

California Cradle-to-Career Governance Structure Homework Team Meeting Summary

August 6, 2020

A subset of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Workgroup scheduled two additional meetings in August 2020 to investigate possible solutions for the governance structure for the state data system. This document provides a summary of the key points that emerged from the first meeting, which included a national perspective on governance structures, a question and answer session regarding how the Governance Operations Agency (GovOps) would approach governance, and informal polls on the composition and voting privileges of governance committee members. More information about the meeting, including a recording of the meeting, and the PowerPoint, are available at <https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/workgroup> (click on “Meeting Materials”).

The following workgroup representatives attended the meeting:

Thomas Vu, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities; Amy Fong, California School Information Services; Ben Allen, California Department of Education; Akhtar Khan, California Department of Social Services; Ed Sullivan, California State University; Patrick Perry, California Student Aid Commission; Joy Bonaguro, GovOps Agency; Chris Furguele, University of California, Office of the President.

Question and Answer Session with Gov Ops

Julie Lee, the Undersecretary of GovOps, joined the meeting to discuss her vision for how the agency could support a managing entity for the California Cradle to Career Data System and to answer questions. She emphasized that GovOps has experience incubating new departments and agencies and can provide expertise in developing the managing entity. GovOps leadership is open to ideas about how to support the managing entity and looks forward to joining conversations with the workgroup to determine what an appropriate model would be. Workgroup members asked the following questions:

In the workgroup meeting, a question was raised about whether GovOps might be streamlined to address various technology initiatives. Are there plans underway? While Gov Ops oversees a number of departments, it is a small organization with 20 staff. There are no plans for reorganization.

How does the Office of Digital Innovation relate to Gov Ops? While part of the Government Operations Agency, the Office of Digital Innovation has a distinct structure, including its own budget line item, director, and staff.

How would GovOps ensure the managing entity would retain independence? Critical issues, like ensuring that data contributors have a voice, should be written into statute. That language can describe the managing entity’s relationship with GovOps and outline the specific structure for the managing entity. GovOps is also open to incubating the managing entity with an option for it to become an independent entity or department at a later point.

Could the managing entity leverage administrative functions at the agency level rather than duplicating them within an office or department? Yes, GovOps has experience providing these types of services to new government entities, which can help to create budget and staffing efficiencies. GovOps can also

hold conversations with the workgroup about desired staffing and operational resources. In order to create the managing entity, in tandem with legislation, GovOps could submit a Budget Change Proposal (BCP) that would earmark operational and personnel funding.

Does GovOps have experience setting up nonprofit auxiliaries to accept philanthropic funding? While GovOps has not done so, other agencies have, so GovOps could adopt a similar model if desired.

Would GovOps be able to support partnerships with other public, private, or nonprofit entities to implement the data system? GovOps has a strong network that integrates partnerships with external parties in the context of procurement and attracting talented staff. It also has experience fostering collaboration among state agencies and a strong track record on data and technology initiatives, including hiring the state's chief technology officer and overseeing the California Department of Technology.

Governance Committee Structures from Other States

Kathy Gosa from the federal State Technical Assistance Center outlined key concepts of governance and provided case studies from five states. These models include an executive board that sets policies and ensures leadership from the partner entities and other stakeholders, as well as advisory boards that assist with implementation. Kathy Gosa outlined several core effective practices for governance including outlining the structure in statute and creating a charter that spells out roles and responsibilities. She also provided links to templates and key concepts that should be addressed in a charter.

Workgroup members asked a number of clarifying questions.

Most states have a data coordinator. Is the effectiveness of that role influenced by where it is housed? It is more important to focus on the tasks assigned to the role, which should allow the individual to support all of the partner entities.

As the workgroup identifies possible advisory boards, could it leverage some of the existing subcommittee structure? Yes, particularly as the subcommittees are structured similar to advisory boards in other states.

How big are executive boards? It varies by state. The case studies included boards as small as five and as many as 13. California will need to walk a line between making sure the board is representative without becoming so large that it is difficult to hold meaningful conversations. One way to address this is to spread partner entities across advisory boards. Some states also allow proxy votes because it can be difficult to convene the full group. Others, when using a consensus process for decision making, set rules that if your data is not implicated by a decision, you cannot veto it.

Maryland has a lengthy decision-making process where a staff member from the managing entity is a gatekeeper for what reaches the board. How well does that work? Maryland has a long-standing, successful data system, but it is a small state, which may impact how well the structure works.

Have other states been able to combine data across departments or agencies on early care and learning, and connecting that information to K-12 data? Yes, many states have done this successfully.

If an agency oversees multiple divisions, do they get multiple seats on the executive board to represent each program area? In other states, representation is set at the agency rather than the program level.

For example, a state agency that includes workforce and adult education programs only gets one vote, or a state agency that covers both early learning and K-12 gets one vote.

Do state data systems create rules that become binding for individual agencies regarding data usage or policies? No, governance policies are focused on the combined data, not on the individual agencies that contribute data. However, particularly in cases where there is poor data quality, the governing board may set thresholds for data that may be included.

Do individual agencies view state data systems as a resource for their own agencies? Often. The benefit of accessing data from other partners is a common incentive for state agencies to join a longitudinal data system.

Is it common to have a rotating leadership/chair? Often. Usually the chair of the governance committee is elected by the committee but sometimes that role is appointed by the governor.

Possible Governing Board Structures

Three anonymous polls allowed workgroup members to contemplate what types of entities should be on the executive board, which of those entities should have a vote, and what types of entities should be included on advisory committees. Workgroup members noted that it was difficult to distinguish what types of entities would be assigned to the external stakeholder categories, so for the summary below, the two external options were combined into one category.

The group was unanimous that data contributors should be represented on the governing board. 56% (five workgroup members) supported including stakeholders (such as students and families or research organizations), 44% (four workgroup members) supported non-agency partner entities (such as AICCU, to represent independent colleges), and 33% (three workgroup members) supported non-data contributing partner entities (such as CDT).

Workgroup members recommended a broad range of perspectives on the advisory boards with a focus on practitioners (89% or eight workgroup members), advocacy groups (78% or seven workgroup members), and nonprofits (56% or five workgroup members).

In addition, the poll indicated that they thought all members of the executive board should have a vote.

In the discussion of these options, workgroup members noted:

- It would be easier to determine membership for the executive board if its specific responsibilities were determined first.
- It is important to distinguish between decisions made regarding the general direction of the data system, as opposed to decisions about approving a specific research project.
- Students and families should be represented because they should be the ultimate beneficiaries of the data system and the state agencies are holding data that originates from individuals.
- There should be a way for academic researchers, early learning professionals, social service providers, and health care providers to be represented in the governance structure.
- Having a large executive board may not yield meaningful input from external stakeholders. Therefore, it may be helpful to have subgroups where others can provide input, while balancing participation to make sure that a few organizations don't dominate the external stakeholder roles.

- It may be helpful to replicate the existing subcommittee structure, which focuses on areas of expertise (such as technology, law, or research). But care should be taken that there aren't so many advisory groups that decision-making authority gets diluted.
- Rather than proscribe which subcommittees are created in the authorizing legislation, the governing board should be given authority to create and dissolve advisory groups.
- It is important not to conflate having a voting seat on a governing board with ensuring that the system will be accountable to the public and stakeholders.

Public Comment

Magali Kincaid of Public Allies recommended that the workgroup anchor its decisions in intent of data system, which focuses on providing actionable data that empowers meaningful change and can close persistent equity gaps, and focuses on students and families above data contributors. The governance process should be transparent and inclusive.