

Power User Frequently Asked Questions - FAQs

This document is intended for District Power Users to address common questions about STARS Analytics, the training, and more. For additional information please contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

The Basics

What is STARS Analytics?

Currently, any reporting that districts access in SD-STARS is created by the department. This assumes the department understands what districts need, which isn't always the case. It also creates a bottleneck in getting data to districts, as any requests from districts must fit within the SD-STARS Team workload/priorities.

STARS Analytics is a new reporting feature that is available in SD-STARS. It is based on the same software that SDDOE uses for other reporting, such as the Accountability Report Card. The unique thing about STARS Analytics is it gives trained individuals access to data found in SD-STARS. These individuals can then use those data to create what are called dossiers, or reports, which can then be published to the users in a specific district via the new District Report menu in SD-STARS. Now, districts will be empowered to use SD-STARS to build their own reports for their own local-level decision making without having to go to the department.

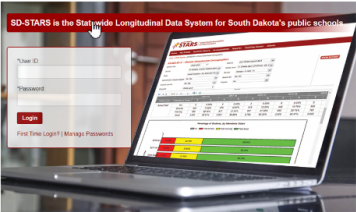
STARS Analytics is based on the same security model as other reports found in SD-STARS. First, only users with certain permissions can access STARS Analytics dossiers. For example, a dossier could be made available to a superintendent but not a principal. Second, what students appear on the report depends on the permissions for the user. For example, teachers only see students in their classroom, principals see students in their school, and superintendents see students in their district.

How can I find out more information about STARS Analytics and what is a Power User?

Users can find more information at <https://doe.sd.gov/sdstars/>. Users can find a complete fact sheet by clicking on the plus (+) sign as illustrated below.


Statewide Longitudinal Data System

The Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (SD-STARS) is a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) that drives the educational initiatives to improve instruction and student performance. The goal for SD-STARS is to securely consolidate and link all educational data that currently resides within the SD DOE. In other words, it pulls data that is already available from different sources (ex: Infinite Campus, assessments), places the data into a centralized system, and links data together. This increases data availability for reporting and analysis that is used by teachers, schools, districts, and the DOE as well as external stakeholders, such as policy makers and researchers. SD-STARS also allows for deeper and richer performance analysis by bringing student, teacher, principal, and financial data together.



Data Sources and Reports

- + Purpose, Components and Security
- + Upcoming Trainings
- + District STARS Account Managers
- + District Power Users



Who would make a good Power User from my school/district?

An individual is a good candidate to be a Power User if they:

- Logs into SD-STARS on a regular basis.
- Can be given elevated permission by their district to access confidential district-wide student data, including free-reduced lunch data, for the purpose of creating and publishing reports for users in the district. The district must sign a SD-STARS Power User access form acknowledging this elevated permission.
- Understands educational data, especially data reported to the state by districts. This includes data like: enrollment, student demographics, state assessments, basic special education data, and accountability report card
- Is comfortable manipulating data to form lists, tables, and charts. They can organize, compare, and analyze data by using filters, colors, etc.
- Have attended a regional training within the last two years.

For a complete list of who is a good candidate to be a Power User, see the [Power User Fact Sheet](#).

How is STARS Analytics the same or different from the SD-STARS reports that I already know about and use?

Current reports in SD-STARS Reports and STARS Analytics are more different than they are similar. They are similar because both can be accessed by logging into SD-STARS, both are used to display data for users, and both have security that limits what a user can see. They are different in the place in SD-STARS they can be found, the role of the Power User and the department, and who is responsible.

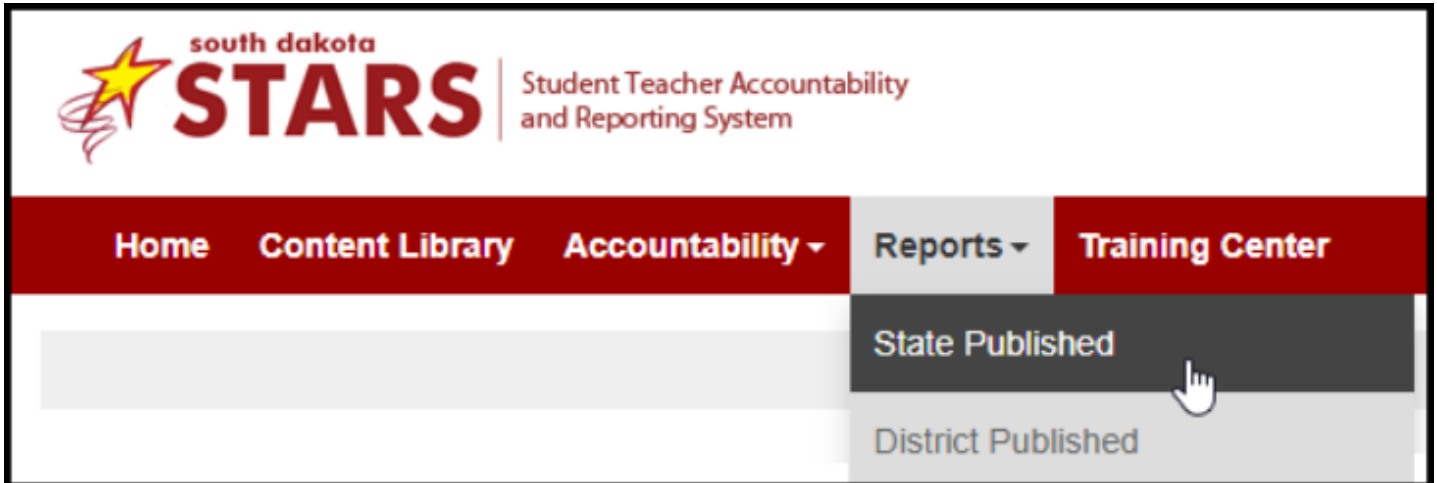
Current reports in SD-STARS are found when you go to REPORTS > STATE REPORTS. These reports were developed by the department, so they are state-created reports. State reports take a long time to create. There are requirements that are identified, multiple stakeholders that review, and eventually it gets to districts. The ownership of maintaining these reports, ensuring they remain working and accurate, is at the Department.

STARS Analytics reports can be found when you go to REPORTS > DISTRICT REPORTS. These reports were developed by district Power Users, so they are district-created reports. District reports are created by the district Power Users. The development, review, and ownership all lies with the district Power Users. The department maintains some of the data behind the reports, but it is the responsibility of the Power User to ensure that the reports are working and accurate.

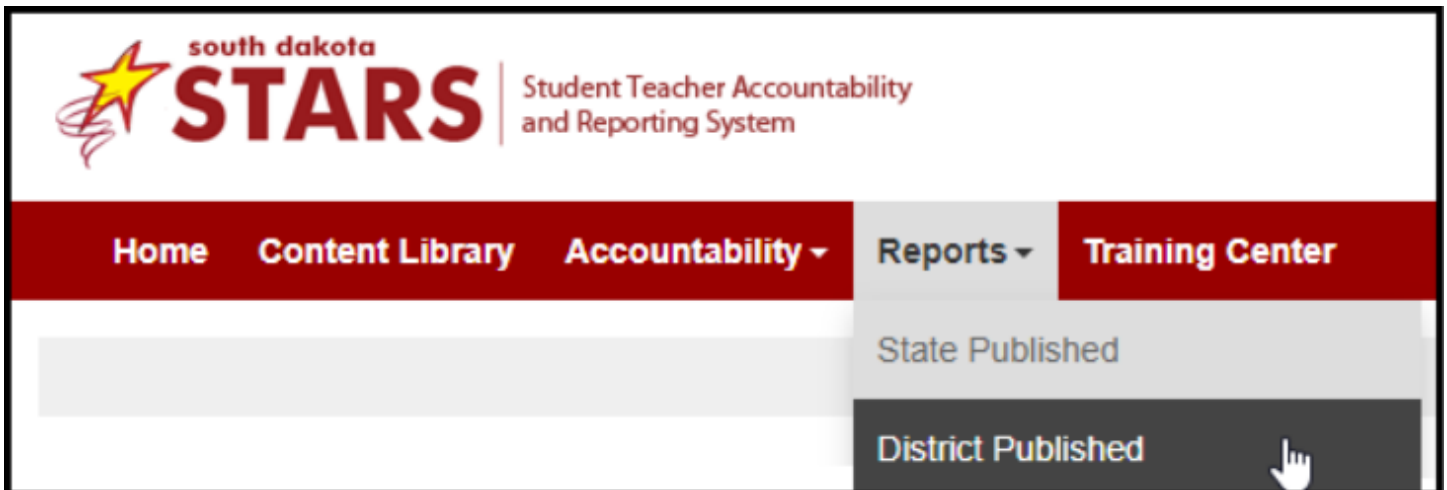
STARS Analytics	
are the same as Current Reports in SD-STARS ...	are different from Current Reports in SD-STARS ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses data found in SD-STARS • Can be found when logged into SD-STARS • Produces reports for district users • Are secured, limiting what data a user can see based on permissions • Can be used to make data-driven decisions for classrooms, schools, and districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found on different menu options • Produced by district Power Users, not the state • Can be created in a short period of time • Limited data sources • Ownership lies with district Power Users, not the state

I see a menu option called State Reports and another for District Reports. What are these menu options?

State Published menu are available to district and school users based on their permissions. This is where you find reports that are created by the state for you to use, like ACT Stoplight, Special Ed Exiter, Assessment Feedback, and more. The department manages this page, controlling the reports that are available and who can see the reports.



District Published menu are reports that the Power User makes available to district and school users based on their permissions. This is where you find reports that are created by your district for you to use. The district Power Users manages and is responsible for anything on this page.



What if I move to a new district? Can I be a Power User for the new district?

Yes, but a new Power User permission slip must be completed by the new district's Superintendent and sent to STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

The Training

How is this training different than other trainings SD-STARS offers?

The SD-STARS Team updates trainings to reflect yearly changes and updates that occur in SD-STARS. Participants are introduced to how to use SD-STARS and basic functions and then the training shifts to how to use those training to make data-driven decisions for their district or school. The Power User training allows participants to develop reports using the STARS Analytic platform. Participants can use many of the same datasets that the SD-STARS Team uses to develop state reports.

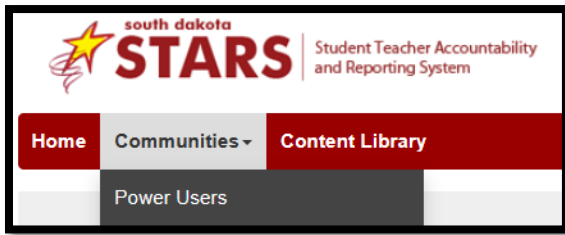
	Trainings for District Users	Power User Training
Who should attend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any public district user who wants more information on SD-STARS Great for those who want to utilize SD-STARS more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific people who are wanting to learn the technical skills for building/designing reports Users who regularly use SD-STARS Teams of 2-3 that have the time and skills to benefit from training
Topics that will be covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basics of SD-STARS Explore data in SD-STARS reports How to ask questions and find answers using data in SD-STARS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who have the desire and skills to manipulate data How to use the new software/feature called STARS Analytics Lots of technical details
Post Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District users will have a basic understanding of what SD-STARS is and how to find appropriate reports to help make data-driven decisions. District users will be trained on how to use the SD-STARS portal to find up to date documents, new trainings, and SD-DOE updates/announcements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Users are expected to create and publish reports for users. Power Users are given access to a community to keep up to date with changes, new training, and advanced course offerings.

Why does my district need to send a minimum of two participants to Power User Training?

The SD-STARS team wants the new Power Users to be set up for success in using this new platform. The SD-STARS team found three key benefits to sending at least two participants. First, during the Power User training, participants will learn how to make dossiers (reports or dashboard). Folks found that having only one person knowing how to do this could be overwhelming. Second, having two people familiar with STARS Analytics is important once Power Users return to their district. Third, if a Power User leave their district, that will leave the district without any Power Users.

I want additional information, where can I look?

In 2023, the SD-STARS team created a community dedicated to STARS Analytics and Power Users. Only those who have the Power User roles will have the Power User Community listed. You can find the Power User Community while logged into the SD-STARS Portal, then used the dropdown under the Communities tab.



In the Power User Community, Power Users will find information on upcoming trainings, STARS Analytics updates, Power Points decks from trainings, and other resources.

Power Users are also automatically enrolled into the [Power User Listserv](#). Power Users can communicate with each other and the SD-STARS team with questions, suggestions, or sharing ideas with one another.

STARS Analytics Details

What is a dossier?

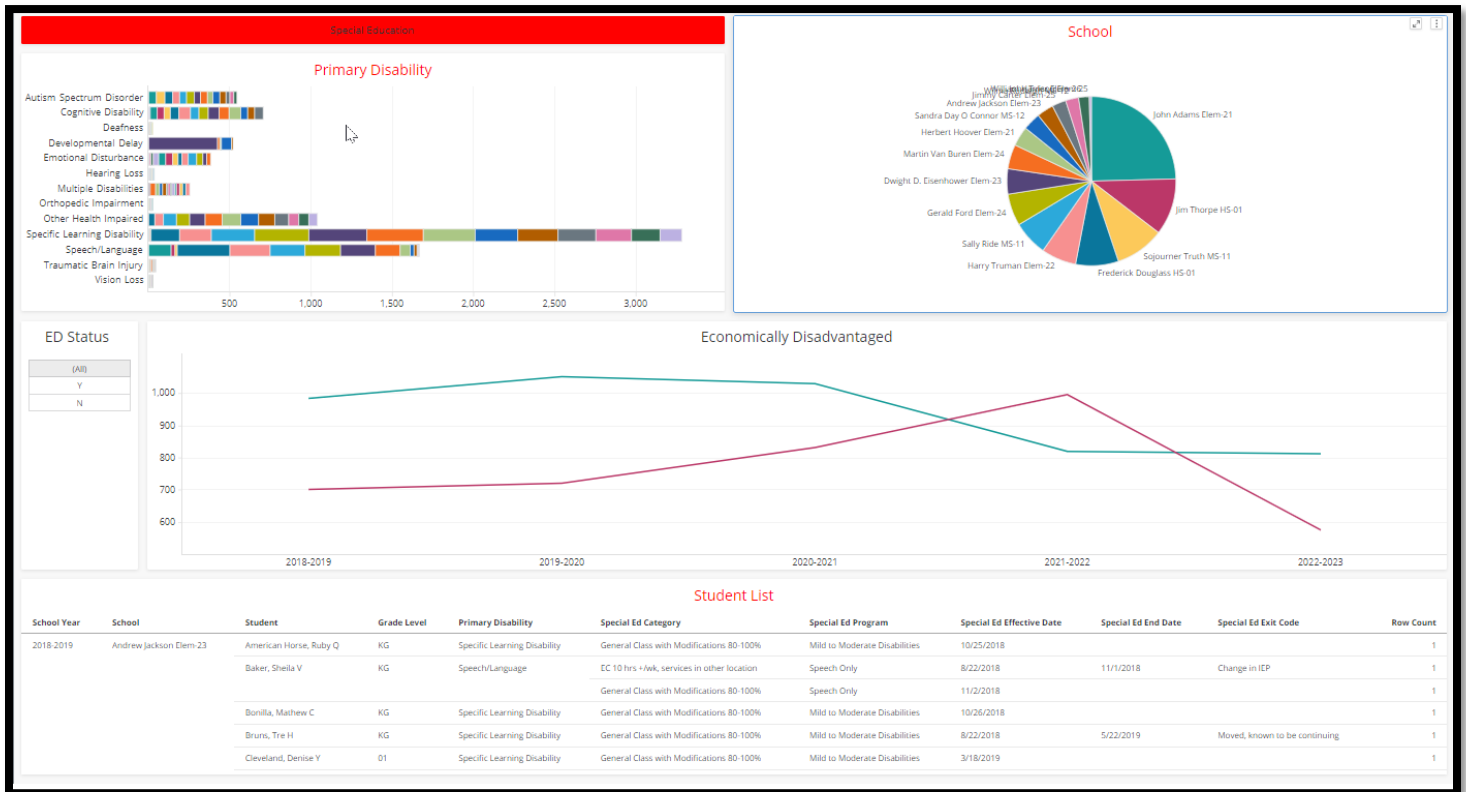
A dossier is the STARS Analytics term for a report or dashboard. There are key terms that many individuals may be introduced to during this training. Here are some examples...

What is a dataset?

In STARS Analytics, there are various datasets that can be used by the **Power User**. Each **dataset** is made up of **attributes**, also known as labels, and **metrics**, also known as a measure. It is important that the Power User understands information about the datasets, attributes, and metrics to build accurate reports.

Each dataset is accompanied by a **Dataset DIG** (Data Interpretation Guide) and can be found in the **Power User Community**.





Can dossiers be shared between Power Users from different districts? In other words, is it possible for one district to use a dossier that another district creates?

Yes, this is possible. Please contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us with the following information.

1. The name of the district who has the dossier.
2. The name of the dossier.
3. The district that wants the dossier.

The SD-STARS Team will copy the dossier from the one Class district and paste it into the folder for the other district. Both districts will only see data for their district. Once the copy is made, each district can continue making changes to the dossier without affecting the other.

Why does STARS Analytics time out?

STARS Analytics has a built-in feature to time out after 50 minutes of inactivity to protect educational data. If your device goes to sleep after a set time, then STARS Analytics may need to be refreshed or you may need to relog into SD-STARS.

Can visualizations be copied instead of having to copy a dossier?

Saving/copying a singular visualization is saving/copying the entire dossier. If a Power User wants to share a dossier/visualization, the save it to your districts folder and then all Power User in your district will have access to it. If a Power User wants non-Power Users to have access to a dossier, than publishing the dossier is the right course of action.

If a Power User wants to use a visualization in a presentation, then taking a screen shot may be the right steps. Screen shots will not be an interactive and wont update. If screen shots are used, Power Users should keep in mind that educational data needs to protected, and Personal Identifying Information (PII) should not be used in the public setting.

Why doesn't the back button work?

The back button the Power Users see while in STARS Analytics is for the browser and not STARS Analytics. STARS Analytics is an application and not a webpage, so asking an application to back up causes the issues. Using the back button is not recommended as it will cause the Power User to lose any unsaved work.