

south dakota

# STARS

Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

# connections

## SD-STARS Calculates Growth Measure

South Dakota's new accountability system includes academic growth as one of the five indicators that make up the School Performance Index at the elementary and middle school levels. To determine how best to calculate growth, the South Dakota Department of Education brought together teachers, administrators and other experts to study different research based and tested growth models.

The group will weigh the pros and cons of each model and whittle down the options at future meetings, according to Abby Javurek-Humig, the department's Director of Accountability and Assessment. The model could then be adapted for use on a school level, so it fits within the accountability system.

What does this have to do with SD-STARS? First, SD-STARS stores the data needed for growth calculations. SD-STARS could also provide reports on growth of students to schools and teachers. In addition, accountability reports that utilized the selected growth model will be accessed through SD-STARS.

The growth model selected by this group will differ from how growth is approached for teacher evaluations.

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## SD-STARS Begins Roll Out

April is the transition month when users will expand beyond the 10 pilot districts to districts statewide. With the rollout gearing up, Education Service Agencies (ESAs) and the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) are here to help.

Lisa Reinhiller, from ESA 1, said, "Our goal is to provide assistance to districts as they figure out how to implement SD-STARS. By developing a plan together with ESAs, districts can ensure that our help will not only address training and support needs for SD-STARS but also connect it to other statewide initiative and district goals."

During December and January, ESAs made initial contact to give districts notice that SD-STARS was coming. In addition, districts provided the names of at least two people who will be trained on SD-STARS (called District Data STARS) and one person who will manage the accounts (called the STARS Account Manager).

During February and March, ESAs held kick-off calls with district administration, Data STARS, and STARS Account Managers. The calls provided an overview of SD-STARS and an opportunity for districts to get answers to their questions. ESAs have also been working with district Infinite Campus contacts because key data in Infinite Campus are used to create and maintain accounts in SD-STARS.

Going into spring, ESAs will continue to work through next steps with districts.

One step is for ESAs to train District Data STARS on the new system. A second step is for districts to review and communicate their district's policy on data confidentiality. Reinhiller says, "Districts already know the importance of keeping student data confi-

dential, but districts need to make sure they communicate this to the district staff who will be accessing SD-STARS."

A third step is to help districts determine the timeline for implementation. Even though the rollout starts in April, districts may choose not to add users to SD-STARS until a future month. The one exception to this is that district will need at least a few users by June 2013. These users should be the district staff who review accountability reports, as these reports will be available through SD-STARS.

SDDOE created an implementation guide and planning template to help districts determine what is needed for SD-STARS. These documents can be found online.

If your district has any questions about the rollout, please contact your ESAs. Their contact information is in this newsletter. You can also contact Marcus Bevier (marcus.bevier@state.sd.us) or Sara Kock (sara.kock@state.sd.us) with the SDDOE.

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- Steps to implement SD-STARS:**
1. Sign MOA
  2. Assign Key Personnel
  3. Attend Kickoff Call with ESA
  4. Review Confidentiality Policy
  5. Communicate Policy to Staff
  6. Clean Up Data in Infinite Campus
  7. Install Silverlight
  8. Attend STARS Account Manager Training
  9. Verify Accounts
  10. Approve Accounts
  11. Attend Data STARS Training
  12. Develop District Training Plan



## About Us:

South Dakota STARS Connections is a bi-monthly publication for South Dakota administrators and teachers and 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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# ESAs Are Here To Help

By: Holly Schumacher, ESA 5

With the assistance of regional ESA Education Specialists, like me, districts throughout South Dakota have been preparing for SD-STARS, South Dakota's statewide longitudinal data system.

As ESAs, one responsibility is to train District Data STARS on the reports and components of SD-STARS and to help them develop their local training plans. Districts appointed Data STARS, who will serve as leaders in the development and implementation of SD-STARS for their local school districts. Data STARS come from a range of job responsibilities - from secretarial personnel to school administrators. This diversity in backgrounds will benefit the quality of trainings we will provide.

ESAs are also helping districts understand how accounts in SD-STARS are created and maintained. Each district selected an individual(s) who will be responsible for

updating data within Infinite Campus to ensure SD-STARS maintain security. In addition, we are currently developing trainings for STARS Account Managers (SAMs). This training will be delivered to districts soon, so contact your ESA for information.

ESA involvement with the South Dakota Education Data Governance Board (SD-EDGB) is just getting started. We identified representatives from each region who demonstrate an interest in determining the policies and rules surrounding data input, use and analysis. Once formed and functioning, the governance board will advise on the development and improvement of SD-STARS.

Clearly, ESAs are busy supporting the rollout of SD-STARS. We hope you think of us as the "go-to" resource for everything SD-STARS, as we are here to help now and into the future.

## Education Data Governance Board

There are many exciting things happening at the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE). One such item is the creation of the South Dakota Education Data Governance Board (SD-EDGB). This initiative is an effort to help establish consistency in data through rules, standards, and policy suggestions voted on by the Board. SDDOE hopes to not only bolster data quality for reporting and analysis but also collaborate with districts on common data issues that affect both districts and the Department.

The Board is comprised of district representatives as well as members from all divisions within the SDDOE. The district representatives were nominated from each

region in the state because of their passion for data quality and use within schools.

Mary Stadick Smith, Director of Operations and Information at the Department, said, "SD-EDGB will help districts because it will set some common standards and procedures to follow relating to data entry, use and analysis. SD-EDGB would also give districts a voice when it comes to important decisions surrounding data."

The first of three working sessions for the Board will start in Spring 2013. These working sessions will help build the foundation of data governance prior to the first meeting. The first official meeting is scheduled for Summer 2013.



# Ask the Experts

## **Does every district have access to SD-STARS?**

Starting in April, SD-STARS will be available to most districts as long as the district signed the MOA.

That being said, even though districts will have the capacity to start accessing SD-STARS in April, your district may choose not to give staff members (including teachers) access to the system until a future date. In fact, we expect that most districts will only give access to a handful of district users (ex: District Data STARS, STARS Account Managers) at first. Then, districts can figure out how other users will get on the system. The exception to this is for accountability. SDDOE is asking districts to make sure the individuals who need to view the accountability reports have access to SD-STARS by June 1.

### **Professional development opportunity for administrators**

SDDOE is working with professors at USD to develop and deliver a course for administrators and counselors on data use and analysis. This course, which will offer one continuing education credit, will be piloted to a limited number of participants this summer.

If successful, this course will expand to administrators throughout the state. In addition, a similar course for teachers is planned for this fall. More information to come in upcoming Connections Newsletters.

## **Does the STARS Connections newsletter go to District Data STARS?**

Hard copies of this newsletter are mailed to every school. In addition, public superintendents, principals, Infinite Campus contacts, assessment directors, and curriculum directors receive this newsletter in a PDF form via email.

For this month, as was done in the past, ESAs will share the newsletter with District Data STARS and STARS Account Managers.

Starting next issue, SDDOE will email the newsletter directly to these key folks.

## **Does SDDOE have any guidance for a district confidentiality policy?**

When implementing SD-STARS, SDDOE recommends that districts review and communicate their policies on the confidentiality of student data.

It is best practice to make sure that your district has a policy, the policy follows both state and federal laws, and staff members have been informed about this policy.

At this time, SDDOE does not have any guidance for such a policy. SDDOE recommends that districts contact their attorney if there are questions or concerns about the district's policy.

## **Will all staff or just key personnel be able to access SD-STARS?**

The system supports all levels of users, from district administration, school personnel, and teachers; however, districts have the ability to determine if a staff member will get an account, when such access will be granted, and what data the staff member is allowed to view.

For some districts, administrators will be the first users. Teachers may not get access until later months. For other districts, only a selected group of personnel will be allowed access.

## **What exactly will districts need to do to implement SD-STARS?**

SDDOE created an implementation guide and planning template to help districts determine what is needed for SD-STARS. These documents can be found online at [doe.sd.gov/ofm/lds.aspx](http://doe.sd.gov/ofm/lds.aspx).

The steps described in these documents will help districts walk through the basic needs for implementing SD-STARS. There are many steps, but don't worry. ESAs will help districts complete these documents and support districts through the steps.



## Power of SLDS: Growth

There are many kinds of questions that could be answered using data in the South Dakota Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (SD-STARS).

These questions can be asked at multiple levels including: individual students; groups of students; teachers; schools; districts; and programs, policies, and strategies.

Focusing on growth, some of the questions that, with time and accurate data, could be answered by using SD-STARS include:

- How much academic progress did an individual student make in one or more year(s)?
- How does an individual student’s growth compare to that of students with similar prior test scores?
- How does the growth of students identified as “Limited English Proficient” compare with students whose native language is English?
- How does the proficiency rate of schools compare to their growth rate? Are there schools who have high proficiency but low growth? Are there schools who have low proficiency but high growth?

# National STARS: Colorado

Since the introduction of high-stakes assessments, schools and districts have been focused on student proficiency. However, these assessments are static measures of student achievement that does not consider the student’s improvement over time, or student growth.

To look beyond student proficiency the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) introduced the Colorado Growth Model. This model was developed with help from an advisory panel of educators, superintendents, data analysts, board of education members, parents, and business members.

Before becoming South Dakota’s Director of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education, Colleen O’Neil worked with the Colorado Growth Model at CDE and, earlier, in a local Colorado school district.

“The growth model we used in Colorado opened our eyes to some important results in the data. It showed us historically where we were doing well, but it also gave us a look at areas in which we’ve struggled,” O’Neil said. “What’s really nice about growth is that it is not done in one pass—like summative assessments. We had a good opportunity to see how much our students were growing and progressing over the years in terms of academic achievement.”

Using the Colorado Growth Model, administrators and educators at all levels were able to dig into the growth data and target the needs of individual students. O’Neil said, “Once we know the needs we could literally customize each child’s education – at the classroom level - in order to ensure we were delivering the education that allowed them to meet the standards necessary for postsecondary and career success.”

One unique thing about the Colorado Growth Model is the ability for the public to view the results. This allows the public to engage in conversations about how they could work with educators to ensure that all students graduate ready for postsecondary and workforce successes.

Colorado is not the only state using growth to gauge student progress. North Dakota, Tennessee, Arkansas and others are either implementing or have implemented growth models to see how students are performing historically and over time. Colorado does, however, have the most mature model of any state at this time.

You can find more information about the Colorado Growth Model online at [www.schoolview.org/ColoradoGrowthModel.asp](http://www.schoolview.org/ColoradoGrowthModel.asp).

## 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 [sdesa.k12.sd.us](http://sdesa.k12.sd.us).

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