

**U.S. Department of Education**

**Washington, D.C. 20202-5335**



**APPLICATION FOR GRANTS  
UNDER THE**

**Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems**

**CFDA # 84.372A**

**PR/Award # R372A120016**

**Grants.gov Tracking#: GRANT11026064**

OMB No. , Expiration Date:

Closing Date: Dec 15, 2011

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This application was generated using the PDF functionality. The PDF functionality automatically numbers the pages in this application. Some pages/sections of this application may contain 2 sets of page numbers, one set created by the applicant and the other set created by e-Application's PDF functionality. Page numbers created by the e-Application PDF functionality will be preceded by the letter e (for example, e1, e2, e3, etc.).

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424		
* 1. Type of Submission: <input type="checkbox"/> Preapplication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application <input type="checkbox"/> Changed/Corrected Application	* 2. Type of Application: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s): <input type="text"/> * Other (Specify): <input type="text"/>
* 3. Date Received: <input type="text" value="12/15/2011"/>	4. Applicant Identifier: <input type="text"/>	
5a. Federal Entity Identifier: <input type="text"/>	5b. Federal Award Identifier: <input type="text"/>	
<b>State Use Only:</b>		
6. Date Received by State: <input type="text"/>	7. State Application Identifier: <input type="text"/>	
<b>8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:</b>		
* a. Legal Name: <input type="text" value="Nebraska Department of Education"/>		
* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): <input type="text" value="470491233"/>	* c. Organizational DUNS: <input type="text" value="8088198820000"/>	
<b>d. Address:</b>		
* Street1: <input type="text" value="301 Centennial Mall South"/>	Street2: <input type="text" value="Sixth Floor"/>	
* City: <input type="text" value="Lincoln"/>	County/Parish: <input type="text"/>	
* State: <input type="text" value="NE: Nebraska"/>	Province: <input type="text"/>	
* Country: <input type="text" value="USA: UNITED STATES"/>	* Zip / Postal Code: <input type="text" value="68509-4987"/>	
<b>e. Organizational Unit:</b>		
Department Name: <input type="text" value="Nebraska Dept. of Education"/>	Division Name: <input type="text" value="Data, Research, Evaluation &amp; IT"/>	
<b>f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:</b>		
Prefix: <input type="text" value="Dr."/>	* First Name: <input type="text" value="Sameano"/>	
Middle Name: <input type="text" value="Francisco"/>	* Last Name: <input type="text" value="Porchea"/>	
Suffix: <input type="text"/>	Title: <input type="text" value="Senior Administrator"/>	
Organizational Affiliation: <input type="text" value="Data, Research, Evaluation, &amp; IT"/>		
* Telephone Number: <input type="text" value="402-471-4740"/>	Fax Number: <input type="text" value="402-471-0117"/>	
* Email: <input type="text" value="sameano.porchea@nebraska.gov"/>		

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**\* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

A: State Government

**Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:**

X: Other (specify)

**Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:**

**\* Other (specify):**

State Education Agency

**\* 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

U.S. Department of Education

**11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:**

84.372

**CFDA Title:**

Statewide Data Systems

**\* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ED-GRANTS-092011-001

**\* Title:**

Institute of Education Sciences (IES): Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems Program CFDA Number 84.372A

**13. Competition Identification Number:**

84-372A2012

**Title:**

**14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):**

Add Attachment

**\* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Nebraska Data Analysis and Research Proposal

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**16. Congressional Districts Of:**

\* a. Applicant

b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

**17. Proposed Project:**

\* a. Start Date:

\* b. End Date:

**18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	4,361,533.00
* b. Applicant	(b)(4)
* c. State	
* d. Local	
* e. Other	
* f. Program Income	
* g. TOTAL	

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

Yes  No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

**21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

\*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:  \* First Name:   
Middle Name:   
\* Last Name:   
Suffix:

\* Title:

\* Telephone Number:  Fax Number:

\* Email:

\* Signature of Authorized Representative:  \* Date Signed:

## ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503.

**PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.**

**NOTE:** Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).
6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee- 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §§3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.
7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).
12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."
18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.

* SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL  sameano porchea	* TITLE  Deputy Commissioner of Education
* APPLICANT ORGANIZATION  Nebraska Department of Education	* DATE SUBMITTED  12/15/2011

Standard Form 424B (Rev. 7-97) Back

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## CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

### Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

<b>* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION</b>	
<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Nebraska Department of Education"/>	
<b>* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b>	
Prefix: <input style="width: 50px;" type="text" value="Dr."/>	* First Name: <input style="width: 200px;" type="text" value="Scott"/> Middle Name: <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>
* Last Name: <input style="width: 300px;" type="text" value="Swisher"/>	Suffix: <input style="width: 80px;" type="text"/>
* Title: <input style="width: 250px;" type="text" value="Deputy Commissioner of Education"/>	
* SIGNATURE: <input style="width: 300px;" type="text" value="sameano porchea"/>	* DATE: <input style="width: 150px;" type="text" value="12/15/2011"/>



SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION  
REQUIRED FOR  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANTS

**1. Project Director:**

Prefix:	* First Name:	Middle Name:	* Last Name:	Suffix:
Dr.	Sameano	Francisco	Porchea	

Address:

* Street1:	301 Centennial Mall
Street2:	Sixth Floor
* City:	Lincoln
County:	
* State:	NE: Nebraska
* Zip Code:	68509-4987
* Country:	USA: UNITED STATES

\* Phone Number (give area code) Fax Number (give area code)

402-471-4740	402-471-0117
--------------	--------------

Email Address:

sameano.porchea@nebraska.gov
------------------------------

**2. Applicant Experience:**

Novice Applicant     Yes     No     Not applicable to this program

**3. Human Subjects Research**

Are any research activities involving human subjects planned at any time during the proposed project Period?

Yes     No

Are ALL the research activities proposed designated to be exempt from the regulations?

Yes Provide Exemption(s) #:

No Provide Assurance #, if available:

**Please attach an explanation Narrative:**

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## Abstract

The abstract narrative must not exceed one page and should use language that will be understood by a range of audiences. For all projects, include the project title (if applicable), goals, expected outcomes and contributions for research, policy, practice, etc. Include population to be served, as appropriate. For research applications, also include the following:

- Theoretical and conceptual background of the study (i.e., prior research that this investigation builds upon and that provides a compelling rationale for this study)
- Research issues, hypotheses and questions being addressed
- Study design including a brief description of the sample including sample size, methods, principals dependent, independent, and control variables, and the approach to data analysis.

[Note: For a non-electronic submission, include the name and address of your organization and the name, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person for this project.]

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## You may now Close the Form

You have attached 1 file to this page, no more files may be added. To add a different file, you must first delete the existing file.

\* Attachment:

**Nebraska Data Analysis and Research Proposal**  
**Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant - CFDA Number 84.372**  
**Priority: K-12 Data System**  
**Nebraska Department of Education**  
**Project Abstract**

*Accountability Counts!* was the theme of Nebraska's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Data Conference held in April, 2011. This proposal seeks to refine and expand the K-12 portion of the state longitudinal data system, known as the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS), by providing tools and training to support the goals of the Governor's P-16 Initiative and the State's new accountability system that focus on holding districts accountable for improving academic achievement for all students. Accountability can only be achieved through collaborative efforts of agencies and stakeholders who have access to quality data and transparent processes. With assistance provided by a 2007 IES grant, Nebraska successfully collects data for all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. The challenge is to build on this foundation and use the data to make informed decisions from the classroom to the board room to the legislative chambers.

Based on an analysis of need from stakeholders, Nebraska has developed four goals:

***Goal 1. Provide a data analysis tool for districts that uses multiple local and state data sources to produce reports for local decision makers.***

**Data Use Tools** that provide districts flexibility to upload data from different sources on different schedules to produce dashboards and support local data analysis and research.

***Goal 2. Provide a statewide system of professional development training for data analysis that reaches every district.***

**Professional Development Training**, including a partnership with the Professional Development Affiliate of the ESUs to create a statewide system of professional development training using data analysis training materials developed by a Data Analysis Cadre. A four-tiered strategy for delivery would ensure consistent training is received by every school district.

***Goal 3. Build a research and evaluation operation in NDE collaboratively with the research community.***

**Research and Evaluation Support** for new collaborative work with the research community and NDE's newly created research function, including a research and evaluation specialist who would assist NDE program directors and staff, coordinate the research community's involvement in the Data Analysis Cadre, conduct NDE research, and disseminate research and findings.

***Goal 4. Expand and enhance the SLDS for sustainability.***

**SLDS Support**, including a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool for use by NDE's Helpdesk and Data Trainers, development of a formal data governance plan, a revision of the data dictionary to include the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS), an interstate student locator tool to find students who have moved to other states, and a staff person dedicated to ensuring high quality student enrollment data resides in NSSRS.

These integrated initiatives will enable Nebraska to meet increasing demands for timely, accessible and actionable data that can be connected to research and analysis findings for decision makers at all levels.

## Project Narrative File(s)

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\* Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename:

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To add more Project Narrative File attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

**Nebraska Data Analysis and Research Proposal**  
**Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant - CFDA Number 84.372**  
**Priority: K-12 Data System**  
**Nebraska Department of Education**  
**Project Narrative**

**Introduction**

“*Accountability Counts!*” was the theme of Nebraska’s 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Data Conference held in April, 2011. The State currently has multiple accountability initiatives throughout its educational system. These include the development of a Race To the Top Early Learning Challenge jointly developed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Department of Education (NDE) and other agencies, the Governor’s P-16 Initiative, and NDE’s new accountability system that incorporates the results of the statewide tests and cohort graduation rates. Accountability can only be achieved through collaborative efforts of agencies and stakeholders who have access to quality data and transparent processes. This proposal seeks to refine and expand the K-12 portion of the state longitudinal data system, known as the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS), by providing tools and training to support these accountability measures which will enable stakeholders to make informed decisions at all levels.

Nebraska’s K-12 educational system presents challenges when attempting to collect and use data to demonstrate progress on these accountability measures. The State’s 249 districts range in size from under 100 to almost 50,000 students, with approximately 70% of districts having fewer than 600 students. Nebraska ranks 16<sup>th</sup> among states in total geographic size and 37<sup>th</sup> in age 5-17 population. Nebraska has 17 intermediate service agencies, known as Educational Service Units (ESU), that are charged with providing professional development services for their member districts. The independence of Nebraska’s early settlers remains in many facets in the State from its unique single house legislature to a long history of local control in education. Local control for Nebraska’s schools means curriculum, course codes, grading systems, school year calendars, etc., are local decisions and not mandated from the State. The state did not have a single statewide assessment of student performance in Reading until 2009.

Nebraska has strong institutional support for a state longitudinal data system. In 2006, Governor Dave Heineman created an executive committee consisting of himself, the chair of the Education Committee of the State Legislature, the President of the University of Nebraska, and the Commissioner of Education to lead the P-16 Initiative. They developed eight goals to hold the State’s educational system accountable. (See Appendix A.1) Three of the eight goals directly address the creation of an SLDS or the need for one in this K-12 priority.

- Goal #2: Eliminate the academic achievement gap between Nebraska’s K-12 Caucasian students and its African American, Hispanic, and Native American Students.
- Goal #3: Develop an effective longitudinal data system that provides information on the Nebraska education system from preschool through post-graduate degree-attainment and entry into the workforce to help align resources with strategic goals.

Goal #4: Attain a high school graduation rate of 90% or higher in each Nebraska high school.

Nebraska recently implemented new statewide assessments, called Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA), to measure student achievement in reading, writing, math and science. On December 8, 2011, the State Board of Education approved a new accountability system called Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS) with a growth model and indices. The calculation of these indices will include components such as NeSA performance results, and cohort graduation rates. This new accountability model supports Goal #2 of the P-16 Initiative by incorporating the NeSA results for all subgroups in all subject areas. State results from 2010-11 indicate there is much work to be done to meet this goal.

Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) 2010-11 Percentage of Students at Meets or Exceeds the Standards			
	NeSA Reading	NeSA Math	NeSA Writing
All Students	71.82%	62.86%	89.34%
Female	74.84%	62.64%	93.85%
Male	68.95%	63.07%	85.01%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	45.43%	35.22%	81.61%
Asian/Pacific Islanders	73.83%	70.05%	88.37%
White, Not Hispanic	78.48%	70.46%	91.72%
Black, Not Hispanic	49.61%	33.27%	78.80%
Hispanic	54.55%	44.40%	84.73%
Students in Migrant Program	40.22%	36.74%	77.13%
Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	58.25%	48.12%	83.42%
Special Education Students	42.07%	35.30%	69.58%
English Language Learners	42.08%	36.66%	79.96%

The 2007 Institute of Education Sciences (IES) grant helped Nebraska develop and implement an SLDS by providing a crucial training program for districts in partnership with the ESUs, integrating Special Education data into the system, building a decision support system known as the Data Reporting System (DRS), and supporting the now annual state data conference. Additionally, Nebraska has successfully collected data for all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. The challenge is to now build on this foundation and use the data to make informed decisions from the classroom to the board room to the legislative chambers.

## **Section (a).        Need for Project**

The deliverables in this proposal were prioritized through an extensive assessment of need involving stakeholders from across the State and within NDE. Goals were developed for the following four areas: data-use tools including one that will integrate data from multiple sources and levels to support decision making and a tool to support accurate graduation and dropout data; a statewide system of professional development training focusing on data analysis and use; support for NDE's new work in research and evaluation; and enhancements to the SLDS to support customer service and sustainability of the system.

While the need for useful, accurate, reliable, and timely data may seem evident given the emphasis on accountability in Nebraska at this time, the process for prioritizing needs was conducted through several steps including focus groups of external stakeholders and NDE program staff, a review of some relevant recent research, and a gap analysis of the Map of Core Elements for Establishing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (IES, 2007 Application Attachment).

Focus groups of data users and data stewards identified the ability to analyze data at the classroom level as the priority need with two dimensions. The first dimension addresses the capability to analyze data that extends beyond the state assessment results and longitudinal data in the NSSRS. Districts maintain their education information in a variety of software systems. These may include student information systems, staff information systems, report card grade systems, local and national assessments results, human resources, and business and accounting systems. Teachers and administrators want and need tools and training to use the longitudinal data in NSSRS, combined with data from with their local assessments and other data. They want to be able to link these multiple sources of data in an effort to conduct relevant research; which can then be used to make valid inferences that influence policy decisions. The NDE Data Trainers have received consistent requests for this priority as they work with all districts throughout the state.

The second dimension, as voiced by the stakeholders from smaller districts, is providing resources to assist them in completing their own data analysis. While large districts may have research departments and dedicated staff able to design and deliver reports using student performance and other data, many small districts lack those resources and rely heavily on their ESUs for professional development and support.

The 2007 IES grant enabled Nebraska to establish a partnership with the ESUs to support training and funded four NDE Data Trainers who have been providing Data Quality training and technical assistance to districts. The ESU Professional Development Affiliate recognized that more work in this area is needed, particularly in data analysis, and proposed to develop appropriate materials and training for a statewide system so that their members (35-40) would be prepared to lead and assist every district in the state.

NDE has reorganized the Data Services team into the Data, Research and Evaluation team. In October, 2011 Dr. Sameano Porchea was appointed as Senior Administrator of the team. Dr. Porchea has a background in research and evaluation, prior state level work in data analysis and research, and experience as a math teacher in middle grades and at the university level. While NDE has begun the process of developing an official research and evaluation team, it will need

support to effectively and efficiently meet its purposes of supporting school improvement through meaningful use of data and research.

In Transforming Schools to Improve Student Learning (October, 2011), Dr. Jody Isernhagen of the University of Nebraska, studied Title I schools identified to be in need of improvement under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in Nebraska. Teachers and administrators rated “using data for school improvement” as critically important and yet both groups identified statements relating to their use of data for school improvement and classroom instructional decisions as having the lowest level of implementation. Locally identified needs are reflected in a recent study by the U. S. Department of Education (Use of Education Data at the Local Level from Accountability to Instructional Improvement, 2010) that found more than 80% of teachers in this survey reported needing training in “examining student data to identify which practices work best for which students”.

Since the basis of all subsequent efforts depends on a robust and fully implemented statewide longitudinal data system, one task was to examine the core elements as they exist today. While all the core elements of the system are in place, this gap analysis identified that the following components need revision, support or expansion:

#### Architecture

- Data dictionary, with well-defined content and common definitions for data elements, to assure the same definitions, codes, and periodicity across all schools in the State at data entry points
- Systems and procedures to assure correct utilization of data by the users and providers
- Statewide data model that defines and describes the logical and physical relationships between data items and system
- Assuring secure access to data and formal reports to protect the confidentiality of individuals, in compliance with FERPA and the statistical reliability of results

#### Business Intelligence Tools (analytical and reporting)

- Supporting high-level longitudinal analyses, required for data-driven decision-making by policymakers, educators, and members of the public
- Providing timely, accurate, and user-friendly dissemination of the needed data, reports and analyses to stakeholders
- Engaging in longitudinal education research to inform policy and decision-making
- Leading the State, districts, and teachers in the development and use of innovative analytical tools and reports to inform policy and decision-making

#### Establishing logistical capacity to create and maintain an SLDS

- Developing efficient administrative processes, infrastructure components, and policy commitments
- Assuring sustainability and effectiveness of the system
- Assuring qualified staff, training, technical and other resources dedicated to the State’s administrative technology over the long term
- Developing a strong plan for the SEA and other stakeholders to continually evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the data system and of associated process, both in their



reporting and decision-support functions, and to periodically assess the degree to which they meet agency and other stakeholders' needs

Planning and funding ongoing, efficient and effective training of key state and local data collectors and users, according to their functional needs, on

- Business intelligence tools and use of data for decision-making

While the analysis of the core elements helped identify the areas of focus for this proposal, it also identified changes that could be and are being made without additional funding or support. See Appendix A.2 for a chart aligning the goals and deliverables to these needs.

## 1. Governance And Policy Requirements

### Need and Uses

Nebraska provides data and data use tools to support informed decision making. The 2007 IES grant provided funds for Nebraska to develop a decision support system known as the Data Reporting System (DRS). (See Appendix A.3) In addition, the state's annual report card, the State of the Schools Report (SOSR), provides demographic, assessment, student and staff data, and financial data at school and district levels plus downloadable files of all data reported since its inception in 2000. The DRS and SOSR have state, district and school level data that can be analyzed and used for informed decisions for policy makers. (Attachment A. 2) This proposal will provide additional tools for analysis at the classroom to provide an emphasis on using research to assist teachers to make informed decisions on strategies to improve student achievement.

Informed decisions to improve student achievement, particularly addressing Goal #2. to close the achievement gaps, rests on quality, accurate and timely data from multiple sources. Multiple sources include not only the longitudinal and state assessment data from the NSSRS, but also locally owned data such as discipline reports, grade books, teacher and staff data, and other local and national assessment results. The data must be integrated at the student level and accessible to teachers. It must be presented in an IT neutral manner so that every teacher and administrator will feel comfortable accessing and using the data. To provide useful information to the decision makers, the data must be available based on "real time" local level data connected to NSSRS longitudinal data, a format that is not possible with Nebraska's existing sources of data.

NDE wants to ensure that local level decision makers have access to data from multiple sources and levels. It recognizes that such a system must be designed in a way that protects privacy and meets confidentiality requirements.

As with any new system, teachers and administrators will need training to understand the capabilities and use of the new tools as well as how the results can be used appropriately. This proposal includes a statewide system of professional development training to ensure that every district has the opportunity for consistent training in all of Nebraska's data-use tools.

Nebraska's vision of presenting "real time" data from multiple sources to classroom teachers is only the first step in improving academic achievement and supporting student success. Next steps include providing links to current, relevant research conducted for the most part with

Nebraska students through collaboration with research centers, making data accessible for research and coordinating and supporting research throughout the state. The availability of this type of data and research will allow teachers and districts to develop effective teaching and learning strategies and provide individualized instruction to meet student needs.

Emphasis on raising the graduation rate, Goal #4 of the P-16 Initiative, increased with the initial reporting of the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates for every district, school and subgroup on the 2010-11 State of the Schools Report. NDE developed a series of data use and data quality tools to assist districts in providing accurate data. Guidance documents are published on the NDE website which includes data use quick reference guides, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), business rules used to determine the Graduation Cohort Year, use of school enrollment codes, and demographic classifications. The Expected Graduation Year Lookup and Graduation Cohort Analysis tools provide districts with student enrollment status and cohort membership. The Expected Graduation Year Lookup tool displays the Graduation Cohort Year assigned to a student by a Nebraska district/system and the date it was determined. The Graduation Cohort Analysis tool allows the review of Graduation Cohort data at both school and district levels. The data are updated each night and follow the Graduation Cohort from their first time in 9th grade into the extended years. Districts can verify the accuracy of data by reviewing the list of students in each cohort by demographic groups. Documents to inform districts and the community about the tools include the “Graduation Cohort Guide 1.1.0”, “Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool” and the “Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool”.

This proposal would expand the currently available tools by deploying the Interstate Locator module of eScholar’s Uniq-ID® for Students®. This system was originally built for Kansas under a 2010 IES grant and joined later by Iowa. The Interstate Locator® module will enable school districts in identifying dropouts, students who are not enrolled, students who are eligible to return, and students who later enroll in a school district within the participating states. After positive identification and confirmation, the former school may report the student as a transfer-out. It is hoped that other states will also participate to facilitate the tracking of even more students across state lines.

In 2009, Nebraska started the process of replacing its unique classroom based assessment system (STARS – School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System) with statewide annual tests in Reading (2009), Math (2010) and Science (2011). Implementation of the statewide assessment system necessitated a new system for holding districts accountable for student performance. Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS) will provide an indexed score that incorporates status points, points for change or improvement, and points for demonstrating individual student growth, through a growth model, using the Reading, Writing, Math and Science assessment results and graduation rates. As this new accountability system is launched, the need for tools and training to help districts understand and use their data to improve student performance is critically important.

### Governance

Governance of Nebraska's SLDS has included the on-going involvement of internal and external stakeholders. Internally, the NSSRS Executive Committee with broad representation across the Department meets regularly to gather ideas, review and make decisions about changes to the NSSRS. A list of the members is included in Appendix A.4. Members of this committee are also the main contributors to the NDE Bulletin which is distributed almost weekly to district and ESU administrators and over 3,000 registered users in the NDE Portal, the central entry point for NDE data collections. The NDE Bulletin is an important communication that provides timely information about changes and notices of upcoming due dates, etc. in NSSRS and other data collections.

In the initial phases of developing the NSSRS, NDE had extensive external stakeholder involvement in active policy advisory and data collectors groups. The data collectors group, formally known as the District Data Collection Group (DDCG), continues to hold regularly scheduled conference calls to solicit input and reactions. The policy advisory group has not met for several years, but with a new team leader with an emphasis on research and evaluation, it will be recreated and this will be accomplished outside of this proposal.

### Institutional Support

The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System is authorized by Nebraska law (Rev. Stat. 79-760.05) which states:

The State Board of Education shall implement a statewide system for tracking individual student achievement, using the student identifier system of the State Department of Education, that can be aggregated to track student progress by demographic characteristics, including, but not limited to, race, poverty, high mobility, attendance, and limited English proficiency, on available measures of student achievement which include, but need not be limited to, national assessment instruments and state assessment instruments. Such a system shall be designed so as to aggregate student data by available educational input characteristics, which may include class size, teacher education, teacher experience, special education, early childhood programs, federal programs, and other targeted education programs.

Developing a preschool through post-graduate degree-attainment and entry into the workforce system is one of the goals of the Governor's P-16 Initiative. The 2007 IES grant provided funds to support four trainers, known as the NDE Data Trainers, who are located geographically throughout the State. Recognizing their essential contributions, NDE secured ongoing financial support for this service when the grant funds ended. NDE and the State Legislature appropriated State funds specifically for the NSSRS for the first time in FY2011 and, most importantly, the Data, Research and Evaluation team did not suffer from staff reductions like other teams in the Department.

## Sustainability

Sustainability of the data system depends on the institutionalization of values, processes and practices. These are demonstrated by NDE's commitment to data quality within the Department and in the districts, the collaborative efforts between NDE and external stakeholders, and effective and efficient services to our internal and external customers. NDE customers include, but are not limited to, NDE staff, districts, ESUs, other state and federal agencies, research organizations, the legislature, and the public.

NDE has institutionalized the value of data quality through a coordinated data auditing system described under the Data Quality section below. All NDE program staff who rely on and contribute regularly to the NSSRS system are involved. In February and March of each year, all NSSRS instructions and guidance are reviewed and approved by program and technical staff to ensure continued accuracy and that changes for the subsequent school year are reflected.

Participating in the SLDS has always presented a greater challenge and burden to Nebraska's very small districts. The NDE Data Trainers, working in a partnership with the ESUs, have been particularly helpful to these districts. This proposal allows for the continuation of that partnership to ensure that all district staff has access to training for data tools through a statewide system of professional development training.

As noted in Section (c) Staffing, the NDE staff who will take the lead on implementing the projects in this proposal were also the leaders of the team that developed Nebraska's SLDS. Their experience and expertise in system development and implementation is important as these tools and enhancements are developed. The new administrator of the Data, Research and Evaluation team is using a trained project manager to assist with all of the work of the team.

## 2. Technical Requirements

### Federal Reporting

Nebraska has a long and successful history of participating in Federal reporting. In 1998, Nebraska was asked to participate in the initial effort to consolidate federal data collection activities. This proof of concept known as the Integrated Performance Benchmarking System (IPBS), was a two state effort involving Oregon and Nebraska. The results from the project indicated that states with very divergent resources and backgrounds could provide comparable data for use by federal education programs.

Despite the change in national administration, the IPBS was expanded into the Performance Benchmarking Data Management Initiative, (PBDMI). With the support of the U. S. Department of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the concept of centralized collection and distribution of federal education data became institutionalized with the Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN) and finally EDFacts. During each of these phases, Nebraska has continued to actively participate and support this initiative.

Over the years, Nebraska's file timeliness has been improved. Nearly all files are submitted on or before the due date: the 2009-2010 file submissions were on time 95% of the time, and are on track to meet or exceed this rate for 2010-2011. In addition, many procedures have been put in place to help ensure the quality of data. Nebraska employs a detailed process to verify data

accuracy, from submission by the districts through preparation and submission to EDEN. The ED Facts file preparation process itself adds a final data quality check. Before files are submitted to EDEN, a copy of the data is sent to the program director or owner of the data for data validation. If an issue is identified, program staff collaborate with the data preparer to resolve the issue and correct the file. Once all issues are resolved, the program staff approve the report and the data are submitted to the EDEN system.

#### Privacy Protection and Data Accessibility (FERPA)

In November 2010, the State Board of Education approved revised policies for data access, privacy and reporting. A new Data Access and Use Policy and Procedures manual was created reflecting these policies and incorporating Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) reporting requirements as well as a process and application for research requests. The manual is available on the NDE homepage at [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov) and is used by the NDE Data Trainers as a model for district policies and practices. An internal Administrative Memorandum #711, Student And Staff Data Privacy And Confidentiality, detailing the processes used by NDE to ensure privacy protection and appropriate access to data was approved in November, 2011.

The NDE Data Trainers also provide annual training for NDE data staff and program directors on the use of data, ethics, and FERPA reporting requirements. Privacy protection and FERPA reporting requirements will be given high priority as NDE develops the proposed tools and training.

#### Data Quality

Nebraska has implemented several practices to support data quality including an automated data validation and verification system and a coordinated auditing effort between data and program staff who are jointly responsible for data timeliness, accuracy and completeness.

The data validation and verification process starts with submission of data to NSSRS. Validations check data during uploads and produce error messages that include suggestions for corrections. As a secondary level of validation Nebraska employs a separate secure access site called NSSRS Validation. This site allows districts to view errors/warnings that may not have been captured during the initial upload. The site also provides verification reports that present uploaded data, such as membership or average daily attendance, in user friendly reports. The site also provides the numerous searchable data lookups. These tools have proven to be very useful in resolving errors.

Another process to ensure data quality is a collaborative review of data by NDE staff. Nebraska employs an approach which pairs Program Data Managers (PDM) and Data Audit Coordinators (DAC). Each program owning data collected in NSSRS has a PDM who is responsible for reviewing the data as needed. The DAC are the data analysts who prepare the files for ED Facts. A complete list of Program Data Managers, Data Audit Coordinators and System Leaders is included in Appendix A.5.

### Interoperability

The eScholar® Integration Templates serve as a mapping mechanism that allows districts to load data from varied local student information systems. Within each Template, all eScholar® data elements that exist in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data Handbooks are coded and referenced to ensure proper compliance with ESEA, ED Facts, and other federal laws. While processes are standardized with NSSRS for data collection from districts, the same does not exist for exchanging or sharing data at the State level.

Student information is maintained in separate “stovepipes” among the state agencies that provide services to students in K-12. While the future of data needs is unknown, the need to link data across very divergent systems in multiple state agencies is almost a certainty. The following is an example of the work NDE has accomplished that may serve as a model in the coming years.

During the last year, NDE developed a process for matching NSSRS data with information from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) by building a Direct Certification and Verification Matching System (DCVMS).

The DHHS Division of Children & Family Services (CFS) and NDE Nutrition Services (NS) agreed in February 2011 to act in accordance with the provisions of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265) et seq. and the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296) to facilitate direct certification for free school meals for any child who is a member of a household receiving assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly the Food Stamp Program (FS), the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF) and direct verification of applications for free or reduced price school meals for any child receiving assistance under the Nebraska Medicaid Program or the Nebraska State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). By the end of December 2011, the data sharing will include foster children whose care and placement is the responsibility of the State or who are placed by a court with a caretaker household.

DHHS provides to NDE a full replacement file of active SNAP and TANF cases/persons on a nightly basis. The data includes, at a minimum, the household member names, gender, dates of birth of each household member as well as the name, address, and primary language of the household of each active opened SNAP or TANF cases. On the nightly basis, DHHS provides this information on active Medicaid/SCHIP cases.

NDE provides Nutrition Services a file of student-level enrollment data from NSSRS based on school enrollment on a nightly basis. The student file is combined with data from the e-Scholar Uniq-ID® system, Colyar ® Child Nutrition Program (CNP) uploaded data file, and a Colyar ® Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Single Student Interactive Screen data file and matched daily with the DHHS SNAP, and TANF data for direct certification. Districts receive email notification and can review a list of students on the Colyar ® CNP website to see if there is a match for a student currently enrolled in their district.

There are several steps that NDE must take to prepare for future interoperability needs. The first is to have a well-documented and transparent enterprise-wide architecture. This includes an NDE Data Governance Plan that contains a revised data dictionary, a data model, metadata, quality assurances, and efficient administrative processes as described in the next section.

NDE has committed to mapping current NSSRS data elements to the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS). NSSRS instruction manuals provide definitions, code sets and format for the data NDE collects through the eScholar® templates. Mapping NSSRS data elements to CEDS will be a joint effort with stakeholder involvement. NDE is proposing a group of 20 district staff to assist in the mapping data to CEDS.

Interoperability includes having the capability to link state with local data. To assist districts with data analysis and reporting, the NDE proposes a data-use tool that will match state and local data. To be successful, these processes must ensure that the data used for matching or linking is accurate and up-to-date. This proposal seeks additional staff dedicated to work with the Interstate Locator module, Uniq-ID® for Students (NDE Student ID) and NDE Staff ID systems, and assisting districts with enrollment data for the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates.

### Enterprise-wide Architecture

While Nebraska meets the requirement to have an enterprise-wide architecture, several of the components need to be revisited and revised to meet changing needs and demands on the system. With the 2007 IES grant, Nebraska was able to address a need to integrate Special Education's data system into NSSRS.

NDE needs a comprehensive Data Governance Plan that covers all of the data systems it maintains. This includes the Grants Management System and the P-16 System which are outside of the priority of the proposal. Currently, the requirements and documentation for the K-12 SLDS exist in various internal Administrative Memorandum, plans, practices, policies and guidance. As the State moves forward into the future, it will need to form relationships with other entities who will want to be assured that NDE has an established and operational governance plan. An NDE Data Governance Plan can also serve as a model for districts to document their practices and policies. The NDE Data Governance Plan will be addressed in its entirety but will not be included in this proposal. Several components of the plan are included.

As the data dictionary is revised and mapped to CEDS, a documented metadata model should be developed and made available to the public. Currently, much of the information needed for the metadata model is provided in multiple documents and files that are posted on the NSSRS page of the Department's website. Missing from NDE's documentation are business rules and formulas for some, but not all, of the calculations using NSSRS data. The metadata model is necessary to support the transparency so critical when data are used to make high stakes accountability and funding decisions and public reporting. NDE staff time is needed to lead a group of stakeholders in the process of incorporating CEDS into the data dictionary and to complete the data model and metadata.

### 3. Data Use Requirements

#### Secure Access to Useful Data for Key Stakeholder Groups

NDE meets this requirement and has already enhanced the system with revised State Board policies, the new Data Access and Use Policy and Procedures manual and the revision of the internal Administrative Memorandum #711, Student and Staff Data Privacy and Confidentiality that includes revised system access request forms for NDE staff. The NSSRS Validation system provides access to individual student records and a new system access request form was developed to ensure that NDE staff have access only to the appropriate data.

The 2007 IES grant provided resources to establish a decision support system. Nebraska's Data Reporting System (DRS) has been recognized as valuable and a viable instrument for providing data to stakeholders for informed decision making. Eight states have obtained a copy of the "DRS Sharing Package", some of which have adapted it for their purposes. The DRS was originally designed to provide user access to masked state level data. In response to districts requests for unmasked data, the system was reconfigured with a public access site containing masked state level data and a secure access site for districts containing their unmasked data. The secure access site now allows district administrators to approve building level access. The DRS continues to be refined by the addition of data elements to increase the analysis options for the user.

#### Data Use Deliverables

The enhancements to Nebraska's K-12 SLDS proposed in this application are integrated to provide a comprehensive approach for providing quality data that will be used at multiple levels to make informed decisions. Quality data begins with a fully implemented SLDS with processes and practices in place to support accurate, appropriate and timely data and data submissions. Training for district and NDE staff is an integral component of the system. The work tasks needed to accomplish the goals and deliverables must be coordinated and organized to avoid duplication of effort. For example, the revision of the data dictionary to include CEDS should be finished before the work begins for the proposed integrated student information system. The proposed deliverables provide new data-use tools, expand the existing training, add a new emphasis on research and evaluation to produce new tools for data analysis and reporting, and enhance the SLDS. These components are designed to move the focus of NDE from data collection to data use and reporting. The goals and deliverables listed below are presented in fuller detail in Section (b).



Goal 1. Provide a data analysis tool for districts that uses multiple local and state data sources to produce reports for local decision makers.

Deliverable:

1.1 A Data Analysis and Reporting Tool (DART)

Goal 2. Provide a statewide system of professional development training for data analysis that reaches every district.

Deliverables:

- 2.1 Training materials
- 2.2 Delivery of training to every district
- 2.3 Monitoring and evaluation of training

Goal 3. Build a research and evaluation operation in NDE collaboratively with the research community.

Deliverables:

- 3.1 Training for NDE program staff
- 3.2 Disseminating data, research and analysis findings

Goal 4. Expand and enhance the SLDS for sustainability.

Deliverables:

- 4.1 Customer Relationship Management
- 4.2 Data Governance Plan Components
  - 4.2.1 Data dictionary aligned with CEDS
  - 4.2.2 Data model
  - 4.2.3 Metadata
- 4.3 Interstate Locator
- 4.4 Enrollment data support

The process of identifying goals and deliverables for this proposal involved many stakeholders. Implementation of these deliverables will involve even more stakeholders in active and collaborative roles in determining the final decision on the data-use tools, in developing and delivering new professional development training across the state, and in working with the research community.

#### *Training on Use of Data Tools and Projects*

The 2007 IES grant enabled Nebraska to establish a partnership with the ESUs to support training and funded four NDE Data Trainers. The NDE Data Trainers have developed a Data Quality Curriculum initially based on NCES' Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data: A School & District Resource (NFES 2005-801). The trainers have developed approximately 15 Data Quality training courses over the three plus years under that grant. The NDE Data Trainers' contributions are so valued that NDE has continued funding for them during

these times of budget cuts and staff reductions. Their goals have included being able to help districts establish appropriate processes and procedures and dedicating resources to ensure the accuracy, timeliness and completeness of data. Through their dedication to these goals and training, districts are more focused on data quality. All districts have identified a data steward and almost 170 of Nebraska's 249 districts' data stewards were represented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Data Conference in April, 2011.

In addition to Data Quality training, the four NDE Data Trainers actively support and provide individual technical assistance through workdays scheduled by the ESUs immediately preceding each major data submission deadline. This hands-on training and assistance is critical for the smaller districts and nonpublic systems. Nonpublic systems do not submit individual student level data into NSSRS, but do assign the NDE Student ID, submit state required aggregated student and staff data reports annually, and a student roster to Nutrition Services Direct Certification and Verification Matching System.

The statewide system plan proposed in the application would add training on using data and would expand the intended participants to all staff in all districts. This ambitious plan of a statewide system of professional development training proposed in Goal 2 cannot be accomplished without the continued partnership of the ESUs, the involvement of ESU staff dedicated to professional development, the NDE Data Trainers, and increased involvement of the research community.

#### Professional Development on Data Use

In addition to the Data Quality Curriculum provided to groups across the state, the 2007 IES grant provided resources for an Annual Data Conference to assist districts in understanding the SLDS and how to submit data. When the funding ended, NDE continued the conferences because of the need to provide opportunities for district staff to learn about the SLDS and also to network with other users. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Data Conference in April 2011 had an expanded focus of using data. Almost 500 people attended the conference. NDE will continue this project and is not requesting additional funding in this proposal. The professional development training plan proposed in Goal 2 will expand the professional development to the district level so all staff can participate.

#### Evaluation of Data Products, Training and Professional Development

Evaluation is an integral component of all programs. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation developed a document to guide the process to "ensure useful, feasible, ethical and sound evaluation of educational programs, projects, and materials" (Sanders, 1994, pg. xiv). These standards will be used to build a solid evaluation plan for the projects in this proposal.

**Standard U1- Stakeholder Identification:** *“Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 25).

The identification of needs for the projects in this proposal was conducted with a broad range of stakeholder involvement. NDE will continue to involve stakeholders at all levels, but most importantly, those persons most impacted by the projects. Since the statewide system of Professional Development Training (Goal 2), the Data Governance Plan and alignment of the data dictionary with CEDS (Goal 4), and the integrated student information system (Goal 1), will affect every district and ESU in the state, the NDE will use several stakeholder groups to guide the evaluation plan and monitor progress of implementation.

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), described in Section (d) Project Management and Governance Plan, will serve as the umbrella stakeholder group. The Data Analysis Cadre and ESU Professional Developers Affiliate will serve as the stakeholder group for Goal 2. The District Data Collections Group and the NSSRS Executive Committee will serve as the stakeholder groups for Goal 1. This proposal calls for a stakeholder group to be formed to assist in the development of the Data Governance Plan (Goal 4).

**Standard P1 – Service Orientation:** *“Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 81).

**Standard F2 – Political Viability:** *“The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 71).

An evaluation plan will be designed that includes and addresses each of the four goals of this proposal. The above named stakeholder groups will be involved in this developing the evaluation plan and will also participate in focus groups, interviews, and surveys throughout the grant period. These qualitative methods will allow NDE to gather data in a manner that is less likely to yield biased results. The interview protocols and surveys will be developed primarily by the NDE’s new research office with the support and involvement of interns and in collaboration with the university’s research community.

The stakeholder groups will be given opportunities to provide guidance regarding the utility of the proposed tools and materials. This guidance will be used during development to ensure that the proposed deliverables effectively address the identified needs. As the project progresses, the stakeholder groups will be informed about the types and purposes for varying evaluation methods. Additionally, they will be provided opportunities to offer suggestions for improvement, considerations, and other appropriate feedback.

**Standard A1 – Program Documentation:** *“The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 127).

**Standard A3 – Described Purposes and Procedures:** *“The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 137).

**Standard A4– Defensible Information Sources:** *“The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 141).

The new Project Coordinator of this proposal is responsible ensuring that the scope, tasks, risks, communication processes, and timelines for each project are defined by the appropriate people. These will provide documentation for NDE staff and stakeholder groups to ensure a clear understanding of each project and its purposes prior to beginning to design the evaluation plan.

Continuous evaluation and reflection are key components of a successful project. Detailed documentation of both the project and the methods of evaluation are necessary not only as proof of progress or completion but also to corroborate reliability, effectiveness, validity of inferences, adequacy and appropriateness of processes. Therefore both a comprehensive evaluation report and technical document will be completed and published by NDE on an annual basis. Prior to publication stakeholder groups will have access to draft versions of each document for review.

**Standard U3 – Information Scope and Selection:** *“Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 37).

In an effort to assure appropriate scope and selection of information collected throughout the evaluation of the projects in this proposal, the stakeholders will participate in conversations about their relevant needs and the proposed research questions.

**Standard A5 – Valid Information:** *“The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 145).

**Standard A6 – Reliable Information:** *“The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 153).

**Approach:** A mixed-methods approach will be used to obtain and analyze data appropriate to the proposed projects. During the development stage, NDE staff and interns from the University will guide the development of protocols, and content for each set of formal and informal interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. Additionally, protocols and forms for documentation of observations will be developed. Finally, protocols will be developed for documentation of data retrieval from current systems. These standardized protocols will minimize possible error associated with individuals being assessed and conducting assessments to increase the reliability of the processes and the validity of inferences based on results.

**Collection:** Initially, baseline data will be collected regarding the time and money expended by varying levels of stakeholders in efforts to obtain and use data in meaningful ways. This data will be collected through an analysis of our current systems in tandem with interview, focus group

and survey responses from current users. This data will be used in a comparison analysis after implementation of and training for the proposed data tools. Additionally, data will be collected on a continuous basis through observations, surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

**Analysis:** Both quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed using appropriate quasi-experimental parametric or non-parametric procedures.

**Reporting:** The results from all data analysis will be presented in the annual evaluation, and technical reports. These reports will be formatted using the guidelines provided by the American Psychological Association (APA). Tables and figures will be presented in a clear and concise manner such that they are easily interpreted.

**Standard A7 – Systematic Information:** *“The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed and any errors found should be corrected”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 159).

One component of the grant proposal is the development of a research and evaluation team at the NDE, including the addition of a Research and Evaluation specialist and the inclusion of interns from the University. This team will be composed in a way that allows for independent replication and comparison of datasets and analysis results. Independent replication and comparison systematically addresses possible errors and facilitates correction.

**Standard U6 – Report Timeliness and dissemination:** *“Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 53).

**Standard A11 – Impartial Reporting:** *“Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation, so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 181).

Quarterly evaluation updates will be provided to stakeholders outlining the progress of the project and summarizing preliminary findings. These updates will be sent out electronically in conjunction with the NDE Bulletin. The NDE Bulletin currently provides timely information regarding the Nebraska Student and Staff Records System (NSSRS); the Data Reporting System (DRS); the State of the School Report (SOSR); the Nebraska State Accountability assessments (NeSA) and the Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS) on a weekly basis.

**Standard A8 – Analysis of Quantitative Information:** *“Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 165).

**Standard A9 – Analysis of Qualitative Information:** *“Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered”* (Sanders, 1994, pg. 171).

The research and evaluation team will be responsible for proposing, and carrying out appropriate analysis. Analysis will be selected based on the type of data collected and the research questions to be addressed. The research questions will be reviewed by various stakeholder groups prior to analysis. Graduate students from UNL, serving as interns, will assist in the development of these

