

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, Vermont Educators
FROM: Daniel M. French, Ed.D. 
SUBJECT: Status Update - SLDS Data Collection and Vermont School Climate Survey
DATE: November 1, 2019

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the progress we are making, as a state, in completing this year's DC#04 SY19 Year End Data Collection using the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Vertical Reporting (VR) process. Last school year, the final school district and supervisory union (SU/SD) submissions were not completed until April of 2019. This year, we have made significant progress in streamlining the submission process, and as of October 29, 2019, only one district has not completed the year end official data collection, which is the largest and most complex of the VR data collections.

This is a significant improvement, worthy of recognition. Vermont's SU/SDs continue to work hard in partnership with the Agency of Education (AOE) and our vendor to complete the necessary collections in a timely way. We are also making adjustments to enable a smoother submission process.

While the DC#04 SY19 submission timeline is greatly improved from last year, it is not yet complete. Data collected in the DC#04 collection are used to generate metrics for Vermont's Annual Snapshot, complete federal reporting and support school finance calculations such as Average Daily Attendance, which is a key metric in the calculation for Allowable Tuition.

As a result, we have made the difficult decision to delay rollout of the Vermont School Climate Survey (also known as VTCLIM) indefinitely. We have concluded that adding a new data collection at this time would create too much additional work for both school districts and the Agency and would negatively impact our collective capacity to be successful in other high priority data work.

Consequently, the AOE's Annual Snapshot team will be working on ways to adjust for this delay and continue to provide clear, useful indicators for the Safe and Healthy Schools domain. We will provide updates about how this delay impacts other programs and projects that may affect your work in the weeks ahead.

Background

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, Vermont changed the way it collects many of the required data submissions from schools. In partnership with SU/SDs, the AOE rolled out the SLDS, a software platform that allows vertical reporting of crucial data directly from districts to the AOE. The goal of this change was to automate much of the business process involved in reporting data to the agency and reduce effort, complexity and risk of errors in the data

submissions. The SLDS VR includes but is not limited to data submissions containing student and staff identity data, enrollment and attendance data, and discipline data.

This rollout experienced several challenges and delays, which, for the most part, impacted the ability of SU/SDs to complete submission of the DC#04 Year End Official Data Collection for SY18. Some districts have continued to struggle more than others with these new technologies and processes, resulting in delays to the DC#04 SY19 submission as well. The DC#04 collection, which takes place at the end of the school year and is supposed to close in July, gathers student and staff data, enrollment and attendance data, and information on disciplinary incidents like hazing, harassment and bullying.