



PRESENTATION AT THE 2014 NCES STATS-DC CONFERENCE

July 30, 2014

MAXIMIZING NCES RESOURCES TO DEVELOP 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.



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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HISTORY OF ALASKA & SLDS GRANTS

- ★ Alaska's K-12 SLDS build from 2006 NCES SLDS grant
- ★ Applied for and not funded for a \$10M+ 2009 SLDS grant
- ★ Awarded a \$4M priority 3 SLDS grant in 2012
 - ★ Links existing K-12, postsecondary and workforce data
- ★ Much lower funding level from earlier proposal required Alaska to identify strategies to optimize and maximize the \$4M grant to achieve project outcomes

FY 12 SLDS GRANT PROJECT OVERVIEW

- ★ **ANSWERS:** Alaska Navigator: Statewide Workforce and Education-Related Statistics
- ★ **Purpose:** To provide critical information to Alaska's policymakers, educators, and general 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
- ★ **Collaborative effort of:**





ALASKA'S APPROACH TO OPTIMIZATION OF THE SLDS GRANT

- ★ Strategic objective: optimize grant funds to achieve project goals within resource and budget constraints
- ★ Maximize use of SLDS resources available to states
 - ★ Utilize best practices where applicable
 - ★ Network with other states and NCES staff
 - ★ Reduce direct project costs
 - ★ Increase confidence amongst Alaska stakeholders
- ★ \$40-60K estimated benefit from utilizing NCES resources



SST REPRESENTATIVE VISIT TO ALASKA

- ★ Initial challenges getting multi-agency team to reach consensus on project approach
 - ★ Uncertainty about national perspective/progress of SLDS development
- ★ How other states are using workforce and wage data in SLDS
 - ★ How Alaska's approach related to other state and national efforts
- ★ Alaska's State Support Team representative, Jeff Sellers, came to Alaska to facilitate discussion amongst project team members
 - ★ Meeting held in Juneau, AK in December 2013
 - ★ Presented on the national landscape of SLDS activities and related workforce data uses
- ★ Identified issues, concerns and questions of partner organizations, all of which had representatives in attendance.



VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS WITH OTHER STATES

- ★ Utilized virtual network meetings, facilitated by the SST, to learn about other states P-20W SLDS technical design and approach.
- ★ In May 2013, ANSWERS team conducted virtual meetings with:
 - ★ Tennessee
 - ★ Mississippi
 - ★ Kentucky
 - ★ Washington
- ★ Information obtained from these states helped the team identify best practices and develop a technical approach to P-20W SLDS
- ★ SST state contacts and staff support scheduling and conducting meetings was helpful

PERSONNEL EXCHANGE VISITS

ANSWERS team members in Arkansas



- ★ ANSWERS project team members identified and traveled to two states with similar technical and matching approaches to P-20W SLDS.
- ★ NSPARC, Mississippi, September 17th & 18th 2013
- ★ Arkansas Research Center September 19th 2013



ANSWERS team members in Mississippi

- ★ Obtained SST Personnel Exchange Network (PEN) funding for portion of trip costs
- ★ <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pen.asp>



LEARNING FROM OTHER STATES

- ★ Many state contacts have been developed since grant inception
- ★ Regularly reach out to state contacts regarding challenges and information requests, such as:
 - ★ Institutional Review Board application process
 - ★ Identified Montana as model state
 - ★ Alaska utilized same IRB provider and received approval
 - ★ Data included in P-20W SLDS and approaches to address legal requirements (privacy, security, data sharing and access)
 - ★ Cost estimates for SLDS development activities (technical development, maintenance and enhancements, staffing model, website and data portal development, etc.)



GRANT FACILITATES STATE SHARING – COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

- ★ Received approval from Virginia Department of Education to duplicate and modify existing “What is VLDS?” video in Alaska for ANSWERS
- ★ Utilized same vendor as Virginia to create ANSWERS video
- ★ 55% reduced cost to Alaska based on usage of previous video design and illustrations – Total savings \$6,600
- ★ Minor changes to “Alaskan-ize” the video
- ★ [Watch the video: What is ANSWERS?](#)
- ★ Link to original VLDS video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lonZnZfm7cs>

SLDS WEBSITE AND GRADS360 COLLABORATE

- ★ ANSWERS team members frequently visit the SLDS website and grads360.org, including for:
 - ★ Monthly webinars
 - ★ Policy briefings and best practice articles
 - ★ Send relevant information to project team and stakeholders
 - ★ Have incorporated projects into recruitments that require watching SLDS webinars and writing synopsis
 - ★ Grads360 Collaborate site - used for examples of document templates and examples, MOUs, governance structure, and other best practices



UTILIZING PTAC SERVICES

- ★ Team became familiar with PTAC services through website and SLDS conference presentations
- ★ Held telephonic meetings with PTAC staff to learn more about services and how to make best use of them
 - ★ November 2012 and July 2013
- ★ February 2014 held web meeting and provided overview of database architecture and technical approach
- ★ Q&A on technical documentation, early feedback on approach, and plan to meet again in future after further developed
- ★ Utilize PTAC best practice briefs, policy guidance, and MOU samples



UTILIZING SLDS STAFF EXPERTISE

- ★ Regularly reach out to SST representative and SLDS program officer for consultation and advice relative to project activities, including to:
 - ★ Participate in project team meetings and offer input and advice
 - ★ Provide sample documents from other states or contacts for such
 - ★ Review draft ANSWERS documents and offer comments and suggestions
 - ★ Address challenges such as those with IRB approval
 - ★ Advise on strategic planning activities
 - ★ Offer input as a SLDS subject matter expert (SME) on various subjects and issues

A stylized graphic of a mountain range with white peaks and grey shadows, set against a dark blue background. The title 'NCES SITE VISIT TO ALASKA' is centered in yellow text at the top.

NCES SITE VISIT TO ALASKA

- ★ SLDS grant program staff came to Alaska in June 2014
 - ★ Nancy Sharkey, Program Officer
 - ★ Lauren Wise, Program Analyst
 - ★ Jeff Sellers, Alaska SST Representative
- ★ Alaska team used visit to the benefit of ANSWERS by:
 - ★ Engaging the project team, executive leadership, and stakeholders
 - ★ Obtaining SLDS staff feedback on strategic plans and project challenges
 - ★ Input on technical approach, data use opportunities, and future expansion considerations



SST REGIONAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

- ★ Technical and program project team members jointly participate in regional SST workshops, as available
 - ★ May 2013 – Phoenix, AZ
 - ★ Stakeholder Engagement, Data Use and Sustainability
 - ★ June 2014 – San Antonio, TX
 - ★ Focusing on Stakeholder Engagement: Internal and External Communications
 - ★ Common Education Data Standards (CEDS)
- ★ Team members learn from other states and share AK experiences



PARTNERING WITH ALASKA'S REGIONAL EDUCATION LAB (RELNW)

- ★ Alaska's REL, Education Northwest, is supplementing resources and supporting the ANSWERS project
- ★ Through IES funding for REL's, doing similar work in AK
 - ★ Engaging same stakeholders as P20W SLDS
 - ★ Working to address policy issues and gaps in related data
 - ★ Clear ability to align efforts among ANSWERS and REL to optimize funding
- ★ REL drafted work plan based on ANSWERS needs and submitted to IES with annual plan
 - ★ REL services at 10-20 hours per month valued at \$80K annually



RELNW SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN ALASKA

- ★ Providing guidance on public report content and design, including trends in higher education and workforce outcomes
- ★ Sharing experience and knowledge with the ANSWERS team in developing data systems that support a public interface and adopting data governance processes
- ★ Acting as a conduit for feedback on ANSWERS from key education stakeholders who are members of ASPRA
- ★ Facilitating working sessions and events for ANSWERS

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

★ ANSWERS Contacts:

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