Notes from 5/31 Evaluators Track Session

(The session PowerPoint agenda and all session handouts will be made available as attachments on the For Evaluators page of the 21C website at www.NYS21CCLC.org.)

(1) Review of the *Session Objectives* (see agenda)

(2) Review *The Role of the State Evaluator*

- **Facilitating network meetings** – providing TA, reviewing procedures, facilitating discussion around methods and strategies and sharing best practices). The goal is to avoid working in silos in order to strengthen ongoing program improvement by capitalizing on the group's collective experience and expertise; enable programs to share challenges, strategies, and best practices.
- **Conducting case studies** at 10 sites per year. The purpose is to explore common challenges and best practices, to identify what we can share with the State for policy and practice improvement. The focus will be on reporting statewide trends; the purpose is not to evaluate individual programs.
- **Shadowing the Resource Centers** when they conduct Welcome and Monitoring Visits. The purpose is to provide formative feedback to the RCs – the State evaluator is not conducting additional monitoring of programs.
- **Reviewing the Annual Evaluation Reports –** The purpose is to explore common challenges and solutions in program implementation and reporting. The goal is to standardize the content, not the format – which was supported through the reporting guidelines that we distributed earlier this year. Again, we will roll up findings about statewide trends across programs.

(3) Measuring Student Outcomes Beyond the APR

This goal is of interest because the APR only reports aggregate level outcomes, and there are issues around the completeness, accuracy and adequacy of the data as reported for APR.

Jonathan invited the group to brainstorm responses to this scenario: If there were *no obstacles* due to resources, data access or practicality of assessment, what student outcomes would be the most important to measure?

Following is the list of ideas shared by the group, in which Social-Emotional Learning emerged as a common theme:

--Social-Emotional Learning

- Ability to relate better to peers and adults. "I would stay away from academic outcomes."
- Emotional self-regulation
- Connectedness/sense of belonging among peers, parents, families
- Increased confidence in their abilities
- Civic engagement and sense of responsibility
- Empathy/active willingness to understand

--Student trust in peers and staff/teachers

--Academic and problem solving skills

- Creative thinking and problem-solving skills
- Academic growth at the child level during the program year

--Exposure to new ideas and experiences

--Growth over 5 years, in terms of student commitment and intrinsic interest in learning/curiosity

--Leadership and decision making skills

--Involvement in high risk behaviors

--"I want real, quality measurement….need time and resources to measure these things well. We're kind of measuring a lot of these things but not very well"

--Something meaningful and actionable for programs in real time

--More frequent reporting to programs on individual/child focused measures

(4) Assessing SEL

During the next portion of the meeting, participants were asked to review of a sample SEL assessment, the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) and then discuss, in small groups, their responses to a set of discussion questions. Following is a summary of the group share out:

--This model only works if the program model is predicated on assessment of students' SEL skills and targeted interventions. Otherwise, it would just be another burden for staff to administer, resulting in information they wouldn't use.

--Wondering about alignment between GPRA and the things we do measure (academic and behavioral).

> Jonathan reminded the group that in general, GPRA represents required reporting but is not a limit on what can or should be measured. Nevertheless, SEL skills are well aligned with Objective 1.2/GPRA Indicator 4 – improvements in student behavior. They are also well-established as an important mediating factor that facilitates academic achievement.

--How can we communicate our impact to the Federal government—because their reporting system is so limited?

> Jonathan reminded the group that the State is working on improving the reporting system, but in general, APR is not the only way to report to the Federal government. Local findings that align with State goals will get rolled up and reported to the State, which then submits reports to the USDOE beyond the APRs.

--Some projects I work with have SEL program components and they use the DESSA. These programs have SEL Coordinators who administer the DESSA. They do targeted interventions at various levels.

--It's hard to imagine fitting this data collection approach into our existing structures (since the grant design and funding is already set for the 5 year period). It would have made more sense to have these conversations prior to the RFP being developed.

It was acknowledged that measuring specific alternate outcomes, including SEL, might make the most sense for programs that have included such outcomes in their program design as established in their grant proposals.

--SEL measures are what 21C programs should be accountable for, since programs have limited ability to impact academic outcomes.

(5) ***Assessing Student Outcomes through Teacher Surveys:***
Presentation from Laura Payne-Bourcy, Laura Payne-Bourcy Consulting and the R/E/D Group

Dr. Bourcy presented the adaptation of the federal student survey, which they have modified to be used as a pre-post survey. She noted that the survey focuses on the outcomes from the original PPICS reporting, including homework completion, tutoring, efficacy, attention, and motivation to learn. Her group is currently working on a summary of their results in Excel.

Dr. Bourcy noted that because they obtained principal buy-in, they have been able to obtain a 100% return rate, and get it on the agenda for discussion during staff meetings. They did acknowledge however that they may have trouble "pulling this off" in one large program that serves 1,500 students.

Procedurally, because classroom teachers need to complete the survey for individual students, they administer the pretest for all 21^{st} CCLC enrollees, but then administer the posttest only to those who were identified as needing improvement.

In response to a question from another workshop participant, Dr. Bourcy noted that they have not yet looked at disaggregating the results for students who attended at least 90 hours, but there was agreement that this would be a useful analysis.

Resources for the above can be found on their website, www.lpbconsulting.org under the *Resources* tab.

(6) How to Make Use of Available Data:
Presentation by Ana Maria Grigoras and Danielle Campbell, L&G Evaluation

As evaluators of numerous NYC 21C programs, they face significant challenges in accessing data to demonstrate program impacts with limited resources. They indicated that they had brainstormed on this topic with Emily Hagstrom of Via Evaluation.

Ana Maria and Danielle invited participants to indicate the data sources they use as part of their 21C evaluations. Following is a summary of the methods mentioned:

District data (academic)
--Report cards; but it was noted that these data may be easier to obtain in programs managed by a CBO
--State test scores
--School climate surveys are currently conducted in NYC; NYSED is currently piloting these in other districts.
--Discipline incidents
One program indicated that they are able to obtain student level data by "sweet talking" district staff and establishing good relationships. However, some districts – notably NYC – have much stricter

regulations around data access. If records can only be obtained aggregated at the school level, the data are only meaningful for programs that are explicitly designed to achieve school-wide outcomes.

Other challenges about access to data in NYC:

--data aren't available until the end of December, which is too close to the APR reporting deadline.

--presenters felt that part of the difficulties with the NYC IRB is that they see us as researchers and not evaluators (describing respective roles as "proving vs. improving"); we need to make that shift in perception.

--We need a plan to get the NYC DOE and State Ed talking to one another about this issue of data access. We need a data sharing agreement between the state and NYCDOE. Years ago, CitySpan had a data sharing agreement in place—they would get unit record data directly from NYC DOE and store it. Evaluators would the run reports for the APR from this database.

(7) Review of Assessments that Individual Programs are Using

Topic tabled due to lack of time.

(8) Invitation to join discussion board, suggest topics for future networking.

--Approximately 8 evaluators indicated intention to sign up on the discussion board.

--Recommended topic: how to get data on non-participants.