**Workshop Session:** Evaluator Network Meeting
**Facilitator:** Jonathan Tunik, Senior Research Associate (MI)
**Date:** Monday 10/29/2018

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Sixteen local evaluators working with 21 CCLC grantees in NYC attended the Evaluator Network Meeting as part of the NYC Kick-Off Conference. Objectives for the meeting were to: (1) **Identify** issues of interest or concern to local evaluators; (2) **Explore** relevant topics that are of interest to local evaluators as well as those that align with state priorities; (3) **Learn** from experienced evaluators in the network and share best practices. The main topics discussed were the Evaluability Checklist and the AERs, as well as ongoing communication plans for this network and how MI can best provide support. The main points from each discussion are summarized below.

| Evaluability Checklist |
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- Changes: The Evaluability Checklist is currently being revised; revisions will be distributed soon and will be reviewed by an advisory group of local evaluators. Attendees were invited to contact MI if interested in joining this advisory group. Changes will be in format rather than content, so evaluators may begin completing the checklist using last year's version if they want to get started.

- Language: A review of the language in the form was requested: the "evaluability" label can be confusing, as even programs who are rated as "not ready to be evaluated" are still required to comply with all evaluation activities and reports. A possible new title is the "TA Checklist" as the intended purpose is to identify technical assistance needs; it is not a monitoring form.  It was also noted that the checklist needs to reflect the fact that many programs have multiple sites that often have different TA needs.

- Timing: A suggestion was made that the deadline for submission of the Checklist be moved from December to September since this is when evaluators begin working with grantees. However August and September are already very busy reporting times, and the checklist can still be completed in September for those who wish to even if it is not submitted then. Another suggestion was to submit the checklist on a rolling basis as needed, instead of a hard deadline – this option will be explored by MI. For this year however the deadline will remain 12/31.

| Annual Evaluation Reports (AER) |
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- Review: All AERs will be read either by MI and/or SED; MI will do a more in depth review of a selection of programs (20%). Like the program visits last spring, the purpose is not to evaluate individual programs/reports, but to identify trends; ultimately, it is to help program managers be better informed consumers of evaluation services.

- Audience: There was a lot of discussion about who is the intended audience for the AER: MI? SED? Advisory Board? Parents? Many attendees felt a conflict between what the guidelines required and what they felt their clients wanted to see: the required content for the report made it too complex for the programs to read, but if they targeted the report to their client's wants and needs then they would be spending most of their time on "non-required" aspects of the report. Some attendees felt the guidelines were more extensive than previous years but MI stated that Round 7 was based on Round 6 and should not be that different.

- Guidelines: From the perspective of the AER Guidelines, NYSED and MI are the main audience; this level of detail and rigor is necessary for MI to meet our obligations to SED, to draw conclusions that can help programs make better use of their evaluations. MI suggested using the Executive Summary

to provide highlights in a more accessible form; or using the report narrative to provide content that is accessible to the client audience, but providing required details and rigor in appendices.

- History/Context: One attendee shared their history with 21CCLC grants to provide context: having a local evaluator wasn't required until Round 4; evaluation manual/guide was only created 5 years ago; evaluation budgets used to be capped at 5% but are now at 8%. Increasing rigor has been a trend for several years, and increased requirements have been accompanied by increased funding.

- Participatory Evaluation: The programs must read the AERs to confirm accuracy, especially around the program description. This requires collaboration with programs to write the reports, which some attendees felt was different from previous years. MI stated that this was intentional, as we have been moving toward a "participatory evaluation" model. It was suggested that during the evaluation manual review it should be checked to clearly state this.

- Standardization: There was a range of discussion on standardization, with some attendees feeling that there was too much and not allowing for flexibility to meet client's needs, and others feeling there wasn't enough and asking to explore options for online submission through a standard template. Overall it was understood that common measures are needed in order to compare programs across the state, and MI reminded the group that 21CCLC funding has been threatened during the last two federal budget cycles and is still vulnerable to being cut back if not eliminated. It's important to have strong evidence so that NYS remains competitive. However it was a conscious decision not to provide a template to still allow for some flexibility in reporting. One area that is being explored by MI and NYSED is the potential for standardized SEL surveys.

- Changes: Not likely that any new questions will be added, other than optional question that might become required (e.g. data on summative outcomes were optional in Y1, but will become required if they are part of your grant objectives). Some questions may not be needed, or may have "no changes from year 1" for certain sections like program description. Attendees asked to be involved in review of any changes being made to give input/feedback; MI agreed. Evaluators that want to start on the report before new guidelines are released are asked to use last year's guidelines.

- Federal Reports: MI noted that the feds are looking at possibly changing the APR reporting. We recognize that we need to get feedback from local evaluators. USED organizes periodic listening sessions at conferences which are open to all participants (webinars are generally only open to state-level personnel, but MI might be able to act as a conduit). APR reporting should also become easier with the statewide data system that we are working on; one of the goals would be to enable programs to enter raw data and the system would generate the output needed for the APR report.

**Ongoing Communication**

- The group agreed that it would be beneficial to meet more frequently. In person meetings are challenging geographically (especially for RoS); instead will try virtual meetings (e.g. Zoom, WebEx). Discussed frequency: decided instead of a regularly scheduled meeting the group would prefer to convene as needed – when feedback is wanted on proposed changes, or to review results, etc.

- MI suggested forming advisory group sub-committee, as was done last year for the data systems. Any evaluators interested in the sub-committee were asked to reach out to MI.

**MI Support**

- Attendees requested that MI share findings that they are learning as soon as possible and for this information to be accessible to evaluators. Attendees also provided positive feedback that MI

shared findings, including % of enrollment target achieved, in the general session of the conference. MI stated that once the Year 1 report is approved by SED it will be posted on the RC website.

- Additional analysis on enrollment data was requested, including a breakdown of NYC vs. RoS grantees, as it is helpful for programs to see how they compare to other programs for context. MI agreed to provide this data soon. Individual program results will also be shared with the RCs in the next few weeks, who will distribute them to appropriate programs.

| Attendee Name | Firm |
|---|---|
| Sofia Oviedo | L & G Research and Evaluation |
| Alison Dorsi | L & G Research and Evaluation |
| Bethsaida Charlot | L & G Research and Evaluation |
| Shayna Klopott | L & G Research and Evaluation |
| Danielle Campbell/Lawrence | L & G Research and Evaluation |
| Emily Hagstrom | Via Evaluation |
| Bruce Kaufmann | Play Study Win |
| Ana Maria Grigoras | L & G Research and Evaluation |
| Ajay Khashu | Youth Studies, Inc. |
| Asuka Watanabe | ExpandEd Schools |
| Shannon Stagman | ExpandED Schools |
| Leland Gill | DAH Consulting, Inc. |
| Asere Bellow | Triad Consulting |
| Helen Scalise | NYCDOE OCS |
| Anne Thompson | Laurus LLC |
| Christine Corriston | Laurus LLCs |