Policy Advisory Group

December 12, 2012 Meeting Follow-up

Next Meeting: **January 30, 2013 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. (Central Time)** in the State Board Room of NDE and via polycom in ESUs.

Assignments: Study websites of Ed-Fi and any other district dashboards.

Thanks to all who were able to participate in this meeting here in Lincoln or via polycom at one of 10 ESUs. I think using this system will improve with practice and will enable more people to be involved without the time and effort of travel to one location. Your feedback on using polycom to conduct these meetings will be helpful. (email to: Marilyn.peterson@nebraska.gov or Victoria.green@nebraska.gov). Questions, concerns and future topics should also be emailed to the above addresses. Thank you.

After introductions, the purpose of the Policy Advisory Group (PAC) was presented as a representative group who will assist in implementing this grant by:

* Providing input, feedback, assistance to implementing the activities in the grant
* Helping us see how grant activities fit into the bigger picture of what is happening in districts and the state
* Monitoring progress to keep the grant activities moving forward
* Assisting in developing and implementing an evaluation plan
* Helping with the decision to build or adopt an optional district dashboard system
* Provide other topics relative to the data system as a whole

The Goals and Activities (also called deliverables) of the 2012 State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant were reviewed from the powerpoint that accompanied the original agenda. The PAC will be involved in monitoring the progress of implementation and impact of the grant through an evaluation plan. In addition to the evaluation plan, NDE has monthly progress conference calls with the U. S. Department of Education (USDE). NDE is also developing a website to post information on the grant and the progress reports, etc.

Goal 1 of the SLDS grant is to provide a data analysis tool for districts that uses multiple local and state data sources to produce reports for local decision makers. The State has one type of dashboard (data analysis tool) called the Data Reporting System or DRS. The decisions about what data to include and what analysis is available (content and capabilities) were made at the State level. The DRS uses only data from the State level found in the NSSRS. Note: NDE is in the process of bringing the DRS up-to-date with data and developing a way to provide reports and analyses that involve race/ethnicity data since the change over from reporting in five groups to the new seven groups.

This grant would provide a dashboard where districts define the content and capabilities and use both local data and NSSRS data. Many decisions need to be made in order to provide a local dashboard. The initial big decision was described in the grant as “buy or build” but in reality it is “adopt” or build. The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation has created a system called Ed-Fi and offered it to states and districts at no cost. Ed-Fi is not a finished product that you simply implement. It is a structure or framework that states or districts must adopt and adapt to their data. PAC members are asked to review the Ed-Fi website to learn as much as possible about it. Please check out the Education Insight Dashboard System (<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/EdInsight/default.shtml>) at the Delaware Office of Education website as it provides examples of dashboards created through Ed-Fi. NDE staff are also exploring whether there are other dashboards in the public domain clearinghouse. This is a site where products built with federal grant funds are available to other states.

Slide 25 of the powerpoint depicts a basic structure of a dashboard. There is a holding “box” at NDE that will contain the local and state data. Districts will decide

* What kinds of decisions would be most beneficial (important)
* What kinds of data is needed for these decisions
* What data should be available from NSSRS and from districts
* What the dashboard would look like

The dashboard should allow districts to submit data as often as needed for the dashboards. To be useful to teachers and administrators, data will need to be submitted more frequently than what is now collected by NDE.

Whether the State decides to adopt an existing structure and framework or build one, it will need these components. Both options will involve time and effort and the grant provides funds for NDE to hire staff to devote to this project. The grant calls for selecting 5 or 6 districts to assist with the work by providing the time and effort of a local staff person and provides funds to pay the district for that person’s work.

The kinds of data that might be included on a local dashboard were discussed. Multiple districts and ESUs are providing data and dashboards already. This group, the PAC, will be involved in helping to make the decisions about the data to be included as well as the criteria to use in selecting districts to serve as the initial pilot districts.

Other data news: NDE is working to develop a way for districts to look up data in NSSRS on a newly arrived student. Once a newly arrived student is enrolled in a district (Student and Enrollment templates submitted), the district would be provided data on that student such as ELDA and NeSA scores, demographics, program participation, etc. Eligibility for free and reduced lunch data would not be provided due to stricter confidentiality rules of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Until the data collected initially in 2011-12 for students, courses and grades at high school is more thoroughly audited, this data would not be included. Details of this new tool are still being developed.