

# Education Data News

## Budget Explorer Makes Financial Forecasting Manageable



By Andy Prestage, Management Analyst, FCMAT

Created by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), Budget Explorer (BE) is a Web-based forecasting and cash flow application for K-12 local education entities. Because it is Web-based, BE can be accessed from any location that has an Internet connection. The application and associated user data are stored together, meaning that all you need is a computer with an Internet connection to accurately forecast district or county office revenues and expenditures.

Located online at <https://www.budgetexplorer.org>, BE was designed with ease-of-use and user-friendliness in mind. Major capabilities of BE include:

- Forecasting of any fund, by individual object code and resource, from 2 to 5 years;
- Automatic uploading of data produced by the state's Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) software;
- Rolls up to Combined, Unrestricted, and Restricted Summary level;
- A built-in enrollment projection module;
- Projection of average daily attendance and teacher staffing requirements;
- Highly accurate teacher salary forecasting;
- Revenue limit calculation for districts and county offices of education;
- An integrated cash flow module;
- Accurate display of revenue limit apportionment payments (including deferrals);
- Performance of automated balancing of any restricted resource;
- Capability for users to easily document their assumptions;
- Extensive reporting capabilities.

Budget Explorer has become an indispensable tool for district and county office fiscal staff who need better tools to monitor tight budgets and to ensure that cash will be available as needed. Budget Explorer is currently available free of charge to over 1,200 users. For more information about Budget Explorer or to request a user account, please go to [http://www.fcmat.org/stories/storyReader\\$1254](http://www.fcmat.org/stories/storyReader$1254).

## Inside

- 1 Budget Explorer Makes Financial Forecasting Manageable
- 2 Data Ethics Training
- 3 MIS Conference
- 4 Consolidated Application Reporting System (CARS)
- 5 Major CDE Data Collections
- 6 CALPADS Benefit to Homeless Assessment Collection
- 7 Requests for Assistance

> continued on page 2

> continued from page 1

## Data Ethics Training

By Stephanie Jennings, Analyst, CDE

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has developed an online data ethics training course that teaches data users what data ethics is, why it is important, and its significance to organizations. While laws set the legal parameters that govern data use, ethics establish the fundamental principles of "right and wrong" that are critical to the appropriate management and use of education data in the technology age. This online course is based on [The Forum Guide to Data Ethics](#) and is focused on how ethical principles apply to education data. It is intended for any person who handles data in an education organization, including superintendents, chief information officers, principals, teachers, registrars, counselors, school board members, data managers, technology directors, information systems staff, data stewards, technical staff, office staff, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and vendors. While there is no requirement to follow these principles, the Forum hopes that the contents will prove a useful reference to data handlers and education leaders.

To ensure awareness of the course, NCES has developed this training resource at no cost to the participants. The course takes about 1-2 hours to complete. At the end of the course there is a final assessment, where users can test their knowledge about the rights and wrongs of data ethics. Users will receive a certificate within 2 weeks after completing the course and passing the assessment. We encourage you to consider incorporating this into your professional development program.

Any questions may be sent to: [DRGINFO@cde.ca.gov](mailto:DRGINFO@cde.ca.gov). This course can be found at: [http://nces.ed.gov/forum/dataethics\\_course.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/forum/dataethics_course.asp)

## MIS Conference

By Sonya Edwards,  
Education Administrator, CDE

The California Department of Education (CDE) is co-hosting the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Management Information System (MIS) Conference February 15-17, 2012 in San Diego, California. The conference covers topics ranging from using data to improve education, to national data standards, to statewide longitudinal data systems, and so on. The conference is attended by representatives from local and state education agencies from nearly all states. More information about the conference is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/conferences/?id=905>

## Consolidated Application Reporting System

By Sonya Edwards, Education Administrator, CDE

In January, 2012, the California Department of Education (CDE) will be releasing the new on-line Consolidated Application and Reporting System (CARS). The CARS is an online data collection system for LEAs to apply for Categorical Program Funding. It will replace the current desktop ConApp Data Systems (CADS). As with the launch of any statewide system, there may be some bumps in the road; however, many districts and direct funded charters are eager for this new system to roll off the assembly line.

The CDE is currently setting up user accounts for the person that the district superintendent has designated as the CARS LEA Administrator for their district.

The CARS Winter release will take the place of what used to be collected in ConApp Part II, and there will not be a release titled "ConApp Part II" for 2011-12. The CARS Winter release will not contain any new data collections or what was previously referred to as "a page." There are also no significant changes, no new data items, to any of the individual data collections. For a complete list of the data collections included in the Winter release refer to our the CARS web site. See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fq/aa/co/cars.asp> for more information about this system. If you have any questions about this system, feel free to contact the ConApp Support Desk at [conappsupport@cde.ca.gov](mailto:conappsupport@cde.ca.gov), or by calling 916-319-0297.

## Major CDE Data Collections

By Paula Mishima,  
Special Projects Administrator,  
CDE

With the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), the CDE is transitioning to source many state and federal reporting requirements from CALPADS. Concurrently, the CDE is updating and modifying other CDE data collections which were the source of some of these data in the past, to collect only those data not in CALPADS. The matrix on the following page summarizes three major CDE collections.

> continued on page 3

## Matrix of Major CDE Data Collections 2011-2012

Collection System	Census Day	Primary Data Collected	Collection Window	First Deadline
<b>CALPADS</b>				
Fall 1	Oct 5, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2011-12 Enrollment</li> <li>2010-11 Grads &amp; Dropouts</li> </ul>	Oct 5, 2011 – Feb 22, 2012	Dec 14, 2011
Fall 2	Oct 5, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff assignments</li> <li>Student course enrollments</li> <li>English Learner services</li> <li>Highly Qualified Teacher</li> </ul>	Oct 5, 2011 – Feb 29, 2012	Jan 18, 2012
Spring 1	Mar 1, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrant Counts</li> <li>English Language Acquisition Status</li> </ul>	Mar 1, 2012 – April 18 2012	Mar 28, 2012
End of Year	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course Completion</li> <li>Program Participation</li> <li>Discipline</li> <li>Student Waivers</li> </ul>	May 14, 2012 – Aug 18, 2012	July 18, 2012
<b>CBEDS-ORA</b>				
CBEDS-ORA	Oct 5, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>County District Information Form (CDIF):</b> <i>counts of classified staff, estimated teacher hires, graduation requirements</i></li> <li><b>School Information Form (SIF):</b> <i>counts of classified staff, select educational options enrollment, technology, education calendars, parental exception waivers, bilingual paraprofessionals</i></li> <li>Update Coordinator contact information</li> <li>Update <i>List of Expected Schools</i></li> </ul>	Oct 5, 2011 – Jan 13, 2012	Oct 28, 2011
<b>CARS</b>				
<b>CARS Winter</b> (formerly ConApp Part II)	n/a	The Winter release will usually occur in December. It contains the district entitlements for each funded program. Out of each state and federal program entitlement, the system collects data related to how districts will reserve and/or allocate funds. It also includes mid-year activity reporting and year-to-date expenditure reporting. See <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/carsschedule.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/carsschedule.asp</a> for a list of the data collections in this release window.	Feb 2012	5-6 weeks after release
<b>CARS Spring</b> (formerly ConApp Part I)	n/a	The Spring release occurs in May. It collects the LEAs' new fiscal participation data in categorical programs and provides assurances that the LEA will comply with the legal requirements of each program in the coming fiscal year. It also collects end-of-year activity reporting and year-to-date expenditure reporting. See <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/carsschedule.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/carsschedule.asp</a> for a list of the data collections in this release window.	May 1 – June 30	June 30, 2012
<b>CARS Fall</b>	n/a	The Fall release occurs in October. It collects year-to-date expenditure reports for Title II and Title III. See <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/carsschedule.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/carsschedule.asp</a> for a list of the data collections in this release window.	Sept 1, 2012 – Oct 31, 2012	Oct 31, 2012

## CALPADS Benefit to Homeless Assessment Collection

By Justin Lane, Analyst, CDE

Every year, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires districts and states to report on homeless student assessment results for students served by LEAs that received McKinney-Vento grants. In the past, the CDE collected these data on the McKinney-Vento annual survey. The ED also requires (per ESEA Title I) all districts and states to report the number of homeless students enrolled (in total and by primary nighttime residence category). The CDE collected these data from LEAs using the ConApp, and starting in 2009-10, the CDE collected these data in CALPADS. Realizing that LEAs often serve homeless students that are not enrolled within the LEA, the ED modified the assessment reporting requirements requiring that districts and states report only on assessment results for students enrolled.

Starting in SY 2009-10, the CDE has met this requirement by extracting the statewide student identifiers (SSID) for enrolled homeless students from CALPADS and matching them to the assessment results file. As a result, the CDE has dropped the homeless assessment results reporting section from the annual McKinney-Vento survey. In addition, the CDE will no longer be collecting counts of enrolled homeless students on the ConApp. Because homeless students are a highly mobile population, it can be challenging for schools and school districts to identify and maintain continuity of services to these students. When homeless students transfer to another district, their homeless status may not transfer with them. This leaves the student and the new district at a distinct disadvantage.

The services that students need may not be immediately offered because their status is unknown to the district. However, now that CALPADS is in place, when a district enrolls a student, the system can readily see that the student has been identified as homeless and is eligible for services, provided the sending district has identified the student as homeless in CALPADS. Ultimately, this enables districts to immediately identify their homeless students and provide the necessary services to these students. These are just some of the many ways that CALPADS is making a difference!

## Requests for Assistance

### CALPADS

- Service Request Web Form: <http://www2.cde.ca.gov/calpadshelp/default.aspx>
- Email: [calpads-support@cde.ca.gov](mailto:calpads-support@cde.ca.gov)
- Phone: 916-325-9210

### CBEDS-ORA

- Email: [eddemo@cde.ca.gov](mailto:eddemo@cde.ca.gov)
- Phone: 916-327-0219

### CARS/ConApp

- Email: [conappsupport@cde.ca.gov](mailto:conappsupport@cde.ca.gov)
- Phone: 916-319-0297

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