



## Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System Data Governance Committee

### DRAFT Minutes

Wednesday, July 17, 2024 – 10:00 AM

Zoom Meeting: <https://uri-edu.zoom.us/j/98015003108>

This meeting was RECORDED

RI Department of Education, Room 606  
255 Westminster St, Providence, RI, 02903

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#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dana **Brandt** (RILDS); Colleen **Caron** (DCYF); Jessica **Cigna** (SOS); Peg **Votta** (RIDE); Harris **Hameed** (DOIT); Rebecca **Lebeau** (OHHS); Mike **Matkowski** (OMB Delegate); Andrea **Spargo** (RIOPC); and Megan **Swindal** (DLT).

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Vincent **Flood** (DOA).

#### GUESTS:

Sarah Bramblet (DLT); Sarah Cote (RILDS); Dave Grenier (RILDS); Brett Lamoureux (OMB); Rockwell Richards (RILDS).

#### SUPPORT STAFF:

Kim Pierson (RILDS).

**Dana Brandt** called the July 17, 2024, meeting of the Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System Data Governance Committee to order at 10:06 AM EST, acknowledging that a quorum was present.

1. **WELCOME - Brandt** opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She announced the appointment of a new RIDE Committee representative, Peg Votta, replacing Scott Gausland who is now the Chief Data and Analytics Officer at the Rhode Island Department of Administration. Brandt also announced her imminent departure from RILDS at the end of the following week. She shared that her departure would result in a pause of both the Data Governance Committee and Executive Governing Committee meetings until a new director is hired. She recommended that if a director is not named within six months, the Data Governance Committee should begin meeting quarterly, as a backlog of requests would likely accumulate.

**Swindal** inquired if requests would still be received through the RILDS data request process during the six-month hiatus. **Brandt** confirmed that there would be a notice on the website, but requests would still be permitted and timestamped upon receipt for future review.

2. **VOTE** on Adoption of Meeting Minutes – **Brandt** requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2024, RILDS Data Governance Committee meeting as presented and without modification. **Lebeau** motioned, **Spargo** seconded, and the Committee approved the minutes as presented.

**VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brandt, Caron, Cigna, Hameed, Lebeau, Matkowski, Spargo, Swindal  
**ABSENT:** Flood  
**VOTING IN OPPOSITION:** None  
**ABSTENTION:** Votta

**Brandt** requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2024, RILDS Data Governance Committee meeting as presented and without modification. **Cigna** motioned, **Caron** seconded, and the Committee approved the minutes as presented.

**VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brandt, Caron, Cigna, Hameed, Matkowski, Spargo, Swindal  
**ABSENT:** Flood  
**VOTING IN OPPOSITION:** None  
**ABSTENTION:** Lebeau, Votta

3. **DISCUSSION** of Prioritization Matrix – **Brandt** introduced the draft RILDS Data Request Prioritization Matrix. She noted that understanding how the RILDS Center prioritizes incoming requests, particularly given the large backlog, has been a topic of discussion at both recent RILDS Executive Governing Committee and Data Governance Committee meetings.

**Brandt** explained that the matrix is designed to triage incoming data requests. According to the draft, for any request to be prioritized, it must follow the processes outlined in the RILDS Data Request & Release Policies, adequately address data confidentiality, privacy, and security, and have methodological integrity. Once a request is approved, the Committee would then prioritize it.

**Brandt** proposed that each Committee member, including those from Non-Data Contributing Agencies, evaluate proposals against the criteria matrix on a 3-point scale. The scores would then be averaged, with higher-rated requests prioritized and lower-rated requests placed lower on the list, which would be adjusted as new proposals are approved and added.

**Spargo** asked about a cutoff or prioritization date for lower-priority requests that have been in the queue for an extended time (e.g., six months or longer). **Brandt** responded that incoming high-value requests could continue to bump lower-priority ones, especially if they score higher due to being submitted by a Data Contributing Agency, urgency, alignment with state priorities, reproducible value, etc. These would be addressed before requests that don't align as well, which may continue to wait.

**Hameed** inquired if the length of time a request has been awaiting fulfillment would factor into the prioritization process. **Brandt** stated that urgency is considered in prioritization, but not the length of time a request has been pending. She explained that including the

length of time as a factor would require the Committee to revisit and reprioritize all outstanding requests at each meeting. The current policy allows for ranking each request once, with future requests being slotted into the queue based on their average score. **Lebeau** noted that this is how EOHHS handles request prioritization, and they have not encountered issues with requests never being fulfilled or remaining pending for extended periods.

**Caron** asked what happens if a request doesn't meet the three minimum requirements (following the processes outlined in the RILDS Data Request & Release Policies, protecting confidentiality, privacy, and security, and having methodological integrity). **Brandt** confirmed that requests not meeting these minimum requirements would not be approved.

**Matkowski** inquired if the measures have equal weighting. **Brandt** confirmed that, as proposed, the matrix treats all eight criteria equally.

**Votta** asked how requests from different audiences (policymakers, researchers, etc.) are prioritized if they are not weighted differently. **Brandt** responded that the prioritization is based on other elements of the request and output, balanced by each committee member's interpretation and reflected in their scores.

**Caron** inquired about when and how requests that don't meet the criteria are eliminated and where those denied requests are documented. **Brandt** explained that the Committee reviews all incoming requests, and each request's ratings and approval are documented. She also noted that all approved but unfulfilled requests would need to be evaluated and prioritized by the Committee at the next Data Governance Committee meeting.

**Cigna** asked if additional information would be needed for the Committee to adequately review each request against the matrix criteria. **Brandt** stated that the data request provided to the Committee for each meeting would contain all necessary information to review the request against the criteria, and each request would include a blank matrix for individual Committee member review and assessment. The Center would collect and calculate these after the meetings.

**Caron** suggested adding a pre-screening section to indicate unapproved requests and the reasons they were not approved to the matrix template.

**Swindal** asked about the income-generating criteria, noting that Data Contributing Agency requests are more highly prioritized based on criterion 3 but do not generate income, which rates lower on criterion 4. **Brandt** explained that these requirements stem from discussions at the Executive Governing Committee level, which expressed interest in RILDS being both self-sustaining and prioritizing agencies based on General Revenue funding.

**Votta** suggested that requesters providing an ASAP deadline be required to include a justification for the urgency.

**Lebeau** recommended including a delay notification on the Data Request form to inform requesters of the minimum expected processing time for their requests.

**Brandt** thanked the Committee for their feedback, stating that an updated matrix would be presented at the next meeting and that additional details would be included in future RILDS Data Requests for review.

#### 4. **DISCUSSION** of & **VOTE** on Data Requests

##### a. *Postsecondary Commission & Mathematica, Value-Added Earnings*

**Brandt** introduced the Postsecondary Commission's request for individual-level data to conduct a research project in partnership with Mathematica. The project aims to evaluate the value-added earnings of postsecondary degrees and credentials for graduates from Rhode Island public high schools who enroll in Rhode Island higher education institutions.

**Swindal** asked how entities like Mathematica find RILDS. **Votta** explained that there is an existing data-sharing relationship between RIDE and Mathematica. **Brandt** added that the Postsecondary Commission uses Mathematica for their research capacity and had approached the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner for this project.

**Spargo** stated that RIOPC is currently denying the request. She explained that gathering, validating, and integrating the specified data would be a significant burden. Additionally, she noted that the U.S. Department of Education is currently requiring all postsecondary institutions eligible to participate in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide data for the Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment (FVT/GE) regulations. This data is due by October 1, 2024, and has already consumed significant time and resources from Rhode Island postsecondary institutions' Institutional Research (IR) staff, Financial Aid offices, and other departments. **Spargo** mentioned that some of the federally mandated metrics might overlap with the data requested by the Postsecondary Commission and Mathematica.

**Spargo** also voiced concerns from the IRs regarding the proposed methodology, specifically about how transfer students would be handled, such as CCRI students who complete their two-year degree but then enroll in a four-year institution. She requested a meeting between the Postsecondary Commission, Mathematica, RIOPC, and the IRs to address these questions and concerns. **Brandt** agreed that a follow-up conversation and resubmission would be beneficial. She also raised concerns about the study's dependency on financial aid data, emphasizing that RILDS has never received this data from the postsecondary institutions. As a result, the request could not proceed at this time.

**Caron** requested more detail in the research design, particularly regarding the comparison group.

**Hameed** inquired about the amount of historical data required for the request. **Brandt** indicated that a significant amount of historical data would be needed. The study will evaluate Bachelor's degrees for 15 years after enrollment, Associate's degrees for 10 years after initial enrollment, and credential earners for 5 years. These timeframes would require data starting from 2008. However, RILDS data only goes back to the 2007-2008 school year for URI and CCRI, but not for RIC, meaning that historical data might not be readily available from these institutions.

**Brandt** reminded the Committee that the process for approving data requests requires a vote from Data Contributing Agencies, and approval from the agencies whose data will be used. Since RIOPC's data is central to the request and they are not approving it at this time, the request cannot proceed and will not require a vote.

Brandt summarized the additional details that will be needed from the Postsecondary Commission and Mathematica for a resubmission. These include more information on the population of interest, the comparison group, and how additional credentials or majors are accounted for. Brandt asked if there were any further suggestions to provide to the Postsecondary Commission and Mathematica for the next evaluation of the request.

**Lebeau** reviewed the request against the three minimum criteria discussed earlier regarding the prioritization matrix. She noted a lack of information on how data confidentiality, privacy, and security were being adequately addressed and requested that these areas be expanded upon in the resubmission.

**Swindal** requested more information on how workforce training and UI data would be used, noting that neither was specifically mentioned. **Brandt** mentioned that UI data had been dropped from the request (via an email received the day before), but she would ask for more details on how the workforce training data would be utilized.

**Votta** stated that she would like to understand why discipline data was being requested and how it would relate to job persistence after postsecondary education.

**Cigna** suggested reconsidering the study's start period, noting that beginning with the recession might not provide the best years for analysis.

## 5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the July 17, 2024, RILDS Data Governance Committee meeting adjourned at 10:44 AM EST.