



SLDS Topical Webinar Summary

Engaging Local Stakeholders from Postsecondary and/or Workforce

This webinar explored unique approaches in three states to engaging postsecondary and workforce stakeholders in the development and management of statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDSs). Melissa Board of Washington State's Education Research and Data Center, Jayson Chung of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and Charles McGrew of the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics discussed challenges to stakeholder engagement, legal and organizational strategies for involving postsecondary and workforce institutions, and sustainability for data systems beyond the startup phase.

Challenges to Postsecondary and Workforce Engagement

Over time, focus on stakeholder engagement in SLDS development has evolved from seeking partners to supply educational data to establishing cohesive data management strategies and ensuring sustainable systems. Concerns shared by all contributing agencies—including data privacy issues, varying reporting requirements, and fears of losing control of messages behind the data—can be magnified among postsecondary and workforce agencies with unique data collection systems and decentralized governance structures. These organizations are also distinct in the information they can contribute and what they hope to gain from a shared system.

Below are examples of how the states of Washington, Wisconsin, and Kentucky address the challenges of integrating postsecondary and workforce agencies into SLDS design and management.

Washington State's Partners in Law

The statute establishing Washington State's Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) identifies the state's public education entities, community college system, public four-year postsecondary institutions, and state employment agency as partners in the center. As part of the state's Office of Financial Management, ERDC's independence from oversight by any one educational entity allows it to adapt to the needs, concerns, and goals of each of its partners without being limited by any one set of responsibilities.

ERDC Partner Agencies

- Department of Early Learning
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Professional Educator Standards Board
- State Board of Education
- Washington Student Achievement Council
- Council of Presidents (public four-year higher education)
- Independent Colleges of Washington
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
- Employment Security Department

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For more information on the IES SLDS Grant Program or for support with system development, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/SLDS>.

In communicating with its partners, ERDC seeks to highlight the benefits of the shared data system and provide transparent information about how the data are collected, managed, and shared. It also works closely with agencies to explore various strategies for using the data. ERDC coordinates webinars, site visits, and in-person meetings to deepen the discussion of each agency's contributions and the questions they hope to answer about their work based on the shared data.

To ensure the continued growth and relevance of its data system, ERDC takes steps to help its partner organizations get the most out of the data. These steps include

- pursuing cooperation with private postsecondary institutions to demonstrate how they can link data on their graduates to workforce outcomes in new ways;
- releasing data in small doses quickly so that agencies can use the data immediately even as more in-depth reports are being developed;
- hosting summits to address frequently asked questions and explore data use topics;
- publishing data use handbooks and posting them to its website;
- working with partners to develop reports and data sets based on their individual data needs; and
- recognizing that all partners bring a valuable perspective that strengthens the project.

Wisconsin's 'Constellation' of Stakeholders

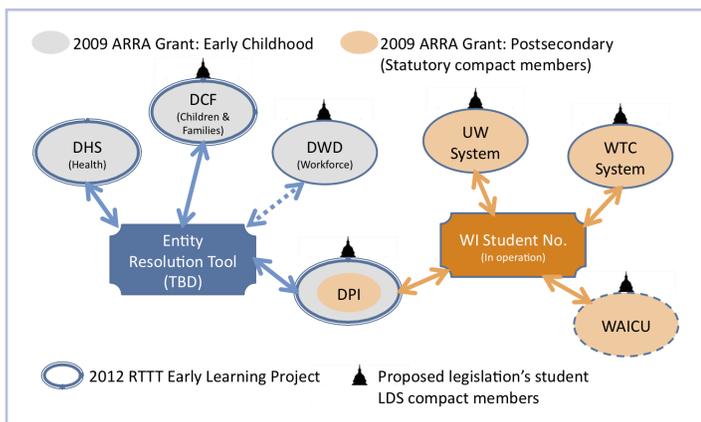


Figure 1. Wisconsin's SLDS Ecosystem

Faced with a highly decentralized system of state education entities, Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and its SLDS partners developed innovative approaches to data collection and data sharing to meet the needs of its stakeholders. As in Washington State, the involvement of public education entities, technical colleges, public universities, and private postsecondary institutions in the state's SLDS is prescribed by state statute. However, in Wisconsin, circumstances led two distinct groups of education and workforce agencies focusing on two different types of data to

develop parallel data systems. The systems use different keys for matching data records across sources while still allowing data to be shared seamlessly between the two groups. The diversity of stakeholder interests underscored the need for a communications strategy based on giving each partner agency a sense of ownership in the project and establishing a sense of trust and comfort over time. It also means thinking outside the box when coordinating data collection and sharing. For example, when it came to developing data requests and sharing policies and procedures, DPI realized it needed to expand its interagency circle of specialists to include experts in intergovernmental relations as well as data managers.

DPI also recognized the need to transition quickly from a project-management mentality driven by deadlines and deliverables to a long-term management mentality focused on building a lasting and valuable system. It promotes the system's sustainability by proactively developing a research agenda to give the system life and purpose for the future.

Expanding Collaboration in Kentucky

By the time Kentucky's Center for Education and Workforce Statistics (KCEWS) was formally established in legislation in 2013, the state had been thinking about ways to integrate education and workforce data from its various agencies for several years. Sharing and linking data among the agencies was further aided by the fact that the same state executive office, the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, oversees both policy areas.

In addition to the legal and political framework linking state agencies focused on education and employment, KCEWS is governed by a board chaired by the cabinet secretary and comprised of agency leaders representing K12 education, higher education executives, educator licensure, and financial aid. It is also supported by an advisory council that includes deans of education colleges. Both the board and the advisory council are involved in developing the center's annual research agenda. Additionally, every report issued by the center has a focus group, which allows for input from the state's chamber of commerce, employment agencies, and others on the alignment between Kentucky's education and workforce systems.

KCEWS Partner Agencies

- Education Professional Standards Board
- Council on Postsecondary Education
- Kentucky Department of Education
- Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
- Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

KCEWS’s outreach to its diverse stakeholders includes releasing useful data and reports as quickly as possible and utilizing statewide agencies as networks to publicize its products. It is also developing an online portal to allow its partners to generate their own data reports and reduce strain on its limited staff caused by the growing volume of information requests. Moving forward, the center is focusing its efforts on filling information gaps between agencies as well as building relationships with military organizations, out-of-state universities, and employment authorities in

neighboring states to better track K12, postsecondary and workforce data for Kentucky students.

Strategies for Stakeholder Engagement

SLDS leaders in Washington State, Wisconsin and Kentucky have developed numerous strategies for engaging stakeholders in research and data management efforts, as well as for building relationships to strengthen the SLDS for the future. Some of these strategies are highlighted in figure 2.

Washington State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly webinars with public four-year institutions • Annual campus visits to postsecondary partners • Outreach to private postsecondary institutions to encourage cooperation • Release small doses of data quickly so they can be used immediately • Host data-use summits with partners • Publish data-use handbooks • Communicate with partners to learn about their data needs • Provide reports and data sets based on feedback from partners
Wisconsin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust among partner agencies over time • Understand and respect each agency’s unique pressures and circumstances, and give them “space” to address these • Define joint responsibilities and interests while protecting agency autonomy • Communicate clearly with partner agencies, recognizing semantic differences to avoid misunderstandings • Make common messaging to superiors, stakeholders, constituents and policymakers a priority • Shift from a “project-management” mentality to a long-term management mentality as quickly as possible • Be proactive in setting research priorities to maintain control of SLDS agenda • Talk the talk—remind stakeholders why the SLDS is important
Kentucky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve a variety of stakeholders in designing reports and information tools • Release useful data immediately and expand available information over time • Secure executive orders or legislation and develop rules about data de-identification to avoid legal issues • Develop data portals, reporting tools and internal processes to respond to data requests more quickly and effectively • Work toward filling gaps between agencies rather than replicating data-collection and -management efforts • Assist agencies with data requests and provide research and technical support

Figure 2. State Strategies for Stakeholder Engagement and Sustainability

Additional Resources

Washington State Education Research and Data Center
<http://www.ercd.wa.gov/>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
<http://dpi.wi.gov/>

Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics
<http://kentuckyp20.ky.gov/>

State Support Team (2013). Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit: Traversing 'Stakeholder Land.'
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/target_team_stakeholderland.pdf

State Support Team (2012). SLDS Spotlight: State Approaches to Engaging Postsecondary Stakeholders.
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/spotlight_engaging_postsecondary_stakeholders.pdf