Minnesota Department of
Education

Frequently Asked Questions: Early Education Student

This document contains the following sections:

Information added since the last revision is in *italics*.

General

1. What is the purpose of Early Education Student?

Early learning makes a difference in a child's life. Early Education Student is a system to identify and track children who participate in Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness. We need to track which programs parents choose, so we can better understand the transition between early learning programs and elementary school. *We will also use the information to satisfy federal reporting requirements.*

2. Why now?

We currently identify children in Early Childhood Screening, Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education, so extending similar procedures to ECFE/SR (Early Childhood Family Education/School Readiness) is the next step in understanding patterns and pathways prior to kindergarten.

The federal grants we received from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund competitions support the implementation of Early Education Student. This initiative aligns with Governor Dayton's Seven Point Plan for Achieving Excellence for Better Schools for a Better Minnesota. Minnesota is leading the nation in pioneering preschool finance solutions.

3. When is the due date?

The due date is August 31 each year. If that falls on a weekend, it is the subsequent business day.

4. Can our district require a birth certificate to enroll children in ECFE or School Readiness?

No. Early childhood programs or any school-based program cannot require a birth certificate for registration or enrollment. To verify a child's name and age, parents may provide a birth certificate, passport, baptismal record, health care record or similar document.

Families served by early childhood programs are often more likely to lack formal documentation than the general population. It is critical that MARSS staff work to support early childhood staff in serving these families.

It is important that early childhood staff record children's names as accurately as possible, so we can track them moving forward. Families without formal documentation are often those most likely to benefit from early childhood programs. Meet with your colleagues in Early Childhood Screening, Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education to understand how they have handled these issues.

5. What if a child is transferring into our program from another school district? How do we find out the SSID Number?

Use the online State Student Identification Validation System. The system requires superintendent authorization to access. You can also work with your MARSS Coordinator to complete a "Notification of Change in Student Enrollment - Request for State Reporting Number." The student start date is not relevant for ECFE and public preschool services.

6. What does MDE do with the data?

We are collecting this data as part of the Early Learning Challenge Grant requirements, and retiring similar elements from historical reporting systems. Secure Reports are available online for district staff authorized to access the Early Education Student system. Aggregated reports will be posted on our website. We may use summary data from the reports in grant proposals, for analysis and in providing technical assistance.

7. Is EE Student data shared with any other agency?

Summary data from the reports is public, and will be available to anyone. Student level data is not public. The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and federal privacy law regulates the use of this data.

8. How long is EE Student data kept?

There is no end date for the retention of the data.

Getting Into the System

9. Why can't I access EE Student with my username and password for other MDE systems?

You must add EE Student to your MDE account by requesting access online. From the MDE home page, select School Support > Data Submissions > Early Education Student. Select Request Access when prompted, and define your role and district. You will receive a *confirmation email when your request has been processed. Once you receive the confirmation email, you can access EE Student.*

10. I've requested access to the system multiple times. Some of my acceptances have been accepted and previous ones were rejected. Am I in or out?

You are in and should be able to enter data or upload a file. If not, please ensure your superintendent has sent authorization on your behalf. Then contact MDE.EEStudent@state.mn.us to see what next steps are needed to get you into the system.

11. I forgot my password *or username* – what do I do?

Click the link on the log-in screen for more information if you've forgotten your password *or user name.*

12. Why do I receive an error saying some information matched an existing account?

Discrepancies as minor as upper or lower case could prohibit access. The security system has built-in checks to prevent duplication of user accounts. It will check for unique user names, first and last names, email and phone numbers. If you have an existing account, proceed with the Forgot Your MDE account Information Path to obtain that information. Through this path, you can retrieve/confirm User ID, Password, and/or Secret Answer. Each requested item will be emailed to the email address defined on your account profile. Allow for relay of emailed information before proceeding with another request or action. Recommended use is to retrieve User ID, then once you have received that information, request the password in the same fashion, to have both pieces emailed to your account profile email address, which ensures you have both correct.

13. How do I reset my password?

Once you have logged in with your User ID and Password, or accessed View Your MDE Account, choose Change Password from the left navigation panel.

14. Why does my Favorite or Bookmark link to EE Student result in an error message?

The incorrect screen may have been saved as Favorite or Bookmarked. The secure login screen cannot be bookmarked.

15. What do I do if I am responsible to submit for more than one district?

You will need only one account in Early Education Student, but you need to be sure your access request includes both. This can be validated in your district school selection list to see if you can select all submissions for which you are accountable. If not, access your account profile and select the Modify button to re-request the comprehensive access to all districts you need (the most recent request overrides previous requests.)

16. Is there a link to the State Student Identification system to correct any issues?

Yes. This is built into the program to help districts quickly resolve any data errors. Users will need to have a superintendent's authorization in place for the State Student Identification

Validation system. This is separate from the superintendent's authorization for Early Education Student.

17. Is this a legitimate expense for ECFE and/or School Readiness?

Yes. Fund 1 or Fund 4 funds may be used.

18. Do we have to use the parent letter?

No. Many districts are creating notes to attach to the Parent Questionnaire describing the importance of the information to increase response rates. MDE is happy to review your district's version so that other districts may use it.

ED Forms

19. What forms do we use?

For the 2014-15 school year, only the Parent Questionnaire (ED-02470-03) for EE Student is used with parents. For the 15-16 school year, Parent Questionnaire (ED-02470-04) for EE Student is used with parents. There are no changes between 02 to 04 except the removal of the school year term to allow for use over multiple years.

Upon district request, we created the Early Education Student ED Form (02471-03+). This is NOT to be distributed to parents. It may facilitate communication between the Early Childhood and MARSS offices if MARSS is doing all of the data entry. Use it ONLY if it helps your district.

At trainings from November 2013 forward, the ED forms are associated with colors. The Parent Questionnaire (ED-02470-01+) is blue and the Early Education Student Form (02471-01) is yellow.

20. Why are the demographic questions the same across scholarships, School Readiness and ECFE?

This was done intentionally to align the reporting across program areas and simplify administration. Parents need only complete one per year. The district may gather the information in any format (online registration, paper and pencil, interpreters, etc.).

21. What are some options for distributing the Parent Questionnaire?

Based on experiences from the Kindergarten Entrance Assessment, districts may want to present the questionnaires during special events or parent teacher conferences, with an envelope for each parent. Then the parent places their response in a larger manila envelope before leaving. That manila envelope is then passed to the person doing the data entry.

Some districts have also found success bundling an entire registration packet for each parent in a folder or clip. Then when the parent returns all of the information, the Parent Questionnaire can be assigned the correct SSID number.

22. What do we do if it is not the parent attending with the child?

Use the practices your district previously did with the Participant Questionnaire. Often, districts will ask that the person attending takes the form home to the parents for them to complete and then return.

The People to Report

23. Why is parent name and DOB requested?

Every item we can add to a child's file that will remain constant helps solidify that child's identity over time. It helps us build a database for effective public policy across funding streams. This is especially important as children in early childhood move between education, child care and home-based health services. Data submitted through this system will meet all state and federal data privacy requirements.

Parent name is only required for Pathway I and Pathway II scholarships.

24. If a child registers for a program but does not attend, are we to report that child?

No.

25. Are we to report people attending one-time events like speaker nights?

No.

26. Are we to report children in child care?

No.

The only exceptions to this are children accessing child care sites through state scholarships. For the 2013-14 school year, only Rochester, St. Paul and Owatonna school districts are piloting this approach with special arrangements with the Regional Grant Administrators.

27. Our district goes beyond School Readiness funding and provides preschool services with other funding sources. Are they to be included too?

If the children are in a public school building, taught by public school staff, whether or not those staff are on the teacher contract, those children are to be reported as well. Please clarify the funding sources for those children under that element.

28. Our district partners with Head Start and/or child care. How do we distinguish them in the software so we don't report the Head Start and/or child care children?

Contact your software vendor to clarify.

29. Our ECFE/SR program partners with Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education with joint classrooms, or we have children enrolled in both program areas. How do we distinguish these children in the system for export without disrupting the EI/ECSE MARSS export?

Talk with your software vendor.

Children in EI/ECSE must be maintained for the regular MARSS uploads with their associated site numbers to ensure the district receives proper reimbursement.

It is the goal of EE Student to reflect all children participating in ECFE and SR regardless of special education status. If the district must choose however, ensure the special education status is maintained to generate general education revenue. Notify the software vendor that the district is very interested in being able to report all ECFE/SR children for subsequent years similar to how a district can report a child in first grade and participating in special education.

30. What if a family attends a program in two separate districts simultaneously? Which district reports the registration?

Both. This will not cause an error.

Multiple Registrations

31. What do I do if a child/family registers for a fall AND a spring course?

Change the count of classes to two. Leave all other the data the same. The course catalogue for early childhood will capture this data when it is released.

32. If one child attends two different classes with two different parents, how do we record that information?

On the registration the child will be enrolled in two classes and have two parents listed.

33. Our District is in Phase I – how do we handle confirming official names for infants and toddlers from ECFE from the 2012-13 school year?

This is a district decision. One leading district made the decision to wait until fall to request documentation of children's names, knowing that a large majority of their infants and toddlers would return to the program. They assigned the State Student Identification Number at that time. For the infants and toddlers that did not return, they recorded the child's name using the best documentation available on file. Other districts assigned the numbers right away.

34. What do we do if parents bring in two separate forms of legal papers and the child's information differs based on which form is used?

This is a district decision on which form should take priority. Check with your MARSS office.

35. What if a family from a border state attends a program?

Assign a State Student Identification Number. It does not generate general education revenue.

36. What if a child is receiving a scholarship?

See the codes in the User Manual under Funding Source. Be ***very careful*** regarding the term "***scholarship***" as there are a number of options currently existing. Please confirm with the Early Childhood Coordinator if there is any doubt.

If the child is receiving a scholarship from School Readiness ***Program*** funding – use code 02. This is the program funding that has been available historically through the formula funded program in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.15.

If the child is receiving a scholarship through the state scholarships expanded through the 2013 state legislature (Minnesota 2013 Session Law Chapter 116, Article 8, section 2), identify whether the child received a Pathway I or Pathway II scholarship with the Early Childhood Coordinator. The scholarship variables, which vary slightly, are the variables that will be required within EE Student. This includes parent name, county and sibling information. Sibling information is only required when a sibling is accessing a scholarship. The following EE Student elements do not apply to Scholarship: migrant status, McKinney-Vento, special needs, count of classes, hours/days attended and services referred from/to.

If the child received a Race to the Top federal scholarship in 2013-14 or 2014-15 which were focused in Minneapolis, St. Paul, White Earth and the Invest Early areas, mark the child as receiving a "Community Scholarship."

37. What do we do if both children (siblings) register simultaneously?

Add both as independent children – not siblings.

38. We have a public preschool in a public school building taught by public school employees but they are not on the teacher contract. Do we report those classes?

Yes.

39. What if a child attends both ECFE and School Readiness? Or School Readiness and Early Childhood Special Education?

For the child attending ECFE and School Readiness, they are reported under both programs. It is similar to a child attending two different schools – both schools would report that child. It is OK for a child to be listed twice in EE Student.

For a child attending School Readiness and Early Childhood Special Education, the child is reported in both EE Student and MARSS Finance. This will not cause an error.

40. If a family is attending ECFE and School Readiness with two different teachers, will the registrations be linked together?

Yes, through the State Student Identification number. Report the child under both programs.

41. Is there a deadline for the superintendent to provide their authorizations for staff in the system?

No – there is no deadline. Staff can only access the system after they have been authorized. It is to staff's advantage to have early access to be able to learn the system and submit data in a timely manner.

Data Element Clarifications

42. For ECFE, under Parent Participation Type, what should we list for parents who are not volunteering above and beyond regular ECFE classroom activities with their own child?

Not participating.

43. What is to be marked if the family pays the full amount due based on a sliding fee scale? Is it "Full fee" or "partial fee"?

If families are paying the top tier rate for your district (i.e., the highest rate charged by your district whether it is on or off the sliding fee scale), they are paying the full fee. If they are not paying the top tier rate for your district, they are paying a partial rate.

44. What do I do if a child changed a name from FY13 and now?

Use the new name. Connect to the previous SSID number.

45. For income, do I list the income for one parent or both?

It is household income. You may list both but do not need to list both parents if they are not both attending with the child.

46. For immunizations, what if they are a conscientious objector? Or if they are in progress to get their immunizations? Does the conscientious objector letter need to be notarized?

Conscientious objectors meet the current requirement. The family only needs to be up to date at one point in the year. The letter does not need to be notarized.

47. Which immunizations are to be included?

Use the schedules listed on the Department of Health website.

48. For immunizations, are we going with the "recommended" or "overdue" dates?

Recommended.

49. Is there a faster way to figure out children's levels of immunizations?

The Minnesota Department of Health supports the Minnesota Immunization Information Connection. This resource is free to use once you have an established user agreement with your regional MIIC coordinator. Information on finding your regional MIIC coordinator can be found on this page as well towards the bottom of the screen.

50. When we indicate funding source for an EE Student, is it assumed that ECFE is also a funding source for an ECFE class?

Yes. This is only for ECFE. School Readiness may have a student attending only with parent fee in some districts.

51. Can we indicate more than one funding source?

Yes. The goal is to reflect the complexity of hosting these sessions. For School Readiness, if they are paying no fee then some source should be identified.

52. What is McKinney-Vento status?

Homeless status. See MARSS manual for more information.

53. Why don't the race/ethnicity codes exactly match those in MARSS?

Those codes are driven by federal funds. Neither School Readiness nor ECFE receive any federal funds through the state.

54. Where do I indicate what school year is relevant for this record?

There is an element at the child level that identifies the school year. This is the element that the reports will use to sort information by school year. If you edit a record and just change the school year, the student's participation for the previous school year will be erased permanently. Each student's registration ***each year*** *must be reported. Utilizing local software that allows you to move children "forward" into subsequent years (including kindergarten) will ensure staff only need to type the basic information in once when the child starts at the district, and then update related elements like program and contact information annually.*

55. How do I know when I am done entering that you have received all of the information?

On the left-hand side of the screen, click on the Complete link. This will show all the records submitted. You may have some records that landed in the Incomplete section as their information didn't match what was in the State Student Identification System. That information (name, date of birth, gender) must match before it can be Complete.

If interested, you may download a PDF file of all student records for your district under the Secure Reports link once logged in to your MDE account.

Training and Technical Assistance

56. Where do I get more information?

After reviewing the materials online, please email Christine Hennessey at Christine.Hennessey@state.mn.us to set up a telephone call. Include two to three times you and any other interested staff are available in the next several weeks. Allow a minimum of 30 minutes for the call.

57. Do I need the leader code for telephone calls?

No. That will be entered by state staff.

Scholarship and Course Catalogue Updates

58. Why was an updated format released?

This was done to support the reporting of children accessing state Pathway I and Pathway II scholarships. Note – federal Race to the Top scholarships isolated to the four Transformation Zones are not to be included as Pathway I or Pathway II.

59. Why were the attendance variables added?

These are placeholders for the release of the early childhood course catalogue. Districts may disregard these for 2013-14 and prior data.

60. What is a course catalogue?

It is a way to report the length of time a class was available, the design of the class and who attended. It is very similar to information needed to develop a high school or college transcript. All existing state and federal data privacy regulations will apply to this information as well as EE Student. The K-12 sections of the district are working on implementing the high school and K-8 versions of the course catalogue.

61. When will the early childhood course catalogue be released?

MDE staff will work with interested districts beginning in *spring 2015.* Other districts will come on after that point as software vendors update their systems. This will take anywhere from nine to 18 months from the first release for software systems to be ready.

62. Will there be a similar deadline for the early childhood course catalogue as there was for Early Education Student?

No. Districts will opt in to reporting this based on their software capability. The preschool section of the course catalogue is a part of the federally mandated America Competes Act.

63. Will the early childhood course catalogue be as complex as the K-12 course catalogue?

No. Early childhood has fewer classes, calendars and students.

64. What should I be archiving to report for the course catalogue?

If your district can archive information, save program brochures that describe the registration options and which students attended the different classes. Course catalogue reporting is done after the end of a school year for all age groups so historical information can be reported when available from a software vendor system. This is not required.