

**Florida
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History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Late 1970s.
2. By whom?
Board of Regents MIS Office.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
All of the above, as well as state reporting.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
The K-12 system, community and technical colleges, and all universities.
2. Are any independent institutions included (number or percentage)? What about proprietary institutions? Are different kinds of data or different schedules for data collection used for any of these institutions?
Yes, all private institutions (there are 28) send information on a voluntary basis – mostly for financial aid purposes. We are working on getting the private-for profits in the system and we are also working on expanding the coverage for the private-not-for-profits.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
No, only our work to include more private institutions (both in total number and in depth of coverage).
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We do collect transcript level data. We collect data at the beginning and end of term.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No.
6. Is non-credit enrollment or instructional activity covered (e.g. ABE, ESL, GED, other job-related continuing education activity, etc.)? If so, is this in a separate database and what data elements are?
Yes – we collect information on two levels. The first is adult education (community college and K-12) this includes adult literacy (what courses the students are taking and their progress) and GED progress. The second level is clock hours for vocational programs.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
This is a collaborative process – we meet with representatives from the institutions and discuss and then my department implements change.
2. Are SSNs used as a key link? If they are not, what is used instead? Are there immediate or long-range plans to discontinue use of the SSN as a key link?
SSNs are an element in the reporting systems. We use a student ID as the key link – this ID is institutional assigned.
3. Can campuses access datasets (unit records) themselves -- access in what terms (results, unit record data after it has been cleaned, unit-record data value added). If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
Yes and no. We are currently working on this, but right now they have access to their data.
4. How do you handle privacy and FERPA issues? Do you have an explicit privacy policy and/or policies governing the use of SUR data by third parties such as institutions and researchers?
Yes we have a privacy policy. We comply fully with FERPA.
5. Have any FERPA or privacy issues come up recently in your state? If so, how have they affected your ability to use student record information?
No.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Yes, we have all sorts of connections (UI wage report, welfare, prisons, enrollment with other types of institutions, federal government, etc.). We continuously update reports with other agencies and most are done by schedule.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
No. We tried it through the National Student Clearing House – but this is not as big an issue for us as other states.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
This is on our web site – we are trying to get away from Fact Books, and move toward reports and tables that the user can build at the website using data.

2. If graduation and retention statistics are generated for institutions (or for the state or system as a whole), how are they calculated (e.g. IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method, other methods)?

Yes we do this for both institutions and the state as a whole and we do use IPEDS graduation rate survey method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?

Right now we have 25 requests from external researchers including PhD candidates; university researchers, foundation researchers, and others for a variety of research topics. These are requests that are pending – this means that some are under further review prior to approval, some have been approved but have been assigned a relatively low priority, or some have been met – but upon reflection researchers have requested additional information. Here is a sampling of requests that we have responded to in the past six months:

- a. Harvard University College of Education: The impact of third grade retention policies
 - b. Manhattan Institute: Evaluation of Florida’s implementation of School Choice options in K12; evaluation of choice options
 - c. Florida State University: Correlates of quality teachers; evaluation of K12 Charter Schools
 - d. Florida State University: Evaluation of Mentoring Initiatives
 - e. University of Wisconsin: Student post school employment
 - f. University of Michigan – Teacher Effectiveness
 - g. Mathematica – Performance Measure adjustments for Workforce Investment Act Programs
 - h. U.S. Census Bureau – Participating and founding state in the Longitudinal Employer Dynamics Project
 - i. Department of Children and Families – Provide data to agency management dashboard
 - j. Lumina- Achieving the Dream – Data as well as systems information
 - k. Sunshine Connections – Business Intelligence for Decision makers at all levels
 - l. Upjohn Institute – Employment research for Workforce Investment Act programs
 - m. University of Baltimore – labor market research using administrative data resources from multiple states
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?

I think that I would point to staff efficiencies rather than lack of resources or time. We are in a world right now where there are incredibly powerful tools designed for big multi-source data bases like data warehouses that we need to learn to exploit. We are engaged in three tracks right now to evaluate these tools with a “proof of concept” due by July 1.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?

Data quality concerns are always present. My response to number 3 reflects a big one.

We have long had a culture of accountability in Florida that means that legislators, their staffs, executive leadership and others know they can ask very complex, detailed questions and get answers quickly. The fact that we respond completely and quickly means that they know when we make a budget request that it has direct meaning to them. Our data warehouse is a prime example; it has been in existence now for about 4 years. Each year, we have struggled to justify funding. This year the Chairman of the Senate Education Appropriations was applauded when he announced the research we have supported along with the fact that much of this research was funded by foundations, the federal government and other conduits based on the fact that the researchers had been granted access to the data- meaning that the efforts pay for themselves (more or less).

A second thing is that I am very big on “quid pro quo” – I’ll provide you something, if I get something in return. Researchers get access to certain data for research that is needed to inform policy.