Status of Discussions
Reflecting Work Team Meetings and Feedback
November 21, 2011

Data Base Work Team

A. Our Assignment

The OEIB, in Senate Bill 909, is to provide an integrated, statewide, student-based data system that monitors expenditures and outcomes to determine the return on statewide education investments by:

- Developing the data system or identifying or modifying an existing data system that accomplishes the goals of the data system
- Ensuring that the data system is maintained

The Data Work Group has also endeavored to:

- Coordinate with NCLB waiver effort
- Coordinate with the Outcome-Based Work Group and the Early Learning Council
- Develop a sequencing strategy for implementation

The measure summary and fiscal impact statements for Senate Bill 909 anticipated that the system requirements in the bill would be met at least in part by the work funded by the US Department of Education named Project ALDER and administered by the Oregon Department of Education. The work of Project ALDER envisions the creation of a prekindergarten through postsecondary education (PreK-20) data system and research function that will combine de-identified longitudinal student data from the various sectors. This will allow the progress of students with varying backgrounds and learning experiences to be tracked as they enroll and complete programs so that student inputs or investments from one sector can be measured against student outcomes as they move through the education system to college and careers.

The work group reviewed other states' work and nationally published research to identify the most appropriate methodology for measuring the return on investment or the cost effectiveness of the services provided by Oregon's education system. At present, the recommended measures focus on the traditional education institution "silos", e.g. preschool programs, K-12 districts, and postsecondary programs. As the student longitudinal data system matures with student outcome data spanning multiple learning stages, there will be opportunities for long term evaluation of the broader systems' effectiveness.

B. Early Learning Programs:

1. ROI – Measure student growth between early learning program entry and exit and also at each learning stage via OAKS/Smarter-Balanced assessments.
2. Current Status – Fits and Gaps
    a. Pre-Kindergarten and EI/ECSE expenditures are tracked by provider.
    b. Providers are required to conduct student entry and exit reviews.
    c. Two assessment tools are used predominantly by Pre-K programs and another is used by EI/ECSE programs.
    d. Providers currently may modify the assessment tools to fit local needs, but this impairs the ability to conduct cross-program comparisons.
3. Recommendations
    a. Short term – As a research project, evaluate student growth/funding levels among the provider groups that use the same assessment methodology to gain knowledge of program performance variation and the future means of developing a systematic method of program ROI assessment.
    b. Long term – Using the knowledge gained from the initial research evaluation, and the adoption of a common assessment tool, build the ROI methodology into the early learning program segment of Project ALDER and build systems that can share key student data with each child's early elementary instructors/schools.
4. Next steps
    a. Coordinate systems work with the Early Learning Council and Department of Education program staff to select an assessment tool that assesses student growth from program entry to program exit, to Kindergarten entry, and at subsequent K-12 learning stages.
    b. Develop the initial short term research project and identity additional funding required to complete the project by June 30, 2012.
    c. Determine supplemental funding requirements to (a) build an ROI component to Project ALDER Pre-K systems development and (b) develop student record transfer module to allow student records to be transmitted to each child's elementary school as an extension of the common identification system in Project ALDER.

C. K-12:

1. ROI – Adopt the methodology developed by the Center for American Progress that evaluates the level of student attainment of state standards given the challenges of the student population served and the available resources.
2. Current Status
    a. Key data are presently gathered in DBI and the Department of Education systems that gather key data on student learning progress and demographics (school lunch aid, ELL, special education designations).
    b. Districts are currently providing the data needed for analysis.
3. Recommendations
    a. Short term – Provide funding support to systematically link school district DBI financial data and student progress data including adjustments for district demographic factors with completion by June 30, 2012.

   b. Long term – Building from the student file linkages in Project ALDER, develop tools that provide key student data to instructional staff, parents, and students as students move through the K-12 learning stages to improve instruction and awareness of student progress and needs. The transition to the SmarterBalance national student evaluation and expanded use of formative assessment will provide important data elements that need to be shared between learning system partners.
4. Next steps
   a. Convene an advisory group of district data and evaluation staff to gain input on specific design and use of ROI tool.
   b. Determine additional resources needed to build systematic K-12 ROI capacity into ODE report functions.
   c. Validate records currently retained by ODE to assure accuracy of all district demographic data.

Postsecondary Education

1. ROI – Measure performance of community colleges and universities within Oregon's postsecondary education system by using tools that link degree and certificate completion to the resources used by program area.
2. Current Status
   a. All Oregon public postsecondary schools currently participate in the Delta Project which calculates a ROI by institution, but the programs of each school vary, which cannot be reflected in the measure.
   b. A study conducted annually at the University of Delaware calculates a ROI for each degree program based on the direct program costs. All but one of Oregon's public universities has participated in this study in the past decade, but the work has not been extended to community colleges.
   c. Although the Work Group reviewed a study that examined ROI based on student costs and earnings after graduation, that evaluation was done using a proprietary compensation database populated voluntarily by users seeking individual compensation information. The mechanism for data collection limits our ability to determine if the data is representative of each school's graduate population. For purposes of the OEIB, all costs should be included in the ROI, rather than student costs alone. Work force return on investments may be more accurately determined by surveying a sample of former students at a certain period of years after graduation.
3. Recommendations
   a. Short term – Share the institution-wide data provided by the Delta Project and replicate the University of Delaware direct cost methodology to gauge program specific ROI data.
   b. Long term – Develop a system for annual collection of direct program costs by program/degree from each of the universities and community colleges along with the currently collected completion data to allow for yearly calculation and reporting of ROI by program and institution.
4. Next steps

a. Convene an advisory group of institution business and evaluation staff to gain input on specific design and use of University of Delaware ROI tool.
b. Select a contractor to conduct the program ROI study for Oregon public postsecondary schools.
c. Determine additional resources needed to build systematic ROI data collection capacity into OUS and CCWD report functions.