Arkansas Department of Education

Mainstream Technologies has been supporting the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Research and Technology Division on various projects since 2010. The ADE R&T Division's unofficial mission is to find ways to leverage technology in a manner that provides a flashlight to pertinent issues, rather than using it as a hammer for punitive corrective measures.

Over time, Mainstream Technologies has become subject matter experts for the department, becoming intimately familiar with their data sources and how to efficiently tap them to produce the information their users need. Various ADE departments and school district personnel across the state use the tools co-developed with Mainstream Technologies.

STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Arkansas Department of Education collects data from school districts nine times (cycles) a year through the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (named Student Information System or SIS). The information it delivers is used for many federal and state reporting requirements. Their business goals were to upgrade the legacy technology to a web based architecture which would improve collection methods, to provide next day access to district data and reports, and to improve the quality of their data that would eventually be certified at the conclusion of the cycle.

Mainstream's task was to convert the existing business processes and automate new processes into .NET utilizing a SQL database. This new solution gave the department the ability to track progress throughout the cycle so they could make adjustments prior to certification deadlines. This project was such a success that the Department of Education received national recognition from their peers for the data quality. The success with the SIS technology upgrade provided the opportunity to assist ADE with other data driven development efforts.

Business Challenges

- Modernize their technology
- Improve data collection methods
- Improve data quality and access
- Depth of skills

Impact

- Increased efficiency in data-collection and reporting
- Higher quality and more current data
- Improved business intelligence

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