

Cradle-to-Career Data Governing Board Staff Report

Date Report Issued: August 7, 2026
Attention: Members of Cradle-to-Career Data Governing Board
Subject: **Update from the Executive Director (Agenda Item Four)**
Staff Contact: Mary Ann Bates, Executive Director

At this meeting, the Governing Board (Board) will review milestones accomplished by the Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data (Office) in the Fiscal Year [\(FY\) 2025-26 work plan](#), as well as other impactful initiatives that went beyond the projects listed in the work plan.

Requested Action:

There is no requested action for this item. This is an informational item only.

Section One: Background and What We Accomplished

Each year in August, “the [Board] reviews the Office annual work plan,” developed by the Office and approved by the Board to ensure the “align[ment] with the strategic direction and legislative mandates regarding data access and use, practical tools, and community engagement” ([Governance Manual](#), page 18, 26).

The office accomplished the work defined in the FY 25-26 work plan; Attachment A inventories these wins.

These efforts and impact were only possible with the engagement and care from our data partners, Governing and Advisory Board members, and a few other key structures.

- ❖ Clear Governance Structure: Being able to have clarity on who makes what decision and when enabled rapid collaboration amongst our data providers.
- ❖ Trust and transparency: Before C2C was built, the planning process valued trust and transparency and having the right people in the room.

These values remain prevalent and guide the successful partnerships formed between C2C staff and data partners.

- ❖ **Collaborations:** C2C's accomplishments would not have been possible without close collaborations across department and agency leadership teams, technical teams, and legal teams working toward the same goal.

Section One, Part A: Key Accomplishments from the Work Plan

There are many key accomplishments to highlight over FY 25-26, including:

- ❖ **Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) Workforce Data Expansion:** The LWDA workforce data expansion is the largest and most complex data expansion to date. By ingesting and linking this data, Cradle-to-Career (C2C) will have greater insights into the story of nonlinear paths beyond high school and college pathways currently visible in our data tools. Additionally, linking LWDA data will provide a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of program participants, such as high school graduates, college graduates, and those pivoting careers.
- ❖ **Scholarshare Investment Board (SIB) Integration:** The Office integrated SIB data, including CalKIDS, into the data system to help students access funds thereby reducing the financial burden of higher education. Diana Phuong, Data and Tools Advisory Board Member, submitted a [proposal](#), planting the idea for this partnership and initiative.
- ❖ **California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) Data report:** The Office provided CSAC with data reports on behalf of the public higher education segments to enable CSAC's CalGrant reporting and dashboard development ([AB 123](#)). This provided an efficient, privacy-protecting mechanism to enable cross-agency data sharing for reporting.
- ❖ **NORC Procurement:** C2C procured [NORC](#) platform for the Secure Data Enclave (SDE), which sits at the University of Chicago, is a leading industry standard, and has managed sensitive government data for 20 years. C2C made a strategic choice to procure an existing platform instead of building our own custom enclave from scratch in order to leverage the

existing infrastructure, security, functionality, and customer service support.

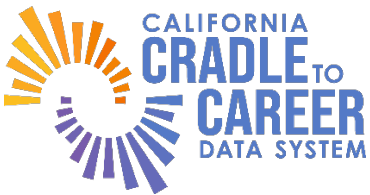
- ❖ **Pilot Studies in the Secure Enclave:** The Office identified three major things the pilot studies should accomplish, which include the implementation of computing environment and legal framework, and conducting research studies. The Office completed the initial build of the enclave, and is working with internal and external researchers to pilot the enclave with studies in the next fiscal year. The UC Policy Lab will conduct initial pilot studies in the SDE, allowing them to draw on their own expertise from operating their secure data enclave to provide feedback and technical assistance on the C2C SDE. This phased approach will ensure the research data request process is smooth and scalable.
- ❖ **Open Science and Learning Agendas:** The Board heard presentations on [Open Science Principals in Practice](#), discussed and voted to embed open science in C2C's research request process. The Board also heard about [Learning Agendas](#) and voted on creating a learning agenda to streamline research requests. Open science principals will be embedded in the research request process, so requests can be classified according to the Center for Open Science's [Transparency and Openness Promotion Guidelines](#), with the goal of making the Research Request Process accessible and transparent.
- ❖ **Student Pathways Dashboard Maintenance and Operations:** C2C updated the Student Pathways Dashboard with new enhanced capabilities driven by user experience feedback. Changes include mobile accessibility, improved responsiveness, accessibility, and faster performance. In addition, a new year of data was added from the annual data submission to follow student pathways 9 years after 2014-2015 high school graduation.
- ❖ **Downloadable Data (Query Builder Version 1.0) for Student Pathways Data Story:** Each visual in the Student Pathways Dashboard has 9,000 cuts of data. After hearing interest from the public on accessing the underlying data, the Office made it available in a few neat and tidy CSV files on the

website. External researchers have been producing their own new visualizations and insights powered by the underlying data.

- ❖ **Scalable and Nimble Infrastructure:** By implementing the Modern Data Stack Accelerator, C2C strengthened its core infrastructure to enable flexible custom queries and scalable data reporting. Included in this is Snowflake's modern infrastructure to securely transmit data to C2C; California Employment Development Department (EDD) was the first data partner to use it. Overall, C2C's scalable infrastructure enabled it to seamlessly ingest data submissions from eight data partners in 2023 and 16 in 2026.
- ❖ **Student Experience Report:** Statute charges the Office with conducting an annual audit on students' experiences transitioning from secondary to higher education ([Education Code Section 10867\(b\)\(5\)\(A\)](#)). The 2025 Student Experience Report focused on transfer students and gathered qualitative data on students intending to transfer. This information will help the design of the Transfers Dashboard.
- ❖ **eTranscript and Career Passport:** C2C will facilitate the intersegmental review and feedback for the eTranscript and Career Passport procurement. The eTranscript task force contributed to incremental gains in getting clarity about how dual enrollment courses meet A-G requirements. C2C also released a new report, "[Informing the California Career Passport](#)", providing a landscape scan of early adopters and leading practices from other states. CCC will utilize pilots where vendors demonstrate proofs of concept for both the Career Passport and new eTranscript California before final vendor selection.
- ❖ **Scaling and incubating California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI):** By partnering with CCGI, as of January 2026, 95% of California public high school students signed Partner District agreements with Local Education Agencies (LEA) to establish transcript-informed accounts.

Section One, Part B: Key Accomplishments That Were Not Originally Included in the Work Plan

- ❖ **Ingesting the Base Wage File:** In Spring 2026, C2C received new and comprehensive earnings data for all Californians to unlock major pieces of the earnings data puzzle and provide more insight into non-linear paths, outside of higher education. Linking more comprehensive earnings data creates a richer understanding of economic opportunity, mobility, and security for those who take non-linear paths after graduating high school. Additionally, the [Board voted](#) on adding employer ID to enable visibility in job paths, metrics, and identifying trends, which equips the data system with the potential to uncover more data insights of the workforce landscape to help shape policy, programs, and inform decisions.
- ❖ **CalKids Reporting:** C2C acted on a [proposal](#) from Diana Phuong, Data and Tools Advisory Board Member, to identify students and unclaimed accounts. C2C linked CalKIDS, TK-12, and CCC data and initial linkage found 40,000 community college students with over \$20 million in unclaimed scholarships. C2C cut another round of data identifying more students and unclaimed accounts to support students on their academic journeys.
- ❖ **5-year Strategic Plan and C2C Goals and Objectives:** The Board [voted](#) on [C2C's 5-year Strategic Plan](#) that will guide the work of C2C over the next 5 years. The plan includes five key goals and objectives that guided the development and structure of the (FY) 2026-27 annual work plan that will be discussed in today's Governing Board meeting.



California Cradle-to-Career Data System 2025-26 Workplan

Office Operations FY 2025-26

Problem: Prior to C2C, there was no central, neutral state entity authorized and funded to bring together C2C-relevant data across different domains. No entity was empowered to facilitate this information integration across silos to provide insights, improve coordination, and remove barriers across large institutions.

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Goal: Establish and operate a new state entity that uses secure, effective, and efficient processes and procedures to earn and keep the trust of data providers and the public.

Staffing & HR	Develop an Employee Engagement Action Plan based on survey results, with a focus on equity and shared values ✓
	Implement, monitor, and document employee engagement strategies ✓
	Administer the annual employee engagement survey and engage Office staff in focus groups ✓
	Minimize the staff vacancy rate for the Office by continuing to implement effective recruitment and retention strategies ✓
Leadership Development	Continue contracts for leadership development, team cohesion, and leadership coaching ✓
EEO & DEIA	Continue IAA for EEO position ✓
	Ongoing staff training and professional development on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility ✓
	Establish and operate a Disability Advisory Committee for the Office ✓
Procedures and policies	Refine and establish necessary office procedures, policies, and frameworks ✓
	Create and implement workflows to enhance efficiency and automation in daily operations ✓
	Implement C2C-specific privacy training ✓
Strategy	Annual work plan ✓
Resources	Budget Change Concept ✓
	Define fiscal and human resources needed to achieve C2C's statutory charge ✓
	Assess and execute on contract and procurement needs in preparation for year-end ✓

Analytical Data FY 2025-26

Problem: Data is siloed in different state-level entities, making it hard for decision-makers to answer important questions.

Goal: Build a linked analytical dataset that connects existing state-level data on education and job outcomes that will empower decision-makers to answer important questions.

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Data System Maintenance & Operations	Continue the maintenance and operational activities of the Data System to ensure the secure, efficient, and effective use of data. 
Downloadable Data (Query Builder Version 1.0) for Student Pathways Data Story	Enable the public to investigate the data sets that power our public products so that additional insights can be gained with the democratization of data. 
CSAC Data Report	Provide CSAC with institution-level data to evaluate the return on investment (ROI) of state-funded scholarships such as Cal Grant, pending requests for support from higher education segment partners. 
CalKIDS Integration	New integration of Scholarshare Investment Board (SIB) data into the Data System to help students access funds thereby reducing the financial burden higher education. 
Continuous Improvement & Development of Analytical Tools	Continue to engage key stakeholders through the established governance bodies and mechanisms to ensure operational excellence. This includes annual Feasibility Studies, Governing Board, and Advisory Boards.  
Secure Data Enclave	Enable researchers to securely conduct innovative and critical research using the Secure Data Enclave to inform policy or initiatives that improve the lives of Californians. Access to this Secure Data Enclave is gained through a structured request process emphasizing transparency and open science best practices. This also includes the facilitation of data sharing with and between our Data Providers to reduce the effort needed. 
Student Pathways Dashboard Maintenance & Operations	Enhance the functionality and usability of the dashboard while continuing to refresh the underlying data powering the dashboard with the most recent annual submission so that users can better interact with the most recent data. 
Transfer Outcomes Dashboard	Expand linkages and capabilities of the Data System to advance additional dashboard development, prioritizing first the Transfer Outcomes Dashboard to illuminate the intersegmental journey of students as they traverse through the California educational systems. 
Data Provider Integration	Integrate and operationalize new Data Partners into the Data System to provide a more complete picture of the student experience as they traverse to and through education to career. Examples of these new Data Providers include: Labor & Workforce Development Agency and ScholarShare Investment Board. 

Practical Tools* FY 2025-26

Problem: Students face confusing barriers in applying for college and financial aid, needing to navigate multiple platforms to complete applications and share information from their transcripts. These barriers can exacerbate existing disparities.

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Goal: Coordinate with partners to reduce barriers for applying to college and financial aid and expand the number of students who benefit from these tools by linking real-time information across institutions and communicating about these options to students.

C2C and Partners**	Conduct the 2025 Annual Student Experience Report 
C2C & Data Partners	Promote CaliforniaColleges.edu as a one-stop shop for launching financial aid applications, applying to public colleges and universities, and accessing planning resources for public, independent, and private colleges and universities 
eTranscript California work	
CCC	Make continued progress on the procurement of an improved eTranscript platform 
C2C & Data Partners	Facilitate ongoing feedback to ensure needs of all segments met 
Career Passport	
C2C, CCC, LWDA	Provide technical assistance and collaborate with partners to develop technical specifications for the Career Passport 
CCGI's work with C2C Data Partners	
CCGI & CDE	Work with local educational agencies and the student information system vendor community to ensure that all 9th-12th grade public school students have access to transcript-informed accounts on CaliforniaColleges.edu
CCGI & CCC	Partner with the CCCs to provide dual enrollment college transcripts to CCGI which will inform unified high school transcripts on CaliforniaColleges.edu. Ongoing exchange of data in support of application completion
CCGI & CSU	Enhance and scale Direct Admission initiatives, including counselor interventions and others supports. Ongoing exchange of data in support of application completion. Streamline the enrollment process for CSU admitted students by continuing to pilot the provision of final transcripts for admissions clearance in Summer 2025
CCGI & UC	Streamline the enrollment process for UC admitted students by piloting the provision of final transcripts for admissions clearance in Summer 2025. Ongoing exchange of data in support of application completion
CCGI & CSAC	Ongoing exchange of data in support of financial aid application completion. Collaborate on content development when updating financial aid modules

* [Education Code Section 10861](#) defines these tools as "operational tools." The Office uses the term "practical tools" on its public-facing documents and website.
** [Education Code Section 10867\(b\)\(5\)\(A\)](#) requires the Office to conduct "an annual student experience audit related to navigating the transition from secondary education to higher education." The Office will use the term "Student Experience Report" on its public-facing documents and website.

Engagement FY 2025-26

Problem: Communities lack equitable access to usable information and data to address their priorities.

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Goal: Different types of users will need different types of information when accessing the data system, and Cradle-to-Career will engage with communities to listen to and identify their information needs through our user-centered design work, community engagement activities, and trainings and outreach for the data system’s practical tools, with a Governance structure that reflects and supports these priorities.

Outreach and Engagement	Ongoing community conversations, events, and engagement activities (both in-person and online) to solicit input and feedback. ✓
	Ensure information is trusted and useful by prioritizing transparency in communications and processes; promote equitable access to engagement activities by region and key communities and prioritize actionable information (ongoing and with measurable metrics by Summer 2026) ✓
	Develop and implement trainings on Student Pathways data story through Data Academies and Data Walks ✓
Communications	Establish and implement plan for regular reporting of key metrics related to the Office’s objectives and public-facing products ✓
	Continue communications strategy through earned and acquired media in print, digital, broadcast, and radio to highlight key milestones, developments, and emerging issues related to the data system ✓
User-centered design	Iterate on data dashboard design based on input from the public ✓
	Develop strategy for user-centered design for forthcoming analytical tools ✓
Focus: Query Builder	Develop and implement Query Builder communications plan ✓
	Conduct interest holder meetings on user interface & outreach activities; develop and maintain partnerships for outreach ✓
Focus: Advancing Accessibility	Develop and implement strategy for continued accessibility compliance, including websites and public-facing materials ✓
	Engage in strategic partnerships with State agencies and entities to advance C2C’s accessibility efforts to ensure persons with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to C2C’s public tools and information
Equity	Collaborate with Language Access Liaisons to implement C2C’s Language Access Plan and efforts ✓
	Conduct annual Boards demographic survey ✓
Legislative Affairs	Develop and submit annual Report the Legislature  ✓
	Engage with Governor’s Office and the California Legislature on C2C’s Legislative priorities ✓
	Provide information, updates, and education for legislative stakeholders: personal and committee legislative staff, Legislative Analyst’s Office, elected officials, and key interest holders across C2C’s policy areas. ✓

Boards FY 2025-26

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	July-September	October-December	January-March	April-June
Board chair	Elect and onboard Chair and Vice-Chair 			
Governance Manual Updates		Confirm Committee composition and charter  	Adopt updates  	
Advisory Board Selection			Confirm Committee composition and charter  	Committee convenes 
Executive Director Review	Confirm Committee composition and charter  	Committee convenes 	Board review with ED  	
Strategic planning		Confirm Committee composition and charter 	Committee convenes 	Board Review of Strategic Plan 
Governance Culture & Ambassadorship	Onboarding for new Advisory Board members 		Governing Board development session at Board meeting 	
	Onboarding for new Board members 			
	Progress summaries discussed at Board meetings 			
			Governing Board: Annual governance survey 	
Advisory Boards	Appoint new Advisory Board members  	Onboarding for new Advisory Board members 		Recruit and select new Advisory Board members  
Advisory Board Recommendation Process				Public proposals submitted to the Office  
	Advisory Board members submit proposals, discuss and prioritize proposals in Fall meeting. 		Governing Board Liaison drafts report with Fall meeting discussions, includes all proposals, and links to the Office's light touch feasibility studies. 	Governing Board Liaison report presented to Governing Board 