

January 2013 Project Update & Policy Question Validation Discussion

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 pipeline.

P-20W SLDS Project Overview

- Federal grant – \$4 Million over 3 years
 - July 2012 to June 2015
- Develop Alaska's P-20W State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)
 - ANSWERS to provide relevant and timely information to stakeholders
- Multi-agency effort to link existing K-12, postsecondary, and workforce outcomes data

Partner Organizations

- **Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE)**
 - Project management and agency coordination
- **Department of Education and Early Development (EED)**
 - Received 3-year grant from U.S. Department of Education, serving as fiscal agent
- **Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL&WD)**
- **University of Alaska (UA)**
- *Executive Governance Team:* Executive Director of ACPE, Commissioners of EED and DOL&WD, President of UA
- *Implementation Team:* Agency project managers, research and IT lead staff, and program directors from 4 partner organizations

Purpose

- Provide critical information to Alaska's policymakers, educators, and general public about Alaska's education and workforce pipelines
 - student transitions
 - performance in postsecondary education and workforce systems
 - return on investment

Objectives

- Develop a method of sharing and using cross-sector information to inform decision making by policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders;
- Create a secure, state longitudinal data system that allows relevant data about K-12 students, teachers, college and career students, and industry to be linked together 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;
- Provide support to help the data users better utilize the system to improve education and workforce outcomes in Alaska; and,
- Increase transparency around educational outcomes, generally.

Parameters

- 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 4 partner organizations
- Used to address cross-sector issues that cannot already be answered by individual partners
- Data de-identified and aggregated
- Output conforms to best practices and laws protecting individual privacy

Project Deliverables and Timeline

1. Planning and Preparation – July 2012 to April 2013
2. Hardware Infrastructure – February to June 2013
3. Development – July 2013 to June 2014
4. Data Reporting – July 2014 to April 2015
5. Training and Professional Development – January to June 2015
6. Sustainability – June 2014 to June 2015

Recent events

- December 2012 implementation team technical meeting in Juneau
 - Attended by all partner agencies
 - Facilitated by Jeff Sellers, Alaska's NCES State Support Team representative
- Gather input from stakeholders from all sectors on P-20W policy questions and information needs and priorities
- Kick-off of contract with GeoNorth to document information about relevant data sources and system requirements

Upcoming activities

- Implement project team subgroups on information technology, governance, and data management
- Develop business and technical requirements and data models for P-20W SLDS
- Publication of Alaska Performance Scholarship Annual Report as proof of concept for P-20W SLDS
- Complete planning and preparation project deliverable

Policy Questions Validation

- Policy questions originally developed by partners as part of application, with help from DQC and WICHE
- Designed to identify high-level information not currently available without linked data, to inform key Alaska education pipeline policy issues
- Research questions are designed to be examples of specific questions for ANSWERS

Validation Process

- Partners contracted with Nancy Smith to bring national-level policy expertise to the project and solicit input from key stakeholders statewide
- ANSWERS partners identified key stakeholders, and stakeholders themselves identified additional interested parties
- Dr. Smith and project staff conducted presentations and meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat Su and Juneau; as well as statewide audio and video conferences

Stakeholder Representation

- Governor's office
- Legislators and staff
- Business and labor organizations
- School boards and school districts
- Native organizations
- Alaska research organizations
- Higher education, both collegiate and CTE
- Teachers and counselors

Stakeholder Feedback

- Stakeholders engaged and enthusiastic
- Strong appetite for existing data not currently available in linked form
- Many requests for “Phase Two” projects
- Need for more information about ANSWERS
- Overall, valuable feedback on stakeholder interests and needs, and strong confirmation that policy questions appropriate & valuable

Upcoming Activities

- Expect Dr. Smith's detailed report and findings at the end of this month
- ANSWERS executive governance team will review and adopt final report
- Plans for wide public dissemination and feedback opportunities



November & December 2012

Stakeholder Engagement

P-20W SLDS

Policy & Research Questions

Overall Takeaways

- Need to reframe questions from “How many” to more of a “What are the trends” and look at cohorts over time.
- Instead of global statewide numbers, run analyses by key subgroups and local or regional entities so that information can lead to action.
- Focus on possible actions/outcomes as a result of seeing reports based on longitudinal data. That is, if we know xyz, then we can change ABC and achieve this new result.
- Make sure all questions use cross-sector data. The outcome may be focused on one sector, but the analyses should include cross-sector data.
- Imagine how the final report/charts/graphs will look and who will receive & use them to guide question phrasing, operational definitions, data elements used, and analyses.

Policy Question 1

How many and which (Alaska) students are progressing through an education program/system to achieve college, workforce, and life readiness?

Research Questions

- How many students graduated from high school and pursued postsecondary education within two years of graduating?
- How many students pursuing postsecondary studies are attending full time?
- Of those pursuing postsecondary education, how many dropped out after one year? After two years? Before completing their program?
- Were students who pursued a career in their field of study less likely to experience periods of involuntary unemployment compared to students taking an unrelated job?

Policy Question 2

What are the migration rates and outcomes for Alaskans attending postsecondary programs outside of Alaska and subsequently returning to Alaska?

Example Research Questions:

- How many Alaska high school graduates and GED completers pursue postsecondary studies outside of Alaska?
- Are students pursuing their education in Alaska more or less likely to complete their degree or certificate?
- Of those pursuing studies outside of the state, how many eventually return?
- Does the existence of Alaska's financial aid programs increase the number of students who attend school in Alaska? Who complete their program of study?

Policy Question 3

Of those Alaskans who participated in and exited Alaska secondary or postsecondary institutions without credentials, how many are within three or fewer semesters to completion and what are their employment status and income?

Example Research Questions:

- How did the wages of high school graduates who went on to complete a degree or certificate program compare to those who did not pursue postsecondary education? To those who did not complete?
- For both drop outs and graduates in secondary and postsecondary, in which occupations were these students most likely to be employed? In which industries?
- How many Alaska secondary students failed to graduate, but obtained a GED in Alaska within two years of their expected graduation year?

Policy Question 4

Of those Alaskans who receive education services from Alaska secondary and postsecondary institutions, how many remain in the state and contribute to the economy?

Example Research Questions:

- Do teachers who received Alaska subsidized loans, particularly those focused towards the profession, exhibit different retention and turnover patterns than those teachers who did not receive these loans?
- Do students returning after pursuing out-of state postsecondary education make higher wages than those pursuing postsecondary education in Alaska? How many find employment in Alaska, and how does this compare to students pursuing postsecondary studies in state?
- Were degree/certificate completers less likely to experience periods of involuntary unemployment compared to students not pursuing postsecondary education?

Policy Question 5

What is the impact of financial aid on college access and success?

Example Research Questions:

- Does the existence of Alaska's financial aid programs increase the number of students who take standardized tests (SAT/ACT/WorkKeys) to pursue a postsecondary education? Who fill out a FAFSA?
- Are postsecondary students receiving financial assistance more likely to attend school full time?
- Are postsecondary students receiving financial assistance less likely to work while attending school?

Policy Question 6

How effective are specific interventions and strategies to increase the rate at which students/citizens, particularly those from low-income families, progress through an education program/system to achieve college, workforce, and life readiness?

Example Research Questions:

- How many remedial credit hours were taken by first-year postsecondary students? How many and what percentage of students required remedial classes?
- Are there socioeconomic or demographic differences among secondary students who qualify for and receive the Alaska Performance Scholarship? AlaskAdvantage Education Grant?
- When student outcomes differed, were there differences in the attributes of those students?

Policy Question 7

How do Alaska's postsecondary institutions' educational program productivity and capacity align with Alaska's current and anticipated workforce needs?

Example Research Questions:

- Of those pursuing postsecondary education, how many obtained their degree or certificate?
- How many Alaska secondary students were eventually employed in an occupation requiring licensure or certification?
- Of the teachers teaching in Alaska, how many attended K-12 in the state? Resided in AK before beginning teaching? Do these teachers have higher retention/less turnover than those who didn't?



Policy Question 8

What is the private/public return on private/public investment in education?

Example Research Questions:

- What percentage of high-school graduates pursued postsecondary education? At what level? (Certificate, AA, BA, etc.)
- How many Alaskans who earned a GED went on to pursue postsecondary education?
- Of those pursuing postsecondary education, how many filled an occupation that was aligned with their postsecondary program of study? Was that program of study available in Alaska? Was that program of study or occupation targeted by a financial aid program?

Policy Question 9

How does Alaska attract and retain teachers?

Example Research Questions:

- What are the turnover and exit rates for teachers? Do certain districts have higher rates than others?
- When teachers stop teaching in Alaska, how many move out of state? Remain employed in Alaska in a different occupation? Remain employed as teachers in a non-public school?
- Do teachers trained in other states have higher turnover and/or exit rates than those trained in Alaska?

Feedback Summary

- Stakeholders want to know which populations do X, rather than how many; need flexibility to ask the same question of different populations at different times in the education/career pipeline
- Primary stakeholder interest is knowing what works and for whom:
 - Goal will then be to do more of what works
 - Can provide program funders with outcomes information, not just costs (ROI)
- Stakeholder interests underscored need to reach further back into student history and to follow students further into the future, given long reach of educational interventions and non-linear impact trajectory

Feedback Summary

- Policy question discussions generated extensive requests for ad hoc information and phase 2 projects
 - Data directly from districts and intervention providers
 - Ability to re-identify specific individuals?
- Need common data standards (CEDDS) –early planning work essential to get good answers to these questions
- Policy validation process significantly informs system design



Potential Use Cases (sample list)

- High school feedback reports
- Trend analyses on dual enrollment by geographic location
- UA enrollment and/or performance projections by K-12 indicators
- Workforce participation by current enrollment status and age
- Salary by highest degree obtained
- Workforce training needs based on education indicators

Follow-up Questions

- What information can ANSWERS provide to help you do your job better?
- What report frequency is needed? Annual reports? Quarterly? Monthly?
- What about ad hoc requests for reports? How often might they occur?

Comments and Questions?

- ANSWERS Project Leaders:

Kerry Thomas

kerry.thomas@alaska.gov

465-6749

Stephanie Butler

stephanie.butler@alaska.gov

465-6743