

## Chapter 2

### SYSTEM OVERVIEW

#### A. A Brief Description of the System

The DOE conducts surveys of school district student and staff information at scheduled survey times during the fiscal year. The surveys 1-4 are conducted at the same time as the FTE survey weeks specified by the Commissioner of Education. Survey 5 includes the collection of end-of-year information. Survey 9 collects the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) information. The Finance information is collected in September. See Appendix B for the survey dates for the current fiscal year.

##### Survey 1

Survey 1 represents a snapshot of district information during a given week in July. This is a relatively small survey; it consists of information on summer school students and staff. Three student reporting formats and one staff reporting format are collected.

The data preparation/edit/correction cycle associated with survey 1 consists of:

- 1) for Student reporting formats -  
two calendar weeks for data preparation after the Friday of the survey week;  
plus approximately two months for transmission/edit/correction.
- 2) for Staff reporting formats -  
two calendar weeks for data preparation after the Friday of the survey week;  
plus three calendar weeks for transmission/edit/correction.

##### Survey 2

Survey 2 represents a snapshot of district information during a given week in October. This is the largest of the six surveys; it consists of seven Student reporting formats and eight Staff reporting formats.

The data preparation/edit/correction cycle associated with survey 2 consists of:

- 1) for Student reporting formats -  
two calendar weeks for data preparation  
after the Friday of the survey week; plus  
two calendar weeks for transmission/edit/correction.

- 2) for Staff reporting formats -  
two calendar weeks for data preparation  
after the Friday of the survey week; plus  
three calendar weeks for transmission/edit/correction.

The two week timeline for student data edit/correction is due to federal and state reporting requirements which place time constraints on when the data must be accessible for official report generation.

### Survey 3

Survey 3 represents a snapshot of district information during a given week in February. Survey 3 is nearly as large as Survey 2; it consists of five Student reporting formats and six Staff reporting formats. Since it also contains data important for FTE funding, it follows the same timeline as Survey 2.

The data preparation/edit/correction cycle associated with survey 3 consists of:

- 1) for Student reporting formats -  
two calendar weeks for data preparation  
after the Friday of the survey week; plus  
two calendar weeks for transmission/edit/correction.
- 2) for Staff reporting formats -  
two calendar weeks for data preparation  
after the Friday of the survey week; plus  
three calendar weeks for transmission/edit/correction.

### Survey 4

Survey 4 represents a snapshot of district information as of a given week in June. Like Survey 1, this is a relatively small survey; it consists solely of information on summer school students. No staff information is collected during this survey.

The data preparation/edit/correction cycle associated with survey 4 consists of:

two calendar weeks for data preparation after the Friday of the survey week;  
plus two calendar weeks for transmission/edit/correction.

NOTE: An estimated June FTE summary is transmitted to the DOE in advance of the actual Survey 4 information. Since this is a single purpose (FTE) estimate, it will continue to be collected in summary form, separate and apart from the System.

### Survey 5

Survey 5, which is collected in August, represents end of year summarization data. Unlike the other four surveys, Survey 5 consists of a collection of information about:

- all students who were enrolled in the district at any time during the year,
- all staff employed by the district at any time during the year, and
- vocational data.

The data transmission/edit/correction cycle associated with Survey 5 consists of four calendar weeks for data transmission/edit/correction.

### Survey 9

Survey 9 which is collected in December, represents the Exceptional Student population. Information for all Exceptional Students as of December 1st of the current school year should be transmitted. NO STAFF information is collected during this survey.

The data preparation/edit/correction cycle associated with survey 9 consists of:

- the first two weeks of December for data preparation and transmission; plus
- the rest of December and the first few weeks in January for editing and correcting.

### Surveys F, W, and S

These surveys collect data about postsecondary vocational and adult general education students and courses/programs as specified by CS/SB 1688 as passed by the 1997 Legislature.

See the District Workforce Development Education Data Base Handbook for additional information concerning Surveys F, W, and S (also see Appendix B of this manual).

### The System

The System manages the collection and verification of data from the nine surveys.

The processing of the System can be grouped into four phases:

- 1) data preparation,
- 2) data transmission,
- 3) the edit/correction cycle, and
- 4) processing after the edit cycle.

### Phase 1 -- Data Preparation

The most important phase of the System is the preparation of the data by the districts. Data collection and preparation are always crucial to the success of any data processing effort. It is essential that the vast majority of edit errors be resolved **before** the reporting formats are transmitted to the DOE.

To assist in the process of preparation, several tools are made available by EIAS/EDS:

- 1) data element definitions,
- 2) reporting formats,
- 3) descriptions of the individual edit checks that will be applied to the data submitted (See Appendices N, O and P), and
- 4) copies of the actual edit programs (written in ANSI standard COBOL LE) used by EDS to edit the reporting formats once they reach NWRDC. (Section B of Chapter 3 demonstrates how copies of these programs can be retrieved from NWRDC.)

By using these tools, you should be able to resolve most edit errors prior to data transmission.

### Phase 2 - Data Transmission

For the System to work within its time constraints, you must be able to send data to NWRDC on one day and pick up edit reports on the next. This capability is provided by the FIRN network. Districts will transmit their reporting formats one at a time using the network, creating datasets at NWRDC. That evening, the System will apply edit and validation tests to the reporting formats contained in the datasets and will create new datasets containing error reports and copies of the records that had errors. The next morning districts will use the network to download copies of these datasets so that they can be used locally. Note that it takes action on your part to download the reports; the System will not send them automatically.

### Phase 3 - The Edit/Correction Cycle

This phase overlaps phase 2 to a large extent since data transmission is an essential element of the edit cycle. In this phase, computer programs and procedures operating at NWRDC are used to edit and correct district data. Automated procedures detect the presence of the district reporting formats once they have been sent and run the appropriate programs to edit and validate the data. The error reports and error records these programs create may be used to help prepare sets of batch update records which will then be transmitted to NWRDC. The System will then detect the presence of these batch update datasets, edit and apply them to the information data base, and generate error reports when an update fails. The district may download these error reports and use them to create new sets of batch updates, continuing the process until all errors are corrected.

Also included in the edit/correction cycle is the provision of on-line programs that permit the districts to directly access their data records on the information data base for both browse and update purposes.

### Phase 4 - Processing after the Edit Cycle

**For Surveys 1-4, there will be a short moratorium for anywhere from 1-4 weeks on processing data after the edit cycle to allow the Office of Funding and Financial Reporting time to calculate FTE.** After this moratorium, districts will have one calendar year from the survey due date during which they may amend their records. To amend records, submit a set of batch update records (on-line updates are not permitted between surveys) just as during the edit/correction cycle. The updates will be applied to the information data base automatically once they pass the edit process.

While the districts will still have the full 9 months to amend their student and staff data, certain data applicable to funding must be corrected sooner or funding delays may occur. This important topic will be discussed later in this chapter, and detailed in Chapter 3.

Also included in post-survey processing is the generation, using the information data base, of the aggregate reports (See Appendix R, Final Reports). The DOE will also use the information data base to respond to ad hoc questions from the Legislature and to analyze and spot trends in Florida education. Audit and other monitoring reports will likewise be produced. Note: Districts must maintain local copies of records transmitted, pursuant to the DOE Audit Requirements document.

At the end of the 9 month period, the records will be archived.

## **B. Methods of Data Transmission**

When transmitting data to DOE, districts will use a number of transmission methodologies. Detailed instructions on each method will be given in Chapter 4 of this manual (Data Transfer and Retrieval).

Four methods of data transfer will be used by districts to send data to the DOE:

- 1) Districts connected to the FIRN network via TYMNET and districts connected as SNA subhosts will use the RJE (Remote Job Entry) data transfer method;
- 2) Districts connected directly to the SNA portion of FIRN will, for the most part, use FTP (the File Transfer Program) to transmit their data;
- 3) Some of the districts connected directly to the SNA portion of FIRN may also use the TRANSMIT/RECEIVE command of TSO/E to send their data;
- 4) Districts using NWRDC's data processing services will copy their reporting formats from one dataset to another.

## **C. Typical Survey Edit Cycle**

This section contains a description of the data transmission/edit/correction cycle during a typical survey. (Survey 2 is used as the example.) A graphic display of this process appears in Appendix C. This discussion will outline the transmission/edit/correction process. This outline will be developed, in detail, in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

### **Preparation for Survey Week**

- 1) Familiarize District Personnel

To ensure an easier transition, the district's school personnel should become involved in learning the System well in advance of the Survey Week. They should become familiar with the error reports so they can promptly respond to requests for corrected information during the edit cycle. The school personnel are, after all, the people who really know the facts underlying the data. Getting their informed cooperation is an important element in the preparation for any Survey Week.

## 2) Pre-edit District Data

In the weeks prior to a Survey Week, districts must begin getting their data into shape for submission to the DOE. The DPS-provided edit programs (or their equivalents) should be run against district data. The error reports should be distributed to the school personnel responsible for correctly entering the data. This marks the beginning of the error resolution process.

## 3) Test the FIRN Connection

During the two weeks prior to a Survey Week, conduct a test of the data transmission portion of the System. This will ensure that your district's communications link is in working order. It will also afford some timely data communications practice in performing a task essential to the success of the System. The details of the transmission test are set forth in Section B of Chapter 4. Each district must also designate a contact person to act as liaison with EIAS/EDS.

## Preparation of Files for Transmission

During the two-week period between the end of Survey Week and the date the reporting formats are due at NWRDC, districts must get their data as error free as possible. Any procedure likely to speed the correction process should be used in this effort. The more errors you correct at this level, the fewer you will need to correct after the information has been stored on the information data base.

After the "date certain" the district defines for the Survey Week (not applicable for Surveys 5 and 9), it is suggested that the district apply the DPS-provided edit programs against the State reporting formats extracted from the district's local files. Any error reports should be distributed to the personnel responsible for collecting the data for resolution of the errors reported. Corrections should be collected as quickly as possible and applied to the district's data files.

The edit programs should then be applied to the corrected files, repeating the correction cycle until the data files are free from errors or the transmission date arrives. Note that after the data reach the information data base, there will be a one-day turnaround between the submission of a set of batch updates and their application to the data base. Additional delays can be eliminated by correcting errors at the district level prior to transmission.

For more information on the edit specifications, edit programs, and other data preparation activities, please see Chapter 3.

## Transmission

### 1) Indicator Files

It is important to note that the district must electronically notify the System as the transmission of each file is completed. This is done by creating a special indicator file at NWRDC (see Chapter 4). As soon as the indicator file is created, the System will know that its corresponding reporting format is available for editing. An indicator file should be created as soon as each reporting format is transmitted.

### 2) Early Reporting

For districts which are ready to send their data before the Friday due date, the System will be ready to accommodate data transmissions beginning the Monday before the Friday due date. EIAS/EDS encourages districts to send their data early to avoid the rush.

## The Edit/Correction Process

Although the due date is generally the second Friday after the end of survey week, the state-level edit/correction process begins the second Monday after the end of Survey Week. (See Appendix B, Survey Dates). It should be noted that this edit cycle is limited to two weeks from due date for Student reporting formats during Surveys 2 and 3. The edit cycle is at least one week longer for Staff reporting formats on Surveys 2, 3 and 5 and Student formats in Surveys 1, 4, 5 and 9. (See Appendix B) Due to the importance of the funding process, however, the discussion here will be conducted in terms of a two-week cycle.

During this two-week period, districts are responsible for transmitting their data to NWRDC and correcting any errors in the data detected by the System edits. Failure to correct errors in certain important fields can have an impact on school district funding.

In general, districts will:

- 1) retrieve the error reports and
- 2) distribute the reports to personnel within the district who can resolve the error conditions that have been detected.

The System produces three kinds of reports from the data submitted by the districts. These are:

- 1) edit reports,
- 2) validation reports, and
- 3) exception reports.

To see what reports were created and the date of creation, the district can access the on-line student, staff or finance menu -- Edit Status.

### Edit Reports

Edit reports point out:

- 1) coding errors within individual fields in a record, (such as an invalid number (6) in the Survey Period field), and
- 2) inconsistencies between multiple fields in the same record (such as reporting an FEFP program number of 103--the Basic 9-12 program--for a student with a Grade Level Number of 03).

Versions of the programs that produce these edit reports are available to the districts by EIAS/EDS. Edit reports are produced the evening of the day on which the data arrive at NWRDC during state processing periods. They may be retrieved by districts the following morning. Student batch updates sent after the state processing date, are loaded on Wednesday evenings with reports available on Thursday morning.

### Validation Reports/Updates

Validation programs report discrepancies:

- 1) between multiple records from the same reporting format (such as the FTE Earned, Course total greater than .5000, and
- 2) between records from different reporting formats (such as disagreement between the Grade Level field on the Student Demographic reporting format, and the Grade Level field on the Student Course format).

Validation reports are produced after data are edited and stored on Tables at NWRDC. (See Appendix C). If a validation report depends on the presence of two files and only one file has reached NWRDC, the validation report will not be generated until the second file has been sent.

During the Edit/Correction Cycle the Validation for the Student Course format will list the records that will have data nulled at the end of the edit cycle if not corrected. At the end of the Edit/Correction Cycle the Validation will update the table, list the records with nulled data, and create an error record file.

### Exception Reports

Exception Reports are listings of records whose field values indicate that an error condition may exist. If, for example, a student's total Class Minutes Weekly exceeds 2,400 (i.e., 40 hours in a five-day period), it is likely that a mistake has occurred. This problem is reported in the Student Course Exception Report.

Exception reports are produced at the end of the edit cycle or on request. (See Appendix C, Schedule of Events)

If some of the files needed to produce an exception report have not been submitted to NWRDC, the exception report will not be generated for that district. Reports of all information data base records containing unresolved errors will accompany the exception reports.

Instructions on how to read and use edit, validation, exception, and remaining error reports appear in Chapter 5.

### Update Methods

Once the error correction personnel within the district (school level or otherwise) provide the corrections that must be made to the district data, one of the two update methods provided by the System will be used to make these amendments. Whether the district chooses to use batch update, on-line updates or a combination of the two methods, keep in mind that DOE Audit Requirements require a complete local audit trail of amendments to the district data be maintained.

### Batch Updates

To use the standard batch update process:

- 1) prepare a set of update records in the same format as the initial submission except for the Transaction Code field, and
- 2) transmit the updates to NWRDC through FIRN (NOTE: magnetic tapes are not permissible), and

- 3) notify the System that the update files have been submitted using the same method of notification (XMITFINI).

See Section C of Chapter 5 for a complete description of the batch update process. The System processes batch updates as often as possible and generates a report detailing any problems encountered. (See Appendix C, Schedule of Events) This report is available for retrieval the following morning. The batch update process operates on a format by format basis and may be used as many times as necessary.

### On-line Updates

Another method of updating the data base is to use the System's on-line capabilities. These are a set of interactive programs operating in the County CICS region at NWRDC. The on-line programs allow district staff to browse (look at) district data records. During the edit/correction cycle, corrections can be made using the update capabilities of the on-line programs. Districts are permitted to browse and update data for the current survey in a number of ways. A full description of the on-line process can be found in Section E of Chapter 5.

Audit trail records of on-line updates are available on request. (See Appendix C).

NOTE: The update features of the student, staff and finance on-line programs will only work during the edit cycle for the current survey and only on the current survey's data, with the exception of the Staff Demographic format which is updatable on-line year-round.

During the edit cycle, districts will use the System's error reports to detect errors, and its batch update and on-line update procedures to correct the errors that have been reported. Districts should be able to correct all their errors within the time limit if they use the:

- 1) full extent of the System's capabilities, and
- 2) attempt to resolve as many errors as possible during the two weeks before the reporting formats are due at NWRDC.

### Notification

At the conclusion of the edit cycle, a letter must be sent to EIAS/EDS. The letter must be signed by the superintendent and must:

- 1) certify that the data reported are accurate and complete, and

- 2) certify that all schools in the district are represented, and
- 3) certify that a local copy of the records transmitted and supporting documentation are being maintained as provided in the Local Record keeping section of the Standard Procedure for Reporting FTE Earned, Course and Other Issues Regarding the Florida Education Finance Program.
- 4) include the district's grand total unweighted FTE aggregated and rounded to two decimal places, as follows:
  - 1) at the school level
  - 2) Grade level
  - 3) FEFP program level
- 5) If updating was performed on previous surveys, the Unweighted FTE totals for those surveys must be appended also.

#### **D. Editing after the Edit Cycle**

##### Correction Policy

School Districts have 9 months from the due date of the survey data to correct any errors in the student and staff records they submit. A district that is late in reporting a correction in funding information will experience a corresponding delay in feeling the effects of the modification. If the error is reported after all funds have been distributed for the fiscal year, the delay could be a long one.

##### Alternate Counts

Special instructions will be furnished to districts which request alternate FTE Survey counts as permitted by Rule 6A-1.0451(2),FAC. Those districts should contact the EIAS/EDS Record Contact Person as soon as it is determined that the district will request an alternate count.

## Dropout Matching

This procedure assists school districts in locating students reported by their schools as dropouts. For each student considered to be a dropout, submit the Student Dropout/Match Information record format. These records are matched against the state Student Data Base which contains records of actively enrolled students submitted by all districts and the Community College Data Base which contains records of students enrolled in Community Colleges. Potential matches are reported back to districts for their use. The districts have the option of submitting the data through batch or may use the on-line menu to receive immediate information regarding matches. However, the on-line match does not include Community College enrollment.

See Appendix C in DOE Information Data Base Volume II: Appendices for dataset names.

## Reports/Files Available on Request

Refer to DOE Information Data Base Volume III: Reports for a list of reports that are available upon request. The reports and files available can also be viewed through the on-line system. Menu item RRPT displays report titles and allows selection of reports to be generated overnight.