

Cradle-to-Career Definitions Subcommittee Meeting Summary

November 10, 2020

This document provides a summary of the key points that emerged from the November 10, 2020 meeting of the Definitions Subcommittee. The suggestions from this group will be used to craft specific definitions for data points in the P20W data set. 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/definitions-subcommittee> (click on “Meeting Materials”).

The goals of this meeting were to establish public display options for the following data points:

- Enrolled in College
- Time to Enrollment
- Enrollment in Multiple Colleges
- Enrolled from Out of State
- Matriculation Status
- GPA
- Satisfactory Progress
- 3rd/8th/11th Grade Assessments
- Standardized Test Scores
- Regions
- Childhood English Language Proficiency
- Met a-g eligibility
- Migrant
- Disabled
- IEP Status
- Free-and-Reduced-Price Meal Status
- K-12 Grade Levels

The following Definitions Subcommittee representatives attended the meeting:

Randy Tarnowski, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities; Todd Hoig, California Community College Chancellor’s Office; Paula Mishima, Randy Bonnell, Glenn Miller & Channa Hewawickrama, California Department of Education; Akhtar Khan & Patrick Delaney, California Department of Social Services; David Sanabria, California Health and Human Services Agency; Douglas Leone, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency; Martha Friedrich & Amy Fong, California School Information Services; Monica Malhotra, California State University; Adrian Felix, California Student Aid Commission; Marjorie Suckow & Phi Phi Lau, California Teacher Credentialing Commission; Chris Furgiele, University of California Office of the President

The meeting began with an update on clarifying the legality of sharing financial aid data. WestEd has submitted a letter that describes the specific desired use case for California to Benjamin Ferraro, Education Privacy Policy Analyst at the US Department of Education.

Postsecondary Data Points

Enrolled in College

Subcommittee members determined that this data point should be derived by the managing entity, by determining whether individuals appeared at any postsecondary institution included in the data set. However, they noted that it may be important to set a participation threshold for cases where students attend multiple institutions. For example, CSU assigns students to a specific institution based on where the student had the largest number of credits.

CDE worked with experts at UC Davis to define the concept of college enrollment for its dashboard on [College-Going Rate for California High School Students](#), including looking at other variables such as where students were enrolled the longest. It will be important to finalize the Cradle-to-Career Data System methodology based on the specific use case for how the data would be displayed. For example, criteria like number of units or length of enrollment could be used to assign students to an institution in cohort-based analyses, but if the intention is to show a snapshot of where students were enrolled in a single year, the variable might be defined differently.

As definitions get established, it will also be important to look at how the concept of college enrollment is calculated for accountability purposes such as for IPEDS. The work of establishing definitions should wait until after the user-centered design process for the dashboard and query builder, to ensure the specific applications are clear.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Time to Enrolling in College as “concerns about the data.” Further analysis is needed to align with existing calculations and specific use cases related to threshold for enrollment.

Time to Enrolling in College

Subcommittee members discussed what cohort of students would be used for this calculation—students who exited secondary education or high school graduates. Given that special education secondary completers are not considered graduates, the group recommended that the Cradle-to-Career Data System adopt CDE’s definition for high school completers, which includes options beyond a conventional diploma. This variable should be disaggregated by various secondary completion categories.

Next, the group edited the timeframes to specify the number of months, rather than listing years. This can help to address students who enroll in college for the first time in the spring term. However, when the National Student Clearinghouse information is integrated, it will need to be checked to ensure that it aligns with this approach. The subcommittee also recommended that specific options for time ranges be re-examined after the data are compiled, to ensure that the categories align with student enrollment patterns.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Time to Enrolling in College as “concerns about the data.” Display options should be evaluated to determine if the appropriate time ranges align with enrollment patterns.

Enrolled in Multiple Colleges

The subcommittee determined that this should be an annual measure, as transfer would appear as a matriculation category. This data point should be calculated by the managing entity.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Enrolled in Multiple Colleges as “ok to include.”

Enrolled in College from Out of State

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Enrolled in College from Out of State as “ok to include.”

Matriculation Status

The group examine this data point from several angles, noting that the available fields might vary if the goal is to understand the proportion of various student types within an institution, or to track student characteristics, such as whether they are enrolling for the first time or transferring from another institution. Two confounding factors were:

- whether to include dual enrollment students (which are called transitory students in CSU), in addition to data point on dual enrollment status
- how to indicate transfers from California community colleges, which is a useful flag for four-year institutions because it indicates a vertical transfer, but is confusing for community colleges because it indicates horizontal transfer

Similar to other discussions during the day, this data point illuminates differing perspectives based on student cohort. For K-12 cohorts designed to understand whether students go to college, dual enrollment students would not be included because they have not yet completed high school. Whereas for college cohorts, dual enrollment students would be included when showing total enrollment for a given year.

Other concerns that were raised included how to establish matriculation status within an academic year. For example, if a student enrolled for the first time in one institution in the fall, and for the first time at another in the spring, how would they be flagged? This is particularly challenging in cases where a student is enrolled in two segments—such as both a community college and four-year institution—in the same academic year.

Another participant wondered how a student should be flagged if they arrived at college with enough AP credits to allow them to enter as a sophomore.

The subcommittee settled on creating two data points:

- One data point should focus on the student and record an individual’s status when first enrolling in a postsecondary institution. This list would include dual enrollment, first time regular admission, and transfer. [Note that additional, transfer-specific elements would distinguish transfer from California community colleges and other sources.]
- A second data point would be associated with the institution to clarify patterns of enrollment. This list would include dual enrollment, first-time regular admission students, transfer students, returning students, and continuing students.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Matriculation Status and Enrollment Patterns as “concerns about the data.” The definitions should be finalized once the use case was clearer through the user centered design process.

Learning and Assessments

GPA

The group discussed the best means to calculate GPA, particularly given the desire to show GPAs within specific contexts such as GPA across all high school math courses or cumulative college GPA. Most of the partner entities do not currently calculate or report GPAs. If the managing entity calculates this data point for the partner entities, the data providers will need to submit information on all courses taken by students and their associated grades, which will increase the amount of data that needs to be stored and associated costs.

Subcommittee members noted several key considerations for calculating GPAs. For example, a decision will be needed on how to handle GPA when students take courses at multiple institutions—should the figure be calculated by institution or overall, particularly when examining cumulative GPAs? Also, in cases like Cal Grants, only some courses are included in the GPA calculation, which could cause confusion.

Subcommittee members did not agree on the best way for GPAs to be calculated. CSU and UC were inclined to submit calculated GPAs, but CCC preferred the managing entity to calculate them. One participant noted that if the managing entity is going to calculate GPAs, the data providers will need to submit information on the number of units/credits student earned.

The group also discussed whether to provide specific GPAs, use ranges, or indicate whether a student is above or below a specific threshold (such as 3.0). Some subcommittee members were worried that using ranges or thresholds would not be sufficient for research projects. Others noted the difficulty of comparing GPAs across institutions due to variations in grading practices and the complexity of the material being taught. Another concern is that different segments establish different GPA thresholds. For example, UC and CSU use a different GPA figure as a flag for academic probation.

The subcommittee recommended the following:

- The GPA associated with Cal Grants should be provided by CSAC, but only be available by request.
- Display a limited number of GPA ranges, including less than 2.0, 2, 2.0 to 2.9, 3.0 and above.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized GPA as “concerns about the data.” Additional analysis is needed on how to calculate GPAs, given that it may not be possible for the managing entity to construct cumulative GPAs across institutions using calculations submitted by individual entities.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Given that none of the segments calculate this element, but it is valuable to know whether students are successful in their first year of college for the dashboard, the group recommended that first year GPA should be used instead of satisfactory academic progress.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized First Year Postsecondary GPA as “concerns about the data.” As with the broader GPA discussion, this element will need to be evaluated once the data are submitted.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

CDE representatives explained that the DRDP, which is used for early learning and care and afterschool programs, includes multiple factors such as self-regulation, cognition, and physical development. These factors are not easily integrated into dashboard displays.

DECISION: The subcommittee indicated that DRDP should be available through the request process only.

K-12 Assessments (Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11)

CDE representatives requested that a caveat be included that notes English assessments show a progression of skills over time, while math assessments are measures of discrete skills. They also noted that student mastery of the English language is measured annually by the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). While mastery of English would be better represented on a dashboard through the Childhood English Language Learner data point described below, some researchers might want to access ELPAC data.

The group discussed including additional assessment data including science, California Alternate Assessment, and California Spanish Test. The science assessment scores were of particular interest, because including them would address a desired data point that was flagged by advisory group members.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 1) CDE representatives will provide specific language on the difference between math and English progression to include in a caveat.
- 2) CDE representatives will compile information on science assessments.
- 3) CDE representatives will determine whether to recommend including additional assessments such as the California Alternate Assessment and California Spanish Test.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Math and English Smarter Balanced Assessments as “ok to include.” However, the ELPAC scores should be made available through the request process only.

College Assessments (SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate)

CDE representatives flagged that in order to share SAT, AP, and ACT information with the managing entity, legal agreements must be signed with the College Board and ACT. Furthermore, care is needed in evaluating the inclusion of IB information, given that so few students attempt the international diploma and must also pass a specific number of topical assessments. Finally, the group noted that information should come directly from the testing sources, rather than using information collected by postsecondary institutions.

CDE representatives determined it would be helpful to work directly with their assessment staff to determine the appropriate way to display college assessment information. While many states show whether students took and “passed” standardized tests, specific postsecondary institutions have various thresholds for desired test scores.

ACTION ITEM: CDE representatives will evaluate how college assessments should be displayed in the Cradle-to-Career Data System.

Regions

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Regions as “ok to include.”

K-12 Items from Prior Meetings

Met A to G Eligibility

CDE representatives clarified that a-g completion is a flag that is provided by local educational agencies. Therefore, it is not possible to show disaggregate a-g completion by CSU and UC definitions (CSU provides more flexibility of using “g” courses to fulfil some requirements).

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Met A-G Eligibility as “ok to include.”

Childhood English Language Learner

CDE representatives recommended adjustments to the specific categories of English language learner status. Specifically, they recommended showing whether a student had been reclassified from an English language learner to being proficient, as these students are typically high achievers.

However, they noted there may be a need to clarify how this information would relate to other displays on CDE’s School Dashboard. For example, English language learners are flagged in the cohort graduate rate using a federal definition that focuses on whether students were English learners during high school.

CDE representatives also clarified that they do not have English language learner flags for early learning and care. Instead, they collect information on home language. Therefore, the group recommended that the determination on language status for early learning and care be deferred until more information can be provided by the Department of Social Services on how they will track this information.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Childhood English Language Learner as “ok to include” for K-12 students only. Language flags for early learning and care should be evaluated once the state begins developing the Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

Childhood Migrant Status

CDE representatives adjusted the title of the metric to make it more specific: Childhood Migrant Education Program Participant.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Childhood Migrant Education Program Participant as “ok to include.”

Disabled /Individualized Education Program (IEP) Status

CDE representatives noted that disability status is handled differently in K-12 than in postsecondary. First, K-12 uses professional assessments, whereas postsecondary institutions often use self-reported data or participation in services as a proxy. Using IEP as a proxy for disability status has some challenges because a student could refuse services. Also, the timeframe for becoming disabled may be significant—for example, a student who is diagnosed with a disability as a child may have a very different experience from an individual who becomes disabled as an adult. CDE representatives will provide an updated recommendation, particularly related to language used to describe people with disabilities.

ACTION ITEM: CDE representatives will evaluate how disability and IEP status should be displayed in the Cradle-to-Career Data System.

Eligible for Free-and-Reduced Price Meals

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized Eligible for Free-and-Reduced Price Meals as “ok to include.”

K-12 Grade Level

CDE representatives clarified that while there are two designations for children younger than kindergarten (infant/toddler and three- and four-year-old) there is almost no information available for those age brackets. Therefore, it is preferable to have K-12 grade level start with kindergarten. This is also important because pre-K data is not found in CALPADS, and CDE would not want to create confusion about the types of data they have at scale. CDE representatives also clarified that transitional kindergarten is a type of kindergarten and should not be listed as a separate category.

DECISION: The subcommittee categorized K-12 Grade Level as “ok to include.”