

Cradle-to-Career Data and Tools Advisory Board Staff Report

Date Report Issued: September 22, 2026
Attention: Members of Data and Tools Advisory Board
Subject: **Update from the Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data System (Agenda Item Four)**
Staff Contact: Mary Ann Bates, Executive Director, Shannon Serrato, Director of Engagement, and Ryan Estrellado, Director of Data Programs

At this meeting, the Data and Tools Advisory Board (DTAB) will receive an update on the California Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C)'s five year anniversary, key accomplishments over Fiscal Year [\(FY\) 2025-26](#), where C2C is going in the next five years, and ongoing work of advancing public tools and resources.

Requested Action:

This is an informational item only. To prepare for this meeting, the Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data System (Office) asked DTAB members to:

- ❖ Review and reflect on [C2C's Priorities Policy Paper](#). During the meeting, members will receive a call to action related to this material.

Section One: C2C Five Year Anniversary

C2C was signed into law on July 27, 2021, establishing a first-in-the-nation initiative to better connect education, workforce training, and employment. In its first five years, C2C has [grown from legislation to a statewide resource](#) designed to help Californians make informed education and career decisions, though some of C2C's most important work has happened behind the scenes. As the Office marks its fifth anniversary, the following section shares how C2C is measuring its reach and impact while expanding opportunities for engagement.

Section One, Part A: Data Insights Matter

From building the foundation capable of securely ingesting data from partners to linking historical data and then developing tools from the linked information,

C2C committed to a bold vision of putting data insights into the hands of people across the state. As the data system grows and C2C's library of tools and resources expands, tracking impact and reach is increasingly important. Engagement activities and communications are guided by key metrics to assess effectiveness. As detailed in the [FY 2025-26 work plan](#), C2C worked to ensure information is trusted and useful by prioritizing transparency in communications and processes through measurable metrics such as:

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| ❖ Website usage/visits | ❖ Meaningful regional community engagements |
| ❖ Email engagement | ❖ Public speaking engagements |
| ❖ New subscriber count | ❖ Media/press mentions |
| ❖ Social media reach and engagement | ❖ Products/artifacts using C2C data |

As C2C ambassadors, Advisory Board members can help expand the reach and impact of C2C's data and tools by sharing resources within their networks and identifying opportunities to increase awareness and use of C2C data.

[Section One, Part B: Data Walks, Data Academies, and Community Data Day](#)

As the Office maximizes reach and community use of C2C's tools, the Office will build on established engagement and outreach metrics to measure impact and conduct targeted outreach across California. Building upon C2C's commitment to data literacy as outlined in the [2026-31 Strategic Plan](#), the Office will advance data literacy through targeted discussions and outreach via deliberate, intentional events and engagement, including Data Walks and Data Academies, that help Californians better understand, analyze, and utilize data to make informed decisions. C2C will collaborate with trusted partners and host events across California that will bring together state agencies, data providers, community organizations, students, practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and the public to collaborate, innovate, and learn through data. Advisory Board members are invited to attend scheduled events, including:

- ❖ [October 5, 2026 | Bay Area Data Walk | Santa Clara University, Santa Clara](#)

- ❖ February 10, 2027 | C2C Community Day | California Natural Resources Agency, Sacramento

Section Two: Highlighting Key Accomplishments

The Office accomplished the work defined in the FY 2025-26 work plan, and more; 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 such as clear governance structure, trust and transparency, and close collaborations. Below are some key highlights.

- ❖ **Workforce Data Expansion:** Linking Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) data will provide a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of workforce training program participants.
- ❖ **Scholarshare Investment Board (SIB) Integration:** The Office integrated SIB data, including CalKIDS, into the data system to help students access scholarship funds.
- ❖ **C2C's Secure Enclave:** The Office completed the initial build of the secure data enclave in the [NORC](#) platform, and is working with partners and external researchers to pilot the enclave and develop a smooth and scalable research request process. Pilot studies will provide the Office with feedback that will ensure the research data request process is smooth and scalable.
- ❖ **Query Builder Version 1.0 for Student Pathways Data Story:** The Office made the [underlying data](#) powering the Student Pathways Dashboard available in a few neat and tidy CSV files for external researchers to conduct their own analysis.

Section Three: Where We Are Going

Based on the Governing Board's previous discussions on scaling the impact and reach of the C2C Data System and its tools, the Office has drafted a [Priorities Policy Paper](#) outlining its priorities for ensuring the Office has the resources needed to achieve the goals and objectives in the Board's [2026-31 Strategic Plan](#).

Section Four: Updates on Public Tools and Resources

The following section highlights C2C's progress on upcoming public tools and resources, such as the Transfer Outcomes Dashboard, Data Dictionary, and publicly available CSV files.

Section Four, Part A: Transfer Outcomes Dashboard

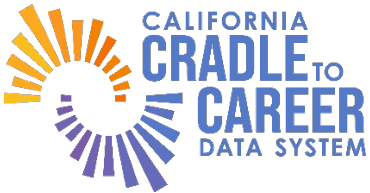
The Office is developing its next public-facing data dashboard which will focus on the educational and early workforce outcomes of transfer-intending students who begin at California community colleges. In the spirit of User-Centered Design, the Office engaged with stakeholders and real end-users to identify the key questions about transfer that this dashboard can answer. Input from students, practitioners, data providers, researchers, and policymakers will be reflected in the Transfer Outcomes Dashboard and its accompanying resources. In addition to the dashboard, the Office is preparing a transfer student-centered narrative to bring the data insights from the dashboard to life for students and families.

Section Four, Part B: Data Dictionary

The Office is redesigning the system's data dictionary to meet the needs of a variety of audiences, including researchers and data partners who are interested in the research request process. In previous Advisory Board meetings, members gave feedback on the early designs. Since then, the Office has continued collecting feedback, including a session with our data partners. This feedback will be incorporated into the release of version one. After that release, members can look forward to more iterations as the Office continues to learn about how its audience is using the product.

Section Four, Part C: Public CSV Files

The Office plans to regularly release publicly available CSV files for the public to download. These can be used for projects, research, and general exploration. These will be aggregated and will meet C2C's privacy requirements, similar to the [Student Pathways Dataset](#). The Office is currently working on a set of College and Career data files, inspired by Members Tarasova and Watson's [2025 proposal](#).



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 