

---

# AERA SIG on School Indicators and Profiles NEWSLETTER

June 1999

---

In this issue . . . .

Dues Reminder

AERA 2000 SIG Program

SIG News Items from Our New Editor

---

## Dues by June 20

We are now finalizing our SIG membership list for 1999-2000. Many of you have sent in your annual dues (\$5 per year, \$10/ 2 years). If you know you have not paid your dues since June '98, please access the Membership Renewal form on our SIG Website (<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/sipsig>) and send in your dues to Gretchen Ridgeway by June 20.

Thank you. Rolf

## AERA 2000 Program

by Peter Prowda, SIG:SIP Program Chair, 2000

The theme for the AERA convention in New Orleans, April 24-28, 2000 is "Creating Knowledge in the 21st Century: Insights from Multiple Perspectives." The makeup of our membership - university professors, researchers and information specialists at federal, national, state or local education agencies - offers different prospective on indicator systems and the reporting of school indicators. Last year there were presentations on the use of indicators in Canada and South Africa. This international perspective should continue.

I am looking for papers that present the state of the art of indicator systems or profiles, how these systems or profiles have impacted schools, innovative methods for collecting and reporting school indicators and the implications on policy. I would also be interested in

receiving any papers that focus on the relationship between accountability systems being developed under Title I or state accountability legislation and your school indicator/report card. In short, if you are working on a school profile or an indicator system, you can make a contribution. The deadline for submission is August 2nd, so don't procrastinate.

We are taking submissions electronically for the first time this year. This should speed distribution to the reviewers and provide fodder for a future newsletter on the program. I work in a Microsoft Word environment. Our DP staff has assured me that I can read any word processing software. Please indicate in the cover letter of your submission the word processing language used.

If you are not planning to submit a proposal, you also can make a contribution by volunteering to serve as a proposal reviewer, discussant or session chair.

I can be reached at [peter.prowda@po.state.ct.us](mailto:peter.prowda@po.state.ct.us), or alternately via phone at (860) 566-7585, fax at (860) 566-1625 or even mail at the Connecticut State Department of Education, PO Box 2219, Hartford, CT 06145-2219.

Pete Prowda  
Program Chair

## SIP News

by Barbara Clements, SIG Newsletter editor

### **Automation of State Reporting Promotes Data Quality**

The quality of school and district data included in state indicator reports is dependent on several things, including the extent to which data are maintained according to the same classifications at the local level, the timing of reporting, and the understanding of what is supposed to be reported. As more and more states move toward automating data collection procedures, they are discovering opportunities to improve the comparability and completeness of data being received from schools and districts. These efforts are important because better data leads to better decision making.

New Hampshire is developing a new web-based data collection system to obtain information from schools and districts that will be used in state and federal reporting. One particular area of focus in this effort is on graduation and dropout counts. High schools have been surveyed to determine what procedures are being used to collect and report this information. Using the data standards set by the National Center for Education Statistics as a guide, the directions for collecting graduation and dropout counts are being revised and the form automated, and increased comparability is expected.

Some states, such as Iowa, are moving toward collecting individual student records at the state level. In an informal survey completed in 1998, more than two thirds of the states indicated that they are currently collecting individual student records or are actively moving toward collecting them. In addition to providing a more useful database for decision making at the state level, this activity can promote data quality because computations of data about schools and districts will be done by the state using the same procedures at the same time.

As more states move toward automating data collection, many schools and districts are purchasing new administrative records software that can handle automated reporting that meets state requirements. Some states, such as Massachusetts, have provided training to administrative software vendors on the new automated state reporting requirements in the hope that they will design reporting modules that will meet the needs of their clients, the schools and districts. These efforts will also lead toward better data quality, since errors often occur when data must be compiled and entered into forms by hand. These new systems can extract the information from the administrative software and submit it directly to the state without very much human interaction, thus reducing reporting burden.

Publishing data about schools and districts in indicator reports often reveals data quality problems, but identifying the sources of these problems is often difficult. Automating data collection and reporting offers one way to improve data quality.

### **Articles for SIG Website**

The Winter 1998 CRESST Newsletter (called The CRESST Line). has a cover article on "Indicators as a System." It offers some good guidance about types of indicators and their uses. We will plan to add this to the SIP SIG home page under Published Reports and papers.

If you have suggestions of good summary articles, papers, or reports on Indicators, Development of Report Cards/Profiles, or Accountability systems, please forward them to Rolf Blank ([rolfb@ccsso.org](mailto:rolfb@ccsso.org)) SIG Chair, or Barbara Clements ([bclements@evalsoft.com](mailto:bclements@evalsoft.com)), Newsletter editor.

### **Reminder:**

AERA meeting presenters--If you were part of a SIG:SIP 1999 session or panel, please e-mail attach a copy of your paper or presentation to Rolf so we can make it available on the Website.

We are still getting some support time from CCSSO for updating our SIG:SIP website. Any suggestions on improvements or additions are appreciated.

Keep up the good work!  
Rolf

Rolf K. Blank  
Director, Education Indicators  
CCSSO, One Mass. Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20001-1431  
[rolfb@ccsso.org](mailto:rolfb@ccsso.org)  
202/336-7044 F 202/789-1792

---

[Back to SIG:SIP Home Page](#)