



SD-STARS complements other DOE systems

Over the last three years, SD-STARS staff visited with many district staff about the system. The most common question is, "How is SD-STARS different from ___?" The blank is often filled in by names of other Department of Education systems, such as Infinite Campus, the South Dakota Assessment Portal and the Smarter Balanced Portal. With different systems being used for different purposes, the question is understandable. "We want districts to understand that SD-STARS is a complement to other department systems," Jameson Berreth, SD-STARS Support Lead, explains.

SD-STARS is a statewide longitudinal data system. It pulls data that are already available from different department systems and links the data for reporting and analysis. This highlights a main difference. "Districts do not enter information into SD-STARS. Instead, we use the data districts enter in Infinite Campus, the Personnel Record Form, and other sources," Berreth says.

Another source of data in SD-STARS are assessment files. SD-STARS contains assessment results for Smarter Balanced, DSTEP Science, and other state assessments. The system also includes ACT results and loads DIBELS and AIMSweb results for districts that grant permission. Beginning in summer 2016, SD-STARS will also have National Career Readiness Certificate information.

Many SD-STARS reports look at Smarter Balanced and DSTEP results, which are also found in other DOE systems. With multiple systems containing the same data, it can get confusing. "SD-STARS provides easy-to-understand reports that connect assessment results to other information, like student demographics or attendance," says Berreth. "Most times these reports are sufficient to answer questions or perform analysis, but sometimes educators will need more

details. In those cases, they need to dig into the source." For example, SD-STARS provides Smarter Balanced results down to the claim level. The Smarter Balanced portal goes one step further, down to the target level. The SD-STARS team tries not to replicate reports that are already in other systems.

In addition to connecting multiple sources of data, SD-STARS also varies from other systems because it can provide aggregate counts and student-level details as well as a longitudinal look at the data. "SD-STARS helps answer the questions districts ask to improve curriculum, evaluate programs and impact instruction. Connecting the different data over time and at different levels makes this possible," explains Berreth. Districts can ask questions like: *How have enrollments changed? Which students were "on the bubble," or close to becoming Level 3 on the Smarter Balanced math test? Over the years, what science strand are students missing? Of those students who are Level 1 on Smarter Balanced English Language Arts, what is their attendance rate? Are our students scoring higher on the ACT than they did last year or as compared to state averages?*

Another difference is system users. SD-STARS is available only to public schools in South Dakota, while some other department systems are available to all school types: public, non-public, tribal and BIE. The South Dakota Assessment Portal is an example of a system available to all schools in the state. This is why parent reports of student test scores are found in the SDAP instead of SD-STARS. Other department systems may also be available only for certain users within a district, but SD-STARS can support most users within a district - from teachers to superintendents.

SD-STARS is also different because districts have a say in what is available. Users can request new reports or changes to current reports in SD-STARS. Changes to the Student Profile and the development of the Special Education Trend report are just two examples in which district requests impacted SD-STARS reports. In addition, the South Dakota Educational Data Governance Group, which includes representatives from school districts, helps review report and enhancement requests, new data sources and system development.

Fall trainings – evaluation and next steps

This fall saw the first SD-STARS trainings offered directly by the Department of Education. The trainings were for STARS Account Managers (SAMs) and Data STARS, and they were held in four locations across the state: Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Watertown. There were 110 participants in all: 39 in the SAM trainings and 71 in the Data STARS trainings. These participants represented 50 different school districts.

Those attending the training day for SAMs learned about basic SAM responsibilities and security in SD-STARS. Key points covered included understanding the advantages of maintaining automatic accounts in SD-STARS and how to clean-up accounts which were created manually. SAMs received resources to complete a

STARS Security Plan to aid them in their managing of the system in their districts.

Participants in the Data STARS trainings were given an introduction to SD-STARS, including basic portal and report navigation as well as information on future updates in SD-STARS. They also received resources to create or update an SD-STARS Implementation Plan for their districts.

The department is making plans for future trainings, including webinars for new users and new SAMs. There will also be spring trainings, similar to the ones held this fall. The department will also create an intermediate training for Data STARS which will go beyond basic portal and report navigation and delve into incorporating data into decision making.



About Us:

South Dakota STARS Connections is a bi-monthly publication for South Dakota administrators and teachers, 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.

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Looking ahead to accountability for school year 2015-16

Even though accountability for school year 2014-15 just wrapped up, the Department of Education is already looking ahead to accountability for school year 2015-16. Laura Scheibe, administrator for accountability and accreditation, says, "There are several key changes coming to accountability that districts need to be aware of. Combined with the changes from last year, we are excited to build a more complete picture of schools' and districts' performance."

Academic growth will be included as a new indicator for middle and elementary schools. Worth a total of 40 points, schools will be able to earn 20 School Performance Index (SPI) points for English Language Arts and 20 points for math. Half of SPI points for academic growth will be awarded based on the performance of all students, and half will be awarded based on the performance of a school's lowest performing quartile of students.

In another change, SPI points for student achievement will be awarded based on multiple years. "By factoring in test scores from 2014-15 and 2015-16, and eventually moving to looking at three years' worth of results, we can help mitigate wide swings in achievement for some of our smaller schools," Scheibe says. The report card will continue to look at participation for the current year, but in accessing results in SD-STARS, districts will be able to view multi-year and current year achievement.

The college and career readiness (CCR) indicator will include a separate career readiness measure beginning in school year 2015-16. The indicator will then be worth 30 points. Schools that provide the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) test to their students would earn up to 10 of their CCR indicator points from the results. "We consider students who graduated the prior year. So for the 2015-16 report card, we would look at the NCRC results of students who graduated in spring 2015," Scheibe says. If a student takes the NCRC multiple times, the best score is counted. For schools that did not administer the NCRC to seniors last year, all 30 points of the indicator will come from college readiness measures.

How college readiness is calculated will also be changing. Instead of only using ACT scores, now Accuplacer scores will be also incorporated into the calculation. Again, this indicator only considers those who graduated in 2015. If a student took the Accuplacer multiple times, the best score will be used.

Finally, the department is working to develop a public interactive report card. Currently, districts interact with the private report card in SD-STARS, while the public views the report card as a PDF. "The goal is to create a website that allows parents and stakeholders the ability to navigate among schools and indicators through links and interactive reports. The experience will be similar to the private report card," Scheibe says. The public website will continue to suppress data for subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

SD-STARS welcomes technical developers

The Department of Education welcomes two new members to the SD-STARS team – Richard Spalding and Brian Reed. Both are employees of the state Bureau of Information and Telecommunications, but they work primarily to support the technical needs of SD-STARS. Although districts may not interact directly with Spalding and Reed, these gentlemen are helping to make sure SD-STARS has accurate, useful and timely data to support districts and the department.



Ask the experts

Where can I access the public report card?

The public report card is available on the Department of Education’s website at doe.sd.gov/reportcard. Report cards are available for the current year as well as previous years at the state, district and school levels. Because these report cards are publicly accessible, they do not include student level reports, and subgroups with fewer than 10 students are suppressed. The public report card should be used for external and public purposes such as presenting to a school board or sharing with parents.

Who is my district’s STARS Account Manager (SAM)?

Each district has at least one person serving as a SAM. This person manages accounts in SD-STARS to make sure the correct people have access with the appropriate permissions. If you have a

question about your account in SD-STARS but do not know who your SAM is, go to doe.sd.gov and click on School Directory in the lower right corner of the homepage. Find your school district under the Public School Districts list. Scroll down to see who is listed as the STARS Account Manager.

Can I get to a Report DIG directly from a report without leaving it?

DOE creates guides for each report in SD-STARS. These guides are called Report Data Interpretation Guides (DIGs). The DIGs provide detailed information on the data in the report, how to navigate the report, and what questions could be answered using the report. You must go to either the Training Center or Content Library to open a DIG. By using your web browser to open the DIG in a separate tab or window, you can have both the report and DIG open simultaneously.

Knowledge, skills and professional behaviors educators need to use data

As state and local education agencies increasingly focus on serving educators with their data systems, many face the common challenge of identifying what educators need to know and be able to do to use data effectively. This is where the SLDS Data Use Standards Workgroup stepped in.

Since the summer of 2013, the South Dakota Department of Education has participated in a conversation to help identify the essential knowledge, skills and professional behaviors required for educators to effectively use data. Members represent state education agencies, local education agencies, regional service agencies, postsecondary institutions and more. The objective was to provide a foundation for states’ development of data literacy and data use trainings as well as to inform and improve the articulation between pre- and in-service data trainings for teachers and administrators.

The result of this work is two resources. The first is divided into three sections describing the essential knowledge, skills and professional behaviors needed to use data. Each of these three main sections is further divided into subsections that contain individual standards and clarifying information. At the end of each section are scenarios that illustrate the standards being applied by educators in real-world situations. The second document contains three case studies that further illustrate the use of these standards in the educational context.

The workgroup plans to continue its work over the next year, improving these documents and publishing examples of how educational organizations are using data use standards.

To find out more about this work, go to <https://slds.grads360.org/#program/data-use-standards> or contact Sara Kock (sara.kock@state.sd.us).

Report spotlight: Special Education Trend

Users will find a new report in SD-STARS called the Special Education Trend Report (EN.009.00-X). This report provides aggregate counts of students in special education. Users can filter results by race, gender, grade and LEP status as well as special education program, category and primary disability. This report is available to users with the following permissions: Principal, Superintendent, Management and Assessment.

The report does two things to generate requested data. First, it selects a specific segment of students in special education. This is determined by the parameters chosen when generating the report, such as race, grade, special education program, primary disability and others. Secondly, it takes that population and displays it by a special education indicator. The group can be broken down by program, category or primary disability. For example, a user can search for all students in special education regardless of gender, race or other variables and sort them by primary disability. This will show how many students in the school/district have autism, speech, vision loss or other disabilities as their primary disability. A user may then be interested in only male students. By changing the gender parameter to male, a user can see the primary disabilities for male students in the school/district.

Once the desired parameters are selected and the report is generated, it will feature a data table accompanied by a bar graph. If no data are retrieved, it is likely that the parameters are too specific, and there are no students in the district meeting those criteria.

Since the report is longitudinal, it shows five years’ worth of data, allowing a school or district to identify trends in disabilities, programs or services provided. For example, if school year 2014-15 is selected in the parameters, data back to 2010-11 will be shown. Although the data for the current school year are updated nightly and may change, the data from historical years look at students enrolled as of the last day of school.

Check out the Report DIG in the Content Library or Training Center. Questions about this report or any others can be sent to STARSHelp@state.sd.us.



New video on student directory information released by Privacy Technical Assistance Center

The Privacy Technical Assistance Center recently released a new video called *The A-B-C's of Student Directory Information*.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows schools and districts to designate certain basic information as directory information, and share that information without consent if certain additional requirements are met. Directory information is information contained in education records that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Generally, directory information includes name, address, telephone listing, email address, place and date of birth, participation in recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards received by the student as well as dates of attendance.

This video helps districts understand why they would want to use student information and the types of information that should be included. It also helps explain the process districts should use when designating directory information.

View the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJr2nIJK6Ls>

National STARS: 4 districts focus on data use to improve student achievement

School districts gather information on their students, from test scores to attendance to demographics. When the data are used to answer questions, track progress and empower educators, districts can see improvement in student achievement.

Goochland County Public Schools in Virginia created a culture in which education data are used as a tool to empower parents and educators. Collaborating with parents and the community, the district used data on student academic growth, social-emotional measures and school climate to set key benchmarks and to establish a system to support and report progress towards achieving these benchmarks. At the same time, the district rolled out professional development and data literacy training for administrators and teachers to help them reflect and improve on practices. Today, educators have the skills needed to individualize instruction and the information to help parents understand their child's needs.

Tacoma Public Schools in Washington boosted graduation rates and college-level course participation rates with the use of data. School leaders collaborated with community members to analyze achievement data and develop the Tacoma Whole Child Accountability System. The system uses multiple measures to define student success. It also uses key benchmarks to create a plan of action and provides a data system that supports progress.

Madison Metropolitan School District in Wisconsin created a system based on a vision of ensuring every student graduates from high school ready for college, career and community. A unique plan of action was created for each school using key benchmarks and a data system that allows schools to access timely data. This helps schools check the progress of their students and make improvements as needed. The district used tools such as early warning systems, professional development and school improvement plans to help them fulfill their vision.

Henrico County Public Schools in Virginia increased student success and reduced disparities in discipline rates for students with disabilities. Data revealed students with disabilities had disproportionately higher disciplinary rates as well as lower graduation rates. The district developed a plan to correct these disparities. The plan included creation of a Special Education Advisory Committee comprised of parents who participate in reviews of data for the schools. Dashboards were created for teachers, administrators and parents to engage in discussions about decreasing disciplinary rates and increasing graduation rates for students with disabilities.

Source: Data Quality Campaign (<http://dataqualitycampaign.org/>)

Certified STARS trainers available to districts

STARS Certified Trainers are available to provide trainings to districts. Trainers have been trained by DOE staff on the SD-STARS system and are kept up-to-date on system developments and new reports. Districts can contact the trainer directly to request a training either at a cost to the district or as a part of their state-supported professional development.

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