

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,
2017

Submitted to House and Senate Education Committees

**Submitted by Secretary of Education
Rebecca Holcombe**



Prepared by Brian Townsend, IT Director

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 the 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/slids/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 addresses 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 to be developed through the VADR project are:

1. All Public K-12 Schools Participating in Automated Vertical Data Collection Process
2. Develop State-level Operational Data Store
3. All VTAOE Data Analysis Tool Data 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 has been awarded a no-cost extension through June 30, 2017 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. Time was also lost when the initial vendor was bought by a larger company. The Agency has remained in close contact with its federal partners throughout, and they have been pleased and supportive of our efforts to complete the project. We have had some discussions about a possible additional no-cost extension to correspond to the additional time lost due to the procurement delay and to ensure that the project is completed successfully. With an investment of this size, we feel it is better to build the system correctly than to build it too fast.

The Agency is working with the vendor to complete the project by the end of June, 2017. The Agency will continue discussions to ensure that US DOE is apprised of our progress and will support continued funding until completed. No-cost extension requests may not be made until the final 60 days of the revised implementation timeline and the Agency will have a more complete picture as to whether the full

implementation will be completed this year – or whether a further extension may be needed – at that time.

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 Choice Solutions and their edFusion product to be implemented as Vermont’s K-12 SLDS. Choice Solutions was acquired by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) during contract negotiations. The Agency included language recommended by the offices of the Attorney General and Chief Information Officer to mitigate potential risk posed by this acquisition.

Annual Update

The Agency has been working iteratively with HMH to refine the system and data requirements based on feedback received from district personnel and their student information system (SIS) vendors. The initial system implementation is set up to streamline 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 on a near real-time basis.

The updated specifications will include all details necessary for district SIS vendors to facilitate 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. The Agency has been collaborating with SIS vendors to scope out changes that may be needed to these systems and will be preparing contracts for this work once the final specifications are released.

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 is working 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 VTAAAP 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 completed the analysis and mapping of these data sets and HMH has nearly completed 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. One other recent change is that the Agency and HMH have worked with US DOE to prioritize the export of data that will be used to populate the State Report Card, as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act, through this implementation. This maximizes both State and HMH resources in ensuring that part of the initial implementation helps meet this requirement.

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.

Agency staff have been working with partners in other agencies across the state to begin data mapping and alignment to facilitate this work once the K-12 implementation is complete. The Agency has discussed contract amendments with both Agilis and HMH to ensure this work is completed before that grant implementation period ends at the end of 2018.

The Agency will include all related updates to this project on its SLDS website located here: <http://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/statewide-longitudinal-data-system>.

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

END