

MARYLAND LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Highlights

Maryland has just ended a year of intensive work and careful planning intended to ensure a successful project. Upon receiving the IES grant, several months of additional study was completed using NCES resources and ideas from other states. We quickly engaged our internal and external stakeholders, and gathered their input. We also incorporated current state-funded projects to leverage a combination of state and grant funding to enhance our final product. As we ended our first year we had met our Year One goals. We are ready to move quickly to implement our unique student identifier, a hallmark of our new longitudinal data system, and continue our progress on our other goals.

Unique Student/Teacher Identifier – Maryland undertook a complete review of other states' unique identifier systems in order to implement a proven model and identified a system that met our needs and specifications. We developed an RFP using those specifications and completed a procurement and award process that will allow us to implement the use of our student identifier for the 2007-2008 school year. This was a major step forward as we have many components for the longitudinal system except the unique identifier needed to link student records.

Stakeholder Engagement – A needs assessment approach was used to engage both internal (professionals working within the department of education) and external (a diverse group representing all levels of the school districts, and various communities: business, parent, advocate, media/press, etc.) stakeholders in the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) project. All participants were given an orientation to the project and asked to provide input relative to their own data needs to improve student achievement and address research concerns. They also provided input on challenges and concerns they had about the system, especially in relation to access and security. In addition, intact working groups, each representing a specific role in local districts have been kept informed of project initiatives and progress.

EDEN Gap Analysis – The project staff has spent considerable time cataloguing the data elements required for EDEN files and the Consolidated State Performance Report and comparing those requirements to the capacity of the current data collection system. The department program offices have been engaged in providing information on the data elements they currently collect from the school systems, and comparing that to what is required. This gap analysis has allowed us to identify data elements for EDEN reporting that we did not know was being collected. A next step will be to consolidate those data collections.

Design of EDEN tables in data warehouse – The current data warehouse contractor (state funded) has begun planning processes that will enable data to be organized into tables for efficient and accurate EDEN reporting.

Further development of Special Education System – The online Special Services Information system (SSIS) was implemented with all districts in the state. User access consists of an online, web-based application controlled by secure log in access. SSIS has a set of pre-defined reports to assist each local school system to review their data. A data extract function allows local school systems and MSDE users to extract flat files for research. Finally, there was a pilot of ad hoc query techniques for MSDE and local school system Special Education users. This pilot has shown that guided queries and pre-defined reports are more effective for the majority of local school system users. MSDE users responsible for monitoring efforts benefit most from ad-hoc queries.

Achievement of Outcomes and Performance Measures

According to the revised timeline, all project outcomes have been accomplished on schedule. In some cases, initial estimations of the time it would take to complete a phase were incorrect because the full magnitude of the work was not clear at the time that the initial timeline was developed. Therefore a few milestones were completed a month or two after the scheduled deadline. Also, interactions with consultants and other states caused us to reevaluate some of our initial approaches and spend additional time in planning. That being said, we have also made progress on some goals that were included in our plan for Year 2. We adjust and take advantage of any opportunity to move us ahead, whether the topic is on our current timeline or not. The project is still on track for completion in 2008.

Project Contributions

- Maryland's longitudinal data system will facilitate the completion and submission of additional EDEN files. This in turn will enable more opportunities at the federal and state level for research.
- Maryland's history and culture of stakeholder involvement has been leveraged to enhance knowledge and acceptance of the MLDS across the state. A culture of using data for decision-making has prepared stakeholders to embrace the MLDS concepts and look forward to having longitudinal student data.
- The data collection and reporting policy of local school systems will most likely be adjusted to consolidate data collections from their program offices. This will allow districts to have more complete student data systems, and provide more data to the state.