



SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 5, 2015

ANSWERS Project Overview - 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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OVERVIEW

- ★ ANSWERS – **A**laska **N**avigator: **S**tatewide **W**orkforce and **E**ducation-**R**elated **S**tatistics
- ★ P-20W SLDS: early learning through the workforce statewide longitudinal data system
- ★ Federal grant - \$4 million over 3 years (July 2012 – June 2015)
- ★ Collaboration of Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), University of Alaska (UA), Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), and Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DOLWD)



A stylized graphic of a mountain range with white peaks and dark blue shadows, set against a solid dark blue background.

WHY ACPE?

- ★ Keen interest in capacity building specific to assessing impacts of ACPE programs and services and providing analytical resource to other education/training stakeholders
- ★ Pursuant to AS 14.42.030. Functions, duties, and powers of commission. (4) contract with or use existing institutions of postsecondary education or other individuals or organizations to make studies, conduct surveys, submit recommendations, or otherwise contribute to the work of the commission
- ★ Relevant to ACPE mission: Promoting access to and success in postsecondary education and training for Alaskans and in Alaska



ALASKA'S NEED FOR CROSS SECTOR P-20W LONGITUDINAL DATA

ANSWERS will equip state leadership with Alaska data to make informed policy and funding decisions based upon effectively evaluating immediate and the longer-term **outcomes** of programs and policies, and to clearly measure the state's return on investment

ANSWERS will:

- ★ Make evaluations which cut across multiple sectors easier and more cost effective, efficient, informative, flexible, and secure
- ★ Be a reliable source of cross-sector information from which policy makers can better identify program results
- ★ Increase agencies' capacity to comprehensively respond to inquiries




PRIVACY AND SECURITY APPROACH

- ★ Emphasis on protecting individual privacy and security throughout planning, development, and implementation of ANSWERS
 - ★ Conservative design approach
 - ★ Partnership and collaboration with partner organizations
 - ★ Strong data security and privacy protections
 - ★ Operating practices and data use protocols



PROJECT PLAN AND TIMELINE

1. Planning and Preparation – July 2012 to June 2013
2. Infrastructure – July 2013 to March 2015
3. Development – January 2014 to March 2015
4. Data Reporting – May 2014 to April 2015
5. Training and Professional Development – March 2015 to June 2015
6. Sustainability – July 2014 to June 2015



OBJECTIVES AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- ★ Link cross-sector data—transparently and securely
- ★ Maintain data with protocols ensuring data sharing the privacy of individual unit records
- ★ Protection of individuals' privacy is an overarching priority



OPERATING PRINCIPLES - CONTINUED

- ★ Data contributors own their data and are expert at understanding and explaining their data
- ★ Data value is increased through common understanding and use
- ★ Ongoing ANSWERS system design and maintenance centers on system agility, flexibility and scalability



PARAMETERS

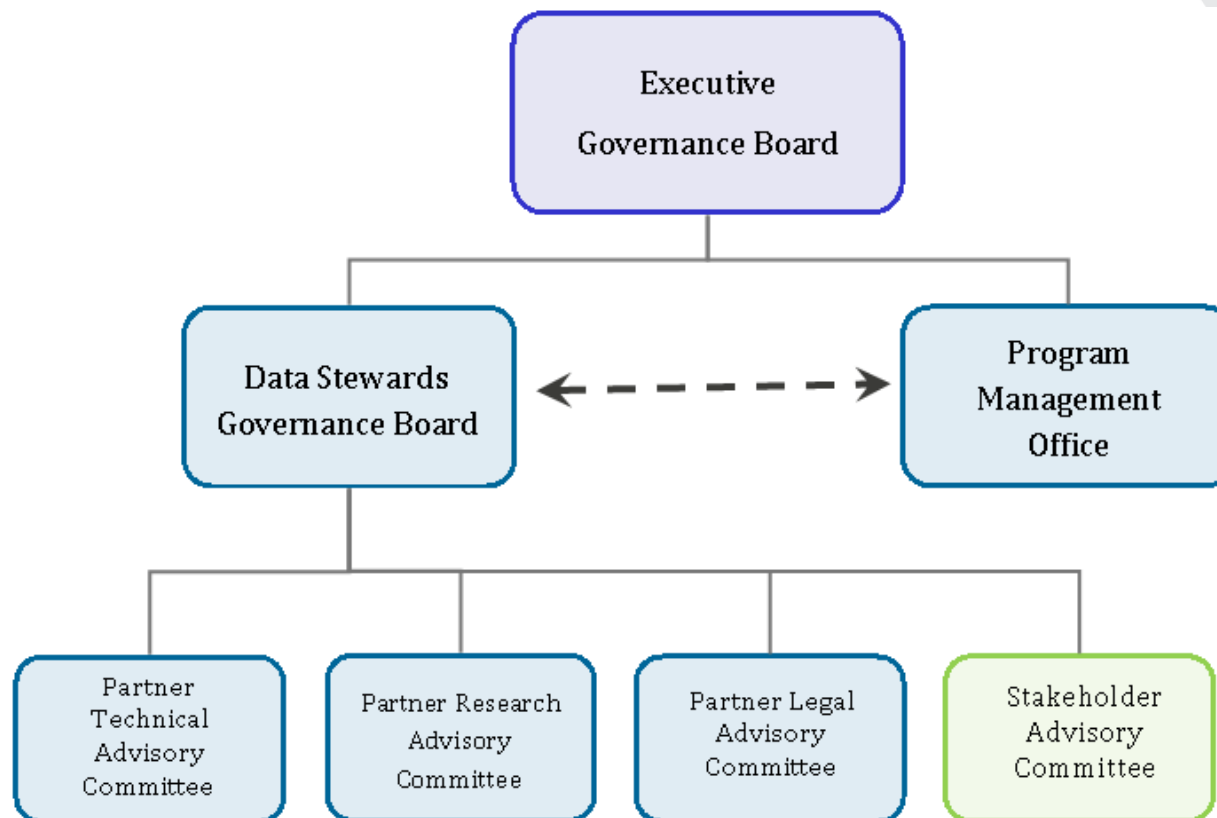
- ★ Data is de-identified and aggregated
- ★ Does not replace or usurp existing data systems
- ★ Uses subsets of data from various partners' data systems as appropriate to answer critical questions and use cases
- ★ Based on multi-agency governance structure requiring input, review and agreement by four founding partner organizations
- ★ Addresses cross-sector queries that cannot be answered by individual partners
- ★ Output is based on best practices and individual privacy protections



GOVERNANCE

- ★ Multi-tiered governance structure:
 - ★ Executive Governance Board: ACPE Executive Director, EED and DOLWD Commissioners, UA President
 - ★ Data Stewards: Data/project managers from each partner organization
 - ★ Implementation team and committees: four partner agencies' project managers, research and IT staff, legal staff, and program directors
 - ★ Stakeholder committees and advisors

GOVERNANCE FLOW DIAGRAM





ROLES OF THE POLICY QUESTIONS

- ★ Policy questions – *see handout*
 - ★ Developed in 2009 and revised in 2012
 - ★ Designed to identify high-level information needs, not currently available without linked data
 - ★ Identify stakeholder needs, interests and project scope
 - ★ Determine which data elements are appropriate to link
 - ★ Require Executive Governance Board Approval to change



PRIVACY AND SECURITY

- ★ Protecting individual privacy and security throughout planning, development, implementation and over time is fundamental
 - ★ Alaska's conservative approach to P-20W SLDS
 - ★ No individual evaluation possible; only de-identified and aggregated data produced
 - ★ Multiple levels for accessing ANSWERS information

A graphic of an iceberg with a dark blue upper portion and a white lower portion. The text 'PRIVACY AND SECURITY PROTOCOLS' is written in white on the dark blue part. The text 'ANSWERS is designed to separate identifying information from incoming data so it cannot be exposed, derived by users, or identify individuals' is written in dark blue on the white part. Below this, a list of design considerations is shown, each preceded by a yellow star. At the bottom, a sentence about information outputs is written in italics.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY PROTOCOLS

ANSWERS is designed to separate identifying information from incoming data so it cannot be exposed, derived by users, or identify individuals

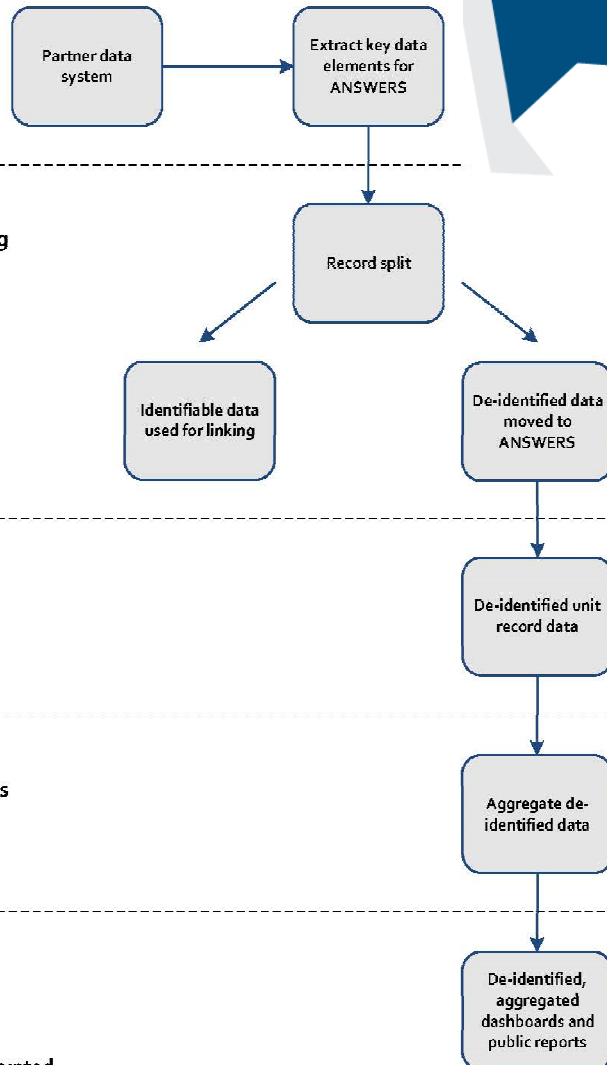
Design considerations include:

- ★ Data de-identification
- ★ Data encryption
- ★ Data compartmentalization
- ★ System access logging and auditing
- ★ Role-based access

Information outputs are aggregated and conform to best practices and federal and state privacy laws

PRIVACY AND SECURITY DIAGRAM

Data Source File Preparation
Raw data collected by state agency



System 1 – Restricted Access*
Process of de-identification and linking

System 2 – Restricted Access*
Information stored in ANSWERS

System 3 – Restricted Access*
Information used to respond to queries

System 4 – Public Access
Information displayed to public

*All restricted access systems are encrypted

See handout for full size image



DIFFERENT STATE APPROACHES

- ★ States' P-20W SLDS approaches vary
 1. Central database contains identifiable information with strong information security controls
 2. Central database that maintains de-identified data for research and analysis (*like ANSWERS*)
 3. Federated data system in which data queries draw from source systems and records based on specific data request
- ★ Mississippi and Arkansas were identified as having a similar system model to Alaska in terms of privacy and security



EXAMPLE FROM MISSISSIPPI

- ★ Mississippi's SLDS public website LifeTracks has the ability to use an interactive tool to drill down in four target areas: Early Childhood, Pre-K-12th Grade, Community College/Public University, and Workforce.
- ★ Within the four areas you can select:
 - ★ Historical trends
 - ★ Demographics
 - ★ Average student participation, progress, and success

For more information on Mississippi's SLDS visit <https://lifetracks.ms.gov/SitePages/Home.aspx>



EXAMPLE FROM ARKANSAS

- ★ The Arkansas Research Center (ARC) has developed software and processes to integrate and anonymize data, allowing for rigorous research and evaluation of program outcomes while keeping individual privacy at the center of the process.
- ★ Ongoing evaluation of the Pre-K program, which measures the impact of early childhood education on academic success in K-12.
- ★ ARC also regularly publishes Arkansas' Education to Employment Report, which outlines average wages and industries of employment by education. http://arc.arkansas.gov/arc_web/resources/publications/AEER2013.pdf
- ★ Another key mission of Arkansas' SLDS is to reduce burden on agency staff for reporting and to keep individual privacy at the center.

For more information on Arkansas's SLDS visit <http://arc.arkansas.gov/>



SUSTAINABILITY

- ★ ANSWERS Program Management Office (PMO) – system administration and maintenance post-grant project
 - ★ Reports to Executive Governance Board
 - ★ Ensures ANSWERS adheres to all applicable privacy and security practices, governance protocols, etc.
 - ★ With partners, coordinates responses to cross-sector information requests
 - ★ Develops and updates public reports, identifies emerging stakeholder needs, and proposes new information products



SUSTAINABILITY - CONTINUED

- ★ ASLC source of interim funding within ACPE operating budget
 - ★ Annual program costs estimated at \$1.2M
 - ★ Information demand will inform longer-term planning
 - ★ Funding model to be revisited after initial three-year operational period

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

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