



Higher Education Fiscal 2017 Budget Overview

**Response by the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center
for
The Senate Budget and Taxation Subcommittee on Education, Business and Administration
January 28, 2016
&
The House Appropriations Committee
February 2, 2016**

The Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center appreciates the opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the budget analysis. First, as an overview, the Center is pleased to note some of its progress and accomplishments over the past year, including the following.

1. Completed loading all data from partner agencies (2007-2008 through 2013-2014), which includes over 6.5 million student and worker records.
2. Through careful design, data management, and detailed efforts in identity resolution, the Center has successfully matched students across sectors and over time. Specifically, close to 90% of all 12th graders in a given year can be linked to a higher education and/or workforce record.
3. The Center applied for and received a highly competitive federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$2.6 million. The grant project, which will be led by the Research Branch, will develop synthetic data for the purpose of expanding access to the data for research while ensuring absolute privacy and protection of personally identifiable information. The project will also position the MLDS Center as a major innovator in the use of longitudinal data.
4. The Center developed data quality standards to provide a consistent process for assessing the accuracy of information reported to the public. These standards were reviewed by a consultant for the Regional Education Laboratory (REL Mid-Atlantic) who noted that Maryland is ahead of the curve on addressing data reporting standards in writing.
5. Completed several research and reporting products including new data dashboards, data snapshots, a research report, and the 2015 Dual Enrollment Report.
6. Expanded the reach and impact of the Center by creating a temporary research staff appointment process to allow outside entities with an important Maryland research question access to the data. The first group to be given an appointment is Baltimore's Promise, a city-wide collaborative that seeks to use data to improve outcomes for city youth.

The following is a response to the questions and requests for comments raised in the Budget Overview.

Page 29 - The Executive Director of the MLDS Center should comment on identifying the most urgent questions for MLDS to analyze; what can be expected from the Baltimore's Promise collaboration; and when the MLDS website may have more content available for policymakers and the general public.

- 1) The Center's work is guided by the Research Agenda (attached) which is periodically reviewed and approved by the Governing Board. The Center also plans to work closely with the P20 Council to ensure it is addressing questions that are of immediate concern to State policy makers. Currently the Center is working on the following analyses in response to questions posed in the Research Agenda:
 - a) Analysis of post-graduate job acceptance and retention among college students graduating with STEM degrees;
 - b) Analysis of remedial course taking - specifically looking for high school predictors; and
 - c) Analysis of workforce outcomes for students who enroll in community college and do not go on to obtain a four year degree.

- 2) Baltimore’s Promise
 - a) The Governing Board adopted a limited temporary staff appointment process. The process is designed to balance the need to provide access to data for important State interests while ensuring the system is closely contained and managed to ensure the highest standards of privacy and security. Baltimore’s Promise is the first entity to receive a temporary staff appointment.
 - b) Baltimore’s Promise seeks to generate a fuller profile of postsecondary outcomes.
 - c) Specifically, they will use Center data to address the following research questions:
 - i) How many students move directly into the workforce after high school graduation?
 - ii) How many students work at the same time they pursue postsecondary education?
 - iii) How many students who complete a CTE certification in high school are in the workforce?
 - d) Since these are the same questions the Center will be addressing statewide, this partnership not only helps Baltimore’s Promise but also adds to the Center’s research capacity (at no additional cost to the Center).
- 3) Additional Content for the Public and Policymakers
 - a) The Center has built a solid foundation on which to build its reporting and future analyses and fully expects to have several new dashboards available in the coming months (on the topics listed above 1a – c).
 - b) The Budget Overview compared the Center’s output to Washington and Virginia. Those states have been fully functional for 3 to 4 years compared to the Center’s one year. The Center expects to have as much content as those other states over the next year or two.

Page 29 - Further, given the slower than envisioned production of analysis and reports from MLDS, and the absence of guidance from the P-20 Council in coordinating research interests with MLDS, the Executive Director of the MLDS Center, Chair of the P-20 Council, Secretary, State Superintendent of Schools, Chancellor, and representatives of the community colleges and independent institutions should comment on how MLDS and the P-20 Council can be held accountable over the next year for P-20 coordination and producing timely, incisive data analytics (snapshots, dashboards, reports, etc.) for policymakers and the public. Benchmarks and output metrics should be suggested so that the General Assembly can determine the value derived from the operating funds directly and indirectly tied to MLDS and the P-20 Council.

The MLDS Center, working the Department of Budget and Management, has established benchmarks and output metrics in its *Managing For Results* budget submission. The metrics include:

- 1) The number of dashboards posted;
- 2) The number of page views on the MLDS website;
- 3) The number of training seminars on the use and analysis of the data;
- 4) The number of times reports are cited; and
- 5) The number of reports that are published in scholarly journals.

Page 40 - The MLDS Director should comment on whether the amount of college credit savings students build up can be tracked through either dual enrollment or other methods, such as high school advanced placement credit, so that this may be compared to other forms of financial assistance. The Secretary and State Superintendent should comment on efforts to address the challenges discussed above as well as efforts to increase dual enrollment and make students aware of dual enrollment opportunities.

Understanding the long term impact of programs, like dual enrollment or advanced placement courses, is exactly the type of analysis the MLDS is designed to conduct. For example, the Center will be able to analyze whether a high school program, such as dual enrollment, has an impact on a student’s time to degree and could then estimate the potential college credit savings.



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RESEARCH AGENDA

The Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) provides the ability to examine student preparation, progress and outcomes over time, across PreK-12, postsecondary education and training, and the workforce. Establishing the Research Agenda is the duty of the MLDS Governing Board (see Ed. Art. § 24-704(g)(5), Annotated Code of Maryland). This revised Research Agenda reflects the Governing Board's commitment to longitudinal analyses of critical education and workforce transitions and outcomes. Accordingly, the research agenda of the MLDS Center will focus on what happens to students before and after critical transitions and not on topics that could otherwise be researched by one partner agency using its own data.

To that end, all research analyses, and therefore research reports intended to inform policy and programming, will utilize data from at minimum two of the three partner agencies providing data to the MLDS Center:

- 1) Maryland State Department of Education;
- 2) Maryland Higher Education Commission; and
- 3) Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

For example, all analyses of the postsecondary readiness, access, persistence and completion will be examined, when available, in the context of the academic experiences, achievement, and life circumstances of Maryland students in the PreK-12 education system and/or prior workforce experiences. Similarly, all analyses of the workforce transition or outcomes will be conducted in the context of the academic experiences, achievement, and life circumstances of Marylanders, which may include PreK-12 data, postsecondary education or training data, or both, as well as prior workforce experiences.

The Center research analyses may also include data from sources other than these three agencies as the Center grows and the sources of data expand.

Finally, all research analyses of each of the following research questions will include examinations of how results vary by different critical student subgroups and backgrounds (which is MLDS – Question 15). Such subgroups and backgrounds, for example, include: 1) race or ethnicity, 2) gender, 3) socioeconomic status, 4) language, 5) ability, and 6) setting.

A. Postsecondary Readiness and Access

1. Are Maryland students academically prepared to enter postsecondary institutions and complete their programs in a timely manner? (MLDS – Q1 – P20W priority)
2. What percentage of Maryland high school exiters go on to enroll in Maryland postsecondary education? (MLDS– Q2)
3. What percentage of Maryland high school exiters entering college are assessed to need to take developmental courses and in what content areas? (MLDS – Q3 – P20W priority)
4. Which financial aid programs are most effective in improving access and success (i.e., retention and graduation) for Maryland students?(MLDS – Q9 – P20W priority)
5. Assess the need for inclusion of online education data. (SLDS Grant Q5.2)

B. Postsecondary Completion

6. How likely are students placed in developmental courses to persist in postsecondary education and transfer and/or graduate? (MLDS – Q4)
7. Are community college students able to transfer within the state to 4-year institutions successfully and without loss of credit? (MLDS – Q5 – P20W priority)
8. What are the differences in performance, retention, and graduation, including time to degree, of students who initially matriculate at a Maryland community college and transfer to a Maryland 4-year institution versus those who initially matriculate at a Maryland 4-year? (MLDS Q7)
9. What are the differences in performance, retention and graduation, including time to degree, of students beginning in dual enrollment programs, at 2-year institutions and at 4-year institutions? (MLDS Q8)
10. What are the characteristics of 2-year institutions that are allowing students to persist most effectively and either graduate or transfer? (MLDS Q10)
11. Which 4-year institutions are graduating students most effectively and in the timeliest fashion? (MLDS Q11)

C. Workforce Outcomes

12. What happens to students who start at community colleges and do not go on to 4-year institutions? (MLDS Q6)
13. What are the educational and labor market outcomes for individuals who use federal and state resources to obtain training at community colleges or other postsecondary institutions? (MLDS Q12)
14. What economic value do noncredit community college credentials have in the workplace? (MLDS Q13)
15. Are exiters of Maryland colleges successful in the workforce? (MLDS Q9 – P20W priority)
16. Assess STEM post-graduate student state and regional job acceptance and retention. (SLDS Grant Q5.1)
17. Assess training and retention of early childhood workforce in Maryland. (SLDS Grant Q5.3)
18. What are the workforce outcomes for Maryland students who earn a high school diploma (via high school graduation or GED[®]) but do not transition to postsecondary education or training? (new)
19. What are the workforce outcomes for Maryland high school students who complete Career Technical Education coursework, who either enter the workforce directly or also obtain postsecondary education or training? (new)
20. What are the workforce outcomes of Maryland high school non-completers? (new)