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VLDS

VLDS E-Newsletter - March 2014

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INSIGHTS Conference Q & A

With Brooke Bell, Director of Research Services at CIT

VLDS: What is the process for selecting speakers?

Brooke: The theme of the Insights 2014 Conference is "Bridging the Data Divide," so we recruited speakers to share experiences and results that speak to the collaborative nature and power of Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS). Interest in VLDS research cuts across a wide cross section of stakeholders. In order to make the conference relevant to this diverse group of attendees, we created a balance of speakers to appeal to many interests, yet still maintaining focus on the power of using educational and workforce data.



VLDS: What is the goal of the conference this year?

Brooke: "Bridging the Data Divide" refers to the collaborative nature and enriching power of VLDS. The purpose of Insights 2014 is to celebrate the exciting insights revealed through VLDS research, to promote the use of data to improve and advance education, and to provide opportunities for networking and creating new partnerships. The current conference agenda can be found [here](#) and is constantly being updated with new information.

VLDS: Are there any changes from last year's conference to this year?

Brooke: This year, the conference will be held in Richmond as the Insights Conference will move around the Commonwealth in order to accommodate stakeholders from all regions. In addition, we've added more panel sessions to provide attendees with even more options for relevant and interesting presentations. Insights 2014 will highlight two keynote speakers who are proponents of the power and potential of educational and workforce development data: Aneesh Chopra, the former (and first) U.S. Chief Technology Officer and Karen Jackson, the Commonwealth's Secretary of Technology.

VLDS: Who should attend this conference and why?

Brooke: Insights 2014 is designed for a wide variety of stakeholders including, educators, researchers, and policymakers. Generally anyone with a passion for collaboration and educational/workforce research is encouraged to attend. We hope to see you there.

2014 VLDS INSIGHTS Conference



Date: June 24, 2014

Time: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Location: Hilton Richmond Hotel & Conference Center, Richmond, VA

Cost: Early-bird price \$75

Lodging information:

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hilton with a special rate, reserve your room [online](#) or by calling (800) 444-8667. Use the code: Insights Conference.

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INSIGHTS Explained

There is tremendous interest in the education community in how data can be used effectively and whether its use can affect educational outcomes. Forty seven states have or soon will have a state longitudinal data system commonly referred to as SLDS. That means that university researchers and state agencies will be collaborating at unprecedented levels and, in some cases, for the first time. Any system that requires collaboration among different groups of people with differing perspectives and goals, however, can present challenges as well as advances.

To gain a greater understanding of the cultural divide between the two groups as well as insights into how they can achieve a strategic alignment toward their shared missions, VLDS sponsored a research project called "Bridging the Data Divide." Virginia Commonwealth University's Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute and University of Virginia's Center on Education Policy and Workforce Competitiveness collaborated on a year-long examination of the dynamics between the state agencies and university personnel in Virginia, Texas, Maryland and Washington. Researchers conducted 71 hour-long interviews with individuals most directly involved with SLDS efforts. Fifty-eight percent of these interviews were conducted with representatives of state agencies, including 14 percent from workforce development, 13 percent from higher education and 10 percent from K-12. Thirty-nine

percent were conducted with university personnel, primarily university researchers involved with SLDS (31 percent), as well as smaller groups of individuals from each university's Office of Sponsored Programs (8 percent). In addition, two individuals representing the U.S. Department of Education were interviewed for a national perspective.

The resulting [project report](#) outlined the structural and cultural divisions between agencies and researchers, the areas where their missions coincided, and then provided 10 "guiding principles" that point the way toward more effective collaboration. These insights, powered by VLDS, will not only help VLDS maximize limited resources as it moves forward with new research partnerships in the Commonwealth, but it is also among the first meta studies of the SLDS process in the nation.

VLDS in the News

VLDS Featured on Forbes.com

In a recent article on the use of data in improving public school outcomes Forbes.com turned to Tod Massa for insights on how having the ability to track long-term outcomes is essential for any such use of data. [Read more...](#)

Bethann Canada presents to REL Southeast / REL Southwest and SXSWedu

Bethann Canada was one of the presenters for a Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast and Southwest webinar titled [Our State Has an SLDS: Now What?](#) Canada's [presentation](#) discussed issues related to the management and use of SLDS data. She was also featured on a panel at the [SXSWedu Conference](#) where she focused the [discussion](#) on how states are flipping the procurement process by "using principles such as user-centered design, crowdsourcing, prototyping and co-creation to bring procurement into the modern age."



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For more information on VLDS, visit
<http://vlds.virginia.gov>

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