

Arkansas

Arkansas Department of Education R384A100010

Project Title: *Arkansas Department of Education's SLDS Improvement and Modernization Project*

With significant help from its 2005 and 2009 IES SLDS grants, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has established and continues to improve its SLDS, which by 2007 had already met all of the Data Quality Campaign's 10 essential elements. ADE is committed to achieving improvements in student outcomes and is pursuing a broad range of new initiatives to build a strong culture of DDDM that is enriched through cross-agency data sharing and engagement of the research community. In its December 2008 evaluation of the Arkansas SLDS, ADE's evaluator documented significant utilization and good end-user satisfaction with the SLDS and showed that schools that made the heaviest use of the SLDS experienced small but discernable growth in student achievement compared to other schools. ADE will use the opportunity provided by ARRA and the IES SLDS 2009 grant to advance several new improvements and accelerate initiatives to address the new SLDS standard set by the seven required capabilities and 12 elements outlined in the RFA. To improve the currency and utility of data delivered to stakeholders, ADE will significantly modernize its SLDS environment, replacing or restructuring legacy components and migrating to newer technologies and real-time data/information exchange and exchange standards. ADE will advance several bold, cutting-edge initiatives related to inter-agency data sharing and adoption of national data standards that will benefit Arkansas and advance the state of practice nationally. Backed by a strong endorsement for its planned activities by Arkansas Governor Mike Bebee and heads of several state agencies ADE will, in addition to meeting all current grant commitments, achieve the following outcomes:

- Expansion of the Arkansas Research Center (ARC) with participation from ADE; Arkansas educational research, teacher preparation, and educational policy institutions; and higher education, workforce, human services, and health agencies.
- Expansion and acceleration of current work on DDDM and researcher engagement, facilitation of relevant research within each of these agencies and research that requires data from these agencies to be combined.
- Expansion of data-sharing agreements to maximize amount of data about the Pre-K population collected in the SLDS.
- Participation in Arkansas's new state data-sharing consortium, the Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT), and development of master data management/entity resolution, "TrustEd", and service oriented architecture (SOA) based solutions—including a focus on NIEM, SIF, and PESC data-exchange standards—to ensure privacy protection, FERPA compliance, and a high degree of interoperability.
- Completion of a two-phase modernization/standardization upgrade of the SLDS systems architecture, including replacement of 12-year-old statewide school information systems with a new SIF 2.0 compliant SunGard eSchoolPLUS solution, implementation of a state-level Zone Integration Server and restructuring of data exchange based on SOA/SIF standards.
- Implementation of a NEDM-compliant database synchronized to the current ADE production SLDS for use by researchers and data analysts, external data exchanges, and alignment of Arkansas' data definitions to the NCES Handbook.

ADE will continue to evaluate its SLDS implementation, including tracking stakeholder use and satisfaction and impact on student achievement outcomes.