Cradle-to-Career Data System

EDGE Coalition Briefing

March 2021

The challenge: California needs actionable information

- California has **separate, disconnected information** on various education systems, social service programs, and employment.

- It has **been challenging to identify barriers and successes** for Californians as they move from early childhood through adulthood.

- **Actionable information** needs to be in the hands of **communities and families** to help create better outcomes for all Californians.

Taking action: The Cradle-to-Career data system

- In 2019, California enacted the [Cradle-to-Career Data System Act](#), which called for the establishment of a state longitudinal data system to **link existing** education, social services, and workforce information.

- The Act articulated the scope of an **18-month planning process** to be shaped by a workgroup that consists of the partner entities named in the Act. The planning process, which is being overseen by the Governor's Office and managed by WestEd, runs from January 2020-June 2021.
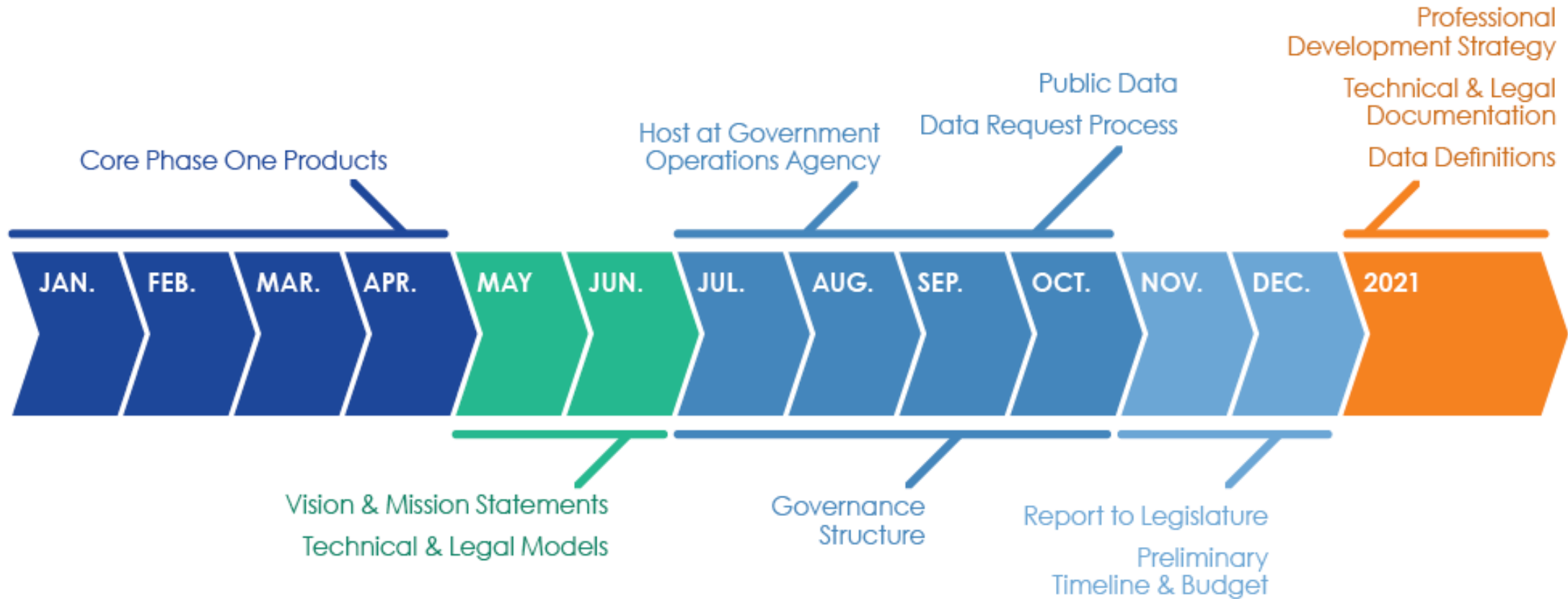
A collaborative approach to designing a solution

Partner entities include:

- **Early Learning and K-12:** California Department of Education, State Board of Education

- **Postsecondary**: the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, California Community Colleges, California State University, University of California

- **Education-Related Entities:** California Student Aid Commission, Commission on Teacher Credentialing

- **Employment and Workforce Training:** Employment Development Department, Labor and Workforce Development Agency

- **Social Services and Health:** California Department of Social Services, California Health and Human Services Agency

- **Data Experts:** California Department of Technology, California School Information Services

Members of the public are also helping to develop proposals and reviewed recommendations through two advisory groups (Policy & Analytics Advisory Group and Practice & Operations Advisory Group) and five subcommittees (Definitions, Technology & Security, Common Identifier, Research Agenda, and Community Engagement Subcommittees).

There are more than **200 people** involved in the planning process.

Planning Timeline

Core Phase One Products — JAN. FEB. MAR. APR.

Vision & Mission Statements
Technical & Legal Models — MAY JUN.

Host at Government Operations Agency — JUL.

Governance Structure — SEP.

Public Data
Data Request Process — OCT.

Report to Legislature
Preliminary Timeline & Budget — NOV. DEC.

Professional Development Strategy
Technical & Legal Documentation
Data Definitions — 2021

Timeline for implementation

- Initial legislative report was submitted at the end of December 2020

- The Governor's budget included funding for the 2021-22 fiscal year and the workgroup recommendations for the data system have been included in both the trailer bill and legislation introduced by Irwin

- Other states have taken about one year to get their data loaded into the data system and linked, after which the combined information will need to be validated and integrated into the public facing tools

- California will be poised for immediate action because so much of the technical documentation will have been developed before funding is released

Cradle-to-Career data system purpose

Vision

The Cradle-to-Career Data System connects individuals and organizations with trusted information and resources. It provides insights into critical milestones in the pipeline from early care to K–12 to higher education, skills training, and employment. It empowers individuals to reach their full potential and fosters evidence-based decision-making to help California build a more equitable future.

Mission

To be California's source of actionable data and research on education, economic, and health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities; to expand access to tools and services to navigate the education to employment pipeline.

Cradle-to-Career data system tools

Analytical Tools

» Dashboards
» Query builder
» Fact sheets
» Research library
» Access to restricted data for authorized purposes

Operational Tools

» College and career planning tools and curriculum
» College eligibility monitoring tools
» Electronic transcripts, including nontraditional learning artifacts
» Option to share social service history in college applications
» Support for data cleanup at local education agencies

Support Tools

» Community outreach to alert intended audiences to tools
» Professional development and technical assistance to support data use
» Data quality reviews
» Public feedback loops

Examples of Tools for Students

- **Foster Youth:** Students can authorize the Department of Social Services to alert the colleges they apply to about their status as foster youth, so the college can work with them from day one about financial aid and other supports that are available to them.

- **College Students:** Students send an electronic transcript when they apply to college and include examples of badges or competency-based certifications.

Why This Matters for Employers

- The impact of the pandemic and the disruptions to education will ripple throughout our economy, so understanding what happens as students move from one system to the next will help communities **strengthen our recovery**

- Even before the pandemic, California wasn't producing enough **college graduates**, so educators need more comprehensive information to help students plan for, apply to, and pay for college

- The **pathways** from education to employment isn't always a straight line, and we need to be able to better understand how education, social service, employment, and retraining intertwine, and how this varies by student population type

Examples of Tools for Families and Educators

- **College and career planning:** Families will be able to access to information about education and career options. Parents can see whether their children are on track to meet a-g requirements and work with their schools to make course corrections.

- **Financial aid:** High school counselors can view whether students are completing their financial aid applications and provide more support to ensure that students can afford higher education.

- **Better data:** High schools can get help to ensure their courses are correctly flagged for a-g status, so there aren't problems with students' college applications.

Examples of Dashboard Content

All of these topics will be displayed as **infographics** that allow users to see **trends over time** and the outcomes for different **groups of students**, such as by race, gender, socioeconomic status, and many characteristics from disability to veteran status.

Results can be viewed at the local institution, regional, and statewide levels.

- Which colleges do K-12 students apply to, get accepted to, enroll, and persist in?

- How many students are eligible for financial aid but do not apply? How many students apply for financial aid but do not receive it?

- When students in community colleges transfer to a four-year institution, do they successfully earn a bachelor's degree?

- How much do students earn after they graduate from college and what type of industries employ them?

Examples of Query Builder Content

Users can **select variables** of their choice to generate **tables** and **charts** on student outcomes, with the ability to get more specific information about student experiences, such as:

How do community college transfer outcomes vary for students differ based on:

- Educational goal

- Transfer preparation level

- Award type and program

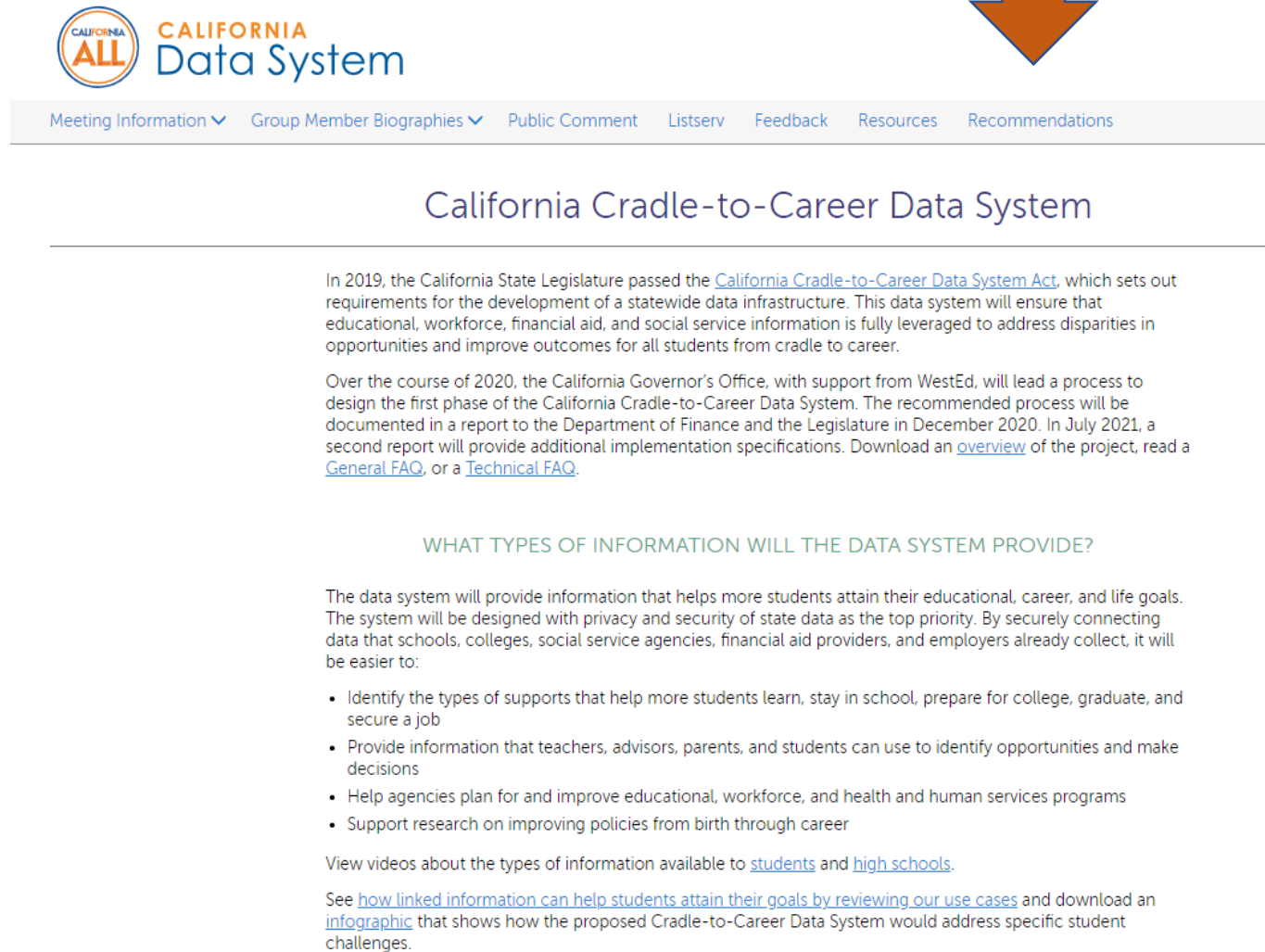- History of enrollment in multiple colleges
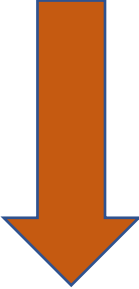
- Declared major

Focused on privacy and neutrality

- Data will be hosted by an **independent third party**—the Government Operations Agency—with oversight from a governing board that is accountable to taxpayers. It will not conduct its own research or issue policy statements.

- For college eligibility, transcript, and social service history data, individuals and their families, or authorized school personnel, will access tools through a **password-protected interface**.

- When looking at education and career outcomes, the public will only see **trends and summaries for anonymized groups of students**, with individual **information kept private.**

- For research projects, individual identities will be hidden, and studies must be approved through a **data request process**.

Read the specifics

Background information and recommendations are available at:

cadatasystem.wested.org

California Cradle-to-Career Data System

In 2019, the California State Legislature passed the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act, which sets out requirements for the development of a statewide data infrastructure. This data system will ensure that educational, workforce, financial aid, and social service information is fully leveraged to address disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students from cradle to career.

Over the course of 2020, the California Governor's Office, with support from WestEd, will lead a process to design the first phase of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System. The recommended process will be documented in a report to the Department of Finance and the Legislature in December 2020. In July 2021, a second report will provide additional implementation specifications. Download an overview of the project, read a General FAQ, or a Technical FAQ.

WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION WILL THE DATA SYSTEM PROVIDE?

The data system will provide information that helps more students attain their educational, career, and life goals. The system will be designed with privacy and security of state data as the top priority. By securely connecting data that schools, colleges, social service agencies, financial aid providers, and employers already collect, it will be easier to:

- Identify the types of supports that help more students learn, stay in school, prepare for college, graduate, and secure a job
- Provide information that teachers, advisors, parents, and students can use to identify opportunities and make decisions
- Help agencies plan for and improve educational, workforce, and health and human services programs
- Support research on improving policies from birth through career

View videos about the types of information available to students and high schools.

See how linked information can help students attain their goals by reviewing our use cases and download an infographic that shows how the proposed Cradle-to-Career Data System would address specific student challenges.

Resources

- Website: https://cadatasystem.wested.org/

- Join our listserv: https://cadatasystem.wested.org/listserv

- All meetings are open to the public, have time allotted for public comment, and are held via Zoom

- Questions? Email Kathy Booth kbooth@wested.org