

Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) Governance Charter

A. Vision

Minnesota has developed the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) matching student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary education and into the workforce. By bridging existing data with other incoming data, a range of education programmatic and delivery questions can be answered to gauge the effectiveness of current programs and design targeted improvement strategies to help students.

SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to:

- Identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work,
- Inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and practice, and
- Assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans.

The Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership governs the SLEDS system. The project is managed jointly by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE) and Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

B. Rationale

Stakeholders, from students to parents to state policymakers, need data to make informed decisions. The state plays a critical role in serving the diverse needs of consumers and policymakers, ensuring effective data use at all levels, and ensuring local users have access to quality data and capacity to use the information to inform decisions.

C. Legal Authority

M.S. 127A.70 Subd. 2(b) *Under the direction of the P-20 Education Partnership SLEDS Governance Committee, OHE, MDE and DEED shall improve and expand SLEDS to provide policymakers, education and workforce leaders, researchers, and members of the public with data, research, and reports to:*

- (1) expand reporting on students' educational outcomes;

- (2) evaluate the effectiveness of educational and workforce programs; and
- (3) evaluate the relationship between education and workforce outcomes.

To the extent possible under federal and state law, research and reports should be accessible to the public on the Internet, and disaggregated by demographic characteristics, organization or organization characteristics, and geography.

It is the intent of the legislature that the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System inform public policy and decision-making. The SLEDS governance committee, with assistance from staff of the Office of Higher Education, the Department of Education, and the Department of Employment and Economic Development, shall respond to legislative committee and agency requests on topics utilizing data made available through the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System as resources permit. Any analysis of or report on the data must contain only summary data.

D. Purpose

The general purpose of the SLEDS system is to identify and analyze pathways, progress, predictors and performance – the 4 P’s of Minnesota’s education and workforce systems.

Pathways: The movement of individual students between K-12, higher education, and workforce.

- Who enrolls in college and when?
- Which levels of education lead to higher wages?

Progress: The benchmarks or transition points students meet—or fail to meet.

- How many students choose college, and how many work?
- What industries employ college graduates and at what wages?

Predictors: The characteristics, patterns, or commonalities that help explain which students achieve successful outcomes and which do not.

- Student demographics
- Immediate vs. delayed entry into postsecondary education

Performance: How well are education and workforce aligned for individual success?

- Where can we focus additional strategies and resources?

E. Research

SLEDS data will provide a comprehensive foundation for assessing the performance of Minnesota’s education and workforce systems. Data alone cannot improve performance but it can support the careful consideration of issues and analysis leading to action.

Guidelines for Conducting SLEDS Research

1. The study must involve analysis of transitions between systems or between providers within a system.
2. The study must be in alignment with state priorities.
3. The study must have the potential to make a definite contribution to contributing state agencies and partner data providers (e.g. study on impact of advising and college prep services to students at low-income public schools on high school graduation and college participation).
4. The researchers must use sound research design and have the potential for successful completion.
5. The project must comply with ethical standards for research in education and with all regulations set forth in federal and state law, particularly as they pertain to privacy of data on individuals.

F. Data Sharing

Access to SLEDS data will be as broad as possible, but will be governed by the following federal and state laws and resultant policies and procedures.

- Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA, Minn. Stat. § 13)
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFR Part 99)
- Confidentiality and Disclosure of Unemployment Compensation Data (CFR 20. Part 603)

Additional factors that are considered when determining the level of access are:

- Classification of data,
- Role and responsibility of the user, and
- Compliance of users with data security policies and training.

The *SLEDS Data Access and Management Policy* was adopted by the SLEDS Governance Committee on October 24, 2014 and can be found online at <http://sleds.mn.gov/#research>.

Guiding Principles

Based on the work of the SLEDS Research and Data Advisory Committee, seven guiding principles for data access and management have been established:

1. SLEDS will focus on providing cross-sector, linked data and analysis.
This principle asserts that SLEDS focuses on cross-sector data use and refers any data requests limited to just one sector (K-12 education, postsecondary education or employment) to the appropriate agency or partner data provider.
2. SLEDS relies on transparency and clarity in all we do.
Education and workforce data, including its use, will be presented in plain and readily comprehensible language and formats. SLEDS partners will maintain a level of detail and disaggregation in accordance with state and federal regulations. SLEDS policies and procedures, including roles and responsibilities of all parties, will be defined and available for all to see.
3. Protecting the privacy of individuals is a priority.

This principle governs all we do and recognizes that an individual's privacy is a primary concern for contributing state agencies, partner data providers, and users of the SLEDS system. This requires users be aware of and respect the differing data privacy requirements of the various data sets included in SLEDS.

4. Common understanding and use of data increases its value.

This principle recognizes that only common understanding and use of data allows SLEDS to empower and inform decision making. This level of understanding requires contributing state agencies and partner data providers to jointly develop an understanding of and common language regarding the transitions between systems in addition to local programs. This process requires that state agencies and partner data providers discuss and commit to overcoming the obstacles to shared understanding and use of data, including but not limited to the issues of turf, trust, technology and time.

5. Data providers, at the state and local levels, are critical sources for understanding and explaining the data.

This principle recognizes the critical role state agencies and partner data providers play with regard to training. Creating opportunities for data users to connect with data providers is imperative for success. Data users should be specific and transparent in describing their methodologies and assumptions and are encouraged to vet those methods and assumptions with contributing state agencies and partner data providers.

6. Maintenance of SLEDS and the provision of research and analysis is the responsibility of all data providers.

This principle recognizes that maintenance and use of SLEDS requires the coordinated and collaborative efforts of the contributing state agencies, the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership and partner data providers.

7. Local partner data provider access is needed for data to drive continuous improvement in local and state level policy.

This principle recognizes that access to and use of data at the local level (i.e., colleges, K-12 schools and districts, workforce programs) is valued and better informs local improvement and state policy.

F. Data Governance Structure

The SLEDS system will be jointly managed by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the Minnesota Departments of Education and Employment and Economic Development.

Governance Committee: The SLEDS Governance Committee standing membership shall include one standing representative from each of MDE, OHE, DEED, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP), Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), Education Minnesota (EdMn), the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), the Minnesota Private College Council (MPCC), the Minnesota Career College Association (MCCA), early childhood education, and the business community. These members shall be elected and/or appointed by their respective organizations and shall retain membership until their successor is elected and/or appointed.

Two additional members may be appointed by the Chair to serve a two-year term. These members may not be representatives of the organizations represented by the SLEDS standing membership of the SLEDS Governance Committee.

Each member may have a designee with the authority to represent and make decisions for that member.

The duties of the SLEDS Governance Committee members shall include:

1. Evaluate and consider SLEDS research and evaluation topics at the request of the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership or other groups that will inform data driven decisions and educational policy formation.
2. Advise on additional data elements to be added to SLEDS for research purposes.
3. Advise on data security and data privacy policies and practices.
4. Appoint members to the Research Committee and Data Advisory Committee.
5. The SLEDS Governance Committee shall be notified of requests for accessing SLEDS data prior to the SLEDS Executive Committee approval and be provided with an opportunity for feedback.
6. Ensure access to public data in accordance with state and federal privacy laws.
7. Advise on stakeholder support and engagement.

SLEDS Executive Committee: The SLEDS Executive Committee shall include the Commissioners of MDE, OHE and DEED. Each member may have a designee with the authority to represent and make decisions for that member.

The duties of the SLEDS Executive Committee members shall include:

1. Approve requests for additional data to be added to SLEDS.
2. Approve data security protocols and data privacy policies and practices.
3. Secure funding for SLEDS from the Minnesota Legislature, the federal government or external funders.
4. Advise OHE on SLEDS budget and finance issues.
5. Approve requests for access to SLEDS data in accordance with policy established by the SLEDS Governance Committee, federal and state laws and best practices.
6. Ensure access to public data in accordance with state and federal privacy laws.
7. Secure stakeholder support and engagement.
8. Communicate with stakeholders.

SLEDS Research and Data Advisory Committee: The Research Committee membership shall include one representative each from MDE, OHE, DEED, either MAESP or MASSP, the University of Minnesota, MnSCU, MPCC, MCCA, early childhood, and two K-12 representatives.

The Research Committee duties shall include:

1. Advise in the development of a data system interface/portal to provide access to SLEDS data while adhering to state and federal laws.
2. Review proposals for research and evaluation and make recommendations for implementation.
3. Develop research and evaluation proposals for utilizing the SLEDS data to further state research goals set by the Governance Committee.
4. Provide technical expertise and consultation on research methodologies.
5. Develop protocols for maximizing validity and reliability of SLEDS data.
6. Recommend protocols for allowing non-MDE and non-OHE staff access to SLEDS data.
7. Review data requirements for research and evaluation proposals and recommend additional elements to be collected if necessary to meet research requests.
8. Evaluate research proposals with respect to data-based components and make recommendations to the Research Committee for approval.

9. Provide the technical expertise for the creation of an interface for users that is not only secure but also user friendly and widely available to authorized users at all levels of the educational system.
10. Provide technical expertise and consultation on data structure and data linkages for existing and new data.

SLEDS System Coordinators: Coordinators appointed by OHE, DEED and MDE shall report to the SLEDS Governing Committee on the research, administrative, financial and technical operations of the SLEDS.

The Coordinators will:

1. Facilitate the work of the SLEDS Governance Committee and contributing state agencies.
2. Work with Governance Committee and contributing state agencies to identify funding opportunities to support SLEDS work.
3. Work with IT staff on data security, data privacy policies and practices and data validation.
4. Respond to data requests and maintain access portal to data.
5. Produce summary analysis and reports. Develop and update web products and agency reports using SLEDS data.
6. Maintain awareness and compliance with FERPA and other relevant laws. Ensure compliance among SLEDS users with data security and data privacy policies.
7. Work with the Research and Data Advisory Committee to coordinate data management including: set data standards, define data elements, document data processes, and identify file specifications.
8. Work with the Research and Data Advisory Committee to facilitate research using SLEDS data.
9. Coordinate the SLEDS Research Data Advisory Committee.
10. Represent Minnesota at national conferences related to P-20 systems and research.
11. Serve as spokespersons for the SLEDS system.
12. Assist agencies in public relations aspects of SLEDS in communication with school districts and charter schools, higher education institutions and the public.

SLEDS MN.IT Staff will:

1. Ensure data security and data privacy compliance with federal and state laws.
2. Construct and test required data files.
3. Manage data (set data standards, define data elements, document data processes, and identify file specifications) and facilitate data loading, cleaning, testing and linking.
4. Serve on the SLEDS Research and Data Advisory Committee.
5. Assist in utilizing the SLEDS data to further agency research goals.
6. Manage SLEDS data system including development of end-user interfaces and automated report structures, provide access to approved users, and maintain user identity system.
7. Provide technical expertise and consultation on data file construction, data linkages, and research methodologies.
8. Maintain SLEDS web products.

Office of Higher Education, the lead state agency for SLEDS, will:

1. Manage specified project funds.
2. Coordinate completion of specified deliverables.
3. Provide support for required federal and state reporting by contributing state agencies.
4. Facilitate governance process.
5. Ensure compliance with data security and access policies.
6. Monitor data sharing agreements and process.

7. Plan and execute communications strategy, conduct general outreach/publicity, and provide media relations support.
8. Coordinate with Governor’s office and other external stakeholders.
9. Facilitate access for approved users in cooperation with MN.IT.
10. Conduct/coordinate training for users.

SLEDS Data Governance Structure

