

School Improvement and Accountability in Education are two of the most prominent and controversial topics in society today. Nationwide the focus of public attention is on our students, educators and administrators. While the demand for school improvement and the need for accountability are pronounced, there is a significant lack of tools available to educators.

While some questions are obvious:

- How do you define, determine and measure accountability?
- How do you define and measure improvement?
- Who should be held accountable when student performance fails to meet standards?

There is a subtle and even more important question we should be asking:

- What causes change in student performance?

Unless the causes for changes in performance can be identified and replicated or eliminated as appropriate, efforts to measure performance and establish accountability will be wasted.

“More testing,” “longer classes,” “better teachers”

Complicated issues often generate simple answers. The truth is that complicated issues only respond to careful, in depth study and disciplined action.

- Why do some students perform well on certain tests but not on others?
- Why do some students perform poorly in assessments but well in related classes?
- Do particular patterns in classes lead to changes in assessment performance?
- How do certain extracurricular activities affect class performance?
- Which students on the cusp of meeting the standard and how can they be helped?

An Education Agency’s Most Abundant Resource

The answers to these questions lay in an abundant but underutilized resource present in every local or state education agency: **data**.

Typical school districts have vast stores of data including grades, attendance, test scores and discipline, as well as the standard demographic elements of gender, race, economic status and challenge. States have a wealth of additional data. Each of these data areas or “domains” can individually provide valuable insight into factors affecting student and

school performance. These valuable data are usually locked away in archives, student information systems and scattered databases. It often is filled with duplications, errors and inconsistencies making it unusable as an analysis and decision making tool.

Data Warehousing and Data-Driven Decision Making

The real power of school data is realized when these data are stitched together allowing analysis and reporting across multiple domains. A data warehouse brings together widely varying data in a location and format that allows easy, controllable, flexible access. A data warehouse makes vast amounts of accurate, standardized data available to decision makers. This allows them to explore the data both over time and across dimensions. Only by examining and analyzing a state or district's data will the true causes of changes in performance be identified and understood.

Education Needs the Power of Data Warehousing

School districts need the power of data warehousing in an affordable, rapidly implemented package. Corporate data warehouses are typically custom built by large consulting firms over a period of years. Corporations usually have extensive support departments capable of maintaining and developing these custom data warehouses. School data is much more difficult to handle and analyze than standard corporate data. Much school data are non-additive letter grades, attendance and discipline records. In addition school data frequently comes from many different sources using different naming conventions.

eScholar provides *the* Data Warehouse for Education

The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® is a revolutionary tool for school improvement. eScholar pioneered K-12 data warehousing and leads the market, supporting over 8 million students across the United States. Utilizing sophisticated data warehousing techniques, eScholar helps administrators make sense of the large and varied collection of data that every school system accumulates. Most importantly the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse helps them use that data to make decisions in a way never before possible.

Designed By Data Warehousing Experts

The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse was designed by experts in data warehousing who bring that experience specifically to education. eScholar provides a framework for collecting and organizing local and state information drawn from a wide variety of sources. These sources include student management systems, state and commercial test scoring services, even databases and spreadsheets maintained by individual departments. The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse is designed to include all the data elements important to a state or district. It is also *completely customizable* to the requirements of individual agencies.

Flexible Implementation

Because states and districts often have very different technical capabilities and depth, the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse is available in a variety of configurations. It can be installed and run by the state or district Information Services staff; or it can be hosted off site by eScholar, bringing significant cost savings, freeing up staff time, and allowing rapid implementation. It is also possible to rent a subset of the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse, giving agencies a cost effective option for getting started.

The Importance of Standards

Just as standards are important in education and assessment, standards are critical when evaluating technology. Scholar brings all the power of a data warehouse to local and state education agencies in a consistent, standards-based package. This framework is based on widely accepted standards, such as NCES and SIF, rather than proprietary designs. Using standards as a base provides flexibility and compatibility now and into the future.

Use The Power of Your Data

Educators nationwide are realizing the power of data already accumulated across their districts and states. Scholar is a powerful and flexible tool for harnessing that power for accountability, consensus building and reporting. eScholar is dedicated to being a partner in learning and school improvement. We invite you to learn more about how eScholar can bring the power of data to your district or state quickly and affordably.

Why eScholar?

- The leader in education data management, providing successful statewide solutions for 11 SEAs, supporting over 3,500 school districts and over 12 million students across the country.
- Focused exclusively on the education data management industry since 1997.
- Comprehensive services, training and support programs to ensure customer success.
- An established, active user community allowing access to best practices, experience, and support from peers nationwide

Today, our products have become the recognized standards in the student and staff identification and educational data warehousing markets. The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution has become an indispensable solution to local and state education agencies for integrating and managing the vast quantity of information they collect on students, programs, teachers and much more. For more information, contact Sales at sales@escholar.com or (877) 328-2969

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