Education Data Advisory Committee (EDAC)
2025-26 Annual Report to the State Board of Education and the Education Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Executive Summary

The Education Data Advisory Committee (EDAC) continued its mission in 2025–26 to review and advise on data collection forms, processes, and practices that impact Colorado's K-12 education community. This year's work focused on strengthening transparency around the purpose and value of data collections, supporting data modernization efforts, and reinforcing EDAC's role as a bridge between Local Education Providers (LEPs) and state reporting needs.

A core focus this year was the Statewide Student Information Solution (SSIS) engagement and the broader need to modernize Colorado's education data environment and make meaningful strides in supporting reporting burden. EDAC members provided local perspective, surfaced concerns from the field, and helped frame the context for potential solutions to mitigate concerns of burden while supporting state and federal reporting requirements. While the committee recognizes that no single solution will meet every local need or preference, EDAC supports continued momentum toward a more coordinated, efficient, and sustainable data system.

EDAC also continued to evolve as a meaningful advisory body and the committee has increasingly engaged in more direct and substantive discussion about the burden, design, and intended use of data requests. CDE staff have also engaged the committee more candidly, seeking advice on how to solve practical challenges rather than only presenting completed forms for approval. This shift has strengthened the value of EDAC's feedback and improved the partnership between CDE and the field.

EDAC Scope and Function

EDAC is a legislatively mandated committee charged with reviewing data collection requests to minimize unnecessary burden on local education providers. EDAC reviews collections from CDE and all state agencies to provide recommendations to improve clarity, reduce duplication, and ensure that data requests are aligned with statute, rule, and program need. EDAC's work is not limited to intake and review of forms; it also provides an important district perspective on collection design, technology, reporting, and the relationship between state data needs and local implementation realities.

2025–26 Areas of Focus

- **Data Burden and Modernization:** EDAC supported the SSIS project and the need to modernize Colorado's education data environment. Members acknowledged concern in the field, noting prior efforts did not result in visible change, while also recognizing that the current environment reflects decades of decentralized system and reporting decisions. EDAC supports continued advocacy for a recommended solution that can reduce duplication, improve interoperability, and create better experiences for local education providers and state staff.
- **Transparency – Purpose/Use:** EDAC continued to emphasize that data burden cannot be

understood only by the volume of forms or submissions. From a field perspective, collections beyond core mandates do not always have a clear or direct benefit to the district or community submitting the data. EDAC recommends that CDE consistently articulate the purpose, statutory requirement, and value of each collection. This includes distinguishing between data collected for compliance, funding, and outcome measurement.

- **EDAC's Evolving Role and Partnership with CDE:** The committee continued to move beyond the perception of "rubber stamping" data collections. EDAC members asked more substantive questions about whether data collections are necessary, whether existing data could meet the same need, how the information will be used, and whether the design of the collection minimizes burden. CDE staff also demonstrated greater willingness to engage the committee earlier and more openly, including asking EDAC to help identify practical solutions to problems staff have been tasked with solving.
- **Cross-Agency and P-20 Collaboration:** EDAC continued to recognize that education data needs extend beyond CDE and K-12 reporting. The committee appreciated engagement from the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) and identified additional opportunities to strengthen participation from other partners, including the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). As Colorado continues the Governor's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and broader P-20 data needs, EDAC can play an important role in advocating for the use of existing data through appropriate data sharing agreements and memoranda of understanding, rather than creating new collections or forms.
- **Collection Design and Field Experience:** EDAC noted continued improvement in the design of collections submitted for review. CDE staff more consistently used LEP terminology, provided stronger context-setting questions, and incorporated logic-based survey design, including skip-logic. These improvements help respondents better understand why data are being requested and reduce completion time. EDAC encourages continued attention to collection design, especially where the data are highly local in nature or the purpose is not clear to respondents.

Committee Accomplishments

EDAC's work this year reflected meaningful progress across several areas. First, the committee served as an important advisory and advocacy body for the Statewide SIS project. Members helped socialize the need for modernization, provided field-based perspective on longstanding challenges, and supported the idea that data modernization should be framed as a "help us help you" effort. A more modern structure has the potential to create mutual benefits by reducing redundant work, improving data quality, and making state reporting more sustainable. Additionally, EDAC strengthened the quality and engagement of the review process. Committee members increasingly delved to understand the "why" behind collections, including ties to statutory, regulatory, funding, compliance, or programmatic purpose. This helped expand discussion beyond simply burden of effort to also purpose, value, and necessity.

CDE staff continued to improve the quality of collection materials submitted to EDAC. Consistent use of LEP definitions, clearer terminology, logical survey design, and improved context-setting supported the review process and clear communication to the field. EDAC recognizes these improvements as evidence of a stronger partnership between the committee and CDE staff.

Looking Ahead: 2026–27 Focus Areas

1. **Continue Supporting Statewide SIS and Data Modernization:** *EDAC* should continue to provide local perspective and advocacy as CDE advances the Statewide SIS project and related

modernization efforts. The committee can help communicate both the need for investment and the reality that any recommended solution will involve trade-offs. EDAC should support continued momentum while helping CDE understand where local sacrifices, implementation challenges, or unmet needs may require additional support.

2. **Strengthen Transparency Around Intent and Purpose:** EDAC recommends that each collection includes a clear explanation of why the data are needed, what legal or programmatic requirement they support, how the data will be used, who the audience is, and what districts receive in return. This would help move the field beyond the perception of a one-way data submission process and toward a clearer understanding of the value and purpose of each request.
3. **Aligning EDAC with CDE Data Governance:** EDAC's focus on intake, burden, and collection review should be connected to CDE's broader data governance work. Data governance can help identify duplicative collections, clarify data ownership, assess report usage, support data sharing decisions, and evaluate whether existing data can meet new needs. EDAC should remain a key advisory partner as this work matures.
4. **Expand Cross-Agency and P-20 Participation***:* EDAC should encourage participation from the Colorado Community College System, the Colorado Department of Higher Education, and other partners involved in P-20 data discussions. As the state advances Statewide Longitudinal Data System efforts, EDAC can advocate for responsible data sharing, use of existing data, and reduced reliance on new district collections when the information may already exist elsewhere.
5. **Improve Communication and Public Visibility***:* EDAC should consider posting or distributing the annual report through a trackable URL to better understand who is accessing the report and how it is being used. Increased transparency around EDAC's work may help strengthen understanding of the committee's role and demonstrate the value EDAC provides to districts, CDE, and state partners.
6. **Continue Collection-Specific Improvements***:* EDAC should continue encouraging collection designs that use clear terminology, logic-based questions, and concise explanations of purpose. For collections involving behavior or other highly local data, forms should clearly explain whether the collection supports state compliance, program effectiveness, funding, public reporting, or another defined purpose. EDAC also encourages CDE to explore opportunities to expand useful historical views in public reporting tools, such as providing multiple years of historical data where appropriate and feasible.

Conclusion

As Colorado's education data environment becomes more complex, EDAC's role as a bridge between state requirements and local realities remains essential. The committee recognizes that data burden is not only a function of individual collections, but also the result of legacy architecture, decentralized reporting practices, and decades of system decisions. Addressing these challenges will require a holistic approach, sustained investment, and continued partnership across CDE, districts, BOCES, charter schools, administrative units, and other state agencies.

EDAC appreciates the growing candor and collaboration with CDE staff and the increased willingness to use the committee as a problem-solving partner. With continued focus on transparency, modernization, cross-agency coordination, and meaningful return of value to districts, EDAC is positioned to help Colorado make measurable progress toward a more efficient, understandable, and sustainable education data environment.