If you're having trouble viewing this email, you may see it online.

Share this: ✉ 🐦 f in

VLDS

VLDS E-Newsletter - October 2013

🐦 @VLDSinsights

#VLDS

**Virginia Secretary of Education Celebrates
the Governor's Technology Award with VLDS Agency Leads**

L to R. Wendy Kang (VCCS), Jeremy Deyo (VEC),Secretary of Education Laura Fornash and her Director of Education and Workforce Development Elizabeth Creamer, Tod Massa (SCHEV) and Bethann Canada(VDOE) Photo: Misty Kiser,

Welcome to the October Issue of the VLDS Insights E-newsletter. This issue introduces two content sections that will become regular features in future issues. The first, **Insights for Researchers**, will feature content specifically for the research community; the second, **Insights Explained**, will provide updates on how insights powered by VLDS are informing various stakeholders in the Commonwealth. As always, we'll update you on any VLDS news and events. Thanks for reading.

IN THIS ISSUE:

VLDS GOES LIVE!

After four years, thousands of cups of coffee, more than a hundred revisions to various RUDAs, scores of data governance meetings, the input of researches, technologists, engineers and an army of dedicated Commonwealth citizens and public servants, we finally did it. Late in the summer, VLDS went live! Congratulations to everyone who had a hand in creating this pioneering, Virginia-grown collaboration.

HIGH PRAISE FOR VLDS FROM FED ECONOMIST

This summer, VLDS was invited to demonstrate the system to economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond to explain what the system can and cannot do. According to one researcher, "I have worked with a few different data sets, including NLSY, PSID, SIPP and CPS, and I must say that the VLDS interface is the most research-friendly data interface that I have worked with [sic]."

INSIGHTS FOR RESEARCHERS

How Do Researchers Gain Access to VLDS?

VLDS provides researchers the ability to request and receive double de-identified data from across Virginia's education and workforce agencies, which can be

merged together to produce information that once was considered impossible, too time consuming, or too costly to obtain.

Now that VLDS has "gone live," it's time to jump in line and let the flood of valuable research begin, right? Well, unfortunately, we're not there yet. Remember, it has taken years to develop the system, and at this stage, VLDS must focus its limited resources on partner-agency sponsored research. These initial projects will help to test the system and improve it for future research.

So for now, here's a guide for researchers to prepare their projects for consideration

- VLDS research projects must meet rigorous evaluation criteria and standards before access is granted
- Researchers will be required to sign a contract and a non-disclosure agreement with a sponsoring agency
- Researchers are required to have the support and sponsorship of one of the partner agencies: VDOE, SCHEV, VEC or VCCS
- Researchers should be able to identify how their research will benefit the Commonwealth
- To gain sponsorship, research is required to have a clear objective that strictly addresses one or more of the following research questions:

1. How can Virginia improve high school graduation rates while increasing students' preparation for college and careers?
2. How can Virginia improve preparation, recruitment and retention of Virginia's educational personnel, including their meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and hard-to-staff schools?
3. How can Virginia improve performance of the public workforce system?
4. By what means can Virginia's public workforce development system meet the needs of job seekers/workers and employers?

It is important that researchers identify and stage resources for the project. For example, since VLDS data are, generally, in a raw, unstructured format, having a team member with experience structuring flat files into a relational database is essential. Securing funding or identifying potential funding sources will be important considerations when evaluating potential projects. Further, since agency resources are limited, the number and breadth of projects VLDS will be able to support will be limited. The VLDS team currently is assessing the system's capacity and working to determine the number and types of research projects we will be able to accept. We'll continue to update the research community as more information becomes available.

Contact Will Goldschmidt at **Will.Goldschmidt@doe.virginia.gov** with any questions about VLDS research projects.

INSIGHTS EXPLAINED

CCRI and VLDS, a Data Love Story

Over the past several years, an ongoing research project has been conducted that not only provided the inspiration for the creation of VLDS, but also benefitted from the collaborative efforts of its partner agencies. That program, Virginia's College and Career Readiness Initiative (CCRI), has been led by VDOE, in close partnership with VCCS and SCHEV. For nearly five years, CCRI's research-based insights have helped focus education reforms that better prepare high-school graduates for success in college and in their careers.

The rigorous empirical evidence that the CCRI produced has been leveraged to inform policy under two governors (one Republican, one Democratic), the legislature and the state Board of Education. In fact, the picture of the educational landscape revealed by the project has had a significant influence on the actions on state policies and programs geared to strengthen high-school graduates' preparation for college and careers.

Among its most noteworthy achievements, CCRI research insights have led to:

- revisions in Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in Mathematics and English;
- the establishment of college and career-ready performance expectations jointly developed and agreed to by VDOE, VCCS and SCHEV; and
- tougher requirements for Virginia's standard diploma to require a career-readiness credential.

Streamlined Process
Now that VLDS is live, the process to obtain results has been streamlined. According to Dr. Deborah Jonas, who directed the CCRI research program, "With VLDS we can now gain insights from the data much more quickly and efficiently. Researchers with approved projects can access data in weeks, rather than months, greatly reducing the time it takes to complete research projects. Ultimately, this will help the Commonwealth to become more nimble in informing program and policy decisions to improve the way we educate."

Jonas also pointed out that Virginia is a national leader in developing and using data from integrated data systems in secure environments that eliminate personal information from the data.

For more information visit the CCRI website on VDOE – **here**.

ABOUT VLDS
Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) is a pioneering collaboration for Virginia's future, giving

the Commonwealth an unprecedented and cost-effective mechanism for extracting, shaping and analyzing educational and workforce development data and more in an environment that ensures the highest levels of privacy.

Funded by the 2009 Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program of the United States Department of Education, VLDS is comprised of several component technologies that support secure, authorized research addressing today's key educational and workforce training questions. VLDS is the result of a shared effort by several Virginia government agencies.

Visit the VLDS **website** for more information.

Brought to you by:

Virginia Department of Education

State Council of Higher Education in Virginia

Virginia Employment Commission

Virginia Community College System

Virginia Information Technologies Agency

Virginia Tech

Center for Innovative Technology

For mdrtt info/rxldatiirgiein VLDS wvisit

VLDS complies with or exceeds state and federal privacy laws and guidelines.