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MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, Business Managers, School Boards, VSBA, VSA, VPA
FROM: Acting Secretary Heather Bouchey, Ph.D.
SUBJECT: Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Update June 2018
DATE: June 14, 2018

As communicated via a [memo dated November 11, 2017](#), the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE), in collaboration with our implementation vendor Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), has been working this year to finalize the design, development, and testing of a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

Overview and Update

Through its Vertical Reporting processes, the SLDS will help to automate reporting of education data from Supervisory Union / Supervisory District (SU/SD) information systems to the state. Once fully implemented across Vermont, this streamlined reporting process will greatly reduce the data reporting efforts currently required of Vermont's schools and districts.

The streamlined nature of SLDS data reporting will enable Vermont education stakeholders to make data-informed decisions, based on actionable information, to improve educational outcomes for all Vermont learners. SLDS data may be used to facilitate research of education programs and services in evaluating their efficacy of improving student achievement and enhancing educational equity. The SLDS also supports state and federal reporting requirements.

During finalization of system testing, the AOE issued a survey to all districts to establish district points-of-contact and confirm district information system vendor relationships. In accordance with state procurement processes, the AOE issued a simplified bid to those identified Student Information System (SIS) and state reporting information system vendors, soliciting their proposals to support districts in the transition to SLDS Vertical Reporting. The resulting contracts, which we hope to execute this week or next, will detail the services that these vendors will provide to districts they support.

Frequently Asked Questions

The final Vertical Reporting specifications have now been distributed widely to district data and IT stakeholders. The AOE has been in contact with many district personnel as they have continued their work to evaluate system readiness and ask clarifying questions. These questions and AOE's responses are being compiled in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document

which will be shared directly with all district points-of-contact and information system vendors. This information will also be posted on the [SLDS webpage on the AOE website](#).

Reminders and Next Steps

As districts evaluate system readiness, they are reminded that, at a high level, a SU/SD will need to demonstrate the following items for system readiness:

- Computerized systems capable of containing all of the information required by the state.
- Systems with the ability to facilitate combined reporting for the whole SU/SD.
- Student Information System with subject-specific course and section assignments for every student, which include teacher of record, NCES course code, term, rigor level, etc.
- Ensure that all of the specific data required by the state is in your systems; this may include data that has historically not been collected within that system.
- IT personnel and/or vendor contacts familiar with exporting data out of your current systems and automating uploads.

All SU/SDs will work with their vertical reporting vendor to ensure that they are able to extract and transfer file submissions, in accordance with Vertical Reporting specifications, to a test SLDS environment for validation. Once a district's submissions have been validated, the SU/SD will be able to schedule the submission of data automatically and securely to the state through the SLDS, replacing the data collections listed below.

The AOE will work with each contracted SIS and state reporting vendor to identify six SU/SDs that have best demonstrated system readiness to serve as that vendor's pilot district. Non-pilot SU/SDs will commence their validation process when the pilot for their specific information system vendor has been completed and the SU/SD has demonstrated system readiness.

The goal is to have contracted vendors for all SU/SDs submit 2017-2018 year-end information in SLDS Vertical Reporting formats this summer, with the following exceptions. Given that Caledonia North SU, Essex Caledonia SU, Washington South SU, and Blue Mountain SU will undergo governance changes after June 30, 2018 that may preclude their ability to leverage this new format for 2017-2018 reporting, these four districts may need to use alternate reporting methods. The AOE has reached out to these districts to ensure they are able to complete all required reporting, through legacy data collection applications, prior to their dissolution.

While there are other SU/SDs affected by Act 46 changes as well, those SU/SDs will have all current member districts remaining together in their respective new SU/SDs and will be joined by other new member districts in 2018-2019. Since these governance changes should not affect their ability to report on behalf of their 2017-2018 member districts/schools, there is no need to treat their 2017-2018 reporting any differently than districts that have no Act 46 related changes this summer.

Data Collections Impacted

Vertical Reporting submissions will replace the following collections:

1. Fall Student Census
2. Spring Student Census
3. Tuitioned Student Census
4. Educator Census
5. Combined Incident Reporting Software (CIRS)
6. Student Educator Course Transcript (SECT) collection

All other data collections, not listed above, will be coordinated by the AOE through other channels. The data being collected are not new and reflect the information collected in accordance with the Vermont School Register, a student record-keeping system required by Vermont statute, and with other federally required information.

2017-2018 Year-End Reporting

As mentioned above, the goal is for all districts to complete year-end reporting for the 2017-2018 academic year in the new Vertical Reporting submission format. To aid in this transition, the AOE has proactively extended the normal due date for the year-end official collection from July 15, 2018 to August 15, 2018.

Further, the AOE is offering additional supports to districts and their vendors including supporting vendor-specific user group collaboration, hands-on working sessions at the summer Vita-Learn IT/Pizza Conference, and by developing/deploying a patch to the CIRS database that may be used to assist districts in converting school-level extracts to the new district-level submission file formats.

The AOE is aware of the district process to rollover their information systems in preparation for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. Given this information and to ensure that initial SLDS configuration does not delay or disrupt this process, it is imperative that districts work with their information system vendors to ensure that they will have a preserved backup of 2017-2018 data to work from. The AOE has discussed this information with district vendors but it is important for all districts to ensure that they retain copies of 2017-2018 data until year-end reporting has been completed and certified by the AOE this summer.

PreK Reporting

It is also important to understand that, while the initial SLDS implementation has focused on reporting for grades K-12, the SLDS Vertical Reporting submission process will also be leveraged to enable SU/SDs to submit required PreK data as well.

Specifically, all Act 166/prekindergarten students that would have previously been reported via Fall and Spring public student census collections will continue to be included in all relevant student-level data submissions reported through SLDS Vertical Reporting. Specific requirements will be included in the aforementioned FAQ document; however, the relevant submission files include 04_0_Student_Identity, 04_4_PS_Enroll, 04_5_PS_GradeProg, 04_6_PS_ADM, 04_7_PS_Att, as well as 04_16_CIRS_Incidents, 04_17_CIRS_Offenders,

04_18_CIRS_Actions, and 04_19_CIRS_Victims, as applicable. It should be noted that SECT-related course information (e.g. 04_14a_StuSectionEnrollment, 04_15_StudentSecResults) are not required for PreK students. Failure to include your Act 166/prekindergarten students with your VR submission, will prevent town districts from receiving ADM funding.

Training

SU/SD **technology staff training** will occur during the implementation of their automatic transfer of data to the SLDS by HMH and AOE's project team. During the integration of your local SIS and the new state system, district staff and the local SIS vendor must be available to troubleshoot issues that arise.

SU/SD **data reporting manager training** on the use of the SLDS interface will occur for pilot districts as these districts are being brought onto the system by HMH. Subsequent trainings for non-pilot districts will be repeated and recorded for future reference as all districts are brought online. The training will be the same for each SU/SD, regardless of the SIS platform used.

General training on **data collection and required data reporting** will be on-going by the AOE.

Additional Information

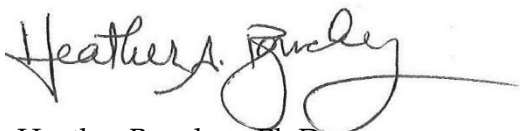
Additionally, information related to this system implementation will be posted on the [SLDS webpage](#) on the AOE website. New information will include the project implementation and timeline details, system specifications, answers to frequently asked questions, and additional informational resources. Please feel free to share this information and this link with interested parties.

This project implementation is being led by Brian Townsend, IT Director at the Vermont Agency of Education; and Lisa Gauvin of Agilis Technology, Technical Lead/Project Manager on behalf of AOE.

Additional comments and questions about this project can be forwarded to AOE.SLDSInfo@vermont.gov. Staff will respond to any questions as soon possible.

We thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Heather Bouchey, Ph.D.
Acting Secretary of Education