

# Project Startup Report

**Project Name:** North Dakota State Longitudinal Education Data System (ndSLEDS)

**Agency:** Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

**Project Sponsor:** G. David Massey

**Project Manager:** Sarah Lee

## Project Description

DPI was awarded a grant from the United States Department of Education to build a longitudinal data system to expand upon the reporting that is currently in place. Due to the complexity of the scope of work approved in the grant, it was determined to divide this work into two separate projects: a planning project (noted in the grant application as Phase 1) and an execution project (noted in the grant application as Phases 2-5).

The purpose of this project is to plan the execution of ndSLEDS. This is a planning project, meaning the intent of this project is to analyze and gather information to produce a project plan and schedule for the execution of ndSLEDS. This project will create data governance structures, address data integration strategies, and include formal data quality processes. This project will also obtain consulting to determine a vertical reporting strategy and potential pilot. We will be researching architectures that are cost effective and meet the goals of the K-12 education data warehouse. A result of this planning phase may include the release of an RFP.

## Business Need or Problem

Business Needs or Problems which required both this planning project and the eventual execution project:

- There is a lack of usable, timely, and quality data at both the state level and the district levels:
  - The State Automated Reporting System (STARS) is missing data and linkages to achieve the ten Data Quality Campaign elements, such as the link of teacher to course and student data.
  - STARS lacks formative assessment data to provide timely interventions for students
  - STARS does not collect all of the data required to transfer data among institutions, such as student grades by course.
  - School districts and the State need to improve availability of education data to stakeholders for analysis of student achievement and outcomes.
  - Most school districts do not properly track staff data, hindering their ability to better support educators in raising student achievement.
  - Professional development data is not readily available to the State from the school districts to allow for the analysis of the effectiveness of professional development.
  - Summative assessment data is currently collected, but is not readily available to stakeholders outside DPI.
  - Quality P-12 longitudinal data is not available to other education and workforce stakeholders for the evaluation of the effectiveness of their programs.
- School districts do not have the data and analysis tools they need to better support decision makers and teachers.
  - Data submitted into STARS is not available for school districts to readily access or in formats that provide the school districts feedback.
  - There remain manual data collections that lack validations, quality and coordination with State and school district data stewards.
  - Most of North Dakota's school districts do not have adequate resources to implement and support a student information system or data warehouse.
  - North Dakota education data, including student assessment, teacher qualifications, education

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programs, school finance data and others, are not available for analysis through a web-based business intelligence tool.

- Training and data governance are needed to transform how data is used within the state to achieve the goals of NCLB.
  - DPI currently lacks a comprehensive data governance system.
  - There is a lack of structure in most school districts to provide adequate data stewardship and verification of data.
  - There is currently no comprehensive statewide support structure for helping stakeholders discuss and resolve issues related to data-driven decision making as well as learn and promulgate best practices.
- P-12 education data will be a primary data foundation for other longitudinal systems being planned.

## Key Metrics of this Planning Project

Project Start Date	Estimated Length of Project	Estimated Cost
7/01/09	12 months	\$387,900

## Benefits to Be Achieved

Project Objectives of this Planning Project	Measurement Description
1. Provide a data governance committee structure that collaboratively sets direction, and drives full participation.	a. Committees have signed charters. b. Appropriate committees have Local Education Agency (LEA) participation. c. Committees have begun to meet regularly as defined in their charters.
2. Create a project charter and project plan for Phases 2-5, which contain the scope of work and schedule for the design, development, and implementation of ndSLEDS.	a. The Phases 2-5 project charter will have measureable objectives for the project. These objectives will be the project's solutions to the business problems defined in the business case. The Phases 2-5 project charter and project plan will have a scope of work and schedule that will define how the project will meet the objectives noted in the execution project charter. b. The Phases 2-5 project plan will provide structure and direction for the project via the individual plans, e.g., integrated change control plan, human resource management plan and the organizational change management plan.
3. Determine what, if any, RFP's are required for the project and document the needed scopes of work for those RFP's.	a. The project plan will contain information regarding any necessary procurement.
4. Determine the desired BI architecture infrastructure that can securely deliver data to the teacher level.	a. Identify existing architectures/models that accomplish this today. b. Document BI requirements for use in any applicable RFP's.

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## Cost/Benefit Analysis

Cost/Benefit Analysis of both this planning project and the eventual execution project:

An immediate monetary return on investment is not anticipated. Long term value is expected in providing information to measure the effectiveness of programs and funding that ultimately improve student outcomes. In the long run, an established longitudinal education data system can provide a direct relationship to funding and program effectiveness.

## 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 LDS 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.