

# ANSWERS Overview - Legislative Aides

February 24, 2014

## **ANSWERS** **ALASKA'S P-20W SLDS**

Mission: Deliver outcomes information to Alaska stakeholders to assess, evaluate, and improve the state's education and career development spectrum.



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*ANSWERS is a collaboration of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, the University of Alaska, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.*

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# Purpose

- ★ Provide critical information to Alaska's policymakers, educators, and general public about Alaska's education and workforce spectrum, such as:
  - ★ Student transitions
  - ★ Performance in postsecondary education and workforce systems
  - ★ Return on investment



# Objectives

- ★ Develop a method of sharing and using cross-sector data to inform decisions by policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders;
- ★ Create secure, state longitudinal data system that links relevant data about K-12 students, teachers, college and career students, and industry to better understand and inform policy makers on the education to workforce cycle;
- ★ Create reports, dashboards, and other information products that provide the right information to the right people in the right formats to better inform decision and policy-making; within specific parameters:
  - ★ Relies on input from existing data systems
  - ★ Used to address cross-sector issues that are not answered by individual partners
  - ★ Data is de-identified and output conforms to best practices and laws



# Role of Policy Questions

- ★ Policy questions (see handout) were originally developed by partners as part of a 2009 SLDS grant application, with help from Data Quality Campaign (DQC) and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
- ★ Revised in 2012 based on ANSWERS stakeholder input and feedback
- ★ Designed to identify high-level information not currently available without linked data
- ★ Identify stakeholder interests and project scope
- ★ Determine which data elements to collect
- ★ Policy questions available online at [acpe.alaska.gov/ANSWERS](http://acpe.alaska.gov/ANSWERS)



# Role of Policy Questions - continued

- ★ Policy questions will guide development of specific information or outcomes questions and reports, such as
  - ★ High school or school district feedback reports
  - ★ Program-specific reports such as the annual APS outcomes report
  - ★ UA enrollment projections by K-12 indicators
  - ★ Salary by highest degree or vocational certifications obtained
  - ★ Workforce training needs based on education indicators



# Project Overview

- ★ **ANSWERS** - Alaska Navigator: Statewide Workforce and Education-Related Statistics
- ★ **P-20W SLDS** - early learning-through-workforce statewide longitudinal data system
- ★ Federal grant - \$4 million over 3 years
  - ★ July 2012 to June 2015
  - ★ Project objective to link K-12, postsecondary and workforce data
- ★ Collaboration of Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), University of Alaska (UA), Department of Education & Early Development (EED), and Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DOL&WD)



# Governance

- ★ Initially established in 2011 Administrative Order 261
- ★ Multiple layers of governance focusing on different areas of priority.
  - Executive Governance Board: charged with the responsibility for ANSWERS composed of ACPE Executive Director, EED and DOLWD Commissioners, UA President
  - Data Stewards Governance Team: proposes policies and implements those approved by executive board
  - Implementation Team and committees: Four partner agencies' project managers, research and IT staff, and program directors



# Parameters

- ★ Data is de-identified and aggregated
- ★ Does not replace or usurp existing data systems
- ★ Uses subsets of data from various partners' data systems as necessary to answer critical questions and use cases
- ★ Based on multi-agency governance structure requiring input, review and agreement by all four partner organizations
- ★ Used to address cross-sector issues that cannot efficiently be answered by individual partners
- ★ Output conforms to best practices and laws protecting individual privacy



# Operating Principles

- ★ Designed as a conceptual framework within which specific policies, memoranda of agreement and supporting documents are being developed
- ★ Agreed-upon principles through consensus among Executive Governance Board members
- ★ Living, iterative document refining details as project progresses, to transition into governance agreements for ANSWERS program management office, post-grant



# Operating Principles - continued

1. ANSWERS facilitates cross-sector, data linking to participating data consumers in a consistent, transparent way
2. ANSWERS data maintenance protocols facilitate data sharing and use while ensuring the privacy of individual unit records
3. Protecting the privacy of individuals is a priority
4. Partner agency data contributors are the owners of their data and are experts at understanding and explaining their data
5. Common understanding and use of data increases its value
6. Ongoing ANSWERS system design and maintenance will focus on system agility, flexibility and scalability to be able to efficiently respond to stakeholders' evolving needs



# ANSWERS Privacy & Security

- ★ ANSWERS is designed to separate identifying information from incoming data so it cannot be exposed, derived by users, or identify individuals.
- ★ Design considerations include, among others:
  - ★ Data de-identification
  - ★ Data encryption
  - ★ Data compartmentalization
  - ★ System access logging and auditing
  - ★ Role-based access



# ANSWERS Reporting

- ★ Multiple control levels
  - ★ Public site with predefined aggregate reports
    - ★ Primary and secondary suppression (such as cell size)
  - ★ Responses to queries
    - ★ Aggregated and cell size-suppressed information in response to specific legislative or other queries requiring linked data
  - ★ Feedback report recipients
    - ★ Aggregated, but not cell size-suppressed, confidential information for relevant population (such as school district)
  - ★ Approved research access
    - ★ Limited to de-identified until level data required for approved research needs
    - ★ In accordance with data governance policies, still in development



# Project Plan and Timeline

## ★ Project Deliverables and Timeline

- ★ Planning and Preparation (complete) – July 2012 to June 2013
  - ★ Infrastructure (in progress) – July 2013 to September 2014
  - ★ Development (in progress) – February 2014 to December 2014
  - ★ Data Reporting – July 2014 to April 2015
  - ★ Training and Professional Development – January 2015 to June 2015
  - ★ Sustainability – July 2014 to June 2015
- ★ Dates are revised on a monthly basis based on project activities

# Project Progress

## Completion of Outcome 1 – Project Planning and Preparation

- ★ Established and implemented governance structure
- ★ Analysis of existing data systems
- ★ Created stakeholder engagement and communication plan
- ★ Proof-of-concept reports issued and stakeholder input gathered
- ★ Developed business and technical requirements
- ★ Partner agency agreements on system design, platform, and processes

# Current Project Activities

- ★ Commencement of infrastructure outcome
  - ★ Procurement related to infrastructure development
  - ★ Software design and development
  - ★ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) development
  - ★ Data governance program refinement
- ★ Preparation for development and reporting outcomes
- ★ Sustainability plan development



# ANSWERS Sustainability Plan

- ★ ANSWERS Program Management Office (PMO) – system administration and maintenance post-grant project
  - ★ Reports to Executive Governance Board
  - ★ Coordinates responses with partners relative to information requests
  - ★ Develops and updates public reports, identifies evolving stakeholder needs, and proposes new information products
  - ★ Ensures ongoing system maintenance and security
- ★ Initial funding by ASLC as part of ACPE’s operating budget
  - ★ Initial demand for information will impact sustainability planning
  - ★ Funding structure to be evaluated after initial operational period



# ANSWERS Cost Projections

- ★ Estimates for ongoing ANSWERS costs based on current project assumptions and information, and will be adapted as needed
- ★ Annual costs of \$1.1M post grant project - ASLC funding
  - ★ PMO staffing (management, research, and technical roles)
  - ★ Partner organization costs (report development, data submission and validation, etc.)
  - ★ Other administrative costs (facilities, supplies, travel, etc.)



# Questions and Comments

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## ★ ANSWERS Website - [acpe.alaska.gov/ANSWERS](http://acpe.alaska.gov/ANSWERS)

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