MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, Business Managers, School Boards, VSBA, VSA, VPA

FROM: Secretary Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D.

SUBJECT: Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Update Fall 2017

DATE: November 7, 2017

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE), through funding from a 4.9 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education, is in the final stages of developing and implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to support the work of the AOE and Vermont school districts. A significant portion of the federal award supports the creation of a system to automate education data submissions to the state from Supervisory Unions / Supervisory Districts (SU/SD), known as Vertical Reporting.

The SLDS is intended to enhance the ability of Vermont to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data. The SLDS should help all Vermont education 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. The SLDS also supports state and federal reporting requirements.

Since the project started in the fall of 2014, AOE has been working closely with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) on the following:

1. Design and build of secure development, test and production environments.
2. Analysis and migration of historical education data.
3. Analysis and design of the Vertical Reporting process.
4. Analysis and alignment of other AOE data sources for inclusion in the SLDS.
5. Development of technical specifications.
6. Preliminary contact with Student Information System (SIS) vendors.
7. Preliminary contact with SU/SD technology staff.

This memo is to alert you, as a stakeholder, that we are entering implementation phase for the SLDS.

The AOE, in collaboration with HMH and SIS vendors, will be deploying the SLDS at the SU/SD level through a tiered approach over the next eight to 12 months.

In the next few weeks, the AOE will be releasing the Vermont SLDS Vertical Reporting specifications, along with a survey from the AOE, to allow SU/SDs to begin to evaluate and

report back about their systems readiness. A SU/SD will only begin implementation when they are able to demonstrate systems readiness.

Detailed readiness criteria will be discussed with district personnel and their information system vendors. 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 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 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.

The AOE will initially select approximately six SU/SDs that have demonstrated system readiness to participate in a pilot group. There will be one SU/SD to represent and test each of the different student information systems being used across Vermont; for example: Infinite Campus, MMS, PowerSchool, Schoolmaster, Web2School, etc.

The initial pilot group of SU/SDs will work with their specific SIS vendor to set-up and test the secure automation of data submissions to the AOE. By identifying and remedying issues in advance of the tiered implementation, the AOE hopes to smooth the transition for remaining non-pilot SU/SDs that will follow shortly thereafter.

During this time, the non-pilot SU/SDs will be simultaneously working with their SIS vendors and the AOE to reach SLDS implementation readiness.

Non-pilot SU/SDs will begin implementation when the pilot for their specific SIS has been completed and the SU/SD has demonstrated system readiness.

For all SU/SDs, the goal is to be certified for automated data submission to the SLDS; meaning you are able to extract and/or transfer file submissions to the SLDS in accordance with Vertical Reporting specifications.

Once the testing is complete and the SU/SD is certified, districts will be able to schedule the submission of data automatically and securely to the state through the SLDS, replacing the data collections listed below.

We anticipate the initial pilots will complete their testing by February 2018 and be certified to submit data via SLDS.

We anticipate that the remaining non-pilot SU/SDs will complete testing of their automatic transfer of data from their SIS to the SLDS by the end of June 2018, which coincides with the end of the SLDS federal grant.

Data Collections Impacted

During the testing phase, whether you are part of an initial pilot or part of the tiered implementation, all SU/SDs will continue to report data to AOE using current data collection methods until the SU/SD is certified. Once you are certified, the data you submit to the SLDS 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 Agency of Education 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.

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.

Funds Available to Assist with Local SIS Costs

The federal grant award that is funding the SLDS includes money that the AOE will use to ensure that the SIS or other state reporting vendors, on behalf of the SU/SDs that they serve, are able to implement changes that will enable data submission as outlined in the Vertical Reporting specifications.

Additionally, information related to this system implementation will be posted on the AOE website. This page will be updated with new information throughout the statewide rollout. This can be found at the following URL: http://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/statewide-longitudinal-data-system. 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.

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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,

Secretary Rebecca Holcombe

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