

ALEX MEDLER: We are going to begin the webinar in hope of using everybody's time as well as possible. Thank you very much for joining us. This is Alex Medler with the National Charter School's Resource Center at Safal Partners. Our webinar today is about the dashboards that we've been creating for the department that cover each state's charter school grant program.

Before we get going, let me just cover a few logistics, and then I'll let Mukta from Safal say a few words, and we'll dive right in. In terms of logistics today, this webinar's being recorded so that other people who couldn't necessarily join us at the right time can access it later. We expect not too many members, so we'll be able to just use the Conference Call function. So you should feel free to speak. We're not muting the participants.

If you haven't muted your own phone though, even with seven or eight participants, it can be pretty loud. So mute your phone until you'd like speak, and then unmute it yourself, and you should be able to speak. I hope people can see their computer screen because I'll be walking you through stuff online. So if you haven't and you're just calling in, please try to access it via your computer so you can see the dashboard.

And if you're having any technical challenges with hearing me or seeing the screen or getting a question in, contact Sarah Hamshari from the resource center, and she can help. You can talk to her through the Chat function, if that's available, or you can reach her by email.

Before we dive in, let's see-- well, yeah, that's it for logistics. Mukta, would you like to say anything before we get started?

MUKTA PANDIT: Sure. I just wanted to just welcome everyone and thank you for taking the time for this walk through. And just wanted to say we're actually really excited to share this draft with you. It has been sort of a team effort to pull these together with all of the different data sources and using technologies to be able to display the data. And I just wanted to emphasize that this is really for you all and your teams and your communities and, of course, it's a priority for ED. And we just want to make sure we get it right.

So the idea is we are trying to give you log in access initially and have this sort of walk through to make sure we can walk you through the functionalities, the filtering, and being able to do the drill downs, but then also walk through any sort of substantive questions in terms of where the different pieces of data come from. And if you have any concerns or questions on those. And

we want to make sure we get it right, we get your input before we share the data publicly. So with that, I'll hand it over to Alex to walk you through the dashboards.

ALEX MEDLER: Sounds good. Let's see. Well, anyway, we're going to dive in. We'll be taking notes. So we'll look forward to your feedback and comments. And also, feel free to forward email notes to me later. In addition, we're really hoping to gather feedback from all the states by early next week-- so by December 4, if you can-- so that we can make a round of revisions and hopefully get this finalized.

Let me start by explaining the purpose of these dashboards. This was a priority for the US Department of Education. Their goal is to make it easier to explain or for people to understand how their programs work and what's going on in the states. And they're also aware that the states really have a lot of control and influence over these, so they want to be able to have users understand what the difference is.

And so we have taken available data from various sources that include the charter, the grant application the performance measures, the APRs, and the reporting that you already do through the CSP to turn it into this dashboard. So one thing to keep in mind is that the idea is for this to be outward oriented and to be reflecting the data that the department already has, rather than trying to create a new data gathering exercise, which has some implications, as you'll see as we get into the rest of the discussion.

Before we go forward, are there any other questions? I see one question from someone from Georgia who wanted to know to make sure they could get access to it. We have uploaded dashboards for those with '15 and '16 grants. So Sarah can forward links for states with any years from those, and we can get them to you. But I am going to walk you through the Arizona one in order to show you how it all works.

Sarah, would you let me share my screen?

SARAH Yeah, Alex, you can share your screen if you just got the top, and then go to My Screen and
HAMSHARI: share the monitor.

ALEX MEDLER: Oh, OK. Sorry. All right. It says Presenter. Share it. Did it go to my screen, Sarah?

SARAH I don't see it yet.

HAMSHARI:

ALEX MEDLER: Oh, shoot. I just clicked on it.

SARAH OK. There it is.

HAMSHARI:

ALEX MEDLER: Yes. There it is. Sorry about the delay there. All right. So I am going to be sharing with you Arizona. Mark Francis in the Arizona department agreed to let us share with you theirs. He'll be on the call tomorrow, but I'll walk you through the Arizona data today. Arizona is interesting because they actually have a few years of data. And over time, more states will look like this one.

One first thing to note is that when you come into your state, it will have sort of navigation pieces around it. But what you'll want to do generally when accessing it is to click on the full screen, like I just did. And then you'll see it starts at this Quick Facts page. A few things to highlight on this is that you'll see, up in the top, that you can click on a Return to Navigation page that takes you to a place where you can look at multiple states.

And you can also click, up in the upper left, for instructions and information about each tab. And if I clicked on this now, it would take you to PDF that explains data sources and explanations of all the data that are on this particular tab. Then, when you look at it, you'll see there's four different elements here. But any graphic, if you look in the upper right in Focus mode, you can open up to adjust that graphic and see it in better detail if it's too hard to see up close.

And then you'll see that we start with a Grant Summary that is based on the abstract, but we have taken each state's abstract and edited it a bit so it fits for space and so that they're common across all the states. If you are interested in the details of the abstract, you can click on the blue link, and it will take you to the US department of Education's version of the entire abstract. So one thing for you to review in the states is to see if our grant summaries are currently accurate and reflecting the way you want your grant program to be summarized.

The SEA Snapshot sort of tells you about the grant period, the amount of funds, and also gives you a little bit of information on the size of the state's charter school program. One of the things at the bottom is a graph that really shows how the state's CSP grant funding compares to other states over the years. This goes back to 2009 because we have some grants that are taking longer than others as they ran out. So the idea here is to demonstrate sort of the scale of, let's say, your grant program compared to other states.

And on the right is a bit of a teaser. It's a map of the funded schools in that particular state. And we'll show you on the map the enrollment, and Subgrantee Maps will have more information based on the individual subgrantees. Are there any questions on this piece or anything you'd like me to walk you through in terms of functionality?

OK. Oh, and Sarah, with my sharing my full screen, I can't really see the chat function. So if someone has something in chat or Q&A, please go ahead and interrupt with the question. So if you go to the next tab, you will navigate through this through the bottom tabs. So there's Quick Facts, the Subgrantee Map, and Subgrantee Enrollment, et cetera.

So if you go to the Subgrantee Map, there's a few things you can see. First is a list of each of the schools that have received a subgrant. On the right is a map of each one that also shows whether the grant is in the implementation or planning phase. And then the graph will show, especially over time as things build up, both the award payments and the drawing down of those payments.

The data source for all of this is the reporting you do to WestEd each year. So this is not up today in real time, is one of the questions I had from somebody. And our intention is to make it available to be updated as the reporting comes in. If there is something in the reporting that's inaccurate we can fix that. But we would most likely be updating this on an annual basis as new data comes in.

Let me show you a few functions. One thing is that you can, if you're interested in this from a community, you can roll over each of those dots and get details from the report on the type of grant, the amount, other information that is recorded in the WestEd data. And if you click on one of these, you can actually also see the contribution of that individual school to both the table and to the graph that's there.

If you need to and you're interested in this from sort of an individual school piece, you can open up the data there, although I seem to be having a bit of a problem getting it to open up. You can also, if you click on an individual school, you can find out where it is on the map that way. So a pattern that works on most of these pages is that one data piece is linked to multiple pieces of the print out.

Any questions there? OK. Oh, I should say a few states will likely have follow up questions because not all states report their data in the WestEd data tables the same way. So there's a

few states out there where we are likely to have a follow up conversation with the state and the program officer to make sure that we have interpreted the award data correctly.

And when you're reviewing it, please do take a moment and review this data table on the awards and see if it makes sense for you in terms of the estimated award total. We can talk about the details of how we did that, but some states use different language and use the columns differently with the WestEd data. Any questions or comments?

OK. Moving on to the subgrant enrollment data. This also comes from the WestEd data, and the linking is similar to the previous page. So if you are curious about, really, the 2015 program, you can click on any of those items, and just the schools that are affected will show up. If you wanted to know just the schools that did not open, for example, you could click on that orange part of the graph, and the school would show up in the data table. Or you could be interested in everything that happened in 2016 and end up with a subset available in the tables.

So again, the data is linked from one thing to the other. This page is really giving you information about the status of the schools and the kids affected by each program. And again, each of these items can be opened up to be seen on their own page, and the data is linked, and you can scroll and look through it as well. Again, this data source for this is also the WestEd data reporting. Any questions?

All right. Moving to the budget table, Budget tab. This comes from the reporting that comes through the department on both the grants that are awarded to the states, but also the spending by the states to the subgrantees. So on the left is basically a summary of, by year, the funding that you received in total and by year of the expected budget that you have from the feds. The middle sort of explains the total obligations that you've made so far in terms of awards. The right breaks it out by implementation and planning and by year for the awards.

This is based on the total spending and obligations in those years, not just new awards per year. But it should sum up based on the WestEd data. And again, there may be questions we want to follow up with you on in terms of some of the states, making sure we have comparability across all the states in the reporting. Any questions on the budget format?

SARAH

Alex, we got a question in the Q&A from Brian in Colorado. So he asked, will both of

HAMSHARI:

Colorado's grants be going live, or just the 2015 to 2018 grants?

ALEX MEDLER: That's a great question. The plan, at this point, is to do the '15 and '16 and then '17 grants, but to not do those prior. For a state that still has a '15-'16 grant but then was, say, just awarded a new grant, we would presumably be doing both. And we haven't figured out if we need to break out some of how the data is recorded. But so far the plan is to not include the spending from states with funding prior to the FY '15 awards. Does that make sense, Brian, and any other follow ups on that?

One of the implications of that is that several of the states, even though they have a '15-'16 award, are still spending down prior grant awards. And so that date is not included yet in the spreadsheets for the states. We've gone back and forth about that with the department, and the current approach is to focus on the awards that are made '15 and '16 and move forward so that we have sort of a starting as of date.

Go ahead. Question? OK. Again, feel free to pipe in. Any other questions, Sarah, on the Q&A?

SARAH No. Nothing else on the Q&A.

HAMSHARI:

ALEX MEDLER: OK. The next piece is the logic models. And on this tab you will get a little explanation of what a logic model is on the left. And you can click on a link that will take you to your state's application as it's posted on the website. And as it's working, it should take you to the page that opens up to where your particular logic model is.

That's also necessary because what we've attempted to do is to basically cut and paste the entirety of the logic model on this page. But some of your logic models, as you know, take more than one page. Some of them are in page breaks in your original documents. I should add, the department is eager for people's logic models to be an accurate and effective portrayal of their grant program, and some states are in the process of updating those logic models. So especially as these become more publicly available and used to summarize your grant, I know that the staff at the department are very interested in working with you to update them so that they are the best sort of schematic, concise portrayal of your program as possible.

So that's another thing to follow up with the department about. And in the meantime, we'll be posting these versions. And I do ask people to go ahead and click on the portions of the links there and see if they're working for you. We had a question from Colorado where the link didn't work on their websites, or on their servers. So we've made some adjustments. So

please take a look at that and see if those links are working for you.

That actually holds for all the links. One of the things that would help us would be if you would click on the links to the other backup documents and go ahead and make sure they work. In particular, we want to make sure that the likely configurations people have on their computers, either in your State Department or your districts, aren't preventing them from getting access to something. Any questions, Sarah?

OK. The next tab able the Performance Measures. These are taken from your official performance measures as approved by the Department, so these should reflect the updated performance measures that you have. At this stage, you'll see that we list the objectives by number, which are linked to the particular measures that go for that objective below. Or you can do all of them and open up the whole list. Whoops. Let's see if I can get back to all of them.

And these are cut and pasted from what is in the official documents. So it is good to check them and see if something has been entered in error. But you should be able to link them. They should reflect your up to date performance measures.

And going forward, we hope to, in later iterations, be able to include the performance measure targets per year, and then eventually the data that's reported on them. At this early stage, so many states basically have just preliminary data that we haven't included the targets or performance data yet. Any questions.

Something else to be aware of is that we are also considering the best ways to make them comparable across states. As you may know, the objectives on the [INAUDIBLE] measures are common across all states, but the others are unique to each state. However, most of you have very similar objectives that vary a little bit but are covering on the same basic trends. So eventually, we hope to be able to sort of code them so you might be able to do cross-state comparisons and say, well, what really are the measures for, let's say, increasing the number of schools in the different states? Any questions or comments?

OK then. I will move you to the Charter Landscape tab. This is data that unlike the rest of the tabs we've looked at, this is not taken from your charter school grant program. This is from other sources that really give you a sense of how the state does on various measures. So you do get basic data on the grant period and the grant funds, but you also-- this is more about your charter schools, the law as it's ranked by other parties like the National Alliance, or the

NACSA Accountability Ratings, or the Alliance's health of the sector rating.

So you get sort of basic numbers and ranks on the left. Each of these graphs, again, like the others, can be opened up, although I seem to-- let's see if I can-- so if you can't see them very well, you should be able to navigate and click to open up that particular graph. These do include rollover functions. So if the labeling is not clear, you should be able to see that.

And then, if you want to, the tab up here will explain to you more information on the various sources. So you can click to get access to the model, ranking law, or the other primary sources for each of these materials. And the intention here is to include basic information so that a general user would also find out more about your state's charter school context to sort of understand how your CSP fits within that context.

Part of the issue-- one of the things we've talked to the department about and would like your feedback on, they're interested in sharing more information on who the authorizers are, the types and scale, and maybe more information on that, as well as other aspects of the charter program.

You'll see here that now we have sort of the period of closures and openings by year. We have the demographics of the students, the geographic location of the schools, and the EMO CMO independent split amongst all those schools. So as you know, there's a ton of data on each state's charter schools out there, and we want to make this useful, but we also realize there's limits to how much we can share and not overwhelm people. So we would love your feedback, if not today, when you submit your written comments later, on what you'd like to see shared about your charter school context from various sources. Any questions or comments there?

OK. The last tab we have is currently under construction. I'll just show it to you and show we're working on it. But one of the topics we will look at is the dissemination activities in each state, and that will be a summary of the things that you have in your grant application in terms of dissemination activities. We'll also be coding so that people can work across states and see who's running a dissemination grant program and who isn't, and who has a conference they can attend, things like that. But that should be forthcoming pretty soon in the next iteration of the dashboard.

So that is the main parts to share. You guys have been very quiet on the outside. Let me say,

we look forward to getting your comments by email. And you can also call me directly by phone if you want to discuss any of this. And happy to take any comments or questions now. Any other comments or questions while we're on the phone?

I will also take the time to ask if any people have any just reactions to it. Do you think this will be helpful? Do you think people in your states will use it much, or is there anything that can make it more useful? So it doesn't have to be technical feedback on a particular aspect. But what do you think about the approach overall, and how do you think it will work in your state? Anybody?

OK. I'm going to put it back to Sarah as we wrap up. If there aren't any other questions, let me just say, our next steps will be that we will continue to solicit-- we'll do another one of these webinars for people that couldn't make it today tomorrow if you have any colleagues that would like to come on live and have questions. There will also be a recorded version that can be shared with people in the other COP and other things.

We're looking for your feedback, hopefully by early next week. And after that we will consolidate that feedback, propose changes back to the department based on it, as well as some other updates, and then we should have finalized version. And then the intention is to go live with it as soon as we can after that, after it goes through vetting within the department. So this is an excellent time to make any corrections or to suggest any changes.

I should also add that in a few cases, there may be data issues between your state's data and what we're sharing or what was reported and how it's interpreted. So in a few states we may have to follow up one-on-one to make sure that we're getting an accurate interpretation of your data. Any comments or questions before we wrap up for today's call? OK.

SARAH

Alex, we've got one more question in the Q&A about whether this is going live on Monday. So

HAMSHARI:

it's not going live yet. We're just looking for feedback.

ALEX MEDLER:

Yeah. What happens Monday is the deadline to get feedback back to us so that we can then assemble that and make changes. So it won't go live until we get that feedback. We'll make tactical changes and fix some things. And depending on the feedback, we may have some proposed changes to negotiate with the department. Then the department will make those changes, and the department will sign off on it. And then it will go through a final clearance process before it goes live. And then before it goes live, you'll also be alerted by us at the Resource Center and the department for the process so that we can get it out there.

And the intention is to collaborate with you guys in the field so that hopefully you can link to it and it becomes a resource that helps explain your program. And if we get help on disseminating and getting this out there so that it's useful, that would be excellent. Any other questions, Sarah, on the Q&A or anybody on the phone?

SARAH
HAMSHARI: No, I think that's it. We did one other question, which I think you somewhat addressed. We had a question on whether all the data is going to come from WestEd and how we make sure that the information is accurate in the dashboard.

ALEX MEDLER: Yeah. A bunch of the data comes from the reporting that goes through WestEd on their data collection. And then some other data comes from the budget, comes from department documents. And other data comes from the initial application. And then the performance measures come from a separate reporting gathered by the department.

For the WestEd data in particular, that is likely something where it would be useful if you can help us to look through some of the tables and confirm that that is done correctly. We'll reach out proactively to a couple of states where the columns seem to be used differently than in other states. And so that might be a follow up with us and WestEd to make sure the states have comparable data. Any other questions or comments on that or on the process?

SARAH
HAMSHARI: So we just had another question come through on the Q&A, which was additional activities and subgrants have occurred since our last APR. Should we include this info in our feedback, or should we wait until we submit our next APR?

ALEX MEDLER: At this point, I would please just note in your feedback that that is the case. We will definitely have a discussion with the department about how we want to handle the ability to update. The assumption going forward thus far has been that it really wouldn't be viable to do real time updates as states make a slate of awards. And so we've been working from the assumption that we would use the WestEd data collection and other existing data collections, without creating an additional burden for either the states or an unrealistic expectation about real time changes that aren't viable across all the states.

But we'll note that a couple of states have asked about that and talk with the department about it. If you have strong feelings about it and suggestions or ways to do that that don't create an undue burden on the states, et cetera, that'd be a great thing to include in your feedback. Any other comments or questions?

Oh, one other question I did have from somebody. I'll let you know. I think Colorado noted that it doesn't have the right-- the contact information is embedded within the abstract but not elsewhere. So we've noted that. So we'll note that updated contact information for the CSP program should be included somewhere. All right. Any other questions before we wrap up?

OK. Hearing none. I want to thank you all for participating. As usual, we are always ready for email or phone at the Resource Center. Another version of this call will take place tomorrow if you have colleagues that have questions. And we do look forward to your written comments by next Monday and hope this will be useful to you going forward in the future. And as always, thanks again for your time and hope you have a good day. And we'll wrap it up there.