

Community Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Summary

April 8, 2021

This document provides a summary of key points that emerged over the course of the meeting. More information about the meeting, including materials, the PowerPoint, and a meeting recording are available at <https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/community-engagement-subcommittee>.

The April 2021 meeting had the following goals:

- Share effective practices for technical assistance, particularly pertaining to addressing bias
- Surface learnings related to professional development and technical assistance
- Provide feedback on a draft community engagement plan
- Generate ideas for professional development and technical assistance related to a potential proof-of-concept project

The following representatives attended the meeting:

Advancement Project, Karla Pleitez-Howell
California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), Steven Sterling Mitchell
California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI), Maya Ramos Clayton
California EDGE Coalition, Anna Alvarado
California School Information Services, Amy Fong
California State Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Lea Darrah
Children Now, Stephen Blake
Concordia University Irvine, Lizz Mishreki
Elk Grove USD, Jackie Navarez
Growing Inland Achievement, Sorrel Stielstra
High Tech High Graduate School of Education, Ben Daley
Jobs for the Future, Mara Lockowandt
Legacy Education, Ena Hull
Moreno Valley Unified School District, Esperanza Arce
NAACP Pomona Valley Branch, Jeanette EllisRoyston
North Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Theresa Harvey
Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), Lucero Chavez (for Patricia Chavez)
Sacramento State, Chao (Danny) Vang
San Bernardino City Unified School District, Rose Gonzalez
San Diego State University, Center for Equity and Postsecondary Attainment, Lauren Owen
Student Senate for California Community Colleges, Gerardo Chavez
Washington Unified School District Board of Trustees, Jackie Wong

Effective Technical Assistance Strategies

Leni Wolf, Associate Director of P-16 Research with the Education Trust-West presented on effective technical assistance strategies, with a focus on a technical assistance tool called Data Equity Walks. She explained that the Education Trust-West thinks about data as being a tool for several purposes:

- Identify how well students are being served
- Build capacity and create common understanding

- Support local advocacy efforts focused on closing opportunity gaps

As part of its #Data4thePeople campaign, The Education Trust-West created the Data Equity Walks to allow audiences to engage with information that shows gaps in educational outcomes, collectively identify solutions, and create urgency around educational equity issues. Data Equity Walks are geared towards audiences from all backgrounds, from students as young as middle school, to district leaders, to community-based organizations. On its website, The Education Trust-West provides a free Data Equity Walk toolkit that includes planning questions, a DataQuest how-to guide, a facilitation guide, ready-made slides with state-level data for California, and editable slides and spreadsheets.

Leni Wolf of Ed Trust West shared a video that showed a Data Equity Walk and provided some of the questions that might be asked, such as “What are your general reactions to the data?” and “What questions do you have about the data?” She also shared examples of how Data Equity Walks empowered high school and community college students in Sacramento to build community members’ advocacy capacity, supported the recruitment of University of California faculty, and encouraged district leaders to reallocate resources. Finally, she clarified how to present data in an engaging way and noted the importance of ensuring participants do not walk away with a deficit mindset.

Karla Pleitez-Howell of the Advancement Project shared that she participated in a Data Equity Walk and found that it was a very dynamic experience because it generated community-identified solutions. She asked for examples of how to use Data Equity Walks for advocacy, particularly related to work with English language learners. Leni Wolf of Ed Trust West noted that having data in hand empowers educators to advocate for more resources or other needs.

Karla Pleitez-Howell of the Advancement Project also asked about what can be surprising during a Data Equity Walk. Leni Wolf of Ed Trust West focused on participants’ personal connection to the data. The Data Equity Walk allows for reflection individually, in small groups, and in large groups, which is important because it allows for people to hear about each other’s experiences.

Jeanette Ellis Royston of NAACP Pomona Valley Branch asked how data relate to equitable distribution of resources. Leni Wolf of Ed Trust West responded that allocation of resources is often a conversation during Data Equity Walks.

Then, Alexandra Lozanoff of WestEd led the group in an activity to reflect on the presentation, which surfaced the following aspects that resonated with them:

- The focus on community input and equity
- The importance of ensuring that data discussions are focused on community assets
- The role that Data Equity Walks can play in bringing a strengths-based approach to data conversations
- The tools that Education Trust-West provides for the data equity walk, including the facilitator's toolkit
- Facilitation is critical, particularly to ensure that the discussions do not inadvertently reinforce a deficit interpretation of the data--because of this, there were concerns about the scalability of the process

- Conversations about data need to be ongoing, supported, and practiced
- Ensuring that data is accessible to high level stakeholders AND the public
- Providing multiple "presentation formats" of data that so that participants are able to engage from their own perspective and on their own terms

The group also noted a few areas where more information would be helpful, including:

- How to engage people to analyze data in a virtual environment
- Clarification on how a Data Equity Walk is different from an assessment or audit, as well as how it is different from a focus group

Jackie Navarez of Elk Grove Unified School District noted that the Data Equity Walks reminded her of New Zealand's Family Strengths model for mental health services. The focus is on bringing multiple stakeholders together to support the mental health issues found in a family. The process led to many creative solutions and greater buy-in.

Jeanette Ellis Royston of NAACP Pomona Valley Branch noted that it was surprising to hear that so many different agencies came together to share and discuss data.

Draft Community Engagement Plan

After taking time to review and celebrate the work of the subcommittee to date, Alexandra Lozanoff of WestEd introduced the draft Community Engagement Plan, which encapsulates input from previous subcommittee meetings. She explained that the plan has two main components: key characteristics that are meant to serve as principles to guide all community engagement and professional development priorities for each of the four persona groups.

The subcommittee then split into small group breakouts to provide feedback on the plan.

- The following aspects of the plan resonated with subcommittee members:
 - The focus on multiple languages is critical to support non-English speakers' access to the data system
 - The acknowledgement of expertise held by practitioners, students, and families
 - The intentional prioritization of equity throughout the plan
 - The asset-based approach, ensuring that students' and communities' assets will be showcased
- Members provided suggestions for changing or adding to the plan, including:
 - Showcasing the stories of different student groups, their needs, and their assets
 - A feedback loop for community members to inform ongoing dashboard design and the research agenda
 - Contextualize what is considered "good" in the data, including engaging the community to define successes and set benchmarks
 - Professional development and technical assistance resources and tools should be focused on helping the community make use of the tools in their daily work (for example, providing slide decks that users could edit and use within their own contexts)

This feedback will be incorporated into the draft community engagement plan.

Proof of Concept: Teacher Recruitment Dashboard

LeAnn Fong-Batkin of WestEd described a proposed Teacher Recruitment dashboard that would serve as a proof-of-concept for the Cradle-to-Career Data System. She explained that the dashboard would link data on students graduating from teacher preparation programs at California State University, certification data from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and five years of employment data from the California Department of Education. She clarified that additional data would be added in future phases, such as other teacher training programs or what students majored in as undergraduates.

The proposed dashboard would answer questions that can help support stronger investments in teacher training, placement, and retention such as:

- How many graduates get credentialed and how many of those become teachers?
- How do teaching credentials relate to teacher assignments?
- Do teachers with emergency credentials become fully credentialed?
- How do teacher retention rates vary by subject or type of school?
- What is the relationship between student and teacher characteristics?

In small groups, the participants generated ideas for professional development and technical assistance for the proposed Teacher Recruitment dashboard, including:

- Target professional development and technical assistance on the desired outcomes: teacher retention and a more diverse teacher workforce
- Create data stories on teachers' full career journeys, including credentialing and entering administrative roles
- Consider partnering with CSU's Future Teacher group, which may benefit from access to professional development for teachers in training
- Explore differentiated data for teachers with CTE credentials and implications for CTE programs and CTE teacher recruitment
- Provide professional development for analysts that is focused on the characteristics of teachers just beginning their careers and variations in these characteristics
- Create curricula that can be embedded in graduate programs

Many of the ideas for how to provide professional development are applicable to all parts of the Cradle-to-Career analytical tools:

- Create screencasts on how to navigate the tools
- Provide orientation on available tools for a data savvy audience, including how to build queries
- Establish communities of practice or learning networks that meet multiple times, for example:
 - Create a data coaching cohort model to support people to use the data
 - Lead a process to "learn from variation" such as examining the data to identify bright spots and conducting site visits to understand what worked
 - Provide 90-day investigation on effective practices on teacher retention, including reviewing scholarly literature and living resources
 - Create an accompanying "change package" of evidence-based ways to improve outcomes
 - Provide cross-segment data coaching sessions that convene multiple stakeholders to understand how to use data

- Post facilitation guides for different levels of leaders to host Data Equity Walks
- Create on-demand quick video tutorials that walk people through how to navigate the dashboard, using an example question and guide how to answer it, and suggest related questions for the participant to explore on their own
- Publish disaggregated briefs that share data and also providing stories and context
- Provide models and templates for participants to use in their day-to-day work

The subcommittee identified the following elements as being important to the design of professional development activities:

- Design technical assistance and support technology that guides users through what is helpful and essential
- Provide coaching and examples about how to ask questions about equity and disaggregated data that are productive, actionable, and not deficit-oriented
- Include training on the ethical use of data
- Include stories of individual lived experiences in research summaries or other data presentations
- Explain real-world applications, provide specific examples, and include case studies with examples of effective practices
- Provide complementary information, such as the context for the data in the dashboard, previous initiatives, legislation, funding, etc.
- Include self-assessments and reflection activities
- Offer presentations and panels of experts that include long-time teachers, mixed with off-line activities where participants present back their learning
- Develop certifications or other ways to capture training on resumes to incentivize participation (e.g., certifications for school board members to include on their personal resume)
- Identify gaps, while emphasizing the need for additional information (e.g., make sure people are cautioned that we are not certain how people got into the teacher prep program – so as not to assign causation without more information)

The following design considerations should be considered for all professional development/technical assistance:

- Be deliberate in how tools are referenced, and name and organize tools so they fit together and make sense for audiences
- Prioritize relationship building, share power with those who are "being trained," and foster idea sharing and two-way communication
- Acknowledge the expertise that attendees come with and encourage an asset-based mindset about both the participants and those represented in the data
- Align professional development to participants' reasons for doing the work
- Consider using Canvas to provide online training, because many postsecondary entities use this curriculum tool
- Align with other professional development incentive structures (e.g., California Teachers Association or counselor continuing education units)
- Ensure clear connections between the data and long-term goals related to student success

- Ensure that all resources are shared with an action plan that focuses on how resources can be used

In addition to considerations about professional development and technical assistance, the group shared the following ideas specifically for the construction of the Teacher Recruitment dashboard:

- Focus on recruitment and retention of teachers of color
- Include information about the number of teachers getting career and technical education (CTE) credentials who already have a single-subject credential, as well as the number of teachers getting CTE credentials who are coming straight out of industry
- Map out resources for subject areas outside of English language arts and math
- Explain how the data relates to CALPADS codes and reporting
- Explore how teachers entered the profession and how well their characteristics align with the students they teach with the goal of learning how can we expand programs and make investments to have positive outcomes
- Examine whether there is equitable distribution of new teachers to schools
- Explore how teacher retention varies by credentialing programs and how retention in high-need schools or subjects vary by type of program

Full Group Discussion

Each group selected one idea to describe a type of professional development for the Teacher Retention dashboard more fully, including exploring which personas the support would target; where the support would occur, what knowledge and skills it would provide participants, and key features.

Group 1: Laura Owen of the Center for Equity and Postsecondary Attainment shared the idea of providing training on ethical use of data. The training would focus on analyzers and organizational planners. The group discussed having the training virtually, but wondered if that would be effective. Interacting with the dashboard would be an important part of the training. Similar to features found in banking apps, they suggested integrating tips into the process of accessing the data in the dashboard. This could include providing embedded reminders about how to use the data ethnically.

Group 2: Jackie Navarez of Elk Grove Unified School District shared the idea of professional development for a school board, focused on presenting trends on the number of teachers of color, as well as how to supports to facilitate that analysis. The group suggested conducting the training at a school board meeting, paired with prep and study sessions. These events could occur both online and in-person, while recognizing that in-person supports accountability. The group emphasized the training should not occur only in one instance. There should also be monthly/quarterly questions or activities sent to the group to keep them engaged and to support the development of best practices. These best practices and other activities could be compiled in a resource library. The training should prompt the group to think outside of the box in an analytical and comprehensive way, considering questions such as: What factors impact teachers of color, including external variables like the relationship between salaries and cost of living? Why do people get into teaching? The professional development should also involve a carrot. Just as teachers get professional development hours, school board members should get certificates or microcredentials for their resumes.

Group 3: Ben Daley of High Tech High Graduate School of Education shared the idea of a professional development series focused on bright spots, featuring programs with higher levels of teacher retention. More than pointing to bright spots in the data, the training would provide additional information on the practices behind the strong outcomes. These practices would be gathered by talking to those who have seen success, as well as drawing on scholarly literature. It would involve data storytelling, as well as videos, toolkits, and a specific communications strategy.

Group 4: Karla Pleitez-Howell of the Advancement Project shared the idea of providing training on quantitative and qualitative data, and leveraging systems that already exist to offer the training, such as county offices of education and the California School Board Association. Therefore the training should be structured so that it can be tailored to look at whole regions or at specific counties. The training would be targeted at all four persona groups, focused on equity, and highlight the important role teachers play. It would involve skill-building around how to link data to broader concepts and would also focus on bright spots. The training would think about systemic disparities and ask participants to identify where historically inequities occurred, as a way to not focus on individual deficits. The trainings would also support participants to look at how programs vary, significant factors that cause change, and the implications of funding streams. The training should also be followed by technical assistance to address issues that are identified through the discussion.

Maura Keaney of Collaborative Communications noted that the managing entity could partner with existing groups to deliver these types of supports. Jackie Navarez of Elk Grove Unified School District endorsed this approach.

Karla Pleitez-Howell of the Advancement Project shared that it is important to challenge ourselves to reach parents and focus on Parent-Teacher Associations. She noted that professional development for PTAs is hard to find, and that it would be valuable if professional development and technical assistance efforts reached out to community-based organizations.

Communications Plan

Maura Keaney of Collaborative Communications shared that a communications plan is being drafted and asked for volunteers to read the draft of the plan.

Jackie Navarez from Elk Grove Unified School District offered the idea of giving the plan to a range of readers, particularly in different age groups, and noted that it would be valuable to get their input on which social media to use (e.g., using Tik Tok to reach younger users).