

Michigan Data Policy Landscape

Michigan has a good grasp on the capacities and limitations of the state's current data systems, unlike some states, which are just beginning to document the capabilities of their multiple data collection systems. Despite this, much remains to be done before Michigan will be ready for statewide linking of teacher and student data. Information warehousing is split between the Department of Education and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). CEPI manages data in an electronic data warehouse called the Michigan Education Information System (MEIS). Although the two organizations meet weekly to coordinate their data collections, the process is inefficient. Further, a certain level of animosity appears to exist between the two entities as well as different visions for the future of data-driven decision making in Michigan.

Current Data Capacities

Michigan has 13 data systems and two databases that collect data on teachers. License 2000 includes individuals as soon as they apply for a teaching license in Michigan and the teacher preparation program reports them to the Center for Educational Performance. However, downsides are that the system only tracks those teachers prepared in Michigan and does not allow longitudinal studies. CEPI would like to be able to provide this kind of data-based decision support. Possible future funding would come primarily from state general funds, but also possibly from federal teacher quality Title II funds. Currently no funding is available to tackle this problem comprehensively and thoughtfully.

The second data collection on teachers is the Registry of Educational Personnel (REP), which is done twice a year. The REP collects 35 fields of information on personnel but does not track multiple assignments, which has been problematic given No Child Left Behind regulations. The REP collects Social Security Numbers (SSNs) but uses each teacher's license number as that teacher's personal identification number, which can then be linked back to the SSN. Although rarely utilized, the REP has the capacity to link the two databases and to service requests from outside parties, such as researchers, districts, or teacher preparation programs.

CEPI is just starting to see some requests from teacher preparation programs for data on their graduates. They anticipate that this demand will continue to grow in the future and that CEPI will be preparing special reports for all 36 of the teacher preparation programs. Those reports will be released this summer, regardless of whether the program requested the information. There is a link from the Department of Education Web site to 2002-2003 data documenting the pass rates for individual teacher preparation programs as well as state summary data.

The Political Landscape

The Office of Educational Accountability is responsible for the high-stakes testing. A teacher's name is associated with a test through a class code, but the codes are not

warehoused, so only the district can go back and link student and teacher data. Thus, linking student and teacher data is possible but is a potentially explosive political issue.

There is much resistance to, and trepidation around, the idea of linking individual teachers to student test scores for value-added assessments. Currently the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) is a standards-referenced test, which cannot be linked across grade levels in a valid way. Thus, there is no way to look at student progress longitudinally. Starting in the fall of 2006, Michigan will be changing the MEAP to enable linking tests in 2-year blocks, but these 2-year blocks would then be used to examine school growth only, not individual teachers.

The public has expressed a lot of concern about the idea of value-added assessments. The Michigan Education Association (MEA) historically has been very negative about assessment and accountability. However, CEPI and the Department for Education both expressed the need for policy with a balanced approach, the necessary funding, and increased technical capacity.

Web Resources

Michigan Department of Education
<http://www.mi.gov/mde/>

The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)
<http://www.michigan.gov/cepi>

Teacher Preparation Accountability Report
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MTTC_Performance_Report_2002-2003_103937_7.pdf