



ED-FI CHEAT SHEET: TERMINOLOGY

Is there a word that you keep hearing or reading that you associate with Ed-Fi? Hopefully, you will find it on this “Cheat Sheet.” If you would like to suggest additions to the list, please use [this quick form](#) to send us the words that you think we should add.

ED-FI TERMS

Application Programming Interface (API)

APIs allow applications to talk to other applications. The Ed-Fi API is “how users interact with” the Ed-Fi Operational Data Store (ODS). (*How Ed-Fi Can Help You Make the Most of Your Data*, p. 3) The Ed-Fi API follows REST conventions (HTTP using verbs GET, POST, PUT, DELETE).

association (Ed-Fi association)

An association is “a relationship between entities which is used to show that instances of the entities could be linked to each other.” (<https://techdocs.ed-fi.org/display/EFDS32/Core+Concepts>); it is a relationship between two tables and is maintained in the association table.

attribute (Ed-Fi attribute)

An attribute is “a property that is owned by an entity.” (<https://techdocs.ed-fi.org/display/EFDS32/Core+Concepts>). It is an element in the Ed-Fi UDM that correlates to a field; attributes are individual columns in a database table (attribute = element = field).

category (PowerSchool data-publishing category)

In the context of the Ed-Fi data-publishing dashboard, a category is a grouping of data elements for which records are published to one or more Ed-Fi tables (or “resources”) in the district Ed-Fi ODS.

data dictionary

A data dictionary clarifies how data elements are defined.

data model

A data model is conceptual; it is a logical way to think of (and talk about) how entities within a given model relate to each other.

domain (Ed-Fi domain)

Ed-Fi domains are what the Ed-Fi Unifying Data Model (UDM) is most broadly organized into; there are 16 base domains in the UDM. For a list of the 16 base Ed-Fi domains and more information about what each represents, see the Ed-Fi Alliance’s [techdocs page on Ed-Fi domains](#).

Ed-Fi

“Ed-Fi is a set of technologies that use the Ed-Fi Data Standard, a set of rules that establish a unified structure for K-12 educational data.” (*How Ed-Fi Can Help You Make the Most of Your Data*, p. 3)

Ed-Fi Alliance

“The Ed-Fi Alliance is the group of educators, technologists, and thought leaders shaping the future of education technology through the Ed-Fi Data Standard and the ecosystem of Ed-Fi Technologies.” (<https://www.ed-fi.org/what-is-ed-fi/community/>)



Ed-Fi Data Standard

“The Ed-Fi Data Standard is the set of rules for the collection, management, and organization of educational data that allows multiple systems to share their information in a seamless, actionable way.” (<https://www.ed-fi.org/what-is-ed-fi/ed-fi-data-standard/>)

Ed-Fi Unifying Data Model (UDM)

The terms “Unifying Data Model (UDM)” and “Ed-Fi Data Standard” are often used interchangeably. The UDM is the foundation of all Ed-Fi standards and the way to ensure that standards are compatible. The UDM is made up of entities, attributes, and associations. It is highly normalized which means that it is optimized for storage of very granular data. Note that the Ed-Fi ODS database schema (physical) is NOT a standard; the logical data model is a standard.

entity (Ed-Fi entity)

“A classifier that describes a set of abstract or real objects that share the same features, constraints, and semantics.” (<https://techdocs.ed-fi.org/display/EFDS32/Core+Concepts>) For example, the “StudentSchoolAssociation” entity describes how many students are enrolled in the school. Entities can be associated to one or more resources.

errors (Ed-Fi data-publishing errors)

Errors in Ed-Fi data publishing occur when data are unable to land in the ODS.

JSON

JASON stands for JavaScript Object Notation and is a format for “storing and transporting data.” (https://www.w3schools.com/whatis/whatis_json.asp) The JSON payloads that you are likely to see in PowerSchool after publishing data to the district Ed-Fi ODS include representations of Ed-Fi resources. In general, the element name is followed by a colon and then the value for that element. See the [SC Swagger website](#) where all resources are provided as a single JSON object.

mapping (Ed-Fi data mapping)

Data mapping is necessary for interoperability to occur. It’s the process of aligning data tables, elements, and field values from a source system to the Ed-Fi data standard. Ed-Fi data mapping includes descriptor mapping and system mapping. For more information on each, please see pages 9 and 10 of the document [How Ed-Fi Can Help You Make the Most of Your Data](#) by Education Analytics.

Operational Data Store (ODS)

The ODS is where data land when they are transferred from a source system that has mapped to Ed-Fi – directly onto the structure of the Ed-Fi ODS. It can be thought of as the entire scope of tables that support the Ed-Fi data model.

PowerSchool data-publishing dashboard

The PowerSchool data-publishing dashboard is available for a given school year after a South Carolina school district has followed SCDE’s instructions to create a new Ed-Fi profile for the year and connect to the district’s Ed-Fi ODS using district-specific and year-specific credentials.

resource (Ed-Fi resource)

An Ed-Fi resource corresponds to a single or multiple tables in the Ed-Fi ODS.



source system

The source system is the system *from* which data (such as PowerSchool SIS data, assessment data, or IEP data) are transferred *to* the Ed-Fi ODS through the API. These systems act as a client and connect to the API.