



Core Services of the State Support Team

The State Support Team (SST), an initiative of the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Program, is a group of experienced state data systems experts who provide states with direct technical assistance (TA) on a wide range of issues to support SLDS development and use. While the SST have provided and will continue to offer TA on an array of data system-related topics, the Team has developed a core set of SST Services to address some of the most common, critical challenges faced by states in their SLDS efforts.

Each of the SST Services is designed to meet the range of data system-related needs of organizations and agencies across the P-20W spectrum (early childhood through the workforce and beyond). Currently, the SST Services focus on three target areas: stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and data use (please see the next page for more details).

Recognizing that states' needs, objectives, and environments vary widely, the SST Services are crafted to benefit states at various stages of SLDS development and use, and are geared toward multiple sectors of the P-20W environment. Each service is comprised of a collection of SST-created resources (e.g., working templates, presentations, and self-assessment guides) used to develop a defined set of potential deliverables—tangible products (or formal training) the state will have or receive as a result of the service engagement (e.g., policies, manuals, role descriptions, data system analysis, and training). These deliverables are customized to support the state's implementation efforts and, ultimately, the achievement of intended outcomes. Services are delivered along a sliding scale, with states deciding the “level” of engagement with the SST. This ranges from a “self-service” approach to “full-service” engagement as follows:



LEVEL 1 (Self-service): State SLDS staff is given access to resources and utilizes them with little or no SST involvement

LEVEL 2 (SST-assisted): SST serves in an advisory role, but state leads implementation of service deliverables

LEVEL 3 (Full-service): SST is directly engaged with the state in developing all of the service deliverables

Any state, regardless of federal grant status, is eligible to receive assistance from the SST. States can request SST support by logging into GRADS360° at <https://nces.grads360.org> and filling out a request form under the “State Support Requests” tab. If interested in a Service area, be sure to specify in your request. If you do not have a GRADS360° account, just send an email with a description of the service or TA you would like to support@sst-slds.org.

DATA USE

Building a longitudinal data system is not an end unto itself. The ultimate test of these systems’ value is how the organizations and individuals they intend to serve use the data to inform and improve their work and, ultimately, increase opportunities for students and workers in the state. Ensuring effective data use requires clear direction, strategic planning, and wide-ranging user support. To support states in this work, the Data Use Target Team has defined a comprehensive data use strategy which guides states through the many steps between determining the purpose of SLDS data use and establishing its sustainability.

Resources: Communicating Data Use to External Stakeholders: Issues and Advice from States; Developing a Data Use Strategy; Data Use Through Visualizations and Narratives

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Strategically engaging stakeholders, from policymakers to end users, remains necessary to support a state’s SLDS (for all sectors and P-20W). Stakeholder engagement helps to improve communication and increase leadership buy-in. Most importantly, stakeholder engagement helps to sustain and support the state’s SLDS. The Stakeholder Engagement Target Team has created a six-step guide towards effective stakeholder engagement and will continue to equip states with resources on how to work towards successful stakeholder engagement.

Resources: Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit: Traversing ‘Stakeholder Land’; State Desired Outcomes and Determine Purpose Statement – An In-Depth Look ; Stakeholder Engagement Self-Assessment Checklist; Stakeholder Engagement Plan Guide and Template; SLDS Spotlight: Engaging Postsecondary Stakeholders; SLDS Spotlight: State Approaches to Engaging Local K12 Stakeholders

SUSTAINABILITY

As states have received grant funding to develop and implement statewide longitudinal data systems, the issue of sustainability becomes a real concern. As many grants are coming to a close, strategies for sustaining these systems must be addressed as soon as possible; other grants are just starting, and this is the ideal time to discuss issues of sustainability and make a sustainability plan as SLDS progress is made. The Sustainability Target Team hopes to guide states as they evaluate their current situation; discuss options, opportunities and strategies for sustainability; and formulate the components of a sustainability plan.

Resources: SLDS Sustainability Planning Guide; SLDS Sustainability Toolkit; Sustainability Self-Assessment

To request an SST Service or support on other SLDS topics, log on to GRADS360° at <https://nces.grads360.org> and fill out a request form under the Request Support tab. If you do not have a GRADS360° account, simply email your request to support@sst-slds.org.