Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MASSACHUSETTS STUDENT CONNECT

Project Start Date: 3/1/2009
Project End Date: 2/28/2012

Amount Awarded: $5,993,464

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education began the process of establishing the cornerstone of our data system in 1998 with the implementation of the Student Information Management System (SIMS). At that time the architecture of the system was an adequate first step for the initial implementation of a student level data collection system.

The data collection system has grown to encompass additional student, educator and assessment data that are required to meet the increasing demands to make informed policy decisions and understand best practices in the classroom. Massachusetts' educators, policy leaders across the state, parents and students are demanding a system that supports a targeted, data-driven approach to instruction that is readily accessible, less burdensome to compile and easier to use. Through inter-agency collaboration, this integrated data system will enable the longitudinal analysis of services and investments in children and youth over time. Policy makers, educators and researchers will have the tools to better understand which programs and services are creating positive outcomes for children, youth and families, particularly those who are most at-risk.

The Students Connect project contains three overarching components that will complete and support a comprehensive, efficient and effective longitudinal data system. Each component will be implemented between the 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 school years.

1. Develop and Implement the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) as the Engine for Massachusetts LDS Data Collection and Management:
   - Streamline the existing systems to improve the timeless of the data.
   - Implementing a dynamic exchange of data will significantly reduce the burden to local school district staff.
2. Establish An Interagency Readiness Passport System:
   - The Department, in collaboration with other state agencies, will first improve the exchange of aggregate data that are relevant to supporting services and programs for Massachusetts children and youth.
   - A multi-agency working group comprised of policy, data and legal analysts will analyze and develop options to reconcile privacy and data security requirements with the goal of data sharing across the range of services needed by at risk children and families.
3. Evaluation of the Feasibility of Regional Data Sharing Among States
   - Establish a partnership with a team of policy leaders and researchers convened by Professor Steve Coelen and a consortium of New England and Mid-Atlantic states to investigate how policies, best practices and interstate tracking of students can be improved through privacy laws compliant data-sharing and research agreements.