

California Cradle-to-Career Workgroup Meeting Summary

September 29, 2020

The California Cradle-to-Career Data System Workgroup, which is comprised of partner entities named in the authorizing legislation, provides recommendations to the Governor's Office regarding data system development.

This document provides a summary of the key points that emerged from substantive discussion over the course of the September 29, 2020 Workgroup meeting. More information about the meeting, including support materials, 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 & Universities; Ben Allen, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Mary Nicely, and Bruce Yonehiro, California Department of Education; Akhtar Khan, California Department of Social Services; Tim Murphy, California Department of Technology; Jeanne Wolfe, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency; Amy Fong, California School Information Services; Ed Sullivan, California State University, Office of the Chancellor; Patrick Perry, California Student Aid Commission; Barney Gomez, California Community College Chancellor's Office; Sara Pietrowski, California State Board of Education; Michele Perrault, Commission on Teacher Credentialing; Amy Faulkner, Employment Development Department; Joy Bonaguro, Government Operations Agency; Chris Furguele, University of California, Office of the President; and Ben Chida, Governor's Office.

Public Comment

Anna Alvarado of the California Edge Coalition expressed gratitude for the way the facilitation team and the Workgroup members have integrated public input. She noted that equity should be at the heart of all of discussions and stated support for the proposed publicly available data, particularly the employment information. She voiced interest in how the priority research questions would be addressed in the alternate proposal that will be discussed at the October meeting.

Angela Perry of The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) echoed Anna Alvarado's appreciation for the process elevating and giving voice to public members and advocates. She noted that the proposal had been amended to reflect this input and called attention to the alternate suggestions in the proposal that would be discussed at the meeting.

Rigel Massaro of Public Advocates gave kudos for the collaborative effort that has enabled members of the public to be seen and heard. This input yielded changes to the proposal such as increasing the number of public members, providing full voting rights for all members, focusing on user centered design, and emphasizing continuous improvement. She stressed the importance of ensuring that students and parents have a voice and a vote on the Governing Board.

Record Matching Recommendation

The facilitator provided an overview of the Request for Information (RFI) process that was used to gather information on a possible Master Data Management (MDM) solution for the Cradle-to-Career system. MDM solutions allow records on individuals to be matched across data providers so that it is possible to follow their participation and accomplishments over time. The Common Identifier Subcommittee, Technology & Security Subcommittee, and California Department of Technology worked

together to create the RFI and summarize market information about available MDM services and solutions.

Jeff Whitney of the CSU Chancellor's Office, and a member of the Technology & Security Subcommittee, provided information on the RFI results and walked through the subsequent recommendations from the two Subcommittees. The Workgroup was also alerted that an independent firm is conducting an evaluation of whether the California Health and Human Services Agency's (CHHS) Record Reconciliation and Research Data Hub can address the needs of the Cradle-to-Career data system.

Workgroup and Advisory Group members asked for clarification on the following questions:

Did the respondents to the RFI have expertise in user-centered design? MDM solutions are not used to provide information to end users. They provide the technical architecture that makes information available for tools that users interact with, such as dashboards. User-centered design would occur with the information that the MDM makes available (for example, how to arrange content within the dashboard to make it easy to navigate).

Would the solutions provide transparency about how records were matched? The respondents provide numerous features related to match processes that would provide transparency, such as the ability to evaluate match rates, manually override matches, or reverse matches.

Did the solutions address data quality, or would that need to be managed by the data providers? The respondents described features that could help to flag data quality concerns, and the Subcommittees discussed implications for the data providers, but no recommendation was made on whether this work would be handled within the MDM system or by the data providers.

Did the respondents address ongoing maintenance? Ongoing maintenance models depend on whether the solution is off-the-shelf versus a custom design. Custom designs are harder to maintain and require more reliance on the vendor.

Is it possible to customize off-the-shelf solutions? It is possible to configure off-the-shelf solutions, although it depends on the specific changes desired. The more that the solution is customized, the more expensive it becomes.

Were the respondents able to handle the hybrid data approach (blending features of centralized and federated systems) recommended by the Workgroup? Most of the respondents had the capacity to structure data in this fashion.

Given that IT companies are frequently acquired, which can affect the services they provide, did the respondents represent entities that are likely to have longevity? Several of the respondents providing off-the-shelf solutions were large, established companies with an international presence.

Does GovOps currently have staff with the necessary skill set to work with MDM solutions? GovOps would need to hire data engineers to do this work. As the technical infrastructure specifications are developed, the Technology & Security Subcommittee can think strategically about whether work would be done by staff or contracted out.

VOTE

The Workgroup unanimously approved the following recommendations:

- Given that there are a number of qualified providers of MDM solutions, the Cradle-to-Career data system should pursue this type of approach for person-matching.
- When soliciting proposals for a technical solution, allow providers to either provide a comprehensive solution or propose modular solutions.
- The Managing Entity should hire technical staff to oversee the selection and implementation of the technical solutions, have sufficient expertise to knowledgeably manage the technical solutions, and potentially develop custom components as needed.
- Further assessments should be conducted to better understand ways that commercial solutions could be integrated with existing and emerging state technologies.

Governing Board Proposal

Sara Pietrowski of the State Board of Education (SBE) and Samantha Tran of Children Now presented the proposed governance structure, which was developed by a homework team made up of members of the Workgroup, Policy & Analytics Advisory Group, and Practice & Operations Advisory Group. They highlighted how the revised draft addresses key concerns raised in the Advisory Group meetings.

Questions and Answers

Workgroup members asked clarifying questions, including:

How did the homework team come to the decision to have 16 people on the Advisory Boards and could these groups serve the same purpose if they are smaller? Having a larger group allows a broader range of audiences for the data system to give input on whether the data and tools are providing actionable information and whether the intended communities have the awareness and skills necessary to use the information and tools.

Can someone sit on both Advisory Boards at the same time? The proposal says only one member of an organization may serve at a time, and that person can only serve one consecutive term, but it doesn't speak to whether this restriction applies to one board or all possible boards.

Could faculty from a college sit on the Advisory Board? Yes, this is an example of a practitioner position, which is included in the list of member types.

The proposal outlines how the Governing and Advisory Boards will address policy issues. Is that appropriate? If so, how will the data providers coordinate with the Managing Entity about the technical and day-to-day operational work of standing up and running the data system, particularly if the Governing Board only meets quarterly? The proposal notes that the Governing Board is responsible for operational oversight. However, given the diversity of data sets and differences in the maturity and scale of the data that will be provided, the Managing Entity would work directly with data providers to address day-to-day issues, rather than in full-group meetings. If there are issues that need to be tackled with a subset of providers, such as all public postsecondary providers, the Managing Entity could create a Task Force to resolve the issue. This reflects a sentiment from the Workgroup that they did not want to Governing Board to be deeply engaged in day-to-day management.

Does the Governing Board have authority over the Managing Entity? Yes, the Governing Board would approve budgets and operational plans, establish a theory of action to guide an annual evaluation that would be reported to the Governing Board, ensure the Managing Entity is implementing a user-centered

design approach, and hire, evaluate, and fire the Executive Director. The Governing Board sets the strategic direction that the Managing Entity implements.

What role do the Advisory Boards have in decision making? They are not decision makers. They make recommendations and give feedback for consideration by the Governing Board. Having the Advisory Boards brings in perspectives from intended users and spreads out the workload so it does not all fall on Governing Board members. The SBE's Advisory Boards provide an example of how this works in practice.

Concerns

Several Workgroup members, including Bruce Yonehiro and Ben Allen from the California Department of Education (CDE), Ed Sullivan of the California State University (CSU), and Chris Furguele of the University of California (UC) expressed concern about the process described for recommending new data elements. The CDE representatives noted that, given the amount of work that will be necessary to implement the large scope of data that has been proposed for phase one, it is important to first successfully link, test, and support the use of existing elements before new ones get added. Given the current fiscal situation in the state, it may be unrealistic to think about expanding the scope before it is even built.

Ed Sullivan and Bruce Yonehiro noted that recommendations for additional data must not put the data providers at risk of violating federal law. If new data elements can be recommended using a two-thirds vote, parties that may not understand the implications could push through items are illegal to share.

Joy Bonaguro of GovOps reminded the group that just because something is listed in the governance structure, it does not need to be implemented in phase one. She and Akhtar Khan of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) noted that the legal framework for the Cradle-to-Career system requires that data sharing would not violate the law.

Chris Furguele, Ed Sullivan, Ben Allen, Bruce Yonehiro, and Mary Nicely of CDE also expressed concern about forwarding approved requests to the Governor and Legislature if a data provider raises an objection. Chris Furguele noted that this creates an adversarial tone that could undermine the development of trust among the data providers. It also gives the Governing Board a regulatory role over individual state agencies that is outside the scope of this project.

Tom Vu of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) noted that having the Governor appoint members to the Advisory Boards could politicize them and recommended that Advisory Board members be appointed by the Governing Board. Ed Sullivan countered that the Legislature is likely to want an external entity to appoint these seats, so it is better to specify in the proposal how non-data provider perspectives would be guaranteed, rather than have it added later.

Edits to the Proposal

Note: Workgroup members raised questions and concerns about the data request process, which will be addressed by a [homework team](#) (meeting on October 9) and discussed at the October Workgroup meeting. Therefore, the group did not edit or approve any language pertaining to data requests.

Based on a pre-meeting survey, the facilitator clarified where the Workgroup members had already reached consensus on the proposal. Then the facilitator clarified where there were differing opinions—both between the Advisory Groups and the Workgroup, and among Workgroup members—including the

number of public seats and the characteristics of public members, the appointment process for Advisory Boards, the voting threshold, and the approval process for new data elements.

Then the group examined specific requested changes to wording and developed recommendations on the areas where there had not been consensus.

Number of Public Seats and Characteristics of Public Members

The group examined three possible options for the number of public seats:

- Option 1: Six seats
- Option 2: Eight seats, where two would be appointed by the Assembly and two by the Senate
- Option 3: Twelve seats allocated based on a list of specific types of end users

Amy Faulkner of the Employment Development Department (EDD), who had indicated a preference for setting the number of seats based on end user roles in the pre-meeting survey, noted that 12 public seats may be too high, but that the public seats should be reserved for end users.

Ben Allen of CDE noted that it is preferable to have six rather than eight seats to keep the Governing Board from becoming so large that it would be difficult to ensure meaningful engagement.

Joy Bonaguro of GovOps noted that end user perspectives could be brought in through Advisory Boards. She also noted that it can be difficult for a single individual to represent an entire constituency. Therefore, it would be important to ensure that people appointed to represent end user perspectives are engaging with stakeholder groups. Channa Hewawickrama and Bruce Yonehiro of CDE concurred.

Rigel Massaro of Public Advocates and an Advisory Group member clarified that when she talked about the urgency of having students and parents on the Governing Board, her expectation was that individuals would be chosen who have experience representing their communities. For example, the Governor and Legislature could appoint individuals who are active in local Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), PICO, the SBE's California Practitioners Advisory Group, or Local Control and Accountability Plan processes. Advisory Group members including Samantha Tran of Children Now and Christopher Nellum of The Education-Trust West concurred.

Angela Perry of TICAS and an Advisory Group member, expressed concern that without membership on the Governing Board, the public would lack the ability to vote on governance decisions.

Nearly all Workgroup members expressed support for reserving six seats for public members. Amy Fong of California School Information Services (CSIS) and Michele Perrault of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) indicated that the number of seats is less important as the right representation.

The final document includes six seats for public members. The report to the Legislature will indicate that some Advisory Groups members preferred a larger number of public members.

Workgroup and Advisory Group members worked together on wording to quantify appropriate representation, and settled on the following description:

individuals who represent the members of the public that are intended to benefit from the system or are affected by the data—such as practitioners, families, students, adult learners and workers, community organization staff, research organization staff, and advocacy organization staff

Ex Officio Positions

The group unanimously endorsed editing the description of suggested roles that could be appointed to ex officio positions to only include the state's Chief Data Officer.

Decision-Making Threshold

The group considered two voting thresholds:

- Two-thirds vote
- Majority vote

Angela Perry of TICAS expressed concern that with a two-thirds voting majority and only six of the 17 seats reserved for public members, data providers could block community perspectives and priorities.

Chris Furguele of UC, Bruce Yonehiro of CDE, Joy Bonaguro of GovOps, and Akhtar Khan of CDSS noted that a two-thirds majority fosters a collaborative, consensus-driven culture rather than an adversarial one where entities are being forced to participate against their will.

Ed Sullivan of CSU indicated that he expected most votes by the Governing Board would be by affirmation, so the two-thirds vote would rarely be used.

Workgroup members unanimously expressed a preference for a two-thirds vote threshold.

The final document includes a two-thirds vote threshold. The report to the Legislature will indicate that some Advisory Groups members preferred a simple majority.

New Data Elements

The group discussed whether to defer the decision about the process for adding new data elements to a later phase of data system development. Both Workgroup and Advisory Group members felt that it would be preferable to develop a policy as part of the current planning process, particularly given that data collection and needs are constantly evolving.

Chris Furguele of UC suggested that decisions about new data should be part of the strategic planning process, so the purpose of the additional data would be built into the analysis of whether to include it. Joy Bonaguro of GovOps and Tim Murphy of the California Department of Technology (CDT) were supportive of this approach.

Chris Furguele and Ed Sullivan of CSU recommended that the Governing Board use a voluntary approach for expanding available data, taking feasibility and cost in account. Ed Sullivan stressed that data providers should not be forced to collect new data without funding.

Chris Furguele noted that the Managing Entity could use the feasibility study process to identify various means for collecting new information that might be more cost-effective and reduce the burden on state agencies and local providers and education institutions. Patrick Perry of the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) countered that the Managing Entity should not conduct feasibility studies on data that are not currently collected—this task should be undertaken by the Legislature.

Patrick Perry of CSAC recommended that the Cradle-to-Career data system should only work with data that are already collected. If the Governing Board makes recommendations for what other agencies should do, it will become politicized. Requirements about new data collection should only come from the Legislature or the federal government. Tom Vu of AICCU, Amy Faulkner of EDD, Amy Fong of CSIS,

Bruce Yonehiro of CDE, and Chris Furguele concurred, noting the first principle of the legal framework was that partner entities retained control of the data they contribute.

The group considered several approaches to the policy, including adopting language from the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act, providing more specific wording about which entities would be responsible for developing recommendations for additional data, and the benefits of referring more broadly to the concept of data rather than a more proscriptive naming of data elements.

The group developed the following description to clarify how requests for additional information would be handled by the Governing Board:

The Governing Board would review recommendations for additional data as part of the strategic planning process. All recommendations for additional data would require a feasibility study conducted by the Managing Entity. The Managing Entity would work with the relevant data providers and experts to document data availability, reliability, and validity; legal requirements; startup and ongoing costs to the Managing Entity and to the data providers; potential approaches for collecting the information; and any political or other implications that would jeopardize the neutrality of the Managing Entity.

Data & Tools Advisory Board

The group considered the description of the Data & Tools Advisory Board and made edits to clarify its purpose and align the description with the decisions made about recommendations for additional data. The new language reads:

Each year, the Data and Tools Advisory Board would be responsible for examining whether the intended data users have access to actionable information, and for identifying ways to improve that information.

For phase one of the data system, the Data and Tools Advisory Board would develop suggestions to improve the usability or usefulness of the data for the Governing Board, including:

- Visualizations on the dashboard
- Data points in the query builder
- Operational tools

Appointments to the Advisory Boards

The group discussed four options for appointments to the Advisory Boards:

- Option 1: The Governing Board and the Governor's Office would each appoint eight members
- Option 2: The Governing Board would develop a list of recommended appointees for consideration by the Governor's Office, which would appoint all members
- Option 3: The Governing Board would appoint eight members, the Governor's Office would appoint four members, Assembly would appoint two members, and the Senate would appoint two members
- Option 4: The Governing Board would appoint all seats

Ed Sullivan of CSU noted that designating political appointments helps to prepare the recommendation for likely changes that will happen in the legislative process for creating the data system.

Bruce Yonehiro of CDE noted that it is unusual for Governing Boards to make appointments and the Governing Board will not meet frequently enough to take on this task.

Patrick Perry of CSAC asked whether it is common for the Governor's Office to appoint members to Advisory Boards. He expressed concern that the Governor's Office might not have the bandwidth to fulfill this request, or that a future Governor might either refuse to fill seats or politicize the Advisory Boards.

Amy Supinger, who is consulting to the planning process, noted that it is not common, but it also is not common to name Advisory Boards in statute. However, the Governor does commonly appoint members of statutory boards.

Angela Perry of TICAS provided an example from the Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education, where Advisory Board members are appointed by the Assembly Speaker, the Senate, and the Department of Consumer Affairs in partnership with the Governor's Office. However, in this case, the positions are specified by role.

Sara Pietrowski of SBE described how her organization fills Advisory Board seats. For one of the groups, federal law spells out a list of required roles, but the list allows for a pool of candidates that meets any of the roles rather than mandating one seat per role. A small number of board members serve on an appointments committee that reviews applications from the field, interviews candidates, and brings their recommendations to the full Board for final approval.

Barney Gomez of the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and Bruce Yonehiro of CDE stressed that the process should not be cumbersome and time consuming.

Nearly all Workgroup members expressed an interest in having the Governing Board appoint all seats. Jeanne Wolfe of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (CLWDA) preferred having the Governing Board develop a list of recommended appointees for consideration by the Governor's Office, which would appoint all members. Ed Sullivan of CSU, Sara Pietrowski of SBE, and Michele Perrault of CTC indicated that they would be open to either of these two options.

The final document states that the Governing Board would appoint all seats.

Representation for Employment Development Department

Amy Faulkner of EDD asked that the list of the 11 data provider Governing Board members be amended so that EDD would be a named party. The proposal was adjusted to assign one seat to California Labor and Workforce Development Agency/Employment Development Department. However, Jeanne Wolfe of CLWDA asked for the chance to discuss this amendment internally before finalizing this addition. She and Amy Faulkner will bring a recommendation to the October Workgroup meeting.

VOTE

The Workgroup voted unanimously to adopt the Governance Structure proposal as amended during the September 29 meeting, with the caveats that the representation of EDD and items pertaining to the data request process will be added to the proposal after a discussion and vote at the October meeting.