



Meeting Notes 2025

Governing Board

September 19, 2025

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Meeting Presentation](#)

Type of Meeting SLDS Governance Board

Facilitator: Amy Bhikha

Note Taker: AI-assisted Note Taking

Timekeeper: Heather MacGillivray

Attendees: Amy Bhikha, Stephanie Beasley (absent), Susana Córdova, Michael Vente, Lee Wheeler-Berliner, Jess Kostelnik, Sarah Heath, Rebecca Tyus, Brian Eschbacher, Katie Zaback, Whitney LeBoeuf

Agenda Items:

2:00 - 2:05 Welcome & Roll Call

2:05 - 2:15 Updates

2:15 - 2:50 Branding & Communications

2:50 - 3:20 Revisiting the Research Framework

3:20 - 3:30 Close

Open

Call to Order

- Roll Call was taken, Quorum was reached
- Agenda and Objectives reviewed

The meeting provided an update of the data addenda readiness for DocuSign and the system's vendor onboarding. A large portion of the discussion was dedicated to reviewing and providing feedback on three potential names and logo concepts for the SLDS, as well as a presentation on the importance and structure of a research framework, which the OITprogram team will now begin to draft for review.

Updates

A new format was used to provide updates with a one slide overview and corresponding one slide communicating the activities of each governing group. Regarding the data addenda, two of three agencies' addenda documents are ready for DocuSign and all agency Attorney Generals have reviewed each addendum. The group confirmed there were no questions regarding the requests for the governing board or the new update format which was praised by Lee Wheeler Berliner and Katie Zaback.

Course Data Request. A question was raised by Katie Zaback about the inclusion of course data in the addenda, which had been discussed in a previous meeting as a potential decision point. Heather MacGillivary (program manager) clarified that course data is not included in the current addenda as the immediate priority is to get the foundational data set into the system. The vendor contract has been signed, and the vendor is being onboarded to ingest this base data first. Heather emphasized that the door is "not closed" on course data, and it could likely be added later as an addendum once the base data is flowing. Heather MacGillivary (program manager) acknowledged the concern and mentioned that Katie Zaback would be a guest speaker at an upcoming sustainability meeting to discuss the matter further with the Sustainability Advisory Group.

Project Milestones. The discussion highlighted several key milestones, including:

- **System Build:** The vendor contract is signed, and the vendor is being onboarded.
- **Data Governance:** Draft data addenda have been distributed for review. Two of three are ready for docusign
- **Communications:** Three potential packages of name, tagline, and logo have been developed for the system for Governing Board feedback.
- **Public Relations:** A "Better Data, Better Decisions" meeting was held on August 28th with over 100 participants to promote the SLDS.
- **Upcoming Events:** An SLDS presentation is scheduled for the "Evidence Builders" session on September 29th.

Data Reporting Timeline. The meeting included a significant discussion about the data reporting timeline for the first public report.

- The Sustainability Advisory Group recommended that the **first report**, scheduled for **September 2026**, will include data up to **fiscal year 2024**.
- Subsequent reports would be released annually in April, with data from the previous fiscal year, starting in **April 2027** for fiscal year 2025.
- **Jess** raised a concern that this would mean a **two-year delay in data** for policymakers.
- **Lee** requested a clear map of which data sets have what timing to be more transparent about the data's age.
- **Katie Z** clarified the distinction between a fiscal year (ending June 30th) and a school year. She also noted that while a delay is a challenge, the proposed timeline is a good starting point and a "stretch" for agencies.
- **Michael and Susanna** agreed that the process of cleaning and validating data takes time and that different data sets become available at different times throughout the year. They also highlighted the importance of allowing time for students to reach milestones before reporting on outcomes (e.g., wage data).

SLDS Naming and Branding

The meeting featured a presentation by **Brandi Wildfang**, Chief Communications Officer at OIT, who presented three proposed names and logo concepts for the SLDS:

1. **Colorado Data Connections** (or CoData)
2. **Data Bridge Colorado** (or CoData Bridge)
3. **Colorado Data Hub** (or CoData Hub)

The team's guiding principles were to focus on data, align with the mission, be clear and understandable, and avoid existing names in Colorado or other states. All logos are customizable in terms of colors and elements.

- **Katie Nelson** liked "Data Connections" and raised a concern about potential trademark issues and search engine optimization, suggesting a deeper dive once a preferred option is chosen.
- **Lee Wheeler Berliner** voiced a concern about creating "more noise in the system" and liked "CoData Hub" because it simply describes a place to get information.
- **Rebecca Tyus** preferred "Data Connections" because it speaks to the core purpose of an SLDS—connecting data across departments and time.
- There was a suggestion to shorten "Data Connections" to "CoData Connect," which received positive feedback.
- **Jess Kostelnik** and others supported "CoData Connect," with the tagline "connecting data, unlocking potential."
- The group discussed the pros and cons of each name, including potential acronyms like "CDC" for Colorado Data Connections. Ultimately, the group decided to take the proposed names back to their comms teams and stakeholders for further feedback before a final vote at a future Governing Board meeting.

Research Framework

Klaus vonZastro and Kate Akers presented a follow-up on the SLDS research framework.

Why a Research Framework is Important:

- It allows the board to set a high-level vision and agree on a focus for the SLDS.
- It empowers staff to make more timely decisions and prioritize information requests.
- It promotes transparency and ensures the work aligns with the board's mission.
- It can be a "living document" that evolves over time.

DC Example and Key Lessons:

- The District of Columbia's research agenda focuses on **cross-agency data, action-driven information, and clear audience consideration**.
- Their agenda includes big questions about employment outcomes and the **return on public investment** in education and workforce systems.
- It **balances short-term feasibility with long-term aspirations**.
- The agenda also outlines categories for disaggregated analysis, such as race, ethnicity, and disability.

Next Steps for Colorado:

- The group discussed the process for creating a research framework.
- **Lee Wheeler-Berliner** and **Jess Kostelnik** asked about how to move forward, suggesting a less process-heavy approach.
- **Katie Zaback** emphasized the need to gather input from stakeholders, particularly higher education institutions and school district leaders, to ensure the framework addresses their needs and provides value in return for the data they provide. She cautioned against moving too quickly, especially as the holidays approach, to allow sufficient time for stakeholders to review and

provide their input on the draft research agenda.

- Heather agreed to create a "straw man" draft of the research framework for the next meeting on October 17th, incorporating the feedback from stakeholders and using the core questions from previous discussions. The plan is to discuss the draft at the upcoming in-person meeting on October 24th.

Future Meeting Dates

- **October 17th:** Regular meeting to continue discussion on the research framework, branding, and system build timeline.
- **October 24th:** An in-person meeting to celebrate progress, discuss cross-pollination between governing groups, and finalize the research framework.
- **November/December:** Gather stakeholder feedback.

Close

- Recap Action Items
 - **ACTION:** Watch for DocuSign for Data Addendum and sign by September 30th at the latest.
- Next Month's Agenda
 - Research Framework
 - Branding and Communications
- Adjourn Public Meeting