

south dakota

STARS

Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

connections

FERPA webinars popular

Links to slides and recordings of the most recent webinars hosted by the South Dakota Department of Education and experts from the U.S. Department of Education are available on the SD-STARS site at doe.sd.gov/ofm/lds.aspx.

The February webinar focused on data sharing with third parties. Presenters discussed sharing data with military recruiters, child welfare agencies, noncustodial parents and researchers. Participants asked questions about how best to protect student privacy when it comes to notices about community health concerns, organizing class reunions and alumni transcript requests.

The March webinar covered staff policies related to student privacy. The Privacy Technical Assistance Center previewed resources that will be available to districts in coming months. These resources can help districts set policies around student data privacy, including who has the authority to access student data.

To register for the May webinar on parent policies, go to the SDDOE Calendar of Events and registration site at southdakota.gosignmeup.com and search for FERPA.

SDDOE initiates data governance advisory group

Regular meetings of the South Dakota Education Data Governance Group are set to start this month. The group, which is made up of school district representatives and employees of the South Dakota Department of Education, will address data issues and requests. With a mission and action plan in place, the SD-EDGG hopes to streamline data collection processes, improve overall data quality, and protect student data.

Group member Carla Leingang talks about fall and winter working sessions: "We really set the groundwork for our future meetings. We took a hard look at the security of the data, consistency of data entry and the privacy of students as we created the group's goals."

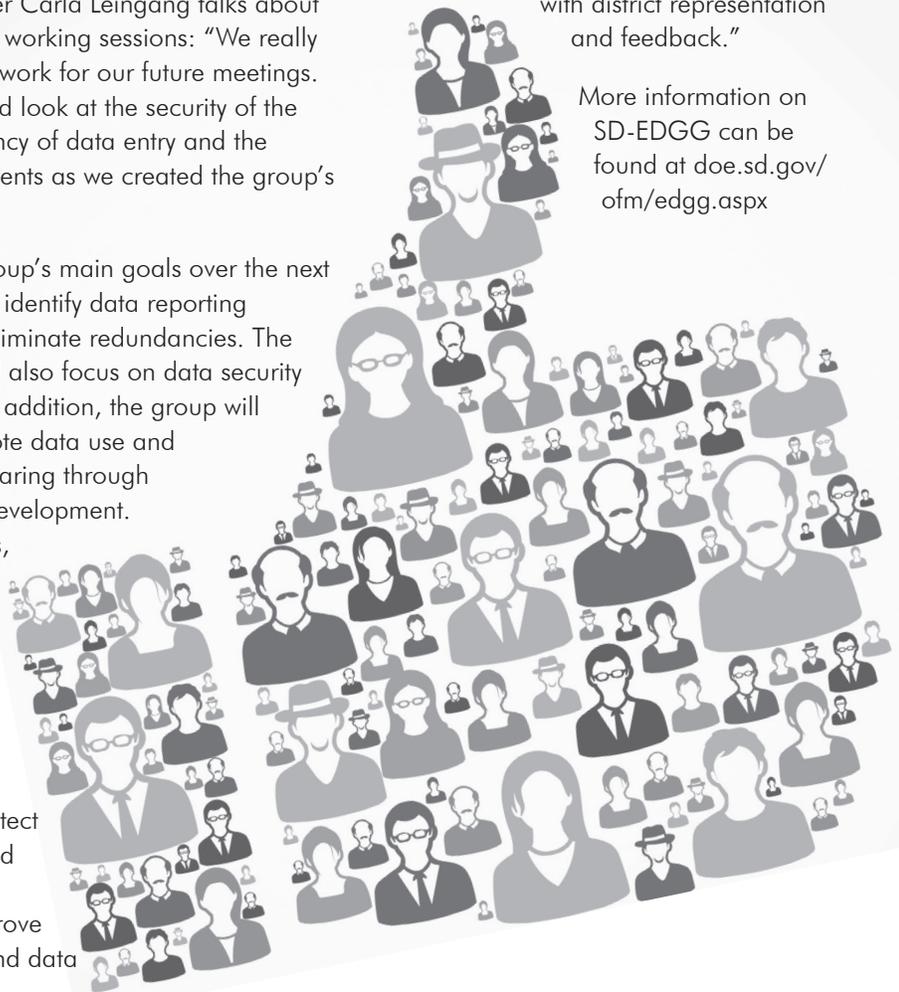
One of the group's main goals over the next two years is to identify data reporting sources and eliminate redundancies. The SD-EDGG will also focus on data security and quality. In addition, the group will work to promote data use and information sharing through professional development.

Leingang adds, "The goals are really holistic in nature. What we're driving for is to streamline our processes, protect our student and staff data and ultimately improve data quality and data

use. It's a tall order, but we are excited about the upcoming meetings and the work going forward."

The effort will also improve communication between SDDOE and districts related to data practices. Mary Stadick Smith, chairperson of SD-EDGG, agrees: "The department sees the value in data governance, but we couldn't do it alone. It needs to be a collaborative process with district representation and feedback."

More information on SD-EDGG can be found at doe.sd.gov/ofm/edgg.aspx



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About Us:

South Dakota STARS Connections is a bi-monthly publication for South Dakota administrators and teachers and is 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 marcus.bevier@state.sd.us or sara.kock@state.sd.us.



Reports: You need them and SD-STARS has them

by Dawn Wirth, ESA 2

Last spring, SD-STARS rolled out to all schools as a beneficial longitudinal data system. At that time, I was an elementary principal. What I didn't know then, but I know now, is that SD-STARS has reports that would have eased some of those tasks. In my new role as an ESA, I am digging into SD-STARS and seeing the benefits and ease of its use. This is EXCITING for administrators and teachers.

The first reports I looked at were the enrollment reports. Under Enrollment Demographics, you can sort students by disability, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient (LEP), gender, grade level, migrant and race. For example, if you need to know how many students are in each grade, this report will give you current enrollment by grade and total for district with a graph.

I have spent way too much time in the past looking for student class sizes. In SD-STARS, it took me three minutes to create a report and graph that can be printed or projected.

When planning for next year or looking at trends, these reports are tremendous. As administrators and teachers, you spend many hours creating reports for continued decision making in your districts.

SD-STARS is an available tool that will calculate and create a variety of reports from enrollment demographics to assessment results to attendance. Calculations are done by the system and reports can easily be projected to large or small audiences for district discussion.

SD-STARS houses multiple years of data allowing educators to identify trends in achievement, attendance and enrollment. I wish I would have understood the system sooner.

It is a great tool available to all public school districts in South Dakota. This spring, when you are making decisions for your district, there will surely be a reason to log into SD-STARS.

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Summer 2014 data courses announced

This summer, the Department of Education is expanding both administrator and teacher courses on how to use and understand data. The courses involve some pre-course work and a face-to-face meeting. Below are the dates for in-person instruction.

ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING – Using Data to Guide School Improvement

June 16 – Rapid City
June 17 – Mitchell
June 20 – Brookings

TEACHER TRAINING – Using Data to Inform Instruction

August 4 – Rapid City
August 5 – Pierre
August 6 – Sioux Falls

Teachers and administrators are encouraged to register at southdakota.gosignmeup.com. Participation is free, and mileage/lunch will

be reimbursed by SDDOE. One graduate credit is available through USD at a reduced cost of \$40. Those who elect to do this will also complete an independent project.

Evaluations from last summer's courses were overwhelmingly positive. One administrator said, "The knowledge obtained in this class is a great starting point in helping me guide staff in [using data]."

Teachers reported that they now see data as an asset. One teacher said, "I am feeling confident that I will be able to do this in my school. The information is very practical."



Ask the Experts

How will districts access the 2013-14 accountability reports?

By June 1, District STARS Account Managers should make sure that the District Accountability Team members have the correct permissions in order to access the accountability reports. SAMs can find directions for how to assign accountability access in the SD-STARS Training Center.

What is data governance?

Data governance provides a structure through which decisions about data can be addressed. In our state, the South Dakota Educational Data Governance Group is tasked with data governance. The group advises on policies for data collection, quality, use and security as it relates to data systems, including SD-STARS. The results are efficiencies in district reporting, more accurate data, a process for approving or denying data requests and promotion of data security best practices.

Who is in the South Dakota education governance group?

The SD-EDGG is made up of stakeholders from around the state, including employees of the South Dakota Department of Education and school district representatives.

Have other states done this?

Yes, other states have implemented similar groups through initiatives termed "data governance." In fact, most states have either implemented or are implementing a data governance model to help offer consistency and improve data quality by means of rules and policy.

Has South Dakota done this before?

Yes. The Department of Education previously had a state-level data governance board. From this effort, it became clear that district representation was needed.

What kind of authority does the advisory group have?

SD-EDGG focuses on promoting best practices and making recommendations to the Secretary of Education in terms of data management, entry, use and security. In addition, the group will make decisions on report and enhancement requests, future development of SD-STARS and general data requests received by the department.

Does data governance relate to SD-STARS? If so, how?

Although separate in terms of mission, the SD-EDGG and its work directly relate to SD-STARS in terms of data quality and use. The data in SD-STARS is only as good as the source. So if there are inconsistencies in data entry or use, these are reflected directly in SD-STARS. SD-EDGG will also approve report requests and provide feedback on the direction of SD-STARS.

Will SD-EDGG members have access to confidential student information?

No. Members of SD-EDGG are focused on data management and processes. Discussion of student data does not involve personally identifiable student information. Group members do not have access to student information because of their role in the SD-EDGG. A group member only has access to student information as it pertains to his or her place of employment. Further, a group member is not permitted to share with the group any personally identifiable student information.

Data Governance Advisory Group Members

The South Dakota Education Data Governance Group consists of representatives from 12 school districts and each division within the South Dakota Department of Education. District representatives were recommended by ESAs. SD-EDGG members will help inform policies and decisions regarding data entry, use, analysis and security. Members will also aid in the further development of SD-STARS.

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Karen Byrd	Kadoka School District	Shawn Behrends	State Library
JoNell DeHaan	Andes Central School District	Daria Bossman	State Library
Tim Graf	Milbank School District	Tami Darnall	Finance and Management
Marge Hauser	Brandon Valley School District	Steve Fiechtner	Delivery Unit
Kevin Keenaghan	Deubrook School District	Ann Larsen	Educational Services & Support
Cora Petersen	Eagle Butte School District	Carla Leingang	Assessment and Accountability
Gay Pickner	Huron School District	Jan Martin	Assessment and Accountability
Ryan Speed	Shannon County School District	Judy Merriman	Finance and Management
Daniel Swartos	McCook School District	Becky Nelson	Learning and Instruction
Karen Wagner	Belle Fourche School District	Tiffany Sanderson	Career & Technical Education
Troy Wiebe	Pierre School District	Mary Stadick Smith	Office of the Secretary
Karen Wagner	Belle Fourche School District	Linda Turner	Educational Services & Support



US Dept of Ed releases guidance on student privacy, use of educational technology

The U.S. Department of Education’s Privacy Technical Assistance Center has released new guidance related to student privacy and the use of educational technology in the classroom. This information can be found at ptac.ed.gov.

As this document explains, “Gone are the days when textbooks, photocopies, and filmstrips supplied the entirety of educational content to a classroom full of students. Today’s classrooms increasingly employ on-demand delivery of personalized content, virtual forums for interacting with other students and teachers, and a wealth of other interactive technologies that help foster and enhance the learning process. The information sharing, web-hosting, and telecommunication innovations that have enabled these new education technologies raise questions about how best to protect student privacy during use.”

A recording and transcript of a recent webinar offered by PTAC are also available on the center’s website.

National STARS: WASHINGTON

South Dakota is not the only state interested in data governance. In fact, many states have had similar groups in place for years. One such state is Washington.

The Washington K12 Data Governance Group was established by the 2009 Legislature because Washington recognized that its K12 data management system focused primarily on compliance. Before the group was formed, there was little coordination across the education agency’s programs relating to data collection. The result was inaccurate data, inconsistent rules and a large burden on districts for data reporting. With the development of its statewide longitudinal data system, Washington recognized a chance to do better and turned to data governance.

Washington’s data governance group includes representatives from school districts and statewide organizations. The group’s primary role is to assist in the design and implementation of the statewide longitudinal

data system. At meetings, members receive updates on the SLDS five-year plan, discuss accountability report cards, approve new reports to be made available in the SLDS and learn how the SLDS is aiding research.

By reviewing state policies and national literature, interviewing stakeholder group and conducting a survey, the group identified critical research and policy questions. These questions involved enrollment trends, program and course performance, student achievement, attendance, discipline, student outcomes (i.e. graduation rate), success and risk indicators, teacher workforce and cost analyses. The group then works to ensure that the SLDS incorporates the data necessary to answer these questions.

Washington has found great value in data governance. The process helps increase efficiency in their data management practices, establish consistency in rules and reduce the burden on district stakeholders.

ESA DATA STARS

Representatives from each ESA have been trained in SD-STARS. They are ready and willing to answer your questions. If you don’t know your ESA assignment, go to doe.sd.gov/octe/sdesa.aspx.

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