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SSIS Questions for Phone Testimonies from other States
Rhode Island Department of Education
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QUESTION: What is current situation?

- do have a centralized student information system
- system as it is today: seven different SAP (school admin packages) that are spread all over the state
- because of competition/attrition, have two strong vendors, then five that may have a few (5, 10, 6 districts); Central Access Package (call SAMS) and one which is STI - new open version that's web-based; one has 102 districts (SAM) and 30-something (other)
- 9 reporting periods where those districts from fall enrollment send records to centralized database system (customized build ORACLE system) which has student, teacher, financial, demographic; incl. personnel, student schedules, vocational, etc.; very comprehensive
- an XML is sent each month (by the 10th) collect the previous month's data (e.g., sent in January, it's Dec's data); it's cleansed in-house; if there's something wrong, we send it back; send back a web-based report; they straighten out the data, then send it back up, it'll go through the same cleaning process; then into a holding area and sits there; the districts can go into the other area of the centralized system; the supt or principal has to look through the data and verify it; after approval, moved over to the permanent area

RFP

- RFP got canceled at the last minute; got a new superintendent and budget cuts didn't want to make districts spend additional funds; it's on hold due to the economy and budget
- currently looking to modify RFP to modify the process: on the level that RIDE is talking about
- wanted one SIS at all 152 districts to feed into state system; backload of bandwidth
- wanted to supply a standard package for everyone; all they want from it is 55% or 60% of state reporting requirements plus added functionality to benefit the districts and operate a school
- local piece was developed with the local districts - they determined their side (the functionality that was needed at the school level); state just made sure that it was consistent with what they needed
- going to send back out to vendors soon, but need to find out about RTTT first
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FUNCTIONALITY AND FRAMEWORK

- have uniform course description in MS; can be pushed down from state level when add a new course
- districts could add in extra agents as they want (different data collections)
- talked to other states; didn't want the big districts saying that they could manage things their way; so made a conscious decision that they didn't care where the data resides;

district could do it through an AFP model; could support it within their district or have the state hold it

- were going with a SIF component if a vendor came with a SOA or SIF component for horizontal movement of data
- moving forward from XML upload-only data
- both horizontal and vertical movement of data is very important to the state
- need to be able to access cumulative data at the student level
- state tracks the data as it's moving; having real time data is huge
- control bandwidth, update time
- looking for local component level (schools bringing in lunch programs, transportation programs, library programs, scientific programs, assessment information) - need some way that they can move data across more easily than an XML file so that the data isn't outdated when a student transfers
- take advantage of that technology; RTTT; as begin to tie-in cohort of students and looking to see teachers having an impact on a student; can track data to evaluate the teacher; if can't bring together this data, assessment will be flawed in the beginning
- total processing of data; if you want quality data, and want all components to come up with answers to the questions you're asking; any other way, will require additional man-hours, people, pulling files in, pulling files out, etc. and funding isn't exactly increasing
- even if there wasn't a vertical component, who could run a school system without a SAP (aka SIS); no one; so not talking about providing them something already doing, not an extra burden; if they go to real time and single state, actually taking a burden off of the districts; biggest burden is the guidelines we place on collecting data and uploading, etc; so remove them having to upload the data, and the state will just pull the data, and therefore that'll remove a burden;
- before we move it over to reporting servers/database through ETL process, give message to supts and do a verify - wouldn't have to have the message; don't have to do that anymore; would instead have to make sure that own data is clean and the data is the same
- pull additional burden of man-hours from them to do state reporting
- get away from the "your data looks like this" - instead, data just "is"; edits would be right at the entry level, so automatically where it comes in - fix it now or it can't be taken in; data isn't allowed if it's not clean
- 7 different packages now; spend development time, pulling it in; takes time and issues in fixing that
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QUESTION: What was the intention for funding (state pay, districts pay, etc.)?

- several different models:
- one we'd already applied for some $$ with legislature; 5-year plan; talking to several of the groups (not a formal survey taken in terms of costs); got cost samples of what districts are paying now;
- wrote a $3.4million SLDS grant to help this continue
- main thing was looking at whether to price it by ADA, school size, etc.
- don't know prices exactly until you put bid out and receive bids themselves; can do estimates, but can't exactly determine model until have the numbers/stats

- look at projects by economies of scale, pulling everything into one; cost may be cheaper in the long run
- some districts were willing to entertain paying a share but also those who want state to pay for it

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS:
- biggest obstacle is changing the way people think; convincing people that it's inevitable; to get to the level they're asking for in looking at data
- lack of understanding about where going or about benefits
- start looking at an advantage point of view
- start looking at the technology they need to run their schools; meet with data managers
- sell it as something that will help them do their job (they could care less about what the state wants)
- having some serious problems with their existing data; concerns were lying on deaf ears; were wanting a stronger voice around how/what the state does with data;
- state is answering a question that they have right now today; by answering those questions and responding to those problems by saying that the piece they use to do their everyday job is what we've
- also component of a database warehouse in this
- mixing up the technology - local schools have the same problems; have a piece where we'd be able to move over to a true data warehouse from the 'state level' v 'local level' and be able to do data mining
- where can really begin to bring in and feed data to post-secondary institutions
- there are no charter schools in MS

QUESTION: If you get one vendor will it be voluntary, mandated at state level or legislative mandate?
- legislation in MS that allows them to define the process
- state was going to be able to go "here's your new process"; even the 7 that they have now was somewhat mandated by the state; 7 SIS' were certified; had them for the past 8 years; can't go with anyone else but those SIS vendors (8-9-10 years)
- now know that there are some issues with even certifying 7
- justify vertical reporting, but working with 7 packages when new guidelines come around (teacher-student information/linking) which takes work when everyone has to modify them; capacity
- some with a smaller number gets down to a value; may hurt the smaller vendors who don't have the capacity to make the changes

SIF?
- They will move to a SIF
- right now it's XML; encrypted network and traverse it through XML

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