

# Education to Career Research and Data Hub Research Advisory Committee

March 1, 2024, 1-2:30 p.m.

## **RAC members in attendance:**

Abbie Anderson  
Chris Cleveland  
Sarah Cohodes  
Wil Del Pilar  
Shaun Dougherty  
Anne Douglass  
Dan Goldhaber  
Yoonsook Katie Ha  
Penny Hasseli  
Jeremiah Johnson  
Kate Keller  
Alex Mayer  
Mark Melnik  
Shanette Porter

## **Agency members in attendance:**

David Bogojevich  
Jocelyn Browne  
Amy Checkoway  
Symantha Clough  
Mario Delci  
Matthew Deninger  
Danielle Kane  
Elana McDermott  
Sam Ribnick  
Melanie Rucinski  
Suzanne Smith  
Julian Smith-Sparks  
Ashley White

## Welcome

Sam Ribnick, executive director of the E2C Hub, welcomed members and expressed gratitude for their continued contributions. The E2C Hub is already implementing RAC feedback:

- The cross-agency research agenda is in development.
- A Student and Family Voice Committee has been created and has met already. Additional nominations for student representatives are welcome.

New agency representatives introduced themselves:

- Symantha Clough, E2C Hub Research and Data Analyst for Higher Education
- Melanie Rucinski, E2C Hub Cross Agency Research and Data Analyst
- Ashley White, Research Director, Elementary Education and Care



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## Updates on activity

1. Data Stories
  - a. [Educator Diversity](#) published
  - b. Chronic Absenteeism (in final review)
2. [Early College Data Dashboard](#)
3. [New datasets in the E2C Hub](#)
  - a. Two more datasets were added recently that aren't reflected in the list: [Advanced Course Completion](#) and [AP Participation](#).
4. [Student and Family Voice Committee](#)
5. [Open Data Day Lunch & Learn](#), March 13

## Discussion:

Members asked if college and career data could include registered apprenticeships in the future. Sam answered that a workplace learning tool is in development and there could be an opportunity to provide input on what's included.

A member asked if vendors such as Open Architects would be able to access datasets in the E2C Hub and connect with SIS for district dashboards. Sam replied yes, there's a very good use case for Data Hub data. We can make sure OA knows how to make the connection, and we hope that districts will find these feeds helpful for building their own data dashboards.

## Policy priorities

Sam shared identified priorities from the Secretary of Education and Commissioners and asked the RAC members for their input. What we put in the cross-agency research agenda will influence what research projects get approved, data linkages, and E2C projects.

Member suggestions included:

- Pell-eligible college students who are also eligible for benefits such as SNAP but not applying for them.
- The nexus between health and schooling, connecting early interventions to schooling outcomes. See: [Returns to Early-life Interventions for Very Low Birth Weight Children](#).

- The role of housing costs on teacher shortages prompted thoughts on research on broader labor market issues. The Massachusetts workforce is smaller than it was pre-pandemic, there's outmigration, an aging workforce, etc.
- The E2C Hub represents state's best chance of publishing policy-neutral data analysis. KY Stats, for example, publishes a standard set of reports each year to form a foundation for justification of funding.
- Linking datasets could be really powerful. There's opportunity to cross education and health as well as education and location. For example, where do students go? With data available through NIH, we might be able to connect info about individuals post education tied to health outcomes.
- Post-secondary outcomes that trace folks into apprenticeships and skilled trades. Can we follow students into their workforce and postsecondary paths and map a general pipeline for related occupations from CTE programs.
- Data on the types of student aid students receive.
- Access to teacher salary information. Does DESE have individual information on teacher salaries? Other states sometimes have that info in EPIMS. Is it better to work with EOLWD or another agency?
- Students' trajectories across the educational pipeline and into workforce, which jobs and where. Studying geography could help us understand the injustice of place, pockets that are more helpful, and those with more challenges.
- The role of housing costs in teacher shortages.
- Data on paraprofessional-to-teacher transition, grow-your-own programs.
- Data on lesser-known programs of DESE like adult education. Is there a group of researchers who could come together and identify those corners?
- Longitudinal data on English learners across the agencies.
- Outcomes of persons enrolled in a WIOA/Perkins programs. These provide educational services to adults with less than a HS diploma and English Language Learners.

An RAC member reminded the group that researchers want to collect everything. If you get a long list of research requests, prioritize on the potential policy ramifications with data that is collected or merged.

## Proposed Evaluation Framework

The E2C Hub is looking to establish an evaluation process for our leadership group and the RAC to measure progress on goals in June. Where is collaboration among agencies setting this project up for success? We want more public accountability as well. Amy Checkoway and Matt Deninger are working on a rubric. We want to preview the goals that we have in mind for evaluation.

## Feedback on Goals, Key Actions & Outcomes

### Ownership of Goals

There was a question about dashboards. States put a lot of resources into dashboards and there are lots of good reasons to have them, but how well utilized are they?

Sam replied, In addition to creating the dashboard, we want to see grow public user base of tools. We need to measure our usage and demonstrate growth. We are still building up our capabilities. Continue to ask to see those results.

A member asked, Does the state have shared goals and long-term outcomes of interest? There's nothing on EOE website to address this, and there could be interesting conversations about the goals and outcomes. It's hard to know if they are hitting their target unless the goals are defined.

Sam acknowledged that goal setting can be challenging because of the need to balance quantitative measures between what's ambitious and what's achievable.

A member noted, On early literacy, the key action to produce an impact evaluation plan for governor's initiatives seems different than others. Will the E2C Hub be designing research projects for the state?

Sam explained, The actions are project wide. The E2C Hub staff have varying levels of involvement in these action items. Regarding ECIDS, there's a lot of interest on the state level in childcare investments. The E2C team won't necessarily be doing research. It may be procured or put on the research agenda, but we want to make sure these questions are answered.

A member asked, Regarding Early College, does this include the Early College Promise Pilot? Districts have to report that data to DESE so it will be good to see how it's working.

Sam said the newly published dashboard does not include this, but future versions will be inclusive.

A member suggested, When you talk of strengthening ownership over goals, you need to identify who that is. Need to speak to the people who are involved.

### **Facilitate Actionable Research**

A member noted a concern that research requests that fall outside of the cross-agency research agenda will be rejected and requested more transparency on that.

A member asked, Do these processes have the intention of increasing research projects across Massachusetts? It would be good to communicate and socialize that interest.

Sam answered, Yes, we want to make it a less burdensome project on both sides.

A member suggested, It would be helpful, since there's focus on cross-agency research, to give guidance, give example projects. There's a DESE requirement to meet FERPA--will cross-agency projects be limited because they need to improve education in some way? Make those stipulations transparent. Some academic journals have a query process to determine if the project worth pursuing. We don't want to create double work, but it would weed out proposals that don't meet the requirements.

Sam agreed, We don't want to leave people guessing whether or not a project will be approved. It's always OK to reach out with a paragraph to see if it's feasible.

The member followed, Let's make that available as a norm, so everyone knows they have that option.

A member asked, Do you have a definition of actionable research? If this is a goal in the approval process, define actionable research and ask researchers to explain in their proposals how the research could be used in an actionable way.

### **Increase Data Access**

A member wanted to know, How many datasets will be living on the E2C Hub site vs. Profiles, DESE, and other agency sites? Could you reduce the technical burden on the E2C Hub and DESE staff to think about moving those to a central location?

Sam explained, We are just getting started building up the E2C Hub and are starting to have conversations about the best places for data to be. When it is useful to have in more than one place, we will do that.

David Bogojevich offered, Even when the E2C Hub doesn't host the data, we hope people will be able to find it from our site by adding links to external resources.

A member said, I would like to see multiple years on one screen so you can see trends. Can we streamline Edwin so it's more intuitive?

Sam replied, We know it's common that people have trouble with Edwin, and that some reports are underutilized. We want to build up a community of practice. We'd like to follow up with you to discuss ideas.

A member asked, A researcher may need dataset from more than one agency. Is there information about how you can link datasets?

Sam answered, Melanie will work on creating pre-linked file or guidance on connecting data for student-level data. Data in the E2C Hub is aggregate data, but you can see some examples linking and aggregation like wage outcomes by high schools.

A member said, There's a lot about increased access, but how do you increase use? Need to engage with end users.

Sam said, We plan to make larger investment in communication efforts. We have all these tools, and when we meet with people who use them, they love it, but the uptake is really small. We need to get to where people are, and we are thinking about ways we can do that.

A member suggested, Do you track all the academic papers that use MA data? I think this is something worth touting.

Sam replied, Yes, and we want to do more to make that visible.

### **More effective data use**

A member asked, Would you be able to present at meetings and conferences that might have data centric audiences? The MassCUE annual conference features vendors and presentations around data. Another DESE staff member does a presentation on state reporting.

Another member suggested, What about via school boards? non-profits - pushes out with data stories.

Sam replied, We want to get out there, and to put together a group of district data staff.

Sam thanked Research Advisory Committee members for their input and closed the meeting at 2:26 pm.