Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Governing Board Meeting
August 9, 2013
Meeting Minutes

Board members present:
Dr. Lillian Lowery, State Superintendent of Schools (Acting Chair)
Dr. Danette Gerald Howard, Secretary of Higher Education
Tina Bjarekull, President of Maryland Independent College and University Assn.
Jason Perkins-Cohen, Executive Director of Jobs and Opportunities Task Force
Leonard J. Howie III, Secretary of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
Joe Popovich, representative of Dr. David Wilson, President of Morgan State University
Jennifer Strong Mullinix, Howard County Public Schools Teacher
Dr. Carl Roberts, Executive Director of Public School Superintendents Assoc. of Maryland

Staff and Presenters:
Ross Goldstein, Executive Director of MLDS Center
Elizabeth Kameen, Principal Council of Maryland State Dept. of Education (MSDE)
Ben Passmore, Asst. Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, University System of Maryland
Jared Billings, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of the Governor
Beth Perlman, Chief Information Officer, MSDE
Chandra Haislet, FY2012 SLDS Grant Director, MSDE
Michael Woolley, University of Maryland Baltimore School of Social Work

Minutes:

Dr. Lowery opened the meeting at 9:07 am.

Dr. Lowery: Pleased to have Ross Goldstein join us as executive director of MLDS, board member introductions.

Agenda:
1. Legislative Session/Overview
Ben Passmore reported that the past legislative session was very successful. The General Assembly is eager to set up the MLDS Center and to receive more research and data. Legislators have recived an overview of the MLDS system and the way the Center will be set. There is a core of legislators who understand the system and are anticipating the benefits of the system. On the House side, there is some interest in moving away from general funds support to a self-support model. The General Assembly will look for reports and information products to be available as early as the upcoming legislative session. The budget was approved for MLDS Center with very minor changes.

Ross Goldstein gave an *overview of the center budget and staff positions. In addition to the executive director position, there is an* executive assistant, two associate branch directors, two IT directors, 3-5 other staff information technology positions that primarily support the data system.

Beth Perlman noted that certain activities must happen for the handover of MLDS system from MSDE to the Center. The Center needs to hire staff. Until then, the system is in "maintain" mode but ready for transfer. Funding for MLDS via MSDE ran out in June. Ms. Perlman committed to making sure federal requirements will continue to be met. To overcome physical and server issues that a

result of MSDE and MLDS being in different buildings, Google cloud services will be used for email and to transfer from server to server.

Dr. Howard asked Mr. Goldstein to address the staffing timeline? Mr. Goldstein responded that the first step is to appoint the associate directors. As soon as that takes place the Center will hire senior information technology staff positions. The goal is to complete the appointment of the associate directors within the next two to three weeks.

2. Action Items: Delegate authority to the MLDS Executive Director to issue credentials for access, hire staff, and approve MOUs

- System Access - Mr. Goldstein noted that after July 1st access to the system ended, and therefore he needed the ability to grant access so that people can work with the system.
- Hiring – The MLDS Center organizational structure establishes three branches. Two of those branches will be led by an associate director who is a loaned employee from MSDE or MHEC. The employees will report to their agencies and continue to spend half of their time on agency duties. Under the loaned employee arrangement, MLDS Center will have input on the individuals hired in the associate director positions and can send the employees back to their agency if it is determined that they are not meeting performance expectations. The hiring process will be for the agencies to propose candidates, and then MLDS (represented by Mr. Goldstein and Dr. Passmore on behalf of the Chairman) and Jared Billings on behalf of the Governor's office will meet with a representative of the agency to ensure that the person is right for the job. Mr. Goldstein will give go-ahead to continue with selection if all works well. Once associate directors are in place Mr. Goldstein plans to seek their input to hire senior staff.
- MOUs - The MLDS and each agency need MOUs to establish relationship, personnel, in-kind contributions, and budget where necessary.

Tina Bjarekull noted that based on the law, MLDS Center needs a detailed security protocol and asked whether one had been adopted. Elizabeth Kameen responded that a security protocol was adopted - subject to further review and revision.

Dr. Howard made a motion to approve the action items authorizing the Executive Director to provide system access, hire staff, and enter into Memorandums of Understanding on behalf of the MLDS Center. The motion was seconded by Dr. Popovich and unanimously approved.

3. Action Item: Development of Center Bylaws

Mr. Goldstein proposed developing and adopting bylaws to address issues of delegation of authority, rules of order, meeting times, roles and responsibilities of members, the authority of the chairman. Jared Billings stated that the bylaws will drive what happens moving forward. He suggested that a few members of the governing board be involved in the process. Mr. Billings also noted a need to discuss how the Governing Board will set research questions, handle public requests for information, and generally guide how the center operates. There is not time or ability to always call the board to ask for permission to do things necessary to support the Board and Center. These are deep conversations that need to happen. It is important to make sure the Board feels its voice is heard.

Secretary Howie agreed with Mr. Billings' assessment and noted that it is important to establish how the entity will operate, more than just bylaws. Clear communications is necessary. Both he and

Ms. Bjarekull noted their willingness to participate in establishing a working framework for the Center.

Mr. Billings also noted that managing General Assembly expectations will be a challenge – they want results in three months. We need a strong message about what the top priorities are, how we will engage public and legislators is critical.

Dr. Lowery stated that we need to make sure board members see the bylaws and can give feedback before the next meeting.

4. Updates
Overview of SLDS grant
The SLDS grant is a three-year grant of $4 million to do 15 projects around five objectives. The source of the 15 projects was a result of an interagency collaborative effort. We looked at gaps in our data and services needed in state. We're currently in year 2 of the grant and very active right now. There are six staff members, with two more coming on board. Private career school and GED data are the identified gaps. Work with MHEC to develop systems to collect this data is on target to provide data to MLDS next year. Objective 3 is dashboard access to data, and we're working on CTE dashboards. We're on target to roll out this dashboard in six months. Our next dashboard is a career access dashboard, working with MLDS to roll out by the end of the year. Objective 4 is establishing training academies; this will be one of the first services rolled out of the MLDS Center. Objective 5 is research.

Objective 2 is looking at data quality and data standards. The challenge is that the three agencies (MSDE, MHEC, DLLR) have robust data systems and merging data into one system will be hard. In addition staff will need to de-identify data and protect privacy. Ms. Haislet then provided an overview of Master Data Management System.

In response to a question by Ms. Bjarekull about the purpose of the training academies, Ms. Haislet stated that the training academies are for researchers to use MLDS responsibly and follow appropriate guidelines. For the General Assembly, one day training sessions to train legislative staff on value of MLDS and how it can be effectively used. There were several questions about who will be able to take part in training and how members of the general public could get invited to participate. Ms. Haislet responded that the scope and target of training is open to discussion, but noted her vision is to see the training academies developed to become a national model for training. Intent of grant is to develop something successful, then scale it up.

Jason Perkins-Cohen: What projects have been completed?

Chandra Haislet: Two dashboards are complete and will be rolled out when MLDS is up and running. Will do a demonstration of these dashboards at next board meeting.

Secy. Howie: The Governing Board needs to be a part of the approach for legislator academies, particularly.

Chandra Haislet: I agree. We will have a strategy for that in place in the next couple of months.

Jared Billings: We need to have another meeting before our quarterly meeting to hash out these issues and the bylaws.

Dr. Lowery: Electronic access to documents for review is fine, no need to meet face to face.

Master Data Management (MDM) System.
The MDM system will allow very limited access to data prior to merging. After the merge takes place, the data will be given a token and will be de-identified. This will be an automated process. This is a good solution to the privacy issues.

Other states are looking at vendor systems (e.g., Informatica and TIPCO) with implementation and sustainability costs. Since these costs are too high to be supported by the MLDS Center budget, staff is going to build our own MDM using grant money. It will be the same as vendor products, and scalable and there will be no additional costs after implementation.

Dr. Roberts: Is there a manual to identify the acronyms?

Chandra Haislet: Yes we have an acronym index that we can give to you.

Dr. Lowery: When we share this with the public, we'll need a glossary.

Overview of Communications Plan
Dr. Passmore noted that the next big event is the official center opening planned for this fall. Only in discussion stages right now, but the board needs to consider what this event should entail. We want to make the public aware of the Center, but that will presumably lead to big jump in requests. Also staff will need to plan a publicity tour and roadshow.

Jared Billings questioned how long we want to wait to have this big event? The reality is that once this goes public, people will want to know more and will ask questions. We want to make sure we're ready for that and that systems are in place. How we respond to requests is tricky – first come first serve or pursuant to an established priority system? The Governing Board must settle these process questions prior to a big public grand opening.

Secretary Howard: Sequencing is key. I agree with Jared. A bylaws group needs to be clear about the kinds of requests the Center needs to respond to. Some of the requests can be handled by the agencies. A request screening process needs to be in place to help manage the influx of requests.

Jennifer Strong Mullinix: Who is the target audience for the roadshow?

Ben Passmore: There are education audiences around the state – superintendents, etc. – who need to see the system in operation. Only the General Assembly, MBRT and a few others have seen what the system can do. Everyone knows about the MLDS, but understanding is limited. Publicity tour/roadshow is to show these people what the system is and to introduce stakeholders to MLDS.

Dr. Lowery: There is a contingent of people who are wary of data, so we need to emphasize that we are protecting data to prevent pushback.

Jared Billings: There are both extremes: people afraid of data and people who think this system will do everything – track kids' homework assignments etc. Need to make sure that facts are out in the public.

Ben Passmore: I will go back to the communications team to develop specific messaging to bring back to the board for approval. The focus will be to make sure we're telling the story the right way.

Secretary Howie: Managing expectations is really key. If we can't answer questions we will have public relations problem

Tina Bjarekull: We need to hold off on the rollout and tour until we have these questions answered. On Objective 2, is the data de-identified at the agencies?

Dr. Lowery: We have laws regarding access to data, and researchers can't access the raw data.

Dr. Howard: When we get data, it has SSNs, but when we give it to researchers it's de-identified.

Jared Billings: MLDS doesn't take the place of data that already exists, it's a capstone project meant to highlight outcomes and transitions.

Ben Passmore: What we're building is a limited system to answer specific questions; we purposefully limited the questions that the Center addresses. It's not an all-encompassing data center.

Update on research agenda.
Dr. Michael Woolley, Professor of Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, explained that the research team is prioritizing research questions with a focus on developing products for the upcoming legislative session. Hopefully, we will have something to show the board in November. The research team is a collaboration between the UMB School of Social Work and UMCP College of Education. Participants include Dean Richard Barth, Dr. Terry Shaw and a few research assistants. There's an active search for a full-time statistician to be employed by the School of Social Work and housed at MLDS. Other participants include Dr. Laura Stapleton, two doctoral fellows, Dr. Robert Croninger and Dr. Marvin Titus. The team started with 18 research questions – three for the SLDS grant and the other 15 established by the Governing Board. Six of these were prioritized by the P-20 Council: academic preparation, remediation, transfer, financial aid, community college success, and Maryland students' success in the workforce.

- Six workgroups looked at the prioritized questions to determine what we needed to do to answer them.
- Three SLDS questions: workforce training and retention, STEM, and online education. Last is a policy analysis of the issues surrounding the fact that online education is growing 10 percent a year.
- We need to address the SLDS questions first because they are a part of the grant.
- In answering all questions, we will also address race/ethnicity/subgroups.
- We're prioritizing questions for the fall based on what we can answer quickly, expertise of available staff.

Dr. Roberts: How will the requirements of SB740 fit into this research? Are we prioritizing that for MLDS?

Dr. Woolley: Yes, we need to include dual enrollment and other SB740 priorities into agenda.

Jared Billings: Some of that is to be determined; right now we have a couple agencies working on getting grant money to address implementation of SB740. Mr. Goldstein will be a part of ongoing conversations.

Dr. Howard: We need the research agenda to be flexible, given the possibility of new mandates. Need to make sure research is focused on transition points.

Ben Passmore: I agree with Dr. Howard. It's important to create this as a resource and not a competitor for agencies. Need sensitivity to where questions should be asked, and the best use of resources.

Secretary Howie: How can we manage expectations? If the research agenda is limited and the public has an expectation that the research agenda is open and that they can ask questions, will there be pushback?

Jared Billings: There will be inquiries from public, but they can't ask a policy question that will take 6 months to research. The Governing Board controls the research agenda, not the public.

Jason Perkins-Cohen: How do we balance the interest of the Governing Board in deciding how to answer these research questions and establish a protocol for responding to requests with practical limits on time?

Dr. Woolley: This is a flexible research agenda, open to changes over time. How to construe these broad questions is an ongoing conversation. We can prioritize what the Governing Board believes we should.

Jared Billings: There should be monthly updates on MLDS work for the board, to keep people updated on the research agenda and bridge the gap between quarterly meetings.

Ben Passmore: The interagency workgroup can also provide feedback on the research agenda.

Dr. Lowery adjourned the meeting at 10:37am.