



**To: Representative Tarwater and Members of the Special Committee on Workforce Development**

**From: Torree Pederson, President/CEO, Aligned**

**Date: 21 November 2022**

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the need for a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). I am Torree Pederson, President and CEO of Aligned, a coalition of business leaders committed to improving Kansas's education system. Aligned was founded on the premise that the business community has the obligation, opportunity, and capacity to increase the college and workforce readiness for all students. Aligned is focused on creating alignment between business and education, removing the systemic barriers keeping them apart and encouraging regular and on-going collaboration between the two. Every. Student. Prepared. is our vision for Kansas.

**The Problem:**

As business leaders, we understand the importance of data to run our organizations. After reviewing the education to workforce data available in other states across the country, we see the need for the creation of a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) with ongoing maintenance and management in Kansas. Business leaders lack the workforce needed to maximize their potential. As a result, leaders are asking what we can do to ensure students are aware of high-skill, high-wage jobs in Kansas. A statewide longitudinal data system is needed to answer research questions and craft solutions to support and maintain a 'grow your own' pipeline in Kansas.

**The History:**

Governor Laura Kelly created the Governor's Council on Education in 2019. One of its subcommittees on workforce recommended a State Longitudinal Data System to tie PK-12 education outcomes to workforce outcomes. KSDE responded swiftly to this request and successfully connected PK-12, higher education, and labor data using deidentified student information in 2019/20. Unfortunately, this one-time data linkage has not been analyzed or used for research purposes. KSDE officials believe they cannot outsource this data for this purpose due to State Statute – 72-6314 (attached). Due to the strict provisions in the statute, the department is concerned using data to examine workforce outcomes may violate state law.

**The Solution:**

The state should consider the creation of a State Longitudinal Data System with ongoing maintenance and management. Capacity does not exist within KSDE to do large-scale longitudinal research. We recommend

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partnering with a research university or organization to make maximum use of the data that already exists. Deidentified system outputs could be shared with and analyzed via a secure sharing and reporting MOU with an approved agency (i.e., higher ed research institution). Lawmakers should consider revising Kansas state statute 72-6314 to ensure legal compliance with data sharing and research. Researchers should use the information to answer questions proposed by community and business leaders across the state, which include:

**\*\*\*Workforce Indicator Questions**

- What percentage of individuals who earn industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) enter the Kansas workforce upon credential or degree completion?
- For students who begin a postsecondary program of study (certificate or degree) in a given field, what differences do we see in high school preparation and experiences between those who complete programs and those who do not? After five years, how many are still in the Kansas workforce?
- For students who begin a postsecondary program of study (certificate or degree) in a given field, what differences do we see in high school preparation and experiences between those who complete programs and those who do not?
- Do individuals participating in internships have higher employment rates and wages following graduation than individuals who do not participate in an internship?
- Is there a difference for students who received state/federal grants vs. to those who did not?
- What percentage of students who complete postsecondary STEM programs inside or outside of Kansas stay in or return to Kansas to work after graduation? In what industries are they employed?
- What changes have school districts and postsecondary programs made in program offerings in regions with high-demand professions but a low number of students in preparation programs aligned to those demands?
- To what extent are individuals working in the industries aligned to their high school experiences and/or postsecondary preparation?
- Where did workers receive their education and training for new or expanding industries? Are education and training programs aligned with the industry in which they work?

I would be happy to respond to any questions and assist the committee in continuing to study this issue. A detailed information brief is available for your review. Thank you.

Torree Pederson  
President/CEO Aligned

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