Cradle-to-Career Data Governing Board Staff Report

Date Report Issued: April 25, 2025

Attention: Members of Cradle-to-Career Data Governing Board

Subject: **Cradle-to-Career Data's Future Operations (Agenda Item Five)**

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At this meeting, the Governing Board (Board) will engage in the first in a series of conversations related to the future state and long-term direction of the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data (Office).

Education Code charges the Board with making recommendations on a number of specific topics by 2026. The Board Chair would like the entire Board to consider both the topics defined in statute and a number of broader strategic questions in a series of conversations at the May, August, and November 2025 meetings of the Board.

Requested Action:

This is an information item for the May 2025 meeting. The Board will expect to take action on these topics at its August and November 2025 meetings.

Background:

In 2021, [legislation](#) created the Office as a new government entity under the Government Operations Agency (GovOps). Additionally, it established a 21-member Governing Board and two Advisory Boards, and set forth specific implementation goals for the development of the statewide data system. This outcome was the result of an intensive 18-month comprehensive planning process.

Statute specifies a role for the Board to make specific recommendations related to the future state of Cradle-to-Career (C2C):

- ❖ Pursuant to [Education Code Section 10862 (c)](#) "the managing entity shall operate until July 1, 2026, or a later date, as approved by the governing board, contingent on a review of the appropriateness and efficacy of the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) continuing to house the managing entity after July 1, 2026. A recommendation to move the managing entity under the administration of another state department or agency shall be submitted by the governing board to the Legislature and the Governor through the governing board's annual budget submission."

- ❖ [Education Code Section 10866 (d)](#) charges the Board with providing "oversight of the data system and operational direction to the managing entity to ensure the data system is serving its intended purpose," including strategic planning activities.

- ❖ [Education Code Section 10867 (5)(E)](#) states that the Office is responsible for "within five years of the operative date of the act that adds this section, assessing the feasibility of subsuming the operational tools that are currently administered by other agencies, and reporting findings to the governing board, the Legislature, and the Governor. The report to the Legislature shall be submitted in compliance with [Section 9795 of the Government Code](#)."

Plan for Consideration and Deliberation by the Board:
The Board Chair considered proposing a committee to develop the recommendations required in statute. Because the nature of the recommendations are about C2C's continuity and overall strategy, the Chair would instead like to have a series of in-depth discussions at the May, August, and November 2025 Board meetings with the full Board.

The intent is for the Board to take action on the different components at its August and November Board meetings, which will be summarized via a report to the Governor and the Legislature after the November Board meeting. This timeline leaves open the possibility that the Board's recommendation report may recommend legislative changes or resource requests.

Proposed timeline:

Topic	May 2025 Meeting	August 2025 Meeting	November 2025 Meeting
#1 The Office continuing to operate	Discussion	Action	
#2 The Office continuing under GovOps	Discussion	Action	
#3 Operational tools		Discussion	Action
#4 Governance		Discussion	Action
#5 Governing Board composition and structures		Discussion	Action

Discussion Topics for the May 9, 2025 Meeting:

Strategic Plan and Overall Purpose: In 2023, the Board adopted a [three-year strategic plan](). That plan was first developed via a Committee of the Board and then adopted by the Board at its [August 9, 2023 meeting]().

Statute calls the Office "a **neutral** administrative body" (Ed Code Sec. 10862(b)) charged with "connecting individuals and organizations to **trusted** information and resources" (Ed. Code Sec. 10860(a)).

As the Board considers high-level strategic recommendations for C2C's future, the Board can consider a number of questions:
  ❖ How can the Board's recommendations be informed by the work the Board did in creating the strategic plan?

- ❖ What aspects of the strategic plan do you feel are the most important?
- ❖ What future operational structures would be most conducive to effectively executing on the priorities in the strategic plan?
- ❖ What structures ensure C2C's role as a neutral source of trusted information?

C2C's Continued Operations: Statute contemplates the possibility of both continued operations of C2C or a sunset date. The Board will discuss the continued operations of the Office and the momentum from the 2021 legislation to the current date.
- ❖ Should the Office continue to operate?
- ❖ Would there be any need for a future sunset date?

C2C's Operations Within the State:
Per Education Code 10862 (a), "The Office of Cradle-to-Career Data is hereby created within the Government Operations Agency." Pursuant to [Education Code Section 10862 (c)](#) "the managing entity shall operate until July 1, 2026, or a later date, as approved by the governing board, contingent on a review of the appropriateness and efficacy of the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) continuing to house the managing entity after July 1, 2026."

Context for the Board to consider:
State processes and systems: GovOps hosts many departments who facilitate government-wide work and serve as control agencies across state departments. These include the California Department of Human Resources, the Office of Data and Innovation, the Department of General Services (DGS), and the California Department of Technology.

Like any state entity, whether it is housed under an agency or not, C2C is subject to state processes on IT projects, procurements, HR and recruitment, and a host of additional policies and procedures. For example, all of C2C's space requests and non-IT procurements flow through DGS. The Department of Technology provides oversight and technical support on C2C's major IT contracts. Being

housed under GovOps means that the C2C Executive Director meets regularly with all of the other department directors under GovOps. That structure has facilitated significant collaboration that has supported C2C to stand up an office, sign legal agreements, build the data system, ingest data, and release a public facing dashboard in three years.

Operational size and risk: Independent entities who are not under or part of an agency need a larger staff and carry risks alone. For example, with only 26 positions, many positions at C2C have significant person-dependency risk, including those related to data infrastructure, data security, data privacy, and legal counsel. However, if C2C is under an agency, that agency can backfill key roles during unexpected vacancies, either directly or by borrowing bandwidth from other departments under that agency. A completely independent entity is on its own, and therefore requires a larger staff and more budget resources.

Although being a completely independent entity (for example, an independent commission) would require a significantly larger staff and resources, during the planning process some discussions considered the possibility that an independent structure would further strengthen independence by being independent of administrations over time.

Being a neutral source of trusted information: C2C's neutrality—in substance and in perception—is strengthened when it is not housed under any entity whose policies or implementation could be evaluated by C2C data.

❖ What are the strategic benefits or limitations of maintaining the Office within GovOps? How does that relate to C2C's mission and vision?

Requested Preparation for Board Members for May 9, 2025:
❖ Review the three-year strategic plan, focusing on the problem statements in the strategic plan.

- ❖ Review the sections of Education Code referenced in this staff report to understand the minimum scope of the Recommendation Report the Board needs to submit to the Legislature.
- ❖ Prepare your comments for an in-depth conversation about the topics of this staff report. Please prepare to share your thoughts during the meeting on the bulleted questions above in this staff report.

Discussion topics for the August and November meetings:

At the August and November meetings, the Board will discuss the following topics:

- ❖ **Operational Tools:** Statute states that the Office is responsible for assessing the feasibility of subsuming operational tools by 2026. How are these tools administered by other agencies currently operated? What implications could subsuming tools operated by other organizations mean in terms of operations, budget resources, and the effectiveness of service delivery?
- ❖ **Governance:** How has the governance of the C2C Office worked in practice? How has the Governing Board's work been informed by public engagement, the Advisory Boards, and task forces? What types of governance and engagement activities have been most valuable and operationally feasible?
- ❖ **Governing Board Composition and Structures:** What has the Board learned from its governance surveys and its experience over the past three years? What potential changes on the horizon should the Board consider in terms of new data partners or turnover among Board members? What structures would best support the long-term success of C2C?