One of the keys to developing a successful statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) is establishing the system as an essential tool in improving educational outcomes. With proper training and familiarity with the SLDS, educators can use the system to great effect in their schools and classrooms, and can become powerful advocates for the system's growth and continuation.

In this webinar, Delaware, Georgia, and Hawaii shared methods they have used to train teachers and administrators to use SLDS data to support their students. They also discussed how they have adapted their training methods to changing needs and available resources, and shared lessons learned.

Delaware: Shifting Approaches to Reaching Educators

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) provides educators with two ways to access data from its SLDS, Ed Insight. The Ed Insight Dashboard offers different data views for teachers, school-level administrators, and district-level administrators, with a state-level data view coming soon. A new Report Portal, currently in development, will offer student and classroom reports in addition to those available through the Dashboard. Through the portal, teachers and school-level administrators will have access to standard reports, and administrators at the school and district level will be able to generate additional reports on an ad hoc basis. Each tool and each role-based view within the tools requires targeted training for users.
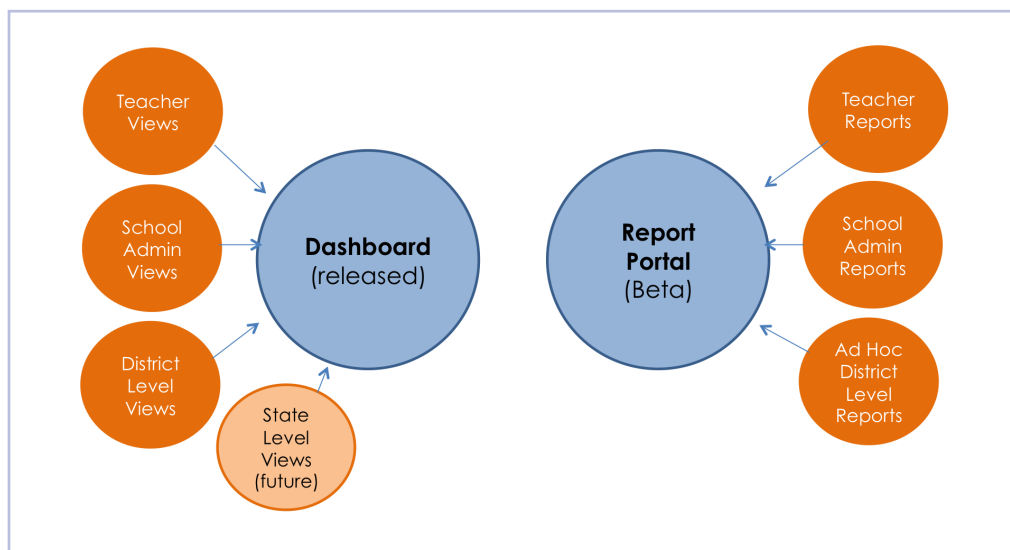

Figure 1. User Access to Delaware's Ed Insight Data Warehouse

Training Methods
During the 2012–2013 school year, DDOE used resources from the Race to the Top (RTT) grant that funded development of the Dashboard to offer 90 minutes of training each week to teachers in the state's 19 school districts and 21 charter schools. The training time was built into teachers' professional learning community time and led by 29 data coaches from DDOE, who worked with designated local data coaches in each district in a train-the-trainer model.

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In 2013–2014, Delaware continues to offer 90 minutes of training each week, although the number of RTT-funded data coaches has decreased to four as that grant winds down. Delaware's SLDS grant, which also funds development of the Report Portal, covers additional trainers for the Dashboard.

DDOE uses the following tools to provide training to data users:

- *Online training videos*. Four videos for teachers and five for administrators are available through the DDOE website for users to access as needed.
- *District-wide presentations*. These presentations offer a general introduction to the Dashboard tool to a wide range of users at once, including teachers, guidance counselors, and other administrators.
- *Specialized positional group workshops*. These expanded, hands-on sessions for individual groups of teachers, instructional specialists, counselors, or school administrators take a more detailed look at tools and data most relevant to those groups. Training for teachers, who can access only data on their own students and classes, covers data such as test scores, grades, absences, discipline issues, and student watch lists, and takes about an hour. Administrator training sessions can take up to three hours in order to cover more detailed information about the available charts and graphs, using thresholds, defining goals, and drilling down on specific metrics.
- *Internal DDOE presentations*. Training presentations for department managers at DDOE aim to encourage use of the data tools, promotion of the tools to district-level users, and penetration into districts where data use is not as strong.

Lessons Learned
Although its training model initially relied on a train-the-trainer approach for developing data coaches at the district level, Delaware has shifted to more direct, face-to-face workshops between DDOE trainers and data users. This approach is more time consuming, but it alleviates some risk of misunderstanding by removing one to two levels of communication between the DDOE and end users. Because use of the Dashboard is voluntary, miscommunicated information can lead users to become frustrated and less likely to use it. The face-to-face model also allows trainers to respond directly to questions and receive immediate feedback from data users.

Targeting workshops to specific positional groups also helps Delaware demonstrate the relevance of tools and prepare educators to use them most effectively. For example, a training workshop for guidance counselors might walk through specific Dashboard tasks such as searching for students with high SAT scores or for students who have not yet taken the SAT. Administrators might look at a

watch list of students in danger of not graduating. Walking users through tasks they can use on a daily or weekly basis becomes a "hook" for encouraging further use of the tools.

Delaware also learned the value of marketing its data tools both to users and internally to DDOE staff. Because use of the SLDS-connected tools is voluntary and educators have access to another paid-service data product, DDOE strives to show educators what they can get out of the state-supported tools. Current marketing efforts focus on how the Dashboard can integrate with other data systems, including the state's assessment delivery system and student information system.

Georgia: Continuous Training for New Tools and Innovation

Georgia's public school system includes 192 districts encompassing 120,000 teachers, 40,000 administrators, 1.7 million students, and 3 million parents. Because all of these audiences can access parts of the state's education data systems—including the SLDS and the statewide learning management system—Georgia offers training to all of these groups on the tools relevant to them. Figure 2 (next page) illustrates the tools and systems used by different audiences to support high-quality instruction and personalized learning.

Training Methods
Georgia has used a variety of training formats to help each of its user groups understand the tools and information most relevant to them. For example, teacher training focuses on classroom-level data that can inform classroom instruction, whereas training for school and district administrators focuses on analyzing school performance and comparing information over time and across schools and districts. In both cases, educators prefer training opportunities that use real data rather than de-identified data prepared for a training environment.

Georgia's training methods include the following:

- *Face-to-face workshops*. Georgia has found workshops to be the most effective training method for teachers, who prefer working in smaller groups where they can ask questions.
- *Summits*. Large district-level workshops bring together a variety of educators in one place. Summits have proven to be the preferred training environment for administrators.
- *Train-the-trainer method*. This method is used only in larger school districts that have their own local trainers.
- *Online modules*. Web-based resources are available to teachers, administrators, and parents. The modules supplement in-person training and are not considered a primary training method.
- *User manuals*. Manuals are available in print and online. Like the online modules, the manuals are secondary training materials.
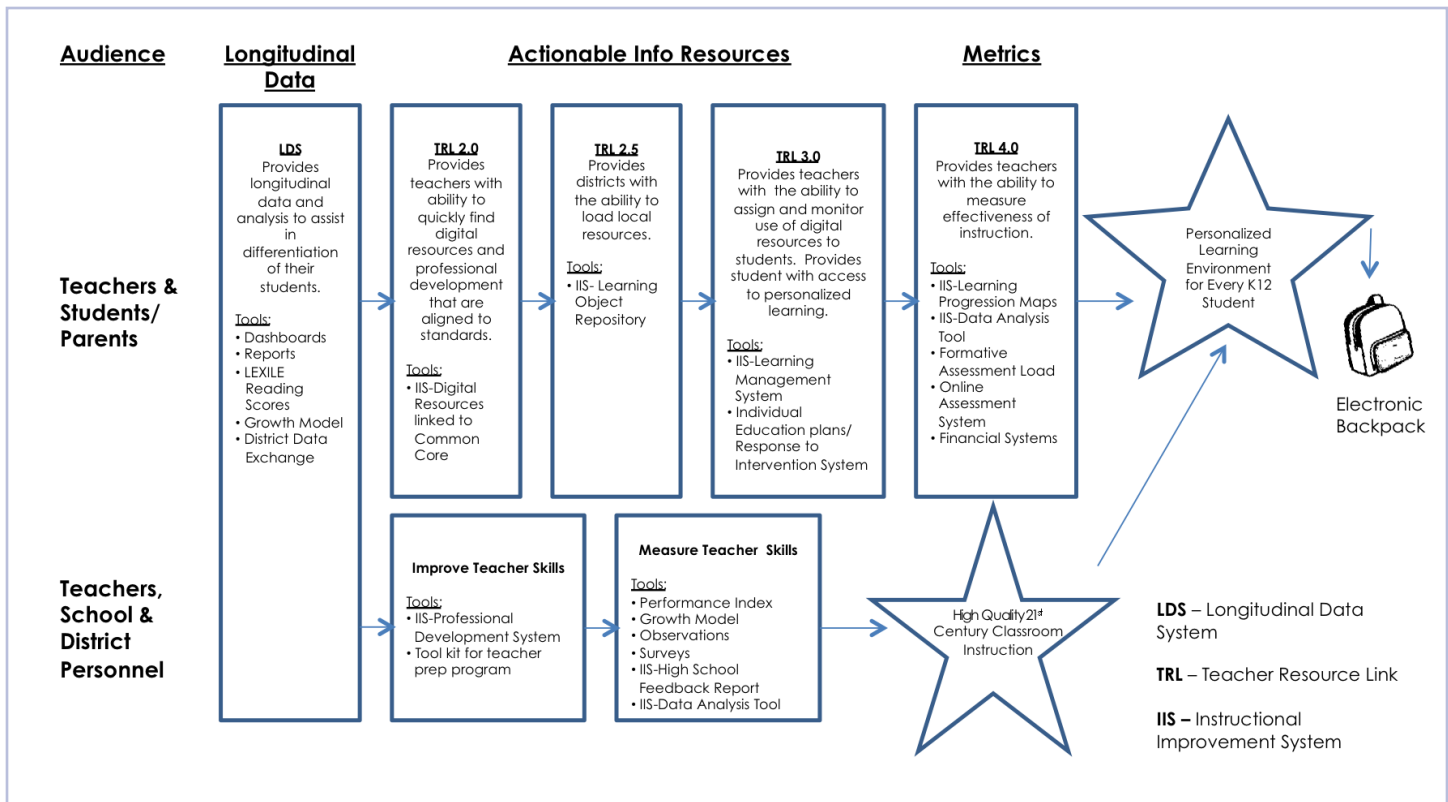
Figure 2. Georgia's Path to Personalized Learning

Georgia's training methods are influenced by three important factors:

1. *A governance body of district administrators established as the state began rolling out new data tools under its SLDS and RTT grants.* The district governance body sets the priorities for which enhancements and additional content the districts want to incorporate into the system. In this way, the districts take ownership of the data and tools and help ensure their needs are met.

2. *The state's rollout schedule for new system features.* The regular addition of new functionality results in frequent changes to the technical environment that data users encounter. Georgia's approach of introducing new features in six-week increments means training materials constantly need to be updated to reflect the changes.

3. *Innovation by educators already using the data tools.* When system leaders learn of teachers and administrators using the tools in ways they had not anticipated, they try to highlight those new uses in training sessions to inspire other educators. As a result of these influences, Georgia updates its training programs nearly as frequently as training happens.

Lessons Learned

For Georgia, involving district administrators via the governance body has been key in getting school districts to take ownership of the data systems, as well as to guide prioritization of new features and enhancements. It was important for Georgia to establish this governance body early in the processes of developing its data use tools. Georgia also found that school principals are among the most effective champions of data use among educators. Even when district administrators or teachers are on board with the new tools, data use often does not gain wider traction without the support of school principals.

One key to data use in Georgia has been integrating functions across data systems and tools. Integrating tools not only gives educators access to more data, it also helps them understand more ways to use it. Increasingly integrated functions and the frequent release of new data features have resulted in an increased demand for training. At the same time, training agendas have been simplified by only having to cover a few new features at a time.

Like Delaware, Georgia has not mandated use of the state's data systems. Believing that a mandate would encourage educators to find ways to avoid using the new tools rather than embracing them, system leaders have focused on demonstrating the value the tools bring to educators by easing administrative burden and providing useful information. The state has introduced one positive incentive to using the tools that has been more effective than initially expected: School districts that use the data systems at least 50 times a month with at least half of teachers participating receive "extra credit" under the No Child Left Behind waiver provisions.

Hawaii: Maximizing the Impact of Limited Training Resources

With just two trainers teaching educators how to use the state's K12 SLDS, Hawaii adopted a phased approach to training intended to gain the maximum amount of support for use of the system. When the SLDS was launched during the 2010–2011 school year, trainers worked with school principals and state education agency (SEA) leaders to introduce the system and garner their buy-in. At the request of the principals, training during the following school year focused on support staff, with updates on new features for the principals and SEA leaders. Because support staff members often are both education practitioners and data users, trainers relied on them to quickly grasp the value of the SLDS and encourage its use in their schools. Training was offered to teachers during the 2012–2013 school year. Hawaii also created "sandbox" training materials for teacher preparation programs that simulate the SLDS environment with de-identified data to introduce the data system to teachers before they even reach the classroom.

Training Methods
Hawaii uses its face-to-face training time with educators to introduce the SLDS, demonstrate the benefits of data access, and address concerns specific to the audience. All data users learn how to navigate the data tools, see what data are available and how data terms are defined, and receive important information about data quality and privacy.

Because administrators use data mostly for planning purposes, training for those users focuses on understanding how the data are defined, collected, and used. Administrator training covers the following topics:

- *Data quality and reliability*. Administrators sometimes see data in the SLDS tools that look different from what they expect. In these cases, trainers focus on making sure administrators understand how the data are defined and investigating any data accuracy issues.
- *Timeliness*. Administrators developing plans for the next school year need to know when the data they are using was collected and how often the data are updated.
- *Privacy*. Administrators can see personal information about students in their own schools or districts, but that information is not available to users outside that jurisdiction. Trainers make sure administrators understand who has access to what data and why.

During Hawaii's first two years of training principals and support staff on the SLDS, those administrators expressed appreciation for the value of the SLDS tools but resisted using professional development time to train teachers on using them. Many felt that the tools would be more beneficial to school administrators, data staff, and curriculum coordinators than to classroom teachers. For the classroom teachers who did receive training on the SLDS, that training focused on the following topics:

- *How to access data as part of everyday practice*. Training sessions used hypothetical situations and case scenarios to illustrate how data tools can help teachers with their day-to-day needs.
- *Navigating large quantities of data*. Trainers worked to avoid having teachers feel overwhelmed by the amount of data available and to help them identify the information most useful to them.
- *Identifying important data elements and trends*. Trainers listened to teachers' needs to determine the data most relevant to their needs.

Lessons Learned
When offering training to educators from a specific school, trainers learned that it was important to understand the context and needs of that school beforehand and adapt the session accordingly. They also found that encouraging questions during training helped them better understand users' needs and even make modifications to the data tools based on user feedback. If a training session includes educators from multiple schools, having representatives from the same school sit together helps novice data users connect the data tools with their school's unique needs and concerns.

When possible, Hawaii tries to connect SLDS training sessions with existing activities, such as a teacher leadership institute, to introduce several interrelated data tools to a wide audience. Whether at a large meeting or a school-level training session, trainers take every opportunity to gather feedback from users on ways to improve the tools, data processes, and training activities.

The "sandbox" training environment developed for teacher preparation programs has proven to be one of the easiest ways for Hawaii to spread the word about its SLDS. The tool, which took three months to develop, was intended to alleviate the feeling of "bailing water out of a canoe" as trainers teach tools to existing educators only to face a flood of new teachers each year. Although the sandbox environment is not identical to the current SLDS tools and uses de-identified data, it allows future educators to familiarize themselves with the SLDS and data-based planning before entering the workforce.

Summary of Educator Training Strategies

	Delaware	Georgia	Hawaii
Audiences	Teachers, school-level administrators and specialists, district-level administrators, DDOE staff	Administrators, teachers, students, parents	School principals, support staff, teachers
Primary or Preferred Training Method(s)	Specialized positional group workshops	Small in-person workshops for teachers, larger summit meetings for administrators	In-person training sessions with administrators or teachers
Additional Resources	• Online videos • District-level meetings • Internal presentations at DDOE	• Online modules • User manuals • Train-the-trainer for larger districts • Pinterest board within SLDS for teachers to exchange ideas	• "Sandbox" environment designed for teacher preparation programs
Lessons Learned	• Face-to-face training with users is preferable to using a train-the-trainers approach • Training targeted to audiences based on position can be customized to that group's specific needs • Internal marketing is important • You can never have enough trainers	• Involve district administrators in governance from the beginning • School principals are effective champions • Integrate functionality across tools • Offer training on new tools as they come out rather than on all tools at once • Creative incentives can boost data use	• Understand school needs before training • Seek out user questions and feedback • Tie data training to existing professional development activities • Create new professional development activities to consolidate similar tools and systems • Introduce the data system via training tools for teacher preparation programs

Additional Resources

Data Use & Sustainability: Helping Stakeholders Get the Most from an SLDS
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/Sustainability_DataUse.pdf

Delaware Department of Education
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/

Georgia Department of Education
http://www.gadoe.org

Hawaii Department of Education
http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org

Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education
http://www.p20hawaii.org/

SLDS Workshop Summary: Developing a Data Use Strategy
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/data_use_strategy.pdf

Stakeholder Engagement & Data Use: Helping Stakeholders Get the Most from an SLDS
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/StakeholderEngagement_and_DataUse.pdf