Technology (TECH) Committee Meeting Summary
Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Welcome and Introductions
TECH Chair Dawn Gessel, Putnam County Schools (WV), welcomed members to TECH and explained the structure of Forum meetings leading up to the July virtual meeting. The June TECH meeting included two breakout discussions, one on learning management systems (LMS) at the local level, and one on statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDSs).

Breakout Group 1 Discussion: LMSs
LMS Use

- Two local education agencies (LEAs) present clarified that they had adopted an LMS long before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. A third LEA adopted an LMS during the pandemic as a solution and has successfully expanded its use. A fourth LEA continues a decentralized approach, giving individual schools freedom in how they manage learning.
- One of the long-time users stated that their LMS use was not student-facing, but that the system functioned as a storehouse for curriculum and professional development (PD) data, as well as a site for staff communication.
- One LEA, having used an LMS for more than a decade, has integrated it with several software platforms over the years, augmenting its capacity for handling staff searches and managing significant volumes of course and curriculum data. The LEA's use of the LMS has continued to expand, leaving schools and teachers well positioned for changing learning models during the pandemic.
- Another LEA shifted its priorities to become more accommodating of students and their families; this process includes offering the full spectrum of in-person, virtual, and hybrid learning environments, arranged to complement one another. LMS use has been invaluable here for managing curricula and assessments, to the extent of building a new curriculum for one subject area. This LEA had been permitted to offer virtual instruction for five years before the pandemic and was ready when the time came to fully move to remote learning.

LMS Data

- LMSs are used to collect data from pageviews in a web analytics service, including student logins, quiz completions, quiz start and finish times, and interactions with online materials.
- Stakeholder use depends on each teacher's way of using the platform. Some can gauge student mastery when using the system to align assessments with academic standards, while some use the LMS to study and optimize student experiences, an advanced extension of what teachers formerly gleaned solely from observations in the physical classroom.
- Automated roster and grade reports are essential—if teachers cannot use the system to pull grades from one system to another, they are not likely to adopt it for assessment. Ensuring that all software is compatible improves interoperability. Grade analysis software, as adopted by one LEA, also had a noticeable impact.

Challenges and Best Practices

- Challenges shared include
    - changing gradebook vendors multiple times caused feelings of instability among users;
    - training users and teachers in instructional design, design principles, and accessibility standards; and
    - training teachers, students, and parents about remote learning after it had already begun, using the online classroom to teach them how to use the online classroom.
- Encouraging teachers to think into the future to see the advantages of using an LMS and adopt the system for their work is a challenge; allowing a volunteer to use the system and become a supporter is a solution here.
- Most teachers do not have time to build out full courses in an LMS, especially at the elementary level. It is helpful to build out full courses for teachers and give them the freedom to modify as they deem necessary.

Future Opportunities

- The LEAs shared their view that K-12 education will be more interconnected, leading to improved analysis and feedback. They also predicted that K-12 education will shift from full courses to microlearning with smaller and more focused units that can be taught and retaught.
- Groups and further discussion about interoperability are needed. There will also be a general demand for increased LMS functionality and standardization, which must arise from conversations between vendors and users.
- Competencies, credentials, badging, and artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI+ML) have the potential to provide great help to teachers in the classroom and reduce burden.

<u>Breakout Group 2 Discussion: SLDSs</u>

SLDSs and the Pandemic

- One state education agency (SEA) moved from a strictly negative attendance model to a more robust, diverse, granular one and adopted a code for assessment exemptions. In some cases, students who had been granted exemptions took assessments anyway; this posed problems with shifting business rules.
- Other SEAs added new codes for participation and non-participation in virtual learning to address the pandemic; one concern is explaining the lack of 2019-20 assessment data to future data users who may not remember the pandemic. Annotating data, archiving business rules, and policy metadata are vital.
- One SEA is in the process of developing its own assessments, rather than modifying external assessments for its needs.
- For the states represented in this breakout group, their SLDSs did not face any pandemic-related data that could not be met.

SLDS Capacity

- One SEA has a statewide data system for PreK-12 data and a larger system that incorporates the first system and adds postsecondary and workforce data. Another SEA

with a PreK-12 data system is working to add more postsecondary and workforce data; however, an updated state privacy law is complicating this effort.
- One Regional Education Laboratory (REL) has found that relevant funding sources have become deprioritized during the pandemic.
- In addition to the ever-present need for more funding and staff, budgets must be passed in a timely manner to move forward with funding allocations and grant awards. SEAs are looking into funding from other sources in addition to federal and state funds.
- The Data Quality Campaign is organizing a webinar featuring some states that have used American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds to make progress on data systems (https://dataqualitycampaign.org/resource/federal-funding-for-eddata/).
- The dual-system SEA noted above is modifying the PreK-12 system to make it harder to enter incorrect data and plans changes to the larger system to accommodate this. The state is working hard to fill in the knowledge gap left by the prior SLDS leader that has departed from the agency.

Challenges, Best Practices, and Future Opportunities

- One SEA with a substantial rural population always has found the Internet to be a challenge, and a solution has yet to present itself. Even during quarantine, children in rural boroughs continued in-person learning because the remote option was simply not possible.
- Best practices noted are solid data governance, engaging key stakeholders when decisions are made, and keeping clean, clear metadata to document anomalies in attendance and assessment.
- One SEA worked with the governor and state legislature on the data system being used; the upper-level support this procured was beneficial.
- Ghedam Bairu, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), noted the Forum's collaboration with the SLDS Grant Program.
- Future possibilities include faster and more timely data delivery and service, increased data visualization, and improved agility of the SLDS (one state is migrating to the cloud for this purpose).

Reconvening and Next Steps

The breakout groups reconvened in the main room, where representatives from each breakout group reported summaries of their respective discussions.