Research Agenda Subcommittee Meeting Summary

July 23, 2020

This document provides a summary of the key points that emerged from a half-day meeting. More information about the meeting, including support materials, a recording of the meeting, and the PowerPoint, are available at https://cadatasystem.wested.org/meeting-information/research-agenda-subcommittee (click on "Meeting Materials").

July 2020 meeting had the following goals:

- Provide an update on decisions by the workgroup
- Review suggested edits to the comprehensive research agenda
- Review research on employment outcomes
- List priority information on employment outcomes for public dashboards, query builders, and research studies

The following subcommittee representatives attended the meeting:
Tom Vu, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities; Tine Sloan, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing; Valerie Lundy-Wagner, California Community College Chancellor's Office; Ben Allen & Jonathan Isler, California Department of Education; Akhtar Khan, California Department of Social Services; Janet Buehler, California Department of Technology; Jennifer Schwartz, California Health and Human Services Agency; Amy Fong, California School Information Services; Jessica Moldoff, California Student Aid Commission; Dan Rounds, California Workforce Development Board; Muhammad Akhtar, Employment Development Department; Abraham Cicchetti, Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts; Lisa Lee, Hoss Lee Academy; Alyssa Nguyen, RP Group; Tongshan Chan, University of California Office of the President; Jesse Rothstein, University of California, Berkeley; Michal Kurlaender, University of California, Davis; Steve Watkins, UnitekLearning.com; Russ Rumberger, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Workgroup Update

The meeting opened with the facilitator providing an update on the decisions made by the California Cradle-to-Career Workgroup at their June meeting, including describing implications for the technical and legal structure for the data system. The group raised a number of questions and issues, which are outlined below, along with the responses provided:

How will the managing entity create data sets for researchers? Third party requests will go through a request process, which is currently being developed by some members of the Cradle-to-Career Workgroup. Much of the data that researchers are likely to request will be part of the P20W data set being used to produce the dashboard and query builder tools, which means that the managing entity could easily produce the data set approved for the research project. Other data elements that the partner entities have made available for research will be listed in a public index. Partner entities will have discretion over which data elements can be shared for research projects. Russ Rumberger of UC Santa Barbara noted that this approach is similar to the one used by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Will information on individuals be expanded over time, even though data are deidentified in the data set? Yes, the managing entity will be able to continue to add information about an individual over time, although information provided to the public will remain anonymous. The technical manner in which this expansion of data will be handled will be determined later, once the technology solution has been selected.

How far back will the data system go in time? This will be determined based on the availability of individual elements in the P20W data set. John Hetts of CCCCO encouraged the data set to go as far back in time as possible.

Suggested Edits to the Comprehensive Research Agenda

The group reviewed changes that some subcommittee members had proposed for the research agenda related to non-employment topics.

Secondary school type: the group agreed it would be useful in the query builder to have an option for secondary school type, such as early college high school and continuation schools.

Secondary school completion: the group also agreed that multiple types of high school completion should also be included in the query builder tool, such as conventional diplomas and GED.

Course characteristics: the group indicated that it would be helpful for the query builder tool to allow track individual course characteristics such as which are honors classes or a-g, committee. Russ Rumberger and Tongshan Chan volunteered to work with CDE to come up with a proposal for how this could be implemented.

AB 540/Dream Act: several members expressed concern about student privacy if undocumented status is included in the data set and noted that many partner entities do not track this information. Therefore, the consensus was to *not* include it on the dashboard or query builder. However, it might be valuable to conduct research studies on whether these students have equitable opportunities and outcomes.

Public Comment

Anna Alvarado from the EDGE Coalition submitted a letter to the subcommittee in advance of the meeting, and reiterated her comments which urged the committee to address disparities, include data on apprenticeship and training, and to approach the construction of this data system through a racial equity lens.

Employment and Earnings Outcomes

After a presentation on entities that conduct research into employment and earnings outcomes and a review of information posted by other state data systems and in California, the group identified additional variables that should be included in the dashboard and query builder tool. In the discussion, Muhammad Akhtar of EDD noted that California had recently signed onto a data-sharing agreement that allows it to document employment and earnings outcomes in other states. The group recommended adding the following to the dashboard and query builder tool:

- workforce retention within California versus out of state
- the number of quarters employed within a year
- industry of occupation
- earning gains for individuals above a threshold age

- 25th percentile and 75th percentile earnings in addition to median earnings
- basic labor market information such as supply and demand

Several subcommittee members commented on the value of EDD collecting additional employment variable such as occupation and hours worked.

The group discussed several concepts that would best be understood through research studies, including:

- Understanding self-sufficiency by determining if individuals are accessing public benefit programs
- Evaluating trends in lifelong learning, coursework after degree attainment, and stackable credentials
- Identifying ways to connect analyses being done in the Cradle-to-Career system with work already underway by CLWDA to examine workforce training and adult education outcomes in the CAAL-Skills system

Participants broke into small groups to examine three facets of priority research studies related to employment and earnings: contextual questions, outcomes questions, and policy questions. A homework team made will distill the comments from these small groups into a recommendation, for discussion at the August meeting.