



NEBRASKA STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

Project Start Date: 8/1/2007

Project End Date: 7/31/2010

Amount Awarded: \$3,468,335

Data are one of an educational institution's most valuable, but underused, assets. At the Nebraska Department of Education and in our schools and districts across the state, we have collected and managed data about students, staff, courses, programs, and schools in order to report on the status and progress of our educational system to the people of Nebraska, its lawmakers, and the federal government. We also use the data to inform a host of planning and operational decisions, both administrative and instructional in nature. These decisions range from day-to-day management concerns, to student-focused instructional strategies, and far-reaching policy making.

Unfortunately, the modular nature of the evolution of education data systems throughout the nation, including Nebraska, has led to many systems that fall short of contemporary best practices for data management and use (e.g., Thorn, 2001; Heritage & Yeagley, 2005; and Tacheny & Plattner, 2005). Put simply, despite the vast amounts of time, money, energy, and expertise invested in the collection of education data, our stakeholders do not yet have access to enough timely, high quality data to adequately inform their decision making.

Having acknowledged this, we believe that the implementation of a statewide longitudinal data system will enable us to remedy common organizational barriers to data quality and align the past and current education data we possess with our future collection efforts. To this end, education data in Nebraska are in the process of being transformed into information that is useful, accurate, reliable, timely, and cost-effective.

Toward that end, Nebraska has already invested considerable time and money in the design and development of a statewide longitudinal data system. In 2004 Nebraska began the development of a new student and staff record system. Already implemented is the student and staff unique ID, and automated data collection system that gathers student, staff and assessment data, and a data warehouse. The system was piloted in SY 2005-06 and is running in parallel with older systems in SY 2006-2007. Full implementation to the public school portion of the system will be in the 2007-2008 school year. While many of the essential components of a statewide longitudinal data system are already in place, there are several other components that are lacking or limited thus not allowing Nebraska to have a comprehensive system.

In order to make it comprehensive we are asking for support from this grant program to complete our data architecture by adding special education and curriculum data to the

system. To improve our capability to exchange student data within FERPA guidelines we are proposing the creation of an electronic transcript facility. To improve the sharing of data with our key stakeholders we need to create a truly comprehensive decision support system. Finally, we are asking this grant program to supplement our existing training program by adding resources to assist our regional training partners.

Although Nebraska has already targeted resources for, and initiated the planning and development of, our statewide longitudinal data system, the system as envisioned in this application does not yet exist. We are committed to accomplishing the task, but acknowledge that limitations in state funding will not permit full-scale implementation in the foreseeable future without the support requested in this application. If support is awarded, we are confident that our statewide longitudinal data system will be fully implemented by the end of 2010.