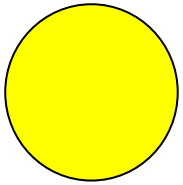
Little Hoover Commission

Information Technology Progress Update

August 25, 2011

Project Overview Report

Project Name: California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS)
Department/Agency Sponsor: California Department of Education
Total Project Cost: $15,291,844
Amount Spent vs. Anticipated To Date: $10,761,189
Timeline (# of Fiscal Years to Complete): June 2012
Total Percent Complete: 70 percent
Months Ahead/Behind Schedule: See status timeline below



Progress Indicator:
Yellow

Key Vendors: IBM
Business Need: For many years, the California Department of Education (CDE) has collected student and teacher data from schools and districts. The majority of the data was collected on Information Day (the first Wednesday in October) as part of a data collection known as the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS). Schools and districts reported to CDE, aggregated counts of students by school, grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity. The data was not submitted with a student identifier of any kind and, therefore, was not longitudinal. Longitudinal means data gathered on individuals that can be connected year to year over time. Along with enrollment counts, schools and districts also submitted counts of dropouts, and graduates, along with an annual census of English learners. Because these counts were aggregated at the school level, none of the data could match students from year to year. National Focus on Student and Teacher Level Data Reporting: As previously mentioned, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 increased the amount of data states must collect from schools and districts. Studies have responded by authorizing longitudinal data systems for student and teacher level data. Federal reporting now requires that states be able to collect and track data on students over time. By this fall, all states are required to report graduation rates by tracking individuals from the time they enter ninth grade to their expected year of graduation four years later. This is referred to as the four-year cohort graduate rate and California just released this cohort rate for the first time in July.

California's Response For Longitudinal Student and Teacher Data: In 2002, Senate Bill 1453 (Alpert) established the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). It stated, "In order to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, California must have access to longitudinal pupil data to assess the long-term value of its educational investments and programs and provide a research basis for improving pupil performance." SB 1453 requires all schools and districts (including charter schools) to acquire and maintain a Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) for each of their K-12 public school students. It also requires the creation of a longitudinal student data system using the SSID that includes demographic, program participation, assessment data (CAHSEE, STAR and CELDT) and highly qualified teacher data. The system must be able to meet all federal reporting requirements, including four-year graduation and dropout rates.

Along with meeting federal reporting requirements, the goals of the system are to:
• Provide a better means of evaluating educational progress and investments over time;
• Provide LEAs information that can be used to improve pupil achievement;
• Provide an efficient, flexible, and secure means of maintaining longitudinal statewide pupil level data in a manner that promotes good data management practices.

Current Status and Project Phase: • January 2008 IBM starts work on the $13.9 million contract
• August 2009 Administration functionality implemented
• October 2009 Fall 1 Data Collection implemented
• October 2010 Fall 2 Data Collection implemented
• April 2011 Spring Data Collection implemented
• December 2011 Student Assessment Results to be implemented
• June 2012 End-of-Year Data Collection to be implemented

Milestones and Accomplishments: Generally speaking, there are five basic phases of CALPADS implementation. Four of these phases are data collections and the last phase is a loading of student assessment data into the system.
Phase 1 is a data collection called Fall 1: This collection consists of enrollment counts and exit records which are used to calculate graduation and dropout rates. This is a collection of student data which also includes grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, English learner status and some program designations, such as special education and migrant. This phase has been implemented for two years and 99 percent of all local educational agencies (LEAs) were successful in submitting the data to CALPADS. Official enrollment, graduate and dropout counts were reported through CALPADS in 2009-10 and 2010 11.

Phase 2 is a data collection called Fall 2: This collection consists of collecting information about certificated staff and their assignments, the courses students are taking and the courses that teachers are assigned to teach. It also collects some characteristics of these courses (AP, independent study, EL services, whether a teacher is highly qualified to teach a course, etc). This data was collected for this first time in 2010-11 and approximately 85 percent of the LEAs were successful in submitting the data to CALPADS.

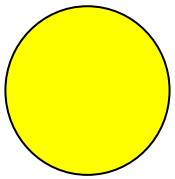
Phase 3 is a data collection called Spring 1: This collection consists of the annual census of English learners by language and the services they receive. This data was collected for the first time in 2010-11 and approximately 85 percent of the LEAs were successful in submitting the data to CALPADS.

Phase 4 is a data collection called End-of-Year: This collection consists of the courses students have completed and the grades/credits they have earned (in grades 7-12 departmentalized classes in traditional schools). This also includes some student program participation information (such as counts of students who have received Title I services or Homeless student counts). This data has not yet been collected and is scheduled to begin collecting the data from school districts in June 2012.

Phase 5 is not a data collection: However, it is a process by which CDE loads historical assessment data into CALPADS so that individual and aggregated student scores can be accessed by schools and districts. This phase has not yet been implemented and is scheduled for completion in December 2011.

Major Changes: All five phases of the system were to be completed and implemented by the contractor, IBM, in 2009-10. Although the first phase of the system (Fall 1) was released on time in the Fall 2009, the system almost immediately began having performance issues. In January 2010, our independent oversight consultant, Sabot Technologies, issued a report that noted technology, personnel, oversight and governance deficiencies. As a result, the former Superintendent issued a direction to IBM to stop any new work on the system until they had corrected the deficiencies of the Fall 1 implementation. IBM responded to the report by hiring additional staff, correcting defects in the system and implementing a quality control process to mitigate future risks to the project. CDE responded to the report by redirecting resources to provide more oversight and established an improved governance model. It took multiple months for IBM to correct the deficiencies and provide stability to the system. Although the result was a successful submission of data for Fall 1 from 99 percent of LEAs, it also delayed implementation of the other phases of the system to the following school year.

In Fall 2010, IBM made progress toward implementing the rest of the phases, but the system continued to experience performance issues. In February 2011, Tom Torlakson, the new Superintendent of Public Instruction, issued a notice of default to IBM and required them to submit a corrective action plan. Since that time, IBM increased their staffing, corrected defects in the system, and successfully implemented three of the phases (Fall 1, Fall 2 and Spring 1). Recognizing improvement, CDE recently lifted the notice of default. IBM is still working to complete the last two phases of CALPADS. The $13.9 million contract specifies that CDE pay IBM for specific deliverables. To date, IBM has been paid approximately half of the $13.9 million contract based on the successful delivery of the phases they have implemented.
Staffing Issues: Initially, project performance was negatively impacted by a lack of coordination between IBM and the project manager that CDE contracted with to oversee the project. In an effort to correct this deficiency and in response to an independent oversight consultant recommendation, CDE created and hired a civil service project manager to effectively manage the project and provided technical resources where needed for project oversight. IBM replaced their Project Manager, increased staffing, and brought in additional expertise to support the project
Lessons Learned: One lesson learned is the inherent risk of a selection process that relies too heavily on cost. A process that weighs heavily on costs provides incentive for vendors to underestimate the scope of the project. CDE has recently recommended to the Department of General Services through a formal letter that the percent of weight to procurement be adjusted for future projects. The other lesson learned is the need to develop internal capacity and resources and rely less heavily on a large contract with a single vendor.

 Progress Indicator: Yellow	**Justification:** A rating of yellow is based on the monthly project status reports submitted to the California Technology Agency. Although a previous rating of red was assigned to the project, the current status has been yellow since February 2011.