

Cradle-to-Career Data System Technical FAQ

Tools for Students and Families

Overall Questions

What types of resources will be provided?

The Cradle-to-Career Data System would scale two existing tools, the California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) and eTranscript California, to provide the following tools and services:

- College and career planning tools and curriculum
- College eligibility monitoring tools
- Electronic transcripts, including nontraditional learning artifacts
- Option to share social service history with college application
- Support for data cleaning at local education agencies

How are existing tool providers engaging with the planning process to ensure that the desired services get provided?

The Cradle-to-Career Workgroup identified the types of tools it would prioritize for students and families after reviewing examples of tools that have been implemented in other states and within California. It selected CCGI and eTranscript California because they aligned most closely with priority features. Then WestEd conducted a literature review to determine critical characteristics of the desired tools and interviewed CCGI and eTranscript California to determine whether the selected tools include those features. The two entities have identified the specific action items necessary to achieve the desired features, including timelines, budgets, data flows, and legal requirements.

Could the Cradle-to-Career Data System be used to generate referrals to other agencies while a student is in school?

While it was discussed as a possible option, this feature was not identified for phase one of the data system.

California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)/CaliforniaColleges.edu

How can I use [CaliforniaColleges.edu](https://www.californiacolleges.edu)?

All members of the public can use the college, career, and major exploration tools, the interest profiler assessment, and learn about financial aid. User accounts are for K-12 students and parents and allow users to set up a digital portfolio.

Will districts need to buy CCGI/CaliforniaColleges.edu after the Cradle-to-Career Data System is established?

There are different ways districts can use CaliforniaColleges.edu. Currently, basic accounts are free to all students, educators, and parents in California. Data-informed accounts with transcript-informed functionality (such as eligibility tools and data-informed application integrations), plus data clean-up and capacity building support, are currently available for a subsidized fee of \$2.75/high school student and \$2.00/middle school student per year. Through the Cradle-to-Career Data System, all districts and students will have access to the transcript informed functionality, free of charge. The timing of this is not yet determined. If you would like to learn more, please contact partnership@californiacolleges.edu.

Does CaliforniaColleges.edu explain about different types of colleges?

There is information on CaliforniaColleges.edu about the different public systems of higher education in the state, including the California Community Colleges, the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC): <https://www.californiacolleges.edu/#/systems-of-higher-education>.

Is the CCGI a-g eligibility Tool part of Californiacolleges.edu?

The CSU/UC Eligibility Tool is available to students on CaliforniaColleges.edu and the associated reporting is available to educators who have accounts.

How does CSU get access to these data to facilitate the admissions process?

CSUs can currently get data via the application integration for students in CCGI partner districts. If you would like to learn more about partnerships, please contact partnership@californiacolleges.edu.

Will CCGI/CaliforniaColleges.edu be required for California's public schools?

This system will not be required. However, once implemented, the system would be made available to all schools. The goal is to have equitable access to the tools.

Will CCGI/CaliforniaColleges.edu include information about undocumented students who may not want their personal information shared?

There is no information related to students' documentation status on CaliforniaColleges.edu.

What is the connection between CaliforniaColleges.edu and other Cradle-to-Career Data System tools like dashboards?

CaliforniaColleges.edu and the Cradle-to-Career Data System dashboards will be separate systems. While they leverage the same source data, they will be transmitted through different mechanisms to ensure that student privacy is protected.

Where can I find more information?

- Please review this website for more information about CCGI: <https://foundationccc.org/What-We-Do/Student-Success/California-College-Guidance-Initiative>
- The website for CaliforniaColleges.edu is: <https://www.californiacolleges.edu/#/>
- Career Assessments are housed on CaliforniaColleges.edu: <https://www.californiacolleges.edu/#/>.

eTranscript California

How will the Cradle-to-Career Data System enable colleges to access social service history to inform supports that students can receive once in college?

The Department of Social Services is developing a tool that confirms social service history that will be linked to eTranscript California.

How does this project relate to current projects in the California Community College system, like SuperGlue?

As part of scaling eTranscript California for the Cradle-to-Career Data System, the underlying infrastructure will be upgraded, including implementing SuperGlue—an effort that better aligns information across community colleges.

Tools for Research and Evaluation

Available Data

How will data be accessed?

There will be multiple options for accessing data:

- **No review needed:** Instant access to data through a public website with dashboards and query tools. Users can build custom queries from the 160+ data points, and download tables and charts with aggregate results. No legal agreements would be required.
- **Expedited review:** It would take one month to receive a data file. Users can request aggregate data that is not included in public tools. No legal agreements would be required.
- **Comprehensive review:** It would take three months to receive preliminary approval. Users can request unitary data or request social science, health, teacher credential, and workforce data not included in public tools. The process requires a legal agreement, institutional review board approval, disclosure review, and a final review before reports can be posted in the research library.

What types of data will be available?

The Cradle-to-Career Workgroup has identified over 160 data points to include in the first phase of development. Information will focus primarily on the education pipeline, including K-12, public and private postsecondary, financial aid, and employment. There will also be a few data points that help to contextualize student outcomes including participation in Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKS. In later phases of development, the data set will be expanded to include workforce data and more extensive social services and health information. In addition, other data sets such as from the justice system may be added.

Where will the data come from?

The data will be provided by state agencies, such as the California Department of Education and the California Student Aid Commission. In addition, independent colleges will have the option to upload their data because there is no state data system for those institutions. No new data will be captured for the Cradle-to-Career data system.

Will the system include information from the justice system?

No. This data set has been identified as a potential priority for phase two of the data system.

Will the system include information from nonprofits that are collecting supplemental information about students?

No. Only information from state agencies and independent colleges will be included in phase one.

Where can I see a list of the 160+ data points being currently considered?

Summaries of the types of information that will be available to the public and prioritized for research studies are available [here](#).

What will the dashboards and query tool look like?

A user-centered design process will be used to ensure that the tools are appropriate for their intended audience. To guide this effort, the Cradle-to-Career Workgroup identified examples they thought would be effective:

- The dashboards may look similar to those implemented by the Kentucky Center for Statistics: <https://kcews.ky.gov/Reports/Reports>
- The query tool may look similar to the National Center for Education Statistics Data Lab: <https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/index.aspx>.

How often will the dashboards be updated with new information?

The dashboards will be updated once a year. Because the data system will be focused largely on education, which is reported to state agencies only a few times a year, and state agencies need to certify information they receive from individual institutions, an annual upload will ensure the information is reliable and complete.

Can outcomes be viewed over long periods of time or will information only be available at a fixed point after each transition (such as only looking at college-going rates immediately after graduating high school)?

The dashboard will use fixed time periods to make the information easier to understand, but the query builder will allow users to set whatever time parameters are appropriate for their analysis.

When will the tools be available?

The implementation will occur no sooner than two years. Planning will continue through June 2021. If the system is funded, work can begin in July 2021.

Disaggregated Data

Will the Cradle-to-Career Data System collect sexual orientation/gender identity data, especially for students who identify as other than heteronormative?

The data system will include a non-binary option under the Sex/Gender category, as well as information on whether students identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT).

Will data be disaggregated for racial and/or ethnic groups, such as Asian American?

The data system will include information on race/ethnicity groups as defined for federal education reporting, which includes American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races.

Will data be available at the school level?

Yes, at the school/college level, as well as by district, region, and statewide.

Will immigration status be included?

No. Immigration status will not be included.

Will information on language be included?

Data points on primary language and childhood English language proficiency have been recommended for inclusion.

How much detail will be available on disability status in K-12?

This data point has not yet been defined.

Will the Cradle-to-Career Data System include military accession data for students who go straight from high school into the armed forces?

No, this information will not be included in phase one. However, self-reported military status will be included for students who enroll in postsecondary.

Can the data system provide an equity score for institutions, based on staff composition, subjects, etc.?

The Cradle-to-Career Data System will make structural issues transparent, but will not interpret the data, such as by recommending a way to evaluate institutions.

Early Learning and Care

What kinds of data will be collected and shared on early learning and care?

Information will be integrated from the California Department of Education (CDE) Child Development Management Information System (CDMIS), as well as the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). However, detailed planning for the early learning and care data points will be contingent on the finalization of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the transition of some programs from CDE to CDSS.

Will the data system include information on children who attended California Early Start (0-3 ages)?

This information has been flagged for inclusion.

Will data on private early care and learning programs be included?

No. Because this information is not currently reported to the state, it cannot be included.

Will information from the Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS) be included?

QRIS is listed as a potential data point, but some concerns have been raised by advisory group members about its inclusion.

K-12 Data

Will the system use CALPADS data?

Yes, much of the K-12 data will come from the California Department of Education [CALPADS](#) data set.

Will the data system include information on high school students' course taking?

Yes. Information such as the level of math, career and technical education, and a-g coursework are included.

Will the system show career technical education (CTE) pathway completion?

Yes. CTE pathway completion is one of the variables that has been flagged for inclusion.

Will the Cradle-to-Career Data System include information on Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs), funding expenditures, and data collection practices?

No. The data system will focus on students and their outcomes over time.

Will the Cradle-to-Career Data System incorporate information from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screening tools?

No, because this information is not currently collected at the state level.

Will K-12 Adult Education data be included?

No, not in phase one.

Postsecondary

Will the system use Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) data for community colleges?

Yes, much of the community college data will come from COMIS data set.

Could the data system be used to determine if community college students eventually become full-time community college faculty, or if they are primarily adjuncts, and whether their employment status has a significant impact on their post-college debt?

In phase one of the data system, information on faculty and staff will not be provided by the education partners. However, this information could be flagged for inclusion in a future phase of the data system.

Will the data system include information about where students go to college if they leave California?

The Cradle-to-Career Workgroup has recommended that data from the [National Student Clearinghouse](#) (NSC) be included in the data system. If the Legislature approves funding, then out-of-state college enrollments could be included.

Financial Aid

What federal laws allow the sharing of financial aid data?

The federal government allows the sharing of financial aid data for statewide longitudinal data systems, as noted in this [guidance](#) from the federal [Privacy Technical Assistance Center](#).

Employment

Where will salary information come from?

The Employment Development Department (EDD) will provide employment and salary information, based on figures reported by employers.

Will information be available for students who go directly to work after high school, rather than going to college?

No. Because the employment match uses social security numbers, which are not collected by the California Department of Education, it is not possible to determine employment outcomes for high school graduates.

Will data be available on the types of jobs that individuals have?

No. While information is available about the employer's industry (such as construction), EDD does not collect information on the specific jobs held by each employee. So, an individual working in the construction industry might be the CEO or an accountant for that organization.

Will information be available on where students are employed?

No. The information reported to EDD only lists a single address for the employer, which may be in a different location than where an individual is working. For example, the employer may list its corporate headquarters, rather than the location of a specific store.

Will it be possible to see if students have entered sustainable careers?

Yes. Earnings data will be benchmarked against a living wage.

Social Services

Is data from the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) or Social Security Disability Insurance data being recommended for inclusion?

No, neither will be included in phase one of data system development. The system will include CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and foster youth status as the first elements pertaining to social and health services, with additional data points being added in future phases.

Workforce

Will information be provided on workforce training? For example, will it show whether an individual enrolled in a Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, took classes through a Workforce Development Board, or participated in a program that trains people with disabilities?

Information from noncredit community college programs, some which provide WIOA services, will be included in the first phase. The second phase of development will include additional training providers, like workforce boards, as well as programs that focus on people with disabilities, such as the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and California Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Will the system be linked to Cal JOBS?

No, not in phase one.

Teacher Credentialing

Why is teacher credential data not included in phase one?

Currently, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing is limited by the Education Code regarding how it can share data. They do have available reports on their [website](#).

Data Request Process

Can state entities that are not data providers request information?

Yes. Any entity can request information.

How will the process provide accountability for agencies, so they do not just deny requests?

The data request process makes clear that the intention is that agencies will act in good faith to approve requests that are legally allowable and serve the public good. The Cradle-to-Career Data System website will include information on each data request including its status. If an agency denies a request, then they must post the reason. In addition, an advisory board made up of Cradle-to-Career Data System Technical FAQ | October 29, 2020 | Page 10 community members will review all requests that were approved and denied each year and make recommendations for ways to improve the data request process

How will requirements for an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the protection for human subjects be handled?

The [Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects](#) (CPHS) will serve as the Institutional Review Board for the Cradle-to-Career Data System, as it has the expertise necessary for state and federal requirements. CHPS is currently used by a number of state agencies, including both health and education providers. The data request form will collect the data points needed for a successful IRB submission. Local IRB approval will not be accepted.

For comprehensive data requests, what training will be required?

Researchers who request unitary data would have to provide documentation that they have been trained about data security and the protection of human subjects, similar to the [CITI training](#).

Could the legal templates being developed for the Cradle-to-Career Data System be used in other contexts?

Yes. The Legal Subcommittee is currently developing a number of templates. Copies are available on the project website here:

<https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/legal-subcommittee>.

How will the Cradle-to-Career Data System ensure that personally identifiable information, health/medical data, and information on minors are protected?

When data are loaded into the system, each data element will be tagged based on the level of sensitivity, to ensure that only the appropriate parties can access this information. Most of the data released from the system will be at the summary level, so that individual identities cannot be determined. In cases where unitary data are requested, they must be approved within state and federal legal frameworks, and information would only be available in a secure data enclave, so it cannot be removed from the system.

Will student-level data be available to local educational agencies and county offices of education for their own students?

Local educational agencies will be able to request unitary data to conduct research and evaluation projects. They will also receive student-level data through the California College Guidance Initiative and eTranscript California, as described in the FAQ section on tools for students and families.

Data System Implementation

Scope

Is California proposing a data system that is similar to other states?

The planning process has leveraged the expertise of federal technical assistance providers and national organizations like the [Data Quality Campaign](#) to determine lessons learned from other states. The proposal proactively addresses needs that other states are now trying to retrofit their data systems to address. Specifically, the California proposal would ensure that significantly more information would be available in the public domain. In addition, the proposal includes tools that are of greater use to students, families, and educators because they allow for planning and support at the individual level. College planning and electronic transcript tools are offered by a number of other states.

Governance

How will the governance process ensure that members of the public have a voice?

One-third of the governing board will be made up community members that are appointed by the Governor and the Legislature. In addition, there will be two advisory boards made up of community members that will provide recommendations to the governing board. One, the Data & Tools Advisory Board, will examine whether the data system is providing actionable information and identify ways to improve access to that information, including visualizations on the dashboards, data points in the query builder, the data request process, and the content of the operational tools. The Community Engagement Advisory Board will examine whether the managing entity is creating strong feedback loops with data users, supports evidence-based decision making and analytical capacity, and ensures equitable access to actionable information.

Managing Entity

Why will the data system be run by a state agency?

The Cradle-to-Career Workgroup felt that a government agency would provide longevity because it would position the data system as part of the state infrastructure. Therefore, they recommended that the data system be incubated at the [Government Operations Agency \(GovOps\)](#). GovOps was created as part of a reorganization plan that centralized the departments that provide services to other departments under a single agency, with the goal of improving the management of state organizations. Because it oversees relevant departments, such as the Department of Technology, GovOps can leverage existing systems to ensure the data system would be developed efficiently.

Unique Identifiers

How will the system utilize unique student identification numbers such as the K-12 Statewide Student Identifier (SSID)?

The Cradle-to-Career Workgroup has recommended that the data system use a master data management approach to record matching. This process allows several variables—including SSID—to be used. Once matched, unique identifiers can be generated that are purpose-specific. Providing different unique identifiers for each requestor helps to keep individual identities more secure. There are a number of technology solutions that can provide this type of functionality.

How did the Cradle-to-Career Workgroup determine how to address the issue of common identifiers?

A subcommittee examined what other states have done, with the support of a federal technical assistance provider. The subcommittee also heard presentations from four states with data systems that provide the type of functionality desired for the Cradle-to-Career data system, as well as from projects already underway in the state. Finally, the subcommittee worked with the California Department of Technology to release a Request for Information for record matching solutions, which drew 27 responses.

Security

How will the security of the data be monitored?

The planning process includes a subcommittee focused on technology and security, which is developing policies related to data security. Their recommendations are available at: <https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/technology-security-subcommittee>.

Data Definitions

Will data providers have to adopt state definitions?

No. Each entity will upload data in its native format, and data dictionaries will be used to combine data and display it in a consistent fashion. The data dictionaries will be available on the Cradle-to-Career Data System website.

What process will be used to determine how data will be displayed?

The Data Definition Subcommittee is documenting how each data contributor tracks each data point. These summaries are compared to create a proposed definition for the dashboards and query builder that considers the quality of data from each source and the variables that would be widely available across data providers. The subcommittee will work through May 2021 to develop definitions, which can be accessed here:

<https://wested.ent.box.com/s/j7uqv9lpyv35jhjn2nvi2nnlrnw9i4rf>

Will the displays align with national data standards?

Each proposed definition is compared to federal standards. The subcommittee determines whether the national standard is appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

How many years of data will be included?

This will vary by data point. The data contributors are currently documenting the years each data point is available, including examining the timeframe after its initial collection in which the data point became reliable.

Data Quality

How will data quality be addressed, particularly for the source data?

Each data point that will be in the public tools is currently being examined and flagged related to data quality. The question of how to improve upon data quality over time will be one of the planning topics in Spring 2021.

Is support available to help colleges and districts clean up their data?

In phase one, data cleanup resources are focused on K-12 institutions, related to college eligibility.