**Strengthening North Carolina's Education Longitudinal Data System (ELDS)**
Recommendations from the Education Cabinet ELDS Work Group
[DRAFT]

**<u>Overview</u>**
The Education Longitudinal Data System (ELDS) is authorized under <u>Chapter 116E</u> of the NC General Statutes. By statute, the ELDS is to contain individual-level student data and workforce data from all levels of education and the State's workforce system. The ELDS must have the capability to do the following:
- Facilitate and enable the exchange of student data among agencies and institutions;
- Generate timely and accurate information about student performance that can be used to improve the State's education systems and guide decisions makers at all levels;
- Facilitate and enable linkage of student data and workforce data;
- Serve as a data broker for education and workforce data maintained by:
  - Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
  - Local boards of education, local school administrative units, and charter schools.
  - University of North Carolina System (UNCS)
  - North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS)
  - North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, Inc. and private colleges and universities (NCICU)
  - Department of Commerce (DOC), Division of Employment Security (DES)
  - Department of Revenue (DOR)
  - Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHS)
  - Department of Labor (DOL)

While the statute states that the ELDS shall be located administratively within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the NC Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC) is also charged with specific responsibilities including:
- facilitating the drafting and adoption of rules;
- providing general oversight and direction to the system;
- approving the annual budget; and
- establishing an advisory committee on data quality as well as a phased plan that outlines the establishment and operation of the system.

Under the parameters set out in statute and based on input from the education and workforce data partners, the Education Cabinet ELDS Work Group is proposing that the ELDS be defined and set up as a "system of systems." The three existing longitudinal data efforts described below provide valuable data for the agency or agencies with which they work. The ELDS will provide a framework for how those data systems can be more effectively connected and leveraged to generate longitudinal data sets or reports for analyzing student and system outcomes across the education and workforce continuum.

**Contributors to the ELDS**

Currently, three longitudinal efforts focused on segments of the education-workforce continuum exist today. They are collaborative efforts among many of the same agencies listed in the legislation (including GDAC) and are hosted and supported by the GDAC.

- **Early Childhood Integrated Data System** – ECIDS is designed to provide integrated early childhood education, health and social service data from participating agencies. This system is administered by North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- **North Carolina School Works** – NCSW is a federated system that links data from early learning to workforce. This system is administered by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).
- **Common Follow-Up System** – CFS is a repository of workforce and education data. This system is administered by Department of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD).

**Key Principles**

Below are key principles that will govern how this "system of systems" will operate:

- Each data contributor to the ELDS will maintain authority over their agencies' data and data systems.
- Each data contributor to the ELDS will be able to request data from other data contributors through the system.
- Data contributed to the ELDS will remain in secure environments, but will be identifiable to other data contributors to the system. Data shared with outside entities must remain confidential and be de-identified.
- Data contributors have the right to deny a data request and not share data.

**Progress**

To date, the Education Cabinet ELDS Work Group has made progress on several parts for setting up the ELDS as described above.

- Based on input and feedback from the education and workforce data partners, GDAC has drafted rules that:
  o define the ELDS and its components (i.e. "system of systems");
  o defines contributors to the system, requestors of the system, and a request;
  o outlines the data request process; and
  o outlines the minimum contents necessary in a contributor data sharing agreement.

  Rules were drafted and submitted to the Rules Review Commission for feedback. The Commission responded with feedback and the rules have been modified and resubmitted.

- GDAC has drafted a Contributor Data Sharing Agreement which builds the foundation for ELDS by enabling the existing longitudinal systems to exchange data. The draft agreement has been shared with data contributors for feedback. The rules and Contributor Data Sharing Agreement, when adopted, will allow the data contributors to begin sharing data through the ELDS. The Agreement outlines:

- o disclosure of data to the ELDS by agencies;
- o process for data exchange among the agencies; and
- o process for disclosure of reports (data) to requestors that are not contributors to the ELDS.

GDAC has received feedback from most of the data contributors and will be incorporating that feedback into the agreement.

## Next Steps

Moving forward, the Work Group's recommendation is to engage an independent consultant to assist the GDAC in developing a strategic modernization and interoperability plan for the ELDS. The independent consultant will gather input and direction from ELDS key stakeholders, agency leaders, and data users. This collaborative effort will be funded by GDAC. The proposed deliverable for this effort will include:

- current state assessment and the State's progress to date;
- a collaborative vision and objectives for a modernized ELDS;
- business, organizational, and interoperability requirements for the modernized ELDS;
- recommendations on ELDS system and data governance; and
- a collaborative sustainability plan for the ELDS.

## Timeline

- **Late Spring/Early Summer 2019** – Independent consultant will begin interviews and data gathering for developing the ELDS modernization plan
- **May 31, 2019** – Contributor Data Sharing Agreement finalized and signed by data contributors
- **Summer 2019** – Rules Review Commission finalizes ELDS rules
- **Winter/Early Spring 2020** – Independent consultant will complete ELDS modernization plan; GDAC and data contributors begin implementing recommendations