



Monthly Report for September 2013

Submitted October 4, 2013

Response to Congressional Committee

In a letter to Superintendent Lowery, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce posed several questions to help the Committee “gain a better understanding of [Maryland’s] comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system.” MLDS Center staff worked closely with MSDE staff in responding to the Committee’s inquiry. The questions focused on specific information collected (with specific questions about personally identifiable information), compliance with FERPA, linkage with non-K-12 systems, challenges faced with creating the system, and use of federal funds in the development of longitudinal data systems. A copy of the request and response is attached.

Staffing Updates

The position descriptions for the Applications and Security Manager and the Senior Database Engineer are completed and the jobs are currently being advertised. Applications have been received and are being reviewed. The goal is to start interviews the week of October 14th. Staff is now working on completing and submitting the position descriptions for the next round of hires, which include the OBIEE Developers and Analysts.

Memorandums of Understanding

The MOUs between the MLDS Center and University of Maryland, Baltimore and the Department of Education are complete and have been reviewed by Liz Kameen, Assistant Attorney General and the appropriate authorities at UMB. Once certain budget and fiscal management details are finalized the MOUs will be signed.

Data Security

Staff met with Elliot Schlanger, the Maryland Cybersecurity Director, and Nylsa Figueroa, his deputy, to discuss security controls, the MLDS Center’s *Data Security and Safeguarding Plan*, and what security audits the Center should plan on conducting. Following the meeting Mr. Schlanger and Ms. Figueroa reviewed the *Plan* and provided useful feedback.

Managing for Results

Staff completed a draft of an MFR¹ and submitted it to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). DBM reviewed the MFR, provided some input and suggestions for performance measures. However, DBM ultimately recommended not including an MFR in the State Budget Book this year since there will be no measurable outcomes to report in the agency’s first year. Instead, just the agency description and mission will be included in the Budget Book. A copy of the MFR is attached.

Research and Policy Services Branch

Staff is working to implement a monthly *MLDS Center Research Series*. The Series will be a lunchtime presentation and discussion on a MLDS related research topic. The goal of the *Series* initially is to engage our immediate stakeholders and move towards engaging the broader education and workforce community in the research being conducted by the Center or significant research being conducted by other institutions on related topics. The *Series* will also provide a useful forum for the Center’s Research

¹ Maryland Managing for Results (MFR) is a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting process that emphasizes use of resources to achieve measurable results, accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement in State government programs.

and Policy Services Branch to interact with and receive input from across the Center staff and ultimately educators and administrators on the research questions.

The plan is to hold the *MLDS Center Research Series* on the first Friday of each month prior to the IWG meeting. The first presentation in the *Series* will be hosted by Professor Michael Woolley who will discuss the inclusion of student group membership in analyses (Question 15) including gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or special education eligibility. The goal is to work toward shared understandings of the methods, meaning, and interpretation of such analyses. Dr. Woolley will use examples from his research to illustrate such points and stress the commitment to examine these issues in all analyses done by the Center.

The Research and Policy Services Branch has been busy continuing to do the research work necessary to build the foundation upon which we will develop analyses in response to specific research questions once we have data. That preparation is focused on three activities. The first is looking at the literature and prior research on the research questions. Doctoral students at both the College of Education and School of Social Work have been busy finding and synthesizing such literature. The Branch has also been working on detailed lists of the specific data we feel is needed to engage in rigorous analyses to answer the questions we have set out for the first year. Finally, the Branch has been active in the processes leading up to the initial data match and merge.

IT and Data Management Branch

The IT and Data Management Branch has engaged data owners and stewards at each agency in Data Collection Groups which have been working the past several weeks to finalize the first data collection files. The first files will include organization and person information that will be used to merge together information that has been provided from each agency. These meetings will be monthly as we continue to enhance the data system and collection process. Topics for the next month will include review of the data inventory, timelines of data collection and initial testing of organization level data files.

The past month staff has been reviewing the Security Plan as well as documents provided by MSDE. As the Center prepares to hire staff and provide approved access to the system, ensuring that the policies and procedures are appropriate and in place will be a critical activity over the next several months.

Reporting and Portal Services Branch

While substantial updates to the portal must necessarily wait until after additional staff have been hired, the Branch is working to identify items on the website that need to be updated or changed. These areas include basic material about Center policies and personnel as well as more complex material including issue briefs. The Branch has also begun development of a change management process to oversee internal and external requests for revisions. Finally, elements are being identified for inclusion in new dashboards to be added to the site before the end of the calendar year.