



Data Protection and Privacy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) treats data confidentiality and the privacy of student educational records very seriously. It complies with all federal laws including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), state statutes, and guidelines to protect confidential data.

What data does the CSDE collect?

The CSDE collects data regarding students, staff, facilities, fiscal and programs to comply with federal and state laws, regulations, and requirements. The [CSDE's Data Acquisition Plan](#) summarizes the data collected, the frequency of collection, and the source of the mandate (federal, state, or other requirement) that necessitates the data collection.

How does the CSDE use data?

The CSDE uses student, staff, facilities, and fiscal data to analyze the effectiveness of districts, schools and educators in preparing students for success in college, career, and life. Such evaluations and studies are designed to ensure compliance with federal/state reporting requirements, provide technical assistance and support, and ensure the effective and judicious use of limited fiscal resources.

Is the CSDE collecting additional data points as a result of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or the Smarter Balanced assessment?

No, the CSDE is not collecting any new data because of the CCSS or the Smarter Balanced assessments. The Smarter Balanced assessments simply take the place of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT).

How does the CSDE protect confidential data?

The CSDE implements technical and security-related protections to ensure that confidential data are only accessible to authorized individuals or organizations. For example:

- The CSDE does not collect Social Security Numbers (SSNs) for students in pre-K through 12. To track students in the system, the CSDE generates a random, unique identification number for each student, called the State Assigned Student Identification (SASID).
- All confidential data are stored on secure servers behind stringent multi-level firewall protections and monitored by sophisticated intrusion detection software.

- Data are only accessible to individuals with the requisite authorization credentials and access is limited per user to very specific data elements.
- The CSDE does not permit the reporting of individual student data to the public. When publicly reporting aggregate totals, the CSDE further minimizes the risk of identification of individual students by not releasing the exact number if the total is fewer than six. In these instances, the aggregate count is simply represented by an asterisk.
- On a limited basis, the CSDE enters into agreements with organizations to perform audits and evaluations of federal and state-funded programs, conduct research or administer and report on statewide assessments. Such agreements restrict terms of use and require stringent security practices to protect confidential data.

Does the CSDE provide individual student data to the federal government?

No. The CSDE does not provide individual student data to the federal government. It should be noted that implementing the CCSS and administering the Smarter Balanced assessments do not change Connecticut's reporting requirements to the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Connecticut will continue to provide USED with school-level aggregate data as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended in 2002. FERPA, along with three other federal statutes, prohibits the federal government from establishing a database with personally identifiable student information.

Does the CSDE retain ownership of all confidential data?

Yes. The CSDE retains ownership of all confidential data that may be shared with any other organization pursuant to an authorized agreement. This remains true with Smarter Balanced.