

# Project Startup Report

**Project Name:** North Dakota Statewide Longitudinal Data System (ND SLDS)

**Agency:** Information Technology Department (ITD)

**Project Sponsor:** Lisa Feldner

**Project Manager:** Sarah Lee

## Project Description

The State of North Dakota is working towards the goals of improving student achievement in PK-12 schools and ensuring that PK-12 students transition successfully from PK-12 to postsecondary education and the workforce. Currently, each agency collects some type of performance data, however data collected within each agency does not always provide a full picture of longitudinal outcomes (how participants fared over a length of time). While North Dakota has experience linking educational and workforce data with the current Follow-up Information on North Dakota Education and Training (FINDET) system, North Dakota needs to develop an architecture to provide the longitudinal data required to perform the research for program evaluation over time. North Dakota has made progress toward planning a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and is prepared to initiate the building of this system.

In 2007 the state legislature formed the SLDS Committee, under the leadership of the Information Technology Department (ITD). This committee's mission is to "propose, develop, and govern a system for sharing longitudinal data that will maximize the usefulness of management information to stakeholders and partners of North Dakota education, training, employment and service systems while protecting the privacy and security of personal information." The committee's focus thus far has been planning, budgeting, data governance, and applying for grant applications for K-12 and postsecondary to the Department of Education.

In 2009 North Dakota accepted stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). A condition of these funds was to report final developed metrics as required by the U.S. Department of Education. North Dakota would meet this requirement by implementing a longitudinal data system.

The purpose of this project is to fulfill the State's need for a P-20 data system as defined by the ARRA funding requirements and the objectives documented in the project charter.

Because the project received only a portion of the funding required for the scope noted in the project charter, the work will be handled in two phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2. Therefore, the project will be scheduled using a "rolling wave" method. The schedule will allow for a re-planning at the end of Phase 1 to further define the scope, schedule, and budget for Phase 2.

## Business Need or Problem

- Agencies are not collecting all the data they believe is needed to inform and improve program information
- Agencies do not have the ability to automatically match data files with other agencies
- The absence of data governance councils at the State and agency levels creates a data system void of the data definitions, rules, and processes needed to ensure data consistency, quality, and reliability

## Key Metrics of this Planning Project

Project Start Date	Estimated Length of Project	Estimated Cost
Planning 9/23/10	55 months	\$4,691,649

## Benefits to Be Achieved

Project Objectives of this Planning Project	Measurement Description
1. Capability for data sharing	a. Has the project produced longitudinal data to

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	<p>provide historical data and reports to authorized users?</p> <p>b. Has the project produced ETL processes for consuming agency data and the logging and auditing required?</p> <p>c. Does the data available allow for research on the individual level as authorized?</p>
2. Establish data governance	<p>a. Has the project established data governance that defines available data and data sharing agreements?</p> <p>b. Has the project identified data that is unavailable due to legal or privacy issues?</p> <p>c. Has the SLDS Committee promoted strategies to raise awareness of available data for research and reporting requirements to the SLDS participants?</p>
3. Address the remaining system capabilities and elements prescribed by the America COMPETES Act that are not met by other projects	<p>a. Has the project addressed the following five required system capabilities at project completion? [Request for Applications NCES 09-04, Grants for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Section IV]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The system must enable States to examine student progress and outcomes over time, including students' preparation to meet the demands of the postsecondary education, the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, and the Armed Forces.</li> <li>ii. The system must facilitate and enable the exchange of data among agencies and institutions within the State so that data may be used to inform policy and practice.</li> <li>iii. The system must enable the matching of teachers with information about their certification and teacher preparation programs, including institutions at which teachers received their training.</li> <li>iv. The system must enable data to be easily generated for continuous improvement and decision-making.</li> <li>v. The system must ensure the quality and integrity of data contained in the system.</li> </ul> <p>b. Has the project addressed the following six required data elements at project completion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Element 2: Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information [America COMPETES Act Section</li> </ul>

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	<p>6401(e)(2)(D)(i)(II)]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Element 3: Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs [America COMPETES Act Section 6401(e)(2)(D)(i)(III)]</li> <li>iii. Element 4: The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems [America COMPETES Act Section 6401(e)(2)(D)(i)(IV)]</li> <li>iv. Element 5: A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability [America COMPETES Act Section 6401(e)(2)(D)(i)(V)]</li> <li>v. Element 11: Data that provides information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework [America COMPETES Act Section 6401(e)(2)(D)(iii)(I)]</li> <li>vi. Element 12: Data that provides other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education [America COMPETES Act Section 6401(e)(2)(D)(iii)(II)]</li> </ul>
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## Cost/Benefit Analysis

No direct cost savings or financial return on investment has been determined. However, the State is the beneficiary of ARRA funding due to a commitment to implementation of the SLDS.

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## Key Constraints or Risks of this Planning Project

- Technology and methodology changes will require a change of project scope and/or cost - technology and product line changes could change as software companies acquire and enhance their product lines.
- This risk will be mitigated by following the State's change request process should a need arise to consider alternate technology, and also by using the expertise of consultants who are familiar with the technology required for this project.
- Lack of State and stakeholders resources – limited resources are a concern as this is a new initiative without the dedicated resources tied to the project.
  - To mitigate this risk, resources will be scheduled around their current job responsibilities. The vendor pool may be used to augment resources and/or ITD can hire contractors to provide assistance.
- Lack of industry resources – most states are implementing an SLDS with or without federal grants, and new grants are being awarded through stimulus funds which will consume vendor resources.
  - To mitigate this risk, the project will attempt to minimize the use of vendor resources. If necessary, the project will use change management processes to extend the schedule without jeopardizing cost, scope or quality.
- Resistance to organizational change within and between stakeholder groups.
  - This risk will be mitigated by creating an organizational change management plan and designing a system which will minimize the data collection burden.
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations may require changes to data governance and data sharing agreements.
  - This risk will be mitigated by addressing data governance and data sharing early in the project schedule to identify any project impacts.