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SRCD State Policy Fellow Portfolio Abstracts: Caroline Martin

2018-2019 State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellow at the Vermont Agency of Education

AUTHOR

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Portfolio Entry 1: Legislative Report

Project Overview:

Background: In 2014 the Vermont State Legislature passed Act 166, a law mandating universal access to 10 hours per week of publicly-funded Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) education for all 3, 4, and 5-year-olds not yet enrolled in Kindergarten. The Agency of Education (AOE) and Agency of Human Services (AHS) are required to jointly monitor and evaluate the Universal Pre-K (UPK) education system to promote equitable access positive outcomes for children and to collect data that will inform future decisions. An annual legislative report is submitted to the General Assembly each spring.

Goal: To develop a legislative report outlining 2017-18 UPK programmatic details, the quality of public and private Pre-K programs, and the school readiness of children participating in UPK.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Served as project co-lead to coordinate and compile data sources across Agency divisions
- Analyzed state administrative data sources to report on all required information related to Vermont's publicly-funded Pre-K education system
- Prepared report document by creating data tables and charts, and writing descriptive summaries of results
- Incorporated edits and feedback from staff across Agencies

Activity Focus Keywords: Administrative Data, Data Analysis, Data Visualization, Evaluation, Written Report
Policy Area Keywords: Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), School Readiness, State-Funded Preschool

Portfolio Entry 2: Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Research-Practice Partnerships

Project Overview

Background: The Agency of Education (AOE) currently has two ongoing research-practice partnerships related to the state's Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) education system. The first partnership is with the Regional Education Laboratory - Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI), which was formed during the first year of full implementation of UPK in 2016. The second contractual partnership is with the Education Development Center (EDC), which was formed in 2018 to conduct an evaluation of the UPK system as mandated by the Vermont legislature. Together, both partnerships advance research initiatives that inform the implementation of UPK (Act 166) in Vermont. Some example research topics include the analysis of enrollment patterns across demographic subgroups, characteristics of approved UPK programs and their attitudes towards UPK, the current delivery system and funding models, and parent choices regarding early care and education arrangements.

Goal: To support the research agendas of each research-practice partnership to help inform the continued refinement and implementation of Vermont's UPK system.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Participated in the design of the Pre-K Provider Survey (included as portfolio entry)
- Led Pre-K Provider Survey data collection efforts
- Contributed to literature review regarding teacher qualifications and child outcomes
- Provided feedback on project documents (e.g., family survey, interim and final reports)
- Participated in weekly partnership meetings
- Attended legislative hearings in which study findings were reported to relevant House and Senate committees

Activity Focus Keywords: Data Collection, Document Review, Evaluation, Implementation Research, Literature Review, Survey Design, Research-Practice Partnerships
Policy Area Keywords: Pre-kindergarten, School Readiness, State-Funded Preschool, Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Portfolio Entry 3: Analysis of Statewide School Readiness Data

Project Overview:

Background: The Agency of Education (AOE) requires all private and public prequalified Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) education programs receiving public funding as part of Vermont's Universal Pre-K system (Act 166) to complete progress monitoring assessments for each child enrolled in Pre-K. School readiness data is collected twice annually during the Pre-K year using the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSGOLD) assessment system. In addition, school readiness is assessed at the beginning of the Kindergarten year for all children using the Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4K!S) and is completed by Kindergarten classroom teachers.

Goal: To assist in the collection, management, and analysis of Vermont's school readiness child outcome data.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Assisted in the collection of R4K!S survey data by compiling field memos, emailing survey links, tracking survey responses, and reporting to AOE staff on data collection progress.
- Managed 2017-2018 TSGOLD data to provide timely answers to questions from program team.

- Analyzed and compiled TSGOLD data for Preschool Development Expansion Grant (PDEG) final report.
- Conducted a detailed analysis of 2017-2018 TSGOLD data to provide an in-depth understanding of children's academic, social-emotional, and physical development and performance across the schoolyear (included as portfolio entry).

Activity Focus Keywords: Administrative Data, Data Analysis, Data Collection, Data Visualization, Written Report
Policy Area Keywords: Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), School Readiness, State-Funded Preschool

Read More About Caroline's Fellowship Experience