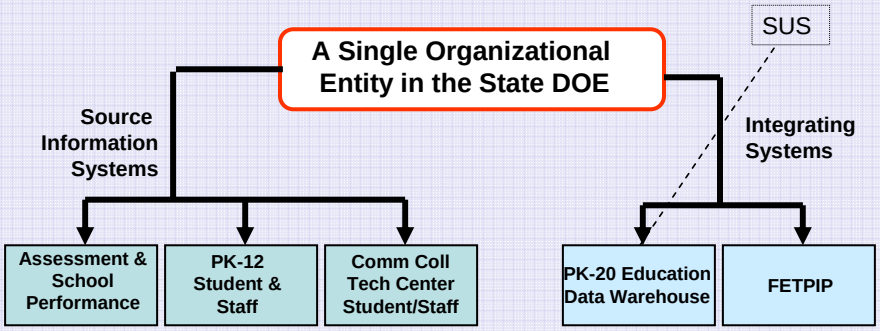
Lessons Learned in Developing and Supporting Florida's Longitudinal Education Data Systems

Jay Pfeiffer, Senior Associate
MGT of America
2123 Centre Pointe Blvd
Tallahassee, Florida 32308
850-386-3191

Florida's Comprehensive K-20 Data Systems

- ***The "Systems"***
  - **Public pre-kindergarten through graduate school with individual student & staff level data for public schools, community colleges, career and technical education, adult education, and the state university system as distinct management information systems.**
  - **A relatively recent single longitudinal repository combining all of these data across systems and joined with facilities, finance, and financial aid.**
  - **Post school employment and non education system program data**
- ***Dependencies***
  - **System of common course numbers and directories, K12 and postsecondary**
  - **Statewide articulation agreements and oversight committee**
  - **A state culture of data sharing**
  - **A means to follow the records of individual students across geographic areas, education sectors, and into the labor market and related services**

Florida's Primary K-20 Data Resources

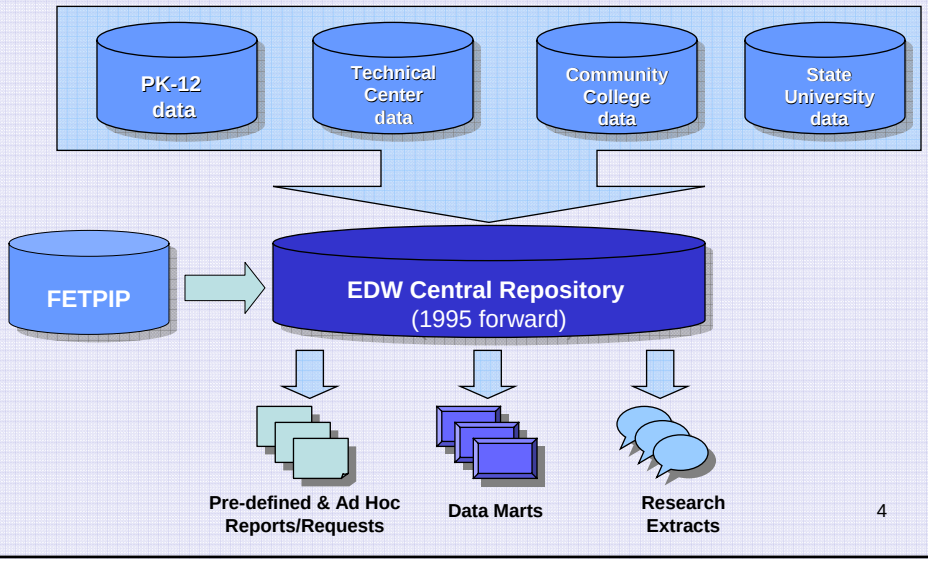


Data collected from testing vendors, school districts, community colleges

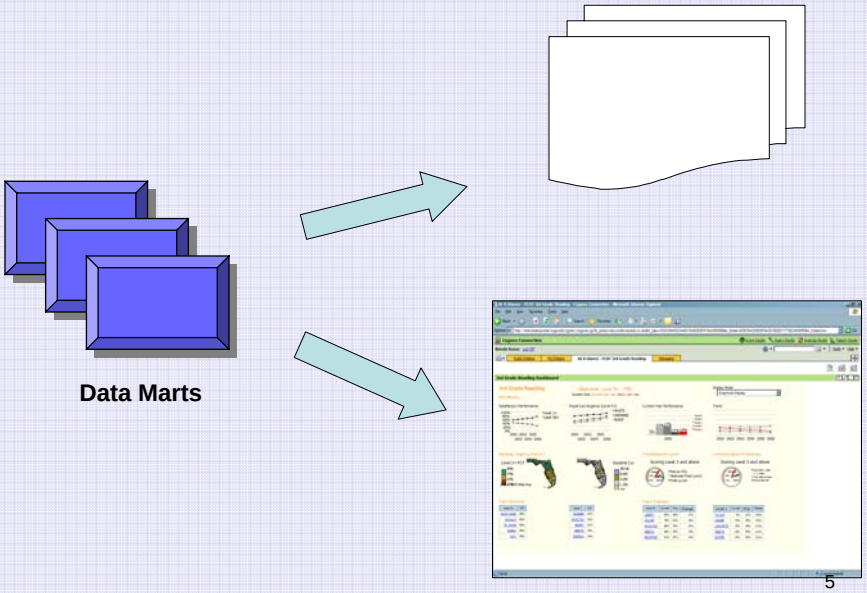
Data collected from source systems, agency administrative data bases

Additional roles include: Department-wide conduit for Labor Market Information, Economic Data, Census, related services and resources.

Florida's PK20 Education Data Warehouse



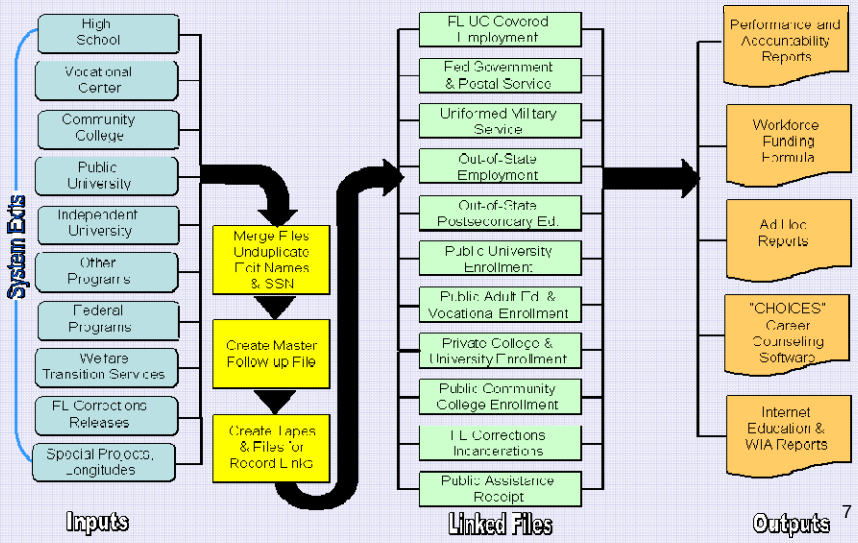
Reports and Dashboards



Types of Data in the Education Data Warehouse

- **Student** – demographic, enrollment, educational programs, promotion, attendance, test scores, awards, other characteristics
- **Staff-** Administrators, teachers, academic background, professional development, salaries, courses taught
- **Educational Institution** – types, location, facilities, design and uses
- **Courses** – offerings, student and teacher participation, instruction type
- **Financial Aid** – state/local, loans/grants, disbursement
- **Educational Finance** – budget, expenditures
- **Educational Facilities –** Design, size, use

FETPIP – The Florida Education &Training Placement Information Program



Types of Data in the FETPIP System

- **Students/Former Students** – Demographic, enrollment, educational programs, promotion, attendance, test scores, awards, other characteristics
- **Employment-** While or after enrolled, type of business, name of employer, size of employer, Florida only
- **Military Enlistment-** Branch of service, rank, military occupational specialty, any location
- **Federal/Postal Employment** – Location (anywhere), job code, salary code
- **Continuing Education** – Private and public postsecondary enrollments, adult education and vocational enrollments; postsecondary enrollments outside of Florida

Integrated, Longitudinal Education Data Have Many Uses

- **Administration**
  - Funding distribution and Equity
  - Performance funding
  - Access Planning
  - Class Size Planning
- **Data Marts/Reports**
  - Program Effectiveness – PK20
  - Teacher Preparation, Employment Characteristics & Performance
  - PK20 Pipeline/Alignment
  - High School Feed Back
  - Community College Feedback
- **Accountability**
  - Post school placement
  - "K16" Alignment
  - Student "growth"
- **Research**
  - Teacher Preparation and Development Best Practices
  - CHOICE Option Evaluations
  - Return on Investment
  - Evaluating Key Transitions for all Students

Integrated, Longitudinal Education Data Have Many Uses - continued

- **Research Partnerships**
  - CALDER at the Urban Institute
  - University level research
  - Foundations
  - Community College Research Center at Columbia University
- **Classroom Uses**
  - FACTS.Org, CHOICES
  - Contextual Information
  - Early Warning Systems
  - Transcript Exchanges, K20
  - Collaboration
- **Education-Related Uses**
  - Chafee Act, Foster Children
  - Welfare Dependency
  - Related Programs (Prison Education, Workforce Investment Act)
  - Economic Development

Challenges (part 1)

- **Administrative data are designed for purposes other than performance measurement**
  - Definitions, taxonomies may differ
  - Time periods may differ
  - What is measured may not be exactly what is desired
  - Administrative data change over time
- **Owners of Administrative Data have legal, ethical, proprietary obligations**
  - They won't naturally want to share
  - "Legal" beliefs may be conjured up
  - Program interests may be different from those of technical staff
  - The "owners" change over time

Challenges (part 2)

- **Confidentiality of Information**
  - Requirements may be different for each data source
  - The issue is complicated by legal issues as well as beliefs
  - Beliefs/requirements may change over time
- **Weakest Links**
  - The strength of a system of linked data sets is determined by the weakest of the data resources
  - Opponents will focus on the weaknesses
  - The data lag actual performance
- **Support**
  - On going, reliable funding
  - On going, reliable political support
  - Cooperative attitude among stake holders
  - All involved will change

What has worked for Florida's Education Data Systems?

Assure continuing support

- Statutory authority, provisions, including cross references with core funding from state appropriations
- Provide continuous services to legislative, executive staff
- Work with data owners, stakeholders in decisions about the mechanics of exchanges, processing and reporting results, changes in requirements, changes in technology, problem areas
- Anticipate roles that the system can play in accountability, performance measurement, cost return analysis, evaluation
- Make it easy for stake holders to participate, reduce burdens, provide data in exchange

What has worked for Florida?

Exceed requirements for privacy protection

- Establish a lead role for the state education agency
- Surpass all requirements, expectations regarding data security and privacy protection
- Limit uses to aggregate statistical purposes for evaluation, program improvement
- Keep data exchange agreements current and up-to-date
- Continuously brief employees, stake holders on security and confidentiality issues
- Always refer inquiries about particular resources, programs, and policies to the business owners

What has worked for Florida?

Keep up with Changes

- Meet changes, challenges head-on
- A leadership changes, make sure that understanding or, appreciation for data systems are part of transitional process
- Stay current with technology
- Continuously refresh a through understanding of resources, requirements, limitations
- Continuously seek new data resources, expand coverage
- Revise business rules as understanding, conditions change
- Maintain short & long term visions for the effort

Summary of Lessons Learned for Florida

1. *Establish goals and purposes for a state-level education information system**.***

2. *Articulate benefits and risks for everyone involved.*

3. *To the extent possible build on existing systems, expertise.*

4. *Pursue opportunities to provide service and share information – "Quid pro quo…"*

Lessons Learned

5. *Establish and maintain a culture of data and information integrity.*

6. *Exceed all requirements dealing with confidentiality and restricted release.*

7. *Secure ongoing support.*

8. *Recognize that change is constant, keep ahead of it.*

Lessons Learned

9. *Consider organizational structures that will facilitate merging data across educational sectors and joining data with agencies/organizations with related interests.*

10. *Umbrella Lesson: It's never over…*

Future Stuff

- **Continuous revision of business process and "connection" rules**
- **Continuous expansion of data system and data element content**
- **Consolidation of key reporting responsibilities**
- **Empower business owners within the Department of Education to extract data and customize reports**
- **Establish working relationships that will empower authorized, external "partner" agencies to join data from external resources, extract joined data, and customize reports**
- **Develop and adopt restricted access policies and processes for externally conducted research**