Session Objectives:

(1) **Provide overview of best practices and challenges** for program evaluability established in the literature
(2) **Review** the Evaluation Readiness Process outlined in the Evaluation Manual – explore alignment with literature
(3) **Share summary of perceived benefits and concerns** surrounding the evaluability process, expressed by local evaluators during Fall conference in NYC
(4) **Discussion** to move towards a consensus on local evaluators' perspectives on what is working, and how the evaluability process might be improved
(5) **Solicit suggestions for other topics** for the Network to explore.

In attendance:
- From Measurement Incorporated:
  - Jonathan Tunik, Project Director - Facilitating
  - Bernadette DeVito, Project Assistant

- From NYSED:
  - Elizabeth Whipple, New York State Coordinator, 21st CCLC

- Evaluators: See attendance list, attached

Minutes:

Jonathan indicated that the Evaluation Readiness Process will stay the same this program year, but NYSED and Measurement Incorporated are open to making revisions to the process going forward. The main purpose of this workshop is to get feedback from local evaluators on ways to improve the Evaluability Process.

Jonathan reviewed Best Practices in Assessing Program Evaluability, the Benefits and Challenges of Assessing Program Evaluability, an Overview of the Evaluability Process in NYS 21st CCLC programs, and a Summary of Perceptions about the Evaluability Process based on feedback offered by local evaluators that attended the NYC Conference held in October 2017 (*see PowerPoint Presentation for details*).

Jonathan then opened the floor to discussion and questions about the Evaluability Process. Following are the main issues raised by participants during the conversation:

Evaluation Manual

Should we still be working from the old version of the Evaluation Manual?

> Jonathan clarified that, for the time being, evaluators should be using the 2013 version of the Evaluation Manual, which is posted on the NYS 21CCLC website. There have been a few changes to the Evaluation Manual and we've communicated those changes via the Evaluation Network email list serve, and will continue to do so through the list serve and posting of FAQs on the "For Evaluators" page on the 21CCLC website. He requested that if anyone in the room has not been receiving list serve emails to email us at 21CEval@measinc.com and we will add them to the list. Measurement Incorporated has since gotten an Evaluators' section added to the NYS 21st Century Community Learning Centers website where we have posted evaluation FAQs, resources, etc., including Evaluation Manual updates. MI has also created an "Evaluation" category on the Discussion Board on the 21CCLC website, where folks can post questions and others can respond or follow conversation threads.

> --A participant requested that a one page summary of recent changes to the Evaluation Manual be developed and shared with the local evaluators. This will be posted on the website.

Logic Model

Is there a preference about the logic model format used by local programs?

> --Elizabeth Whipple stated that local programs can use whatever logic model format they like.
> --Jonathan noted that there are also references at the end of the slides that provide other templates. Slides will be distributed via the list serve.

Short –term Student Outcome Surveys

Are local evaluators required to survey students?

> --Elizabeth Whipple indicated that she feels surveying students is a good thing to do, but said the topic is open to discussion if local evaluators don't think it's valuable. However, programs do still need to assess their local student outcomes. **Update:** Elizabeth and the State Evaluation Team have agreed that a student survey is still required (except for early K-2 participants), although it does not need to be the SSOS. Observations and/or focus groups are recommended for younger students. Detailed guidelines will be provided in the FAQs and Evaluation Manual update.

> --Elizabeth clarified that the original communication indicated that evaluators aren't required to use the version of the student outcome survey that is in the Evaluation Manual (the Short-term Student Outcomes Survey) and that there will no longer be a random selection of sites to participate in a required use of the SSOS for the *Statewide* evaluation. Evaluators can use

whichever survey instrument they think makes sense for their program. Surveys should be aligned with 21C outcomes.

Are we required to have student survey approved by MI?

--Elizabeth Whipple said that approval is not necessary. **Update:** Programs will be required to provide a description of the appropriateness, and usefulness, of any locally selected or developed instruments in the Annual Evaluation Report (AER). Detailed guidelines will be provided in the AER guide and template, to be posted on the website.

I need to have surveys translated into languages that I do not speak. Any suggestions on how I can get them translated?

--Jonathan suggested that they check with the NYS Office of Bilingual Education (OBE); the roles of the State RBE-RN include helping with translations. It was also suggested that evaluators share any translations they may have identified (or developed, if they are willing) via the list serve, and they will be shared on the evaluators' web page.

Miscellaneous Feedback/input from Participants about Student Surveys

--Documenting changes in participants' social and emotional learning would be valuable.

--Elizabeth Whipple stated that CASEL has numerous surveys that measure social-emotional learning.

--A standard student survey developed by the State would be valuable. If all programs were using the same survey instrument, we could have comparison data.

--Jonathan pointed out that use of a standard State survey and of locally-selected surveys both have advantages and disadvantages. In addition to providing local programs with comparison data, a state survey would facilitate evaluation of State-level objectives. However, objectives vary for each program and it may be difficult to find a survey that aligns with all programs' objectives. Also, many published surveys for which validation research has been conducted come with user manuals that provide norms that can be used for comparison – but you need to make sure that the norms are appropriate for your population.

--Elizabeth Whipple said that the issue of programs using their own survey or a state developed survey is up for discussion among the evaluators network.   **Update:** As with the SSOS, a student survey is required (except for K-2 participants), but no particular survey is required, as long as it aligns with federal and local program objectives.

--Local evaluators should make use of the surveys and data that are already being used at schools (capturing things like demographics, outcomes, behavior incidents, etc.) and should try to use student level data (but acknowledged that this requires confidentiality agreements, etc.)

--Jonathan encouraged the group to send him any survey instruments that they feel are useful/high quality, and he will share them with the evaluation network.

Evaluability Checklist

Local evaluators provided feedback on the following aspects of the Evaluability Checklist:

Overall Usefulness

--It helps programs to focus on getting up and running, especially given the Dec 31 deadline. Before there was a deadline, people didn't prioritize it.

--It's necessary and valuable to complete the checklist during the first year.

--The checklist is valuable, gives teeth to the process. It's especially helpful for CBOs since schools aren't always cooperative.

> Elizabeth reminded the group that the Resource Centers can help with issues of cooperation between schools and CBOs.

Process

--It would be good to require that the Evaluability Checklist be completed during each program year since programs often have to adjust to different expectations, staffing turnovers, etc. and need to make changes to their Logic Model/Theory of Change.

--After a new program is implemented, there are often many changes to their Logic Model/Theory of Change, so going through the Evaluability Checklist in subsequent years can be helpful/appropriate.

--I'm in favor of going through the Evaluability Checklist every year because of the significant turnover in school administration, CBO staff, contextual changes. The Evaluability Process helps ensure that the evaluation data is valid.

--Having to submit it to the NYSED gives the process more "teeth", which is helpful.

--There was discussion about the fact that programs may be anxious about being rated as needing technical assistance or being determined "not evaluable"; perception among program staff that needing technical assistance is a bad thing. Possibility that programs would feel less apprehensive if the checklist was submitted to the Resource Centers instead of NYSED.

> --Jonathan pointed out that the checklist results/process are not used to inform the Risk Assessments.

--One option is to submit it both to NYSED and to the Resource Center

--One participant felt that the local evaluator should not be the one to determine Evaluability/Readiness—NYSED or MI should have that responsibility

--Local evaluators should consider completing the checklist with the district, in partnership with them, consistent with participatory evaluation

--In response to a question about who is responsible for signing the Evaluability Checklist, Elizabeth Whipple clarified that it's the responsibility of the program manager/director.

--In response to a question about what happens with the Evaluability Checklist once it's submitted/how the information is used, Elizabeth stated: It's open for discussion for how we will use the information. A few years back, the process was that SED reviewed the checklists, shared them with the statewide evaluator, and TA needs were identified.

--The idea was suggested of assigning some point system to the different components in the checklist, and using the point system across the state to help determine when programs need technical assistance.

--Add a section on checklist that says "This program needs technical assistance—yes/no." and then a place for the local evaluator to indicate the specific areas where TA is needed. (Several people voiced support for this idea.)

Format/Content

--Having it due in December and just a checklist format is limiting; would like to have an opportunity to identify shortcomings/challenges and have a mechanism for revisiting those items so it supports an ongoing process.

--It would be helpful if the Evaluability Checklist looked friendlier.

> Jonathan suggested that language could be added that makes it more explicit that it is not punitive (even if it is still submitted to NYSED).

--Several folks said that they wish the checklist allowed them to "say more"/elaborate on issues. In many cases, the response to an item cannot be summarized as either "Yes" or "No".

--Have "Please explain"/Comments section in all cases, not just if "no" is selected for an item.

--The Evaluability checklist assumes a working relationship between CBOs and schools.   In reality, that's not always the case. Suggestion to include a question about documentation that a school is ready to be a good partner.

> Elizabeth reminded the group that a signed partnership agreement was part of the application process.

--The checklist is a way to identify gaps in evaluability. But there needs to be a second step/mechanism for following up on issues of concern.

Miscellaneous

Elizabeth mentioned that she's been reviewing the Evaluability Checklists submitted by programs/local evaluators, and noticed instances where "Program Being Implemented as Designed" was marked "no" and "Program Ready for Evaluation" was marked "yes". She said it seems like a discrepancy and asked the group for feedback.

> Jonathan noted that the program model should define fidelity. However, fidelity is a continuum and there will always be some degree of variation, so this is not just a yes/no question. It may be that some programs are experiencing variations from implementation "as designed" but not significant enough to make them not evaluable.

> Elizabeth: The core activities of a program must stay true to what is outlined in the contract. Making changes to the scope of work in a contract would require a contract amendment, which is a lengthy/involved process – implementation that requires amendment is a clear example of where the response to "Implemented as Designed" should be "No".

--Local program staff and stakeholders often have not read the RFP and grant proposal. This is a problem. Is there some way to make sure they read these documents?

--Suggestion that MI collect thoughts/ideas from the evaluators network via Survey Monkey. Once that information is synthesized, could develop resources and identify professional development needs.

--Jonathan reminded the group about the Advisory Committee being put together, and invited any local evaluators with interest in serving on the panel to let him know.

Participants:

Amy Shema	Synergy enterprises Inc.
Ana Maria Grigoras, Ph.D.	L&G Research
Danielle Campbell, Dr. PH, MPH/NYC Evaluator	L&G Research
Dean Spaulding/Evaluator	Gullie LLC
Donna Harris Ph.D.	The Center for Governmental Research
Dr. Mansoor Kazi	Realist Evaluation Inc
Ellen Garcia	Interactive Health
Emily Hagstrom/Evaluator	Via Evaluation
Helen Scalise/Senior Manager	NYC Department of Ed.
Isabel Polon	L&G Research & Evaluation
Jane Greiner/Evaluation	Apter & O'Connor
Jessica Weitzel/President	Via Evaluation
Katherine Roberto	Interactive Health
Kimberly Hall/Evaluator	LPB Consulting
Laurel Tague, PhD/Evaluator	Information Resources
Lynn Moulton/Evaluator	Brockport Research Institute
Maeve Powlick	OCB LLC
Mansoor Kazi	SUNY Fredonia
Mark Davies/Evaluator	Bluepoint Consulting LLC
Marie Lorelei Watkins	MLW Consulting
Michelle Law	Laura Payne- Bourcy Consulting Services
P.B. Uninsky, Ph.D., JD	Youth Policy Institute
Rob Lillis/Evaluation	Evalumetrics Research
Ronda Wade/site Coordinator	The Center for Youth School #45
Shayna Klopott/Evaluator	L&G Research & Eval.
Sofia Oriedo	L&G Research & Evaluation
Tatiana Sava/Evaluator	L&G Research
Tracy Herman/Evaluator	Brockport Research Institute