options already in place suggests miscommunication or a lack of awareness around the options for reports. More training or information sharing about what is involved in each report and what each reporting system is capable of may help address some of these comments.

Training and Technical Assitance for district staff

Responses about the most helpful types of assistance suggest that Technical Assistance (TA) and training from MDE would be most helpful through training modules and written documentation or manuals. Suggestions on the content of training and TA includes:

- Add ways to customize which data is included in reports through the reporting systems
- Information on the data elements and supplemental data collected through Ed-Fi
- Details on what MDE does with data and how it is used
- More visible guidance on how districts should fill out demographic forms if information is not provided by guardians
- Further help understanding how parents and guardians fill out the demographic form
- Ways to customize data in reporting are availble through dynamic reports, which suggests that further training on the report system may be helpful.

Additionally, information on data elements and how MDE uses data has been shared with onboarding districts through a Translation Document. Because this information was shared recently, some of the respondents requesting this may not have had a chance to process the information collected. This could also indicate an opportunity to train district staff on how best to use this document.

While many MARSS coordinators expressed interest in learning more about Ed-Fi data collection and submission, training on specific systems must be done by districts' SIS vendors. MDE may play a role in this by encouraging districts to schedule Ed-Fi software trainings with their SIS vendors.

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Appendix A: District staff survey

Thank you for your participation. Results from this survey will be used to inform adjustments to MDE's transition to Ed-Fi for demographic data collection. Your responses will remain confidential; no identifying information will be connected with your responses during analysis or reporting.

1. What best defines your role?

    o   MARSS coordinator
    o   District staff involved with enrollment
    o   Curriculum director
    o   Research or evaluation staff at a school district
    o   Regional data center staff

2. [If MARSS coordinator] How many years have you been a MARSS coordinator?

    o   1-2 years
    o   3-4 years
    o   5-6 years
    o   7+ years

3. What school year did you begin utilizing with the Ed-Fi system?

    o   2018-19
    o   2019-20
    o   2020-21

4. Schools and districts may use data to meet a variety of needs. How well do reports (including public reports created by MDE and reports from Ed-Fi) meet your school and district's data needs?

    o   Very well
    o   Somewhat well
    o   Not well
    o   I don't know or We do not use reports

5. [If somewhat well or not well]: How could the reports better meet your needs? (open-ended)
6. [If curriculum directors or research/evaluation staff] When making changes to programming and instruction, to what extent do you use the detailed demographic data to inform those changes?

    o   We use data to inform all changes
    o   We use data to inform some changes
    o   We don't use data to inform changes
    o   I don't know or we haven't made changes

7. [If curriculum directors or research/evaluation staff] How can MDE best support you in understanding and using data to inform instruction? (open-ended)
8. [if MARSS coordinator] How has the additional data collected through the Ed-Fi system impacted your workload as a MARSS coordinator?

    I spend:

- o Less than an additional hour per week or no additional time
- o 1-5 additional hours per week
- o 6-10 additional hours per week
- o 11-15 additional hours per week
- o 16+ additional hours per week

9. [If MARSS coordinator] As a MARSS coordinator, how familiar or not familiar are you with the technical and data knowledge needed to collect and submit the additional data through the Ed-Fi system?

- o I know everything I need to
- o I would like to learn more about technical aspects as it relates to input in my software
- o I would like to learn more about data elements and the supplemental pieces attached to those elements now collected in Ed-Fi
- o I would like to learn more about both technical and data aspects

10. [If MARSS coordinator or regional data center staff] How useful or not useful has each item been in collecting detailed demographic data through the Ed-Fi system?

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	N/A or don't know
Technical assistance from MDE	☐	☐	☐	☐
Manuals or written documentation	☐	☐	☐	☐
User groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vendor groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quarterly meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training modules	☐	☐	☐	☐
Day-to-day emails	☐	☐	☐	☐
Individual phone conversations with MDE/MNIT	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. [If MARSS coordinator or regional data center staff] In thinking about the collection and submission of the more detailed racial/ethnic groups, where would you like to have further assistance? (Select all that apply)

- o I do not need further assistance
- o I would like further assistance as it relates to inputting the AEO data into my districts Student Information System
- o I would like further assistance in understanding how parents and/or guardians are to fill out the form
- o I would like further assistance in understanding how districts are to fill out the form if information is not provided by a parent/guardian
- o I would like further assistance in knowing what MDE does with this data

12. [If district staff involved with enrollment] From your knowledge of families' experiences, how easy or difficult was it for families to fill out the demographic form?

- o Very easy
- o Somewhat easy

- o   Somewhat difficult
- o   Very difficult
- o   I don't know

13. [If curriculum directors or research/evaluation staff] How useful or not useful has enrollment data been in discovering <u>achievement</u> gaps across demographic groups?

- o   Very useful
- o   Somewhat useful
- o   Not very useful
- o   Not useful at all
- o   I don't know or we do not use data in this way

14. [If curriculum directors or research/evaluation staff] How useful or not useful has enrollment data been in discovering <u>opportunity</u> gaps across demographic groups?

- o   Very useful
- o   Somewhat useful
- o   Not very useful
- o   Not useful at all
- o   I don't know or we do not use data in this way

Thank you for your time and your thoughtful responses!

Appendix B: Parent survey

Thank you for your participation. Your answers will help MDE understand how its new demographic system is working and inform any improvements to the system.

The survey should not take more than five minutes. All responses will be kept anonymous- no identifying information about you or your student will be connected with your answers. This survey is completely voluntary.

Please review the demographic form below, and then answer the three questions about the form. You do not need to fill out the demographic form.

mn DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ethnic and Racial Demographic Designation Form

Student's First Name: _____ Middle Name/Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ District: _____ School: _____

Schools are required to report ethnicity and race to the state and to the U.S. Department of Education. Because of recent changes to Minnesota state law, Minnesota disaggregates each category into detailed groups to further represent our student populations. Parents or guardians are not required to answer the federal questions (in bold) for their children. If you choose not to answer the federal questions (in bold), federal law requires schools to choose for you. This is a last resort—we prefer if parents or guardians complete the form. State questions are labeled as "Optional" and schools will not fill in this information for you.

This information helps improve teaching and learning for everyone and helps us accurately identify and advocate for students currently underserved. The information this form collects is considered private information. You can review the privacy notice to learn more about the purpose of collecting this information, how it will be used and not used, and how the detailed groups were identified. The privacy notice can be found in our *Frequently Asked Questions: Ethnic and Racial Designation Form.*

Is the student Hispanic/Latino as defined by the federal government? The federal definition includes persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.[1]

[You must select "yes" or "no" to this question.]

    O **Yes** *[If yes, go to Question A.]*   O **No** *[If no, go to Question 1.]*

     Optional Question A: If yes was chosen above, select all that apply from the list below (*this question will not be answered by school staff*):

□ Decline to indicate	□ Guatemalan	□ Salvadoran	□ Other Hispanic/Latino
□ Colombian	□ Mexican	□ Spaniard/Spanish/	□ Unknown
□ Ecuadorian	□ Puerto Rican	Spanish-American	

     Go to Question 1.

[Select "yes" to at least one of the Questions (1-6) below.]

Question 1: Does the student identify as American Indian or Alaska Native as defined by the state of Minnesota? The state of Minnesota definition includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. [This question is needed to calculate state aid/funding.]

    O **Yes** *[If yes, go to Question 1a.]*   O **No** *[If no, go to Question 2.]*

     Optional Question 1a: If yes was chosen above, select all that apply from the list below (*this question will not be answered by school staff*):

□ Decline to indicate	□ Cherokee	□ Other North American Indian Tribal Affiliation
□ Anishinaabe/Ojibwe	□ Dakota/Lakota	□ Unknown

     Go to Question 2.

_____

[1]Federal Register, Vol. 72, No. 202/Friday, October 19, 2007/Notices/59274

Question 2. Is the student American Indian from South or Central America?

○ **Yes** *[Go to Question 3.]* ○ **No** *[Go to Question 3.]*

Question 3. Is the student Asian as defined by the federal government? The federal definition includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.[1]

○ **Yes** *[If yes, go to Question 3a.]* ○ **No** *[If no, go to Question 4.]*

Optional Question 3a. If yes was chosen above, select all that apply from the list below (*this question will not be answered by school staff*):

☐ Decline to indicate ☐ Chinese ☐ Karen ☐ Other Asian
☐ Asian Indian ☐ Filipino ☐ Korean ☐ Unknown
☐ Burmese ☐ Hmong ☐ Vietnamese

Go to Question 4.

Question 4. Is the student black or African American as defined by the federal government? The federal definition includes persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.[1]

○ **Yes** *[If yes, go to Question 4a.]* ○ **No** *[If no, go to Question 5.]*

Optional Question 4a. If yes was chosen above, select all that apply from the list below (*this question will not be answered by school staff*):

☐ Decline to indicate ☐ Ethiopian-Other ☐ Somali
☐ African-American ☐ Liberian ☐ Other black
☐ Ethiopian-Oromo ☐ Nigerian ☐ Unknown

Go to Question 5.

Question 5. Is the student Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander as defined by the federal government? The federal definition includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.[1]

○ **Yes** *[Go to Question 6.]* ○ **No** *[Go to Question 6.]*

Question 6. Is the student white as defined by the federal government? The federal definition includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.[1]

○ **Yes** ○ **No**

Parent(s)/Guardian Name _____ Date _____

Parent(s)/Guardian Signature _____

Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the form.

1. I understood the directions.

   o Strongly agree
   o Agree
   o Disagree
   o Strongly disagree
   o N/A or I don't know

2. It was clear which demographic categories to select for my child.

   o Strongly agree
   o Agree
   o Disagree
   o Strongly disagree
   o N/A or I don't know

3. What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)

   o American Indian
   o Asian or Pacific Islander
   o Black
   o Hispanic/Latinx
   o White
   o Additional identity

   [if additional identity] Please specify any additional racial or ethnic identities:

   _____

Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses!

Appendix C: MDE and MNIT staff survey

Thank you for your participation. Results from this survey will be used to inform adjustments to MDE's transition to Ed-Fi for demographic data collection. Your responses will remain confidential; no identifying information will be connected with your responses during analysis or reporting.

1. How effectively or not effectively does the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System – Operational Data Store (MARSS – ODS) store the additional detailed demographic data from the Ed-Fi system?

   o Very effectively
   o Somewhat effectively
   o Not very effectively
   o Not effectively at all
   o I don't know

2. What could be done to make the data storage system more effective? (open-ended)

Thank you for your time and your thoughtful responses!

Appendix D: Follow-up MDE and MNIT staff survey

Results from this survey will be used to inform adjustments to MDE's transition to Ed-Fi for demographic data collection. Your responses will remain confidential; no identifying information will be connected with your responses during analysis or reporting.

1. How effectively or not effectively can…

	Very effectively	Somewhat effectively	Not very effectively	Not effectively at all	I don't know
Districts submit the more detailed racial/ethnic group information via Ed-Fi?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MDE/MNIT retrieve the more detailed racial/ethnic group information that was submitted via Ed-Fi?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MDE/MNIT analyze the more detailed racial/ethnic group information submitted via Ed-Fi?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MDE/MNIT report the more detailed racial/ethnic group information submitted via Ed-Fi?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your participation!