



Monthly Report for March 2015

Submitted April 3, 2015

Staffing

The Database Administrator and ETL Developer positions are currently being advertised on the State's JobAps website. While both positions are filled by contractors through the end of the calendar year, the Center is going ahead with the hiring process now in hopes that the permanent State employees can be brought on board with enough time to overlap with the contractors to receive training and increase capacity.

Website

After the March 13th Governing Board meeting the Charter School Data Snapshot was uploaded to the website. The feedback has been positive. Legislative staff provided an enthusiastic response and noted that the timing of and information contained in the Snapshot was helpful. Staff continues to meet and discuss new dashboards based on policy questions. Staff will start working on incorporating wage data for the Charter School Snapshot and will be discussing a High School to College Enrollment Dashboard to represent cross sector longitudinal data from K-12 to Postsecondary.

Data Reporting Standards

Per the suggestion of the Chairman during the Governing Board meeting, the Data Reporting Standards have been shared with the research consultant to the REL-Mid Atlantic Longitudinal Data User Resource Alliance (LDURA). The consultant provided some useful feedback that will help provide more clarity to the Standards. She also confirmed that Maryland is ahead of the curve in establishing this type of well documented procedure and asked that the Center consider presenting the Standards at upcoming meetings, such as NCES STATS-DC Data Conference.

MHEC Data

At the March Governing Board meeting, during discussion of data matching processes, a question was raised regarding the number of MHEC enrollment records for Fall 2014 with valid SASIDs (State Assigned Student Identification Number). Higher education institutions are currently required to submit SASIDs for first-time students, but most chose to submit SASIDs for other students as well.

There are 22,749 first-time student records included SASIDs. This number represents about 59% of the first-time students who are Maryland residents -- which is NOT the same thing as Maryland recent public high school graduates. Overall, 112,006 student records included SASIDs, or about 31% of all undergraduate and graduate student records.

Legislation

HB 298, known as the Student Data Privacy Act of 2015 currently resides in the Senate for further consideration and vote following yesterday's hearing. HB 298 made it out of the House Ways and Means Committee with an unanimous vote, and it was passed in the House with 122 in favor, 13 opposed, and 2 who did not vote.

This legislation does not have any bearing on the MLDS Center. Section 24-703 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code defines the MLDS Center as "an independent unit within State government." Md. Code, Ed. Art., 24-703(b). The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) Fiscal and Policy Note for HB 298 notes that this legislation has no effect on the State. It is directed at "operators of specified preK-12 websites, online services, online applications, and mobile applications." Further, the Center cannot be construed to be an "operator" as defined by the proposed statute simply because it operates a website. The proposed legislation only applies to operators of websites, online services, applications or mobile applications which are used primarily for a preK-12 purpose and were designed and marketed primarily for such purposes, and which are being deployed by LEA's for students. The Center's website does not meet any of the criteria required by the legislation for falling within the definition of an "operator." Finally, earlier in the session DLS asked the MLDS Center to review the bill and determine whether it would have any policy or fiscal bearing on the agency. The analysis submitted by the Executive Director stated that there was no fiscal or operational impact to the Center.

Data Center

The data center installation at MSDE continues to progress. This month, two servers are configured in cluster with 16GB network cards. Software for virtual machine templates is getting installed. A researcher virtual machine is getting set up that will provide access to various statistical software packages. The team is also in the process of building Active Directories in order to establish user groups and users. The Oracle software that was required to be installed under universal license agreement has been completed. Major components such as Oracle 12c Enterprise Manager, WebCenter and OBIEE are installed on Development and Test environment. Staff is evaluating cost for Oracle Licenses, maintenance of the same, procurement of firewall and switches. There is also planning going on for storage upgrade as well as moving data from DPSCS to MSDE/MLDSC data center.

Data Loading

The ETL Developer has loaded the quarterly wage data from 2009 to 2014 received from DLLR. Staff has loaded new identities for the DLLR wages in MDM and the person, organization, time dimensions, employer and quarterly wage data in ODS. Next staff will be working on loading DLLR claimants and GED data. Educational program participation data was loaded in MDM and ODS. Also a meeting was held to discuss K-12 Enrollment and Attendance data. Once file layouts are finalized, the Center will be receiving this data from MSDE.

Research Series

The April Research Series (held today) is being presented by Dr. Faith Connolly, Executive Director of the Baltimore Education Research Consortium and Dr. Rachel Durham, Assistant Professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education. They will be talking about Postsecondary College Enrollment and Assessed Need for Developmental Coursework. Specifically, the presentation will consider the meaning of college readiness from both the school district and college perspective. In the past decade, numerous actors in educational research, policy, and practice have converged upon a seemingly practical definition of college readiness that hinges upon a student's lack of need for postsecondary remedial education. For good or for bad, this conception has become the de facto working definition of college readiness. BEREC examined local Baltimore colleges' assessment of remediation need and high school performance for the Baltimore City graduating Class of 2011. The talk will focus on the four local institutions Baltimore City graduates attend: the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), Morgan State University and Coppin State University.