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SRCD State Policy Fellow Portfolio Abstracts: Julie Casper, M.S.Ed.

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Portfolio Entry 1a: Tracking Spreadsheet – Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) Budget and Grand Review

Project Overview:

Background: PEG grantees translated the grant expectations into a specific plan for programming and line items in a budget.

Goal: To review Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) Year 3 plans for each of the five grantee cities in the state and ensure that the programming described in the plans aligns with the budgets and budget narratives.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Compared the programmatic goals against the budgets and budget narratives to ensure alignment and compatibility.
- Ensured that the budgets aligned with what the districts were planning to do programmatically.
- Added additional comments and revisions and returned these to the districts with requests for necessary changes in several additional rounds of review.

Activity Focus Keywords: Grant Application, Grant Review
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG)

Portfolio Entry 1b: Analysis of Preschool Expansion Grant Direct Summary Documents and Monitoring Tools

Project Overview:

Background: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) direct service summary documents detail the PEG services provided (e.g., personnel, curriculum and instruction, comprehensive services, and family and community engagement) and include a narrative statement along with the related budgetary expenses. A review of PEG documents will provide the state agency a better understanding of how communities collaborate under the PEG.

Goal: To support the analysis of PEG direct services summary documents and monitoring tools, which all PEG grantees submitted as part of their budget for the following year's grant cycle and to use this information to evaluate the provision of direct services across grantees.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Analyzed the comprehensive services and family engagement sections of the direct services summary documents and monitoring tools.
- Identified how each PEG grantee addressed various components of the grant and provided services (e.g., health, nutrition services, and mental/behavioral health).

Activity Focus Keywords: Data Analysis, Document Review, Community Collaboration
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG)

Portfolio Entry 1c: Interviews with Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) Early Learning Provider (ELP) Directors

Project Overview:

Background: Interviews with Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) Early Learning Provider (ELP) directors support the state early childhood executive branch agency's audit of collaborative decision making between local education agencies (LEAs) and ELPs as well as whether LEAs were effectively monitoring ELPs.

Goal: To conduct interviews with PEG directors of the ELPs at the community level to better understand communication between them and monitoring of PEG organizations and to analyze interviews using qualitative methodology.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Conducted phone interviews with directors of the ELPs across the five PEG grantees.
- Conducted qualitative data analysis including developing coding scheme.
- Developed charts to visualize the data.

Activity Focus Keywords: Monitoring/Audit, Conduct Interviews, Data Analysis, Data Visualization
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG), Local Education Agency (LEA), Early Learning Provider (ELP)

Portfolio Entry 2: Collaborative Networking/Decision-Making Research: Literature Review and Interviews with Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG), Early Learning Provider (ELP), and Local Education Agency (LEA) Coordinators

Project Overview:

Background: Collaboration was central to the theory of change guiding Preschool Expansion Grants (PEG) and therefore it was essential for the state agency to understand how the community collaborations functioned.

Goal: To explore collaborative decision-making for the PEG, which included researching collaborative decision-making, writing a short literature review on collaborative governance/cross-sector networking, and conducting phone interviews with PEG coordinators throughout the state to understand more about the community collaborations.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Conducted a literature review.
- Created survey items and interview protocol.
- Piloted the survey and administered the finalized survey by telephone.
- Developed a participants' rights form (i.e., ensure confidentiality, protect participants by making them aware of their rights as research participants).
- Conducted telephone interviews.
- Transcribed, coded, and analyzed qualitative data.

Activity Focus Keywords: Literature Review, Survey Design, Conduct Interviews, Data Analysis, Transcribe Qualitative Data
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG), Local Education Agency (LEA)

Portfolio Entry 3: Framework for Program Division Grant Analysis

Project Overview:

Background: The state agency manages multiple grants and each grant gathers information from grantees as part of the monitoring process.

Goal: To support the state agency in a systematic coordination and review of grant metrics so that the review process includes identification of common data that are gathered, understanding how the metrics are reflected in the grants and the reporting of grants, and ensuring that the strategic plan for the state agency's

program division, which administers and monitors the grants, is based on measurable goals.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Organized the tools and materials for grants.
- Developed a framework to analyze grant metrics and created a coding scheme for framework analysis.
- Reviewed the strategic plans for each unit (i.e., Preschool Expansion Grant, Program Quality, Workforce, and Family and Community Supports).

Activity Focus Keywords: Grant Application, Grant Review, Monitoring/Audit, Evaluation, Data Analysis, Strategic Plan
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG), Professional Development