

Grant will help Nevada measure student achievement

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Nevada’s Department of Education has been awarded a \$4 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences to develop a system to measure individual student achievement over time.

Nevada was one of 24 states to receive funding to support the design and implementation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.

The grant will come to Nevada in a three-year cycle. The funds will allow the Nevada Department of Education much needed access to link, by the use of one unique student identifier, students starting from pre-kindergarten through high school and following them through postsecondary education and workforce development.

Gov. Brian Sandoval has asked that this data be used to both improve student outcomes and to fill Nevada’s diverse economic job needs.

“All the accountability measures we have enacted require better use of data,” Sandoval said. “This grant will move Nevada closer to a fully integrated system that follows learners from childhood to adulthood.”

Julian Montoya, assistant director of Assessment Data and Program Accountability, said: “Having this type of P-20W data will allow us to develop an early warning system. With an early warning system, we can direct students to the type of college or career ready jobs and into a field which will allow them a successful outcome for both the student and their state.”

Sandoval issued an executive order on Oct. 7, 2011, asking a state education panel to take the necessary steps to create a system to track students through their school years, following in the steps of other states as part of an overarching effort to reform education and improve student performance in Nevada. The grant is an important component of the effort.

That group, the P-16 Council, is working on the issue and will meet again July 5.

A national report showed that Nevada made progress in this effort in 2011. The Data Quality Campaign's seventh annual state analysis, Data for Action 2011, shows that states have made major progress building their student data systems. More states than ever – 36, up from zero in 2005, including Nevada – have implemented all of DQC's 10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.