



Data Quality Certification Program

Statewide Longitudinal Data System

2009-2010

Policies and Procedures Document

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Introduction

Scope of the Document

This document describes the policies and procedures related to the Maine Department of Education's Data Quality Certification program.

Data Quality Certification Program Background and Purpose

The goal of the Data Quality Certification (DQC) program is to support school staff in building a culture of data quality, independent of the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) component utilized. This will enable all stakeholders to better understand and utilize longitudinal data for improving student achievement in Maine schools.

The training program is divided into two levels. The first focuses on the procedural aspects of data entry and understanding data quality from multiple perspectives. While certification as such will not be required, the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) will campaign aggressively for the development of this capacity at the local level, using appropriate rewards and recognitions for participants. The program offers all school staff in the State of Maine the ability to complete the program via onsite and online sessions.

Due to the unique, role-based needs of school personnel, four certification strands are available; data coordination, data entry, program staff. The program affirms that the responsibilities of a data steward may be filled by individuals or teams, and it will prepare those completing it successfully to train others to fill this role. Thus, the data quality initiative develops a self-sustaining training capacity to support continued integration of disparate systems into the SLDS.

The second level of training goes beyond the procedural knowledge in level one, and helps school personnel to review, examine, and interpret their data. The skills and decisions needed for this component of the program are more complex than in level one. At this stage, school individuals are asked to examine the information they have, form pertinent questions, and seek appropriate ways to answer those questions accurately and efficiently. Training for this level is also delivered in both onsite and online platforms.

General Certification Prerequisites

Participants in the Data Quality Certification – Data Coordination Strand should have at least one full year of experience working with the MEDMS and/or Infinite Campus (IC) prior to registering. The program materials are intended to provide high-level instruction in the use of SLDS components and data quality strategies, and they do not include instruction on the basics of the different systems. New staff members should not register for the Data Coordination strand until they have experience with MEDMS or IC. The MDOE offers other training sessions to support new staff.

Policies & Procedures

Certification Windows and Cycles

Each strand is conducted in a similar manner as a course, and has a defined window in which all requirements must be met. The windows are designed to give participants enough time to complete the requirements, and are announced prior to registration. Certification cycles coincide with the current school year, and will help to determine cohorts of certified participants.

Registration

All DQC participants must register for and be accepted into the Data Quality Certification strand of their choice via online registration. Upon acceptance, a confirmation email will be sent to the registrant letting him/her know that registration is confirmed.

Strands have a limited enrollment for each session, so registrations are on a first-come, first-served basis until all available spaces have been filled. (Registration may be initially limited per unit to allow broad participation.) Those who register for a strand that has been filled for a particular window may wish to be placed on a waiting list. Participants who register for a particular strand but realize (usually after a class or two) that another strand would be more appropriate may change strands as long as the following criteria are met:

1. There is room in the new strand;
2. There is enough time left in the window to complete all of the requirements for the new strand;
3. The participant receives written approval from the SLDS Trainer to switch strands.

Participants can only register for one strand per certification cycle.

Training Platforms, Schedules, and Communications

Strands are offered using a combination of onsite and online delivery methods. Generally, an onsite class will be used to commence a certification window, and online classes will be utilized for subsequent material and activities. In addition, the MDOE, MEDMS, Infinite Campus Project Portal, MEDMS Blog, and other sites are used to distribute information to all participants, and those interested. Email and the online virtual learning environment will be the official modes of communicating deadlines, information and reminders to all participants.

Schedules for registration and windows are published prior to the beginning of registration. Depending on need and availability, strand windows may be repeated at different times throughout the cycle to increase opportunities to participate.

Certification Strands

All of the certification strands will enable school staff to create a culture of data quality through effective data policies and procedures at the school, district, and state levels. Each strand, however, will have a specific focus:

Data Coordination – a comprehensive perspective on entry, reporting, validation and certification of data

Data Entry – a perspective on the importance of accurate data at the time of entry

Program Staff – a perspective on validation and certification of data

Course Attendance and Requirements

Collaboration and sharing of ideas is a major component of each certification strand. Because of this, participants are required to attend all classes in their chosen strand, and must complete all activities and assignments within the defined window. Attendance is taken and recorded for all classes. Participants who fail to attend all classes required for their window must discontinue certification and will be given the option to re-register for the program the following cycle.

In order to ensure a smooth progression through each strand, it is highly recommended that participants complete all assignments prior to the next class. Ultimately, however, all requirements must be met before the close of the window.

Participants who are unable to submit all activities and “homework” requirements within the window will be given the option to discontinue certification or to go on a waiting list for the following cycle. Those participants with extenuating circumstances that prevent them from submitting all requirements in time must notify the SLDS Trainer via an Extension Request Form. These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the SLDS Trainer. The submission of an Extension Request Form does not guarantee that an extension will be granted. Ultimately, a response will be sent in writing.

Contact Hours and CEUs

Documentation of contact hours will be provided to all participants, based on the official record of attendance. In addition, Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be available to those participants who wish to pursue this documentation and have successfully completed all strand requirements. All fees associated with the awarding of CEUs will be the responsibility of the participant. Please contact the SLDS Trainer for more information on how to obtain CEUs.

Final Assessment

As stated previously, the goal of this program is to support school personnel in building a culture of data quality in their own schools and districts. In order to evaluate each participant’s work toward understanding the necessity and steps essential to developing this, a final assessment is utilized prior to awarding the certification.

The final assessment is “open book” and participants are able to use any materials available to them as they complete the assessment. The assessment must be completed individually, and within the strand window. A score of at least a three (meets the standard) on a four-point scale is necessary in order to fulfill this requirement.

Participants who do not achieve a score of three on the final assessment will be given an additional opportunity to do so. Participants who do not meet the standard after the second opportunity will be encouraged to register for the next strand window available.

Training Materials

Many of the training materials used in this program have been adapted from the National Forum on Education Statistics – Forum Curriculum for Improving Education Data. Participants are free to use these materials to help build a culture of data quality in their own schools.

Certification Maintenance Requirements

State and federal data reporting requirements change continuously. All Data Quality certified staff must complete 2 hours of additional training annually in order to maintain a “current” certification status. Participants will be required to participate in annual Planned Changes sessions, and they must complete an annual maintenance assessment, achieving a score of at least a three (meets the standard). Only one re-take of the maintenance assessment will be allowed.

Data Quality certified staff are encouraged to complete their maintenance requirements each year following their initial certification. Those who fail to maintain their certification will be required to complete the strand again to become recertified.

Program Review and Evaluation

A group of nearly 30 individuals, representing the state in both geography and role, has been convened to review program documentation and plans. The group will also be instrumental in providing feedback to the Department as the program progresses.

In addition, certification strand participants will be given an opportunity to provide feedback and evaluation once they have completed a session and/or window.

Resources and Support

The Maine Department of Education has an interest in supporting school staff in improving the quality of data that is reported. Should school staff need assistance, please contact:

Topic	Contact	Email	Phone Number
Data Quality Certification	Daniel Chuhta	daniel.chuhta@maine.gov	(207) 624-6810
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