

Monthly Report for August 2016

Submitted September 2, 2016

Meetings

PTAC/DOL Regional Meeting in Atlanta

On August 24th the U.S. Department of Education's Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) held a Regional Meeting that explored the latest guidance from the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor on linkages that are allowable under both U.S. ED laws and U.S. DOL laws with a focus on minimizing risk to confidential data while meeting the reporting requirements under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Representatives from DLLR, MSDE, and the MLDSC attended this in person meeting in Atlanta. The meeting provided the opportunity to learn about the new joint guidance, understand the impact of the guidance, and work through data sharing scenarios for implementation. The meeting highlighted how the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor are working collaboratively to meet federal reporting requirements.

While the MLDSC does not currently assist in WIOA reporting, the Center, like many other state longitudinal data systems, are grappling with similar issues in reporting data across sectors while mindful of varying state and federal reporting restrictions. The meeting provided a better understanding of the ways in which the federal labor and education agencies cooperate, and some creative ideas for establishing data sharing agreements within Maryland.

The "[Joint Guidance on Data Matching to Facilitate WIOA Performance Reporting and Evaluation](#)" was released on August 23, 2016.

Data Governance Advisory Board Meeting

A Data GAB meeting was held at the MLDSC on Wednesday, August 17th. The meeting was extremely productive and included discussion on the limitations on workforce data within the MLDS, the de-linking procedures, the Data Gap Analysis, and Data Suppression Reporting Guidelines. The agenda and items for discussion are available for review here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6NGdi0NaAOCZVh4Q3lad3VQSUK>.

Research and Policy Advisory Board Meeting

The Research and Policy Advisory Board meeting was held at the MLDSC on Thursday, September 1st. During the meeting, there was a discussion on the proposed changes to the research agenda and an overview of the Promise Heights grant - both topics that will be discussed at the next Governing Board meeting. There was also a presentation by Laia Tiderman on seven new data dashboards that are being finalized for release within the next week. Ms. Tiderman also provided a copy of a Data Brief that staff

created as a way to provide succinct and understandable information extracted from the Center's dashboards. The RPB group provided valuable feedback on both the dashboards and the data brief.

Data Suppression Reporting Guidelines

The MLDS Center has begun developing guidelines for the suppression of data reported in all MLDS output. State regulation requires the Center to use de-identified, aggregate data in all reporting, as well as, compliance with FERPA and other relevant privacy laws and policies. These guidelines are the procedures the Center will use to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. Much of the current discussion is around the best ways to provide meaningful data while ensuring the suppression of data that may be identifiable based on the size or uniqueness of the population reported. MLDS Center staff will continue to work through these guidelines with the Advisory Boards and partner agencies. The guidelines will be presented to the Governing Board at the March 2017 meeting.

Research

The research reports on online education and STEM have been edited based on comments from the Maryland State Department of Education and have been resubmitted in fulfillment of the SLDS 2012 grant. A standardized format for research reports was created so that all research report publications from the Center are similar in terms of format and section content.

This semester, we welcome four new members to the research team. Yating Zheng is a graduate student in the Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation program in the College of Education at the University of Maryland. Brian "Heath" Witzel is a graduate student in the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland. Stacey Shippe is a graduate student in the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland. Amber Bloomfield is a Data Scientist in the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment at the University of Maryland. Two research team members (Yating Zheng and James Zheng) attended the SAS advanced programming training *SAS SQL 1: Essentials* in Rockville, MD.

System Management

Security Audit

The voluntary IT security audit is continuing to progress. The auditors have completed vulnerability testing and submitted their interim report. Staff has begun implementing recommended changes to address issues raised by the auditor. The auditors are preparing to conduct the penetration testing and are also in the process of reviewing the Data Security and Safeguarding Plan and the Center's implementation of that plan.

Meeting with Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

Tejal Cherry, Dawn O'Croinin and Ross Goldstein met with Deputy State CIO Luis Estrada and Greg Urban, DoIT's chief operating officer, to discuss the firewall management, the creation of service level agreements, and future plans for enterprise management of State IT systems.

Data Loading

IT staff received and will be loading the MSDE school staff file. IT staff also recently completed loading the End of Term 2015 and Financial Aid Information files received from MHEC.

Dashboards

Staff has been working on a series of dashboards related to Research Agenda Question 20 - *What are the workforce outcomes of Maryland high school non-completers*. Staff also completed a dashboard on postsecondary enrollments by high school students, broken out by when the enrollment occurred (first fall semester, first year after high school, or two to four years after high school). The dashboards are under final review.

Other tasks and accomplishments are listed below.

1. IT staff completed and launched the revised database schema. An in depth presentation of the revised schema was provided to all authorized staff. Staff were instructed to begin to exclusively utilize the new schema.
2. IT staff set up virtual machines for new the newly authorized researcher staff and made sure those researchers' machines contain all needed software.
3. IT staff established new access profiles for the Synthetic Data Project staff. The new profile restricts access to wage data files.
4. IT staff has substantially completed the migration of the firewall management services from MSDE to DoIT. There is still ongoing testing and the resolution of certain issues to be finalized.
5. DoIT has configured CommVault solution at MSDE data center for all of the local backups for both MSDE and MLDSC.