Cradle-to-Career Data Selection for Advisory Boards Committee Staff Report

Date Report Issued: June 6, 2025

Date Report Modified: June 24, 2025

Attention: Members of the Selection for Advisory Boards Committee

Subject: **Summary of the Data and Tools Advisory Board Recruitment and Selection Process (Agenda Item 3)**

Staff Contact: Marykate Cruz Jones, Chief of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships

At this meeting, the Selection for Advisory Boards Committee (Committee) will have the opportunity to discuss and slate candidates and runners up for the six upcoming Data and Tools Advisory Board vacancies which will be recommended to the Governing Board at the August 15 Governing Board meeting.

Requested Action:

After review and consideration of the applications, rubric, and upcoming vacancies, Staff recommends that the Committee slate six new members for appointment to the Data and Tools Advisory Board and six runners up.

- ❖ Move to recommend to the Governing Board to approve six applicants for appointment to the Data and Tools Advisory Board and six runners up.

Background:

Below is a comprehensive overview of the Data and Tools Advisory Board's responsibilities and an analysis of current vacancies. This information provides insights into the duties of the Data and Tools Advisory Board members and highlights the areas where new Data and Tools Advisory Board members are needed to provide diverse perspectives.

Scope of the Data and Tools Advisory Board:

Education Code Section 10865 specifies the Data and Tools Advisory Board holds responsibility for examining whether the data system is providing actionable information and identifying ways to improve access to that information. The Data and Tools Advisory Board consists of 16 public members appointed by the Governing Board.

Vacancy Analysis:

At the outset of Cradle-to-Career Data's (C2C) development, all Advisory Board seats were appointed in staggered term lengths; however, after the initial year, all appointed positions serve three-year terms. The following members of the Data and Tools Advisory Board will cycle off the Data and Tools Advisory Board in August: Jason Borgen, Tamika Connor, Regan Foust, Heather Hough, Laura Owen, and Vikash Reddy, resulting in six vacancies on the Data and Tools Advisory Board. The term for the vacancies will be from 2025 through 2028.

As the Data and Tools Advisory Board faces vacancies, it is imperative to analyze how those impending openings will affect the Data and Tools Advisory Board as the new selection process begins. In terms of the six members that will be cycling off the Data and Tools Advisory Board, three members represent a research organization and three members are practitioners. Given their departure and pending the new selection of members, the Data and Tools Advisory Board will be composed of two members that represent advocacy organizations, two members that represent community organizations, five practitioners, and one member that represents a research organization. The biographies of all current Data and Tools Advisory Board members can be found on Attachment A. More information regarding the breakdown of member term limits and representation can be found below:

	2025	2026	2027
Advocacy Organization	-	1 Vacancy	1 Vacancy
Community Organization	-	1 Vacancy	1 Vacancy
Practitioner	3 Vacancies	3 Vacancies	2 Vacancies
Researcher Organization	3 Vacancies	-	1 Vacancy
Student/Families	-	-	-

Ideal Populations:

As the Governance Manual specifies, it is important for the Data and Tools Advisory Board to bolster the public's voice and cultivate a diversity of perspectives. In addition, attention should be placed on recruiting members who have expertise in equity and prioritizing community members who can be conduits of information to and from the data system's intended audiences.

Based on this information, at the April 28 Committee meeting, the Committee deliberated and approved the ideal populations for appointment for the upcoming Data and Tools Advisory Board vacancies. This includes representatives with experience in apprenticeship and career pathways programs, representatives with a regional area of focus in Northern California and the Central Valley, and undergraduate students. The Committee will take into consideration the approved ideal populations for appointment during the slating process, however, final slating decisions will be made at the June 27 Committee meeting.

Instructions for Committee Members:

The Office of Cradle-to-Career Data (Office) received 38[1] applications[2] for six vacant positions. To support Committee members in their review of the candidates, the Office prepared the following documentation:

❖ **A scoring rubric** which defines the criteria used for scoring the applications. Committee members approved the rubric at the April 28, 2025 Committee meeting.

❖ **A PDF application packet** with the submitted applications.

❖ **A summary spreadsheet** of the applicants assigned to each member for review.

❖ **A Google Form** for members to submit the results of scoring the applicants based on the rubric.

Once all the rubric scores are in from members, the Office will collate the results and share the top candidates as a decision support tool at the June 28 meeting.

Selection of Seats by Category:

To facilitate the Committee's decision making, the Office organized the applications by category relative to the sector or population represented. Based on the applications received and the Governance Manual's guidance to aim for diverse perspectives and backgrounds, it is the task of the Committee to

---

[1] The Office received four additional applications that were not reviewed by the Committee. The Governance Manual outlines, a person who works for an organization or person represented on the Governing Board may not be selected to serve on an Advisory Board. An organization is defined as a state agency or representative of a segment, as opposed to providers that report to an agency. In addition, pursuant to Government Code Section 1062, Advisory Board members must be California residents.

[2] On June 23, 2025, the Office received a request from an applicant to withdraw their application for consideration for appointment.

review the applications, seeking unique individuals and keeping in mind the vacancies identified in this staff report.

To facilitate the Committee's deliberation and ideation, the Office has compiled key questions for members to consider:

- ❖ How do these applicants fill a gap in expertise, experiences, or perspectives on the Data and Tools Advisory Board?
- ❖ How do these applicants contribute to the diversity of the Data and Tools Advisory Board?
- ❖ How do these applicants align with and support C2C's future priorities as outlined in the strategic plan, 12-month workplan, and 5-year timeline?

Members Terming Out in 2025:

Jason Borgen (Practitioner)

Jason is leading Technology, Innovation, Data Systems, and Computer Science Education at the Santa Cruz County Office of Education as the Chief Technology & Innovations Officer. Jason has worked in the K-12 environment for over 20 years--First as a teacher focused on creating an environment beyond brick and mortar learning. Jason spent many years following by supporting school administrators across California with effective ways to leverage technology to lead 21st century schools as part of the statewide Technology Information Center for Administrative Leadership (TICAL) project as well training teachers in transformative practices in their classroom. Jason spent 3-years in leading curriculum and technology programs in a small school district in the Silicon Valley. He is former president of the Board of CUE, INC. Board of Directors – a non-profit focused on inspiring innovation in education and currently is chair of the Data sub-committee of Santa Cruz County DataShare – a multiagency collaborative focused on data literacy and supporting data elements aligned to equity initiatives.

Tamika Connor, PhD (Practitioner)

Tamika is a doctoral candidate with expertise focused on online education. She serves as the Senior Vice President/Accreditation Liaison Officer at Calbright College and a Core Project Team Member of the California Community College's State Chancellor's Office Strategic Enrollment Management Community of Practice, where she uses evidence-based, data-informed, innovative strategies to implement new practices and policies to increase equitable student outcomes. She previously served as Assistant Vice

Chancellor of Enrollment Management (Interim), Department Chair, and Tenured Faculty at the Peralta Community College District/Laney College and was the Adult Education Director for the Chabot/Las Positas Community College District - Mid Alameda County Adult Education Consortium. Tamikas has a strong background in building sustainable partnerships with higher education institutions, community-based organizations, the workforce industry, and local government agencies. Her post-secondary education work includes private and public colleges (e.g., Stanford University, Santa Clara University, and California Community Colleges). She has a broad range of academic experience, including non-credit and dual enrollment programs, credit for prior learning, competency-based education, student onboarding, skills-based hiring, and equity-aligned initiatives such as AB928, AB19, the student-centered funding formula, Student Equity and Achievement Plan, and Guided Pathways.

Regan Foust, PhD (Research Organization)

Regan Foust, PhD is the Executive Director and Senior Research Scientist at the Children's Data Network at the University of Southern California. As ED of the single largest set of linked administrative records concerning children and youth in the United States, she actively promotes a person-level and longitudinal understanding of children and families in California to inform children's programs and policies. She stewards robust data and funding partnerships, pursues and communicates answers to pressing policy questions, aligns data integration initiatives across the state, and, acting as an extension of and thought partner to state and local government, builds the capacity of public agencies to make better use of their own data. Her work is inherently transdisciplinary, spanning the child welfare, education, maternal and child health, mental health, epidemiology, government operational, human service, and public policy domains, placing her at the innovative intersection of academia, government, philanthropy, and public policy. She holds multiple board appointments, notably a three-year term on the inaugural California Cradle-to-Career Data and Tools Advisory

Board. Dr. Foust holds a doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Virginia and a B.A. in Psychology from U.C. Davis.

Heather Hough, PhD (Research Organization)

Heather Hough is a senior policy and research fellow and the former executive director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Her research and analytic approach explores how a wide range of data on student outcomes—including academic, health and well-being, and experiential—can inform our collective understanding of student success, teacher and system performance, and the efficacy of programs and policies. She is committed to strengthening the impact of research on local- and state-level policymaking and implementation, with a particular focus on policy coherence, system alignment, and continuous improvement. Hough has worked in a variety of capacities to support policy and practice in education, including as the founding director of the research partnership between PACE and the CORE Districts; as an improvement advisor at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; and as a researcher at the Public Policy Institute of California, the Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University, and the Center for Education Policy at SRI International. She has served on many statewide committees and work groups, and is currently a member of the advisory board for the Cradle-to-Career Data System. Hough received her BA in public policy and her PhD in education policy from Stanford University.

Laura Owen (Practitioner)

Dr. Laura Owen is a dedicated leader in education, serving as the Executive Director for the San Diego State University Center for Equity and Postsecondary Attainment. With a background as an urban school counselor, district counseling supervisor, and district crisis team lead, Dr. Owen is passionate about closing postsecondary opportunity gaps and advocating for historically marginalized communities. Her research covers interventions targeting FAFSA completion, high school to college transitions, virtual advising, and the impact of technology in college counseling. Dr. Owen has received numerous accolades, including teaching awards from Johns Hopkins University and San Diego State University, and was honored as the 2023 California School Counselor Educator of the Year.

Vikash Reddy, PhD (Research Organization)

Vikash Reddy, Ph.D. is a higher education researcher based in Los Angeles, California, with over 15 years of experience researching racial equity in higher education policy. Dr. Reddy has previously served as the Vice President of Research at the Campaign for College Opportunity, a policy analyst at the California Policy Lab at UC Berkley, and a senior research associate at the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University. His work has been influential in the passage of legislation in California and the adoption of reforms at college and universities in the state. Dr. Reddy earned his Ph.D. in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University. He holds a Masters Degree in Elementary Teaching from Pace University and a BA in Government from Dartmouth College.

Members Terming Out in 2026:

Lisa Catanzarite, PhD (Advocacy Organization)

Lisa Catanzarite, Ph.D. (she/her/hers), is Vice President of Research and Evaluation at UNITE-LA, where she oversees research and evaluation activities in education, workforce development, and economic mobility, with a focus on anti-racism and equity. Examples of recent research projects include: Empowering L.A. Parenting Students for College Success; Fostering Statewide Prosperity Through California's Opportunity Youth; Employment of Systems-Involved Angelenos; Talent Needs of L.A. Area Tech Employers; Business Organizations as Education & Workforce Advocacy Champions; a supply and demand analysis of allied healthcare pathways for opportunity youth; and the *Charting Progress* toward L.A. Compact Goals data dashboard—which tracks key cradle-to-career metrics for the L.A. region and California. Prior to joining UNITE-LA, Dr. Catanzarite spent almost two decades in academia at Washington State University, UCLA, and UC San Diego as a tenured professor and senior research sociologist. Her peer-reviewed publications center on labor markets, education, gender, race/ethnicity, immigration, and poverty. Dr. Catanzarite completed a bachelor's degree in history, master's degrees in education and sociology, and a Ph.D. in sociology (all at Stanford University), as well as a post-doctoral fellowship in Sociology (UCLA). Recent professional service includes the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Advisory Group for the Evaluation of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Compensation Data; UNIDOS-US' Advisory Group for the Latina Wealth Project; and the California Department of Education's State Team for Social and Emotional Learning; and USC Sol Price Center's Steering Committee for Neighborhood Data for Social Change.

Diana Harlick (Practitioner)

Diana Harlick leads preschool to third grade instructional improvement supports, data strategy and evaluation for The Big Lift (www.thebiglift.org) – an eight-district collective impact initiative to increase the percentage of children reading proficiently at third grade. Throughout the course of her career, Diana has led or co-led several multi-partner, multi-sector countywide early childhood initiatives and evaluation studies, combining partnership development, program development and data development seamlessly to scale high impact interventions for vulnerable and at-risk young children. She has built an integrated, longitudinal, multi-district preschool to third grade (P-3) data strategy that provides actionable data tools for a range of local stakeholders, and that fills the preschool to third grade data void that exists in most other places. She is a recognized thought leader at the intersection of early childhood programming, data and assessment, contributing to many statewide reports and conferences. Diana holds a Master's degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology & French.

Helen Norris (Practitioner)

Helen Norris serves as Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Chapman University, where she is responsible for leading the university's information technology strategy and services, as well as overseeing the University Library. Ms. Norris joined Chapman in 2014 after holding technology leadership roles at California State University, Sacramento, and the University of California, Berkeley. Besides serving on the Data and Tools Advisory Board, Ms. Norris is a member of the board of directors for the Society for Information Management and STEM Advantage. She previously served as a board member and board chair of EDUCAUSE and as a trustee and board

chair for the National Endowment for Financial Education. Originally from Ireland, Ms. Norris earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, and a Master's degree in Computer Resource Management and Business Administration from Webster University, St. Louis. She has received multiple awards, including a SoCal CIO Orbie Award in 2023 (https://socalcio.org/awards/2023).

Diana Phuong (Community Organization)

Diana Phuong is the Executive Director of Braven in the Bay Area, which she joined at San Josè State as Site Director in January 2020 and in her first year, adapted the core Accelerator Course to an entirely virtual context to much success. Prior to Braven, Diana engaged counties, districts, and schools in integrated STEAM education by leveraging hands-on learning as a Partnership Director for a local nonprofit, RAFT. She launched a RAFT STEAM Summer Program through joint funding as a 4.0 Schools Tiny Fellow. Prior to that, Diana spent a decade in teaching and high school administration. Her teaching began as a Teach For America Fellow in Memphis, TN, where she taught 3rd-5th grade English as a Second Language. Diana earned her Bachelor's in English from the University of California-Irvine and a Master's in Education from Christian Brothers University.

Jacob (Oliver) Schak (Practitioner)

Oliver Schak is a Senior Research and Evaluation Specialist for Santa Clara County's Behavioral Health Services Department, where he creates data tools and analyses that benchmark the performance of mental health and substance use treatment programs. Additionally, Oliver is a nationally recognized expert on higher education affordability and finance, and he has an extensive repertoire of working with education data for decision-makers, and shepherding data tools for consumers. He previously served as Research Director at

The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) and Associate Director of Higher Education Research and Analytics at The Education Trust. One of his crowning achievements was helping to launch the College Scorecard, while he served at the U.S. Department of Education. A native of Minneapolis, Oliver graduated from Carleton College with a bachelor's degree in economics and completed his Master of Public Policy degree at the University of California — Berkeley.

Members Terming Out in 2027:
Daniel Millán (Research Organization)

Daniel earned a PhD in Sociology from the University of California, Irvine and was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles prior to joining the LA City Youth Development Department. Daniel has over twelve years of experience working on data and research projects that center youth, including undocumented students in California and, more recently, youth in the City of Los Angeles. As a researcher and data analyst, Daniel incorporates community voices and lived experiences to design and carry out projects – this includes mentoring Youth Development Department research fellows.

Myrtha Ortiz Villar (Community Organization)

Myrtha Ortiz Villar is a leader in data strategy, educational support, and advocacy, with over a decade of experience serving underrepresented communities. Currently, they are the Senior Manager of Data Strategy and Insights at Students Rising Above, where she combines deep knowledge of the education landscape with hands-on expertise in program management, data collection, and impact evaluation. Myrtha has worked at multiple institutions, from K-12 to higher education, to develop and implement

data-drive initiatives that effectively support students from first-generation and low-income backgrounds. Rooted in her upbringing in California's immigrant rights movement and with a strong commitment to social justice and equity, Myrtha leverages research, data analysis, and program development skills to advocate for systemic change in education. She holds a B.A. from UC Berkeley in Geography and a Master's in Education Leadership, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship from the Harvard School of Education.

Lauren Reed, PhD (Advocacy Organization)

My name is Lauren Reed, I am currently the Director of Impact & Evaluation at Oakland Promise. Oakland Promise is a cradle-to-career organization that promotes postsecondary completion and economic mobility for underrepresented students from Oakland, CA. I am a researcher, evaluator, and educator with 15 years of experience in community-based research with youth. I have a Joint PhD in Social Work and Developmental Psychology from the University of Michigan, and my practice and research focused on positive youth development, youth participatory action research, school-based dating abuse prevention, and technology-based abuse. I was faculty at the Arizona State University School of Social work for six years before transitioning to the nonprofit sector to lead evaluation research at Oakland Promise.

Iulia Tarasova (Practitioner)

Iulia Tarasova has served on many statewide committees and work groups. In her role as an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Analyst with the City of Roseville, she specializes in optimizing enterprise operations through the strategic implementation and management of advanced ERP systems. With a keen eye for detail and data, Ms Tarasova excels in aligning cutting-edge ERP solutions with organizational needs to drive efficiency, growth, and informed decision-making. Her commitment to excellence extends beyond ERP systems to her dedication to student success; believing that meaningful internship experiences are foundational to building future leaders of California, Iulia draws on her extensive background, including her own impactful internships, to enhance career development initiatives. Through a strategic partnership with RJUHSD, Ms Tarasova has facilitated access to invaluable career opportunities for high school students, adeptly overseeing their placement into roles that offer practical experience aligned with their academic goals. By meticulously tracking and evaluating each placement, she ensures not only the immediate success of these internships but also their long-term influence on students' professional development and leadership potential.

John B. Watson, PhD (Practitioner)

John Watson, Ph.D., is Director of the Data and Impact Center of Excellence at the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), guiding data systems and data science projects that support improving student outcomes. John's roles over the last 20 years include Data Scientist at SDCOE, Senior Director of IT and Analytics at Institute for Evidence-Based Change, a community college research organization operating the Cal-PASS program; Associate Professor of software engineering for National University; and a technical

member of the executive team for two internet startup companies. John completed a bachelor's degree at University of California San Diego in economics, a master's degree focusing on human and artificial cognition at San Diego State University, and a joint Ph.D. in education from Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University culminating in the California State Graduate Research Award for his work in detecting metacognitive awareness in elementary school students.