

BRINGING STUDENT DATA

to Life

Early users favorable to WISEdash,
DPI's new analysis tool

Ken Syke

It didn't take long for Dana Sommerfeld of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District to realize what WISEdash means. "Exciting" and "phenomenal" is how she describes her first uses, "because of the data that's available."

"Manipulating the data totally by hand was pretty cumbersome. What used to take two or three weeks is now just a couple of clicks away," said Sommerfeld, the district's director of assessment.

Reactions from other users have also been favorable. "There is a lot to like about WISEdash," said Tim Schell, IT director at Waunakee Community School District. "The interface is user-friendly and it's an efficient time saver to have many different types of data in one application just a few clicks away."

Nicole Beier, data coordinator/

analyst at Wauwatosa School District says, "One of the perpetual struggles that districts face is an overwhelming amount of data that is often housed in many, varied locations. WISEdash puts much of that data in one central location and ... presents it in a way that can easily be used to inform and enhance data-based decision making at the district, school, and student levels."

So, What is 'WISEdash'?

WISEdash is a new tool that pulls data from the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) longitudinal data

warehouse. However, it's a significant upgrade over the current reporting tools.

- **WISEdash is easy to use** and navigate with many filters available for charts and graphs that enable analysis.
- **WISEdash has various data topics** all in one place, with really colorful visualizations.
- **WISEdash users are able to drill down** to a list of students that make up a number, are able to access a student profile, and can see and use dashboard, metrics (charts/graphs) and definitions which are built right into the tool.

"WISE" is the acronym for Wisconsin Information Systems for Education and is the second tool in the WISE family. (WISEmaps was first.) All the information is displayed via dashboards, thus the "dash."



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— Dana Summerfield, director of assessment
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District

■ It's Secure — For Now

The statewide rollout of WISEdash has been occurring since October. DPI is coordinating with the CESA Statewide Network on the rollout — including helping individuals with the process to get access.

Access to WISEdash is secure for now, meaning that only appropriate school and district personnel are given rights by the WISEdash application administrator (as designated by the district security administrator). There are three levels of access for district staff members:

- Summary data — the most common level;
- Detail data; and
- Economically disadvantaged data — most limited level.

Similar to overall rights, assignment of individual data levels is determined at the school district.

DPI has moved up the schedule on making WISEdash accessible to the public; the target is the second quarter of 2013. Eventually, WINSS, the current public reporting tool, will be phased out.

LEARN MORE at Convention

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The Department of Public Instruction will hold an informative session on the new student information system — the WISEdash data warehouse — at the upcoming State Education Convention. Kurt Kiefer, Assistant State Superintendent for Information Technology, will present “Digital Learning and Data Systems Moving Forward Statewide” on **Thursday, Jan. 24 at 1:45 – 2:45 pm** in room 103C at the Delta Center in Milwaukee. Hear about the WISEdash data warehouse, and other statewide digital learning systems.



Currently, most of what populates WISEdash is annual data. The coming statewide student information system (SSIS) will be in sync with WISEdash, and will have the capacity to integrate much more data and in a much more timely manner. The start of SSIS implementation to the first group of districts is scheduled for the first quarter of 2013.

Learning to Use WISEdash

“The goals for this early stage of implementation are to spread WISEdash access to all interested districts so that they can allow their staff members to, for now, just become familiar with this new tool,” said Straw. “Some new users are finding it pretty intuitive to use, but we also have a user guide and user videos available that should help the learning process.”

DPI has asked the CESA State-wide Network to lead a Guided Analysis Work Group to build a curriculum to help guide educators

What Data is Available?

During the first phase of WISEdash use, there are five data and dashboards available.

- Enrollment and attendance;
- Assessments, including WSAS, ACT and AP;
- Student growth percentiles and growth analysis;
- Student profile (only available with a specific security role); and
- Student search (only available with a specific security role).

DPI’s data warehouse team is working to include additional datasets and dashboards, such as ACCESS ELL (assessment instrument for English Language Learners), graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and new cut scores (for WKCE Reading and Math).

Additional topics under consideration include: school level value-added (“value-added” is a type of statistical growth model of student achievement over time), MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), and PALS (early literacy screener). Dozens of additional data sets and dashboards have been requested.

They will be prioritized and then added to WISEdash over time.

Platforms that aren’t even here yet, such as the SMARTER Balanced Assessment System coming in 2014, will also be added to WISEdash.

“Overall we will be looking to load any and all data that makes sense for analysis,” said Melissa Straw, the WISEdash Project Manager.

WISEdash Features

WISEdash is a new tool that pulls data from the Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) longitudinal data warehouse. It includes many tools to enable analysis and easy navigation. Features include:

- Visual and colorful dashboards that enable easy, intuitive and smart reporting.
- Based on the secure role at the district, ability to drill down for deeper analysis than ever before.
- Capability to filter data in initial dashboards such as assessments and student growth percentiles.
- Guided Analysis workbooks to guide educators in their understanding and use of the data.

For more information visit <http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/>

in their data analysis. Starting in late October, the Work Group aims to be done by April so that data retreats can begin in May. Their purpose is:

“... to design, develop, pilot and disseminate data inquiry processes and tools used by school boards, administrators and classroom educators to improve student achievement. The central mission of the project is to guide educators to find meaning in the data for their students and schools to make data-based decisions that drive school improvement.”

“We aim to make the processes and tools practical but meaningful,” said Judy Sargent of CESA #1, who leads the Work Group. “We really have to make sense of this data on behalf of our students.”

■ What Will WISEdash Mean?

For Kurt Kiefer, the DPI Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology, it's both a significant upgrade and a cost-saver.

“WISEdash is a statewide solution that all school districts can use without any local set up or maintenance efforts,” said Kiefer. “DPI manages those efforts — and costs — once for the entire state, and not repeatedly for 400+ school districts.”

Narrowing down and disaggregating data are additional benefits to Tim Schell.

“The ability to drill down from schoolwide data to individual student data is a powerful support for instruction and school improvement,” said Schell. “Also, most districts have not been able to easily disaggregate their ACT and AP data to see how different



groups of students are performing — until now. WISEdash offers a lot of value to schools and districts.”

Dana Sommerfeld sees an attitude shift coming. “This analysis tool allows even the novice to explore and analyze relevant data to make informed decisions regarding instruction or policy. More educators are going to get excited about data. We will be able to spend much more time responding to the data instead of digging and sorting it out.” ■

Syke is publications editor for the Department of Public Instruction's Instructional Media and Technology Team.

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