

south dakota



STARS

Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

connections

2016 Data Courses

The South Dakota Department of Education is offering data use courses for educators this summer. Two courses will be available.

The Fundamentals of Using Data for Educators course provides educators with the skills they need to analyze and use data.

Scheduled from July 5-Aug. 19, this course meets in-person for one day, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. local time:

- July 18, Rapid City
- July 20, Aberdeen
- July 21, Mitchell

In the second course, Advanced Data Use Skills for Educators, educators will use skills learned in the fundamentals class to complete a data project. Scheduled from May 30-July 13, the course is online, is only available to those who completed the fundamentals class and requires participants to purchase a book.

Teachers and administrators can register at <https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com>. Participation is free, but graduate credits are available through the University of South Dakota.

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DOE Programs Release Reports For Districts in SD-STARS

Over the last year, the SD-STARS team worked with the with the Department of Education's career and technical education division and special education program staff to publish new reports in SD-STARS. These reports provide useful information for federal and state reporting.

Dual Credit

The dual credit program offered by the Department of Education allows high school students to enroll in South Dakota public postsecondary institutions and simultaneously earn credits towards their high school diploma and postsecondary degree or certification. During the 2015-16 school year, students in grades 11 and 12 participated in dual credit coursework at a cost of \$40 per credit in subject areas from auto body repair to world geography.

Amber Rost with the dual credit program said, "Since the program's start in 2014-15, dual credit has seen a large increase in utilization by districts. With state funds supporting the program, the department needs information about course enrollment and completion to inform decisions and determine the program's outcomes."

Four dual credit reports were created to help the state and districts better understand how students are using the program. One report provides the number of course enrollments. Since a student can sign up for more than one course, another report counts the students who are enrolled. A third report looks at the average number of credits students take, and the fourth report looks at the pass rate for dual credit courses.

All reports can be filtered and grouped by institution, student grade, race, gender, economic disadvantaged status, migrant status and special education status. "This allows the state and districts to look at outcomes for student groups," Rost said. "These dual credit reports can answer questions like, *What is the average number of credits that juniors took last fall?* or *Of the students who are English language learners, what percent are passing Board of Regents*

courses and technical institute courses?"

The four dual credit reports are available to users with superintendent, principal, assessment, district management and school management permissions in SD-STARS. These reports are sourced from the dual credit program offered by the department. Information on dual credits earned through private or tribal postsecondary institutions is not available via these reports.

Special Education Indicator 3

State test achievement results of special education students are part of Indicator 3 reporting for the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance report that the special education program completes every year. Since this information is in the Accountability Report Card, special education program staff wanted to leverage SD-STARS to automate the reporting. In addition, staff saw benefits for districts.

Linda Turner, director of special education, said, "By creating the reports in SD-STARS, superintendents and special education directors can access Indicator 3 for their own districts. This helps them identify areas of strength and concern and plan for the following year."

There are four reports. One provides participation rate; another provides proficiency rates in English language arts and math. These reports can be broken down by grade and adjusted to look at students who took Smarter Balanced, the alternative assessment or both. A third report is formatted like the Indicator 3 report in the performance plan to look at students with and without accommodations on the Smarter Balanced or the alternative assessment. The final report is a student list that shows the students who count in the three aggregated reports.

The four special education statewide reports are available to superintendent, principal, assessment, district management and school management permissions in SD-STARS. These reports will not be updated for 2015-16 until after August, once the Accountability Report Card is completed.



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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District Requests: ACCESS Test Takers, Adding State ID

Later this month, users will see the completion of two district requests in SD-STARS. The first is an enhancement adding state IDs to existing reports and the other is the creation of a new report: ACCESS Test Takers. Both requests came from district users who saw a need and submitted a formal request to STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

With the addition of state IDs to existing reports in SD-STARS, district and school users will have access to both student names and state IDs. This helps connect information in SD-STARS to other systems districts may use. Users should be aware that it is the state ID and not the local ID that is displayed.

The ACCESS Test Takers report will be located in the assessment category of STARS Reports.

Students identified as English language learners must take the ACCESS test every year. Results determine if the student is considered proficient and if he or she can exit from ELL status. The report displays student demographics, attendance rate, the four domains and composite score of the ACCESS test, and state assessment results. The report also flags whether a student is considered proficient for ACCESS, took the ACCESS alternative test or is considered first year in country.

The SD-STARS team encourages any user to submit a request for a new report or an enhancement of a current report. Find out more in the Report Development Process section of the Training Center in SD-STARS.

SAM Corner: New Reports For Account Management

Coming this month, SD-STARS will have two new reports which can be accessed and used by STARS Account Managers.

District Access Tracker

This report may sound familiar to SAMs. The District Access Tracker has been an Excel tool available to aid them in managing permissions on accounts in SD-STARS. Now this tool is in a report form with three tabs, or sub-reports. The first sub-report, which is open when a report is first generated, is the User Roles tab. This shows a list of users in the school or district with access to SD-STARS and the roles or permissions assigned to each person. It is easy to see who has permissions like accountability, management or teacher. The second tab is Report Permissions. This page shows what STARS reports can be accessed by users with each permission. The last sub-menu, Site Menu Permissions, is similar and shows what STARS menus are accessed through each permission. The last two tabs will be the same for every district.

The creation of the District Access Tracker report means that the School District Users report (OT.001.00-S) will be removed from SD-STARS. Currently, SAMs can use the School District Users report to see what permissions users have on their accounts. Since the District Access Tracker does the same and is more user-friendly, there will be no need to keep the School District Users report.

Infinite Campus Connection

This report shows fields in Infinite Campus – District Edition that are used for SD-STARS account maintenance. The information needed for account maintenance includes email address, district employment record and a district assignment record with job title. SAMs can use the report to identify users who have missing or outdated information in Infinite Campus that affects their accounts and permissions in SD-STARS. The Infinite Campus Connection report can bring up active users, inactive users or both, based on employment and assignment records.

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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An Inside Look at the Making of Mobility and Early Warning Reports

The SD-STARS team will soon be releasing two new reports in response to district requests: Early Warning and Mobility.

Early Warning Report

The Department of Education utilized research about students who drop out to develop the Early Warning report for SD-STARS. National research indicates students who drop out often give warning signs. By identifying these warning signs earlier, educators can support students to keep them in attendance and engaged in school. Most national research focuses on the “ABCs” of early warning indicators: attendance, behavior and course performance. In South Dakota, the Department of Education does not collect student-level behavior data, so the Early Warning Report in SD-STARS looks at attendance, course performance and other indicators.

The SD-STARS Early Warning Report displays student names, demographic data and many separate early warning indicators. Yellow- and red-filled boxes mean students are at risk in a given indicator. Green-filled boxes mean the student is not at risk in a given indicator.

The criterion for each early warning indicator varies. For attendance, a student who misses 10-17 days of school will be flagged yellow. A student will be flagged red upon missing 18 or more days.

The course performance indicator is broken down into five categories.

- 1) ‘Repeated Grade’ is flagged red if a student has ever repeated a grade since 3rd grade.
- 2) ‘Failed Core HS Courses’ is red when a student fails a core course in high school.
- 3) ‘Not Enough HS Credits’ indicates a high school student is not on track to earn enough credits to graduate. This is based on the students obtaining the state minimum of 22 credits.
- 4) ‘Low HS Cum. GPA’ is red when a student has a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or lower.
- 5) ‘Not Proficient ELA/Math in Most Recent State Test’ is flagged red if a student fails to score Level 3 or 4 in a subject area on the state assessment.

The final indicator marks whether a student was mobile. If the student appears on the Mobility report, the student will be flagged as mobile in the Early Warning report.

This report is available for middle and high schools only. Users will see ‘NA’ for certain high school indicators when they run the report for middle schools. For example, ‘Failed Core HS Courses’ will display ‘NA’ for a middle school student.

Mobility Report

The Mobility report displays students who are considered mobile during the year selected. A student is considered mobile during the year if the student enters or exits a school. That sounds simple enough, but as the SD-STARS team began working with the data, it quickly became apparent this is a complex issue. A work group within the Department of Education focused on identifying changes to a student’s educational setting. These changes impact student learning. In order to accurately identify mobile students, 12 rules were defined by the work group. These rules do the following:

- **Identify which enrollments are included** - Early childhood grades, enrollments less than 50 percent and summer school enrollments are excluded, but homeschool enrollments are included.
- **Determine when data entry could incorrectly flag a student as mobile** - For example, a student who ends and starts in the same school in three or fewer school days is not considered mobile because this is likely a mistake in data entry or a miscommunication.
- **Establish that gaps in enrollment make a student mobile** – Gaps in enrollment may be caused by many things, including transfer out-of-state, dropping out and attendance/truancy issues. Students with these gaps are similar to students who move because both types of students may have missed key instruction. Therefore, gaps of 15 school days or first enrollments that start after Oct. 1 will make a student mobile because the student could have transferred to/from out-of-state or just not attended school.
- **Determine what to do with multi-enrolled students** – Sometimes students have multiple enrollments. They may attend two schools part-time or they may be placed in a juvenile detention center, treatment center or special needs facility. The mobility rules consider consistency in enrollments.

When users run the report they will see aggregate totals on the first page, along with graphs displaying the student mobility rate and prior school/district enrollment. The next page(s) displays the list of students who are considered mobile for the year selected. The student list displays student name, demographics and prior district and school the student attended. The number of mobile events is displayed for the past five years for the student. This allows users to see if a student is consistently mobile or if the mobility was a one-time change.

The Report Data Interpretation Guides are being developed for both reports and will be released as they are completed.



It's The End Of The Year!

Where has the school year gone? The end of the year means it's time for finishing touches and maintenance in SD-STARS. Here's a summertime checklist for STARS Account Managers and Infinite Campus contacts:

- End employees who are leaving the district
- Add new staff members when they start
- Change permissions for those switching to different positions in the district

For more information, see the SAM Corner article in last April's newsletter or contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

Update Internet Explorer Today!

Microsoft is no longer supporting Internet Explorer 8, 9 and 10 for most operating systems. As a result, the SD-STARS system can no longer support these browsers. The South Dakota Department of Education and the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications encourage districts to update their Internet Explorer browser today in order to avoid vulnerabilities.

WANTED

More STARS Certified Trainers

During the past year, six individuals served in the inaugural STARS Certified Trainers (SCTs) program. These individuals received regular training and updates on SD-STARS in order to better support their work with districts.

Several SCTs also served as instructional coaches, school support team members or in other roles for the Department of Education. Although they typically did not provide SD-STARS-specific training to school districts, they were better equipped to use SD-STARS to supplement the work they were already doing with districts.

Now, the SD-STARS team is recruiting more SCTs. The new SCT group will convene for the first time during an SCT Summer Workshop, to be held July 22 or Aug. 8. There are two main requirements to be an SCT: attend the summer workshop and participate in monthly update calls on SD-STARS. SCTs receive access to resources about SD-STARS and additional support from SD-STARS staff.

If you work with multiple districts and are interested in becoming an SCT, email STARSHelp@state.sd.us for more information.

ATTENTION

Dashboards No Longer Available

The dashboards previously offered in SD-STARS are no longer available. The software used to create the dashboards proved to be too time-consuming and expensive to maintain. As a result, dashboards have been removed.

This makes room for a new type of software called STARS Analytics. Not only can it replace the old dashboard software, but it will allow trained users the ability to create reports for their own district.

More information to come in future newsletters!

2015-16 Report Card Schedule Available

The South Dakota Department of Education is looking ahead to the release of the State Report Card later this year. Below is the tentative schedule for release of the 2015-16 Report Card:

- June 10 – PRF closes; last day for districts to make changes to SY 2015-16 data in Infinite Campus
- Aug. 26-Sept. 2 – Districts review and validate data in SD-STARS. If data errors are discovered, this is the time to fix them. The Department of Education recommends districts have their Accountability Team available during this time to assist with the data review process.

- Sept. 27 – Department provides districts with final data prior to the public release of the Report Card.
- Sept. 27-Oct. 3 – Districts share local data with key stakeholders, including boards of education.
- Oct. 4 – Public release of statewide data in the 2015-16 Report Card.
- Oct. 17 – Deadline for formal appeals to be submitted to the department.
- Oct. 31 – Deadline for the department to make decisions on formal appeals.