



MLDS CENTER

Maryland Longitudinal Data System

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Memorandum

To: Governing Board
From: Ross Goldstein
Date: February 27, 2023
Subject: 2023 Legislative Session - Update

During the current legislative session, the following bills have an impact on the MLDS Center.

1. [SB 127 - Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center - Student FAFSA Data - Reporting Requirement](#) - Last year, a new mandatory report was created that requires local education agencies (LEAs) to report to the MLDS Center, the number of students who completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the number of students who did not complete and submit the FAFSA, and the number of students who completed the FAFSA by the deadline for eligibility for State financial aid. The MLDS Center was then responsible for compiling that information and reporting it to the education oversight committees in the General Assembly.

At the June 2022 Governing Board meeting, staff noted that this reporting arrangement resulted in the Center collecting data directly from LEAs (which is not the way K-12 data are generally collected). The Board approved a proposed amendment to the requirement, which was taken up by Senator Ellis (the sponsor of the original bill creating this requirement). SB 127 requires the MLDS Center to provide the report without requiring data from the LEAs. Instead, the bill directs the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to provide the MLDS with access to student FAFSA data in the federal Student Aid Internet Gateway and data collected by MHEC's Office of Student Financial Aid. With the FAFSA data from MHEC and the existing K-12 student data from MSDE, the Center can complete the report, and provide more in-depth analysis. For example, in addition to reporting FAFSA completion rates by county, the Center will also be able to report FAFSA completion by race, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status.

Status: The bill unanimously passed out of the Senate and is now awaiting a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee.

2. [HB 320 - Maryland Longitudinal Data System - Definition of Student Data - Alteration](#) - This bill alters the definition of "student data" to include student disability data by specific disability category. Part of the definition of "student data" is that student data does not include medical and health records. Accordingly, this bill establishes the General Assembly's intent that student disability data, including disability category, is permissible and would not be considered a

prohibited medical or health record. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) collects student disability data.

Status: The bill was heard in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action has taken place.

3. [HB 888 - Education - Prekindergarten Alternative Teacher Preparation Program - Authorization and Reporting](#) - This bill adds to the mandatory annual reporting requirement established by the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* that requires the MLDS Center to report on the progress made in increasing the preparation and diversity of teacher candidates and new teachers in the State. One component of the report requires information on trends in the number of teacher candidates of color hired by local school systems, disaggregated by higher education institutions and alternative teacher preparation programs. This bill requires the report to add prekindergarten alternative teacher preparation programs as an additional disaggregation for this trend analysis.

Status: The bill was introduced and referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. It is scheduled for a March 1st hearing.

4. [SB 938 - Primary and Secondary education - School Safety and Student Well-Being - Examination of Policies](#) - This bill requires the State Department of Education (MSDE) to provide an analysis of the effect State and local policies in place from 2018 through 2023 had on school safety and student well-being. The bill directs the MSDE to use school data on bullying, harassment or intimidation instances; disciplinary actions taken against students; school-based arrests of students; behavioral threat assessments conducted in schools; student drug overdoses and whether they were fatal; the initiation of suicide prevention protocols for students and instances of student suicide; and weapons recovered on school grounds. MSDE is directed to complete the report in consultation with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center. It should be noted that the data to be analyzed for this report are not longitudinal, multi-agency data that require the use of the MLDS. Accordingly, the MLDS Center's input and consultation may be limited.

Status: The bill was introduced late and has not been assigned to committee yet.

5. [SB 131/HB 124 - Mandated Reports - Revisions](#) - This bill repeals, alters, reschedules, and consolidates mandatory reports. The bill impacts several MLDS Center reporting requirements.
 - a. The Annual Dual Enrollment Report, which has been produced and submitted for the past 10 years, was eliminated. The drafters' note stated that the reporting requirement was repealed as unnecessary and noted that the dual enrollment dashboards were sufficient.
 - b. The FAFSA reporting requirement (the subject of SB 127 above) was assigned to MHEC. Center staff informed the bill drafters of the conflict and SB 131 was amended to remove the change to the FAFSA reporting.
 - c. Finally, the bill assigns to the MLDS Center the following requirements: (1) collecting specified information from public institutions of higher education about foster care

recipients and homeless youth; and (2) reporting to the General Assembly on the number of foster care recipients and homeless youth who received a tuition exemption, did not receive the exemption, and earned a postsecondary degree. These requirements were formally assigned to MHEC. MLDS Center staff pointed out the following issues with this proposed change. First, the MLDS Center does not collect data directly from postsecondary institutions of higher education. Instead, higher education data are received from MHEC, which has the resources, expertise, and authority to efficiently collect data from the higher education institutions. Requiring the MLDS Center to directly collect that information is inefficient and will require additional staffing and resources for the Center to complete that task. Second, regarding the required report, the MLDS Center requested that consideration be given to combining the report required under §15-106.1 with a similar mandated report required of the MLDS Center under Education Article § 24-703.1. The report would be generated from data that the MLDS Center already receives from MHEC, the State Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services. The combined report would include most of the information required in both sections.

Status: The Senate bill, with the MLDS proposed amendments, passed out of committee and is on third reader in the Senate. The House bill was similarly amended and received a favorable report from the Ways and Means Committee.

FY 2024 Budget

The Governor's budget allocated \$2,866,781 for the MLDS Center for FY 24. The Governor's allowance granted the over-the-target request for three additional positions. The positions will include another data analyst, a senior database engineer, and a research statistician to support the Reporting Division. In addition, a special fund appropriation has been allocated which will authorize the Center to spend funds received as reimbursement of costs incurred in support of external research projects. The budget analysis by the Department of Legislative Services contained no proposed cuts and did not have any questions or issues for the Center.

Action

Informational.