

# Community Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Summary

May 6, 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 May 2021 meeting had the following goals:

- Approve the refined engagement plan
- Review the communications approach
- Develop recommendations regarding integrating public voice into the governance structure
- Affirm the core recommendations from this subcommittee

The following representatives attended the meeting:

Advancement Project, Karla Pleitez-Howell  
California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI), Maya Ramos Clayton  
California EDGE Coalition, Anna Alvarado  
California School Information Services, Amy Fong  
Californians Together, Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez and Manuel Buenrosto  
Children Now, Stephen Blake  
Del Norte County Office of Education, Jeff Harris  
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  
Moreno Valley Unified School District, Esperanza Arce  
North Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Theresa Harvey  
Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), Patricia Chavez and Lucero 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  
University of California Office of the President, Jenna Allen  
Washington Unified School District Board of Trustees, Jackie Wong

## Recommendation Process

Kathy Booth from WestEd provided a reminder about the Cradle-to-Career Data System recommendation process and timeline. She explained that the subcommittees' recommendations would be provided to the Cradle-to-Career Workgroup on May 27. The workgroup will then submit their recommendations to the Governor's Office and the legislature on June 30, and – pending approval – the data tools will be developed beginning in 2021-2022. Kathy Booth noted that staff from the Government Operations Agency (GovOps), the managing entity for the data system, may reach back out to the Community Engagement Subcommittee for additional information and input once the user-centered design process is underway.

## Community Engagement Plan Updates

Alexandra Lozanoff from WestEd provided an update on the Community Engagement Plan, highlighting the edits to the plan that were made based on the subcommittee's feedback at the April meeting:

- Feature student stories and voices in all professional development activities
- Use videos and screencasts to provide information to all persona groups
- Leverage strategic partnerships to administer professional development and disseminate resources through existing channels
- Provide PowerPoint decks, facilitation guides, and other templates to easily put the information to use
- Embed training and guidance on the ethical use of data
- Institute feedback loops to inform improvements to community engagement strategy

Patricia Chavez from Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) noted that it was important to ensure that families and parents' stories and voices were shared as part of the data system, in addition to students.

## Communications Approach

Maura Keaney from Collaborative Communications shared highlights from the communications approach and explained that it is geared toward raising awareness about the existence of the system, how the system works, and how to effectively use it. The communications approach also tailors information to each of the key audiences – defined by the personas created by the subcommittee.

The communications approach highlights the need to explain the system in a digestible way, repeatedly illustrating how it can create improved outcomes for students through concrete examples that includes parent and student voices. The communications approach will be accomplished in partnership with key stakeholders and advocates as early adopters, champions, and messengers. All communications will be available in multiple languages. The communications approach offers context and outlines the aspirational value for the use of the data included in the tools, while also setting expectations about what the data system is designed to do.

Maura Keaney provided examples how the communications approach might be implemented, such as a welcoming website, consistent and tailored communications, comprehensive social media engagement, earned media, in-person events/webinars, and materials such as videos or visuals. Metrics for measuring the effectiveness of the approach would include website engagement, email blasts, earned media, and social media.

After reviewing communication examples from other projects, the subcommittee responded to a poll *On a scale of 1 to 5, how likely is this plan to effectively communicate information about the data system to your communities?* 40% of respondents categorized the likely effectiveness at a 3, and 40% categorized the approach at a 4.

The group then participated in a brainstorm to identify suggestions for increasing the effectiveness through a virtual whiteboard.

Karla Pleitez-Howell from the Advancement Project suggested using a model similar to the U.S. Census to reach communities, such as working through community-based organizations or individuals and

conducting media outreach. She noted that a younger audience could provide access, given that parents might not be on social media, and that this approach can provide valuable lessons in reaching communities that may not want to interact with the system or share their information. She also suggested engaging parents at the elementary school level, as well as providing teachers guidance on how they could create projects that prompt students to use the data system.

Jackie Navarez from Elk Grove USD shared an example of a [teaching guide for using data from the U.S. census](#).

Patricia Chavez from PIQE suggested providing talking points for school leaders and counselors, with guidance on how to adapt this to their work and for presentations to students. She also suggested partnering with those who serve students directly as well as with community based organizations. The communications approach should include a toolkit with materials such as flyers, PowerPoint presentations, and social media images. The toolkit should be editable so that people in the community can edit documents to reflect their communities.

Jackie Wong from Washington Unified School District Board of Trustees encouraged a grassroots approach that relies on people embedded within communities. She noted that COVID-19 illustrated that word of mouth is the best. There are many people who do not check email or have stable phones. For that reason, it is important to share information with the people trusted within networks and communities.

Amy Fong from California School Information Services noted that it is important to consider the tension between tailoring the messaging to become more meaningful with the corresponding risk of information being lost as the message is changed and shared. Because of this, it is important to consider how to capture the essential elements that should be consistent throughout the communication.

Maura Keaney thanked everyone for their feedback and explained the ideas shared verbally and through the virtual whiteboard would be incorporated into the communications approach.

### Governance Recommendations

Kathy Booth from WestEd provided an overview the concept of governance, which in the context of data systems, generally involves elements such as the mission and vision statements, the research agenda, and decision-making processes.

Then she described the model proposed for the Cradle-to-Career Data System, including the recommendation that the governing board primarily focus on evaluating whether the data system is being implemented in a manner that aligns with the mission and vision, as opposed to more granular issues of implementation. She noted that one priority of the governance structure is to ensure a strong public voice to inform decisions. Public voice includes those who will use the data system—such as practitioners (educators, deans, principals, school board members), social service providers, policymakers, advocates, and research organizations—and those whose information is in the data system, such as students and their families, foster youth, and English language learners.

Next, Kathy Booth explained the process used to develop the governance proposal and how it would allow for public voice in the direction of the Cradle-to-Career Data System, including earmarking a third of the seats of the 18-person governing board for public members and requiring two large advisory

groups that would be made up entirely of public members. She outlined the concerns that had been raised by public members in the planning process about whether this structure would be sufficient.

Kathy Booth noted that very few states have public voice expressly included in their governance process and shared two different models. First, she described Maryland's governing board, which is the only state that has voting seats for members of the public. She noted that this data system is focused primarily on research and that when making decisions, the board rarely splits along data provider versus public member blocks. Then she showed the types of information available in the Kentucky data system, which is designed for use by the general public, even though there is no formal voice for the public in the governance process. She used this juxtaposition to pose a question to the group about how governance systems could be optimized so that they would lead to tools that would be useful to a broad range of audiences.

The subcommittee broke into three groups to create the following recommendations for ensuring public voice in each of the three governing bodies:

#### Governing Board:

- Recruit and appoint a diverse board
- Invest in substantial onboarding, offboarding, training, and facilitation, and ensure there is a budget to support the work. Onboarding and training should:
  - Emphasize that public voice is not just about being heard but having a role in decisionmaking
  - Include activities that build trust among board members and between partner and public entities, including helping to eliminate assumptions around roles and organizations
  - Foster a sense of shared identity and goals to ensure that each member is not only focused on their own constituency
  - Create an orientation binder that provides easy access to information about processes, calendars, and basic information about data systems, privacy rules, and other critical topics in order to ensure all members are equipped to engage and participate
  - Provide support to new members through onboarding activities and peer mentors
- Ensure that community members participate in the interpretation of data so that root causes of the data shown are acknowledged
- The meeting facilitator should support members in implementing an open mindset and ensure that all members of the board are treated equally

#### Data and Tools Advisory Group:

- Be intentional around the composition and process for the group, such as:
  - Ensure a diversity of perspectives that provides representation of communities who are traditionally least served
  - Recruit advisory group members with expertise in equity
  - Invite stakeholders that align with data system priorities (e.g., when discussing the addition of workforce training data in year four, ensure there are stakeholders with expertise at the table)
- Gather appropriate information to support committee decisionmaking:

- Hold public forms for people to provide feedback, look at enhancements to platforms, and engage in small groups to discuss changes
- Target outreach, such as having Gov Ops staff monitor and capture feedback and requests, and by partnering with community-based organizations
- Build intentional processes for reviewing the data request process, including analyzing common requests to identify community priorities and needs, so that those needs can be incorporated into development and design plans
- Pursue active transparency, such as:
  - In addition to making information about decisions available on the website, push out information, such as an annual report out to the Legislature with a focus on equity
  - Set a schedule of how frequently the group will meet that matches goals of the group and align meetings with timing around budget decision timelines
  - Ensure all information is provided in easily digestible formats

#### Community Engagement Advisory Committee:

- Ensure the advisory committee includes community leaders who are conduits for information to and from the intended audiences, with an understanding that they are experts in practical implementation
- Provide resources and staffing to support the community engagement advisory committee
- Gather appropriate information to support committee decisionmaking:
  - Ensure there are forums that solicit community/stakeholder input, including reaching out proactively to have direct conversations with underserved communities
  - Provide usage data
  - Provide data gathered from within the analytical tools (such as surveys and chatbots)
  - Highlight stories of how the system is being used that is relevant and localized
- Have the committee review GovOps' plan for community engagement to ensure it is intentional, structured, equity-focused, and culturally relevant (tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of communities)
- Coordinate with the Data and Tools Advisory Group to identify how the data system can better serve audiences and ensure usage
- Coordinate with other public voice governing processes (e.g., the Local Control Action Plan redesign process)

#### Recommendation Summary & Review

Kathy Booth closed the meeting by sharing the group's key recommendations related to the data system's features, strategies, and roles:

#### Key Features

- Understand that there are four key audiences, and more specific personas within each key audience, who will have different needs and interests
- Establish a theory of action for advancing equity, and apply it to communications and professional development activities to ensure equity is being addressed intentionally

- Prioritize helping people understand the information, clarifying structural factors that drive outcomes, addressing potential bias in data interpretation, and detailing how key audiences can use information for common tasks

### Strategies

- Emphasize asset-based and student-centered approaches to displaying and interpreting information
- Provide resources in plain language that fosters data literacy, and in multiple languages
- Integrate resources into the design of the data tools wherever possible
- Establish targets for community engagement activities and measure them to ensure they are succeeding

### Roles

- Ensure GovOps staff have expertise in community engagement
- Partner with stakeholders to design, engage, and support data-informed action within the community
- Identify ways to tap into the expertise of the people who are represented in the data system

Stephen Blake from Children Now noted that it is important to highlight the role of messengers and messages within the recommendations, and that there should be an intentional strategy for messengers to do outreach with a focus on community leaders.

Manuel Buenrostro from Californians Together reinforced the importance of building capacity of the messengers to do outreach.

Patricia Chavez from PIQE suggested providing coaching and help in delivering messaging for that group of stakeholders.

Jackie Navarez from Elk Grove USD noted that it is important to create structures so that people are able to provide feedback even if they are unfamiliar with technical terms, such as creating feedback forms with multiple choice options.

Amy Fong from California School Information Services notes that it might be beneficial for GovOps to work with a communications agency or others with specific expertise in the topic.

Karla Pleitez-Howell from the Advancement Project noted the importance of having structures within GovOps to ensure a transparent selection process for any external agencies.

Kathy Booth indicated that would make updates to the recommendations, which will then be shared with the workgroup. She thanked the group for their months of hard work to generate these recommendations and shape the Cradle-to-Career Data System.