

Ed-Fi Frequently Asked Questions

September 24, 2020

Is Ed-Fi another system I have to learn?

No. Ed-Fi is a program language connected to an external source (data submission destination) through an API. Ed-Fi acts as a link between your Student Information System (SIS) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for transferring uniform data. Ed-Fi submission is the technology MDE is using to collect new legislative mandated supplemental data elements. In addition to supplemental data elements being submitted via Ed-Fi, Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) is the first program to submit data via Ed-Fi.

How long will it take a district to on-board to Ed-Fi?

On-boarding to Ed-Fi is a multi-step process divided into two phases. The first phase is on-boarding to staging and the second phase is working in production to validate district data. [A detailed explanation of this process can be found in the MDE District On-boarding Guide to Ed-Fi, found on the Ed-Fi on-boarding webpage.](#)

1. **On-boarding and Staging:** District staff participate in six one-hour training sessions held once per month to learn the new technology and how to use it. Then, districts practice using the technology in a staging environment, which behaves like the real environment but it is not actually connected to MDE's data storage system.
2. **Production:** District staff will submit data to MDE using the Ed-Fi technology and using the MARSS A/B file upload system. The SIS vendor works with the district to connect to and submit data in the MDE Ed-Fi live environment. These two submission pathways are then compared and any Ed-Fi data submission errors are corrected in the district SIS. To certify a district for submitting this data only using Ed-Fi, both Fall data and End-of-Year Ed-Fi data submissions must be deemed accurate. *Fall and EOY data collection cycles will be reviewed separately.*

What is dual reporting via Ed-Fi and MARSS WES?

Dual reporting means that a district is simultaneously submitting MARSS data using Ed-Fi and the MARSS A/B file upload system. This process is done throughout both the Fall and EOY collection cycles so as to encompass a full school year. [A detailed explanation of the dual reporting process can be found in the MDE District On-boarding Guide to Ed-Fi, found on the Ed-Fi on-boarding webpage.](#)

Is MARSS WES Edit System going away?

Yes. The MARSS WES submission system will sunset in SY 2022-23.

Will I do any type of edits or validations inside the EDVP?

Yes. At this time the validation used in the EDVP is labeled 'Ed-Fi_ 3.1 NON MARSS'. This is to validate Ancestry and Ethnic Origin (AEO) data because it is not collected in MARSS and therefore there is no comparison available for this data on the comparison report. This is the only validation used in the EDVP at this time. [A detailed explanation of this validation as well as screen examples are located in the Ed-Fi on-boarding Guide to Ed-Fi, found on the Ed-Fi onboarding webpage.](#)

When can I begin using the Extended Ancestry Form?

You can begin using the *Ethnic and Racial Demographic Designation Form* whenever it is appropriate for your district, or you can wait to implement it until the year you are on-boarding to Ed-Fi. It is a district decision as to when the form is implemented, however this data must be submitted once on-boarding to Ed-Fi. If your district chooses to collect this data before beginning to on-board, the information in this form cannot be retrieved by MDE until your district begins the on-boarding process. [The Ethic and Racial Demographic Designation Form as well as supporting material can be found on the Data Submission portion of the MDE website.](#)

I'm afraid of losing all the MARSS WES reports. Will similar reports be available with Ed-Fi?

The local and statewide MARSS WES reports will continue for the next 4-5 years until programming time allows for MN.IT and MDE to program MARSS WES edits in Ed-Fi. Some of the counts will be available through the Ed-Fi portal, in addition to new counts for data that is not currently collected via MARSS WES: migrant, homeless, immigrant, and active duty parent.

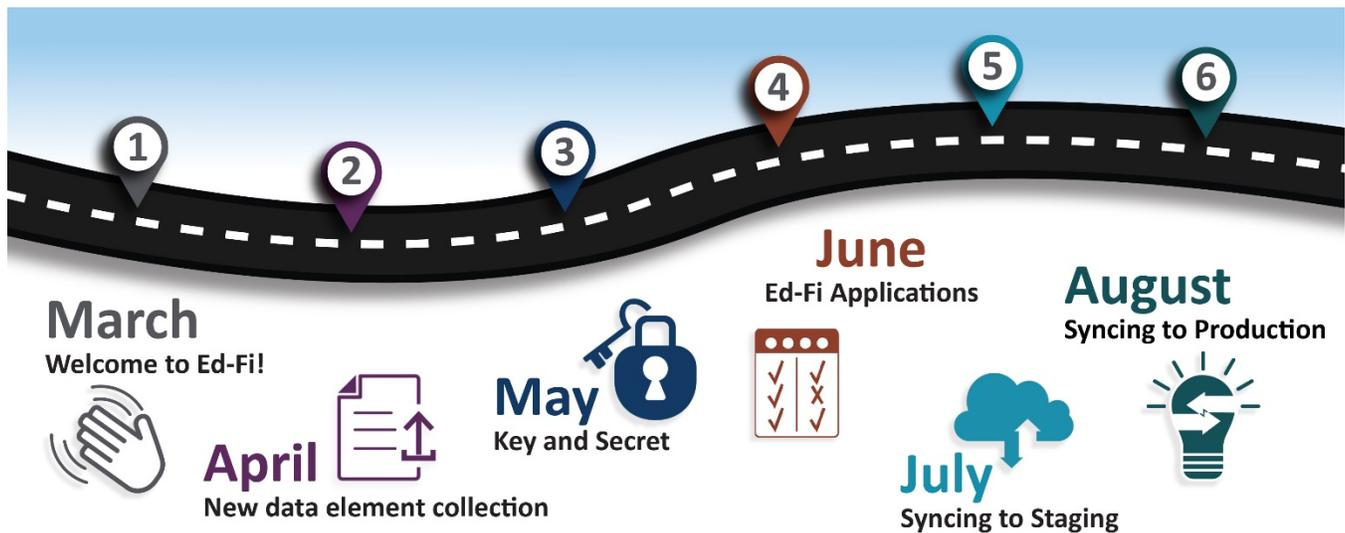
When districts submit data both through Ed-Fi and MARSS A/B files, MARSS WES reports will be for only the data submitted in A/B files. Therefore, districts will use the comparison report to compare Ed-Fi data to the district's MARSS data. When districts are certified to submit Ed-Fi only, district MARSS data will be loaded into MARSS WES only via Ed-Fi and the subsequent MARSS WES reports will be based on the data from Ed-Fi.

[To learn more about Dynamic Reports found in the EDVP when you are a district syncing data to the production environment, please view the Ed-Fi On-boarding Guide, found on the Ed-Fi on-boarding webpage.](#)

Does Ed-Fi on-boarding require extra work time?

Yes. Working through the on-boarding process requires State Reporting Specialists in each district to attend one-hour monthly trainings as well as to spend time during the Production cycles working through errors in the comparison report. However, the MDE Ed-Fi Team has taken into account the time needed to learn the new Ed-Fi system, dual submission, validation of data and eventually certification of Ed-Fi data in the development of the on-boarding requirements. This is why the on-boarding process spreads out the learning and implementation training.

The MDE Ed-Fi implementation team has designed a training webinar series that involves one-hour monthly meetings for the six months prior to syncing data.



Where should I store my extended ancestry form?

As with all student data, district policy should dictate the collection and storage of the Ethnic and Racial Designation Demographic Form. The form should be available for audit by MDE for at least three years after the student graduates or leaves the district, whichever is later. [To view more about documented extended ancestry information on behalf of MDE, please go to the Counting All Students webpage.](#)

What happens if a parent refuses to complete the extended ancestry form?

The extended ancestry form includes both Federal race and ethnicity reporting categories as well as the extended State race and ethnicity reporting categories. It is required that every student in the district be associated with Federal race and ethnicity data. If a parent or guardian of a currently enrolled student has previously reported federal race/ethnic data and now refuses to provide extended ancestry information, then the federal data is sufficient. If the student is new to the district and the family declines to provide the required Federal information and the requested State information, the district should follow its stated procedure for how to determine Federal race and ethnicity demographic categories. [To view more about documented extended ancestry information on behalf of MDE, please go to the Counting All Students webpage.](#)

What does the certification process look like to move to Ed-Fi only reporting?

The certification process involves a review of Fall Ed-Fi data, EOY Ed-Fi data, and an agreement between the district and MDE. A district will work with MDE to review Fall data submission accuracy, to review EOY data submission accuracy, and to determine if the district is prepared to submit data only via Ed-Fi. Once an agreement is made between a district and MDE, the district administration will sign the Certification Agreement. This will mean that all data submitted to MDE after the reviewed EOY data will be submitted only using Ed-Fi; no dual submission of this data or any subsequent data will be required. [Further information on the certification process can be found on the MDE Ed-Fi on-boarding webpages.](#)

