California Cradle-to-Career Workgroup Meeting Summary

January 30, 2020

The California Cradle-to-Career Data System Workgroup, which is made up 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 that day. More information about the meeting, including support materials and the PowerPoint, are available at https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/workgroup (click on "Meeting Materials." The website also provides information on the overall process for how the data system will be designed.

The following workgroup representatives attended the meeting:

Thomas Vu, Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities; Leeza Rifredi, Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education; Cindy Kazanis, Sarah Neville-Morgan, and Mary Nicely, California Department of Education; Natasha Nicolai, California Department of Social Services; Amy Tong, California Department of Technology; Elaine Scordakis, California Office of Health and Human Services; 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 and Laura Metune, California Community College Chancellor's Office; Sara Pietrowski, California State Board of Education; Michele Perrault, Commission on Teacher Credentialing; Amy Faulkner, Employment Development Department; and Chris Furgiuele, University of California, Office of the President.

Introductions and Level Setting

The meeting opened with a description of the benefits of a longitudinal data system, an overview of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act, and a description of the process that will be used to craft recommendations for the Governor's Office.

The workgroup participants each introduced themselves and identified an early win or "low hanging fruit" for the first phase of work on the data system. Some of the common ideas that were shared included:

- Create a mechanism that links and aligns data
- Make it easier for partner entities to collaborate in numerous ways, particularly regarding legal agreements
- Ensure that the information is actionable and will yield changes that support Californians and address equity gaps
- Clarify where the education pipeline leads
- Better support requests for data in order to conduct meaningful research
- Generate operational wins by streamlining efforts and save time for both individuals and partner entities

Establishing Criteria for the State Data System

Workgroup participants identified preliminary criteria for a state data system, working from a list of concepts that had been specified in the legislation, identified during interviews with partner entities, and highlighted in the advisory group meetings (the list of concepts is available on the project website in the document *California Data System Rubric*). The concepts were grouped into two categories: the purpose of the data system and the structure of the data system. Once refined, the concepts will be recorded in a rubric that workgroup participants will use to evaluate proposals submitted by the sub-committees and advisory groups. The rubric will be evaluated at the end of each workgroup meeting, to ensure that the concept still captures core criteria, particularly as the scope of the state data system emerges.

The following items emerged from the discussion about the purpose of the data system:

- Clarify what should change as a result of providing information (see the Vision discussion later in the day for more on this point)
- Focus on whether the information produced can be acted upon, including focusing attention on meaningful ways to close equity gaps and allowing users to customize which information they see
- Acknowledge that data in and of itself does not drive action, but instead helps to create a common understanding of current and historical conditions, which in turn can be used by people to ask further questions and identify action steps
- Include the criterion that the information could be used to inform legislative funding discussions and state priority setting by providing a clearer picture of problems and solutions

The following ideas were raised during the discussion about the structure of the data system:

- Ensure that any examination of the appropriateness of analyses conducted using state data system information is driven by governance principles and a strong sense of ethics
- Establish a framework for how support will be provided related to data use, such as whether support entails definitions and other contextualizing information or expands to include professional development and technical assistance
- Ensure that the data structure is flexible enough to allow for future needs
- Include the criterion that there should be feedback loops to improve the data system based on how it is used

After the workgroup meeting, participants were sent a link to an online document, where they can submit comments on draft rubric language. This language will be finalized at the February 2020 meeting.

Setting a Direction for Phase One

To begin narrowing down what should be included in the first phase of data system development, the workgroup considered a proposal that outlined a possible direction (the proposal is available on the project website in the document *Proposed California Data System Phase One Strategies*). This document referenced concepts discussed in interviews with the partner entities and the two advisory group meetings, but put forward a more granular set of considerations. It was shared as a way to focus discussion, as a first step in developing recommendations for specific products and processes, such as

which partner entities will share data, how much information they will share, and how that information will be accessed.

Based on the general direction established at the January workgroup meeting, the sub-committees will further explore various technical topics, such as legal and technical frameworks necessary to produce the requested information. The workgroup will provide an initial recommendation on the scope of phase one in April 2020, after which the recommendation will be revised based on ongoing discussions by the workgroup, advisory groups, and sub-committees. Final recommendations for the scope of phase one will be formalized in the report that will be delivered to the legislature in December 2020.

In discussing the proposal, the workgroup raised considerations for each component and listed questions that should be discussed by the various sub-committees or in future workgroup meetings.

Overarching Framework

The proposal raised that possibility that rather than being a singular data set or tool, California should create a data ecosystem, with a clear governance structure that ensures appropriate legal and technical procedures are in place to share data in a variety of contexts. The workgroup was supportive of this approach.

Building a P20W Data set

Within this overarching framework, the first component discussed was a P20W data set that includes early care, K-12, postsecondary, financial aid, and employment/earnings information. The data elements included in the P20W data set would be determined based on the information necessary to answer questions outlined in a shared research agenda. This information would be accessed via public dashboards and a query tool that provides de-identified, aggregate information.

Some participants felt that the information should be de-identified in the data set to ensure privacy. However, others noted that it is easier to take action when you know who might benefit from support or know more about individual students' backgrounds. They wondered if identifiable information could be shared back to individual institutions to improve their work with the people they serve.

The workgroup discussed whether information should come directly from institutions or from the partner entities. Some participants stated that the more recent and nuanced data held by individual institutions is more actionable for students, parents, and practitioners. However, many recommended that data should come from state agencies whenever possible so as not to replicate existing data sources and take advantage of work that has already been done to clean and align data.

Some participants noted that constraining the data set to a subset of metrics, as opposed to sharing full copies of the partner entity data sets, could limit its usefulness, because it is not always possible to know what questions will be asked. However, they noted that including all information adds technical complexity and increases costs. One participant suggested starting with data that is universally required, such as for federal reporting, but another noted that the workgroup might prioritize a different set of outcomes than traditional accountability measures. Ultimately, the workgroup agreed that it would be important to determine what information would be most useful for a variety of audiences and then assess its availability and quality, followed by refining definitions and ensuring that the appropriate legal and technical structures are in place to share those data points. Creating personas for data users could help this inquiry process.

Over the course of the discussion, the workgroup identified issues that need to be further explored in the sub-committees and future workgroup meetings, such as aligning data definitions, how many years of mature data are available, the terms of access to the data tables and full P20W data set, how small sample sizes should be handled, what additional reference files will be needed, and whether data needs to be available in real time or could be historical.

Research Request Structure

Next, workgroup participants discussed a second proposal—creating a process that would allow additional data to be linked and shared in order to answer specific questions. For example, if the P20W data set held only some data points and a question was posed that required different data points, this process would allow those additional data elements to be shared. The process would distinguish two contexts for requests: questions generated by an outside entity and questions generated by partner entities.

The workgroup noted that a research request structure would complement the P20W data set. However, one participant noted that it would be important to ensure the appropriate balance between the two, so that most questions could be answered using the P20W data set and partner entities would not be burdened by the process of reviewing requests and preliminary reports. Others suggested that if a large amount of information is openly available in the P20W data set, processes would need to be established for addressing inappropriate uses of those data.

One participant articulated the risk that a single partner entity could block research requests and noted the importance of a review process that addresses partner entity concerns without making data impossible to share. A balanced approach could mitigate the use of Public Records Act (PRA) requests when research requests are not granted.

Over the course of the discussion, the workgroup identified issues that need to be further explored in the sub-committees and future workgroup meetings, such as processes for reviewing research requests, processes for reviewing analyses conducted by outside entities before information is released, appropriate staffing for reviewing requests and analyses, whether data requestors must be credentialed before they can access information, data use and destruction policies, Institutional Review Board requirements, indemnification, addressing Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements, the relationship between PRA requests and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and how to ensure that vendors hosting data do not commoditize information in the data set.

The workgroup also expressed interest in learning more from the California Department of Health and Human Services (CHHS), which has already developed rules regarding access to and use of its data set.

Eligibility Tools

Next, the workgroup discussed a third proposal, which focused on using linked data to determine eligibility for social services or to support transitions between education segments. This idea was generated by the Practice & Operations Advisory Group as a way to experiment with sharing identifiable data in a manner that protects student privacy and for linking education data to information from social and health services. Three possible ways to share data were suggested by the advisory group, including data shared between agencies to automate eligibility requests, data shared to individuals to support their decisions about services they want to access, and data shared to practitioners to improve common processes. This list of possible approaches—which focus on linking data so that the state can be a better

service provider—have not been implemented in other parts of the country as part of a P20W structure. However, there are examples of projects that share identified data to improve services in other states and in California, including work already underway between the California Department of Education (CDE) and the CHHS.

This scenario generated the most questions, but participants also indicated that it could be the most impactful. Participants articulated several possible approaches for using identified data to improve services, ranging from ensuring that individuals getting food assistance also get housing assistance to streamlining the college application and transfer process.

One participant wondered whether the state could effectively build this type of tool. Perhaps the state could contract with a vendor that is already working with many California institutions in a similar capacity. Others worried that vendors might not be able to deliver what is needed and drive up costs. Some participants suggested having a limited number of partner entities develop a new pilot project or scale up an existing project.

Over the course of the discussion, the workgroup identified issues that need to be further explored in the sub-committees and future workgroup meetings, such as how to leverage existing interagency agreements and whether to share data on an as-needed basis or integrate information into the P20W data set.

Polling

To determine the level of consensus regarding the general direction for phase one, each participant was asked whether they agree, disagree, or agree with reservations to the following:

Discussing a proposal at the April meeting for a suite of specific products and processes that address the following three concepts:

1. A P20W data set that provides information for public dashboards and query tools
2. A research request process that differentiates questions generated outside the governance body and questions developed by partner entities
3. Eligibility tools that help individual Californians access services and/or academic options

If approved, these concepts would shape topics covered at the February, March, and April 2020 workgroup, advisory group, and sub-committee meetings, so that participants could further refine what these concepts would entail.

The workgroup unanimously endorsed the first two concepts, although the University of California representative noted the need to have the research request process not overburden partner entities and the California State University representative expressed agreement subject to further discussion of the scale of the data set.

For the third concept, the CHHS representative, the California Department of Technology representative, and the early care representative for CDE endorsed the idea, but most participants agreed with reservations. Many worried that it would be difficult to implement as part of phase one and cause the effort to lose focus. Others expressed concern that if work is not started during phase one, it might not happen at a later point. Some participants were not sure that eligibility tools were the appropriate structure and wanted more information about other options.

Based on the lack of consensus on the third concept, participants requested that examples be provided for individual and practitioner-focused tools that have been built in other states or in California, to be discussed at the February workgroup meeting. Workgroup member were encouraged to send the facilitation team any specific examples they would like to have included in the summary of individual and practitioner-focused tools.

Creating a Vision Statement

In the last portion of the day, the workgroup reviewed a draft vision statement as a way to begin clarifying the goals for the state data system (the draft statement is available on the project website in the document *1.30.20 Workgroup PowerPoint Presentation* on slide 30). Participants felt that the statement was too dry and did not capture the expansive vision outlined in the legislation and held by the partner entities. The workgroup recommended that the statement be structured in a way that describes the envisioned future state for Californians. Key concepts included:

- Data should be used to identify the factors that influence whether Californians meet critical milestones in the education-to-employment pipeline and if they meet them in a reasonable timeframe
- Data should also be used to analyze whether investments made by individuals and the state are advancing equal opportunity and equitable outcomes
- Data should support actions that advance economic mobility and health, made visible through individual outcomes and generational improvements
- Avoid buzzwords and use simple declarative statements

After the workgroup meeting, participants were sent a link to an online document, where they can submit comments on a revised vision statement. This language will be finalized at the February 2020 meeting.

Additional Topics

Other topics discussed by the workgroup included:
- The need for talking points about the purpose of the data system to support communication with others about this work. The facilitation team will forward a summary to the workgroup in the next few weeks.
- The timing for gathering input from students, parents, and practitioners. The workgroup recommended that this feedback be gathered when the priorities for phase one are better developed, with attention paid to when input is being gathered for other improvement purposes.