

# Data Collections Approval Process

Issued **December, 2016**

TO: Nebraska Department of Education Staff  
FROM: Dr. Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education  
SUBJECT: Data Collections Approval Process  
CONTACT: Contact Data, Research & Evaluation (DRE) 471-2288

## PURPOSE

This process is established to ensure that the Nebraska Department of Education (Department) collects the highest quality data possible while at the same time minimizing the data collection burden on local school districts, private schools, and other respondents. Refer to Administrative Memorandum #706, DATA QUALITY for additional information.

## INTRODUCTION

The Data, Research and Evaluation team leader (Data Collections Review Officer), or his/her designee, is responsible for reviewing all data collection activities and their associated forms, instructions, and related memoranda on a recurring basis, with the objectives being:

1. To promote maximum coordination and efficiency of data collection activities within the Department;
2. To insure that sufficient justification exists in law, regulation, or administrative need for each data collection activity;
3. To maintain an inventory of data collections, use, storage, and risk associated with the data collections; and
4. To maintain an overall Department data dictionary of data elements and definitions associated with department data collections.

All data collection instruments that are distributed to public or private school or agency personnel by or under the sponsorship of the Department *shall be submitted for review and receive authorization at least **two weeks** prior to distribution.*

## DEFINITIONS

- Authorization : The determination that sufficient justification exists in law, regulation, or education programs for the data collection activity and that the instrument is approved for distribution to public or private school personnel. A copy of the electronic Data Collection Approval Form (including information regarding surveys) is attached as Appendix A to this Administrative Memorandum. However, the electronic Data Collection Approval Form **must** be completed online at: [https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3F4qTPcLpufAeuV](https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3F4qTPcLpufAeuV)

- Data Collection Instrument : Any electronic or paper form, application, memorandum, or other device (i.e., telephone survey or personal interview), together with its instructions and memoranda, which requests or requires public or private school or agency personnel to collect, maintain, and/or report data to the Department. This includes:
  - Recurrent Data Collections: Data collections due on a regularly scheduled or routine basis.
  - One-Time Survey Data Collections: An instrument that has been prepared to collect data one time only and is not intended for use on a recurring basis.
  - As Requested Data Collections: Data collections with no due date and are either filed as needed or are filed at a date determined by the official appropriation and release of funds.
- Data collections that do not request a public or private school or agency to collect, maintain, and/or return data to the Department are not included within this Administrative Memorandum. Examples not included are:
  1. Data collections used by the Department for the collection of information from other state or federal agencies;
  2. Federal data collection activities which are not under the supervision of the Department and are neither distributed from or returned to the Department; and
  3. Internal Department data collections.
- Respondent : The person or entity that must submit the information or data requested.
- Review: Entails examination of the technical aspects and justification of the data collection activity.
- Storage : The plan, process, and location for storage of the data collected, if appropriate, is identified for inventory purposes.

#### **CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL**

1. Clarity: The information must be requested in a clear and concise fashion, which can be easily understood by the respondent.
2. Definition: All terms utilized and all data collected must be clearly stated, using definitions that are commonly used by other sections or agencies, or are based on accepted standards.
3. Ease of Response: The information must be requested in a format that requires as little effort to respond as practicable, which may include submission of information in a current data collection.
- ~~4. Electronic Collection : The Department collection of data shall be done electronically.~~
5. Need: There must be a written, defensible need for the information requested based on one or more of the following:
  - a. A statute or regulation that requires collection of the data;
  - b. A specified decision, which cannot reasonably be made without the information;

- c. A report required of the Department by an external agency which requires this information;
  - d. A legitimate research need which cannot be met without this piece of information; or
  - e. A report distributed by the Department which requires the specified information.
6. Rationale: Each data request should give the respondent an easily understood description of the reasons for which it is being collected.
7. Redundancy: Data should be collected only once and then should be shared among Department staff if permitted by law.
8. Sample: Data should be collected from as few respondents as possible that will ensure reliability.
9. Timing: The data request must be timed to allow adequate lead time and create the least possible conflict with school schedules.

### **REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION**

Data collection instruments shall be scheduled for review and authorization as follows:

1. Development of New Data Collection Activities: Review and authorization will be required when new data collection activities, including one-time surveys and other data collection instruments, are proposed.
2. Changes in Data Collection Activities: Review and authorization will be required when the following occur:
  - a. Revision of existing instruments in order to add or delete data or make changes in the format;
  - b. Elimination of a data collection; or
  - c. Consolidation of one or more active data collections.
3. Annual Review and Authorization: Instruments currently in use shall be reviewed annually and receive authorization at least two weeks prior to the anticipated distribution date.

### **PROCESS FOR APPROVAL**

Any and all criteria included herein are subject to additions and/or deletions by the Data Collections Review Officer or designee.

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| Sponsor | 1. | Analyze perceived data collection needs.  |
| Sponsor | 2. | Consider how the data can be collected electronically (contact DRE for assistance). |

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| Sponsor                         | 3. | Prepare a justification and plan for data collection, design the data collection, write instructions, gather related materials and complete the electronic “Data Collection Approval Form.” The electronic Data Collection Approval Form is available at: <a href="https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3F4qTPcLpufAeuV">https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3F4qTPcLpufAeuV</a> (contact DRE for assistance). |
| Sponsor                         | 4. | Submit electronically the information in 3 above to the Data Collections Review Officer.  |
| DRE                             | 5. | Ensure that all documentation has been provided and assigned an official Department data collection number.   |
| Data Collections Review Officer | 6. | Review the data collection based on the Criteria for Approval. Determine if the data collection is subject to review by the Department’s Data Governance Council.   |
| Data Collections Review Officer | 7. | Notify the sponsor that the data collection has been approved or disapproved. Work with the sponsor to implement required changes to disapproved data collections.  |
| DRE                             | 8. | Log the data collection and related information for inventory into the Department database.   |

### **DATA COLLECTION NUMBER**

The official data collection number consists of the descriptive letters “NDE”, a two-digit number indicating the section responsible for the instrument and a unique combination of numbers for each data collection. The official data collection number is assigned by the Data Collections Review Officer or designee.

The official data collection number shall appear in the upper right-hand corner of each paper or electronic data collection or at the footer of survey collections.

### **MASTER CALENDAR**

All formula and competitive grants, any report or forms required by the Department, and data collections including the grants management system, the Consolidated Data Collection and the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System shall be listed on the NDE Master Calendar.