

south dakota  
**STARS**  
 Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System  
*connections*

## FERPA Webinars To Be Offered

SDDOE and experts from the U.S. Department of Education will team up again this winter and spring to offer a series of Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) webinars for districts. Topics will include data sharing, staff policies related to data privacy, parent policies and annual notification.

All webinars will be offered twice and recorded. Districts are encouraged to send questions ahead of time to STARSHelp@state.sd.us. The experts will either cover that information during the webinar or answer via email.

The data sharing webinar will be offered on the following dates:

- Feb. 26, 2-3 p.m. CST
- Feb. 27, 1-2 p.m. CST

To register, go to the DOE Calendar of Events (<https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com>). Other webinars will be offered in March and April, with dates yet to be determined.

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## ESAs Working With Districts

As SD-STARS approaches its first birthday in April, ESAs find districts' needs are changing. Jeanne Cowan, an ESA Data STAR for

ESA 6, says, "Last year, we focused mostly on explaining the system and getting people familiar with what SD-STARS does and doesn't do. Now, we are addressing a diversity of needs through regional trainings, webinars, and personal contacts." Districts are moving beyond a basic awareness to using the system and even actively engaging in its development.

One way ESAs engage districts in SD-STARS is during district data retreats. Lisa Reinhiller, an ESA Data STAR from ESA 1, says, "We use the accountability reports in SD-STARS to get the big picture and then use other reports in the system to dig down to the details, focusing on the skills and needs of students."

Reports in SD-STARS can also guide conversations during data retreats. Cowan adds that in the past, hard copies of reports were provided to districts during data retreats. Now, they encourage educators to log in to SD-STARS so they learn how to access the data themselves.

ESAs are also working with districts to create new reports. Cowan says, "We are working with districts on two report requests that were a direct outcome of a regional training

we held." These reports could include assessment results, attendance tracking, CTE participation, graduation

rates, staffing information and more. The reports could even be a combination of data topics and help with state or federal reporting.

"Developing reports in SD-STARS gives districts the opportunity to streamline work they do every day," Reinhiller says.

Cowan and Reinhiller both think districts will be excited for new reports and other upcoming enhancements.

They see SD-STARS as part of a bigger picture. Reinhiller says, "We see how SD-STARS relates to other SDDOE initiatives. It isn't just one more thing; instead it ties other initiatives together."

*"...we are addressing a diversity of needs through regional trainings, webinars, and personal contacts."*

Jeanne Cowan, ESA 6 Data STAR





## About Us:

South Dakota STARS Connections is a bi-monthly publication for South Dakota administrators and teachers and is produced by the South Dakota Department of Education. This publication is intended to communicate news and events regarding the South Dakota Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System (SD-STARS), our Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

To view an online edition of this newsletter, go to [doe.sd.gov/publications.aspx](http://doe.sd.gov/publications.aspx).

Email story ideas or questions to [marcus.bevier@state.sd.us](mailto:marcus.bevier@state.sd.us) or [sara.kock@state.sd.us](mailto:sara.kock@state.sd.us).

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# SD-STARS Offers Online Library Of Resources

by Sara Fridley, ESA 3

SD-STARS is gradually becoming a well-known source of data for school district staff thanks to the continuing efforts of ESA and SDDOE in providing trainings across the state. But the non-data resources in SD-STARS may still be a well-kept secret. SD-STARS links information and resources for all state initiatives into one searchable tool called the Content Library.

The Content Library link in the red toolbar leads the user to a keyword searchable interface with several options shown as round buttons: people, events, learning objects, discussions, and action steps.

There are currently over 170 separate Learning Objects collected in the Content Library and the collection is steadily growing. And since the library is searchable - just as easy as doing a Google search - users can narrow down the list of items to find just the things relevant to them.

For example, when "language arts" is entered as the keyword, 52 resources are listed. This list includes links to the standards, links to related assessment resources such as the SD Assessment Portal and Smarter Balanced, and Parent Guides created by the National PTA for each grade level of the Common Core ELA standards (in English and Spanish).

Learning Object resources can be rated for quality by any SD-STARS user so that eventually you will know whether previous users believed the item to be of value or not.

Another searchable resource in SD-STARS is the Event Calendar. Staff development opportunities and workshops offered by the SD DOE and the State Library are listed here, with links to detailed descriptions and registration. Again using a keyword, such as "IEP" or "library" will narrow down the events listed.

The People search in the Content Library may be most useful for connecting with other teachers in a particular content area or grade level. When teachers set up their personal profiles in SD-STARS, they can select content and grade level attributes as well as focus populations. Attributes will also help SD-STARS identify and recommend resources based upon what might be most relevant. Keyword searching in People is just as simple as the other searches. If you know a name or a school district, then you can use that as the keyword. Or you can enter an attribute, such as a content area, grade level, or focus population.

As SD-STARS continues to grow and expand, the list of Content Library resources will become more diverse and more powerful. School staff can follow data with electronic discussions right in SD-STARS. If a district begins to use the Action Steps capability of SD-STARS, those will also be searchable in the Content Library for those assigned to Steps.

SD-STARS should become another tool to help make schools not just data rich, but also information rich.



# Ask the Experts

## **Will data from the Smarter Balanced assessment be available in SD-STARS?**

In spring 2014, the Smarter Balanced assessment and the new alternative assessment created by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) for certain special education populations are undergoing field testing. This will allow teachers and students to adjust to the new assessments and will give schools the opportunity to work out any infrastructure issues. A field test is primarily used to ensure validity and to determine accurate scale scores for future years, so this year there will not be any test scores for teachers or administrators to review.

Beginning in 2014-15, Smarter Balanced and NCSC assessment information will be available in SD-STARS. As with the Dakota-STEP, teachers and administrators will be able to access information on student performance.

## **Are there any resources available to help me better understand the reports and data in SD-STARS?**

SDDOE is developing Report Data Interpretation Guides, or DIGS, that will describe what can be found in the reports from SD-STARS. In addition, Report DIGs will answer frequently asked questions, provide disclaimers, and explain situations when the report could be used for decision-making purposes. Report DIGs will be located in the SD-STARS Training Center and Content Library.

## **Do districts have a say in reports being developed for SD-STARS?**

Absolutely! A number of districts are working with their ESAs to develop reports on everything from attendance trends to assessment results. Districts can use the request form available in the SD-STARS Training Center and Content Library to submit report or enhancement requests. Please note that reports are not free and a district may be responsible for development costs.

## **What data can be shared with a military recruiter?**

Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to give military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as provided to postsecondary institutions or to prospective employers. It also requires that LEAs provide students' names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters, when requested, unless a parent has opted out of providing such information. The Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) administers this provision of the ESEA. FPCO's guidance on the military recruiter provision is on its website: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/hottopics/ht10-09-02.html>.

For further information, email FPCO at [FERPA@ed.gov](mailto:FERPA@ed.gov). (Answer provided by the U.S. Department of Education)

## **During your fall FERPA training, you shared a video for parents. Where can I find that?**

That video is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/usedgov?feature=watch>

## **How will districts access accountability results for 2013-14?**

Just like last year, accountability reports will be accessed using SD-STARS. As June 1st approaches, districts need to identify members of their District Accountability Team, or individuals who will be responsible for reviewing and accessing the accountability reports. These individuals may or may not be the same people as last year. The District STARS Account Manager (SAM) is responsible for making sure the members of the District Accountability Team have approved accounts with the appropriate roles and should remove permissions for members who are no longer a part of the District Accountability Team. Instructions on this process can be found in the SD-STARS Training Center. If you have questions, please contact [STARSHelp@state.sd.us](mailto:STARSHelp@state.sd.us).

## **If a child is living with a non-parent family member (ex: grandma), do schools need the parent's permission in order to share records?**

The FERPA regulations define a "parent" as "a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of parent or guardian" (§ 99.3 "Parent"). Accordingly, if a non-parent family member, such as a grandparent, is "acting as a parent in the absence of a parent," then the school should view that individual as a "parent" and provide him or her with access to the student's education records. However, if the parent also lives with the grandparent along with the children, the grandparent is not considered to be "acting in the absence of a parent" because the parent is not absent.

(Answer provided by the U.S. Department of Education)



## Helpful Resources For Data Use

Here are a couple of resources to help you get started using data:

### Got Data? Now What? Creating and Leading Cultures of Inquiry

by *Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman*

This book provides strategies and tools for intervening with students and using data to drive decision making. Learn about developing a culture of inquiry, engaging through the collaborative learning cycle, using data to get to the root of a problem, and taking action to improve student outcomes. This book includes online resources and free reproducibles. It is available through some ESAs and the South Dakota State Library.

### The Data Coach's Guide to Improving Learning for All Students

by *Nancy Love, Katherine Stiles, Susan Mundry, and Kathryn DiRanna*

This book aims to help Data Coaches use data to inquire, question, and lead others in collaborative inquiry. The authors share examples of how this strategy has narrowed achievement gaps, spurred powerful conversations, and created a culture of data-driven decision making. The book includes a CD-ROM with templates, PowerPoint slides and other resources. It is available through some ESAs and the South Dakota State Library.

# National STARS: OREGON

In each issue of STARS Connections, we showcase another state's statewide longitudinal data system. This month we feature Oregon.

Oregon's Direct Access to Achievement (DATA) Project began seven years ago. Through the DATA Project, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has worked to bolster educators' data skills, teaching them about data issues and how to apply these skills in their schools and classrooms. DATA Project trainings range from informational webinars to assessment institutes.

In the past year, 500 educators and administrators have attended the DATA Project's data retreats. One Oregon educator says, "It gave me access to information and

how to use it in the classroom. I was able to move data from just being numbers to knowing how to use them."

A key piece of the Data Project's training model is follow-up. ODE offers data coaching sessions for those looking to brush up on skills. Other follow-up training topics include data analysis, networking with other districts, and tools for small school Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Similar to Oregon, South Dakota is starting to provide some top-notch professional development opportunities for educators and administrators around the state. This started with the data use courses, piloted in the summer of 2013. A full slate of courses will be available in summer 2014.

## ESA DATA STARS

Representatives from each ESA have been trained in SD-STARS. They are ready and willing to answer your questions. If you don't know your ESA assignment, go to [doe.sd.gov/octe/sdesa.aspx](http://doe.sd.gov/octe/sdesa.aspx).

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