



# MLDS CENTER

Maryland Longitudinal Data System

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** MLDS Governing Board  
**FROM:** Ross Goldstein  
**DATE:** September 5, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** MLDS Annual Report Recommendations

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### **Purpose**

The *Annual Report on the Maryland Longitudinal Data System and Center*, is a requirement under Education Article, § 24-705, Annotated Code of Maryland. One of the required sections of the report is to provide the Governor and General Assembly with, “any other recommendation made by the Governing Board.” While the report is not due until December, the purpose of this agenda item is to allow the Board time to consider and discuss possible recommendations.

### **Background**

Attached you will find a compilation of recommendations made by the Governing Board in prior reports.

### **Action**

Consider possible recommendations to include in the 2025 Annual Report.

**Annual Report on the Maryland Longitudinal Data System and Center  
Recommendations by the Governing Board (2011-2023)**

**2011-2012**

No recommendations were made.

**2013**

1. During the development and consideration of the MLDS Center's first year budget, there was some discussion of having the MLDS Center become a self-funded agency. While outside funding can and will be sought by the Center, the Governing Board still recommends continued full state funding of the MLDS Center. First, a continued investment of state funds is necessary so that the Center has time to mature the system fully and grow its research and policy reputation in order to compete successfully for outside funding. Second, while outside funding can help offset the amount of required state funds, becoming fully self-funded will result in the Center's research agenda being dictated by the funders – not by the Governing Board or state policy makers.
2. Hiring high-level information technology staff, especially staff with certified security credentials, has proven to be very difficult. The Governing Board recommends that the Department of Budget and Management, perhaps in conjunction with the Department of Information Technology, review state personnel salary guidelines and other incentives that may help state agencies successfully attract and retain high level information technology employees to support complex systems.

**2014**

1. The Governing Board recommends that these standards and protocols be established prior to the release of public information from the MLDS.
  - a. The accuracy of information reported by the Maryland Longitudinal Data System is of the utmost importance to the Governing Board and the Center. Accuracy is affected by the quality and completeness of the data received, the ability of the Center to match that data across sectors (early childhood, PK-12, higher education, and workforce), and the manner in which the information is presented to the public.
  - b. The Governing Board therefore recommends that the Center develop, for Board review and approval, a set of standards and protocols for assessing the accuracy of information reported to the public. The standards should include:
    - i. An assessment of whether the data relied upon for a report is sufficiently complete to support the information reported;
    - ii. An assessment of whether the information presented can be reconciled against other sources;
    - iii. Criteria for determining whether information based on incomplete data is appropriate to be reported; and
    - iv. Methods for informing the public regarding the information published by the Center.

## **2015**

1. The Governing Board recommends that the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission continue to enhance the data provided to the Center.
2. The Governing Board also recommends a detailed review of at-risk populations with a focus on identifying appropriate information to better research and understand the educational and workforce outcomes of those populations.

## **2016**

1. Support legislation amending Education Article § 24-702(c), Annotated Code of Maryland to increase the amount of time a student record may remain linked to a workforce record in the Maryland Longitudinal Data System. Specifically, the legislation increases, from 5 years to 20 years, the amount of time that a student record may remain linked to a workforce record after the student's last enrollment in a Maryland educational institution. Having only five years of workforce data is insufficient to provide a meaningful understanding of student workforce outcomes. Increasing the linkage to 20 years will provide a more meaningful period of time to assess a student's workforce history and provide a more complete understanding of that student's workforce outcomes, resulting in better policy analysis and insights.
2. The MLDS Center should develop and implement a communication plan that creates awareness of MLDS output and information, establishes a better understanding of how longitudinal data can be used to help drive decision making, and generally provides a systematic approach to engaging stakeholders.
3. In recognition of the important role of apprenticeship programs as a strategy for improving workforce outcomes of Maryland students and the interest in the topic expressed by the Governor's P20 Leadership Council, the MLDS Center should continue to work with the Governor's P20 Council to explore ways to grow and analyze apprenticeship data.

## **2017**

The Maryland Longitudinal Data System Governing Board recommends that Center output should include a section on any limitations in the analysis due to the lack of data collected and reported to the Center. Included in the discussion of limitations should be any necessary cautions about how the noted limitations may impact the interpretation of the output. Prior to each June meeting of the Governing Board, staff should analyze these limitations and make recommendations to the Governing Board on actions needed to address these data deficiencies.

## **2018**

The MLDS Governing Board recommends that the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education include, in its final recommendation to the General Assembly on the subject of Governance and Accountability, a role for the MLDS Center to serve as the primary resource for data driven research and analysis on how the implementation of the changes established by the Commission affect student performance and outcomes.

## **2019**

The MLDS Governing Board recommends that the MLDS Center pursue an increased budget allocation to allow for continued and projected research and collaboration with State policy makers and to meet the ongoing operations and maintenance needs of the data system and the Center.

## **2020**

1. The Governing Board recognizes the importance of the following two new data collections being implemented by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC): non-credit data from community colleges and enrollment and degree data from private colleges and private career schools. These data collections will support important research in currently unstudied components of the workforce development pipeline. The Governing Board directs the Center staff to consult with MHEC in the design, development and review of these data collections.
2. The Governing Board directs the MLDS Center staff to explore the feasibility of collecting data on applicants for teacher certification, including applicant demographic information, the type of certification, all subject areas in which the applicant is certified to teach, certification testing completed, highest degree of the applicant, college attended, and prior teaching experience. The feasibility study should determine the available sources of the data, the challenges or barriers to collecting the data, legal constraints, and the cost and resources required to collect the data.
3. The Governing Board directs the MLDS Center staff to explore the education and workforce policy issues related to COVID-19 and the available data at the State and local levels to help address policy concerns with a special lens towards disproportionalities.

## **2021**

The MLDS Center's Research Agenda was developed by the Governor's P20W Development Council over 10 years ago. While minor changes have been made, there has not been a comprehensive review of the Research Agenda, such as:

1. What purpose should the Research Agenda serve;
2. Are the current questions/topics sufficient to address the Center's added scope of work as a result of legislative changes and new data sources; and
3. How can the agenda address questions of social equity?

Accordingly the Governing Board directs the MLDS Center staff, in consultation with Governing Board designees and other stakeholders, to undertake a comprehensive review of the current Research Agenda and provide conclusions and any proposed changes for the Board's consideration later next year.

## **2022**

1. The MLDS Governing Board recommends support for legislation amending SB 644 (CH 577, 2022)30-Education - Student Financial Aid -Outreach Plan and Reporting. Specifically, the recommendation is to change Education Article § 7-212(c), Annotated Code of Maryland, to assign the FAFSA completion reporting responsibilities to the MLDS Center. The Center, in

consultation with MHEC and each agency's Assistant Attorney General, has determined that the Center is able to access the FAFSA completion data in the federal Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) and the Maryland College Aid Processing System (MDCAPS). This access will allow the Center to directly collect FAFSA completion information at the student level, incorporate the FAFSA completion data into the MLDS, and match those data against data already submitted to the MLDS Center by MSDE. This approach would also allow for more in-depth analysis while also eliminating the requirement for local education agencies to report FAFSA completion rates to the MLDS Center.

2. The MLDS Governing Board recommends that the Center's base budget be expanded to provide additional staffing and resources necessary to meet increased demands for research, reporting and collaboration with various stakeholders and policymakers, including work supporting the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

## **2023**

No recommendation was made.

## **2024**

1. There are two future requirements that will have important impacts on MLDS data: (1) Education Article § 24-702(c) requires the Center to unlink an individual's workforce record 20 years after that individual's last education record; and (2) the Center's data agreements with data sharing partners requires the Center to dispose of personally identifiable data 20 years after receipt of that data from the data sharing partner. The Governing Board recommends that the MLDS Center undertake a comprehensive study on the consequences of these requirements on Center research and reporting and develop plans for the implementation of the requirements.
2. The Governing Board recommends that the MLDS Center develop strategies to identify and engage new and existing audiences who can shape output and benefit from the analysis and reporting provided by the MLDS Center