Report on Act 38 of 2009

An Act Relating to PreK-12 and Higher Education Partnerships

Section 3: Electronic Longitudinal Data System

REPORT

January 15, 2016

Submitted to House and Senate Education Committees

Submitted by Secretary of Education
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Legislation

Act No. 38 of 2009. An act relating to pre K-12 and higher education partnerships.

Section 3. ELECTRONIC STUDENT LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

…(5) Report to the senate and house committees on education on or before January 15, 2011 regarding implementation of this section and in January of each subsequent year until implementation is complete.

Link to complete text of legislation on Vermont Legislature website: http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2010/Docs/ACTS/ACT038/ACT038%20As%20Enacted.pdf.

Background

In 2012, the Vermont Agency of Education (Agency) was awarded a Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant from the United States Department of Education (USDOE). The amount of the award was $4,947,261. This is Vermont's first such award. Vermont's proposal tied with Montana as the highest-rated proposal received. The award announcement can be found on the federal SLDS program page here: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/fy12_announcement.asp.

This grant opportunity called for proposals that were focused on one of three priority areas:

1. To design, develop, and implement statewide, longitudinal kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) data systems; (maximum award amount for priority 1: $5,000,000);
2. To develop and link early childhood data to the State's K-12 data system; (maximum award amount for priority 2: $4,000,000); or
3. To develop and link postsecondary and/or workforce data to the State's K-12 data system. (maximum award amount for priority 3: $4,000,000)

The Agency submitted a proposal that will address Priority 1: to develop and implement a statewide longitudinal data system for grades K-12. While Act 38 calls for the selection and implementation of one statewide Pre-K-16 data system, the requirements and maximum award amount associated with this grant opportunity limited the scope the Agency could request be covered by this funding.

The cost to implement a single, statewide student information system that would meet all requirements dictated by the grant Request for Applications (RFA) would exceed the

maximum award amount. The Agency instead submitted a proposal that would establish a streamlined data reporting and analysis system to be utilized by all publicly funded K-12 schools.

The nearly $4.95 Million SLDS grant award will be used to fund the Vermont Automated Data Reporting (VADR) project. Deliverables expected to be developed through the VADR project are:
1. All K-12 Schools Participating in Automated Vertical Data Collection Process
2. Develop State-level Operational Data Store
3. All VTAOE Data Analysis Tool Date Loads Automated
4. Establish Enhanced Training Delivery System
5. All EdFacts Submission Files Capable of Being Automatically Generated
6. Develop Growth Model Reporting Tool

The VADR project will establish a K-12 data system that will serve as the foundation for future expansion to a comprehensive Pre-K-16 system.

Project Timeline
Grant awards were announced in June 2012. The initial timeline for implementation of this grant award ran from July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015; however, the Agency was awarded a no-cost extension through June 30, 2016 to allow more time to complete the statewide implementation of the SLDS. The project to implement this system experienced a longer than two-year procurement delay that resulted in the timeline of the project work to shift accordingly with no change in project scope or cost. The Agency has remained in close contact with its federal partners and they have been pleased with the efforts and progress of the project team. There have been additional discussions about an additional no-cost extension to correspond to the additional time lost due to the procurement delay. All indications suggest that this additional one-year, no-cost extension will be granted; however, extension requests may not be made until the final sixty days of the revised implementation timeline.

Project Vendors
The Agency has procured Agilis Technology as the Technical Lead/Project Management vendor. Agilis Technology facilitated the process by which the SLDS implementation vendor was selected. The Agency selected Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) and their edFusion product to be implemented as Vermont's K-12 SLDS.

Annual Update

The Agency has been working with HMH to define the system and data requirements. The initial system implementation will start by streamlining six existing collections encompassing core data about students, educators, and course offerings. The streamlining of these data collections will ease the reporting burden on schools and make the data collected via these applications available to education stakeholders on a near real-time basis. The project team has nearly finalized the specifications that will enable streamlined submission of these data and will be working closely with school districts to incorporate any necessary changes to their systems as part of system implementation. The Agency has taken great care to minimize the changes that districts will see while balancing necessary changes that will allow for more frequent updates to the SLDS and any modifications needed to maintain data integrity within HMH's edFusion product. The grant award includes money to help pay for changes to district information systems that may be needed to interoperate with the SLDS.

Data that were previously housed in the Agency's Education Data Warehouse (EDW) have been migrated to the new SLDS system and the project team is conducting testing on this deliverable. The Agency has worked diligently with HMH to ensure that the data structure finalized via the streamlined data collection process is completely in sync with data migrated from the EDW. This will ensure that the Agency and district users will retain the capability of comparing longitudinal data migrated from the EDW to that which will be collected directly via the SLDS.

The system delivered by HMH will also incorporate mechanisms to import data from external sources (i.e. sources other than directly from local Student Information Systems). Agency leadership prioritized the initial list of these 15 external data sources for inclusion as part of the initial SLDS implementation. These data sources include datasets related to:

- **Assessment** (e.g. Smarter Balanced and Dynamic Learning Maps assessment results, NECAP and VTAAP science assessment results),
- **Special Education** (e.g. data from the Agency's Child Count collections, Special Education personnel data),
- **Educator Licensing** (e.g. degree, testing, and endorsement information),
- **Independent Schools** (e.g. data from the Agency's Independent School Census),
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** (e.g. data from the Agency's CTE data collections),
- **Education Finance** (e.g. district revenue and expenditure data as collected via the Agency's financial data collections),

- **Program Participation** (e.g. Student- and/or Organization-level participation in various education programs),
- **Dual Enrollment** (e.g. data from VSC and Agency dual enrollment databases),
- **Postsecondary Readiness Exams** (e.g. SAT/AP/ACT results),
- **Postsecondary Continuation/Persistence** (e.g. data from the National Student Clearinghouse), and
- **Additional Indicators** (e.g. indicators that are maintained outside of the SLDS but are necessary for inclusion in SLDS analysis and reports such as ADM, graduation cohort calculations, other indicators needed for Education Quality Review reports, etc.)

The project team has nearly completed the analysis and mapping of these data sets that precipitate the creation of the load procedures to incorporate these external data sets. Similarly, the work to analyze data needed to populate data analysis tools and federal EdFacts reports has been compiled and maintained as the data elements to be collected from districts and those to be imported from external data sets have been mapped within the SLDS.

Funds were also included in Vermont's successful *Race To The Top – Early Learning Challenge* federal grant that will pay for the work to expand the SLDS system to integrate five early childhood data sets including public prekindergarten, kindergarten readiness, and data from Vermont's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. That expansion has been scheduled to take place in 2016 and 2017, after the initial K-12 implementation is complete.

The Agency will include all related updates to this project on its SLDS website located here: http://education.vermont.gov/slds.

For more information, contact Brian Townsend, Agency IT Director, at (802) 479-1030 or brian.townsend@vermont.gov

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