

Research Agenda Subcommittee Meeting Summary

June 23, 2020

This document provides a summary of the key points that emerged during a half-day meeting. More information about the meeting, including the background paper, comprehensive research agenda, PowerPoint, and a recording of the meeting are available at <https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/research-agenda-sub-committee>.

June 2020 meeting had the following goals:

- Provide an update on decisions by the Cradle-to-Career Workgroup
- Review edits to the comprehensive research agenda
- Review literature on financial aid
- List priority information on financial aid for public dashboards, query builders, and research studies

The following representatives attended the meeting:

Tom Vu, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities; Tine Sloan, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing; Valerie Lundy-Wagner, California Community College Chancellor's Office; Ben Allen & Jonathan Isler, California Department of Education; Akhtar Khan, California Department of Social Services (for Natasha Nicolai); Janet Buehler, California Department of Technology; Jennifer Schwartz, California Health and Human Services Agency; Amy Fong, California School Information Services; Jessica Moldoff, California Student Aid Commission; Dan Rounds, California Workforce Development Board; Muhammad Akhtar, Employment Development Department; Abraham Cicchetti, Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts; Alyssa Nguyen, RP Group; Steve Watkins, UnitekLearning.com; Tameka McGlawn & Jesse Rothstein, University of California, Berkeley; Michal Kurlaender, University of California, Davis; Russ Rumberger, University of California, Santa Barbara; and Tongshan Chan, University of California Office of the President.

Workgroup Update

The meeting opened with the facilitator providing an update on the decisions made by the California Cradle-to-Career Workgroup at their May 30 meeting, including describing implications for the technical and legal structure for the data system. The group raised a number of questions and issues, which are outlined below, along with the responses provided:

- *What types of information would be shared in the public research library—would it be the data sets themselves?* The public library would contain copies of reports summarizing the findings from approved research studies.
- *Could there potentially be studies that are not released to the public?* A report could potentially be kept confidential, although the purpose of the data system is to make the insights gleaned from the data system available to everyone.
- *Could the Partner Research Data Set or the P20W Data Set be used to fulfil requests from researchers for studies?* This could potentially be done, depending on the nature of the request. The framework does not restrict the available data points for research studies to these two data sets to ensure that priority questions can be answered.

- *How would the data be matched if it must be deidentified?* Please visit the Common Identifier Subcommittee pages of the project website (<https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/common-identifier-subcommittee>) to access background papers, as well as information from the learning session on March 9, regarding master data management (MDM) matching practices. You can also review the Request for Information for a Cradle-to-Career Data System MDM that was released by the California Department of Technology this month, for more technical detail (<https://caleprocure.ca.gov/event/75021/0000016738>).
- *Would the system be able to pull a second cut of data for the same students to support follow-up research projects?* Potentially, if a set of unique identifiers were kept for each data pull, and the MDM could reference this list to secure a second set of information. In phase one, each data pull would be a flat file. However, there is interest in creating a secure research enclave where researchers would go online to conduct analyses in future phase of the data system.
- *Why can't California create a centralized warehouse?* Please reference the meeting notes from the May and June Legal Subcommittee meetings (<https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/legal-subcommittee>), the May workgroup meeting and the background paper for the June workgroup meeting (<https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/workgroup>). Legal experts from national technical assistance organizations and the partner entities have carefully examined what is allowable given both federal and state laws, and the Cradle-to-Career Workgroup decision to comingle education and social service data. Representatives from the Legal Subcommittee have been asked to meet with their workgroup representative to clarify their recommendations, to inform a vote at the June 30 workgroup meeting.
- *If part of the challenge is combining education and social service data, could California create a separate warehouse that only has education data?* This could be done, so long as the data are deidentified. The Partner Entity Data Set provides one such opportunity. This would need to be determined by the workgroup as part of their recommendations.
- *How is California's proposed system different from other states?* The system has more sources of information and is putting much of this information into the public domain—most states do not make information from the linked data set available to the public, researchers, or partner entities. Please see the earlier Research Agenda background papers for information on the types of information available in other states and compare this to the proposed scope of the P20W data set (for the most up to date list, see the query builder elements on pages 16-19 in the Proposed Research Agenda that were part of the June Research Agenda Subcommittee meeting materials at <https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/research-agenda-subcommittee>).
- *Who will the managing entity be?* The type of entity will be determined at the June workgroup meeting.

Updates to the Research Agenda

The facilitator described the process being used to update the research agenda, highlighted changes from the May draft, and answered clarifying questions.

Research on Financial Aid

After a presentation on the literature related to financial aid, a review of information posted by other state data systems, and some information posted by the California Student Aid Commission, the group identified key concepts to consider on this topic. The sections below reflect discussion in both small

groups and the full group report out. In some cases, questions were assigned to a specific category of data tool based on the best fit, rather than the small group that raised the issue.

Dashboard

- Expand the view to show which majors students select
- Expand the view to include information on how financial aid impacts employment outcomes, including which industries students are employed by and whether they attain the living wage
- Show average time to award rather than on-time graduation
- All types of students who receive aid should be included, not just those going to college for the first time (for example, include students who are returning to college after an absence)

Query Builder

- Showing information on the total cost of college would be helpful for middle-income families that are seeking to make decisions about what they can afford
- Ensure the data set includes all types of financial aid, including as local, state, and federal
- Ensure the data set identifies the ratio of aid received by each financial aid type (such as, 10% from local, 40% from state, and 50% from federal sources)
- Specify whether aid was need or merit based
- Show whether the industry of employment changed over time
- Show whether the program of study is eligible for financial aid
- Evaluate the best possible source of information for the total cost of college, including IPEDS reports or alternative means for gathering information, given the limitations of the SEARS survey
- Clarify language such that it references the aid that students were *approved* to receive, rather than what they *qualified* for, given that it will not be possible to know which students were eligible for aid if they did not submit a FAFSA application

Research Studies

- Research studies should take a broad view of the concept of financial aid to include all means that students use to finance their education, including work, work-study, non-need based aid, unsubsidized loans, and other supports provided to students, such as subsidized childcare and transportation passes provided by workforce development boards
- Conduct analyses that see how different income bands are impacted by financial aid
- Determine whether there is a relationship between the amount of financial aid received, relative to the total cost of college, and college access, completion, and living wage attainment
- Evaluate whether financial aid impacts how far students travel to go to college, within the context of commute times
- Evaluate the state's return on investment for financial aid, such as how much state financial aid is spent on students who complete a postsecondary credential (across all institutions that the individual attends), as well as how much is spent on students who attain the living wage
- Determine whether students exhaust available state and federal financial aid before they can complete a postsecondary credential
- What impact has changing eligibility requirements had on students applying for and maintaining state and federal aid?
- When in their educational pathway do students apply for financial aid? What factors contribute to students losing financial aid?

Items for Future Research Agenda Topics

- It would be helpful to conduct research on the impact of apprenticeships as a form of employment. Information on registered apprenticeships will be consolidated under the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. However, there is not a clear source of information on other forms of employment such as student internships.
- Evaluate which industries need more employees to inform academic offerings and financial aid priorities
- Show whether industries of employment change over time

Next Steps

- Subcommittee members will receive meeting notes on June 25. Please provide your edits by July 2.
- Subcommittee members will receive an updated version of the research agenda—including input from today's meeting—on July 7. Please do a detailed review and provide comments by July 16.