

Statewide Longitudinal Database System Grant Program

Organization: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education.¹

Purpose and Uses: The Statewide Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) Grant Program aims to:

propel the successful design, development, implementation, and expansion of K-12 and P-20W (early learning through the workforce) longitudinal data systems. These systems are intended to enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDSs should help states, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes; as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.²

Data Elements Relevant to Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development:

States receiving SLDS grant funds must build systems that contain data elements specified in the America COMPETES Act. For P-20 students, required elements include (but are not limited to):

- A unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system (except as allowed by federal and state law).
- Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information.
- Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs.
- The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems.
- A State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.
- Student-level college readiness test scores.

For postsecondary students, required data elements are:

- Data that provide information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework.
- Data that provide other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.³

Some states are funded specifically to link P-20 data with workforce outcomes data, particularly with regard to post-school job placement and earnings.

¹ NCES Home Page, <http://nces.ed.gov/>

² National Center for Education Statistics, "[About the SLDS Grant Program.](#)"

³ Institute for Education Sciences, "[Grants For Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems.](#)" 2011, pp. 2 and 8-11.

History and Status: The Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (Title II of P.L. 107-279) authorized awarding competitive, cooperative agreement grants to states for up to twenty million dollars per grantee. While the authorization expired in FY2008, funding for the SLDS grant program has continued through annual appropriations legislation. The House is currently considering the Strengthening Education through Research Act (H.R. 4366), which would reauthorize the Education Technical Assistance Act.

Five rounds of funding have awarded a total of \$611 million in grants. According to NCES:

SLDS grants were awarded to 14 states in November 2005 (FY 2006 Grantees), 12 additional states and the District of Columbia in June 2007 (FY 2007 Grantees), 27 states in March 2009 (FY 2009 Grantees), 20 states in May 2010 (FY 2009 ARRA Grantees), and 21 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands in May 2012 (FY 2012 Grantees). Based on the five rounds of funding, [47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands](#) have received at least one SLDS grant.⁴

The focus of the grant program has evolved, with the early emphasis on K-12 systems expanding to a broader P-20W systems. Frequency of collection and publication, as well as timeliness and format of data vary by state.

The President's 2015 Budget requested an increase in spending on the SLDS grants to support \$57 million in new grants.⁵

Methodology: The SLDS grant solicitation identifies a series of governance, policy, technical, and data use requirements. At the same time, each state has considerable leeway in the nature and design of its system. NCES provides [assistance](#) to grantee states in the form of publications, webinars, consultants, conferences, and a listserv. The [Data Quality Campaign](#) and the [Workforce Data Quality Campaign](#) are nonprofit organizations that provide assistance to SLDS grants as well.

Data Products and Tools: SLDS data are housed on individual state websites. NCES hosts a [webpage](#) that links to grantees' SLDS websites and provides information on each grant.

Annual Cost: The appropriation for SLDS for FY2014 was \$34.5 million. The House is considering a proposal that would authorize \$83 million for fiscal year 2015 and \$518 million over five years.⁶

⁴ NCES, "[SLDS Grant Program: Grantee States](#)," webpage.

⁵ Budget 2015. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget15/summary/15summary.pdf> (pg. 67)

⁶ Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate, "[H.R. 4366 Strengthening Education through Research Act](#)," April 21, 2014.