

# ANSWERS NETWORK PRESENTATION

March 17, 2015

## **ANSWERS: BETTER INFORMATION FOR BETTER DECISIONS**



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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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# BETTER DECISIONS REQUIRE BETTER INFORMATION

- ★ How do we ensure that Alaskan students are prepared to succeed in college/postsecondary training and the workplace?
- ★ How do we identify and evaluate programs that are successful?
- ★ How can Alaska improve our educational and training programs to provide long-term economic benefits for our students and create a highly skilled Alaskan workforce that will attract business and industry growth?
- ★ In an environment of limited resources, what is the best use of funds to best benefit Alaska's students?



# BETTER DECISIONS REQUIRE BETTER INFORMATION

Two programs working to provide Alaska with expanded information for data-informed decision-making:

- ★ ANSWERS – **A**laska **N**avigator: **S**tatewide **W**orkforce and **E**ducation-**R**elated **S**tatistics
- ★ ASPRA – **A**laska **S**tate **P**olicy **R**esearch **A**lliance

# WHAT IS ANSWERS

- ★ In July of 2012, the State of Alaska was awarded a three-year \$4 million federal Institute of Education Sciences grant to build a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS)
- ★ ANSWERS is a P-20W SLDS: early learning through the workforce statewide longitudinal data system
- ★ ANSWERS links *existing* data from ACPE, Department of Education, University of Alaska, Department of Labor and Workforce Development





# PROJECT PLAN AND TIMELINE

1. Planning and Preparation – Complete as of June 2013
2. Infrastructure – July 2013 to September 2014
3. Development – March 2014 to March 2015
4. Data Reporting – May 2014 to April 2015
5. Training and Professional Development – May 2015 to June 2015
6. Sustainability – July 2014 to June 2015

# ANSWERS PURPOSE

To provide timely, relevant, understandable critical information to Alaska's policymakers, educators, and public about Alaska's education and workforce spectrum, including:

- ★ Student transitions, such as high school to postsecondary education, postsecondary education to the workforce, etc.
- ★ Performance in education and workforce systems, and evaluation of education program outcomes
- ★ Return on investment, enhancing ability to measure program costs as related to outcomes

# ANSWERS PARAMETERS

- ★ Does not replace or usurp existing data systems
- ★ Uses subsets of existing data from various partners' data systems
- ★ Addresses cross-sector issues not answered by individual organizations
- ★ Rigorously protects student privacy
- ★ Relies on ANSWERS policy questions to vet information requests
- ★ Includes cross-sector governance structure, guided by ANSWERS operating principles

# ANSWERS PRIVACY & SECURITY

- ★ Separates identifying information from incoming data so it cannot be exposed, derived by users, or identify individuals
  - ★ Data de-identification
  - ★ Data encryption
  - ★ Data compartmentalization
  - ★ System access logging and auditing
  - ★ Role-based access

*Information outputs are aggregated and conform to best practices and federal and state privacy laws.*

# POTENTIAL ANSWERS INFORMATION PRODUCTS

- ★ High school or school district feedback reports
- ★ Program-specific reports such as annual APS outcomes report
- ★ UA enrollment projections by K-12 indicators
- ★ Workforce training needs based on education indicators
- ★ Long-term outcomes of education programs and interventions (post implementation)

# ANSWERS REPORTING CONTROLS

## Multiple control levels

- ★ Public site with predefined aggregate reports and dashboards
- ★ Responses to queries
- ★ Feedback report recipients
- ★ Approved research access

# ANSWERS REPORTING SITE

- ★ ANSWERS information products will be posted on the ANSWERS Web site:
  - ★ Dashboards, such as:
    - ★ Workforce and salary reports by industry and occupation
    - ★ Graduation rates by cross-sector indicators
  - ★ Predefined aggregated and interactive reports, such as:
    - ★ School district feedback reports
    - ★ Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and similar program outcomes
- ★ ANSWERS will also have a process for the request and approval for information requests and for access to data for approved research projects



## PARTNERING WITH ALASKA'S REGIONAL EDUCATION LAB (RELNW)

- ★ Alaska's REL, Education Northwest, is supplementing resources and supporting the ANSWERS Project
  - ★ Engaging shared stakeholders
  - ★ Partnering to foster generation and use of accurate, timely data
  - ★ Aligning efforts to optimize resource use and information outputs

# RELNW SUPPORT OF ANSWERS ACTIVITIES

- ★ Coordinates the activities of the Alaska Statewide Policy Research Alliance (ASPRA)
  - ★ Conduit for input and feedback from key Alaska education stakeholders
- ★ Shares experience and knowledge in developing data products and data governance processes
- ★ Undertakes specific ANSWERS project deliverables such as stakeholder survey design and deployment, suppression analyses, and data product design
- ★ Facilitates working sessions and events for ANSWERS

# COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAMS

- ★ Shared stakeholders – but different access avenues
- ★ Shared research/analysis interests – but different expertise and different accesses to data
- ★ Similar mission-driven goals to transform data into information

# ANSWERS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

- ★ ANSWERS Program Management Office (PMO)
- ★ Reports to Executive Governance Board
  - ★ Coordinates information publications with partners
  - ★ Develops and updates public reports, identifies evolving stakeholder needs, and proposes new information products
- ★ 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

# WHY IS ANSWERS NEEDED?

- ★ More efficient cross-sector data collection and more effective data use
- ★ More secure data
- ★ Reduced costs of maintaining, protecting, and using data
  - ★ More timely data AND more timely access to data
  - ★ Replicability of studies and ability to answer follow-up questions
  - ★ Maintenance of common dictionaries and metadata
  - ★ Elimination of spider web MOUs
  - ★ Prevention of proliferation of personally identifiable information (PII)
  - ★ Rigorous, uniform security protocols with automated controls

# QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

## ★ ANSWERS Project Leaders:

★ Kerry Thomas (465-6759) – [kerry.thomas@alaska.gov](mailto:kerry.thomas@alaska.gov)

★ Stephanie Butler (465-6743) – [stephanie.butler@alaska.gov](mailto:stephanie.butler@alaska.gov)

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

★ Register to receive ANSWERS updates via email

★ View FAQs, publications, and other information



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