

**MARYLAND LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM (MLDS)  
550 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**

**March 14, 2014**

**MINUTES**

The meeting of the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Governing Board was held on March 14, 2014, in the MSDE Board Room of the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. Dr. Brit Kirwan called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present.

**The following Governing Board members were in attendance:**

Mr. Brian Roberts, Change Management Specialist, Montgomery County Government  
Mr. Leonard Howie, Secretary of Labor, Licensing, and Regulations  
Dr. Brit Kirwan, Chancellor of the University System of Maryland  
Dr. Lillian Lowery, Superintendent of Schools, Maryland State Department of Education  
Dr. Danette Howard, Secretary of Higher Education  
Ms. Tina Bjarekull, President of the Maryland Independent Colleges and University Association  
Ms. Jennifer Strong Mullinix, Teacher, Howard County Public Schools  
Dr. Renee Foose, Superintendent of Howard County Public Schools

**The following staff members were in attendance:**

Mr. Ross Goldstein, Executive Director, MLDS Center  
Ms. Dawn O’Croinin, Assistant Attorney General for the Governing Board and MLDS Center  
Ms. James Dixon-Bobbitt, Executive Associate, MLDS Center  
Mr. Jared Billings, Director of Education Policy, Office of the Governor  
Dr. Michael Woolley, Director of Research and Policy Services Branch, MLDS Center  
Ms. Chandra Haislet, Director of IT and Data Management Branch, MLDS Center  
Dr. Jon Enriquez, Director of Reporting and Portal Services Branch, MLDS Center

## **Introductions**

Dr. Lillian Lowery introduced Dr. Renee Foose, Superintendent of Howard County Public Schools, who was recently appointed by the Governor to serve as the representative of local superintendents of schools on the Board.

Mr. Ross Goldstein introduced Ms. Jamese Dixon-Bobbitt, Executive Associate, MLDS

## **The following Governing Board members were absent:**

Dr. David Wilson, Morgan State University

Dr. Bernie Sadusky, Maryland Association of Community Colleges

Mr. Jason Perkins Cohen, Job Opportunities Task Force

## **PRELIMINARY ITEMS**

### **Approval of the November 22, 2013 Minutes**

**Motion:** Tina Bjarekull/Leonard Howie                      To approve the November 22, 2013 Minutes

**Vote:** Unanimous

### **Executive Director's Report**

#### **Staffing**

The initial effort to recruit two Senior IT Director positions was not successful. One of the two senior positions was for an Applications and Security Manager. The Center is working on two fronts to address the security needs of the Center. First, the Center issued a request for resumes (RFR) through the Consulting and Technical Services (CATS) statewide contract. At the same time, the Center is also in discussion with the chief security officer at University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) to determine the feasibility of sharing a security staff resource. UMB is in the process of ramping up their security department and is interested in the proposed partnership.

The other IT Director position will be filled by the current senior development and project manager working as a MSDE contractor on the development of the system. Chuck Shelton, who has been with the project for over a year, has a tremendous amount of experience developing this type of system. He also brings a security focus to all aspects of the development and maintenance of the system. The Center is planning to work with one of the State universities to hire him as a consultant and bill his time to MLDS.

The other IT positions that were advertised were for various database administrator positions, ETL developer, and Oracle Business Intelligence developer and analyst. A joint advertisement was done with MSDE because they have a number of IT positions that they are looking to fill. We were informed by MSDE Human Resources Department that 27 quality applications were submitted and interviews will begin during the week of March 24. MSDE and MLDS will have

a joint interview since both divisions are looking to fill the same positions. Another position that needs to be filled is the DLLR/MLDS shared position. This position will be paid for by MLDS, but 50% of the employee's time will be at DLLR. The details are being worked out, including the position description.

Despite some of the hiring delays, the Center continues to move forward through various contractors. Funds are available to do this because the Center has not been spending money on personnel. For example, staff is close to finalizing a contract with a web developer for a six month engagement. The web developer will provide detailed planning for and development of the website for its re-launch later this year.

#### Other Updates and Upcoming Events

Staff met with Debra Lichter who coordinates MSDE's StudentStat responses. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate reporting responsibilities and have MLDS Center take over reporting on data points related to the establishment and functioning of the data system and Center. The next StudentStat meeting is on March 28, 2014.

The *Data Quality Campaign* (DQC) periodically assembles working groups to analyze a particular policy issue to build a rubric that identifies a set of best practices and analyzes how effectively states are meeting those best practices. Ross Goldstein and Jason Perkins Cohen have both been asked to take part in a working group to identify strong governance policies for longitudinal data systems. The first meeting is April 3, 2014 in Washington.

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest hosted a Webinar on what to do with the longitudinal data system once it is built. There were over 120 attendees from 43 states participating in the Webinar. There were five recommended questions that LDS should address:

- What data usages should be supported?
- What is the best process for managing data requests from outside researchers?
- How do you guide data use, research, and analytics to improve education outcomes?
- How do you prioritize computer data policy and needs?
- How do you sustain funding and ownership of a data system?

There was also discussion on how to engage and/or address the needs of different stakeholders.

- Educators – need predictive reports or early warning reports
- Parents and Students – need actionable data
- Researchers – should be encouraged to structure a class around a particular set of the data, which will increase research capacity and train future researchers
- Developers – should be provided with the framework and scope of the data and encouraged to innovate to provide products and apps that can be used to improve access to information

#### Outreach

On February 21 2014, the Executive Director briefed the Governor's P20 Leadership Council Task Force on Arts Education. The Task Force was interested in the system and how it could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of arts education. Specifically, they wanted to understand what data is available and will MLDS have the capacity to study the impact of arts education on higher education and workforce success. While there are no current research questions pertaining to arts education, the Task Force was encouraged to present their research requests to the Governing Board for possible inclusion as part of a revised research agenda.

Dr. Kirwan noted that he was responsible for Mr. Goldstein's invitation to the Arts Task Force and inquired how the Task Force responded to information about the MLDS. Mr. Goldstein responded that there was a lot of interest in the MLDS and in having the opportunity to have arts related policy questions. Dr. Lowery noted that Jack Smith, MSDE Chief Academic Officer, is leading the task force and helping develop a set of recommendations. Dr. Lowery agreed that having someone from the Task Force present to the Governing Board is a great idea and hopefully it will lead to a policy question that addresses the Task Force's agenda.

Following Mr. Goldstein's presentation Dr. Kirwan inquired about the status of the agency's budget throughout the legislative process. Mr. Goldstein responded that the budget had not received any questions and no cuts had been proposed.

## **Branch Updates**

### *IT and Data Management Branch*

Chandra Haislet, Branch Director, began by following up on the plans for the Center to contract with Chuck Shelton for ongoing project management and system development services. The federal SLDS grant is a three year grant and that we are coming up on the end of year two. A number of activities are closing out so the ability to keep Chuck Shelton on board is a very good win. He is a tremendous resource for the development of the system. He was instrumental in designing the master data management system which is now completed. The whole production solution is also completed. The Center has data files from the agencies. This allows the developers the ability to be able to bring data together from the different data systems and identify and match individuals and organizations. DLLR, MHEC, and MSDE have been participating in the creation of the layout of the Input Files. Ms. Haislet responded to a question from Dr. Kirwan regarding the servers and where they are housed. Ms. Haislet explained that the servers are housed at the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and MLDS will be purchasing additional servers that will also be located at DPSCS. It was also explained that funds have been set aside for next year to have an independent audit of the system.

Ms. Haislet next provided an overview of the data flow processes and security features that those processes create. She noted that the architecture and development of the system have been designed to be FERPA compliant. In response to a question, it was noted that the Center does plan to conduct external verification of FERPA compliance through planned audits next year.

Dr. Howard noted that there is heightened concern about data privacy and security and asked whether the proposed audits will address security vulnerabilities. Mr. Goldstein responded that the planned audits include penetration testing which actively looks for vulnerabilities in system design and implementation. Mr. Goldstein also noted that the Data Governance Advisory Board (which is made up of representatives from the agencies) will serve as an ongoing second set of eyes on security and will play a role in helping to design the various system audits.

Mr. Howie reiterated that federal labor laws place various constraints on DLLR's ability to provide data to the Center, and noted the importance that the agreements between MLDS and DLLR cover the specific data elements. Changes or additions to data sharing will need to be carefully reviewed by DLLR attorneys for compliance with federal requirements. Mr. Howie noted that DLLR does not have an issue with the costs moving forward, but DLLR has to be mindful of the allocation of internal resources because federal funds cannot be spent for purposes not directly related to the programs supported by those funds.

Dr. Kirwan thanked Ms. Haislet for her excellent report.

#### *Reporting and Portal Services Branch*

Jon Enriquez, Branch Director, provided a handout summarizing the "Dual Enrollment Report" that was submitted to the Governor and General Assembly by the Center this past December as required under the *College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013*. The report was based on information provided by MHEC and provides preliminary analysis of dual enrollment trends that establish a baseline for future analysis on the topic. Dr. Enriquez explained that dual enrollment is one of various different kinds of early college work within the state. The population of students who participate in dual enrollment have the same characteristics as the population of students who enroll in community colleges with the single exception that white students tend to be overrepresented in this group. Dr. Kirwan asked if the students go to the community colleges to take the courses or are the community colleges courses offered in the schools. Dr. Enriquez responded that the data does not directly address that question. However, based on other information, students are most likely taking the classes at the community colleges. Dr. Lowery asked if students from out-of-state pay out-of-state fees. Dr. Kirwan responded that there can be reciprocal agreements.

Dr. Enriquez discussed planned changes to the website. The original concept was oriented around the idea of providing researchers direct access to the data. That approach is no longer consistent with the legal limitation that only staff of the Center may have access to the system. Accordingly, the Center will focus on providing a very public facing website. Since most individuals will want access to a set of common questions, the Center will create dashboards that are responsive to those questions.

The Center is hiring a contractor to provide project management and design and development for the new website. Once this resource is in place and the data warehouse is completely built and

populated with the data, it is anticipated that three or four dashboards will be created by August. The contractor will also ensure that the re-design is compliant with state web design standards.

In response to a question, Dr. Enriquez stated that users will be able to drill down into the dashboards to obtain county specific information. The goal is to ensure that the site is responsive to the needs of parents by providing them pre-packaged answers to their anticipated questions.

Dr. Kirwan thanked Jon Enriquez for his excellent report.

#### *Research and Policy Services Branch*

Michael Woolley, Branch Director, provided an update on the Research Series which is a vital part of the Center's activities. The Research Series was started last fall and is held monthly to engage various stakeholders on the research agenda of the Center through presentations and/or panel discussions.

The first Research Series presentation was provided by Dr. Woolley in November 2013 and focused on student group differences and how those differences will inform all aspects of the Center's research (this is research question 15 which is applicable to all of the other 14 questions). The December presentation was provided by Dr. Laura Stapleton from University of Maryland College Park and focused on issues in attributing causal impacts of educational policies. The February presentation was provided by Jon Enriquez on financial aid. Dr. Enriquez was joined by Peter Tyrell who is MHEC's financial aid coordinator. The talk focused on the types of financial aid questions the MLDS Center can answer. Finally, the March presentation was a panel discussion on workforce related issues. Marvin Titus, Associate Professor at College Park spoke about the impact of students working during post-secondary education. Catherine Oliver, Assistant Superintendent for Career and College Readiness spoke about Maryland's Career Technical Education programs. June Streckfus, Executive Director of the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, spoke about the need to use data to make informed decisions. Donni Turner, Director of Policy for DLLR, spoke about identifying occupations for which we should be preparing students. Finally, Jason Perkins-Cohen, Governing Board member and Director of the Job Opportunities Task Force spoke about the need to identify the "cracks" that students fall through and understand and prevent them from falling through the cracks.

Dr. Woolley provided a brief overview of the April and May research series which will be a discussion of a similar multi-agency data project at UMB and a panel discussion on early childhood education, respectively.

Dr. Kirwan thanked Dr. Woolley for his excellent presentation.

### Approval of Bylaws

The bylaws are a framework for the operation of the MLDS Governing Board. From the last meeting, two issues needed to be addressed before approval of the bylaws. First, how the vice-chairman role would rotate. It was suggested to make it on a yearly bases so each of the secretaries would take a one year term as the vice chair. The second issue was the appointment of a designee to attend a meeting in the place of an ex-officio member. It was suggested to have the bylaws reflect the Board's preference to have the same designee each time, to the extent possible. The bylaws require advance notice to the Chairman when a designee will be attending in the place of a member. Finally, the bylaws also reflect the Board's preference that the actual members attend meetings.

One additional change to the bylaws from the prior version is that the roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Executive Director, and Center staff are enumerated. The roles and responsibilities are consistent with the requirements established under State law and are being restated for clarity and completeness.

**Motion:** Tina Bjarekull/Leonard Howie                      To approve the Bylaws with changes

**Vote:** Unanimous

### Approval of Data Inventory

Chandra Haislet explained that the Board is required to maintain and periodically submit to the Governor and General Assembly a data inventory which lists all data in the MLDS. The Data Inventory being presented represents the data elements that the agencies have reviewed and agreed to share with the Center.

Ms. Haislet explained the process for developing the Data Inventory. The research team went through the Common Education Data Standards (CEDDS) and identified what data was needed to answer policy questions. Each agency took the CEDDS data elements identified by the research team and aligned them to what was actually in existence at the agency and then approved some or all of those data elements. There will be an updated Data Inventory presented at the June meeting which will contain additional data elements.

Jennifer Strong-Mullinex asked why teacher assignment start data and end date were included in the data inventory. Ms. Haislet responded that it is useful for identifying teachers.

**Motion:** Danette/Leonard                      To Approve Proposed Additions to the Data Inventory

**Vote:** Unanimous

### Update of Inter-Agency Agreements

Dawn O'Croinin, Assistant Attorney General gave an update on the agreements between the MLDS Center and the agencies. An inter-agency agreement data sharing agreement is currently

in place between MLDS and each of the three participating agencies. However, that agreement needs to be updated due to recent changes in the federal FERPA regulations. Specifically, the regulations provide that a statutory designation that an entity, such as the MLDS Center, is an authorized representative of the education agency is insufficient and instead must be done in a written agreement. Ms. O’Croinin explained that she has created two separate agreements for each agency: one for data sharing and the other to govern various administrative issues such as staffing. There is also a memorandum of understanding governing the relationship between the Center and the University of Maryland, Baltimore for the services related to the Research and Policy Services Branch.

The current status of the agreements is as follows:

1. UMB agreement is complete;
2. MSDE – the administrative MOU is complete and data sharing is in final form
3. MHEC – the administrative and data sharing MOU are in final form
4. DLLR – both are still in negotiation.

One of the critical issues that had to be resolved before completing the data sharing agreements is the amount of time that MLDS can maintain data transferred by the agencies. Federal law requires the agreements to specify how long data will be retained; however, there is no guidance on what constitutes a reasonable amount of time. Ms. O’Croinin made an inquiry to the U.S. Department of Education’s Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) for guidance. During a conference call, PTAC representatives explained that the retention time period was intentionally left unspecified to provide states with flexibility. Ms. O’Croinin asked if a 20 year retention proposal was reasonable. The PTAC representatives stated that 20 years was reasonable and noted that some states have agreements allowing for data retention up to 50 years.

#### Review of System Development Timeline

Ross Goldstein and Chandra Haislet gave an update on the development timeline and what the MLDS Center expects to accomplish within the next six months. Ms. Haislet reviewed the *Data Systems Milestones* handout, which provides the schedule for several key tasks the Center is working to complete.

1. Security and User Access – backgrounds checks have been taking place, with additional dates scheduled. In response to a question by Dr. Howard, Ms. Haislet noted that all staff are subject to a higher level background check that includes the FBI background check. Establishing user roles will take place in April.
2. Development Environment – in April, staff will build the webcenter data base and in May the development of the data cubes using the Oracle Business Intelligence tools will take place.
3. Test and Production Environment – server and storage procurement will take place in April and May and installation, testing and go-live scheduled for June.

4. Data Load – transaction data will be added in April and May and a schedule for recurring data loads will be completed by June.
5. Standard Operating Procedures – the development of standard operating procedures, change control, log aggregation, and audit reporting are scheduled to be completed by June.

Jared Billings discussed the need to have a public launch of the Center and the website. It was noted that this is an important project to the Governor and a public launch will serve as a good opportunity to provide outreach to the public about the work of the Center.

### **Additions to the Agenda**

Mr. Goldstein noted that as the Center gets closer to having a functioning system questions about the appropriateness of the research agenda have been raised. The parameters and focus of the MLDS research needs to be on student transitions and not areas that could otherwise be addressed by the individual agencies. In other words, research should touch on data from at least two of the three agencies.

Some of the 15 policy questions do not meet these parameters. Accordingly, Mr. Goldstein proposed forming a work group to review the questions and, if they are not posing a questions that requires longitudinal data, then either re-formulate the question or propose a new question.

In addition, there also needs to be a process for how new questions will continue to be formulated and addressed - for example, how can questions be generated by the Center or by a Board member? Also, how will the Center handle and prioritize questions from outside stakeholders and interest groups? Finally Also need to begin to work on establishing parameters and processes for filling information requests and endeavoring on new projects.

Mr. Goldstein proposed a small, focused work group consisting of a representative of the Chancellor and the three Secretaries, one other representative each from K-12, Higher Education, and Workforce, and Mike Wolley.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Kirwan adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ross Goldstein  
Executive Director

**Approved:** *May 2, 2014*