**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Workforce Data Integration and Planning:**

**Three States, Three Models, Three Regional Approaches!**

**A look behind the scenes in Missouri, Kansas, and Massachusetts**

**Wednesday, June 14, 2017**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

JEN JACOBS: So again, we want to welcome you to today's webinar – and if you haven't already done so, please introduce yourself in that chat window.

And I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Cheryl Martin. She's the program manager of TAACCCT grants at the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Cheryl?

CHERYL MARTIN: Good afternoon and thank you, everybody. I'm delighted that so many folks have come here – we've been watching the states roll in as you log where you're from there and I think practically everybody's represented.

Let's take a look at that – where you're from on the chat – I mean on the polls. So it looks like the largest number of folks are from the state agency of labor – whatever you call yourselves in your state, lot of folks from local areas and from education as well, some of you are TAACCCT grantees, some of you are not and some of you are like, what's a TAACCCT grant? So we'll explain that in a minute.

I would like to introduce my – as Jen said, I'm Cheryl Martin. I manage these mysterious grants for DOL called TAACCCT. They are one of the many discretionary grants that DOL gives out, and we'll talk about that in a minute. But my colleague Andy Ridgeway is also here; he works on the formula side. And I'll ask him to say something in a moment.

But you can think about discretionary grants as seed money; an opportunity to try new things. And we often talk about how to share the learnings from those discretionary grants with the formula side and with anybody else who might care, and this is one of those opportunities. So we're really delighted to have the opportunity to do that here today. Andy?

ANDREW RIDGEWAY: Yeah. Thank you, Cheryl and thank you, for the opportunity today to join you and our presenters and help share some of the exciting work that the TAACCCT grants have done to integrate data and to use it to improve service delivery.

I'm excited to have this discussion as states and locals are developing, modifying and implementing their data systems under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. So that we can find ways that the workforce system can use data to improve services to workers and businesses.

And I'd also like to remind people that we're not going to be doing – this is not a wheel of performance webinar, per se – but we wanted to talk a little bit about how not just for performance. You can use data beyond performance to improve service delivery; things like displaying training provider data and outcomes, integrating case management systems, and effective ways to leverage labor market information to help workers find jobs and businesses to find workers.

So with that in mind, I'll turn it back over to you Cheryl to introduce today's presenters.

MS. MARTIN: All right – thank you, Andy. We are really delighted to have three folks here to tell us about their experiences with data integration. And you know that's going to be fun because that's always a fun thing to do.

We have Dawn Busick-Drinkard from Missouri.

We have Debra Mukulka's (ph) right-hand woman, Christa Smith, who is here from Kansas, from Washburn University of Topeka. And she's here because Debra had a voice issue today. So Debra will be in the background – thank you, both for being here – and Dawn as well.

And then we also have Kathleen Kirby from Massachusetts who will be talking about what they're doing with data integration there.

Finally we have brief remarks from Kim Vitelli, who's also from U.S. DOL, Office of Workforce Investment. And before we dive into what the others are going to say, we want to ask Kim to set the stage for this and give us a little bit of the bigger picture about WIOA data integration. Kim?

KIMBERLY VITELLI: Thanks, Cheryl. It's good to be with all of you during workforce development week. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, all of our workforce programs have to align and coordinate our services, which means we need to pay attention to the data and processes and IT systems that support this work.

And the law actually requires state unified plans to address how state agencies will align and integrate various types of data. And states have been coming up with really creative ways to do this, and DOL's also been working to support these efforts.

I feel like these integration efforts fall into the categories of good data, good systems and good connections across those systems when we have all of those we can have seamless and high quality services to job seekers and businesses; and those job seekers and businesses can use data to make informed choices and the public gets easy to understand data about how well things are working.

One of the activities going on in the good data category is the Workforce Data Quality Initiative – which you'll sometimes hear people call WDQI. ETA has awarded five rounds of these grants and is reviewing applications for round six, and aim to develop an enhanced state workforce longitudinal database.

Workforce Connect falls into the good systems and good connections across systems category. Workforce Connect is a software suite of tools that was built by the National Association of States Workforce Agencies IT Support Center, in consultation with states, to help state data systems to connect – to better serve unemployment compensation claimants, and it's had an added bonus of integrating services from many others as well.

Some of the tools that fall into that Workforce Connect software suite include single sign-on, integrated registration as well as a workforce profile dashboard where states can share online information for job seekers like tailored job postings and information about job fairs or training opportunities.

These kinds of open source technology solutions can really work to add functions and to connect systems so the department is continuing to partner with our sister federal agencies and with NASWA to create a WIOA IT Support Center to help support the technology work related to WIOA implementation.

The WIOA IT support center, once it's fully operational, will provide and coordinate technical assistance, and best practices, and training, and software tools and even advisory services to states to help support quality IT solutions and to support the sharing and replication of good IT models and practices – all those bottles for good systems and good data and good connections across systems.

Data integration has been a feature of a lot of states work and as these grants and projects progress we'll be able to share more profiles like the great ones we're hearing today in the future as well.

Some of the Workforce Innovation Fund grantees have been working on data system integration. Their re-employment services integration grants that were awarded in June also allow grantee states to integrate and improve their IT systems for serving job seeker customers.

And a new data stream will become more consistently available across the states and to the public when the eligible training provider data reporting is finalized. And states can start reporting ETP data – that eligible training provider data – in our program year 2018. The University of Chicago is already working with states on some tools to help the states digest the data from the eligible training providers and report on those training provider outcomes.

So the efforts to connect data and systems to deliver quality education and training to as many people as possible and as many modes as possible runs through all of our grant programs, not just WIOA and not just TAACCCT. The TAACCCT grants have really increased the ability of community colleges to address the challenges of the workforce.

Some of those states spent extra resources on the data underpinnings of that work and that's what we're going to get to hear about today. The implications of their work, as Andy was pointing out, stretches far beyond TAACCCT and can be really useful for the entire workforce system.

So Cheryl, can you tell us some more about TAACCCT?

MS. MARTIN: Sure can, Kim. Thanks.

So for those of you who answered the question, what is TAACCCT – or those of you who could have – it's one of the many discretionary grants that the Department of Labor gives out. And this particular one was four rounds totaling $1.9 billion that went to community colleges working in partnership with the workforce system, and employers, of course. And the last round was in 2014. That included some extra funds to folks who were doing some extra things, and one of those extra things you could do was data integration.

And so the three folks that are on the call today, each got some additional funds in their grant to do with their talk – going to talk about today.

So I'm going to keep this moving because I want to give them as much time as possible. But, today we're going to basically hear from them about what they are doing with integration – and I think it's better to let them explain it than for me to do that. But before I do that I'm just going to say we will try to take some questions at the end to the extent that we have time. So keep putting them in there.

I also wanted to say that in the file share you will see some resources that each of these folks shared with us and when they get to their resources they can talk about those briefly. But, all you have to do is click on it and then you'll be able to download it. And you can use those – there's samples and examples of things that if you're interested in what they are saying you'll find information there.

So without further ado, I would like to get to the people that you really want to hear from here. And let's move to Dawn Busick-Drinkard. Dawn, tell us about what you are doing in Missouri.

DAWN BUSICK-DRINKARD: Right. Good afternoon everybody this is Dawn Busick-Drinkard and welcome to the Show Me State's presentation of how we're using data integration with our TAACCCT funds.

So we were very fortunate as one of those original 32 states back in 2012 that was granted an original WDQI – the Workforce Data Quality Initiative – and they built, with that grant, years past, a wage explorer. And through the development of that very first system was an inner agency super MOU with all of our statewide partners. And then system was built around to support a wage explorer tool that would help students and employers and just the general public look at if I was a degree-seeking student, what programs support occupations and what do those occupations pay. And that was developed back in 2012 and implemented there.

So then comes along TAACCCT, and TAACCCT was for the community colleges and so we are a statewide consortium, Missouri Workforce Innovation Network – MOWIN. We consist of 13 two-year publicly funded institutions state wide. And we saw the TAACCCT as an opportunity to develop a similar system, or a sister system that could sit next to the original one that was built back in 2012.

However, with this system, it would address non-credit – those adult learners who are seeking industry credentials directly related to occupational pathways. So we had a really good launching – (recording skip) – do this because of this super MOU that we had with all the state agencies. So we had our department of elementary and secondary education, our department of higher ed, our family services division, our state division of workforce development and our department of labor, which is where our UI wage data resides on those systems.

So by having that super MOU everybody was already signed on and we had an opportunity to renew that MOU when the TAACCCT grant came about. And so we did, in 2015, renew that MOU, and so everybody came back on board and made that re-commitment to build a new system to address and to collect data and to be able to begin reporting now in a scorecard fashion and to build PON, the wage crawler, to add the non-traditional, non-credit students that we serve.

So when that happened in 2015, about that time we did a student census and there were 100,000 students registered in our community colleges statewide, enrolled in credit seeking degree programs of study, versus we had 125,000 adult learners enrolled in our non-credit workforce training programs looking to get industry credentials to get back into the labor market sooner than the two years it would take to get a degree. So it really justified why we went forth with this initiative.

So we began building a supplemental non-credit data file. And to do that we invited all of our community college representatives – and that would include somebody on your college campus like an institutional research person who already does the reporting to your state department of higher ed – that then rolls into your state's IPEDS data.

We invited the colleges' IT directors because we knew this would have some IT impact on how to build another system for the colleges to sustain and support long after the grant. We invited our public workforce agency, the division of workforce development, their staff came on board with this statewide data advisory task force.

We had our Missouri department of higher ed. We invited our department of economic development – Missouri's Economic Research Information Center, otherwise known as MERIC – to chair the committee and to chair the project, to help us build and develop this statewide system.

So the statewide task force began meeting around 2015-2016, which is a task force of about 65 individuals from around the state to build this data dictionary; in other words, what are all the fields we want to collect. We know what we collect now currently and report to IPEDS in so much as the credit seeking students, but we didn't have a data dictionary established for this non-credit.

And as you know, there is a different. Typically a non-credit student just comes in and fills out a very simple application – we didn't collect social security numbers on them – all of – they don't do FAFSA – these are really simpleized (sic) applications to take a non-credit, job training program.

So we utilize the credit data dictionary and then took it to the committee and we went through a vetting process – what is it that we need, what is it we must have, how is it that the information will be used so everyone – every college and the administrators have a way to better tell their story of what the return on investment is of our non-credit completers of these programs of study and where are they getting hired.

Once the students' data is placed into this system then we take that system and we match it to our wage data and we can come out with some really unique reports.

So that's the crux of how we all decided that, yes – the number itself, the 100,000 credit seeking students versus the 125,000 non-credit job training students – we really needed to find out what the story is there and where our return on our investment is – because more than – over 90 percent of them are placed in a job immediately after completion of that program of study and earning those industry credentials or very soon after.

And so to build a system such as this, it did take on a lot but we had just gotten through it for building the credit system back in 2012 so we knew that this was a great opportunity to connect with our workforce partners with a tool that they could use as well as our colleges, or a job seeker, or a parent looking for a right training program for their children to pursue to get them into the labor market upon high-school completion.

So these are just some screen shots – these next few slides I'm going to share with you. But this is what – this hasn't launched; this is a beta site currently. We are in phase three of developing this system so it's not open to the public yet, but it will be launched to the public next year.

So to start with that, we began with several filters that can be applied to search programs of study that are connected directly to occupations. And then you can search by location. We have several filters like a zip code or the number of files from a particular zip code, you can search by county, you can search by your workforce board region; you can search by the college. Several filters here that you could apply to begin your search once you get to the system.

And then we have specifications once it comes up. Say you search by program of study. It'll bring up the example screen that you have here based on your filters that you utilize. Twenty-three records were found, it comes back, and then you can continue to progress it on out.

Another thing is – we happily got through this – as you all know, that WIOA was implemented, and with that came some new guidelines for the ETPS system. So as I said, partially half-way through this, we decided to bring our ETPS partners along and help them design and develop their system that will also feed into this new database that we were building here.

So then we made that decision and along with that the ETPS-connected – system is connected to our credit and our non-credit scorecards.

So it was really beneficial that – this is a tool not just for the colleges but it's a tool for the public workforce system itself – meaning our state and regional boards and their staff and their career centers. It's a system that can be used for college administrators as well as job seekers. When you're looking for a program of study, insomuch how is it connected to a certain occupation and what are the average wages of that occupation, you can search statewide, you can search by region.

So for instance, this here, we're looking at an associate in arts degree. And you can see, are they WIOA approved, are they Pell eligible, the program category, a brief description and there's financial information that you can dig down even further – deeper from that. What is the cost of the tuition? And you can evaluate the performance of every college that offers this same program of study that has been WIOA approved, because it's connected to that new ETPS system.

Other things that we detail is the zip code. We will also connect to each colleges course online catalog. There is a brief description about what the program of study, is it credit, non-credit, apprenticeship; are there certain admission requirements.

At the bottom of the screen we will delineate all the different types of cost to that program of study. How much is the tuition for a resident, out of district, non-resident, are there additional fees that apply, are their costs for supply – say you're taking a nursing program and the scrubs and things like that. We have effective dates on these so they know the – the user will know how refreshed the information is and then we also have a category for refund policy.

Another screen that you will see when you get into this is it details information about the school. So that first screen shows you all the various schools that would have a nursing program. And then you can click on that school and start doing your own comparative analysis to make an informed decision. In other words, is it a main campus program of study?

What type of institution is it? Do they have institution wide transfer rates? Do we provide information about the population that that college serves? Is there a web address? Are there different training sites? Is half of it hybrid online, is the other half in seats; in an actual campus classroom? We have contact people's names and phone numbers, e-mails – also we will note, is the school accredited?

For a public side of this, here are some demographics that a parent or a student or a workforce case manager in a career center could look at about the performance of the program. So the demographics of it – in other words, here's the program, here's the age of the students that normally take this program of study; and then similar programs within Missouri. It helps give you that comparative analysis.

Student records are matched with the employment and wage records from the quarterly census of employers and wages submitted by our employers here in Missouri – so that's where that connection to that DOL wage data information, and then the information is then identified and results are shown in aggregate matter. So that's what gives us our demographic measure – our age, gender, race, ethnicity as well.

When you go to the performance it'll start talking about performance measures. What are the earnings; the median earnings of one to three years after that student completes that program? The credentials attained; how many, what is the percentage of students that attain that credential in a certain period of time. And then the payroll employment rate; the percentage of completers, one to three years after they finish, what is the employment rate of those completers in that programs of study.

And this is all really good information, again, that the job seekers, if they were to take this training program – these are expectations that they could have to help them select which college to attend – which occupation that they're looking at – which career training, is it a credit – do I have time for a two-year program or do I need some quick, non-credit job industry credentials training now that would benefit – that are directly connected to occupation?

We have the employment rates as well – 2013, '14 and '15. All of our colleges have been uploading their data for the non-credit students, effective last July 1. So it will take time to populate our database. But they've been submitting data quarterly to the statewide database since last July of 2016.

So right now as we continue to watch and even though this isn't open – we are in the beta site to see how the schools are doing uploading their student information. The database will eventually be fully populated and we'll have a full three years. Three years from now when we look back we'll have a lot of robust information that will benefit many, many people.

And then on the backside of this, we have a public side of this system and then we have a backside of this system. And on the backside is just for the colleges themselves – the administrators – where they can generate reports at the college administrator of all their programs of study on how many students has enrolled in that program, how many completers, how many non-completers, have they earned a credential; how many of them got jobs that were directly connected to the occupations connected to that program of study.

So as a college administrator, and a higher ed administrator, you'll be able to evaluate which of your programs are performing and at what level. And this is a really good, insightful tool. And the report generating is not open to the public, like I said. It is on the backside of this system and it is for our higher education leaders.

So we do have some planned enhancements – where we're going to go forward. We plan to add career exploration tools to this. We're going to integrate it with occupational projections. Our state department of economic development – MERIC – that division publishes a report annually on Missouri high demand projected occupations. They do a report so we plan to play it more with that. We continue to partner with our public workforce system to modify the ETPS system and how to make that system easier to do batch uploading for all these programs of study.

And right now, it's just limited to our TAACCCT colleges – because this is a great way, when you design and develop a new system, to just use a small pilot of colleges – and that would be our two-year institutions here in Missouri, all of our community colleges, and with the TAACCCT brand so our TAACCCT graduates are all enrolled into this system, the data is shared.

And then we plan to, as this gets out and we vet it more with higher education leaders, we plan to add more detailed reporting so that they're getting what they expected out of this to help better tell their story, out of all these non-credit students, who's performing, and maybe do some comparative analysis between credit and non-credit students that are attaining jobs in the occupations that we're training them in.

Other ways that we use our TAACCCT grant is in support of our Career Pathway publications. And these publications are administered and developed, designed by the Missouri Economic Research Information Center. They're shared with not only just our colleges and our academic advisors, navigators and retention specialists who share them with students often because they are refreshed every other month, but we do share these tools with our public workforce development partners. So all of our WIBs – our WIBS staff. We have 40-some career centers throughout the state. They all have access to these same career pathways.

And what that does is the case manager can advise a WIOA client in an academic career pathway – and they're doing it with the same information that the colleges are now. The next step would be to bring our K-12 system aligned. So everybody is using the same career pathway here in Missouri. And that means a lot – I think repetition with students, all the way into adulthood, we're helping them become informed labor market decision makers.

They say 18 careers for our up-and-coming students. This way they know where to so seek this information at and to get refreshed data so the career pathways are constantly in our high demand occupations and industries are being updated. And you can pull these out on a statewide level as well as a regional level. And you will see in the file share of this webinar there are two documents there – the regional career pathway and the statewide career pathway – that each of you can download and take a look at – maybe share with your department of labor or your state workforce or economic development agency and inquire about some consistent, truly connected pre-K all the way through 20 career pathway publication.

This is counted as a best practice through the Department of Labor. But we're really excited to be able to utilize our TAACCCT funds to build such innovative tools such as these that will help us all work smarter and not harder but – to better serve our students to make sure that they are on the best career pathway that meets their needs, their desires, their wishes and results in actual jobs connected to the training that they're receiving at our community colleges.

So with that, I know we'll wait until questions at the end. I'll turn it back over to you Cheryl.

MS. MARTIN: Great. Thank you, Dawn. That is so exciting. And for those of – you have 350 of you who are on this call – if you can believe it we have a lot more excitement to come so let's quickly turn it over to Christa Smith from Kansas.

CHRISTA SMITH: Hi. Thank you for the introduction. Hello, everyone. I'm Christa Smith, the Research Analyst for the KanTRAIN TAACCCT grant project at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. Debra Mukulka, the KanTRAIN project director, is a little under the weather so I'll be presenting the slides today on her behalf.

A little background first on partnerships before we dive into the data integration in Kansas. Kansas has 19 community colleges and six technical colleges. The community and technical colleges are all independently governed with the Kansas Board of Regents – I'll refer to them as KBOR, K-B-O-R – is the statewide coordinating board.

Kansas has a statewide public workforce system separated into five local workforce investment areas, each with a local workforce investment board and one-stop operator responsible for workforce center operations. There are more than 20 workforce centers within the 5 regions in Kansas. The Kansas Department of Commerce administers the state level programs.

Washburn University serves as a lead for statewide consortium Round 1 TAACCCT grant titled TRAC-7 and is currently serving as the lead for the KanTRAIN Round 4 TAACCCT grant.

KanTRAIN is a statewide consortium TAACCCT grant focused on advanced manufacturing and healthcare industries in the state of Kansas. KanTRAIN has partnered with four institutions of higher education, including Washburn Institute of Technology – which is affiliated with Washburn University.

Now, some background on systems in Kansas. The Kansas Department of Education – or KSDE and KBOR – were awarded statewide longitudinal data system or SLDS grants in 2000 and 2009. The 2009 grant ran from 2010-2014 and its primary focus was on expanding the ability of the state longitudinal data system to link across the P-20 education pipeline and across state agencies.

In addition, the Kansas Department of Commerce partnered with the Kansas Department of Labor, in coordination with KSDE and KBOR, and they were awarded two rounds – Round 3 and 5 – of the Workforce Data Quality Initiative, or WDQI. The vision of the WDQI grants was to create a secure longitudinal data system in Kansas that promotes the sharing of data to be used in performance reporting and research for program improvement.

So we already had a good foundation of WDQI and SLDS grants in Kansas. The purpose of the TAACCCT consortium grants were to align the workforce, industry and education in the state of Kansas. The Round 1 TAACCCT grant TRAC-7 looked at education and workforce from a statewide perspective and then customized the educational program by industry most in need at that specific institution.

The KanTRAIN Round 4 TAACCCT grant's focus is on the regional education aligned to statewide industry and the workforce. I'll explain more about this on the next slide.

So for TRAC-7, the statewide model was driven by TAACCCT grant leadership, which drove partnerships with KBOR and Commerce. The consortium site, industry and the LWIBs. For KanTRAIN we transition to a two-tiered model in our systems and partnerships.

The TAACCCT grant leadership aligned statewide coordination with state agency partners such as KBOR and Commerce and forged new partnerships with national industry groups.

While the institutions of higher education in the consortium reported data coordinated by KBOR, and they continued to forge local relationships with industry and the LWIBs.

So the next slide is about some lessons learned about those partnerships. Some of the lessons that we've learned were first the focus. The focus of the partnerships and the work we're going is only on the grant – if the focus is only on the grant activities they will most likely expire after the grant ends. The partnerships that we built and the work we've done will not be sustainable.

Partnerships with state agencies are needed for the grant to be successful, but we also want our work to build on those other grants and to be embedded into the existing statewide systems for sustainability.

So we shifted the roles and expectations of the consortium institutions to result in different outcomes and increase the likelihood that the most successful aspects will be sustained at the consortium institutions. And we also – who owns and leads the process also determines how likely it will be sustained after the grant ends.

OK. So now that you have some context, let's talk about data integration. KBOR has a data, research and planning department that we've worked very closely with. And they have an existing system, a postsecondary data collection, maintenance, analysis and reporting. They also coordinate IPEDS for Kansas institutions of higher education through a statewide postsecondary database system that they designed and they maintain. And they also develop electronic data collection and reporting systems. This serves as the hub, or warehouse, for education data in Kansas.

The model for the KanTRAIN data integration uses this existing data hub – the KBOR data warehouse described in the previous slide – to create new linkages between the partners. There's KanTRAIN, who houses TAACCCT program data; KSDE, who houses student data; the Kansas Department of Labor, who houses labor market information or LMI data; and the Kansas Department of Commerce, who houses data collected at workforce centers. And then there's the KBOR education data component as well.

Previously, institutions of higher education would report student records to KBOR, and the Kansas Department of Labor would report LMI to KBOR and then the LWIBs. This was because existing contacts with the Kansas Department of Labor and KBOR only allowed KBOR to receive the LMI from KDOL, but there was not a link back to the IHEs. The new model makes those new connections and relationships.

So KanTRAIN created a system to match individual level student data to employment outcomes for TAACCCT funded programs in Kansas. KanTRAIN also facilitated the exchange of LMI data from the LWIBs to the KanTRAIN institutions of higher education, as well as the two entities can share case management responsibilities and exchange information on participants to better meet the individual needs.

The ultimate goal of all of this is to enable students and higher education institutions in Kansas access to information on education and employment outcomes to make informed database decisions about their education.

Some of the lessons we learned from this data sharing model were that confidentiality of student data and who can access that data is a really big deal. The sharing and storing of student data was established in contractual agreements – and they must be maintained over time. It also must be embedded into the existing practices to be able to be sustained over time as well.

How did KanTRAIN embed practices for sustainability in data systems? We collaborated with state agencies to facilitate those connections, and then strengthened the existing ties. So KBOR's electronic data collection and reporting system was the link that institutions of higher ed and Kansas Department of Labor. KanTRAIN contracted with KBOR to expand the Kansas Department of Labor reporting to individual level for the TAACCCT institutions of higher education.

The LWIBs to the institution of higher education link was a new alignment that KanTRAIN established. KanTRAIN facilitated contracts with the institutions of higher ed and the LWIBs to promote workforce support services, to have workforce staff offices on campus, to co-enroll participants in workforce services and share information and track participants.

Two additional items are currently in development right now. KanTRAIN is working with KBOR to expand performance and outcome reporting with other Kansas TAACCCT institutions of higher ed. We are also working with industry and the institution of higher ed to create responsive and more predictive reporting capabilities.

And then, finally, the lessons learned from the data integration and planning. Overall this takes time, and of course it takes money too. Sharing resources and partnering with those who want to work together is crucial. You'll need to have a lot of persistence and patience as you move through the process. You need to set targeted goals so that it's clear to everyone what needs to be done to make this go successfully.

That's all I have – thank you.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Christa. Wow.

So as you can see, we've got two really different ways of integrating data, already, that you've seen; one from Missouri and one from Kansas and they're next door to each other.

We have yet to enrich us even more – (inaudible) – way of looking at data integration and now we're going to hear from Kathleen Kirby in Massachusetts. Kathleen?

KATHLEEN KIRBY: Thank you. It's great to be following these other two presenters. So I'm Kathleen Kirby. I'm the Statewide Project Director for our GPSTEM grant, which is our TAACCCT four grant. And one of the things I think is really notable is that the situation in Massachusetts was very different from the situations in Kansas and Missouri.

We really just didn't have the infrastructure that they had built up going into this grant. So in some ways I feel like we're probably three years behind where they are and what they've been able to develop. But, we're working really hard to catch up.

So we did have the SLDS grant for K-12 data collection. We also had the WDQI as well as the TAACCCT grant. In Massachusetts the community colleges are not a centrally managed system. There was no state standard standing data sharing agreements between state agencies, and it hasn't been any wage matching happening between higher education and the workforce system and the division of unemployment system for at least three years.

There was no legislation requiring this kind of data sharing. We don't have our – (inaudible) – which would enable us to track – to find out what the employment outcomes were for Massachusetts graduates who found employment in other states. And there was also no consistent or formal reporting of non-credit workforce data.

So in other words, different colleges did it different ways depending on what they wanted and what their resources were. So we really didn't have consistency in that regard.

Then you sort of say, well, why did you even get involved in this game? At the same time, there really is a drive toward closing the middle-skills gap in Massachusetts, and there is a desire to align education training programs to meet workforce demand; and this is a growing desire, especially under WIOA.

Especially in Massachusetts, there's a strong commitment to higher education as an economic engine. You know, you've probably heard of some of our larger private institutions like Harvard and MIT, but even amongst the public institutions, there's really a feeling that we need to have a very highly educated populous in order to meet workforce needs and attract business into the Commonwealth. And there was a strong belief that the community colleges have a positive story to tell, that we didn't as yet have the data sources that we needed to tell that story.

So as I said, the main barrier was a lack of infrastructure and existing, sort of, foundational relationship. There were some things in place when we started this project that really helped with that support. There was a workforce skills cabinet that was put together a few years ago that brings together the secretaries of education, labor, and workforce and economic development, and that's been in place for a few years and that's been a great place for sort of that cross-agency partnership to begin developing.

Our new governor preserved that structure and is really invested in data driven approaches. WIOA, as I mentioned, is bringing a new drive toward regionalization and faster turnaround of educational programs toward workforce alignment.

Another big factor is the data systems and the IT systems of all the different educational agencies used to be separate and fragmented, and they're now rolling up into one central place in the executive office of education. And that's really going to provide a new foundation for housing and sustainability for this system. So that's been an exciting development.

And so the TAACCCT grant. I can't say that the TAACCCT grant necessarily created all these good things to happen, but it's been kind of a push or a leverage bringing a lot of these other forces together.

So that's kind of an overview of the data integration project as it was originally envisioned, and there's been some pretty critical changes in the last few months that we're still trying to adjust to. But you can see that, as with Kansas and Missouri, the original idea was to take student academic performance data and link that with college program data, link that with labor market information, and tie it into employment outcomes so that we could start tracing our students out into the workforce – and then using that information to reflect back upon how the programs were doing and do that kind of research that Dawn was talking about in terms of what program are most desired, what programs are producing good results, and what programs may potentially need to be retired.

So the system was envisioned as having three main components. The student pathways application would be the thing that would – potential prospective students would be able to use to conduct research about jobs that might meet their needs and their interest and their skills. And then – so that they could figure out what are the community college programs that would help train them for those careers. So as to help prospective students become more informed consumers. And that is actually a piece of it that we have developed – we're almost ready to – it's in beta right now – so that's been a successful piece of the puzzle so far.

We also envisioned this credit for prior learning application – and that also is functional on the campuses. And then the third piece is a research and reporting tool that we thought would give colleges in particular – and potentially our workforce partners – ways of doing much deeper research into the performance of the different programs and how students who went through those programs were doing in terms of their employment outcomes. Their – whether they're employed and what kinds of salaries they were making.

That piece that I just showed you is one of the handouts that will be in the file share after the presentation.

So the student pathways application – as I was mentioning, it gives – the students need the capacity to do some research about potential careers for themselves and then the community college programs that will help them prepare for those careers. And it provides a detailed action plan that walks them through what the next steps are in terms of registration and connecting to the colleges.

The idea behind this is also that it will provide a warm handoff so students who go all the way through this process and conduct the research will be able to connect to an admissions person at the college – as well as other personnel if it's appropriate; for instance, somebody in the veteran's affairs office, people in the financial aid offices – and those people will also be able to reach out to this student. The students register on this system, and that gives the college personnel the capacity to reach out to those students and encourage them and help them as they go onto the enrollment process.

So the idea here is that the student is able to – will use this application to publicize about what the community college offering are, allow students to do some research about what programs might meet their needs, and avail them to look at some different career opportunities for themselves, and then select a college program and connect to that college program that will help them meet their career goals.

So I think this is just kind of another presentation of that same information. But one of the things I wanted to mention to you is that – so this student pathways application pulls together information from O\*NET. It allows students to do some of that career researching – that interest profiling that O\*NET enables. It pulls together labor market information from WANTED Analytics – and it helps students to kind of zero in on what kind of education program might be the best for them.

It then also produces, as I mentioned, this kind of detailed action plan and this handout is another one of the resources that will be shared in the file share after the presentation. So you can see it; it's really quite interesting. It gives them – it tells them a lot of information about the career they've selected; for instance, what are the salary ranges at the associate's degree level, a bachelor's level. If they want to connect to a bachelor's degree program, what are the options for transfer from the community colleges, and then who do they contact and reach out to at the community college of their choice.

And the folks in admissions at the colleges get a very similar kind of handout but it's from the perspective that they can reach out to the student who's entered in this information.

So another piece that we're really just starting to work on now and it's partly because – so things have changed for us a little bit. We originally were working in an environment where we were working with a third party vendor to develop this system. But over the course of time we were able to sort of capture the attention and interest of our executive office of education, and so they've really decided they'd like to bring these tools into the existing suite of tools that are available for the department of higher education.

And so we're going to be connecting into the reporting system that the DHT – Department of Higher Education – already runs and manages and it'll be much richer and more robust data sources available to us, especially as we go down the road and into the future.

So as I had mentioned, whereas Kansas and Missouri seem to be pretty well positioned by their previous TAACCCT grants and other initiatives to engage in this next phase of data sharing and reporting – Massachusetts has had a long way to go to build these kind of partnerships and agreements.

A lot of the process has been to get dedicated to building trusting relationships. And we try to do a good job of putting together a leadership team that was really representative of workforce – our career center partners and higher education in all of its different divisions – and then tying this project into other priorities such as WIOA regional spanning and a new performance assessment push that the department of higher education has been engaged in – and I did see that some of those folks – we've had some good champions under Secretary of Labor and Workforce Greg Bunn – I saw that he was in the audience today.

So we've had these good partnership – it's more been a matter of like, OK, now what do we do? We're ready to collaborate and we just need to move into the next step. And as you know, there's lots of planning involved in any of these big initiatives. But I think we're moving forward in a good way now.

So as you can see, some of the data sources that will go into this research and reporting tool are from HEIRS which is our higher education institutional research database – so all of the student's data goes in there – program data from the colleges, enrollment. And then the jobs data comes from a labor market source such as Burning Glass or WANTED Analytics. We also get information from O\*NET and BLS. And we're at this time gathering information from WIOA about eligible training provider and what kind of programs are eligible for funding.

So here's one view of the kind of reports that this research and reporting tool will be able to producer. So you can see by region, by college – what are the high demand occupations and college programs that fit with those – those job openings. Here are – what are the outcomes – employment outcomes for students who are funded through Pell Grants or from TAA funding – similar kind of view there.

And so why don't we talk a little bit about what the next steps are. Obviously we're rolling these things out onto the campus - campuses. Let's see – I got to catch up here in my notes.

So we're rolling out these information – these systems out to the campuses – and we're involved in really publicizing them and getting people to understand that these tools exist and encourage them to use them. Let's see.

So we're still working on determining a format for the collection of non-credit workforce data – as I began at the beginning – said at the beginning – and this is true for Dawn as well in Missouri – we weren't collecting non-credit workforce data in a consistent way. So our department of higher ed is looking to add that into the reporting that the colleges do.

We're also working to determine whether in terms of sustainability – you know, these systems can be invented but who's going to maintain and update them going into the future. So we're really still kind of working on what are those connection points for the data collection and storage for the long-term maintenance of this system.

We're still working on securing a wage matching agreement so we don't yet still have a signed agreement to exchange information about our program graduates and then to get information from our employers about what their employment outcomes are. But that should be – if not hours away then days away. So we're getting there.

And then we're still working to determine the post grant sustainability and ownership and obviously to promote an publicize.

And so that is where we are in Massachusetts and Cheryl I hand it back to you.

MS. MARTIN: OK. Thank you, Kathleen. Wow. OK. So that was a lot.

We do have a few questions that have come in – and I want to start with one that is kind of a bigger picture question and I'm going to ask Dawn to answer it first – Jen, this is number 10 on our side. That looks at whether – who decides what are the in demand industries and occupations? So in short, how do the states identify what training and certification programs are needed most and how it fits the overall focus on target industries? So Dawn?

MS BUSICK-DRINKARD: Sure. We work closely with our state workforce board and our local regional boards – I think almost every one of our community colleges services on a regional, local workforce investment board. In part those are identified in partnership with the state department of economic development in the governor's direction. But it's basically driven by high demand occupations in the state.

So the seven industries that are noted, that are supported by the state in the state workforce plan are the same that are supported by the colleges. That's not to say that the colleges don't offer additional programs if they have a regional need only in their region – an example would be maybe an agriculture type thing in a rural college versus a metro college may offer a program of study.

But we are definitely connected and do provide input and support and our programs are aligned with the WIOA state plan as well as the governor and the department of economic development identified high demand industries.

MS. MARTIN: OK. Thanks. Kansas or Massachusetts, do you want to answer that question as well?

MS. KIRBY: Sure. This is Kathleen. So similar to Dawn, these high priority industries were identified in our TAACCCT proposal and it was done through research that has been previously performed by the governor's office, by our STEM council, and by the assessment of our labor and workforce agencies. And so we're focusing and we are focusing on five different STEM industries; manufacturing, engineering, health sciences, CIS IT and life sciences and biotech.

So those are the five industries we've targeted. But there are also regional differences, especially in terms of – maybe not the need for those overall industries, but one of the things that will be interesting is that this system will allow us to see what specific job titles are needed in particular regional areas, particular WIB areas, and what skills those different employers are working for in a much more sort of granular way region by region.

Since you can imagine what's needed in the industries in Boston versus what's in the Berkshires, out in the mountains, very different.

MS. SMITH: Yeah. And this is Christa from Kansas. We did the same. When we were developing our application we pulled together various groups – the LWIBs, all of them as well and exactly that – Kansas is also very diverse; we're a very rural state in some areas. So having those different voices at the table to determine what industries we're targeting in the application was very important.

We also aligned with the governor's goals for the state of Kansas and we continue to revise and look at what is the next emerging industry or what's in the highest demand throughout program advisory boards at the institutional level. So lots of data collection there.

MS. MARTIN: Great. Thank you to the three of you.

So I'm going to turn next to another big elephant in the room which is the FERPA question, so I'm going to ask each of our three presenters to, in very short time, talk just a little bit about that but before I do that I'm also going to mention that while they're doing that – I'm going to ask Jen to put up on the screen somewhere up there, three different references.

One is to the credential engine project, one is to the connecting credentials project – and those are just both because somebody asked are these related to that – we're not going to have time to answer it but I want everybody on the call to be aware of those two initiatives.

So you'll see that and you can check in with that. And the third thing is an e-mail address that is TAACCCT@dol.gov – and that is a place that if you have burning questions that you didn't get answered on here – which unfortunately we don't have time to answer some of your other questions – if you still want those answered you can send them to TAACCCT@dol.gov and then we'll direct them to the right person or persons on this call today.

So let's give – we'll take just a couple minutes on FERPA and then we're going to have to end the call to respect your time. So who wants to tackle how you addressed FERPA?

MS. BUSICK-DRINKARD: This is Dawn, and I can in Missouri. Our system – this new system is housed at our Missouri Department of Higher Ed. It is the same database system that the colleges report credit bearing students for years and how the states support that data and the reports to IPEDS.

The data's housed at their warehouse. They are responsible for the information and through the super MOU we have addressed FERPA with the appropriate agencies who do need the unit record data to match it to, say, wage data. They've negotiated all of that out and that was all taken care of prior to this project starting. Thank you.

MS. SMITH: This is Christa from Kansas. We are very fortunate that our Kansas Board of Regents, our Kansas Department of Labor, they are very careful and cognizant of FERPA needs. So when we work with them to develop these agreements, FERPA is first and foremost at the beginning of those contracts. And we have a lot of very restrictive sorts of data security – things that we have to adhere to. So we're very cognizant of FERPA as we do this kind of work.

MS. KIRBY: Yeah. And this is Kathleen and our situation is very similar. All the colleges report their data to the Department of Education in Massachusetts which has all the security and FERPA enforcement standards in place. The wage matching is done; those student level records are sent over to division of unemployment insurance and they're returned in a de-identified way so that protects the identity.

At the state right now the number of agencies are working right now on establishing that, kind of, umbrella MOU to do a more enhanced data sharing, but obviously always protecting the students identity.

MS. MARTIN: OK. Thank you. So those are some brief answers to some of your questions. Like I said, if you have other questions that you would still like to get answered please send them to TAACCCT@dol.gov and we'll direct them to the presenter that could best answer it.

Thank you, so much for joining us today. We really appreciate it. We hope you learned some interesting things. Download those things from the file share and this will all be posted. I'll let Jen talk about that. Over and out to you, Jen.

(END)