

SLDS Governing Board
Zoom Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

February 25, 2021

In Attendance:

Mr. Patrick Sullivan, Chair, State Workforce Investment Board
Mr. Kevin Bishop (for Chris Howard, Executive Director, MS Department of Rehabilitation Services)
Ms. Audrey McAfee (for Nathan "Burl" Cain, Commissioner, MS Department of Corrections)
Dr. Andrea Mayfield, Executive Director, MS Community College Board
Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent of Education, MS Department of Education
Ms. Andrea Sanders, Representative, State Early Childhood Advisory Council
Mr. Robert G. "Bob" Anderson, Executive Director, MS Department of Human Services
Ms. Jackie Turner, Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Dr. Steven Grice, Executive Director, National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center
Mr. John Kramen, Chief Information Officer, Mississippi Department of Education
Mr. Charles McGrew, Program Officer, SLDS Grant Program
Ms. Leanne Taylor, Program Analyst, SLDS Grant Program
Ms. Kathleen Gosa, SLDS Technical Assistance Expert, SLDS State Support Team
Mr. Sean Cottrell, Senior Subject Matter Expert, SLDS State Support Team
Ms. Yolonda Boone, Executive Director, Innovative Solutions
Dr. Jim Hood, Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Research, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Ms. Avery Lee, SLDS Board Attorney
Ms. Holly Spivey, Education Policy Advisor for Governor Tate Reeves

Call to Order: Chair Patrick Sullivan called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Chair Sullivan opened the meeting and attendance was taken.

The meeting began with a guest presentation from Mr. Charles McGrew, a program officer with the SLDS Grant program. Dr. Carey Wright introduced Mr. McGrew, who provided an overview of longitudinal data systems in other states and how they compare to Mississippi's SLDS. Mr. McGrew offered the support of his office to Mississippi on anything SLDS-related.

Ms. Jackie Turner spoke about the importance of a state appropriation, and the consideration of a hybrid model that would leverage grant applications and direct charges for reports. Dr. Wright echoed the importance of a line-item appropriation. Chair Sullivan stated that funding and discussions about revising the SLDS rules and regulations should go together.

Board reviewed minutes from the last meeting. No changes were suggested. Board approved.

Chair Sullivan presented proposed changes to the SLDS rules and regulations. He noted the changes are designed to focus the SLDS as an analytical tool used for the policy making process and opened a discussion on the topic.

Chair Sullivan asked for input from the Board regarding the Research Review and Standards Committee (RRSC) in regard to membership, meetings held, and if it would be needed in the future. Dr. Jim Hood provided an overview of the RRSC, stating that it was established early in the SLDS process and that the committee brought research experts and third-party credibility to the requests. Dr. Hood indicated that he would inquire about the committee's workload and meeting schedule. Chair Sullivan commented that a formal RRSC might not be needed, given the complexity the RRSC brought to the report request process and the resulting length of time from request to the receipt of results.

Mr. John Kraman spoke about the research agenda that MDE had created as part of an SLDS grant. Mr. Kraman noted that some Board members had previously shown interest in developing an SLDS research agenda. Chair Sullivan agreed that this was something that the board should consider. Mr. Kraman suggested that the board could set, define, and drive that agenda.

Mr. Kraman spoke about the need for a fair price and a fair timeline expectation for requests, the need for the board to determine what the SLDS should do. Kraman also discussed ensuring the Board had the capacity to approve and fulfil requests. Dr. Andrea Mayfield agreed that capacity was a big issue and that was why the funding structure is important. Dr. Mayfield also commented that data owners must have an opportunity to review the data that is being used in an SLDS report.

Mr. Kraman spoke about the role of the SLDS as a research tool and the opportunity to expand how data can be accessed remotely by researchers. Dr. Mayfield expressed concern about data being sent to other researchers or other agencies, and Mr. Bob Anderson noted that the Board is the gatekeeper of the data and said that he didn't think the RRSC was needed as a gatekeeper. Chair Sullivan suggested that the Board would not be an efficient gatekeeper given the high volume of requests.

Chair Sullivan offered that a legislative appropriation provided through the MDES budget could cover the basic costs of maintaining and operating the system for policy making purposes; with data being available to the Governor's Office, Lieutenant Governor's Office and Senate Committee Chairs, the Speaker's Office and House Committee Chairs, the Office of Workforce Development, and the Mississippi Development Authority. All others would have access to data and reports at a reduced rate. Dr. Mayfield expressed that data contributors should be able to request reports at no cost if funding was in place. Chair Sullivan suggested the need to put a value on reports to protect against trivial requests.

Dr. Mayfield provided an overview of standing reports that community colleges relied on annually, and Mr. Kraman echoed that MDE relied on the SLDS for federal reporting. Chair Sullivan suggested that an exception could be made for reporting required by federal funding agencies, and that reporting required by state law should be revisited to determine legislative need for the reports. Dr. Hood commented that IHL institutions also requested an annual report that, although not state or federally mandated, were used to reposition university program offerings.

Ms. Andrea Sanders suggested that some Board members needed more information about what reports can be produced. Chair Sullivan encouraged Board members to contact Dr. Steve Grice and his team to learn what the system can do.

Chair Sullivan stated that this discussion could continue and that he would welcome ideas. Chair Sullivan mentioned that he had also asked the SLDS Governing Board attorney, Ms. Avery Lee, to conduct a review of the rules and regulations.

The SLDS Governing Board meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.