SB 909 Student Data System Charge

Senate Bill 909 includes the following among the duties of the Oregon Education Investment Board:

Provide an integrated, statewide, student-based data system that monitors expenditures and outcomes to determine the return on statewide education investments. The board shall provide the data system described by:

(a) Developing the data system or identifying or modifying an existing data system that accomplishes the goals of the data system; and
(b) Ensuring that the data system is maintained.

The bill further requires that the board "ensure that the statewide data system described in the bill be operating on or before June 30, 2012.

Current Status of State Student Data Systems Collaborations

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has been working collaboratively with the Oregon University System and Community Colleges and Workforce Development to build an integrated data system over the past several years. The following is a recap of the longitudinal data systems initiative:

KIDS – In 2005, the Legislature funded the KIDS project. The mission of KIDS is to provide a single, accurate, and authoritative source of data, streamline data and reporting from early childhood through post-secondary, and provide enhancements and efficiencies in transcript exchange and federal reporting.

Oregon DATA Project – In 2007, the Direct Access to Achievement (DATA) project was funded through a federal Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant. It provides K-12 educators and administrators with tools, professional development, and supports so that they can effectively use data to improve student achievement. Grant ended August 2011.

Oregon Formative Assessment Resources (OFAR) – In 2009, Oregon received a 3-year grant to provide formative assessment resources to our schools. This effort is a collaboration between ODE and OSU and UO and includes formative assessment toolkits, better data integration across the system and with higher education, and better data warehousing. The four primary outcomes is the data integration between ODE and the University of Oregon; relocation of ODE's Data Center to Oregon State University; creation of a database system for researchers to analyze Oregon assessment data; and publication of assessment literacy materials to be used at OUS institutions. Funding ends March 2012.

Advancing Longitudinal Data for Education Reform (ALDER) – In July 2010, ODE received a $10.4 million 3-year federal grant and is a collaboration between ODE, OUS, TSPC, CCWD, OED, Early Childhood, and WICHE. ALDER has four main outcomes: establishing a teacher-student link in all our K-12 data systems; consolidating and expanding early childhood student data systems; increasing the data exchanges with higher education and workforce agencies; and creating a comprehensive statewide data quality plan. Grant ends June 2013, with the option of a 12-month extension.

Data Base Initiative (DBI) - ODE currently collects and reports expenditure data at the school district and operational unit (typically school) levels. This data is collected from districts at the conclusion of the school audit period which causes a lag between the current fiscal experience of the districts and the reported information.

"Devil is in the Details" - Most of the education sectors track multiple performance measures for students, staff, programs, and institutions/districts. These measures are not presently linked to expenditures. The bill does not specify what data is to be collected or metric to be used. This could create a fiscal impact on the state agencies, colleges and school districts. Limited conventional metrics analyzing K-12 expenditures and performance at the school or district level could be accommodated with current data systems and staff. ECONorthwest has done high level cost per student analysis in the past with very general cost breakouts. These generalizations were done without modeling specific programs or apportioning expenditures like library, administration and other costs to specific programs. More sophisticated metrics analyzing student level expenditures with individual student performance data, will be more complicated and introduce validity concerns on multiple levels. Key terms that must be defined include "student-based" and "return on education investment".

Present Resources

- At present, Project ALDER provides the largest resource base to support the student data base work envisioned in SB 909 and many of the goals of the grant are consistent with a portion of the SB 909 assignment. ODE is willing to accelerate the early learning component of the project to bring this system on line a year earlier than the grant first proposed.
- The appropriation for the OEIB provides almost $1 million for data systems work, but does not fund other functions required by other statutes that will be within the domain of OEIB such as the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.
- A three-year federal grant for early learning coordination and planning has substantial savings from the first year that could provide some support to a portion of the early learning systems that extend beyond Project ALDER.

Potential Resources

- A new grant proposal is under development for early learning (under the US Department of Education Race to the Top programs) which will contain a plan for $10+ million to support tying the early childhood systems in social services, health care and education together in a "federated" system.
- New funding opportunities could be offered by the US Department of Education under the SLDS program that could provide potential resources but not until next biennium.
- Various foundations (Gates or Lumina) that support education attainment could be possible resources.
- In the 2013-15 budget, a more complete budget proposal could be prepared with the option of using certificates of participation to finance the new system over a 10-year period.

Next Steps

- Pull together the ALDER Steering Committee with additional representatives to develop specific recommendations that define key provisions of the system expectations.
- Seek input from participating agencies on ways to leverage OEIB resources to develop a plan for the present biennium, future grants, and the 2013-15 budget.
- Prepare this information as a progress report to the Legislature by mid-December that will address high level requirements, resource needs and possible timelines.
- Coordinate the data systems work with activities related to the NCLB waiver request.