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SRCD State Policy Fellow Portfolio Abstracts: Meghan McDoniel, Ed.M.

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Portfolio Entry 1: Reach and Risk Report

Project Overview:

Background: About every year, OCDEL releases a Reach and Risk report that highlights the reach of the programs they oversee at the county and school district level. These counties and districts are divided into four levels of risk, High Risk, Moderate High Risk, Moderate Low Risk, and Low Risk, based on a number of risk variables. This year, OCDEL sought to update this report to better reflect important risk factors and evaluate the efficacy of the levels of risk.

Goal: To review the existing Reach and Risk Report, compare to other states' reports, and to make updates of the report based on the group's consensus.

Contribution of Fellow:

- Researched other states' Reach and Risk Reports or Needs Assessments.
- Compiled information about how "risk" was measured in other reports.
- Added this information to a PowerPoint to present at a meeting.
- Took notes during the meeting and summarized these in the final report.

Activity Focus Keywords: Administrative Data
Policy Area Keywords: Reach and Risk Report

Portfolio Entry 2: Preschool Development Grant B-5: Needs Assessment

Project Overview:

Background: OCDEL seeks to improve and build upon the systems designed to help build equitable and sustainable early care and education (ECE) programs across the state through the Raising the Bar, Raising the Floor: Systems Building for the Future of Pennsylvania's Early Care and Education System project. This project is being supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), which provides states with funding to manage systems improvements. The first required activity for the PDG is to conduct a comprehensive Needs Assessment to understand the strengths of the ECE system in the state and identify the areas that need to be updated and connected to improve the overall quality of care, administrative infrastructure, and state ECE funding efficiencies.

Goal: To use a system scan to determine the strengths and challenges in Pennsylvania's ECE mixed-delivery system.

Contribution of Fellow:

- Conducted a crosswalk of the original Needs Assessment to determine what information was included and what information was missing given the guidelines provided by the PDG federal office.

- Incorporated information from the PDG narrative that corresponded to the missing information from the crosswalk.
- Reorganized the Needs Assessment to better reflect the larger themes of the Needs Assessment.
- Continuously helped with copy-editing and organizing of the document.

Activity Focus Keywords: Needs Assessment
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Development Grant B-5

Portfolio Entry 3: Preschool Development Grant B-5: Child Care Capacity

Project Overview:

Background: The Child Care Capacity initiative was designed to help OCDEL and families access up-to-date and accurate information of the capacity of child care providers across the state through programs' vacancy and waitlist numbers. This project is funded by the PDG B-5.

Goal: To enhance the capabilities of the Provider Self Service (PSS), a public facing system that allows families to search for providers in their areas. These enhancements will allow families to see real time vacancy and waitlist information for providers and OCDEL will be able to collect information about actual capacity from programs and providers across the state.

Contribution of Fellow:

- Attended meetings with Public Consulting Group, the consultant hired to create OCDEL's business requirements for the system upgrade.
- Represented the information included in the PDG application in meetings and in the business requirements.
- Reviewed the business requirements to ensure they reflected the purpose of the project.

Activity Focus Keywords: Data Management System
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Development Grant B-5, Provider Self-Service

Portfolio Entry 4: Preschool Development Grant B-5: System Analysis and Cost Modeling to Promote Quality

Project Overview:

Background: In improving overall quality in the mixed-delivery system of ECE in Pennsylvania, OCDEL sought to understand how subsidies, regulations, and policies impact access, cost, and continuity of care for families in the state. This project is funded by the PDG B-5.

Goal: To analyze the influence of payment, regulations, and policies on access, continuity, and cost of ECE.

Contribution of Fellow:

- Acted as team lead from OCDEL to report back for the PDG B-5.
- Collaborated with researchers from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) to develop the framework through which the data would be analyzed.
- Attended meetings to discuss the three studies.
- Connected researchers to OCDEL leaders to help in participant recruitment.

Activity Focus Keywords: Administrative Data, Provider Survey, Data Analysis, Policy Analysis
Policy Area Keywords: Preschool Development Grant B-5, Cost of Care

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