

south dakota



STARS

Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

connections

SD-STARS welcomes new support lead



The South Dakota Department of Education is pleased to welcome Jameson Berreth to the SD-STARS team. Berreth will serve as an SLDS Support Lead. He is originally from Eureka, SD, and has experience in communications and management. After earning his Bachelor of Arts from South Dakota State University, Berreth attended Syracuse University in New York to obtain his master's degree in Public Administration.

Berreth served as President of the Students' Association at South Dakota State University, where he honed leadership and speaking skills that will serve him well in his work supporting district users on SD-STARS.

Berreth is excited to join the SD-STARS team and is ready to help districts with all things SD-STARS!

SD-STARS updating for SBAC, local assessments

With the first year of Smarter Balanced testing complete, the South Dakota Department of Education has been working on updating reports in SD-STARS to reflect some changes.

Kim Carlson, an SD-STARS project manager, says, "Users will notice the same reports that were available for Dakota STEP have been modified to accommodate Smarter Balanced."

SD-STARS users will first notice the changes to the report parameters, or the options one must select before viewing a report. For example, in the Achievement Cut Score report, when a user selects 2014-15 from the assessment year parameter, SD-STARS will give the options of Smarter Balanced and Dakota STEP. If Smarter Balanced is selected, the options for English language arts or math appear in the subject parameter. If Dakota STEP is selected, then science is the only option. "We wanted to make this as user-friendly as possible, guiding the user to select the right parameters to get to the data they need," Carlson says.

The same report will also show historical data. Carlson explains, "If a user selects 2012-13 in the Achievement Cut Score report, the parameters automatically adjust to indicate that reading and math scores were available during that year. So the same report can provide both historical and current data." Carlson cautions that even though users may be able to toggle between tests, it is important to remember Smarter Balanced results cannot be compared to Dakota STEP results.

Districts will also notice changes in the report itself. For example, the Assessment Details Results (formerly called the DSTEP Strand Report) displays strand and indicator results for Dakota STEP Science as well as claim levels for Smarter Balanced ELA and math. Users may

notice changes in terminology (ex: from reading to English language arts). Users will also notice there is no longer a raw score with Smarter Balanced - only scale scores will be available.

Carlson says, "The updates to the reports in SD-STARS should be complete by the end of the summer. We are also working on resources, like updating the Report Data Interpretation Guides and video tutorials so users can navigate and understand the reports."

Work around local assessment reports continues as well. Districts who have given the department permission to load their DIBELS or AIMSweb data will soon see reports in SD-STARS. The department worked with districts as well as internally to develop a suite of reports that provide individual and aggregate results. Carlson says, "These reports won't replace the current local assessment systems districts are using. Instead, these reports will help connect the data to other data found in SD-STARS, such as attendance and Smarter Balanced results."

For example, one report displays a list of students and their DIBELS/AIMSweb results with key demographic information, attendance rate and state assessment results. Another report looks at students' performance longitudinally, from one year to the next by the local assessment subtest and testing period. The local assessment reports should be available by the end of the summer for participating districts.





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.

Email story ideas or questions to STARSHelp@state.sd.us.



Message from Dr. Schopp

This is the third year the department has used SD-STARS to provide Report Card data to districts, giving approved users access to data in the aggregate, all the way down to the level of student rosters.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few new things districts can expect in the Report Card this year.

With the first year of Smarter Balanced testing complete, School Performance Index (SPI) scores will once again be calculated, and school classifications will be updated. Proficiency levels on the Smarter Balanced assessment are labeled 1-4, with levels 3 and 4 considered proficient.

Beginning this year, the attendance indicator will be based on the percentage of students who spent at least 94 percent of their enrolled days in a school.

The Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) for math and English language arts are also being reset. South Dakota's goal for student achievement in the next six years is to reduce by half the percentage of students who are not proficient. Each school's AMOs are unique, recognizing that school's baseline student proficiency levels and establishing a unique trajectory for improvement.

The department provides a variety of resources to aid districts in interpreting Report Card results. Find video tutorials within the SD-STARS Training Center, and use the "View Calculation Guide" link in the report card for help with calculating SPI indicators. Districts can also contact department staff at STARSHelp@state.sd.us for further assistance.

We hope you enjoy the new updates to the Report Card. Enjoy the remaining weeks of summer vacation with friends and family, and best wishes for the start of a new school year!

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Helpful hints for STARS Account Managers

Assigning the Accountability Role

One of the responsibilities of STARS Account Managers (SAMs) is to assign the accountability role to appropriate users within a district. Only users with the accountability permission will be able to access the district's private accountability report card in SD-STARS. To change a user's accountability permission, click on User Accounts under Admin in the main navigation bar within SD-STARS. Then, search for the name of the user whose permission you'd like to change, and click Edit. Next, under Assigned Roles make sure the district is selected, then check the box next to Accountability.

School District Users Report

As a SAM, it is essential to keep tabs on your district's SD-STARS users. One way to do this is by using the School District Users report. This is located under Other Reports in the Reports section of SD-STARS. Simply select

your district, the school you're interested in, and the SD-STARS role(s) you'd like to view. Then, you can see all approved users who have been assigned to those particular roles. This is especially helpful in seeing who in your district has been assigned accountability permission.

Training Materials/Videos

The Training Center within SD-STARS has been updated, and new materials continue to be uploaded. Check out the Training Center's STARS Account Manager Resources section to view the SD-STARS Manual, SAM Responsibilities, as well as additional Account Manager Resources. The Training Center is also the place to go when looking for resources on how to read SD-STARS reports, how to navigate the accountability report card, and to view past editions of STARS Connections.



Ask the experts

Where do I go to access the public report card?

The 2015 public report card is tentatively scheduled to be available Sept. 22 on the department's website: <http://doe.sd.gov/>. On the homepage, there is a link titled "State Report Card" located towards the bottom of the page, which will take website users directly to the public Report Card.

It is important to note that only the public report cards should be shared with outside parties (i.e. the school board). The internal report cards in SD-STARS contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and unsuppressed data making them inappropriate to share with the public.

What is a Data STAR?

Districts identify at least two individuals who attend specialized trainings on SD-STARS. The goal is for them to take what they learned back to their district (train-the-trainer model). These district Data STARS will continue to receive training,

communication and support from the department.

Now that ESAs are not working on SD-STARS, where do I go for answers to my questions?

Since the SLDS grant officially ended June 30, ESAs are no longer working on SD-STARS and are no longer able to offer free STARS trainings. However, the department continues to support SD-STARS users. Any questions or issues can be sent to STARSHelp@state.sd.us. You can also contact any department staff listed in the Contact Us section of this newsletter. Voluntary listservs for STARS Account Managers and Data STARS are also available at <http://www.k12.sd.us/MailingList/>.

Will there still be training available for SD-STARS?

Yes. The department will offer regional trainings for STARS Account Managers during the school year. The department will also offer trainings to district Data STARS, with the goal of giving the

Data STARS the tools they need to train users within their own districts. More information on these regional department trainings will be available later this month.

On-site SD-STARS trainings will still be available for a fee from STARS Certified Trainers. STARS Certified Trainers have been trained by the department on the SD-STARS system. In addition, they are kept up-to-date on system developments and new reports. A current list of trainers is available on the last page of this newsletter. If your district would like to set up a training in your district, you can contact them directly.

Can we request a STARS training as part of the state-supported professional development days?

Yes. Districts can contact ESAs to request an SD-STARS training as a part of state-supported professional development days. The department strongly recommends that the trainer be a STARS Certified Trainer. Again, these trainers are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Important Report Card details

The Department of Education is busy preparing the two versions of the report card: the interactive private report card utilized by districts and housed within SD-STARS and the public Report Card accessible through the department's website.

The key difference is that the public Report Card contains suppressed data of cell sizes less than 10, while the private report card does not. This is because the primary purpose of the private report card is to help school officials understand results for students in their school, while the primary purpose of the public Report Card is to inform the public on how schools are doing.

Suppression is necessary for public dissemination as it protects the confidentiality of students, especially for those small subgroups. It is important that districts understand these differences and use the correct version of the report card appropriately.

The department is on track to release the public Report Card Sept. 22. Districts should pay special attention to Aug. 10-14, which is when they will be able to validate data in SD-STARS.

- Aug. 10-14 – Districts review and validate data in SD-STARS
- Sept. 18 – Department provides districts with final data prior to the public release of the Report Card
- Sept. 18-21 – Districts share local data with key stakeholders
- Sept. 22 (tentative) – Public release of statewide data in the 2014-15 Report Card
- Oct. 5 – Deadline for formal appeals to be submitted to the department
- Oct. 20 – Deadline for the department to make decisions on formal appeals



SD-EDGG releases two data security resources

South Dakota’s Educational Data Governance Group (SD-EDGG) has recently released two policies concerning data access and security. The first document, the Data Sharing Review, outlines the department’s current procedures for ensuring student data privacy at all levels. The second document, the Data Access Policy, establishes procedures and protocols for accessing, maintaining, disclosing and disposing of confidential data records. These documents can also serve as templates for data policies that districts can incorporate themselves.

Both documents can be found at <http://doe.sd.gov/ofm/edgg.aspx>.

Regional trainings available for SAMS and Data STARS

Regional trainings will soon be available for STARS Account Managers and Data STARS. Details are still being finalized, but the department will offer one-day trainings this fall throughout the state. Separate workshops will be available for SAMs and Data STARS. The trainings will be open to any SAM or Data STAR, whether they are new in their position or are just looking to brush up on their SD-STARS skills. SD-STARS’ newest team member, Jameson Berreth, will be coordinating and leading these trainings.

Data: The Language of Communication

by: Avery Askew, intern

Communication is important in any situation or environment, whether that is a school, an office or a website. *How* we communicate information is as important as *what* we communicate. Working with the South Dakota Department of Education’s data management team and SD-STARS has taught me how data can communicate to department and school personnel on multiple levels in an efficient manner. Being able to integrate data into our decision-making processes proves beneficial. We have the resources; let’s use them! Data can show us concrete evidence of how students are performing on state assessments over the course of many school years. Utilizing data in education is beneficial for highlighting areas in need of improvement or areas of student success. In this way, data collected by the department can be communicated to districts through SD-STARS reports.

As a double major in communication studies and English at the University of South Dakota, I utilize the skills I obtained in college at the department. The department applied for a possible grant in order to expand and improve upon SD-STARS. Being a part of the grant application process was an enlightening and rewarding experience. I also learned the importance of communication

between department staff and school district personnel.

The other data management intern, Megan Vockrodt, and I have been working extensively on updating and creating Report Data Interpretation Guides (DIGs) in order to help SD-STARS users effectively read reports. A major motivator for the SD-STARS team is to communicate to districts how implementing SD-STARS can aid in a deeper understanding of student achievement. Some teachers and school personnel are unaware of all the useful features SD-STARS reports have to offer. This is another area in which communication plays a significant role. The SD-STARS team uses feedback from districts to create and improve reports. Data are only useful if shared, and the department aims to provide quality data for educators and school personnel to implement into their decision-making processes.

I have experience working in elementary schools, and I have gained experience working for the Department of Education. Both school and department personnel are working toward the same goal: preparing South Dakota students for college, careers and life. SD-STARS can aid in the achievement of this goal through analyzing longitudinal student data.

Certified STARS trainers available to districts

The SLDS grant for SD-STARS ended June 30. This means that ESAs are no longer working on SD-STARS. However, STARS Certified Training Specialists 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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