Information on Prior Efforts to Build a California Longitudinal Data System

In 2019, the California State Legislature passed the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act (Act),[1] which sets out requirements for the development of a statewide data infrastructure, also known as a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS). This legislation required that the data system ensure that existing education, workforce, financial aid, and social service information is fully leveraged to address disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students from cradle to career. In addition, the legislation requested that the planning process review and build on prior reports, existing data systems, and best practices.[2]

Prior Reports

WestEd reviewed prior legislative hearings and reports from SB 1298 (2007-08 regular session) (Chapter 561 of the Statutes of 2008) and the Assembly and Senate hearings associated with the Act, along with the California Education Round Table Intersegmental Coordinating Committee's Planning Grant Report.

SB 1298 Strategic Plan Summary (2008)

In SB 1298, the California Comprehensive Education Data System Strategic Plan required the State's Chief Information Officer to convene a working group to create a strategic plan to link the state's education data systems into a comprehensive education data system that shares appropriate non-education data from other state data sources. Working group members represented education and higher education, including the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC).

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[1] https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=EDCanddivision=1.andtitle=1.andpart=7.andchapter=8.5.andarticle=
[2] http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&sectionNum=10856

The SB 1298 report listed California's education data systems, including:
- California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS)[3]
- California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System (CALTIDES)
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS)[4]
- California State University's Enterprise System
- University of California's Corporate Student System (CSS)[5] and Decision Support System (DSS)
- California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)[6]
- California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS)[7]

The SB 1298 report recommended that a statewide data system have the following components:
- agile (able to merge, share, and exchange)
- standards-based
- efficient and action-oriented
- policy compliant (federal and state statute)
- affordable

Additionally, the SB 1298 report recommended the following strategies:
- build on and combine the strengths and achievements of existing data systems
- integrate education data from preschool through postsecondary and the workforce
- enable the use of and access to the data for stakeholders and partners

Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee Number 1 on Education (March 2019)

The Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee[8] hearing focused on different use cases for an SLDS. Many of the hearing speakers from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), CDE, and the public higher education segments focused on the need to analyze pathways to evaluate statewide efforts. Other issues that were raised related to providing support to students, creating electronic transcripts, and improving program design.

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[3] https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/
[4] https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Digital-Innovation-and-Infrastructure/Management-Information-Systems
[5] https://css.ucop.edu/
[6] CPEC was defunded in the 2011-12 fiscal year. More information can be found here: https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2012/edu/ihe/improving-higher-education-010612.aspx
[7] https://www.calpassplus.org/Home
[8] https://calchannel.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=21&clip_id=5973

Assembly Budget Subcommittee Number 2 on Education Finance Hearing (May 2019)

The Assembly Budget Subcommittee[9] meeting discussed big picture needs and concerns about an SLDS. The LAO suggested that the segments create a Joint Powers Authority (a recommendation from the SB 1298 report). The hearing focused on the need for information to inform policy, students, and families. The main concerns were about data security, privacy, and access.

The California Education Round Table Intersegmental Coordinating Committee's Planning Grant Report (October 2019)[10]

The California Education Round Table (CERT) Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (ICC) provided a report on a planning grant received from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to study the feasibility of establishing and maintaining a statewide longitudinal student data system in California. The report identified the activities underway in the state regarding data sharing and determined the level of support for a data system amongst the educational sectors and the advocacy organizations. The five CERT members (AICCU, CDE, CCC, CSU, and UC) established a policy workgroup and an information technology workgroup. The ICC report provides a catalogue of existing data collections and data sharing agreements across educational sectors in California and the data elements involved in those data sharing agreements. Additionally, the report identifies gaps in institutional and system data collection efforts.

The ICC found that there are benefits to a statewide longitudinal student data system that would help to inform public policy by providing data for research, segmental metrics, and responses to research questions. The data provided by the system should be actionable—to inform students along the P-20 pipeline. The key policy issues identified were related to the design, implementation, and maintenance of an SLDS.

Effective and Best Practices

To learn from existing data systems and to determine best practices, WestEd conducted interviews and reviewed documentation regarding effective practices for statewide longitudinal data systems.

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[9] https://calchannel.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=21&clip_id=6202
[10] https://wested.ent.box.com/file/597227804655

WestEd received technical assistance from the following organizations: The U.S. Department of Education's Privacy Technical Assistance Center;[11] the National Center for Education Statistics State Support Team for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Grant Program;[12] and the Data Quality Campaign.[13]

WestEd also interviewed and reviewed the websites of many of the SLDSs in other states, including Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Kentucky, Texas, and Washington.[14]

WestEd also reviewed recommendations from policy and advocacy groups related to the need for a SLDS, such as the following publications:

- California Competes: Out of the Dark: Bringing California's Education Data Into the 21st Century[15]
- Campaign for College Opportunity: Building a Student-Centered Data System in California[16]
- Education Insights Center: California Education Policy, Student Data, and the Quest to Improve Student Progress[17]
- Policy Analysis for California Education: Making California Data More Useful for Educational Improvement[18]
- Public Policy Institute of California:
    o Increasing the Usefulness of California's Education Data and Modernizing the State's Education Data System[19]
    o Integrating California's Education Data[20]
- Senate Select Committee: Longitudinal Data Systems[21]
- The Education Trust-West: Data for the People Campaign[22]

For many meetings during the Cradle-to-Career Data System Planning process, WestEd wrote background papers that addressed effective practices and provided examples specific to the topic at hand. This list is available on the project website at: https://cadatasystem.wested.org/resources-page

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[11] https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/
[12] https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/
[13] https://dataqualitycampaign.org/
[14] https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/stateinfo.asp
[15] https://californiacompetes.org/publications/out-of-the-dark
[16] https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Longitudinal-Data-FINAL.pdf
[17] https://edinsightscenter.org/blog/2018/12/03/california-education-policy-student-data-and-the-quest-to-improve-student-progress/
[18] https://gettingdowntofacts.com/sites/default/files/2018-09/GDTFII_Brief_DataSystems.pdf
[19] https://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_813PWR.pdf
[20] https://www.ppic.org/blog/integrating-californias-education-data/
[21] https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4638909-Staff-Report.html
[22] https://west.edtrust.org/dataforthepeople/

Finally, WestEd provided demonstrations of existing tools. Those presentations are available on the project website at: https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/potential-data-tools-webinars