



Center for Education Policy

**A Needs-Assessment Regarding the Collection and  
Use of Education Data in Massachusetts**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Study.** In the context of increased demand for education data for accountability and improvement purposes, the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) contracted with the UMass Amherst Center for Education Policy (CEP) to discuss data needs with the major data users at the state and local levels and report on their needs and suggestions for future data system improvements. During the winter and spring of 2004, CEP collected information from a variety of local and state-level data users, including: 14 interviews and group meetings with senior DOE staff; 11 group discussions with approximately 210 local educators; 181 written responses from group discussion participants; approximately 20 additional email, telephone, and in-person exchanges of information with local data users; and five interviews with education researchers.

**Types of Data.** A variety of types of information are collected under the broad category of “education data,” including student, teacher, organizational, program, and finance data. Discussions of data system needs and opportunities considered all of these information types.

**Uses of Data.** Education data is collected and exchanged for two key purposes by local districts and state administrators/policymakers: **mandatory reporting** and **data-driven decision-making**. A mutually beneficial state-local data system must serve both of these purposes, at both state and local levels.

**SHARED CHALLENGES OF STATE AND LOCAL STAFF.** Interestingly, many of the data challenges identified by data users in our study were similar at both the local and state levels.

**Multiple systems and processes.** At both the state and local levels, data processes have developed in a somewhat piecemeal fashion, in response to particular policy or program requirements. The result is an often-bewildering array of data systems, with overlapping uses and constituencies. Some datasets have begun “talking” to each other—for example SIMS and MCAS databases combine to produce AYP reports—but many continue operating largely separately and with varying platforms and levels of efficiency. In addition to the commonly shared data elements (e.g., SIMS, MCAS, finance), local districts and DOE program staff have a number of additional datasets (e.g., grading, scheduling, transportation, program participants) that they need for their own purposes and don’t want to lose to any comprehensive data system.

**Wide variation in data interest and expertise.** At both state and local levels, we found a division between those who “don’t know what they want” and those who “can’t get what they need.” Novice and advanced data users have different abilities and preferences for using data. Novice users want standard reports and presentation forms (graphs, charts) for certain predictable uses, and they want help formulating the kinds of questions to answer with data. Advanced users also want to be able to conduct customized analyses as questions come up. As one advanced user put it, “I want access to anything I submit, and to be able to combine it in useful ways.”

**Common data needs.** We did identify some data needs that crossed categories of expertise, at both state and local levels. In general, respondents wanted (1) better ways of locating existing data, through data “maps” or search engines, (2) user-friendly, web-based, menu-driven ways of

reporting and accessing information, and (3) access to individual student MCAS histories by SASID for appropriate users. We also heard significant discussion of NCLB's Teacher Quality provisions and the resultant need to pull together data on teacher qualifications and staffing patterns.

**Capacity constraints and reporting requirements limit data-driven decision-making.** The importance of capacity constraints on the data system cannot be emphasized too strongly. At the broadest level, recent budget cuts pit data system expenditures against other important uses of limited funds. Within the data sphere, the resource demands for data reporting and collection processes tend to crowd out capacity for analyzing and using data to improve decision-making and instruction. Therefore, in a time of limited data capacity, streamlining data collection processes to reduce the reporting burden is an important way of freeing up more resources for data-driven decision-making.

**Desire for professional development in data-driven decision making.** It was suggested that DOE could help both local and state staff to understand what they should know about their data. Topics would include: identifying key data elements, standard charts for key elements, menu-driven templates for formatting and analyzing data, and questions to use in thinking through the implications of data patterns. It was also suggested that DOE program staff could help related district program staff by identifying key data elements, models, and questions for their programs.

**Need to enlist the field in developing the state-local data system.** The importance of listening to and working with the field outside of DOE was an important message. One of the questions DOE staff had at the outset was whether local districts were interested in a state-provided system or whether they were more attached to their existing systems. We were surprised at the degree of interest in a state-provided system—with the caveat that a state system be phased in over time and designed/piloted in collaboration with local users. In addition, several interviewees suggested that DOE could expand its analytic capacity by developing a research agenda and enlisting outside researchers in carrying out this research agenda.

**LOCAL DATA THEMES.** In addition to the above, local findings include:

- **Multiple data uses and users.** Superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, IT staff, data entry staff, program staff, and teachers have different data needs and roles. Staffing of roles varies, due to budget cuts, expertise levels, district size, and local allocation decisions. As noted above, there is wide variation in expertise, from novice to advanced users.
- **Multiple data systems.** Districts use databases from multiple vendors for: student information, assessments, personnel, finance, special education, scheduling, grading, transportation, library, cafeteria, health, etc. Data are stored in databases, spreadsheets, and sometimes paper files. Any comprehensive data system would need to accommodate locally useful data elements as well as data required for DOE and NCLB.
- **Capacity/cost constraints.** In addition to budget cuts, Massachusetts districts' relatively small size makes funding professional information management staffs difficult. Maintaining software systems is costly and frustrating; vendors often lag behind state data requirements.
- **Less redundancy and more reporting help wanted.** Consolidation of October 1 and December 1 reports, elimination of March 1 report, improvement of the SIMS error correction process, and clarification of reporting calendar and guidelines were key requests.

- **Quality concerns.** A lack of common definitions of data elements, the qualifications of data entry staff, and the distance between data entry staff and the staff who understand how data are used were mentioned as reasons for data quality concerns. Data audits were suggested.
- **Interest in teacher data.** A number of local educators mentioned the teacher quality pressure they face under NCLB and expressed interest in teacher licensure and staffing information in a single database, analogous to SIMS.

**STATE DATA THEMES.** State findings include:

- **Staff want to find and access existing data more easily.** Because of difficulty finding and linking separate databases, DOE staff say they often have to build unique solutions to produce reports. This makes data-driven decision-making much more labor-intensive, requires expertise that many staff do not have, and adds to the burden of data personnel.
- **Empowering staff vs. “getting it right.”** Staff are very interested in having access to data analysis but ambivalent about doing it themselves due to lack of statistical expertise. As one put it, “we have generalists—we can do the first level, but you need some statistical expertise to do more in-depth analysis and be sure you’re doing it right.”
- **Data-analysis capacity limitations.** Data personnel are constantly faced with requests for information from federal education staff, state legislative and gubernatorial staff, the media, DOE administrators, DOE program staff, local educators and citizens, and education researchers. While there is a wealth of existing data, data staff have limited time to put the collected data into useful formats. “We don’t have time to do analysis and produce reports that we know would be useful,” one said.
- **Data-analysis partners could increase capacity.** Several interviewees suggested that DOE should develop a research agenda and a means of providing raw data to researchers, and then either fund or encourage outside funding of studies targeted at this research agenda. It was also suggested that a separate entity with DOE oversight could be established/contracted with to service external data requests.
- **Professional development in data use wanted.** First, some staff say that they would like training in/licenses for data manipulation software, such as Access or SPSS, although there is some disagreement on the priority of this, as opposed to simply making data access more web-based and menu-driven. Second, training is desired in how to use and manipulate datasets. Third, interviewees requested help really thinking through what data-driven decision-making means for their department.
- **District information wanted.** Some DOE staff who work with districts felt that other parts of the Department had information about “their” districts that they did not have. Suggestions included (1) a contact log system to keep track of who is working with each district and/or (2) designating education specialists as district liaisons, each responsible for knowing and being a point of contact for one or two districts.
- **Pre-population of program data-collection forms.** SIMS and MCAS data have been used to pre-populate data forms in several programs to reduce the burden on district program staff. DOE program staff report that this innovation has been very well-received.

## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful state-local data system must accommodate the fact that at both the state and local levels, data processes take place within very complex organizational contexts, face significant capacity constraints due to recent budget cuts, and are carried out by individuals with widely varying needs and abilities.

At the local level, DOE should work to:

1. **Reduce the reporting burden to maximize data quality and data usage** under existing capacity constraints, and
2. **Help local educators become better users of data.**

At the state level, DOE needs to

1. **Help DOE staff become better users of data,** and
2. **Deploy or delegate the appropriate capacity** to perform data collection, support, and analysis roles.

DOE needs to **work with local district staff, researchers and other data partners** to:

1. Develop a vision of what a true state-local data system should look like, and
2. Pilot, refine, and phase in operation of a true state-local data system.

Specific areas for work include:

### **Create and/or communicate resources for data reporting and data-driven decision-making.**

- Inventory all current data collections and data locations and create a data catalog or map.
- Communicate this data map to DOE staff and relevant local district staff.
- Install a better search engine and a data map on the DOE website.
- Post an annual timeline of all data collections on the website.
- Pull together a standard reporting guide, explaining in layman’s terms why the data are collected, what the annual data collection schedule is, and how each collected element is defined/counted.
- In each data collection communication, include a brief reminder on how the data are used and how they can be accessed for local decision-making.

### **Reduce reporting burden to maximize data quality and usage under capacity constraints.**

- Consider consolidating Oct 1 and Dec 1 reports, and consider whether Mar 1 report can be eliminated.
- Improve the SIMS error process—program a “summary” step into the submission/ validation process, so local staff can see and easily correct data themselves before final submission.
- Continue developing web-based, menu-driven processes for submitting data.
- Offer/publicize knowledgeable “helpdesk” capability prior to major reporting dates, to help districts with reporting questions, before they submit erroneous information.
- Analyze data-collection inventory to identify redundancies and particularly onerous reporting requirements.
- Where possible, reduce redundancies and onerous collection by eliminating collections, pre-populating forms and databases, and using sampling rather than full collection.

**Help state and local staff become better users of data.**

- Enable access to MCAS scores by SASID for DOE and local staff with appropriate clearance.
- Provide better MCAS graphics capability and ability to export to spreadsheet.
- Develop web-based, menu-driven process for accessing data in standard and custom formats. Facilitate connection of SIMS, MCAS, and financial data.
- Encourage DOE departments to identify key indicators, standard data charts, and questions to use in interpreting data implications.
- Identify what types of data analysis can be “do-it-yourself” and which require specialized statistical skills. Provide templates and training for “do-it-yourself” aspects and identify staffing and priorities for specialized analyses.
- Organize conferences and summer institutes for local data users to share models, learn about data resources, and receive professional development in data reporting and data use.
- Provide special sections on the website for particular district data roles, with types of information they will need—data submission deadlines, FAQs, types of data questions they should ask, models of data use, etc.
- Explore ability to provide useful data in time for local budget decisions—Dec/Jan ideal.
- Develop an Educator Information Management System to allow analysis of teacher quality, supply, and demand.

**Explore research/analysis partnerships to maximize DOE capacity.**

- Reduce demands on data staff by developing a research agenda and enlisting outside researchers in producing reports.
- Explore development of a separate research data center to facilitate education research and reduce the number of external information demands on data staff.
- Consider implementing occasional data audits, conducted by an accounting firm, to ensure data quality.

**Work with local educators to continue developing a mutually beneficial state-local data system.**

- Develop a local/state/researcher data advisory committee to “reality test” ideas for improving current reporting and data use methods.
- Support and work with pilot data warehouse efforts for groups of schools.
- Work toward a system that will work for all state and federal reporting requirements, while allowing districts and DOE programs to maintain other information they need.
- Be aware of the push for value-added assessment and the data management system it would require.
- Explore SIF options for linking databases at DOE and in districts.
- Explore open-source options for reducing software and hardware costs.



## **INTRODUCTION**

An important component of standards-based reform is the notion that appropriate educational data can be collected and used to improve the performance of the educational system by state policymakers and local practitioners. The Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA), the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and other education initiatives have greatly increased both the supply of and demand for data on the various inputs and outcomes of the educational system.

Over the past few years, significant progress has been made in upgrading the state's data management capacity to meet these challenges. A Student Information Management System (SIMS) has been implemented, streamlining collection of some state-mandated reports and improving the capacity to analyze the progress of various populations through the use of a new State-Assigned Student Identifier (SASID). This system allows the state, districts and schools to analyze MCAS data in a variety of new ways toward the goal of improving the educational outcomes for all students in the Commonwealth.

Additionally the reporting requirements of MERA and NCLB (e.g., educator data, school safety, staffing) combine to create more information at the state, district, school and student level than ever before. All of these data elements provide a potential foundation for in-depth analysis and understanding of the variables that support the education of students. A great deal of aggregate data are available to the public on the Department of Education (DOE)'s website, which has become a useful source for aggregate data in a wide range of areas.

Overall, however, the state-local data management system remains incomplete. At the state and local levels data are located in multiple, pre-existing databases, and additional data reporting demands have created a situation where databases have been "added-on" rather than integrated into a larger data management plan.

In the context of increased demand for education data for accountability and improvement purposes, the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) contracted with the UMass Amherst Center for Education Policy (CEP) to discuss data needs with the major data users at the state and local levels and report on their needs and suggestions for future data system improvements.

### **A NOTE ON THE SCOPE OF THIS PROJECT**

This project is not an exhaustive study of all the potential elements of a state-local data system. Given the resources and time available, it was envisioned and conducted as an attempt to identify the key issues facing local districts and state administrators as they seek to use data to improve education. As the methodology section below indicates, it is primarily a qualitative study. Thus, attempts to prioritize the issues raised should be done with caution. We believe that this is a useful initial step in identifying ways of improving the effectiveness of the state-local data relationship. However, specific data system implementation decisions should be guided by further research and feedback from the field.

## METHODOLOGY

During the winter and spring of 2004, CEP collected information from a variety of local and state-level data users regarding the collection and use of education data in the Commonwealth. The project consisted of the following components:

- **Initial planning with DOE data leaders.** CEP worked closely with DOE's Chief Information Officer, Information Services Manager, and their staff to develop project goals and data collection strategies and procedures.
- **Interviews with state-level data users.** CEP conducted 14 interviews and group meetings with senior DOE staff, primarily at the Associate Commissioner level but also including program and data staff with connections to local educators, to identify data needs and system-improvement opportunities from their state-level administrative perspective.
- **Interviews and focus groups with local-level data users.** CEP collected information from local data users in a variety of ways. Our primary method was to use group discussions or focus groups. We conducted 11 group discussions with approximately 210 local educators, including eight sessions at the DOE No Child Left Behind conferences in February and March. These sessions brought together a diverse cross-section of local perspectives, including those of superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, technology/data coordinators, curriculum directors, and program staff. Participants were also invited to submit answers to the focus group questions in written form, and 181 responses were collected at the end of the focus group sessions.

Additional focus groups were conducted with the executive board of Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, the Merrimack Valley Superintendents' Roundtable, and the Franklin-Hampshire Technology in Education Partnership. Individual responses were also solicited through email announcements from the DOE commissioner to superintendents and from the DOE information systems manager to local SIMS data coordinators. These resulted in approximately 20 email, telephone, and in-person exchanges of information with local data users.

- **Interviews with education researchers.** Although this was not a major focus of this study, CEP also conducted five interviews with people involved in education research. Organizations included the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC), the UMass Donahue Institute, the Harvard Civil Rights Project, the UMass Amherst Computer Science Department, and a data systems consultant.
- **Examination of models in other jurisdictions.** Again, although this was not a major focus of this study, CEP conducted a quick research scan to identify other states seen as being at the forefront of state-local education data system development. [this section forthcoming]

## THE GENERAL DATA CONTEXT

Driven by Massachusetts Education Reform (1993) and No Child Left Behind (2001), DOE and local districts are exchanging larger quantities of information about students, schools, and districts.

**Types of Data.** A variety of types of information are collected under the broad category of “education data.” A DOE respondent identified the following broad categorization of data domains, which usefully illustrates the range of elements to be considered in an education data system:

- **Student data:** demographics, assessments, schedules, and other attributes of individual students;
- **Teacher data:** licensure, “highly qualified” status, and other attributes of individual teachers;
- **Organizational data:** other organizational data on how staff and students are arranged in education institutions;
- **Program data:** information on participation, outcomes, and other aspects of programs targeting subsets of the student population, such as special education, vocational education, and grant-funded activities; and
- **Finance data:** information on costs and expenditures across the various categories of educational enterprise.

**Uses of Data.** Education data is collected and exchanged for two key purposes by local districts and state administrators/policymakers:

- **Reporting/Accountability:** Funding and regulatory agencies require data to fulfill legal reporting requirements, to assess regulatory compliance, and to generally hold institutions accountable for funding usage and learning outcomes.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Local educators and state administrators/policymakers can analyze data to inform decisions about how best to improve schools.

These two types of data applications can obviously overlap, since required reporting elements can also be greatly useful in data-driven decision-making. But they also differ in a way that illustrates the dual roles of regulation and technical assistance borne by the state Department of Education.

On the one hand, mandatory reporting can be seen as a burden placed by the state on local educators. On the other hand, providing useful data for decision-making can be seen as a support. This dual relationship between local educators and DOE greatly affects the state-local data exchange process, and it must be understood and managed carefully if a mutually beneficial data system is to be developed and sustained.

Furthermore, at both the state and local levels, data processes take place within very complex organizational contexts, face capacity constraints due to recent budget cuts, and are carried out by many different individuals with widely varying needs and abilities. Whatever data solutions the state chooses to pursue, it will also need to recognize and accommodate this context of complexity, capacity, and variability.



## LOCAL DATA NEEDS AND SUGGESTIONS

Our assessment of local data needs focused on three major questions (see Appendix for local-level protocol):

- What do you want or need to be able to do with data?
- What are the barriers preventing you from doing what you want with data?
- What big or small things could the Department do to help you?

We also asked state-level and other interviewees about their perceptions of local needs and challenges (see Appendix for state-level protocol). In general, these perspectives agreed with the local perspectives. In cases where perspectives on local-level needs differed between local and state-level interviewees, these differences are identified in the text below.

In this section, major themes regarding data needs are presented first, followed by a collection of specific suggestions for improvement of the system.

### THE LOCAL DATA SITUATION IS COMPLEX

As briefly mentioned above, data reporting and data-driven decision making at the local level take place within a complicated organizational setting. There are a number of dimensions to this complexity:

**Multiple data uses and users.** Local districts use, or have the potential to use, data in a variety of ways. Broadly, data may be used for state and federal reporting, district or school decision-making, or classroom instructional improvement. More specifically, data uses include mandatory reporting, planning, managing day-to-day operations, public relations, evaluating student and teacher performance, assessing costs and benefits of programs, and tracking trends.

Different users have particular needs for data. Superintendents are interested in overall planning and mandated reporting, but they also have a primary interest in marshalling data in presentation formats to help “sell” their budgets to their towns or cities. Principals may use data for teacher evaluation and site-based management. Curriculum directors are interested in evaluating curriculum effectiveness and in targeting appropriate professional development. Program staff have an interest in accessing data for grant proposals and in using data to target appropriate interventions and evaluate/improve program delivery. Classroom teachers may use data to improve their ability to personalize instruction and improve student achievement.

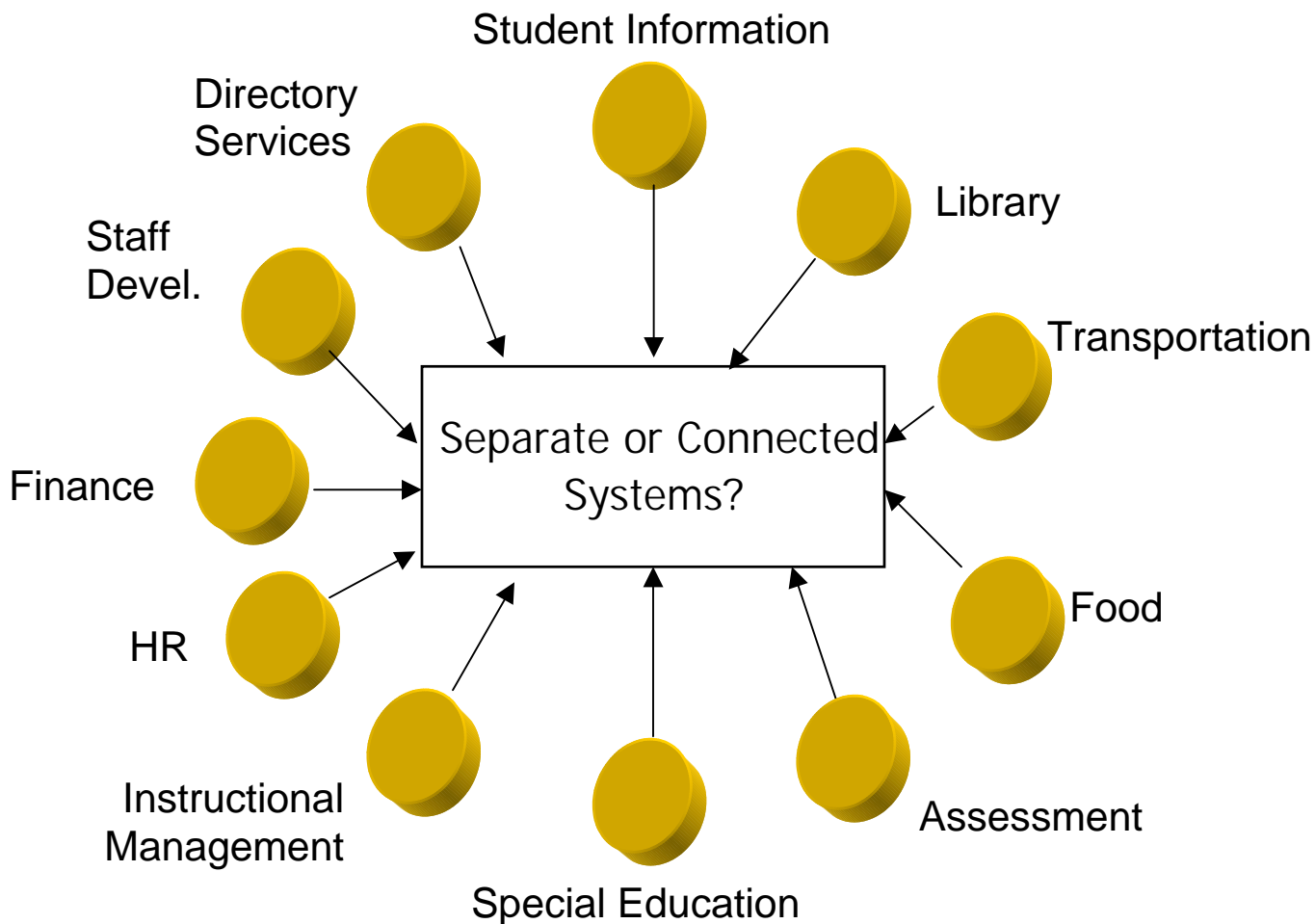
**Multiple data systems.** With multiple data users, multiple buildings, and multiple needs, school districts have developed an often bewildering array of data systems. According to a recent report, “Districts have accumulated software unsystematically in a piecemeal approach. Software was purchased in response to a specific need or requirement, not as part of a strategic rethinking of the manner in which information is collected, used, and reported.”<sup>1</sup> Databases support a variety of purposes, including: assessments, finance, personnel, special education,

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<sup>1</sup> Gallagher, Daniel J., *Information Management: Improving Student Outcomes Through Data Driven Decision-Making* (2004: Massachusetts Technology Solutions, Inc.), p.3.

scheduling, grading, transportation, custody, library, cafeteria, school nurse services, and so on. Some of these are electronic databases, provided by perhaps 13 different software vendors. Some may still be in paper files. Figure 1 and Table 1 (later in this report) illustrate this data diversity challenge.

**Figure 1: School District Data Sources**



Source: Adapted from materials by Bill Dornbusch, Northampton Public Schools

A recent report<sup>2</sup> by the technology directors of the TEC and ACCEPT Collaborative member districts identified a wide variety of different software packages being used in eight different data categories in 19 suburban Boston districts. These include:

- **Student Information:** PowerSchool (4), iPass (3), StarBase (3), Rediker (2), Win/MacSchool (2), FPS SQL, MMS, Nordex, SASIxp, Tenex.
- **IEP:** eSPED (9), Eutactics (6), Beacon, Easy IEP, FPS SQL, Custom.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- **Finance:** Munis (5), Town (3), IMG FIPS (2), MicroBudget (2), Harpers, HTE, KVS, Tenex, Unifund, Custom.
- **Library:** Sagebrush (11), Follett (6), Athena, Dynex.
- **Health:** Health Office (5), SNAP (5), iPass, PowerSchool, SASIxp, Student Health Manager, WinSchool, Filemaker Custom.
- **HR:** Munis (3), Excel (2), Abacus, Access, Millenium, SchoolBase, Unifund, Custom.
- **Transportation:** Transfinder (2), Edulog, Starbase, VersaTrans.
- **Cafeteria:** WinSnap (2), Horizon, PCS.

A number of districts and software vendors around the country have been working to develop a way of getting these disparate databases to “talk” to each other as part of a larger, integrated network. SIF, the Schools’ Interoperability Framework, has been adopted by many major software vendors, enabling users to designate one database as the authoritative database and then have information entered into that database populate relevant fields in other databases in the system, thus reducing duplication of effort and information conflicts. SIF is still a relatively new phenomenon, but proponents feel strongly that it offers significant promise.<sup>3</sup>

**Capacity constraints.** Increased demands for data collection, management and analysis are occurring in a climate of severe capacity constraints in most districts. State budget cuts and rising fixed costs over the past few years have led to painful budget cuts, and many districts have had to choose between data capacity and teacher layoffs. As one respondent put it, “In a small system, there’s no data manager. To add one when we’re cutting teachers is politically absurd. Not to do it is educationally absurd—plus it gets us in hot water with DOE.”

As the TEC/ACCEPT report<sup>4</sup> notes, “the form of local government in Massachusetts is a major factor in the ability of school districts to create information management and analysis staffs. The small school districts in Massachusetts are disadvantaged relative to the county systems found throughout the country that can bring their mass to bear in creating professional information management staffs.” As a result, district data efforts are often under-staffed and under-funded, with administrators often wearing multiple hats, including that of data manager. This, in turn, leads to the most-mentioned constraint: lack of time. Several local respondents noted that DOE could help retain some local capacity by articulating the need for data roles in local schools, as well as by helping to ensure that data processes are as efficient as possible.

**Costs.** The costs of maintaining and updating data software systems represent a significant capacity barrier to data-driven decision-making. One interviewee stated, “Districts are paying huge amounts of money for systems that they basically loathe. And as data requirements change, their vendors may or may not update their systems to accommodate those changes.” Changing systems or vendors costs districts more money. One tech director said, “I spent \$80,000 on a data system software enhancement, and as I was installing it they pulled the certification—I bought complete vaporware. I’m tired of changing vendors every two years.” One respondent spoke for many when he asked, “Can we please stop changing everything?”

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on SIF, see <http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/articleprintversion.cfm?aid=3949>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.6.

Several interviewees discussed the general issue of district spending on computer infrastructure—computers, software licenses, anti-virus security, etc.—and suggested that open-source options such as server-terminal setups and open-source operating systems and software may offer significant cost reductions in the near future. It was noted, however, that current DOE Technology Plan guidelines may provide a disincentive to these open-source efforts, particularly in the system for rating “modern computers” (Type A or B), which do not accommodate server-terminal setups. DOE may wish to support or encourage efforts to share models and conduct research on potential cost savings through open-source options.

**Concerns about data quality.** A number of respondents spoke about the danger of “garbage in, garbage out” in terms of data quality. A lack of commonly understood definitions of data elements, the distance between staff with data management skills and the practitioners who understand what the data mean, the distance between data entry staff and the staff who understand how data are used, qualifications/training of data entry staff, and technological challenges were mentioned as reasons for data quality concerns.

“We are so far from getting anything out of a data warehouse,” one district consultant said. “We have no standard definitions, different grading patterns in elementary, middle, and high school, our inputting of grades is not consistent, teacher information is missing—there’s no way to get actionable results!” And the TEC/ACCEPT report notes that “personnel now performing these data roles are not necessarily suited to the task by skill set or temperament. People who were hired 10, 15, 20, or even 30 years ago as clerks or receptionists for the qualifications they brought to past challenges are not necessarily suited to the demands of a digital relational database environment.” Interviews with staff who have begun piloting a regional data warehouse in Connecticut indicated that data discovery and cleaning for the warehouse was by far the most time-consuming part of the process.

Several state-level interviewees felt that data quality has been improving as local people see that it is being used to affect their financial support. Several others suggested that it could be improved further by conducting occasional data audits. It was suggested that an accounting firm could be hired to select groups of students in perhaps three or four programs a year and see if the reporting was accurate.

**Additional local data.** A large number of local district people noted that the data wanted by state and federal agencies are only a subset of the data that are needed at the local level to keep schools running. They were particularly interested in making sure that any future data systems would be flexible enough to integrate locally useful data as well as data required for DOE and NCLB. Table 1 on the following page illustrates the two types of data for one average-sized district. The “owner” column indicates the person responsible for ensuring the data is entered. Data entry may be completed by the “owner” or a clerk. Items not marked with an asterisk are local data elements used by the schools but not required by DOE or NCLB.

**Table 1: Types and Locations of District Data for One District**

<b>Student Information</b>			
<b>NCLB DOE</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Source Location/System</b>	<b>"Owner"</b>
*	Primary Student Information	Starbase	Principals & School Secretaries
	Ancillary Student Information	Cumulative Folders	Principals, School Secretaries & Teachers
	Student Health Information	Health Master	Health Director & School Nurses
*	Food Service/F&R meal eligibility	Excel	Food Service Director
	Busing (routes & student fees)	Versitrans	Transportation Supervisor
*	Special Education (IEP)	Eutactics	SPED Dept.
*	TBE & ESL Information	Excel	SPED Dept.
*	Title I Information	Paper	Principals / Title I Teachers
*	504 Information	Paper/Excel	SPED Dept.
*	Suspension Information	Paper (Starbase @ H.S.)	Principals & School Secretaries
*	Standardized Assessments (MCAS/IOWA, etc)	Testwiz, Access, Excel	Technology Director
*	Graduation & Drop-out Rates	Paper/Excel	H.S. Principal
	SAT/PSAT Data	Paper/Excel	H.S. Guidance
	Curriculum/Instructional Management	Paper/Word Documents	Principals/Department chairs
*	School Choice Information	Paper	Central Office
	Library System	Winnebago (H.S. & M.S)	Library Dept. Head
<b>Staff Information (Teachers &amp; Aids)</b>			
<b>NCLB DOE</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Source Location/System</b>	<b>"Owner"</b>
*	Primary Staff Information (seniority and certification)	Excel/Access	City H.R. Dept
*	Staff Professional Qualification	Paper	Central Office
*	Teacher Professional Activities	Paper	Principals & School Secretaries/Teachers
<b>Financial Information</b>			
<b>NCLB DOE</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Source Location/System</b>	<b>"Owner"</b>
*	Primary Financial Information	MUNIS	City Mayor/City Auditor

\* Indicates data from these sources required for NCLB and DOE reporting

Source: Bill Dornbusch, Northampton Public Schools

**Concerns about teacher data.** A number of local educators mentioned the teacher quality pressure they face under NCLB and noted the difficulty they face in assembling the required information. As one respondent wrote, “The report that is most problematic for our district has always been the School Staffing Report. We are a small district that does not have a Personnel Director and we try to keep our certification lists current and updated, which is more important with the district report card requirement for Title I schools. However, the staffing report changes each year, which makes it difficult; the instructions are not really clearly written; and it would be helpful to have a list from the state on what the current status of certifications are for our district. The state clearly must have that information because that is where people receive and renew their licenses. Why not tabulate that information and return it to the districts, especially in time for the school staffing report? It seems as if the School Staffing Report and the Licensing Data should be combined somehow.”

A number of focus group respondents expressed interest in teacher licensure and staffing information in a single database, analogous to SIMS. They also voiced concern about having to declare a significant number of teachers “not highly qualified” because their certification was pending for long periods of time due to a backlog at the DOE.

#### **LOCAL DATA NEEDS AND ABILITIES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY**

Our research identified a wide variety of interest and ability regarding data use by local educators.

**Lack of “data culture.”** Several respondents noted that educators have traditionally been “people and paper” types, not “data and technology” types. Therefore, developing a system for using data to improve procedures may be daunting to many educators. As one interviewee put it, “These are statisticians’ and economists’ skills. People who aren’t data junkies will freak out at too many numbers at first—lots of people don’t balance their checkbooks!”

**Some don’t know what they want; others can’t get what they need.** Respondents varied greatly in the types of data support that they wanted from DOE. Some superintendents and technology directors indicated that they have particular types of data analyses that they would like to be able to conduct, but they find it difficult to access and manipulate the necessary data. One superintendent provided examples of questions he would like to be able to answer: “Is my high school attendance too low (compared to other similar high schools)? How do my MCAS scores stack up to other similar districts’? How should we spend professional development dollars--do master’s degrees in teachers produce better achievement in kids? Who are my high-achieving Latino kids, and what’s different about them than underachieving peers? Should we fund after-school programs? His major concern was getting access to the data that would enable him to conduct these types of analyses.

At the other end of the spectrum, a number of respondents indicated that local educators need more help in formulating the kinds of questions that they can answer with data, and that time constraints made it difficult for them to figure out the questions they need to ask and the technologies they need to answer them. One local respondent identified the following barriers to

using data, “Lack of time. Lack of knowing what is possible. Sometimes I don’t know what question to ask about doing this or that because I can’t imagine what I don’t know about!”

In the course of our interviews, several Massachusetts districts were identified as leaders in data management or data-driven decision-making. Further research is needed to confirm the quality and particular strengths of these efforts. Districts mentioned included: Worcester, Boston (especially for “My BPS,” which helps teachers use data), Falmouth, Hudson, Littleton, and a consortium of western Massachusetts districts called the Technology in Education Partnership.

**Large and small districts have different challenges.** A number of respondents indicated that while both large and small districts face data challenges, the types of challenges differ somewhat. Respondents from large districts were more likely to mention problems with timelines for producing and correcting large amounts of data. They also spoke of data definition and quality issues being magnified by the scale of data entry and the numbers of data clerks of varying ability levels. Respondents from smaller districts noted the capacity constraints described earlier. Some state interviewees suggested that data demands are particularly burdensome on small, one or two-school districts, vocational schools, and charter schools, and that some way of offering them support should be found.

#### **LOCAL EDUCATORS AS CONSUMERS, NOT JUST PROVIDERS, OF DATA**

Both state and local respondents noted the importance of helping local educators become more savvy users of education data.

**Data consumers provide better quality data.** As a number of respondents noted, district staff have begun providing better quality data in those cases where they recognize that they will be getting it back and using it for decision-making purposes. Some also noted increased attention to “getting the data right” when state funding was linked to the data provided (e.g., Chapter 70 based on SIMS data), although several warned that such linkages also can invite “shaping” of the data to in the direction that will increase reimbursement.

**Helping local educators see how data can be useful.** It was suggested that DOE could do more to help districts understand what they should know about their data and to put in place a series of activities to get them there. These would include: identifying key data elements, standard charts for key elements, menu-driven templates for formatting and analyzing data, and questions to use in thinking through the implications of data patterns. Summer institutes on using data for administrators and for curriculum teams including teachers were mentioned.

**Targeting relevant data to particular types of users or “owners”.** As noted above, superintendents, principals, program staff, curriculum directors, and teachers have different needs, uses, and responsibilities for data. A number of respondents suggested that DOE could organize data and data collection processes by user or “owner” category. For example, if there are data that need to be reported by school, the information, definitions, procedures, and submission deadlines would all appear on the “principal’s notification page.” The same would be true for superintendents, program coordinators, etc... It was also suggested that DOE program staff in each department could help related district program staff by identifying key data

elements that impact their programs, providing models of charts and tables for analysis/presentation, and identifying key questions to answer with data.

**Enabling combination of different types of data.** Many of the types of questions local administrators want to answer involve combinations of, for example, student, teacher, and financial data. The ability to combine different types of data in interesting ways and to compare these combinations across similar districts was a common theme.

**Need to get input to local budgets by December/January.** Several respondents noted that the most useful time to be making data-based decisions is before the local budget is completed. The cutoff time for useful information for the following school year budget was identified as December/January.

## **PEOPLE-FRIENDLY DATA PROCESSES**

As part of helping local educators become better providers and consumers of education data, a number of respondents spoke of the need for data processes to be as clear and streamlined for average users as possible.

**Eliminating redundant reporting requests.** A number of local respondents spoke of their frustration in reporting the same information to several different departments at DOE. Pre-population of program reporting forms with already-collected SIMS data was appreciated. Respondents also wondered about the multiple collections of similar data on October 1, December 1, March 1, and end-of-year. Respondents said that combining or eliminating any of these collections would be a huge relief to capacity-strapped data personnel; some said that fewer collections would yield higher quality data.

**Sufficient lead-time for data requests.** Numerous respondents complained that they did not have enough lead-time to prepare for new data reporting regulations. “It seems like we are always playing ‘catch up,’” said one respondent. New data requirements often mean working with software vendors to update databases, and respondents complained that this was difficult without significant lead-time.

**Web-based, menu-driven processes for submitting and accessing data.** A number of respondents spoke of the challenge of retaining data-related skills that are infrequently used. As one respondent put it, “Don’t assume if I learned it and used it once a year ago, I still know it.” Web-based, menu-driven data submission and access were seen by many as the best answer for this problem. One interviewee also suggested that web-based self-training modules might be created to help data users.

**Standard reporting guide.** Several respondents noted that it would be useful to have a guide to the various data collections, explaining in layman’s terms why the data are collected, what the annual data collection schedule is, and how each collected element is defined/counted.

**Improve process for making data corrections.** A significant number of respondents saw the SIMS error correction process as being unnecessarily unwieldy and time-consuming. Staff from larger districts in particular complained about the Quick Validate process and requested a way of getting a complete error list at the time of initial submission. They also suggested a way of limiting these errors would be for those reporting the data to have the ability to view a summary of what was submitted to double check the data entry prior to uploading the data to the DOE.

**Help locating data.** Respondents noted that it was often difficult to find existing data on the DOE website. Suggestions included both a “map” of where different data sources are located and a better search engine for the site.

**Access to all data submitted, in standard and customized ways.** Beginner data users want to be able to use the data they submit in useful presentation formats for a variety of standard purposes. Advanced users want to be able to conduct ad hoc analyses as questions come up. As one superintendent put it, “I want access to anything I submit, and to be able to combine it in useful ways.” The suggested solutions were wide ranging and often dependent upon the skills of the interviewee. Basically, interviewees expressed a need for local users to have access to raw data for the advanced users to conduct “ad hoc” analyses, as well as a need for common, basic programs or “filters” that can work from this raw data and perform standard reports and presentation forms (graphs, charts) so that beginner users are able to accomplish simple tasks without needing the skills of a data analyst. As mentioned above, standard reports for superintendents, principals, teachers, and others would be useful.

**Access to individual MCAS data on newly enrolled students and to students’ historical data more generally.** Numerous respondents spoke of their difficulty getting MCAS data on students who have moved into a district or enrolled in a regional vocational school. Many were also interested in tracking trends and thus were interested in accessing historical data.

## **INTEREST IN STATE PROVIDING SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR ALL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

One of the questions DOE staff had at the outset was whether local districts were interested in a state-provided system or whether they were more attached to their existing system. We were surprised at the degree of interest in a state-provided system, with the caveat that a state-system be phased in over time and designed in collaboration with local users. Respondents noted the above-mentioned problems of multiple reporting requirements and the cost and redundancy of multiple data systems.

For these reasons, they were interested in a single platform that would meet all reporting needs (federal, state, finance, discipline, special education, etc.). They noted that the existing local systems will eventually need to be updated or replaced, which provides an opportunity to move to a state-endorsed system. They identified benefits in sharing and comparing data with other districts via a common platform. And they liked the idea of a state system that would be automatically updated to accommodate changing reporting needs. However, they also noted that they did not want to lose local data elements that are not reported to DOE, so a state-provided system would need to accommodate local data.

## **VOICES FROM THE FIELD: SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

In this section we have pulled together a variety of specific suggestions for improving the local data experience that were offered in the course of our research. These are primarily taken from the NCLB focus groups' written answers to the question "What big or small things could DOE do to help you?" with some additional comments received via email or in interviews also included. (For the full notes from the NCLB focus groups, see Appendix.) These have been winnowed and roughly grouped thematically, but we have chosen to retain the language of the comments, to give DOE a sense of the voices of the field.

### ***Reporting***

#### **Reduce redundancy of reporting requirements**

- Make reductions or minimize redundancy in collection
- Have all the departments of DOE get together and review what information they are requesting and then try to consolidate so no departments are requesting similar information
- Design software to eliminate duplication of data entry whenever possible

#### **Clarify when, how, and why data must be reported**

- Publish a timeline for information requirements
- Make it clear what needs to be collected and in what form
- Make the process much simpler – show all the reports needed in one place
- A clearly printed or web page timeline of all DOE reports, not just the web-based, with dates of submission deadlines
- Because the issue of who is collecting, reporting and interpreting data, the small thing that would help would be to list all reporting requirements and deadlines in one place on the DOE website with links to the specific areas. Right now small districts must check finance, SPED, NCLB, etc. locations on the website to get information.
- Reinforce the requirement of why these data are being collected
- In DOE data requests, they should articulate why they need it and how districts can access and use it once it's collected
- When Doe develops a new program, they should define the data requirements up front—put the data piece in the RFP
- Provide necessary time to data people to collect, input and verify information prior to submission
- Have scheduled times for changes in reporting requirements—make it predictable

#### **Consider consolidating Oct 1 and Dec 1 reports, and eliminating Mar 1 report**

- Why is Dec. SPED SIMS report requested when this info is already requested in Oct 1 SIMS report?
- Collapse Oct 1 and Dec 1 reports into one
- If we could do November 1 and end-of-year reports only, that would really help, and get you better data. We're running so hard now to get data, we're not giving good data—spending 2-3 weeks after the fact to try to fix it rather than checking before we send it in—I'm spending all my time correcting mistakes.

#### **Fix inefficiencies in the error correction/submission process**

- Give a complete error list during the Quick Validate process, so we could know all our errors and have more time to research and correct them
- Allow quarterly updates--edits and reviews of data

### **More support wanted in submitting data**

- Assign DOE people to districts, so we have someone who knows the district when we call
- More DOE telephone support
- During high time of data collection (just before deadlines) have knowledgeable people to call—like Christmas help
- Have additional field support
- Either run workshops or provide well-detailed instructions on completing all DOE reports

### **Smartforms don't always lead to electronic data collection**

- Continue to expand the DOE SIMS downloads for reporting for the district rather than “Smartforms” which tend to be distributed in the district for manual entry
- Smart Forms are smart for DOE, not for us—you still have to print out some reports and enter the data by hand

### **Recognize the different challenges of small and large districts**

- Realize the budgetary constraints of regional/smaller districts
- Consider the needs of large school systems when making data requests

### **Other reporting suggestions**

- Need to be able to do a search for a student by last name and by SASID, to correct errors and to check to see where school choice students are, to ensure correct payment
- On mid-cycle and final reports (accountability), include a column under improvement that states what each school's target actually is --- don't just give CPE “change” and yes/no
- Start listing 504 & IEP as a “D” code on MCAS reports – on AYP – subgroup SPED is only IEP students
- Per Pupil expenditure is always a mystery – Can we have a clear direction, explanation of the process?
- Don't use case-sensitive forms!
- Use local id's as well as SASID, 2-way exchange of data
- Explain formulas – i.e. how is dropout rate determined – what baselines, etc... We see the end product posted, but are not always clear on how it was calculated

### ***Data-Driven Decision-Making***

#### **Examples wanted**

- Big picture goals of what we need
- Provide best practices from other districts
- Exemplars of how to make data driven decisions
- Supply templates and instructions
- Making actual templates for us is a step in the right direction
- Create templates of how districts could use this. We are all doing the same thing, so there must be a value to seeing some similar kinds of analysis.
- Providing proven methodologies
- Best practices for utilizing the information we already have
- Help coordinate, disseminate ways in which some districts might be using data effectively

#### **Access to own data desired, in standard and customizable formats**

- Give us easy access to our own reported data – entered by the one overburdened clerk who works part-time
- Provide/share information on our district (School and District profiles are useful)
- Standard reports
- Automate some of the NCLB computations for schools and subgroups
- Generate clear reports by grade, subgroups, schools, district
- I want access to anything I submit, to play it off something else—finance, staffing, attendance, assessments
- Big thing – access to state data to perform a query with our own specific constraints

- It would be very helpful if all the data (SIMS, MCAS, LEP testing, Reading First, etc.) could be linked and the districts provided with front-end access for analysis at the district level
- Linking SIMS with MCAS scores
- Linking fiscal end-of-year report to SIMS
- I want to compare myself to similar districts/communities, look at staffing patterns, instructional costs, etc.
- Provide a tool to allow easy linking of data sources that would provide the statistics. Provide summary data from other districts and state averages
- Enable districts to enter additional data that could be linked with state's data
- Give us a quarterly list of teacher licensure results
- Let us know after each SIMS report how many kids are being sent to the district through school choice—it's hard for districts to track down themselves
- Connect data collected for Perkins grant/career education to SIMS
- Hard to get a handle on school discipline numbers—OCR database doesn't agree with DOE website

### **Make it easier to find existing data**

- Make the website easier to use
- Could use a data catalog for the website—there's so much there, it's hard to tell what's there
- Special links for supts and principals (audience)

### **Training on data-driven decision-making wanted**

- Provide training of use of data on a district level
- Provide a full day training on technology tools and use
- Training on the use of templates and how to import/export at school level
- Offer professional development on interpreting data
- What to do with trends and weakness from student data
- Substantial training in use of tools and data – through to action planning to use the data
- Training of administrators in data collection and analyses, such as Root Causes and Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) is needed and would be very beneficial
- Help data managers and assessment/evaluation specialists connect with each other more regularly
- Provide consultants to work with schools on “data analysis” and “interpretation of instruction”
- The DOE may be able to send someone out to the schools or districts to train a person on how to utilize the data, then share that with the school or district
- DOE might want to require teacher prep or professional development to include training in use of data

### **Student mobility requires access to current and historical student records**

- Provide repository of information where districts could look up student information, especially MCAS scores
- Allow districts to electronically access data for students moving into the system
- Make the data collected from MCAS taken in other districts available
- My Tech School pulls kids from 7 different school systems. We should be able to access and import their student records directly to our student database, as well as into DOE sponsored software such as Test Wiz
- Create a student history repository which tracks MCAS scores and allows districts to input other tests
- It would be nice to have older data available electronically
- Create a program for schools to use to enter individual student data beginning in the early years

### **Interest in a teacher database**

- Help creating a common database to capture teacher quality and status
- Suggest/provide software that will be applicable to DSSR “District School Staffing” Report
- Teachers are being reported as not highly qualified because the DOE is backed up with licensing teachers

### **Ability to download data in spreadsheet form would be useful**

- Provide more flexible output from Test Wiz
- Love TestWiz, but it would be easier if you could extract data into a spreadsheet
- How to manipulate CSU files into Excel, Access, SPSS, etc...
- Make data more available for formatting
- MCAS scores that are distributed through the download box are difficult to deal with and extract data from

### **Advocacy/support for staffing for data collection and analysis wanted**

- Make staffing recommendations
- Suggest a staffing structure to all cities and towns for the correct accumulation of data
- More emphasis to superintendents on working on who is responsible for accurate data collection--this is more than just a data entry duty. Understanding the SIMS elements and definitions requires training, time...
- Requirements for data for public understanding of funding/staffing requirements
- Provide grant money for people/roles to develop data management information processing capacity

### ***Both/Other***

#### **Appreciation for help from DOE data staff**

- I am happy to note that the Department has become very accessible when I have data needs or questions
- DOE has been very helpful on the straight SIMS data collection – Joanne Brady in particular
- Continue with the excellent support, excellent communication, clear presentations, and respectful reminders
- Maureen Lovett and Maureen Chew—really nice, responsive. Also Judy Chan-Li and Christine Texiera.
- DOE is doing an exceptional job! The SIMS process has helped us to establish consistency within our own district

#### **Interest in data management software, SIF, data warehouse**

- Single software solution
- DOE should provide districts with a data management system
- Given changes already and in the future data collection/reporting, and given reduced district resources providing a unified data collection management system for districts would save districts the costs for upgrades.
- Come up with what they want, give us a database that we can send it in, then the state will have it
- Adopt SIF – state RFR
- Adopt a SIF standard for data programs
- Offer QSP (Quality School Portfolio, free open-source, web-based decision support tool) to all schools
- Adopt a data warehouse – state RFP
- Allow districts to add their own custom data to warehouse
- Organize a project that develops a user-friendly database warehouse with shared servers across multiple school districts
- Assist with adequate funding to update technology (hardware and software)
- The state could buy a wonderful system that's compatible with SIMS—right now, districts are paying tens of thousands of dollars to feed into SIMS
- Ultimately, if DOE could be part of a data warehouse with the districts and just go and get the data when they needed it, that would be awesome

#### **Other issues**

- Tell the vendors of software when SIMS changes
- Access to security portal for data managers
- Be aware that not all districts use WINDOWS
- Get out into schools before the rules are made to see what the landscape is really like



## STATE-LEVEL DATA NEEDS AND SUGGESTIONS

Our interviews with DOE staff included the following questions:

- What are the main issues you face in your work, in terms of collecting and using education data for decision-making?
- Based on your needs and those of other state-level users, what are the key types of data we should be collecting and using at the state level to improve decision-making?
- What are the most useful aspects of current data practices, from your perspective?
- What are the most challenging aspects of current data practices?
- Do you feel that you have adequate access to existing data resources?
- Let's say you were made the omnipotent education data czar. What would you do to improve the collection and use of education data for state and local users?
- Are there any "quick fixes" or small changes you can think of that might improve a certain part of the data system?

In this section, we summarize the major themes that emerged from these interviews regarding ways of improving data use at the state level. Where relevant, we have also included ideas and suggestions from the researchers we interviewed, and from the local district respondents.

As with local districts, DOE needs for information have grown. These demands lead to increasing concern about how to find data, how to use data, how to store data, and how to respond to both internal and external demands.

### DATA ACCESS

**“Data silos”—disconnected data.** Many groups inside the Department use data in different ways, and many keep their own sets of data. A partial list of DOE databases includes the following:

- SIMS—student demographic data
- MCAS—student assessment data
- ELAR—teacher licensure data
- Financial files—foundation and end-of-year
- Grants database—financial aspects of grant programs
- Individual program databases—e.g., vocational education, after-school programs
- Directory Administration—district contact information, security roles for data access, etc.
- Smart ABE—adult basic education data
- Charter Schools – collection of information on charter schools within Massachusetts
- MARS—internal state accounting system

Some of these have begun “talking” to each other—for example, SIMS and MCAS databases combine to produce AYP reports—but many continue operating largely separately and with varying platforms and levels of technological efficiency. “We need to integrate more,” one interviewee said. “Different parts of districts send data to different parts of DOE—principals, SPED directors, vocational education personnel. The grants system doesn’t talk to other

systems. So if you're working with a district on one program, you may not know what else is going on."

**DOE website is valuable, but it needs a better search engine.** A number of state and local-level interviewees spoke highly of the amount of useful information on the DOE website. "The website has become the way people access information," one interviewee said. "It's very powerful." But staff also uniformly felt that the site's search engine was a poor tool for locating desired information.

**Data "map" desired.** A number of interviewees expressed a desire for a "map" of where to find particular types of data in the Department. "Beyond my unit, I don't know what data is collected across the Department," one said. "You have to know who to talk to," said another. "Say you need MCAS data, well, who do you ask for it? Paula knows everything, but you don't go to Paula for that. Who do I go to, is how I work. It would be nice not to always have to rely on the kindness of friends for our data."

**Staff feel they need professional development in data use.** Training needs fall into several categories. First, some staff say that they would like training in/licenses for data manipulation software, such as Access or SPSS. There is some disagreement on the priority of this kind of training, which is discussed further below, in the Data Capacity section. Second, training is desired in how to use and manipulate datasets—"how to take variables, have datasets intersect, and know what the results mean." Third, interviewees mentioned the need for help really thinking through what data-driven decision-making means for their department. "We could use some help thinking through what would enable us to identify where to put our efforts. What are our key performance indicators? What questions should we be asking? What charts should we use? We could start the process for the schools, and then let them fill in the gaps—head them in the direction of valuing data, because we do."

**Access to student-level MCAS data is an issue.** DOE program staff need to identify underperforming students in their programs for a number of reasons, including targeting funds, approving grants, and shaping interventions. Therefore, they would like to be able to gather SASIDs on participating students and access MCAS information on those students. However, they generally have neither the clearance to access this classified information nor the technical ability to do so if permitted. "Right now I have to give someone 30,000 SASIDS and have them run the numbers. I would like to have that access myself, or a rationale why not." Some interviewees requested an easy-to-manipulate tool to analyze MCAS data but not see student-level data, like an online version of TestWiz. Others wanted student-level data, with levels of access, that could be interacted with in a dynamic way to get program or school level results.

## DATA CAPACITY

**Numerous internal and external requests lead to “information management triage.”** The Department of Education struggles with meeting the demands of state and federal laws, and is challenged by resource limitations (human, financial, etc.).<sup>5</sup> Data analysis staff are constantly faced with multiple requests for information from federal education staff, state legislative and gubernatorial staff, the media, DOE administrators, DOE program staff, local educators and citizens, and education researchers. So while there is strong interest in being able to access and use existing data, and there is a wealth of existing data, information staff have limited time to put the collected data into useful formats. A sort of “information management triage” takes place, in which the most urgent and immediate data requests take precedence, and data design and analysis projects which could have great utility in data-driven decision-making are continually pushed down the “to do” list. “We don’t have time to do analysis and produce reports that we know would be useful,” one interviewee said.

**Technology training vs. web-based simplicity.** One way of reducing the demands on current data analysis staff would be to enable more DOE staff to do data analyses themselves. A number of DOE staff expressed interest in technical training in data-manipulation programs such as Access and SPSS. However, others cautioned against depending too much on this type of training, due to staff time constraints and the problem of forgetting such training due to infrequent use. As one interviewee said, “I don’t have time to learn how to make good Excel or Access charts. We used to have trainings, and I got all fired up about it, and then I had no time to practice, so I lost it.”

As noted earlier in this report, district-based personnel said similar things about this kind of technical training. In both cases, the preferred alternative was to be able to use a web-based, menu-driven application to be able to access various types of standard and custom displays of data.

**Empowering staff vs. “getting it right.”** Several respondents reported being very interested in having access to data analysis but being ambivalent about doing it themselves. “We have an ongoing need for MCAS analysis, drilling down to cohorts, trends, and so on,” one interviewee said. “The question is, who should do that drilling down? Should it be centralized or decentralized? Should the MCAS folks do it? They have the expertise. We have generalists—we can do the first level, but you need some statistical expertise to do more in-depth analysis and be sure you’re doing it right.” Concerns about maintaining confidentiality of data, as well as the need to ensure statistical validity, offer challenges to staff use of data.

**The right mix of data people.** One interviewee suggested that the data function should be analyzed to make sure DOE has the right mix of people for data work. “We need data collection specialists for collecting the data and data analysts to organize the data after we get it. We should look at areas where we’re doing a lot of troubleshooting and ask why that is happening.” Another interviewee noted, however, that the data function is significantly supported by major

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<sup>5</sup> For more on DOE capacity challenges, see: McDermott, Kathryn et al., *An Analysis of State Capacity to Implement the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993* (UMass Amherst Center for Education Policy: 2001), available at [www.umass.edu/education/cep](http://www.umass.edu/education/cep).

federal grants, and that the deployment of employees was in part affected by the duties required for those grants.

**Increase capacity by developing research agenda, making data available to researchers.**

Several interviewees felt that it was unrealistic to expect the DOE data staff to conduct a wide range of data analyses themselves. They suggested instead that DOE should develop a research agenda and a means of providing raw data to researchers, and then either fund or encourage outside funding of studies targeted at this research agenda. It was also suggested that a separate entity with DOE oversight could be established/contracted with to service data requests from researchers and other external parties requiring data analysis, provided that clear data access rules could be developed.

**Reducing the local reporting burden.** One interviewee noted that DOE has to gather some data that it doesn't use itself but that is required by federal agencies. "We are often asked for data in several different ways by different federal agencies or laws," the interviewee said. "For example, incident-level stuff for Safe and Drug-Free Schools. In cases like these, can we meet the need through careful sampling, rather than making everybody collect this data? We ought to identify key pieces of data that are particularly onerous and ask, are we using it? Then we should either stop collecting it if we can, or collect it in a less onerous way."

**Appreciation of data staff.** A number of interviewees noted that the quality of relations with the data staff has improved to a very positive level. One interviewee said, "The IT people are wonderful under Maureen Chew. They're helpful, they're quick—it's a nice change."

## DATA USE

**Staff want to be able to combine different datasets—student, teacher, program, and finance.** One interviewee noted that because data are kept in separate databases, staff often have to build unique solutions when they want to produce reports. This makes data-driven decision-making much more labor-intensive and requires expertise that many staff do not have, which in turn adds to the burden of the data personnel. One interviewee characterized DOE's grants information in particular as antiquated and often paper-based. "We're called on to answer questions like what's the cost-per-student, the cost of training, etc., and it's very hard to do it. We should never separate program and finance information the way we do."

**An educator information management system (EIMS), analogous to SIMS, is wanted.**

Several interviewees spoke forcefully about the increased demands for educator information as a result of NCLB. "The ELAR database has licensure information on teachers and other licensed individuals. Directory Administration tells us who's teaching in the schools. We need to link who's teaching with who's licensed." Such a linkage would require an individual identification number for each educator, but proponents believe this could be resolved, perhaps by using social security numbers. Optimally, an EIMS that would allow the state to get a handle on educator supply and demand issues would follow the educator through recruitment, preparation, licensure, employment, retention, professional development, and re-licensure.

**Data audits may be needed, to ensure data quality.** A 2003 study of state data systems by the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA)<sup>6</sup> identified nine “essential elements” of statewide data collection systems: (1) unique statewide student identifier, (2) fall student-level enrollment data, (3) student-level state test data, (4) information on untested students, (5) student-level course-completion data, (6) student-level SAT, ACT, and AP test results, (7) student-level graduation and dropout rates, (8) ability to match K-12 and higher education, and (9) state data-audit system. Massachusetts is relatively well-positioned in many of these categories. However, several interviewees raised concerns about the quality of data collected by local district staff, due to the local staffing and systems issues described earlier in this report. They suggested, as did the national report, that the state could conduct a small number of data audits each year, perhaps contracting with accounting firms, to ensure that districts understand and adhere to common standards of data categorization and quality.

**Other student-level data would be useful.** Interviewees mentioned that more information on student course-taking as well as some sort of link to higher education, perhaps by having the SASID follow the student to college, would be useful. These recommendations are echoed by the NCEA study mentioned above, which also adds SAT, ACT, and AP test results to the list of useful student-level data to collect and analyze.

**More complete information on districts wanted.** Some DOE staff who work with districts felt that other parts of the Department had information about “their” districts that they did not have. “If I go to Brockton,” said one interviewee, “I want to know who else is working with Brockton, what grants Brockton has gotten, who the key contacts are there, what the district review results have been, and so on.” This interviewee suggested (1) that some sort of contact log system could be developed by DOE, to keep track of who at DOE is working with each district and/or (2) that DOE could designate its education specialists as district liaisons, each responsible for knowing and being a point of contact for one or two districts.

**Increasing pressure for “value-added” analysis.** Current student assessments give “snapshots” of student achievement at various levels, but they do not allow measurement of the degree to which achievement is increased in particular students or cohorts over time. Increasingly, policymakers are asking for this type of information. A recent policy brief<sup>7</sup> by the research organization MassINC describes the following elements of a data system that would be required to support value-added analysis, the first two of which already exist: individual student identifiers, annual gathering of student demographic information, a coordinated and linked data management system, and annual grade-by-grade testing with vertically aligned tests. Additional, longer-term elements would include: capacity for local school districts to enter their own data elements, a data auditing function, linkages to post-secondary data, and a systematic appraisal of the statistical system used to conduct the analysis.

**VES is under-utilized.** Several interviewees noted that VES seems to be an application in search of a purpose. Some potential purposes were identified, including using VES internally to

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<sup>6</sup> National Center for Educational Accountability, *Essential Elements of Statewide Data-Collection Systems* (2003). Available on the web at: [nc4ea.org/index.cfm?pg+data\\_collection](http://nc4ea.org/index.cfm?pg+data_collection).

<sup>7</sup> Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, *Gaining Ground: Value-Added Analysis for Massachusetts* (MassINC: 2004). Available on the web at: [http://www.massinc.org/about/ceerp/research/gaining\\_ground.html](http://www.massinc.org/about/ceerp/research/gaining_ground.html).

reduce DOE email volume devoted to “philosophical discussions,” setting up threaded discussions for different types of educators, and offering distance-learning options for students with illnesses or temporary out-of-home placements.

## **DATA STORAGE**

**Program-specific data needs vs. major DOE databases.** DOE programs need data that is kept in the large DOE databases such as SIMS and MCAS, but they also have program-specific data needs, such as vocational education’s post-graduation survey information. This situation is analogous to local districts’ needs for additional information, such as grades and bus routes, beyond that collected for DOE and NCLB. This has contributed to the program-specific databases that have developed at DOE in the past. However, some of these programs are now finding that they can cut their own data collection and maintenance by linking to the major DOE databases. For example, vocational-technical education estimates that 80% of its data needs will be met by the planned use of SIMS data instead of separate data collection.

**Pre-population of program data-collection forms.** SIMS and MCAS data have been used to pre-populate data forms in several programs to reduce the data collection burden on district program staff. DOE program staff report that this innovation has been very well-received.

**ELAR server is overburdened.** One interviewee identified the ELAR database as one of the more problematic data elements at DOE. “The server crashes every day. I spend a lot of time replying to people who have technical problems, and probably 9 out of 10 complaints are about ELAR.”

**Where does data live?** Several interviewees spoke about whether the data in a comprehensive state-local data system should be primarily located at DOE or in district databases. Some felt all of the data should be collected at DOE and placed into one database, with proper bandwidth, security, and database design. Others envisioned a way of logging into a data dashboard that would draw information as needed from disparate DOE databases which the user could use to display information and/or to manipulate for deeper analysis. Still others imagined that the primary locus of data would be local, in districts, and that rather than districts preparing reports for DOE, DOE would simply query the district databases whenever it needed data. The technical aspects of each of these scenarios are beyond the scope of this paper, but it is worth noting that they would have quite different impacts on state and local capacity needs.

## **SUGGESTED “SMALL FIXES”**

Interviewees suggested a variety of “small fixes”:

- A map of what data is where in the Department, what you can get and what you can’t
- Training on how to get data
- A better search engine for the website
- Purge unneeded, outdated info from website—clean up website warehouse
- SPSS licenses and training for staff
- Staff access to MCAS data by SASID, with appropriate clearances/security
- Ability to look up previous years’ student scores and import into MCAS.

- Improve TestWiz to improve ease of graphic presentation
- Align grants accounting categories with general DOE accounting categories
- Change Oct 1 and Dec 1 reports to one Nov 1 report
- Use end-of-year SIMS transmission for finance Schedule 11 reporting
- Make sure state regulations encapsulate federal regulations wherever possible.
- Create a research agenda of questions the research community could help answer
- Assign all DOE education specialists to one or two communities, so that each community would have a DOE contact
- More helpdesk capacity to help districts with reporting questions
- Make the data reporting process easier to edit—make the validation process more interactive
- Define as many reporting fields as possible for expected values
- Data audits by accounting firm—three or four per year.
- Add Section 504 into SIMS
- Teacher data—give all districts the data collection tool used to prep for panel reviews, have them submit it, compile it centrally
- NCLB Consolidated Planning Workbook—provide professional development on this across all programs



## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful state-local data system must accommodate the fact that at both the state and local levels, data processes take place within very complex organizational contexts, face significant capacity constraints due to recent budget cuts, and are carried out by individuals with widely varying needs and abilities.

At the local level, DOE should work to:

3. **Reduce the reporting burden to maximize data quality and data usage** under existing capacity constraints, and
4. **Help local educators become better users of data.**

At the state level, DOE needs to

3. **Help DOE staff become better users of data,** and
4. **Deploy or delegate the appropriate capacity** to perform data collection, support, and analysis roles.

DOE needs to **work with local district staff, researchers and other data partners** to:

3. Develop a vision of what a true state-local data system should look like, and
4. Pilot, refine, and phase in operation of a true state-local data system.

Specific areas for work include:

### **Create and/or communicate resources for data reporting and data-driven decision-making.**

- Inventory all current data collections and data locations and create a data catalog or map.
- Communicate this data map to DOE staff and relevant local district staff.
- Install a better search engine and a data map on the DOE website.
- Post an annual timeline of all data collections on the website.
- Pull together a standard reporting guide, explaining in layman's terms why the data are collected, what the annual data collection schedule is, and how each collected element is defined/counted.
- In each data collection communication, include a brief reminder on how the data are used and how they can be accessed for local decision-making.

### **Reduce reporting burden to maximize data quality and usage under capacity constraints.**

- Consider consolidating Oct 1 and Dec 1 reports, and consider whether Mar 1 report can be eliminated.
- Improve the SIMS error process—program a “summary” step into the submission/ validation process, so local staff can see and easily correct data themselves before final submission.
- Continue developing web-based, menu-driven processes for submitting data.
- Offer/publicize knowledgeable “helpdesk” capability prior to major reporting dates, to help districts with reporting questions, before they submit erroneous information.
- Analyze data-collection inventory to identify redundancies and particularly onerous reporting requirements.
- Where possible, reduce redundancies and onerous collection by eliminating collections, pre-populating forms and databases, and using sampling rather than full collection.

**Help state and local staff become better users of data.**

- Enable access to MCAS scores by SASID for DOE and local staff with appropriate clearance.
- Provide better MCAS graphics capability and ability to export to spreadsheet.
- Develop web-based, menu-driven process for accessing data in standard and custom formats. Facilitate connection of SIMS, MCAS, and financial data.
- Encourage DOE departments to identify key indicators, standard data charts, and questions to use in interpreting data implications.
- Identify what types of data analysis can be “do-it-yourself” and which require specialized statistical skills. Provide templates and training for “do-it-yourself” aspects and identify staffing and priorities for specialized analyses.
- Organize conferences and summer institutes for local data users to share models, learn about data resources, and receive professional development in data reporting and data use.
- Provide special sections on the website for particular district data roles, with types of information they will need—data submission deadlines, FAQs, types of data questions they should ask, models of data use, etc.
- Explore ability to provide useful data in time for local budget decisions—Dec/Jan ideal.
- Develop an Educator Information Management System to allow analysis of teacher quality, supply, and demand.

**Explore research/analysis partnerships to maximize DOE capacity.**

- Reduce demands on data staff by developing a research agenda and enlisting outside researchers in producing reports.
- Explore development of a separate research data center to facilitate education research and reduce the number of external information demands on data staff.
- Consider implementing occasional data audits, conducted by an accounting firm, to ensure data quality.

**Work with local educators to continue developing a mutually beneficial state-local data system.**

- Develop a local/state/researcher data advisory committee to “reality test” ideas for improving current reporting and data use methods.
- Support and work with pilot data warehouse efforts for groups of schools.
- Work toward a system that will work for all state and federal reporting requirements, while allowing districts and DOE programs to maintain other information they need.
- Be aware of the push for value-added assessment and the data management system it would require.
- Explore SIF options for linking databases at DOE and in districts.
- Explore open-source options for reducing software and hardware costs.

## **APPENDICES**



## **Appendix 1 – Local-level Protocol**

### **Focus Group: Data Needs and Challenges at the Local Level**

Andy Churchill   Susan Bowles  
Center for Education Policy, School of Education, UMass Amherst  
Tel.: 413/545-0958   Email: achurchill@educ.umass.edu

Thank you for coming! You will have several ways to share your ideas about education data. This paper is one way. Please take a moment now to jot down any thoughts you have about the questions below. If you think of anything else during the session, add it to your list. If you would like us to contact you for an interview, there's a space for that, too. .

**1. What do you want or need to be able to do with data?**

**2. What are the barriers preventing you from doing what you want with data?**

**3. What big or small things could the Department do to help you?**

**4. Who should we be talking to (organizations, types of people, etc.) to make sure we get a good picture of local data needs?**

**If you would like to be contacted individually, please give us your contact information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 – Protocol for Interviews with State-level Staff

*[Send comments to Andy Churchill, UMass Center for Education Policy, at [achurchill@educ.umass.edu](mailto:achurchill@educ.umass.edu) or call 413/545-0958. DOE contact is John Celso, at [jcelso@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jcelso@doe.mass.edu) or ext. 6896]*

**Project Summary.** The Department has contracted with the UMass Center for Education Policy to conduct a needs-assessment regarding the collection and use of education data in the Commonwealth. We will be gathering input from state-level staff, local educators, and other sources on education data needs, sources, barriers, quality issues, and system-improvement opportunities. The research team will produce a report summarizing state and local input on the different data needs an education data system should meet, the degree to which current practices do or do not meet these needs, and recommendations for improvement. CEP will present these findings to DOE in late spring.

I basically have a few, broad, open-ended questions that I hope will help dig out some of the key state-local data needs from your perspective.

**Local Needs.** I'd like to talk about two areas of data needs—the state level and the local level. Let's start with the local level. Could you briefly tell me how you interact with local schools and districts?

Based on your interaction with local schools and districts, what are the main issues local educators face in terms of getting and using data for decision-making? In other words, what do they want in terms of education data, and what is working well or not so well?

What are the main issues local educators face in terms of mandatory data reporting to the Department and the feds? What is working well, and what is not working so well?

**State Needs.** Now let's talk about data needs at the state level. First of all, what are the main issues you face in your work, in terms of collecting and using education data for decision-making? In other words, what do you want in terms of data, and what important things are you or aren't you getting?

Looking beyond your position, who are the other key users of education data at the state level?

Based on your needs and those of other state-level users, what are the key types of data we should be collecting and using at the state level to improve decision-making?

What are the most useful aspects of current data practices, from your perspective?

What are the most challenging aspects of current data practices?

Do you feel that you have adequate access to existing data resources?

**Barriers/Quality Issues.** I'd like to get your perspective on the quality issues we face in collecting, analyzing, and using education data for decision-making. What do you think are the main barriers to collecting and using high-quality data at the state and local levels?

Do you have any suggestions for ensuring high-quality data?

**Building a Data System.** Let's say you were made the omnipotent education data czar. What would you do to improve the collection and use of education data for state and local users?

What would a true state-local data system look like?

Are there any "quick fixes" or small changes you can think of that might improve a certain part of the data system?

Are there any other places you've heard of that are doing a good job with data and might be a model for us in Massachusetts?

**Anything Else.** Is there anything else that you would like to say about how to improve our ability to collect and use education data for state and local decision-making?

Thanks very much.

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

### Danvers NCLB Focus Group

#### Responses

Surveys	35
District (Supt, Asst. Supt)	3
School Principal	0
Technology/Data	5
Title I	1
Curriculum Director	3
Other/Unknown	22

#### Summary

- Training on Data analysis and interpretation
- Time to collect, correct, analyze data
- Longitudinal Student Data
- Process for making data corrections
- Ability to compare MCAS district/school subgroups with state subgroups between a centralized data system and compatibility with local data systems
- Connecting SIMS data with academic support services/remediation rec'd for grants, etc...
- Creating a SIMS type system for Teachers
- Access (timely and accurate) to data that is reported to the DOE (at district and school levels)
- Classroom Teacher access to the student MCAS data
- Ability to merge many software/databases
- Resources for data analysis (staffing, training, infrastructure)
- Regional school districts/vocational schools need to be able to access student records from the state (rather than calling several different feeder schools)
- Ability to make district/district comparisons (test scores, budget, etc.)
- Reduction in the number of reporting requirements

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

### DANVERS SURVEYS - Detail

#### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SIMS data should populate the end of year report</li> <li>▪ Shouldn't have to input data twice</li> <li>▪ CRESST web based software project</li> <li>▪ Who should have access to security portal?</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I would like to be able to measure the effectiveness of particular strategies of teaching over the years.</li> <li>▪ If a group succeeded what did they have in common</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher GTE</li> <li>▪ Interrelationships between finance and student education</li> <li>▪ How does the foundation use the SIMS data</li> <li>▪ Connect different data sets and ability to present in graphs</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easy to manipulate it in Excel, Access</li> <li>▪ Make it available to individual schools</li> <li>▪ Longitudinal data</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-depth reports on student performance</li> <li>▪ Overall picture is provided but this is not enough information to make decisions</li> <li>▪ VES??</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrators and teachers need to be more thoroughly trained in accessing the student performance data as well as how to generate questions from the data and finally interpret results into instruction</li> <li>▪ Test wiz training is not enough</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ help see needs for after school programs</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easy access at state and local level</li> <li>▪ Thoroughness</li> <li>▪ Ability to manipulate easily</li> <li>▪ Clarity for both reporting categories and data reports</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Look at MCAS data and see how schools, classes, subgroups perform on subsections</li> <li>▪ Get data on students leaving to go to choice schools and private schools</li> <li>▪ Long term information on cohorts of students as they progress from grade to grade</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SIMS data</li> <li>▪ Is it possible to put it in Test wiz or some other program to be able to sort the data?</li> </ul>	Administrative assistant
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To keep an accurate account of the district student faculty needs – to improve in necessary areas</li> </ul>	Administrative Assistant
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist school districts with creating a 5 year strategic plan and vision of where DOE and NCLP are</li> </ul>	Administrator of

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

	<p>going with data collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow for increased teacher access to MCAS/student profile data so that a teacher in the summertime can conduct an item analysis at home of their future MCAS results</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide exemplary practices, examples of how school districts make data driven decisions</li> </ul>	Student Services
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data needs to be easy to use and manipulate</li> <li>▪ Receive data in a timely fashion</li> <li>▪ Avoid duplication of efforts</li> <li>▪ Federal reports/state reports as fro same data in many cases</li> <li>▪ Professionals with limited tech ability need to be able to use the data</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manipulate data readily to address specific issues re: teaching and learning</li> <li>▪ Make data available to the end users – teachers and students</li> <li>▪ Collect a wide variety of data beyond MCAS to compare with the standardized measures</li> <li>▪ Track cohorts of students over time</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Link directly into grants</li> <li>▪ Esp. for large urban districts</li> </ul>	Asst Director Technology
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Important to have professional development on interpreting data – not just collecting – also cautions in terms of data use – how about qualitative data for full and comprehensive analysis seems to be missing</li> <li>▪ Would like to involve administrators and teacher leaders in data analysis and interpretation</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SDF's</li> <li>▪ To be better able to have appropriate prevention programs</li> <li>▪ To id on the school local level those students who are in need of intervention/treatment</li> <li>▪ Not to provide an Orwellian database for the feds but to provide the needed services and assets that will help this child become a better person on all levels</li> </ul>	CSHP Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyze and synthesize it quickly</li> </ul>	Curriculum coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collect accurately</li> <li>▪ Manipulate to solve a variety of local/state customers</li> <li>▪ Useful for administration, teachers, parents and community</li> <li>▪ Accessible in an easy to use format for all users</li> </ul>	Data Analysis
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase and validate funding from state, federal and grants</li> </ul>	Director of Administration
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Track staff data for district and state reporting (similar to SIMS using SASIDS)</li> </ul>	Director of Personnel
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make decisions regarding staffing needs</li> <li>▪ Use test data to improve test scores</li> </ul>	Director of student services
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compare data from our district with other districts</li> </ul>	Health

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data on suspensions, exclusions, drug and violence and related incidents, district staffing, school staffing, (including guidance, counseling, SPED, nursing staff,) I am a grant writer for our district and would find this information helpful</li> </ul>	Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use MCAS data to determine curriculum needs</li> <li>▪ Determine quality of teachers to address standards (weaknesses/strengths, training needs)</li> <li>▪ Report data to general public that reflects improvement growth</li> </ul>	Instructional Technology
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We would like to be able to use the data to help teachers pinpoint the needs of their individual students</li> <li>▪ Like to be able to see a history of the school's data</li> </ul>	Registrar
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide teachers, esp. with current data on student performance that is well organized and user friendly in the way it is formatted and presented. Allow teachers or data mangers to freely sort data files by any subgroup.</li> <li>▪ Allow use of part of MCAS to be the basis of any given report, when the whole is not needed to answer a question.</li> <li>▪ Have the items standards they relate to and student performance data easily available to align with each other in reports</li> </ul>	Research & Evaluation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ analyze subgroup information</li> <li>▪ longitudinal student data</li> <li>▪ summary reports for at risk students</li> </ul>	Strategic Planner
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete grant application</li> <li>▪ Provide required information as dictated by the applications</li> <li>▪ MCAS analysis</li> <li>▪ MCAS remediation reports</li> </ul>	Supervisor of Health Education
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis at the school level and report to various departments in order to be able t5o project trends, enhance planning, make operations more efficient and allot budgets</li> <li>▪ Import DOE data analysis into our local student databases</li> </ul>	Technology Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compile aggregate information about our schools/district in clear and easy to understand/interpret manner</li> </ul>	Technology Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program changes</li> <li>▪ Insure teacher quality/prompt updates on certification</li> <li>▪ Quick turnaround</li> </ul>	Technology Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE supply a data entry/management tool to be used at the school level to collect SIMS and other regional data for each school.</li> <li>▪ There should be a way of electronic transmission by school personnel of school data to a district database. This might alleviate the tedious, time-consuming effort of data entry at the district level.</li> <li>▪ This would put the onus on the school staff to provide accurate data in a timely fashion</li> </ul>	Title I Director

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data is not collected and stored in a way to be able to see these groups easily</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Portability</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ User friendly programs</li> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Access to data</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE does not get the information to school districts in a timely manner</li> <li>▪ We are always told it is coming but it usually comes too late</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administration</li> <li>▪ Politics</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limits on accessibility at the LEA level</li> <li>▪ Lag time on submission of data and availability of accurate and timely data</li> <li>▪ Lack of understanding by technology people as to reason and purpose of the data</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Personnel</li> <li>▪ Ease of getting specific data</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have each school in a different database, so information is not easy to view</li> </ul>	Administrative assistant
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personnel – too many requirements and not enough staff</li> <li>▪ The expertise to create a database and then manipulate the data for reports</li> </ul>	Administrative Assistant
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequate staff to analyze data with time for ongoing and consistently make data driven decisions</li> </ul>	Administrator of Student Services
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited ability of staff to manipulate data</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Currently use Test Wiz – it does some analysis but is limited</li> <li>▪ District was part of the pilot of COGNOS several years ago. I don't think this tool works in education – it's a business application, however, linking different sets of data is useful.</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning curve in entering data and getting familiar with all of the DOE reports</li> <li>▪ Fine tuning all of the DOE reports to be able to coordinate all data and then use it in varying capacities. For example principals would like to see correlations derived from the data regarding learning achievements compared to the demographics of their student population</li> </ul>	Asst Director Technology
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accessibility – to data</li> <li>▪ Guidance in using data to inform decision making</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data collected by principals and sent directly to DOE therefore by the time we see it, it is much later in the process</li> <li>▪ Student ID and DOB not necessary – identification is irrelevant</li> </ul>	CSHP Director

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All data is designed to help destroy public education</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Too many projects on the plate at once</li> </ul>	Curriculum coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need clear goals</li> <li>▪ Who want, what to what and why</li> <li>▪ Relationship between different products, test wiz, spreadsheet, SIMS filemaker and other tests</li> </ul>	Data Analysis
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of understanding on the importance of data being collected on the part of administrators and teachers</li> </ul>	Director of Administration
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Someone whose major role in the schools is to collect, report and then be able to report the results back and help us interpret it.</li> <li>▪ Maybe it could be a grant opportunity so smaller districts can hire or define the job description and role of this person</li> </ul>	Director of student services
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accessing this information in a timely manner</li> </ul>	Health Coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use Test Wiz to generate some of the school reports.</li> <li>▪ Would like to be able to generate reports comparing the district with the state over time</li> <li>▪ Reported in proficiency not in percent of correct answers</li> </ul>	Instructional Technology
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Once the data has been submitted to the DOE there is no real feedback on what has been submitted</li> </ul>	Registrar
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each test application sits on its own software platform and comparison of results from different tests (SRI SAT MCAS) is difficult. Some software is only available for one year (to enter a 2<sup>nd</sup> year you must delete the previous year!) so looking longitudinally is very tough.</li> <li>▪ The sheer volume of data entry, data formatting and data management for 1400 students precludes our getting many reports into the hands of teachers in a timely manner.</li> <li>▪ Access to MCAS data on our new students transferring into our districts is difficult to obtain</li> </ul>	Research & Evaluation
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current data formats from DOE are not flexible</li> <li>▪ Availability of tools to manage data are limited</li> </ul>	Strategic Planner
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Security portal is not always user friendly</li> <li>▪ Links are sometimes down – unavailable</li> <li>▪ Information not always available when DOE says it will be</li> <li>▪ Data not aggregated consistently often not done until end of school year which is too late for grant applications</li> <li>▪ MCAS remediation reports are labor intensive and repetitive</li> </ul>	Supervisor of Health Education
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE send back data is now in a form that is hard to read</li> <li>▪ DOE staff reps are overburdened and sometimes do not have the expertise to clearly explain the reports that are sent back</li> <li>▪ Too many DOE reports to fill out</li> <li>▪ Too small of a staff in a small district to meet all of the reporting demands</li> </ul>	Technology Director

### Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

**2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seems to increase very year to the point of overload</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of manpower for collecting, inputting and submitting data. Most of the people who work with the data in our district also hold several other job responsibilities and don't have the time to dedicate strictly to data collection, reporting and analysis.</li> <li>▪ It would be nice to get some state/federal funding to hire more personnel dedicated to meeting these data requirements and ensuring accuracy</li> </ul>	Technology Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Doe has been very helpful</li> </ul>	Technology Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Money</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Maybe DOE could make all district data available over the security portal in a format that would respond to common servers</li> <li>▪ Data metrics offers test wiz software that manipulated MCAS data in a very useful way. How about a piece that brings in other data?</li> </ul>	Title I Director

### Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

#### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make the data collected from MCAS taken in other districts available</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supply templates and instructions</li> <li>▪ Training on the use of templates and how to import/export at school level</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make data reporting easier for schools</li> <li>▪ There continues to be confusion and discrepancies between school districts and DOE in regards to data management</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE needs to clearly think out what they need to do to comply with NCLB, how they need to accomplish what they need to do and implement communicating clear expectations and steps, all while managing the school level as the primary collection of the data.</li> <li>▪ Doe needs to work out the kinks BEFORE implementation rather than as they go along</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce the number of different types of reporting requirements</li> <li>▪ Allow quarterly updates edits and reviews of data</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make the website easier to use</li> <li>▪ Special links for supts and principals (audience)</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshops are helpful</li> </ul>	Administrative assistant
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Streamline some of the reports</li> </ul>	Administrative Assistant
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Big – more tracking on models for data driven decisions</li> <li>▪ Longitudinal study</li> <li>▪ Small – exemplars of how to make data driven decisions</li> </ul>	Administrator of Student Services
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local resources are limited and strained</li> <li>▪ Avoid needless duplication of efforts</li> <li>▪ Collected data must be used to its optimum</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimize data collection</li> <li>▪ Teachers are being reported as not highly qualified because the DOE is backed up with licensing teachers</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design software to eliminate duplication of data entry whenever possible</li> <li>▪ Either run workshops and proved well detailed instructions on working with completing all DOE reports</li> </ul>	Asst Director Technology
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer prof development on interpreting data</li> <li>▪ Add qualitative piece</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Throw out NCLB and work toward providing an educational system that meets the needs of students not designed to teach to the test and reach standards that are not realistic</li> <li>▪ Get rid of the politics</li> </ul>	CSHP Director

### Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

#### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making actual templates for us is a step in the right direction</li> <li>▪ Sometimes though we're not able to view everything we need to view on the screen</li> </ul>	Curriculum coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Big picture goals of what we need</li> <li>▪ Make it clear what needs to be collected and in what form</li> </ul>	Data Analysis
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Centralize all use of data to one source</li> <li>▪ Suggest a staffing structure to all cities and towns for the correct accumulation of data</li> </ul>	Director of Administration
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Because the issue of who is collecting, reporting and interpreting data, the small thing that would help would be to list all reporting requirements and deadlines in one place on the DOE website with links to the specific areas</li> <li>▪ Right now small districts must check finance, SPED, NCLB, etc. locations on the website to get information.</li> <li>▪ It's very difficult to do with no increase in staff to do it.</li> </ul>	Director of student services
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not sure</li> </ul>	Health Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More DOE telephone support</li> </ul>	Instructional Technology
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The DOE may be able to send someone out to the schools or districts to train a person on how to utilize the data, then share that with the school or district</li> </ul>	Registrar
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tell the vendors of software when SIMS changes</li> <li>▪ Provide more flexible output from Test Wiz</li> <li>▪ Help data managers and assessment/evaluation specialists connect with each other more regularly</li> <li>▪ Access to security portal for data managers</li> <li>▪ Organize a project that develops a user-friendly database warehouse with shared servers across multiple school districts</li> </ul>	Research & Evaluation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a student history repository which tracks MCAS scores and allows districts to input other tests</li> </ul>	Strategic Planner
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adhere to timelines</li> </ul>	Supervisor of Health Education
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make the process much simpler – show all the reports needed in one place</li> <li>▪ Don't on Oct 1 SIMS for extra data from previous school year! It only complicated matters I this critical report</li> <li>▪ Why is De SPED SIMS report requested when this info is already requested in Oct 1 SIMS report?</li> <li>▪ Supts and principals should know the importance of the local person doing reporting for DOE</li> </ul>	Technology Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact by email</li> <li>▪ Have additional field support</li> </ul>	Technology Director

## Appendix 3 – Danvers Focus Group Summary

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### Marlborough NCLB Focus Group

#### Responses

Surveys	33
District (Supt, Asst. Supt, Coordinators)	8
School Principal	1
Technology/Data	9
Title I	2
Curriculum Director	2
Other/Unknown	11

#### Summary

- Training on Data analysis
- Time to collect, correct, analyze data
- Longitudinal Student Data
- Accuracy and Reliability of data
- Process for making data corrections
- Contact and service from the DOE
- Ability to compare MCAS district/school subgroups with state subgroups
- Tension between a centralized data system and compatibility with local data systems
- Connecting SIMS data with academic support services/remediation rec'd
- Classroom Teacher access to the student MCAS data
- Ability to merge many software/databases
- Resources for data analysis (staffing, training, infrastructure)
- Address student mobility issues
- Explanation of why data is needed, how calculations are made and what data are used (i.e. census data, DOR information)
- Ability to make district/district comparisons (test scores, budget, etc.)
- Platforms for software (MAC v. PC)

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### MARLBOROUGH SURVEYS - Detail

#### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easily search and compare data from local student database (attendance, grades, SPED, teacher, ESL, etc.) with test results – MCAS, Iowa, SAT and other tests)</li> <li>▪ Using the above to predict what students will have a problem with</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make informed decisions</li> <li>▪ Study progress of students, curriculum, schools, district</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide schools with MCAS data by teacher (in elementary and middle grades)</li> <li>▪ At HS level – better tracking/Communication about the competency determination</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We already use some of the data to do our own in-house reports</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine efficacy of support/intervention of educational programs within the district</li> <li>▪ Look at grade cohorts of student performance over time</li> <li>▪ Use individual classroom data for teacher professional reflection</li> <li>▪ Compare/contrast data from a variety of sources that report on student performance within curriculum program areas</li> <li>▪ Be able to used data we submit</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have all our data sources be able to talk to one another</li> <li>▪ Look more specifically at disaggregated data (graphs and visuals)</li> <li>▪ Better track teachers progress toward being highly qualified</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When doe publishes summaries of student performance in which data from multiple sources have been linked (i.e. SIMS, MCAS), districts should be provided with the data file used to calculate the district summary results. For example – competency determination, status, AYP calc's, etc...</li> <li>▪ Districts could then use the data for internal monitoring or verifying DOE data</li> <li>▪ Correction process when errors are found</li> </ul>	Assessment Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In conference to MCAS data, be able to specifically track students that may fall into multiple sub-group categories</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyze student achievement with information or history of their teachers</li> <li>▪ Analyze data focusing on students new to the district</li> <li>▪ Have an easy way to verify accuracy of the data</li> <li>▪ Compare LEP compared to other LEP</li> <li>▪ Update DOE data</li> <li>▪ Transmission for corrections is difficult</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Print and rearrange data as the district needs it to generate their own reports</li> <li>▪ Your district to other districts' salaries, student population, AP, SAT, drop out, budgets</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have it to be user friendly</li> </ul>	Curriculum Director

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have access that does not crash</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multiple and custom analysis – ne3ede for proposal development or custom mapping in district</li> </ul>	Data Specialist
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Want/Need to have accuracy of data to drive/review implement programs</li> <li>▪ Get specific and general information, trends, strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>▪ Use different format for different view</li> <li>▪ Give information/example of best practices on data collection and analysis</li> </ul>	ELL Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Want to compare our subgroups to state subgroup in regard to performance – would need proficiency index for each subgroup at the state level to make the comparison</li> <li>▪ Would like to have pertinent census information for district without needing to spend hours on the US census site</li> <li>▪ Information from early childhood agencies, welfare, state agencies regarding trends for the population we will be receiving.</li> </ul>	Grant Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drive decision making at the district level</li> </ul>	Human Resources Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support staff in making decisions about curriculum, instruction and assessment</li> <li>▪ Create and view “road” district is following</li> <li>▪ Disaggregate data by program – subgroup</li> <li>▪ Help to align all efforts to support student achievement</li> </ul>	Instruction Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To use it to justify educational decisions leading to school improvement</li> </ul>	Principal/Title I director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	School Support Specialist
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Everything – if you collect it, we need it to be able to use it however we want.</li> <li>▪ Also, you should ask districts what else should be collected. Some information may not be valuable at a state or federal level, but very necessary at a district or school level.</li> <li>▪ Perhaps flexibility to allow for local data to be included.</li> <li>▪ Links to other state organizations (DOR) and links among other districts and schools.</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I want to be able to trust the data to use it for school and district uses much irrelevant data are collected</li> <li>▪ Transience of student needs to be addressed</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use it to help improve instruction</li> <li>▪ Make a case for staff/finances</li> <li>▪ Professional development needs assessment</li> <li>▪ Budget Decisions</li> <li>▪ Staffing decisions</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gather comparative data from district to district</li> <li>▪ Breakdown in state subgroups in MCAS</li> <li>▪ Get MCAS data back earlier</li> </ul>	Superintendent

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyze data for students new to the district – those also in district for two years, four years, etc.</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I need to combine information from main student database, sped database, test wiz and teacher information and its impossible to combine all in one</li> </ul>	Technology Admin.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manipulate data, extract, reformat planning at data requirements</li> </ul>	Technology Admin.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standardize the collection (a parochial issue).</li> <li>▪ Have it become useful at the teacher level to be used in improving classroom instruction</li> </ul>	Technology coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve student achievement by giving staff the ability to assess, evaluate and monitor individual students, classroom groups and schoolwide.</li> <li>▪ Decision-making to monitor programs of instructor effectiveness</li> </ul>	Technology Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ </li> </ul>	Technology Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Export from DOE and then import into another application</li> <li>▪ Easier tools for analysis</li> </ul>	Technology Manager
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To better assess programs and initiatives for effectiveness in improving student performance</li> <li>▪ To better identify students in need of interventions</li> </ul>	Technology/Title I Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify strength and weaknesses of program</li> <li>▪ Plan programs for the future</li> </ul>	Title I Director

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incompatibility of results</li> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Money</li> <li>▪ Personnel</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not always in a format that is easy to use and manipulate</li> <li>▪ Too much data</li> <li>▪ Sometimes it's hard to find</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some of the “electronic” forms have to be filed manually – a system, like SIMS, for all data submitted would be helpful</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack the</li> <li>▪ Capacity</li> <li>▪ Technological expertise</li> <li>▪ Integrated technology/SIMS system</li> <li>▪ Would like to know how other districts manage their data</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data goes to DOE but is not consistently provided back to the district.</li> </ul>	Assessment

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE central database</li> <li>▪ Real-time data collection</li> </ul>	Coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extremely time consuming process</li> <li>▪ Limited resources</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of raw data going back to the schools</li> <li>▪ Resources</li> <li>▪ Difficult to facilitate communication between all parties i.e. Harcourt, DOE, School</li> <li>▪ Waiver Issue?</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Money</li> <li>▪ Personnel</li> <li>▪ Lack of ease to manipulate and use the data to create charts and graphs to meet district needs</li> <li>▪ Too fragmented</li> <li>▪ Transmissions</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stop changing the rules!</li> </ul>	Curriculum Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personnel (data entry)</li> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Limited knowledge of data management</li> <li>▪ Provincial thinking</li> <li>▪ Fear that open access to data could have unforeseen consequences</li> </ul>	Curriculum Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greater access to delimited files (illegible)</li> </ul>	Data Specialist
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication between all parties involved</li> <li>▪ Knowledge o what is needed by all</li> <li>▪ Friendly and quick way of getting reports or data</li> <li>▪ Feedback on waivers, certification, issues</li> <li>▪ Enough technology to keep, analyze and feedback for the district on information obtained</li> <li>▪ Competent personnel to analyze and provide the required feedback to schools and teachers</li> </ul>	ELL Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time consuming</li> <li>▪ Data requested often hard to capture at the central office level</li> <li>▪ Student mobility is greater in large, urban districts</li> </ul>	Human Resources Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Reliability of tools/Test Wiz</li> <li>▪ Personnel to follow up use data to track and focus needs</li> </ul>	Instruction Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time to interpret MCAS data for all staff</li> </ul>	Principal/Title I director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The DOE does not do a good job of keeping data – i.e. Mellow testers – district was asked to go back 8 years and provide information on those certified/trained to test. This data was sent to the</li> </ul>	School Support Specialist

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

	DOE each year – now it is on the web and inaccurate – the DOE “can’t keep records that long” thus the district wastes time doing the DOE’s job.	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The data collected by DOE cannot be used easily.</li> <li>▪ Too much of the data needs to be generated by hand.</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Resources</li> <li>▪ Limited staff with multiple duties and responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Kids are counted multiple times (race, income, SPED, ELL)</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sometimes (all should) be MAC Compatible!</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Money</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Training</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There needs to be one application/database that can be queried to get what District personnel need, or</li> <li>▪ There needs to be consistency within each to be able to obtain certain information at a certain point in time.</li> </ul>	Technology Admin.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amount of data required</li> <li>▪ Inaccurate or unobtainable data available systems not available</li> </ul>	Technology Admin.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time to collect data</li> <li>▪ Accuracy of data due to a lack of centralization</li> <li>▪ Locally, improving upon administration the requirements to maintain accurate data</li> <li>▪ Lack of standardized process</li> </ul>	Technology coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficulty collecting and disseminating, just started to work with UCLA in using web-based QSP – have become a certified instructor</li> </ul>	Technology Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Windows based tool only – TEST WIZ</li> </ul>	Technology Manager
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not enough time allocated by district to accomplish tasks required.</li> <li>▪ Currently 20-25% of my job description is to be allocated for state reporting information.</li> </ul>	Technology/Data Manager
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ STUDENT ACHEIVEMENT DATA - state/federal focus is on a single measure of student achievement. There is not assistance for districts in developing other measures, nor does there seem to be any efforts to switch public attention from the “single measure consciousness”</li> <li>▪ Increased staffing needs for data reporting are expensive at a time when we are cutting staff.</li> <li>▪ Lack of Macintosh compatibility</li> </ul>	Technology/Title I Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having the time and manpower to disaggregate and analyze the amount of data and use it where it will do the most good</li> </ul>	Title I Director

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Time</li><li>▪ Money</li></ul>	
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## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supply schools with program that will easily take in ASCII data using the standard as a key to being in the data</li> <li>▪ The key here is “easily”</li> <li>▪ Cross-platform program</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants – apply for non-competitive online, amend online</li> <li>▪ Staff – we would still need to do competitives on paper? Maybe not (I’ve applied for non-DOE grants online and it was very easy and less stressful worry if the smart mail involved)</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quicker turnaround on assigning SASID numbers to new students</li> <li>▪ Easier way to report problems, such as wrong SASID, scores, etc... Harcourt is not always helpful. Esp. with HS needing to earn competency.</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Combine as many reports as possible into one report</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more reports on disaggregated data</li> <li>▪ Provide districts with other tracking software (like test wiz)</li> <li>▪ Provide more technical workshops</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE should provide districts with a data management system</li> <li>▪ Given changes already and in the future data collection/reporting, and given reduced district resources providing a unified data collection management system for districts would save districts the costs for upgrades.</li> </ul>	Assessment Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On MCAS data returned to district, identify the categories that the student was calculated into</li> </ul>	Assist. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be much more careful about giving districts a heads up on what’s coming.</li> <li>▪ Send out a calendar in Supt. About what is due, when</li> <li>▪ Make grants available at a time other than the last week – month of school. Usually the same person does it all</li> <li>▪ Make charts, graphs, available for district use.</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize the data to simplify collection</li> <li>▪ Simplify the programs to make the elements</li> <li>▪ Define HQ – translate accurately</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get out into schools before the rules are made to see what the landscape is really like</li> <li>▪ Students/teachers are people not just numbers</li> </ul>	Curriculum Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide Software and training</li> </ul>	Curriculum Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide best practices from other districts</li> <li>▪ Provide /share information on our district (School and District profiles are useful)</li> <li>▪ What to do with trends and weakness from student data</li> <li>▪ Give prescription for success</li> </ul>	ELL Director

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Come up with an efficient way to do school attending children data collection. – right now we send out “cold” call requests for information from other districts with no way to require a response.</li> </ul>	Grant Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Common data systems</li> </ul>	Human Resources Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue development of Test Wiz – allowing more applications to flow through – DRA/GRADE</li> <li>▪ Substantial training in use of tools and data – through to action planning to use the data</li> </ul>	Instruction Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help with curricular improvement suggestions</li> </ul>	Principal/Title I director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Track teachers and their students for MCAS progress</li> <li>▪ Begin with assessing teacher/student groups at K level and continue to track student with teachers they have had.</li> <li>▪ Align the grade with standards, track poor performance, student in grade/level student with teachers who are not ready to effectively meet student needs.</li> </ul>	School Support Specialist
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get a relational database</li> <li>▪ Create templates of how districts could use this. We are all doing the same thing, so there must be a value to seeing some similar kinds of analysis.</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE website is inaccessible much of the time</li> <li>▪ Notices are posted late</li> <li>▪ Reminders when the data are already submitted</li> <li>▪ Too much information unless a district has someone devoted to monitoring on a daily basis</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE has been very helpful on the straight SIMS data collection – Joanne Brady in particular</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leave us alone</li> <li>▪ Seriously, requirements change frequently</li> <li>▪ Per Pupil expenditure is always a mystery – Can we have a clear direction, explanation of the process?</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When MCAS data is wrong related to students, it is difficult at best, to get the data corrected – or when material is misplaced, when the tests are scored to have the overall scores corrected</li> <li>▪ Publish a timeline for information requirements</li> <li>▪ If charter schools are public schools, have them held to the same standards and requirements across the board.</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I don't really know. I was thrown into try to retrieve all this information for the superintendent and am finding I can do certain reports/queries in different software, but not in one place</li> </ul>	Technology Admin.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make data more available for formatting</li> <li>▪ Make reductions or minimize redundancy in collection</li> </ul>	Technology Admin.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data collection</li> </ul>	Technology coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer QSP to all schools</li> </ul>	Technology

## Appendix 4 – Marlborough Focus Group Summary

### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

		Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Realize the budgetary constraints of regional/smaller districts</li> <li>▪ Make staffing recommendations</li> <li>▪ Requirements for data for public understanding of funding/staffing requirements</li> </ul>	Technology Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be aware that not all districts use WINDOWS</li> <li>▪ Notify in a timely manner that results have been posted</li> <li>▪ Notify in a timely manner that various data collection is due</li> <li>▪ Share data with other organizations</li> <li>▪ Standardize out placement attendance forms</li> </ul>	Technology Manager
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personal calls to district superintendents to reinforce the need for:</li> <li>▪ Accurate data management</li> <li>▪ Provide necessary time to data people to collect, input and verify information prior to submission.</li> </ul>	Technology/Data Manager
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reinforce the requirement of why this data are being collected</li> <li>▪ Assessment of highly qualified staff</li> </ul>	Title I Director

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### Randolph NCLB Focus Group

#### Responses

Surveys	36
District (Supt, Asst. Supt, Coordinators)	14
School Principal	5
Technology/Data	2
Other/Unknown	15

#### Summary

- Longitudinal Student Data
- Training on Data analysis
- Test Wiz with accurate SIMS/MCAS data
- Regional Schools Accessing Student Data
- Correlating MCAS results with attendance,
- Additional MCAS subgroups (ELL, 504)
- Connecting SIMS data with academic support services/remediation rec'd
- Classroom Teacher access to the student MCAS data
- Ability to merge many software/databases
- Resources for data analysis (staffing, training, infrastructure)

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### RANDOLPH SURVEYS - Detail

#### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

1	Analyze to determine groups/populations who might have needs we have not identified	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Want relevant data that is easily accessible to classroom teachers. MCAS – current/past students, attendance history, whether past/current, Title I, 504, SPED, participation in academic support services, free/red. Lunch, discipline. (Merging Test Whiz, SIMS, and local data – Redicker</li> <li>▪ Easily track students in district... 3, 4, 6, 7,8,10 MCAS results and the same group over time with data regarding the interventions to determine intervention effectiveness.</li> <li>▪ Easily access information on disaggregated groups – Where are they? History, interventions, etc... Was told to get information on 51 African American students in the district, would need access to all 11 schools in the data system.</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use SIMS &amp; MCAS to combine information</li> <li>▪ Templates more readily available</li> <li>▪ Tracking student data over time</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make decisions surrounding curriculum modifications</li> <li>▪ Get data to the level where individual teachers can use it! (rather than central office) Teachers need to be able to look at the students they personally had, have, or are going to have.</li> <li>▪ Allow for codes for teachers</li> </ul>	Curriculum specialist
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify groups that need change</li> </ul>	Title I coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accurately review the student population trends</li> <li>▪ Know breakout data of subgroups</li> <li>▪ Have cross references for students in more than one sub-group</li> <li>▪ Accurately track licensed/highly qualified staff</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use it a part of an assessment of our progress in meeting our school and district data, give options for other important data from the district.</li> <li>▪ Data that is accurate and based on consistent assumptions</li> <li>▪ Data that measures the effectiveness of the data collection regulations and processes. i.e. will SSDR data collection improve school safety or is it time consuming bureaucracy that encourages “looking the other way”?</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify trends by whole groups and subgroups</li> <li>▪ All data linked to attendance, FR/RED lunch, spending, previous scores, IEP, ELL, transient data, 504</li> <li>▪ Usable for grants and operating budgets</li> </ul>	Principal
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine the needs within the district – MCA/highly qualified teachers, etc... - to develop district improvement plans and then record/determine progress.</li> <li>▪ Sort this information easily and need to be able to manipulate data easily for analysis</li> </ul>	Principal

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Benchmark our progress – review against similar districts</li> <li>▪ Comparison of student progress through the system (make this information available)</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need access to data that we can use to measure ourselves against area schools.</li> <li>▪ I need MCAS history on our incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to make data driven curriculum decisions</li> <li>▪ Sometimes I need test results on individual who transfer to our school mid-year</li> </ul>	Testing coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reconcile – test whiz data is not the same as the hard copy of the MCAS data</li> <li>▪ MCAS data updates – students whose files were incomplete and get updated do not have their new data forwarded to the districts and the students.</li> <li>▪ Sort by similar districts</li> </ul>	Curriculum specialist
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use it for:</li> <li>▪ Program improvement, staff development, raise student achievements</li> </ul>	Special Services Administrator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Track achievement of kids who move in to/out of town</li> <li>▪ Merge MCAS, grades, attendance, 504, SPED, ELL, ethnicity to income learning data easily (expand Test Wiz, which works well for some things)- also other standardized data</li> <li>▪ Be able to assign data by teachers so they access what's relevant</li> <li>▪ Rediker is “mergeable” but not easily @ staff</li> </ul>	Director of Curriculum & Instruction
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I want to use data to make decisions and on individual teachers</li> </ul>	Principal
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For educational programs and individual student academic placements, upon entering our regional vocational school system and through their 4 years with us.</li> </ul>	Principal
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine needs – curriculum focus</li> <li>▪ Use data to update budgetary requests</li> </ul>	Health coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use data for:</li> <li>▪ Needs assessment</li> <li>▪ Set goals</li> <li>▪ Challenge policies that may be ineffective</li> <li>▪ Plan for the future</li> <li>▪ Longitudinal tracking of student by school, year, etc...</li> </ul>	Director of Student Services
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ability to take the district data using SASIDS are compared grade to grade, teacher to teacher, school to school, subgroup to subgroup – user friendly</li> <li>▪ Add once per year MCAS update for grades 11 &amp; 12 MCAS retest so as to have most accurate public data</li> <li>▪ Ability to compare/contest “types” of districts</li> <li>▪ Define AYP with subgroups only</li> </ul>	Academic Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilize SIMS to document change in the district’s demographics which this can be used to verify changed in the town’s eligibility for funding</li> </ul>	Curriculum Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cross reference data from other districts when students transfer from district to district</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to identify at the classroom level, which factors effect MCAS</li> <li>▪ Need to identify at individual student level, factors predicting MCAS performance</li> </ul>	Technology Specialist

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to identify how to change teaching methodologies to improve performance</li> <li>▪ Need to make data-drive resource allocation decisions using data</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Answer the questions DOE asks of us – i.e. private school students data needed for Title I</li> <li>▪ Combine data currently (distributed among a variety of databases) to evaluate program effectiveness</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take SIMS data collected and link to MCAS, SAT, class rank, GPA, course placement, SPED and other standardized testing data to supply administration with statistics and information for budget, curriculum and parent information</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longitudinal student data</li> <li>▪ Information on student (individual) participation in Academic Support/remediation</li> <li>▪ Information for regional schools</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to receive data in timely manner</li> </ul>	Principal
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual student longitudinal data (MCAS, attendance, etc.)</li> <li>▪ High school subgroup data attached to the course selection and actual class attendance rather than daily attendance</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longitudinal data</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Correlate student performance with program implementation, attendance, staff attendance, class size</li> <li>▪ Longitudinal data</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disaggregate student performance by user-defined categories</li> </ul>	Asst. Supt
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficulty getting student data from the number of schools in the collaborative</li> </ul>	Collaborative Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merge school data on summer school, after school programs, etc... with MCAS data to analyzed success of these programs</li> <li>▪ Take MCAS/AYP data to the TEACHER LEVEL</li> <li>▪ Have a more accurate Test Wiz report (reflecting SIMS data)</li> <li>▪ Longitudinal individual student data</li> </ul>	

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our district needs staff to explore the potential of the existing system. We probably d not use this to its fullest.</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merging different systems (SIMS, Test Whiz, Rediker)</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers having access to data and files</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mobility within and outside the district</li> </ul>	Title I coordinator

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data input is cumbersome – often bogs down the technical administrator when one field moves to many fields</li> <li>▪ Security portal is often down</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data reports that force information into fields that don't link to our structure.</li> <li>▪ Lack of realization of the political/community reaction to data that needs explanation (no one waits for or trusts explanation).</li> <li>▪ For example – teacher quality data – reporting all of our new teachers as not highly qualified because DOE has a 6-8 month certification delay. And reports, those that work small FTE's in school as district personnel, when people want to cut top district administration and accuracy of data</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time, awareness of data use, lack of communication data available throughout district, not easily available to the teachers</li> </ul>	Principal
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time is the biggest problem – time to digest data, time to discuss, time to take action</li> </ul>	Curriculum specialist
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Staffing</li> <li>▪ Money to pay for staffing</li> </ul>	Special Services Administrator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Money – in a small system there is no data manager. To add one when we're cutting teachers is politically absurd. Not to do it is educationally absurd, plus it gets us in hot water with DOE</li> <li>▪ Reliable data on transient students</li> <li>▪ Inability to correct "closed" data</li> </ul>	Director of Curriculum & Instruction
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diskettes are not able to be opened in excel, not broken down further</li> <li>▪ Training for secretaries</li> <li>▪ New information system software and need more district IT and software people</li> </ul>	Principal
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RVTS are not able to obtain grade 7 ELA and grade 8 Math MCAS scores in a timely manner to identify students in need of remediation/preparation for the Gr 10 MCAS. Since our school's AYP reports and school ratings are based on Gr 10 student performance, we are at a disadvantage when we do not have the scores and individual item analysis for ISSP development on these students.</li> </ul>	Principal
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficulty understanding the significance or relevance on issues</li> <li>▪ Not having a grasp on who/how this data impacts the district</li> </ul>	Director of Student Services
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Timeliness of MCAS at least before scheduling for the next AY</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Timelines and getting data especially for regional high school.</li> </ul>	Academic Coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Technical supports</li> <li>▪ Staffing</li> <li>▪ Financial costs</li> </ul>	Curriculum Coordinator

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vendor compliance</li> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Training</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of proven successful methodologies</li> <li>▪ Software problem (vendors)</li> <li>▪ Structural barriers in the form of school teacher union/resist change and data usage</li> </ul>	Technology specialist
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure – internal administrative structure</li> <li>▪ Training – learning what is available, who in the district in the gatekeeper, knowing what is an easy request and what is an impossible request</li> <li>▪ Frequency of use</li> <li>▪ Incompatibility of financial systems</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis requires staff time to relation the various data sources and provide information o the admin. Staff.</li> <li>▪ Once the process has begun, staff will ask follow-up questions that require additional work to create or want comparison data from other districts and state averages</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Software to manipulate data</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff to conduct analysis</li> <li>▪ Time for analysis</li> <li>▪ Classroom teacher involvement</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other responsibilities during the school year prevent thorough analysis of data</li> </ul>	Principal
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accuracy of data</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data is not easily accessible for schools and classroom teachers</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to technology</li> <li>▪ Access to data</li> <li>▪ Limited number of trained staff (data analysis and data input)</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to integrate data from a variety of sources</li> </ul>	Asst. Supt.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to data w/o identifying individual students</li> </ul>	Collaborative Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SIMS isn't in Test Wiz yet</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue with the excellent support, excellent communication, clear presentations, and respectful reminders</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On mid-cycle and final reports (accountability), include a column under improvement that states what each school's target actually is --- don't just give CPE "change" and yes/no</li> <li>▪ Tart listing 504 &amp; IEP as a "D" code on MCAS reports – on AYP – subgroup SPED is only IEP students</li> </ul>	Curriculum specialist
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't report inaccurate or misleading data</li> <li>▪ Be sure department specialist (in any area) know that most school personnel are generalists – we attend to issues a few times a year</li> <li>▪ Get MCAS away from AYP that is based on different student groups and focuses on individual student progress.</li> <li>▪ Concentrate on linking all reports to give the "big picture"</li> <li>▪ Don't reporting requirements</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easily accessible</li> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Timely</li> </ul>	Principal
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Big thing – access to state data to perform a query with our own specific constraints</li> </ul>	Testing coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional opportunities for training on data management tools</li> <li>▪ It appears that one person or two become the "experts" because they have attended one DOE workshop. Train the trainer model works well but only if the "trainer" is not always the same person in the district (with many other responsibilities). With additional opportunities for training – 6 months or so after the initial training – other personnel in the district might attend for more in-depth understanding</li> </ul>	Curriculum specialist
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer state support</li> </ul>	Director of Curriculum & Instruction
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excel files (data)</li> <li>▪ Provide funding for training</li> </ul>	Principal
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a CD with MCAS data for our Oct1 SIMS data for grade 9 students by December of each year</li> </ul>	Principal
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe schools/SASID attachment may be a problem (FERPA)</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide training of use of data on a district level</li> <li>▪ Provide clearer reporting based on district needs</li> </ul>	Director of Student Services
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide guidelines/definitions or cut off points - for example when is the class of 2003 complete? Are students who just passed the Nov retest eligible to be part of the class of 2003?</li> <li>▪ What is the definition of truant?</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better timing of MCAS information</li> </ul>	Academic

## Appendix 5 – Randolph Focus Group Summary

### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

		Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Greater involvement at the building level</li> </ul>	Curriculum Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Linking SIMS with MCAS scores</li> <li>▪ Providing proven methodologies</li> </ul>	Technology Specialist
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a tool to allow easy linking of data sources that would provide the statistics. Provide summary data from other districts and state averages</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide consultants to work with schools on “data analysis” and “interpretation of instruction”</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student data (that move inside and outside of the district)</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide MCAS results sooner</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow districts to electronically access data for students moving into the system</li> <li>▪ Automate some of the NCLB computations for schools and subgroups</li> <li>▪ Allow districts to add their own custom data to warehouse</li> </ul>	Asst. Supt.

## Appendix 6 – Sturbridge Focus Group Summary

### Sturbridge NCLB Focus Group

#### Responses

Surveys	27
District (Supt, Asst. Supt)	5
School Principal	0
Technology/Data	4
Title I	2
Curriculum Director	1
Other/Unknown	15

#### Summary

- Training on Data analysis
- Time to collect, correct, analyze data
- Longitudinal Student Data
- Process for making data corrections
- Ability to compare MCAS district/school subgroups with state subgroups between a centralized data system and compatibility with local data systems
- Connecting SIMS data with academic support services/remediation rec'd
- Creating a SIMS type system for Teachers
- Access to data that is reported to the DOE (at district and school levels)
- Classroom Teacher access to the student MCAS data
- Ability to merge many software/databases
- Resources for data analysis (staffing, training, infrastructure)
- Regional school districts/vocational schools need to be able to access student records from the state (rather than calling several different feeder schools)
- Ability to make district/district comparisons (test scores, budget, etc.)

## Appendix 6 – Sturbridge Focus Group Summary

### STURBRIDGE SURVEYS - Detail

#### 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH DATA?

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We want to use our data to identify strengths and weaknesses. We want to be able to identify trends – i.e. changes in school population, are we successful at helping students achieve academic excellence?</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Look at the SIMS and check if the student has passed ELA and math MCAS test. At this point some students are taking the tests multiple times. It is getting very difficult to keep track of what has passed and who needs to retake</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Combine it</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need to be able to collect data, sort data, and report it to answer a multitude of questions posed in different ways</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Download in a manner to be used and manipulated</li> <li>▪ Sort on multiple levels</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apply for grants</li> <li>▪ Part of school assessments and recommendations</li> <li>▪ Make changes of implementation of programs</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use different data elements to tell us more about student achievement/instruction</li> <li>▪ Demographics standardized tests – classroom grades</li> </ul>	Academic Data analyst
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access student information and MCAS results without having to re-enter data</li> <li>▪ The state has the information - we need it to be able to better track students and to make decisions about them and programs for them.</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher profiles – certification seniority, salary, assignment, accumulated sick days</li> <li>▪ Building staff profiles – assignment, department, supervisors, work schedule</li> <li>▪ Student profiles – 52 data elements and discipline</li> </ul>	Curriculum/Technology Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual student data to include, formative assessment, DRA, norm referenced assessment, writing rubrics</li> <li>▪ Easy programs for teachers to complete/use/add data</li> </ul>	Director of Student Services
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use it to prepare grant applications under title I and competitive grants</li> <li>▪ To correct relevant information to comply with NCLB as it pertains to grants</li> <li>▪ Create new educational projects based on what the data is telling me this would include collaborations with other educational organizations outside the school district</li> </ul>	Grants Administrator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I need to be able to use the student questionnaires data that is collected as part of MCAS. Right now it comes out of the security portal as gobbledygook that must be translated into an excel spreadsheet. Then it must be put into access and tables/queries be built for each individual piece of data. Very, very cumbersome. I want DOE to build an infrastructure similar to Test Wiz so that the</li> </ul>	Grants Manager

## Appendix 6 – Sturbridge Focus Group Summary

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	<p>data can be sorted by grade, subgroup, school, district for each question. Right now I have to build the file for each individual piece of data. For example, I want to know if Hispanic students in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade watch TV and how that compares to other subgroups and how they score on MCAS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you can help create the infrastructure please call me at 413-529-1500x141. I'm already working with Martha Zorn at UM Amherst in Public Health. The work should be done once for all, instead of creating an infrastructure district by district.</li> </ul>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collect data on educators to determine Highly Qualified</li> <li>▪ Collect data on professional development educators attend to determine percent of educators attending high quality PD</li> <li>▪ Report the prof. dev. needs and highly qualified educator needs</li> <li>▪ Longitudinal data on staff</li> </ul>	Professional Development Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multi-year analysis of student assessment data (MCAS) with tracking of specific growth or lack of growth in subsets of test</li> </ul>	SPED Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gather information and implement programming to address the need</li> </ul>	Substance Abuse Coordinator
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess student progress</li> <li>▪ Track teacher prof. dev.</li> <li>▪ Develop teacher profiles (degree, certification or license, etc...)</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decisions regarding programs</li> <li>▪ Data used to support budgets for appropriate resources</li> <li>▪ Analysis of curriculum</li> <li>▪ Analysis of student strengths/weaknesses in subject areas</li> <li>▪ Communicate in a simple and understandable way to parents, community, teachers</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School level – be able to access data, have standard reports, ability to modify reports</li> <li>▪ Test Wiz – track students by SIMS</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use data to make curriculum and instructional decisions</li> <li>▪ Do root cause analyses and develop action plans</li> <li>▪ Measure/report progress on implementation of action plans</li> <li>▪ Identify trends in achievement/progress</li> <li>▪ Develop professional development plans</li> </ul>	Superintendent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve student performance</li> <li>▪ Improve instruction</li> </ul>	Superintendent Secretary
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access and sort it easily once we've entered it in SIMS – assuming we can have access to our own data, our own up to date data</li> <li>▪ Decisions about needs and weaknesses, strengths in all instructional programmatic arenas with a focus on district school and student and teacher improvement</li> </ul>	Technology Director Grants Director

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1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyze student performance/achievement on: standardized tests, local assessments, learning plan progress, attendance/discipline progress</li> <li>▪ Analyze the impact of curriculum/professional development investments (beyond student performance)</li> </ul>	Technology of Directors
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual student profile over time (kind of an ISSP) type data for individual student weakness areas</li> <li>▪ Larger Cohort data – groups at students by school/by grade, by subgroup</li> <li>▪ Timing of data to inform decisions about Summer school (remediation)</li> </ul>	Title I Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyze by subgroups and content areas to figure out who needs help and where</li> </ul>	Title I Director
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easier manipulation</li> </ul>	

### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More user-friendly input – perhaps EXCEL based that is compatible with the districts</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are successful at collecting accurate data, but we don't have a vehicle to support data analysis. Test Wiz is a good 1<sup>st</sup> step but we need assistance on interpreting our results, the products available are too costly to purchase.</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over 12 databases, triple entry</li> <li>▪ No standards</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primarily for teacher quality data – mentoring</li> <li>▪ An up to date database on our teachers</li> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Training</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some tech. Knowledge limitations</li> <li>▪ Standard format</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Several methods of data collection being used = hard to come up with valid data, hard to put data together and compare with results and recommendations</li> <li>▪ Different people collecting data, different perceptions/terminology</li> <li>▪ When surveying “active consent” can cause problems not getting a valid population</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are just now getting all our data into a comprehensive, usable system. We have a long way to go before we can tie classroom grades to MCAS to attendance, etc. (let alone longitudinal data!)</li> </ul>	Academic Data analyst
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time and personnel at district level as well as improvement of our internal audit process</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data collection – software available (Win School) does not permit/collect all 52 data elements</li> <li>▪ Requires separate support software to enter balance of the data elements. In short, we must run two software programs and then merge data to comply with SIMS reporting</li> </ul>	Curriculum/Technology Director

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### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Staff to create data systems</li> </ul>	Director of Student Services
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The system is very confusing and obscure in many ways, esp. for someone who needs to create a universal system for grants management for an entire district</li> </ul>	Grants Administrator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of time</li> <li>▪ Lack of knowing what is possible. Sometimes I don't know what question to ask about doing this or that because I can't imagine what I don't know about.</li> <li>▪ Principals who don't like what data says refuse to use it and insist the data is invalid</li> <li>▪ The IT person in my district doesn't tell people what data is available so it gets warehoused and then unused.</li> <li>▪ Lack of data analysis expert I the district... perhaps more training in data use for key district staff would be enough</li> </ul>	Grants Manager
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Money</li> <li>▪ Hardware</li> <li>▪ Networking</li> <li>▪ Software</li> <li>▪ Access to data in real time</li> </ul>	Professional Development Coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't really see any</li> </ul>	Substance Abuse Coordinator
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding of software and hardware</li> <li>▪ Getting School Committees and town officials to understand the importance of data collection</li> <li>▪ Finding software that addresses the myriad of data elements being collected</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training for staff</li> <li>▪ Confusion about analysis</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time to spend in using the data</li> <li>▪ Personnel to collect, manage, analyze data</li> <li>▪ Training for staff to use templates for instructional assessment</li> <li>▪ Funds for tech. Equipment and staffing</li> </ul>	Superintendent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of funding and adequate staffing</li> </ul>	Superintendent Secretary
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of easy access to the data we collect and send to DOE</li> <li>▪ Resources to have a data warehouse (at local level)</li> <li>▪ Funding for staff need to collect, enter, report and sort all the data we need – so we need more non-tech ways to give data access to not techies</li> </ul>	Technology Director Grants Director
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural perspectives</li> <li>▪ Skill sets of teachers/admin</li> <li>▪ Information management team is overtaxed</li> </ul>	Technology of Directors

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### 2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH DATA?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Predetermined focus on MCAS takes away from other important factors</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Funds</li> </ul>	Title I Director

### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Align data (clear guidelines as to how to access data)</li> <li>▪ More specifics access to secure portal</li> <li>▪ In lieu of missing school records, be able to search for students that remain enrolled in MA schools</li> <li>▪ More timely release of data</li> <li>▪ MCAS alt. Assessment</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DOE is doing an exceptional job!</li> <li>▪ The SIMS process has helped us to establish consistency within our own district</li> <li>▪ Help creating a common database to capture teacher quality and status</li> <li>▪ More emphasis to supt's on working and who is responsible for accurate data collection</li> <li>▪ This is more than just a data entry duty</li> <li>▪ Understanding the SIMS elements and definitions requires training, time...</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use local id's as well as SASID, 2-way exchange of data</li> <li>▪ Adopt SIF – state RFR</li> <li>▪ Adopt a data warehouse – state RFP</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I think that when we provide data to the doe – if they could share the data will all aspects of the department so that we would not have to continue to reproduce the same answers already given.</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a full day training on technology tools and use</li> <li>▪ How to manipulate CSU files into Excel, Access, SPSS, etc...</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explain formulas – i.e. how is dropout rate determined – what baselines, etc... We see the end product posted, but are not always clear on how it was calculated</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe &amp; Drug Free schools data collection – it's great that you can get data – however, it does not track throughout to get a sense of patterns</li> <li>▪ Clarification workshops on data collection/definitions</li> <li>▪ Technical assistance (hands on help)</li> <li>▪ User friendly data results</li> <li>▪ Help informing parents about NCLB as it relates to data collection/management (active consent issues)</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Best practices for utilizing the information we already have</li> <li>▪ Help coordinate, disseminate ways in which some districts might be using data effectively</li> </ul>	Academic Data analyst

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### 3. WHAT BIG OR SMALL THINGS COULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO HELP YOU?

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standardize reporting software – i.e. teacher information in future collection software should be made available by the DOE</li> </ul>	Asst. Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Single software solution</li> </ul>	Curriculum/Technology Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a program for schools to use to enter individual student data beginning in the early years</li> </ul>	Director of Student Services
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I'm not sure. I need to learn more about the ways the data needs to be reported.</li> </ul>	Grants Administrator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report the patterns discovered in the safe and drug free school data</li> <li>▪ What subgroups do?</li> <li>▪ How does violence and drug data correspond with MCAS performance</li> <li>▪ How does violence data connect with student questionnaire data</li> <li>▪ For example, do student who are using drugs (reported in SDF have attendance issues (SIMS) and how does that connect to MCAS performance?</li> <li>▪ Report data over time</li> <li>▪ Connect data collected for Perkins grant/career education to SIMS</li> </ul>	Grants Manager
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Suggest/provide software that will be applicable to DSSR "District School Staffing" Report</li> </ul>	Professional Development Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ My Tech School pulls kids from 7 different school systems. We should be able to access and import their student records directly to our student database, as well as into DOE sponsored software such as Test Wiz</li> <li>▪ Tracking of graduate surveys is problematic. Post-graduate survey (MISER)</li> </ul>	SPED Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Come to local districts to assist</li> </ul>	Substance Abuse Coordinator
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standard reports</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	Superintendent
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist with adequate funding to update technology (hardware and software)</li> </ul>	Superintendent Secretary
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update our district/school profiles (2000 &amp; 2001 data)</li> <li>▪ Give us easy access to our own reported data – entered by the one overburdened clerk who works part-time</li> <li>▪ Easily open and use the MCAS CD with our scores</li> <li>▪ Adopt a SIF standard for data programs</li> </ul>	Technology Director Grants Director
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide grant money for people/roles to develop data management information processing capacity</li> </ul>	Technology of Directors
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generate clear reports by grade, subgroups, schools, district</li> <li>▪ Use our local data – we have a lot of it!</li> </ul>	Title I Director

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