

**MARYLAND LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM CENTER
550 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

November 22, 2013

MINUTES

The meeting of the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center was held at the Maryland State Department of Education on November 22, 2013. Dr. Brit Kirwan called the meeting or order at 9:04 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present.

The following Governing Board members were in attendance:

Dr. Brit Kirwan, Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Board;
Dr. Danette Howard, Secretary of Higher Education;
Mr. Leonard Howie, Secretary of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation;
Bernie Sadusky - Executive Director, Maryland Association of Community Colleges;
Tina Bjarekull, President of the Maryland Independent Colleges and University
Association;
Ms. Jennifer Strong Mullinix;
Dr. Carl Roberts, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland;
Mr. Jason Perkins-Cohen;
Mr. Brian Roberts

The following Governing Board members were absent:

Dr. Lillian Lowery, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Nicole Marano, Associate Dean, Stevenson University
Dr. David Wilson, President, Morgan State University

PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Approval of the August 9, 2013 Minutes

Dr. Brit Kirwan entertained a motion to approve the Governing Board minutes from the August 9, 2013 meeting.

Motion: Tina Bjarekull/Carl Roberts To approve the August 9, 2013 Minutes

Vote: Unanimous

Executive Directors Report

Ross Goldstein briefed the Governing Board on the following activities of the Center and staff since the last meeting.

Staffing

The first staff positions filled were the Associate Directors of the three branches of the Center: Each of the Associate Directors demonstrated the value of the shared staffing model because of their familiarity with the MLDS and because their former and ongoing role at their agency directly correlates to the mission of the MLDS Center.

1. Chandra Haislet – Associate Director of the IT and Data Management Branch
2. Jon Enriquez - Associate Director of the Reporting and Portal Services Branch
3. Professor Mike Woolley – Associate Director of the Research and Policy Services Branch

The initial recruitment for the two senior information technology positions (Database Engineer and Applications and Security Manager) was not successful. While many applications were received, the applicants were either not qualified or declined to be interviewed due to the salary. Hiring IT staff at a state salary is very challenging - especially for a position that requires security expertise and credentials. Staff will renew the recruitment efforts by targeted advertising and networking.

In response to a question, Mr. Goldstein stated that work on the development of the system is not being delayed despite inability to recruit for the IT positions. The MLDS Center is able to utilize contractors at MSDE who are working on the State Longitudinal Data System grant and Race to the Top projects. The contractors will be paid with MLDS Center funds.

Recruitment for other IT positions will begin during the first week of December. Those positions include database analysts, programmers, and network engineers.

Dawn P. O’Croinin was selected as the Assistant Attorney General for the Governing Board and will begin on December 4th. Ms. Kameen, who served on the hiring committee, noted that Ms. O’Croinin is an experienced attorney who mastered the complexities of Medicaid and Medicare law and is well suited for this new position. Dr. Kirwan, noting that this was Ms. Kameen’s last meeting serving as counsel, took the opportunity to thank her for her excellent services to the Governing Board.

Other Projects and Accomplishments

MLDS Center provided support to two grant applications.

- IES Grant for Continuous Improvement in Education - USM, MHEC and MSDE – to study transition courses
- IES Grant to Establish a Research Training Program at UMCP

MLDS Center contributed to a letter in response to an inquiry by the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The Committee sought to gain a better understanding of Maryland’s longitudinal data system, the scope and security of data collected, compliance with FERPA, linkage with non-K-12 systems, and the use of federal funds.

MLDS Center staff met with Elliot Schlanger, State Director of Cybersecurity, to review the *Data Security and Safeguarding Plan*. Mr. Schlanger provided input on the plan and discussed best practices for auditing.

MLDS Center staff completed a Managing for Results (MFR) plan that was submitted with the Center's budget. The Department of Budget and Management ultimately decided not to include the MFR in the budget book since there are no measurements at this time – only estimates. The MFR contains four primary goals:

1. Secure data system that receives student and workforce data
2. System accurately tracks students throughout their educational career and into the workforce
3. Maintain a public facing web portal that provides timely and relevant information for stakeholders
4. Research and policy analyses concerning critical education and workforce issues will be used to inform education policy decisions and will be nationally recognized

Research Series

The first MLDS Center Research Series presentation took place on November 1, 2013 by Mike Woolley. There were close to 30 people in attendance. The presentation generated a lot of interest, questions, and discussion. The next presentation in the series will be on December 6, 2013 by University of Maryland Professor Laura Stapleton.

Memorandums of Understanding

A memorandum of understanding needs to be completed for each of the agencies (MHEC, MSDE, UMB, and DLLR) collaborating in the development and work of the MLDS Center. The MOUs are substantially completed. There are a few unresolved issues regarding the administration of the shared positions that need to be resolved.

Outreach

Staff provided a briefing for the MSDE Assistant Superintendents on the MLDS Center, the status of the development of the system, and the research agenda. A presentation was also given to the *Maryland Association for Institutional Research* about the center and how data from MHEC's new annual collection will be utilized by the Center.

A meeting has been scheduled with Kennedy Krieger Institute to provide them with information about the Center and to explore possible collaborations. Finally, Morgan State University expressed an interest in a presentation for its Board of Directors.

Reporting

Staff is working to complete the Governing Board's required Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly. The report is required to address the status of the implementation of the MLDS, the research conducted, data added to the system and data determined not to be relevant and therefore removed, and recommendations by the Board.

Staff is also working on the annual report to the General Assembly required by the *College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 (SB 740)*. The report must address the number of students who are dually enrolled and the number and course name of the courses in which a student is dually enrolled at HS and public institution of higher education.

Currently, the MLDS does not have the data required to answer these questions. Therefore, in order to answer the first question regarding the number of dually enrolled students, staff sent a request to MHEC to provide the Center with the number of dually enrolled students in Fall 2012 and Fall 2011.

Dr. Sadusky noted several limitations with the potential reporting, including the fact that the changes created by SB 740 would not be reflected in the Fall 2012 enrollment data. Several members noted that the report must clearly lay out the limitations of the data and how those limitations impact the findings in the report.

General Assembly Session

In preparation for the upcoming legislative session, briefings for legislators and staff are being done to update them on the progress of the Center and answer questions.

Branch Updates

IT and Data Management Branch - Chandra Haislet reported that development of the master data management system was on target. Data is being migrated and testing can now take place. Dr. Kirwan asked about the scope and sufficiency of the testing. Ms. Haislet responded that testing was very comprehensive and would take four to six weeks. Finally, Ms. Haislet discussed the data collection workgroups that have been established to allow MLDS developers and data stewards at the agencies to meet and work through the data requirements.

Reporting and Portal Service Branch - Jon Enriquez reported that due to lack of staffing, content on the website has not been updated. However, some basic updates have been made, including adding new board members, removing incorrect links, and posting the meeting notice. Initial plans have begun for building new dashboards to illuminate the Board's 15 policy questions. As these new dashboards are built a change control process will be implemented to allow stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and feedback.

In response to a comment by Dr. Enriquez about making data available to outside researchers upon request, Ms. Kameen reminded the Board that State law limits access to the MLDS system to staff of the Center. Dr. Howard questioned whether that meant a Public Information Act (PIA) request to the Center seeking data would be denied? Ms. Kameen responded that PIA may grant limited access to data - but not to the system. Mr. Goldstein noted that there have been expectations that some level of restricted system access would be granted to non-system users. Mr. Goldstein suggested that the website may be able to bridge this apparent conflict between expectations and legal limitations. For example, the website could provide dashboards that allow users the ability to drill down to a subset of the posted data that is particularly relevant to the user or create their own queries of the posted data.

Research and Policy Services - Mike Woolley reported on the monthly *Research Series* that is being presented by the Center. Dr. Woolley noted that the first two presentations focus on broad issues

impacting the research agenda, such as methodological and quantitative approaches and statistical methods that can be used in the research analysis. Starting in February, the *Series* will start to address policy specific topics - the first of which will be a discussion on financial aid. Ms. Bjarekull noted the importance of providing context for the research being released and its potential limitations. Dr. Woolley concurred and noted that the research team will also work collaboratively as a check and balance on one another to ensure that the proper context and caveats are noted and addressed. Dr. Sadusky raised the issue of what constitutes a policy recommendation, noting that a policy recommendation should be based on what the research says, not the conclusions or analysis that are drawn from the research. It is advisable for the Center to recommend best practices as opposed to policies.

Approval of Bylaws

Mr. Goldstein noted that the bylaws were originally presented at the August meeting. At that time, there was a discussion about including in the bylaws procedures on how the MLDS Center will receive and respond to research requests and data inquiries. The version of the bylaws under consideration do not address those issues. The Chairman recommended waiting to establish procedures once the Center starts to get a better sense of the type, amount, and urgency of the research requests. At that time, the Governing Board can create a set of procedures to guide the process of responding to research requests and data inquiries.

Mr. Goldstein noted that the bylaws are focused on procedural rules to guide the Board meetings and general operations. Dr. Carl Roberts, noting the example set by the P-20-W Council, recommended a one-year rotating term for vice-chairman. There was also a discussion and a general consensus that in cases where the law allows a Board member to appoint a designee, the Board member should generally have the same individual serving as his or her primary designee. The Board also concurred that the bylaws should indicate the preference that the Board member attend in person and not consistently or permanently appoint a designee. There was also a discussion of the fact that no subcommittees or executive committee is established in the bylaws. Mr. Goldstein stated that while not in the bylaws, it is still within the authority of the Chairman to convene an executive committee or small working group as needed.

A vote on the bylaws was deferred until the next meeting.

Approval of Data Inventory

Ms. Haislet presented the Data Inventory to the Board, noting that it continues to be aligned to the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS). CEDS is the result of a national collaborative effort to develop voluntary, common data standards for a key set of education data elements.

The prior version of the Data Inventory was 60 pages because it included all of the CEDS data elements and indicated whether they were “active” (meaning in the MLDS) or inactive. This version of the Data Inventory only include active elements. Ms. Haislet stated that certain data elements were removed because it was determined that they were listed as “active” in error and had never been collected or part of the MLDS.

Ms. Haislet explained that this version of the Data Inventory is only organization and individual identity information. This data is necessary to build the Master Data Management System. At the next Board

meeting, another update to the Data Inventory will be presented to the Board. That version will contain a large set of transactional data. All data added to the Inventory is vetted by the agencies through a series of meetings and collaboration between MLDS developers and agency data stewards.

Ms. Bjarekull asked why certain data elements have an asterisk. Ms. Haislet responded that the asterisk indicates that the data element is unique to Maryland and not in CEDS. Ms. Mullinix asked why phone numbers are being collected. Ms. Haislet responded that phone numbers are useful for data matching and validation purposes. Finally, Donni Turner, Director of Policy for the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR), stated that if DLLR does not have one of the data elements listed in the Inventory, it should be removed.

No action was taken on the Data Inventory.

Approval of Data Security and Safeguarding Plan

Mr. Goldstein presented the revised Data Security and Safeguarding Plan, noting that the only changes were to Section 2, Data Governance Security, which had been left as a draft. Section 2 specifies how the center will perform decision making regarding data retrieval, sharing and use. Four guiding principles are established, which include: security, privacy, relevance, and access. Roles and data protection responsibilities are also provided, including a Data Governance Board and the specific role of the MLDS Center data management staff. Finally, a procedure for adding and authorizing staff is provided.

Dr. Kirwan asked whether the plan has been vetted by security experts. Dr. Passmore responded that the Data Security and Safeguarding Plan was drafted in consultation with an independent consultant with expertise in data security and then reviewed by the Privacy and Technical Assistance Center of the U.S. Department of Education. There was also a review by the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT) as well as each Chief Information Officer and Assistant Attorney General with DLLR, MHEC, and MSDE. The University System of Maryland also had its information technology specialists conduct a review. Mr. Goldstein noted that a recent review was also conducted by DoIT against the relevant NIST Standards.

Dr. Howard noted that the “Data Governance Board” is an advisory body and its name should reflect that fact - i.e. “Data Governance Advisory Board.” The Board concurred with this recommendation.

No action was taken on the Data Security and Safeguarding Plan.

Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly

Mr. Goldstein presented the current draft version of the Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly which is required under Md. Ed. Art. § 24-705 and due on December 15th. The report responds to each of the five required topics: (1) update on implementation; (2) list of studies performed by the Center; (3) a list of currently warehoused data that is determined to be no longer necessary; (4) any proposed or planned expansion of data; and (5) recommendations made by the Board.

Regarding item (2), the list of studies performed by the Center - this year the report focuses on the upcoming research agenda. In future years, the report will provide research accomplishments instead of planned research.

Regarding item (5), recommendations made by the Board - Mr. Goldstein asked for input from the Board. Dr. Howard proposed two recommendations: (a) a review by the Department of Budget and Management of state personnel salary guidelines and other incentives that may help state agencies successfully attract and retain high level IT employees; and (b) continue full funding of the Center, as opposed to self-funding.

Communications Strategy

Mr. Goldstein noted that there had been discussions about conducting a grand opening of the MLDS Center during the Fall of this year. Staff recommends that any type of grand opening or official rollout of the center wait until Spring of next year, which will allow staff the ability to have the system and web portal ready to meet some of the expectations that may be created by a highly visible public announcement of the center. In the meantime, the Research Series has been a good way to inform key stakeholders of the presence and work of the Center.

Mr. Goldstein also presented a number of catchphrases or slogans to the Board for their consideration. After some discussion and input by members, the Board settled on, "Better Data, Informed Choices, Improved Results."

Adjournment

Dr. Kirwan entertained a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.