CELT
Center for Educational Leadership and Technology

65 West Boston Post Road
Marlborough, MA 01752
Tel (508) 624-4474
Fax (508) 624-6565

Georgia Final Report

Executive Summary:

The Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) approached the Teacher-Student Data Link (TSDL) grant resources as a vehicle to develop and implement the following four projects:

I. Automate functionality allowing a receiving LEA (local education agency/school district) to claim a student transferring from another LEA within Georgia.
II. Create a seamless link from the LEA's Student Information System (SIS) to the statewide claiming functionality.
III. Automate functionality that transfers a student's electronic, academic record from one Georgia LEA to another Georgia LEA.
IV. Document the process for dealing with the transfer of student academic records from one Georgia LEA to another Georgia LEA.

As a requirement of State Board Rule 160-5-1-.07, all Georgia public schools are required to assign a GTID (Georgia Testing Identification Number) to every student. Utilizing this GTID to link multiple student-related datasets allows for district and school users including teachers to obtain vital information on their students which can lead to improved student achievement.

The objectives were to:

- Enhance the unique student ID (GTID) assignment including refining the matching (fuzzy logic) to increase the accuracy of matches by reducing or eliminating duplicate GTID assignments.
- Develop and implement an electronic student claiming process, which provides a web-based, "near real-time" option for claiming in addition to the current batch extract process. With this process, academic records are transferred from the sending to the receiving district/school within 24 hours.
- Automate the download of student academic records from one district to another within the state.

The three districts participating in the TSDL project were **Bartow County School System, Gwinnett County Public Schools** and **Morgan County School System.** A pilot was conducted which involved the districts, one of whom already had a longitudinal data system, in order to validate the processes, policies and architecture. The pilot districts also worked diligently with GADOE leadership to develop the TSDL purposes and characteristics and definitions for Teacher of Record and Contributing Professional.

The following project narratives describe in more detail each of the four TSDL projects.

Project narratives for each of the project(s)

I. Project One: Automate functionality allowing a receiving LEA to claim a student who was transferring from another LEA within Georgia.

Enhancements were made to the unique ID matching system to refine the matching logic. As a result of this, the number of near matches has decreased while the number of real matches increased. This student identifier assignment is essential in order to create an accurate Student Course Profile, which in turn ensures an accurate Teacher of Record.

II. Project Two: Create a seamless link from LEA SIS to the statewide claiming functionality

As a result of this project, school districts are now able to access the GTID system within the Longitudinal Data System (LDS), thereby making the login process seamless and the need for multiple logins no longer necessary. Through this approach, identity management remains a school district responsibility. Thus, the districts keep ownership of the process and decisions made on who is in which roles and has the necessary permissions to view which data. From a user perspective, they are in the district system with the page headings having their own district logo and characteristics. In essence, they "tunnel" into the GA LDS through their district SIS.

III. Project Three*:* Automate functionality that transfers a student's electronic, academic record from one Georgia LEA to another Georgia LEA

The enhancements made to the GTID system allow for the download of accurate Student Course Profiles (SCP), the transfer of student records between districts, and subsequent accurate determinations of Teachers of Record. The SCP consists of the current student course schedules which link students to teachers. As a part of this project, the SCP was enhanced to provide districts the ability to add up to three "other" instructional staff to the SCP for each course at student level. This enhancement now provides a more complete picture of the student's current educational environment and allows each of the educators to access the student's longitudinal data history.

IV. Project Four: Document the process for dealing with the transfer of student academic records from one Georgia LEA to another Georgia LEA.

The Georgia DOE staff worked with pilot districts to document the process of obtaining access to electronic academic records of transferred students.

No-Cost Extension

Georgia DOE was approved for a no-cost extension from January through June, 2013. They used the remaining TSDL resources to make improvements to the Student Course Profile (SCP) and include the Georgia Virtual School. The Student Course Profile is the dataset that ties a student to a teacher and course. Once this file is processed for a school district, their teachers are able to log into their student

information system and tunnel into the longitudinal data system (LDS) where they will be able to view the longitudinal data for their student population. The Georgia Virtual School (GVS) currently does not have a student information system but they do store student-level data in various formats. They were able to create the Student Course Profile extract by using the file layout parameters, and successfully upload the file to the UAT environment. Work was also done on the back-in to allow the GVS to upload data into the UAT and production environment. The GVS is currently in the process of acquiring/developing a student information system which, after the tunnel code is installed, will allow their teachers to tunnel into the longitudinal data system.

Lessons Learned

The projects yielded several lessons. It is critical that all students are connected to a unique ID, as this is the fundamental beginning point for the system. Connecting teachers to students requires a good definition of teacher of record which will handle all scenarios of how students are taught in a school, such as team teaching, paraprofessionals, and pull-out programs. For Georgia, it was equally important that the work, including the longitudinal database policies, definitions and processes are aligned with the Race to the Top requirements and deliverables.

As part of the TSDL project, CELT wrote a case study of the idea creation, development and implementation of Georgia's Tunnel. This document is located on the TSDL website at http://www.tsdl.org/resources/site1/general/White%20Papers/TSDL_Summit2012_GeorgiaTunnelPaper.pdf.

Challenges

The primary challenge of the TSDL project was developing the teacher of record definition. Since this would not only impact the LDS systems but also the student growth model and teacher evaluation systems, there had to be agreement from multiple stakeholders on exactly what the teacher of record would be and ultimately how teachers would be linked to students. Focus groups were conducted in each of the pilot districts to engage teachers, administrators, school staff, parents, corporate partners and school board members and gain their important input.

Another challenge was managing the resources not only to maximize the TSDL opportunity, but also to support the RTTT commitments and do this with a prioritization on long-term needs and sustainability. For example, it was necessary to examine the benefits of build versus buy and develop strategies to have a balanced mix of needed staff and contractors.

Major Accomplishments / Benefits

This project accomplished a key function for the LDS, that of connecting the appropriate teacher to the appropriate students to the appropriate courses. Without this the LDS systems would not have been able to be developed or implemented successfully. This linkage is used throughout the LDS, including for the security features, role-based identities, roster verification, individualized education plans (IEP), teacher evaluation, professional development, and online assessment.

A major benefit is the cost-saving that occurs by building a statewide tool within the LDS thus leveraging the scale and efficiency of the statewide effort, rather than having each district invest in

their own unique set of tools that wasted precious local resources on potentially incompatible systems. Lastly, by delivering this system directly to the teacher's desktop, teachers spend less time collecting and analyzing data and more time acting upon the information the data provides.

The diagram in Appendix A (see page 6) of the Georgia Tunnel, also known as the Data Hub Portal , is color-coded to show in green those components that had been completed as of the end of 2012 and in yellow those components which were in their long-range plan. Of particular note is the work that has been done to link this model to the Georgia Virtual School ensuring that educators and students have access to a strong catalogue of courses and resources to enhance teaching and learning.

Conclusion and next steps

It is evident that the four TSDL projects have built the necessary foundation for Georgia's LDS to function effectively, ensuring that students and teachers are correctly linked, rosters are verified, and course profiles are accurate.

Next steps include ensuring that the Teacher Evaluation Methodology (TEM) contains all necessary components including a growth component, classroom observations and surveys, all of which are dependent upon accurate roster verification.

The Georgia Teacher-Student Data Link Team, composed of representatives from the Department of Education and Bartow, Gwinnett and Morgan County school districts, worked together in the TSDL Project* to develop the following purposes, characteristics and definitions for use in establishing a valid and reliable Teacher-Student Data Link:

Purposes:

The TSDL and TOR definition can be used for multiple purposes including, but not limited, to:

1. Allow the identification of the primary teacher(s) and other educators for a subject/course and track their individual contribution(s) to student achievement.
2. Plan and evaluate professional development activities tailored to student outcomes and specific academic standards, objectives, and pedagogy.
3. Support accountability models including those based on longitudinal data.
4. Support fund allocation formulas.
5. Examine teacher prep programs across colleges, universities and other program providers using student achievement.

Characteristics:

The Teacher of Record definition should:

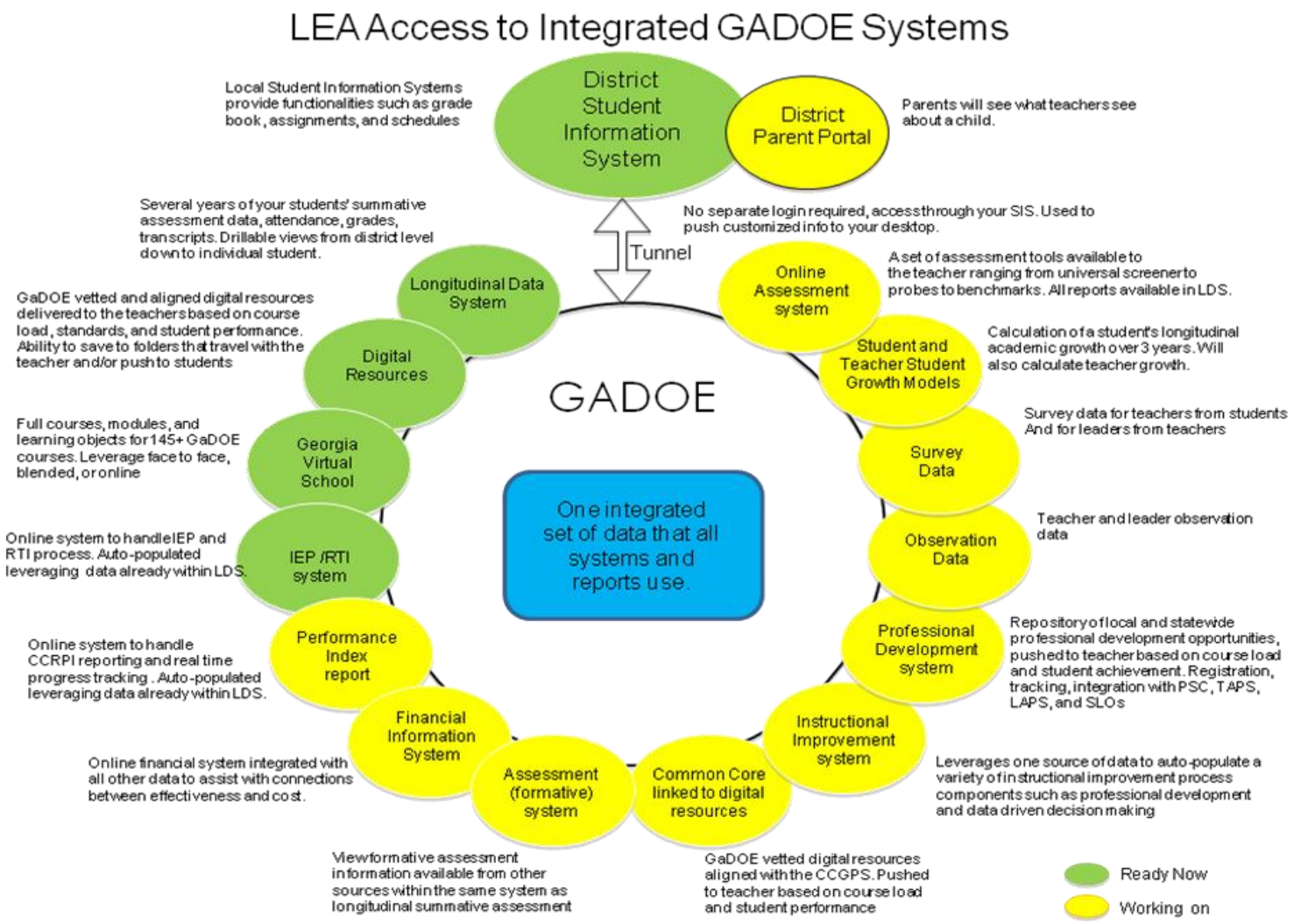
1. Be flexible to cover all grade levels, pre-K through 12.
2. Accommodate teacher assignment changes and turnover during the course of the semester or year.
3. Be supportable by current systems and data collection methods.
4. Be clear and understandable for all stakeholders.
5. Be applicable to all teachers employed by school districts or the state education agency and cover all courses and subjects including virtual (online) courses.

Definitions:

A <u>Teacher of Record</u> is an individual (or individuals in co-teaching assignments) who has been assigned the lead responsibility for a student's learning in a subject/course with aligned performance measures.

A <u>Contributing Professional</u> is an individual who has been assigned the responsibility to provide additional services that support and increase a student's learning.

Appendix A
Georgia Tunnel



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* ***The Teacher-Student Data Link (TSDL) Project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and managed by the Center for Education Leadership and Technology (CELT). Lessons learned and materials developed are available at www.tsdl.org. For further information, contact Nancy Wilson at nwilson@celtcorp.com.***