FAQ from the October 2015 collection webinar presentations

SIMS

Q: Which district should report the student in SIMS in the case of 50/50 custody where parents live in two towns and student goes to an out of district program?

A: In this scenario, the districts usually have a cost share agreement. The two districts would alternate school years – one district would report the student as an outplacement for one whole school year, and the other district would report the student as outplaced for the next whole school year.

Q: How do I code a student in SIMS that is tuitioned to another public school?

A: The public district that is educating the student should report him in SIMS. If the student is tuitioned from another public district, the educating district should report the student as 03,01,10 in DOE011, DOE012, and DOE013 respectively.

Q: If a student is outplaced to another public school district, doesn't that district report the student in SIMS and SCS?

A: Yes, if a public district is educating the student, that educating district should report the student in SIMS and SCS.

Q: In DOE019, if we report all students as 00, won't that affect the district's chances of getting grant money?

A: No. Reporting the low income information in SIMS reporting is not how districts receive reimbursement for free and reduced lunch. Districts are reimbursed for this through the nutrition office at ESE. This information is SIMS will no longer be used by ESE, so districts can choose to report all students as the default value of 00, or they can continue to report students with the appropriate values for free or reduced lunch eligibility.
Q: What are the benefits of reporting these free and reduced numbers in SIMS DOE019?

A: There is no benefit or penalty for reporting this information in SIMS. ESE is no longer using the low income data from SIMS DOE019 for data reporting or analysis purposes. The new metric is economically disadvantaged. For more information on the new metric, refer to the webpage on Redefining Low Income.

Q: If a student is in PK, they are supposed to be coded 00 in DOE021. Does that mean they would be coded 1st year ELL student the following year as a Kindergarten student?

A: Yes. Kindergarten would be considered the student’s first year in U.S. schools, even if they attended PK in the U.S.

Q: For DOE021, is this referring to academic year or calendar year?

A: Academic year.

Q: If a student is expelled, but receives educational services, are they ever coded as expelled?

A: If a student is expelled but is receiving educational services from the district on the report date, the student should be reported as enrolled (DOE012 =01). If the expelled student refuses educational services, doesn’t respond to the offer of services, or discontinues participation in educational services from the district, the student should be coded as expelled (DOE012 = 05).

Q: In SIMS, once we report a student as a summer exit as of October 1, can we stop reporting them for the rest of the year, or must they be reported all year?

A: Summer transfers and drop outs should be reported all year. Summer graduates should only be reported in October SIMS.

Q: If a student with a developmental delay turns 10 and we follow the guidelines by coding them as no longer being a special education student, won't that reduce our Foundation Budget and Chapter 70 (assuming this is the October report)?

A: No. Chapter 70 funding is based on total enrollment reported by the district, with additional funds for special education that are calculated by a cost rate multiplier applied to the overall enrollment.
EPIMS

Q: Would contracted Speech Pathologists, OT, PT, etc. through an agency be considered non-district employees in SR09?

A: If these staff members are not hired by or paid by the district, then yes they should be coded 05 in SR09.

Q: There are a number of job codes for whom we couldn't submit evaluation data, even though they are evaluated the same way as classroom teachers. This includes OT, PT, Speech, and others. Is this an error or should we not report this information for them?

A: Only staff members in job classifications that require an ESE license should have evaluation data reported in EPIMS.

Q: How do we know if we are one of the 50 districts who are required to report ratings in SR34 this year?

A: Every district got a unique letter from Craig Waterman in the Educator Evaluation group here at ESE, indicating by when they will be expected to report SR34 for at least some educators. Refer to your district ed eval point person who will have the email from Craig (likely sent in July) indicating exactly when your district is expected to report SR34 for some and all educators.

Q: Are collaboratives expected to report SR34?

A: Collaboratives also should have received a letter from Craig Waterman in the Educator Evaluation group at ESE, indicating by when they will be expected to report data in SR34.

Q: Do charter schools have to report SR34?

A: Commonwealth charter school that DO NOT have an evaluation system that conforms with the state system should report 99 in all the evaluation fields, including SR34.

Q: In the past, weren't we only required to report district employees?

A: Districts should report all staff members who have contact with students. The new SR09 value of 05 simply allows for a more accurate way to report a staff member who works in the district but is not employed by the district.

Q: WA17 - Isn't this the same as reporting SR09 as on paid leave?

A: It is a more complete and detailed way to report. For a staff member on paid leave, the SR09 value on the staff roster file will indicate that they are on leave. And their work assignment records will have a WA17 value of 03.
Q: In WA17, can you use 03 for an assignment that was active, but all students have withdrawn since then?

A: Yes.

Questions about new element, SR38 – Beginner Educator Identifier

Q: Is this element reported just for EOY, or both October and EOY?

A: This is to be reported in October and EOY.

Q: Why is this element being collected?

A: This is being collected for the Educator Evaluation unit at ESE.

Q: Is this just for teachers or for all staff members reported in the staff roster file?

A: This element should be reported for all staff members reported on the staff roster file.

Q: The description says “in the first year of experience in their primary job classification.” Is this academic year or calendar year?

A: Academic year.

Q: We don't identify our staff as 'new'; how do you suggest we determine the appropriate values?

A: You can use hire dates or promotion dates to determine if someone should be coded as Yes in SR38.

Q: What if a staff member has multiple work assignments and one of the work assignments is new, but others are not? For example, a guidance counselor adds the role of Chair of Guidance Department. Is she a beginner educator because of that new role?

A: SR38 should be coded as Yes only if the staff member is new in their primary job classification. In this example, guidance counselor would be the primary job classification, so SR38 should be coded as No.

Q: What if the individual is in "transition" to a new role, e.g. "acting" in the role and will officially take over the following year?

A: When the staff member is ‘acting’ in a role, but it is not their primary job classification for that reporting period, they should be coded as No in SR38. The following year, if they take on that new role as their primary job classification, SR38 would then be reported as Yes.
Q: Should a staff member be coded as a Yes in SR38 if they are in their first year in our school or district, but they have prior experience?

A: No, if the staff member has prior experience elsewhere (out of state, private school, out of district, etc.) then he/she would not be considered a beginner educator. This staff member should be coded as No in SR38.

Q: If someone has private school experience or out of state experience in their job classification, are they considered beginner in our district SR38 = Yes)? If a technology person or admin has private industry experience in their primary job classification, are they considered beginner (SR38 = Yes)?

A: If the staff member has prior experience in their primary job classification, they should be coded No in SR38. It doesn’t matter where the prior experience took place. They should only be coded as Yes in SR38 if they are in their first year ever of experience in their job classification.

Q: Should a staff member be coded as a Yes in SR38 if they are promoted to a new job classification? Example: someone who was a teacher in the district for a long time, and is now promoted to principal.

A: Yes, if this is the first year that this staff member is working as a school principal, he/she should be coded as Yes in SR38. This is their first year of experience in that primary job classification.

Q: We have a principal who is first year in our city but has been principal in other districts. Would she be considered first year (SR38 = yes)?

A: No, this person has prior experience as a school principal. She should be coded as No in SR38.

Q: If someone was promoted from assistant principal to principal or assistant superintendent to superintendent, should he/she be coded as a Yes in SR38?

A: Yes, if this is the first year of experience in the new job classification, these staff members should be coded as Yes in SR38.

Q: If a teacher is teaching English then the next year they teach special ed, would SR38 be Yes? Or if a teacher is teaching English grades 5-8 and the next year teaches grades 8-12, would SR38 be Yes?

A: In these examples, SR38 should be No. The teacher is not changing primary job classifications.
Q: Will we get an error the following year if we accidentally still have a staff member coded as Yes in SR38?
A: No.

SIF

Q: Will we be able to check errors in SIF year round?
A: We plan to open the collection window a few weeks ahead of the report date, so districts can view error reports.

Q: How can I find out if my district is on SIF 2.7?
A: You can ask your data collection support specialist if you’re not sure if you’re on SIF version 2.0 or 2.7.

Q: When can new districts on-board to SIF 2.7?
A: Ask your SIS vendor contact to find out if your district is scheduled to on-board to SIF 2.7 this year.

Q: If we asked to be legacy for June, will we automatically be returned to SIF for October?
A: Yes, all SIF districts are expected to submit SIMS and SCS via SIF for the October collection.

Q: For SIF related problems, do we contact the data collection team or our SIS vendor?
A: If it is a question about data errors, you can start with contacting your data collection support specialist. But there are some issues that your SIS vendor will need to be involved in.