

Cradle-to-Career Data System Communications Overview

Goal

The Community Engagement Subcommittee seeks to promote diversity and inclusivity in building engagement with the Cradle-to-Career Data System. The goal of this communications strategy is to effectively reach the key audiences (outlined in the paragraph below) identified as primary users of the data system and increase the awareness of:

- The existence of the data system
- How it works, why it matters, and who it's for
- How to effectively use the data system and interpret the information it provides

Key Audiences

The subcommittee identified four key audiences for outreach, which were codified using personas. Personas provide profiles for hypothetical individuals who are representative of the key audience. Each key audience type has multiple personas associated with it, which are listed below. Other audiences and personas can be added in the future as needed.

- **Analyzers:** such as state legislative staff, policy and research analysts, think tank researchers, foundation program officers, doctoral students, reporters
- **Planners:** such as nonprofit workforce development leadership, school district staff, school board members, community-based organization staff, directors of college admissions, technical assistance providers, program monitors at state agencies
- **Practitioners:** such as teachers, faculty, advisors, counselors
- **Individuals:** such as high school students, college students, parents and family members working with students, adults looking to transition careers or continue their education

In addition to segmenting by use case, outreach will consider the range of life experiences, regional concerns, targeted age range, urban/rural users, and demographics within these personae categories.

Key Messages

Key messages and messengers for communications activities were identified for each audience. These messages are guiding themes that help shape promotional materials for specific audiences. Messages will need to be further targeted for personas within

each audience. For example, different messages will resonate within the Individual category for high school students and adults transitioning careers.

Overarching Messages

- The California Cradle-to-Career Data System is a go-to, one-stop resource for accurate, up-to-date information about education and the workforce data.
- The data system is user-friendly and easy to access
- The data system includes both research tools and resources that can help support students today and advance their learning outcomes in the future
- The goal of the data system is to help create improved outcomes for students

Relevant Messages for Key Audiences

- **Analyzers**
 - The data system provides trusted information that is user-friendly and easy to access.
 - The data system is a one-stop-shop for the public to access information from multiple sources.
 - The data system lets users explore data from early learning, K-12, and higher education systems while providing tools that can directly support students' college and career trajectories.
 - The core focus of the data system is to provide data and information that can shape policy and advance educational equity.
- **Planners**
 - The data system provides trusted information that is user-friendly and easy to access.
 - The data system provides secure and well-curated information.
 - The data system is a one-stop-shop to access information from multiple sources.
 - The data system lets users explore data from early learning, K-12, and higher education systems while providing tools that can directly impact students' college and career trajectories.
 - The core focus of the data system is to provide data and information to advance educational equity.
 - The data system will help individuals and teams develop evidence-based action plans to support your programming and planning.
 - The data system helps align early learning, K-12, and higher education systems, ensuring smoother transitions from each to the other.
- **Practitioners**
 - The data system includes key factors and information connected to educational success
 - The data system provides secure and well-curated information

- The data system lets users explore data from early learning, K-12, and higher education systems while providing tools that can directly impact students' college and career trajectories
- The data system allows practitioners to monitor California public college and financial aid applications in one place
- The data system provides tools that will help to explain to users the information it provides and that users can employ to develop action plans.
- The data system helps users target students who need support and tailor your interventions to meet their needs.
- The data system helps automate time-consuming activities, allowing educators to give greater support to students with complex needs and others who need your help the most.
- The state's goal for the data system is to promote equity and provide nuance around systemic inequities.

- **Individuals**

- The data system includes key factors and information connected to educational success.
- The data system lets users explore outcomes at specific K-12 and college institutions while providing tools and information to help you plan for, apply to, and pay for college.
- You can use the data system to discover your college and career goals, plan for how to achieve them, and launch into fulfilling futures.
- You can use the data system to speed up the college and financial aid application process and make it more accurate by launching from CaliforniaColleges.edu account.
- You, your family/caregiver, and your school counselor can monitor all your California public college and financial aid applications on a single platform.

Messengers

Persona	Messengers
Analyzers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy makers (Governor's Office staff, Legislative Analyst's Office staff, etc.) ● Peers and organizations (scholars and staff at research institutes, think tanks, and education publications)
Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Researchers ● School leaders ● Civic leaders ● Professional education association staff ● Community-based organization staff

Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District director or supervisor or principal • California Department of Education staff • California School Counselor Association staff • UC Bulletins • Superintendents • Counselor/ teacher preparation program staff • Institutional researchers
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Students • Teachers • Principals • Community leaders

Additionally, messages and messengers will look different targeting early educators from Los Angeles vs. K-12 families in Fresno, vs. K-12 families in Humboldt. This refinement will ensure the messages (and messengers) are localized, authentic, and speak directly to the need and lived experience of those who can benefit from the data system.

Strategy

- Explain the data system and its components in a digestible way and detail how it can help improve outcomes for students
 - Repeatedly
 - Over time
 - Via concrete examples
- Identify and partner with key stakeholders and advocates who can serve as early adopters, champions, and messengers
- Create the context, including expectation setting, case-making, and the aspirational value for using the information included in the tools

Communications Approach

- **Partner Engagement – Grassroots Approach**
 - Connect with a wide range of partners and organizations to reach all audiences
 - Key groups to consider:
 - School leaders
 - Informal coalition networks
 - Professional and employee associations
 - Community-based organizations
 - Community advocates

- Religious/faith-based organizations
 - Community leaders
 - University Counselor/Teacher programs
 - California Department of Education and Local Education Authorities
 - CORE
- **Website**
 - Introduce the information system and explain how it was developed using a user-centered design approach
 - Communicate that linked data can be used to drive actions to improve equitable outcomes for Californians.
 - Create a welcoming web presence tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of key audiences
 - Hold demonstration sessions with partner groups, reporters, and other stakeholders
 - Create a monthly/semi-monthly newsletter with easy sign-up process so partners and key audiences can learn more, get regular updates, and provide ongoing feedback to streamline and enhance the platform
- **Email**
 - Consistent tailored email communications to reach key stakeholders and share information on C2C and provide opportunity for questions and feedback.
 - Email communications should be concise, easy-to-read, and accessible on mobile devices as well as laptops.
- **Social Media**
 - Use a comprehensive social media strategy with specific approaches and toolkits designed to reach each key audience, such as:
 - Social media content, tailored for each platform
 - Short videos and other visual assets
 - Influencer outreach and relevant hashtags
 - Ongoing posts targeted to, and authored, by representatives from each of the target audiences
- **Earned Media**
 - Leverage local and statewide media outlets to communicate the promise and progress of the data system, such as:
 - Commentary pieces to communicate the context and use of systems (post on Medium.com if not picked up by traditional media)
 - Press releases sharing key milestones for data system development and use of the data
 - Pitching to key media, including local/community media outlets
- **Events/Training**
 - Create training modules that can be used by a wide variety of audiences

- Conduct ongoing outreach to engage key audiences, such as:
 - In-person gatherings including meetings and institutes
 - Community town halls
 - Virtual events, including webinars and virtual conferences
 - Sessions should focus on specific use cases, such as tools for early childhood practitioners, applying for financial aid, or community engagement
- Provide regular opportunities to participate in training sessions
 - Consider connecting with Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) trainings.
 - Seek engagement with teacher/administration credentialing programs
 - Incorporate into existing faculty professional development opportunities
- **Materials**
 - Develop a communications toolkit to effectively describe the features of the data system to all audiences, such as:
 - One-pagers
 - PowerPoints
 - Infographics
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 - Short videos and other visual assets
 - “Blurb” quotes/third-party endorsements of the data system, from personal representatives, partners, committee members, and the Governor’s Office
 - Allow communities to tailor and adapt materials for their specific uses, while still following message guidelines.

Metrics

Key metrics should be tracked to measure and improve the effectiveness of the communications strategy and to document whether there is increased use of the data system.

- **Reach of Messages**
 - Incidents of accurate messages reaching key audiences.
 - Lack of misinformation.
 - Stories in media reflecting key messages.
- **Website Usage**
 - Document number of visits to data system landing pages
 - Feature different landing pages for different key audiences to use in tailored outreach
 - Track visits and click-throughs on social media, email, and other digital outreach
 - Document the number of overall website visits over time
 - From launch through first year, compare month-to-month figures on individual users, then compare year-to-year, including:

- Geography
 - Mobile vs. desktop access
 - Browser type
 - Days/time of day used
 - Relationship of use to key events, such as college and financial aid application deadlines
- Number of visits to key pages
 - Which pages are used the most by each key audience?
 - How many users visit these pages?
 - How long they stay on the page?
 - Where are they coming to the page from?
- List building
 - Track growth of those signing up for updates on the data system
 - Include a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the data system, suggest improvements, and gather success stories that clarify how key audiences are using the data system
- **Email Blasts**
 - Distribution lists
 - Identify distribution lists that each key audience commonly uses.
 - Tailor emails to each key audience and to specific personas within those key audiences
 - Track how many users from each key audience are featured in mass email distribution campaigns
 - Open rate
 - Track the overall open rate of email distributions to key audiences
 - Track click-through rates to landing pages from email distributions
- **Earned Media**
 - Track the number of media hits on the data system after announcement of launch
 - Document the number of pitches, commentaries, and other media outreach around launch
 - Determine the media reach of hits
- **Social Media**
 - Track engagements, shares, impressions, reach, and clicks on organic and paid social media posts
 - Document social media mentions of the data system from key audiences

Estimated Timeline

- Early 2022: Launch of initial dashboards
- Fall 2022: Full rollout of analytical tools