

**Illinois State Board of Education**  
**PDG B-5 Planning Grant Program Progress Report**  
**Quarter Ended September 30, 2023**

**Activity One: Conduct or Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period**

*Home Visitor Workforce Needs Assessment Project:* The Illinois Network of Child Care Resources and Referrals (INCCRRA) is leading the Home Visitor Needs Assessment Project. During Q3, INCCRRA identified 10 additional areas within the state to host Round 2 and Round 3 focus groups, based on the analysis of home visitor locations and demographic criteria. The target areas were Lake County, DuPage/Kane County, Winnebago County, Lee/LaSalle/Whiteside County, Peoria/Bloomington/Champaign County, East Central Illinois, Madison/St. Clair County, Southern Illinois. All focus group questions were developed and submitted to an advisory group for review and feedback. The feedback was incorporated into the focus group questions.

*Integrate Gateways Registry Data into Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) Project:* INCCRRA was also selected as the vendor to facilitate the Integrate Gateways Registry Data into Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) Project. During Q3, INCCRRA was successful in obtaining a CloudPak account through the Illinois Department of Human Services and began working with the University of Illinois-Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) Team for assistance in getting their files uploaded.

*Educator Workforce Dataset Project:* In Q3, Northern Illinois University (NIU) continued to optimize the Illinois longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and Early Childhood Educator Workforce Dataset architecture to ensure clarity for agencies moving their data into CloudPak and joining with each other in the dataset. In July, key IT leadership from Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) attended a demonstration illustrating CloudPak's data staging process by the ILDS team. NIU continued ongoing discussions with Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regarding: 1.) defining a process with ISBE to request data for the Educator Workforce project, 2.) confirming with Jen Kirmes, ISBE's Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, that the Educator Workforce Standing Dataset project needs to include both high school and college data, 3.) developing an "initial" data request for high school data and ELIS/EIS data and sending it to ISBE for their review and edits, 4.) working with Jen Kirmes, ISBE's Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, the ILDS team is currently setting up the Early Childhood (EC) Educator Workforce Charter for its final set of reviews and edits by the Educator Workforce Committee and 5.) throughout the quarter, ongoing collaboration continued through multiple drafts of the Charter separately with Jen Kirmes, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), ISBE, and IBHE.

*Support for Developing Regional/Local Data Reports and Systems Project:* In addition to the Educator Workforce Dataset Project, NIU serves as the facilitator for the Support for *Developing Regional/Local Data Reports and Systems Project:* During Q3, NIU facilitated monthly Early Childhood Participation Dataset (ECPDS) Steering Committee Meetings throughout the quarter, which included reviewing the ECPDS front end user interface design, and the detail behind how the ECPDS reporting process will work with CloudPak.

The ILDS team continued working with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to finalize the ILDS Data agreement template and the following: 1.) worked throughout the quarter to finalize the language within the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) data agreement. Currently

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awaiting execution of IDHS' data agreement with IECAM to be fully executed before this agreement can move forward and 2.) continued to meet with IDHS to ensure Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) has the correct contract to act as IDHS' data manager.

In July, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and its data steward, Northern Illinois University's IIRC team, completed updating the CDDA IDs within ISBE's Early Childhood (EC) data and re-integrated it into CloudPak so it could be joined to the ECPDS.

In September, NIU IIRC created ISBE Data Virtualizations that will facilitate matching ISBE's data with IDHS data. Throughout this quarter, the ILDS team assisted agencies and Collaborative Communications (contractor) on activities that will lead to a user-friendly user interface (UI) for the ILDS Early Childhood Participation Dataset (ECPDS). (Please note that the contractor is not funded by this grant.)

**Highlights:**

- Based on its discovery work and feedback from the ILDS team and IECAM, Collaborative Communications completed and presented the first version of the ECPDS UI wireframe design to the ILDS team, IECAM team, and the Director of the Chicago Early Childhood Information Data System (CECIDS).
- The ILDS team assisted Collaborative Communications in scheduling focus groups to review the revised wireframes with various Birth to Five Councils and Head Start grantees.
- Collaborative Communications completed follow-up focus groups with multiple Birth to Five Councils.
- Work continues to assist in scheduling the Collaborative Communications' focus group with Head Start grantees and Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) Director.

**2. Problems/Challenges**

*Educator Workforce Dataset Project:* The multi-month delay of the full execution of the contract between University of Illinois – Champaign and ISBE was resolved in September 2023. Earlier in the quarter, lack of an executed contract led to a work stoppage by ILDS' key data integrator, IECAM, and its sub-contractor Chapin Hall, which has potentially impacted some deliverables.

**3. Significant findings and events**

*Support for Developing Regional/Local Data Reports and Systems Project:*

Multiple deliverables are contingent upon the execution of the IDHS data agreement with IECAM. Included in delayed deliverables are the DCFS data agreement to execute on its data request, the ILDS data request to have IECAM build reports against the ECPDS, and the IWERC data request to use ECPDS data for its analyses.

Since no school superintendents responded to the contractor's informal online survey regarding the design of the front-end tools, Collaborator Communications was requested to include the superintendents in one of their next contact points with ECPDS stakeholders regarding the ECPDS wireframes.

IECAM completed its testing of the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) geocoding software, and determined that while functionable, it doesn't have significant usability outside of Illinois' urban

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areas. The ILDS team and IECAM's next step is to meet with DEC/IDHS to share the results and better understand whether the accuracy of IDOT's geocoding is sufficient to meet their needs.

In Q3, work with the CECIDS model to rerun the program using updated ACS2021 data to determine the optimal approach(es) for Early Childhood Eligibility has been delayed until late November or early December 2023.

**4. Dissemination activities**

N/A

**5. Equity-related activities**

*Home Visitor Workforce Needs Assessment Project:* INCCRRA conducted an analysis for the Home Visitor Workforce Needs Assessment to determine the best locations to host focus groups. They considered areas of the state where there were a large proportion of BIPOC home visitors, as well as the inclusion of home visitors who worked in rural communities. Funding has been included in the grant to allow INCCRRA to reimburse participants for their mileage to attend focus group meetings, which is expected to help reduce a potential barrier to participation.

**6. Other activities**

N/A

**7. Activities planned for next reporting period**

*Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Project:* In Q4, INCCRRA will complete the following activities: 1.) continue to conduct in-person and virtual focus groups to collect thoughts and recommendations regarding salary increases, incentives, credentials, and pathways to home visiting, as well as barriers, 2.) develop and finalize questions for the fourth round of focus groups, 3.) host fourth round of focus groups. 4.) finalize the transcription and coding of the focus groups and 5.) create a final report regarding the findings from the focus groups, including recommendations, and share with state agency partners.

*Integrate Gateways Registry Data into ILDS Project:* In Q4, INCCRRA will work with the IECAM team to connect Gateways data to CloudPak.

*Educator Workforce Dataset Project:* During the next reporting period, NIU will complete the following activities: 1.) The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will complete a proof-of-concept project to test the use of the CDDA ID with ICCB data within CloudPak, 2.) NIU will submit an Educator Curated Dataset (originally called ELIS/EIS) Data Request for Gateway and ELIS/EIS data for review to ISBE 3.) establish a data agreement for IECAM to manage Gateways Data, 4.) review and edit the draft Educator Workforce Charter with all involved agencies and 5.) finalize approach for connecting ICCB, IBHE, IDES data to ILDS

*Local Support for Developing Regional/Local Data Reports and Systems Project:* Activities planned for the next reporting period include: 1.) work with the Governor's Office to finalize architecture approach, 2.) monitor the IDHS Agreement with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) until it is

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fully executed. This agreement will allow DCFS to begin its data request within CloudPak, 3.) meet with ISBE and IDHS/IECAM to review the contractor’s ECPDS UI design road map and agree on the near-term scope and UI deliverables, 4.) meet with IDHS to develop a long-term plan for receiving Head Start data from Illinois Head Start grantees (i.e., grantees using COPA or ChildPlus, and those using neither MIS vendor), 5.) using CECIDS’ eligibility approach, rerun the program using updated ACS 2021 data both with and without administrative data, 6.) develop and gain approval for Data Request allowing IECAM to build reports against the ECPDS, 7.) review wireframe designs with Head Start focus group, 8.) complete draft of survey based on feedback from focus groups and other input regarding the wireframes and draft user interface mock-ups, 9.) work with IECAM to design the underlying reports to support ECPDS’ Front End and 10.) develop IECAM scope and report definitions.

**Activity Two: Develop or Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period**

The contract for this activity is pending therefore work related to this project has not begun yet.

**2. Problems/Challenges**

N/A

**3. Significant findings and events**

N/A

**4. Dissemination activities**

N/A

**5. Equity-related activities**

N/A

**6. Other activities**

N/A

**7. Activities planned for next reporting period**

N/A

**Activity Three: Maximize Parent and Family Engagement in B-5 System**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period**

*Staff the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (FAC) Project:* Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) is the vendor that has been selected to staff the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (FAC). During Q3, IAFC hired a new staff member to lead the day-to-day work of the Family Advisory Committee. The FAC convened three times during the third quarter, IAFC supported the FAC members in a goal setting and action planning process using a “SMARTIE Goal” approach,

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shared information regarding engagement opportunities for FAC members, and co-developed a training and facilitations plan with the FAC. FAC members also participated in multiple engagement opportunities regarding the Early Learning Council Integration and Alignment Committee's Regional Intermediaries' project. Additionally, IAFC worked with COFI to design a training plan for the FAC that responded to FAC members' goals and interests.

IAFC worked with the FAC co-chairs and a FAC parent leader to plan meetings, tally votes, record the minutes, and support the overall operations of the FAC. In Q3, IAFC distributed monthly stipends to FAC members to compensate them for their time and expertise.

*Review of Regional Intermediary Structures Project:* Wendy McCullough, LLC serves as the consultant to lead the Review of Regional Intermediary Structures Project. During Q3, Wendy McCullough assisted the Early Learning Council Integration & Alignment Committee (IAC) develop and agree on the directional recommendations for aligning regional intermediary structures.

This included:

- Developing a list of recommendation ideas to consider based on input from the focus groups
- Creating a survey for IAC members and meeting participants to review and provide feedback on these ideas
- Analyzing this survey and IAC discussions to draft a preliminary directional recommendation for them to further debate, recognizing areas of consensus and priority
- Facilitating conversations to flush out concerns and additional detail in the recommendations (e.g., success indicators)
- Facilitating conversations to identify implementation considerations that would inform the State's planning process (the next phase of work).

Wendy McCullough also collaborated with IAC Co-Chairs to create materials and facilitate IAC meetings to provide time for the IAC, and other interested stakeholders, to shape these recommendations and ultimately agree on them.

*Developing Framework for How the State will Integrate Family Voice in Policymaking:*

NORC at the University of Chicago will facilitate the development and implementation of a stakeholder engagement process to authentically engage and elevate the voice of parents, providers, and communities in developing recommendations that prioritize equity as foundational to early childhood education and care systems-building within Illinois. The contract between NORC and the Illinois State Board of Education was executed in Q3. During this reporting period, NORC developed draft discussion guides and probing questions using a culturally responsive lens for the interactive focus group protocols and interviews with parents, providers, and key stakeholders (e.g., each discussion guide is customized for each audience – parents, providers, and communities). The NORC team also identified key stakeholders, direct service providers, and parent and family organizations to facilitate an equitable process of nominating potential participants for each of the respective focus groups.

## **2. Problems/Challenges**

*Staff the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (FAC) Project:*

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During Q3, the FAC worked to reshape its original goals to ensure they can be completed by December 2023. This was necessary due to the delay in launching the project, and for efforts to be made to rebuild the relationship between the FAC and the Early Learning Council. Training for the FAC members has moved more slowly than anticipated, as IAFC worked with the FAC co-chairs and members to revise the initial approach that IAFC proposed to ensure that the training opportunities provided to FAC members were relevant and added value to members of the FAC.

*Review of Intermediary Structures Project:* The Integration and Alignment Committee believes that the scope of this planning phase limits the ability to create meaningful recommendations for training and technical assistance (T&TA), for two reasons:

- 1.) there are many other 3<sup>rd</sup> parties that provide T&TA that are not within the focus of this work, and
- 2.) T&TA supports providers while the other functions focus more directly on helping families and children, which creates confusion on what the ultimate goals are for this work. Therefore, the IAC co-chairs recommend setting this function aside and finding a setting more conducive for developing comprehensive recommendations for T&TA (e.g., workforce development).

### **3. Significant findings and events**

*Staff the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (FAC) Project:*

In Q3, IAFC supported the FAC in setting and refining its goals to develop action plans using the SMARTIE (Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Ambitious, Relevant, Time-Bound, Inclusive, and Equitable) goal framework. The two goals that the FAC has established for itself for the remainder of the year are:

- Provide family voice on ELC and committee work that impacts families through engagement opportunities, and work with the ELC to embed a protocol for including family voice in the work of the ELC, including revisiting how the ELC/FAC work together.
- Review and respond to the [ISBE Advancing Preschool Inclusion in Community-Based Early Childhood Education Programs report](#) on barriers and potential recommendations for inclusion related to disabilities, racial disparities, economic disparities, and culturally responsive practices in early childhood education and care settings. IAFC will convey this information to the ELC and ELC subcommittees by December 2023.

IAFC also worked with COFI to develop a training plan for the FAC, which includes 3 trainings or facilitated convenings in 2023, with the remainder proposed to occur in 2024. IAFC presented these three trainings/convening to the FAC members during the September meeting. They include:

- Working Across Cultures (October)
- FAC Retreat (November)
- Conversation on Inclusive and Participatory Family Engagement Practices with the ELC (December)

*Review of Regional Intermediary Structures Project:* The IAC agreed on the following directional recommendations for aligning regional intermediary functions:

#### Aligned Governance and Systems

- Align service area boundaries for all regional intermediary structures to simplify navigation and consolidate partnerships (CCR&Rs, CFC/LIC, B-5 IL, ROE, AOK, CI).

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- Unify intake and application forms/processes to enable system points of entry to provide state-wide coordinated intake, eligibility determination, and referrals across ECEC programs (CCAP, EI, HV).  
Integrated Intake & Referral
- Expand system point of entry's scope and capabilities to provide integrated intake, referral, and a "warm hand off" across ECEC programs; collocate regional staff as possible to strengthen collaboration (CCR&Rs, CFCs, CI).
- Develop a state-wide integrated intake & referral data system to streamline referrals for regional intermediaries & providers (CCAP, EI, HV).  
Streamline and consolidate regional intermediary support for referrals to community resources (CCR&Rs, CFCs, CI).

Shared Community Development

- Merge regional intermediary councils and meetings to create one planning/reporting table per region for ECEC, coordinated by one regional intermediary but with a defined role and sufficient capacity for the other regional intermediaries to participate (CCR&Rs, LIC/CFC, B-5 IL, AOK, CI, ROE).
- Develop a single, shared ECEC agenda for each region that all regional intermediaries support (CCR&Rs, LIC/CFC, B-5 IL, AOK, CI, ROE).
- Unify needs assessments and parent surveys into one per region and create universal access to this input; Reduce cadence of assessments/surveys to shift resources to driving change (CCR&Rs, LIC, B-5 IL, AOK).

**4. Dissemination activities**

*Review of Regional Intermediary Structures Project:* In Q3, meeting materials were shared with IAC members and meeting participants in advance of the meeting so they could prepare for discussion in a timely manner. The discussions were also summarized and shared with the IAC.

**5. Equity-related activities**

*Staff the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (FAC) Project:* Illinois Action for Children provided simultaneous Spanish translation during the Committee meetings that were held in Q3.

*Review of Regional Intermediary Structures Project:* IAC meetings were open to the public and attended by about 50-60 participants each time (5x more than the appointed I&A Committee members). This provided a venue for transparency in the process and an opportunity to gather more diverse perspectives.

*Developing Framework for How the State will Integrate Family Voice in Policymaking:*

The draft discussion guides for the focus groups and parent interest form were developed from an equity, humanizing, culturally responsive, and equitable evaluation lens.

**6. Other activities**

*Developing Framework for How the State will Integrate Family Voice in Policymaking:*

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NORC discovered that it may be particularly beneficial to conduct a third, optional set of focus groups with organization stakeholders as a way to identify potential higher level structural issues and promote longer term accountability and sustainability; therefore, they included draft discussion protocol language for the three (two main and third optional) focus groups. The NORC team submitted a summary memo with the estimated budget amounts to ISBE for their review and approval. If approved, ISBE will work in partnership with NORC to complete the necessary budget and contractual amendments to include this third additional organizational focus group.

**7. Activities planned for next reporting period**

*Staff the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (FAC) Project:* During the next reporting period, Illinois Action for Children will continue to staff monthly FAC meetings, distribute stipends to FAC members, provide training to FAC members in partnership with COFI and connect FAC members to engagement opportunities across the early childhood education and care system.

*Review of Regional Intermediary Structures Project:* In Q4, Wendy McCullough, Consultant, will 1.) continue to schedule and facilitate monthly strategizing meetings with IAC co-chairs, 2.) prepare materials to share directional recommendations with the ELC Executive Committee, 3.) review directional recommendations with the field again (ECEC providers, staff of regional intermediaries, parents/FAC), 4.) prepare for and facilitate the IAC meeting that will be held in December 2023 and 5.) develop the first draft of the final report.

*Developing Framework for How the State will Integrate Family Voice in Policymaking:* During Q4, the NORC team will complete the following deliverables: 1.) schedule an interactive focus group with parents from the FAC in partnership with the Department of Early Childhood at ISBE and Illinois Action for Children, 2.) acquire IRB approval to conduct nine focus groups with parents, providers, and stakeholders, 3.) revise draft discussion guides, flyers, and interest forms for parents, providers, and stakeholders based on the Department of Early Childhood at ISBE feedback, 4.) begin contacting key stakeholders, direct service providers, and parent and family organizations to facilitate the process of nominating potential participants for each of the respective focus groups and 5.) begin conducting a series of the six currently funded onsite and virtual interactive focus groups and interviews with parents, providers, and stakeholders (which may include the three additional organizational focus groups if approved by ISBE). The NORC Team will schedule a series of interactive focus groups and interviews with parents, direct child care service providers, and organizational stakeholders in partnership with the Department of Early Childhood at ISBE.

**Activity Four: Support the B-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period**

*Prior Learning Assessment Project:* The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referrals (INCCRRA) leads the work related to the Prior Learning Assessment Project.

In Q3, a recap of recommendations was shared with faculty to garner additional feedback for recommendations to the state which will be included in the final report. Recommendation topics



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include consensus on number of assessment retakes, amount of awarded credit to the learner, and number of attempts a learner is allowed. Additional recommendations are under review pending data analysis to help better inform decisions.

Two new additional groups of scenarios for assessments were initiated for learners. One is for retakes, and one is for initial assessments. These new assessments are available in both English and Spanish. During Q3, a CBEN marketing consultant continued to refine marketing materials with input from PLA pilot faculty to help inform the development of the materials that can be used for the Illinois ECE workforce.

*Pyramid Model Implementation Project:* The Pyramid Model Consortium serves as the consultant to facilitate the work related to the Pyramid Model Implementation Project. In Q3, programs received individual coaching and participated in communities of practice with their process coach(es). All family child care programs and Benchmarks of Quality were entered into PIDS and each program was provided access tokens to the Birth-to-Five, Wellness, and Trauma-Informed Care Modules. Additionally, two Implementation Site Leadership Teams located in Springfield, IL and Lisle IL, launched eleven (11) Pyramid Model programs. In Q3, the Pyramid Model Consortium facilitated the State Leadership Team Bi-Monthly Meeting.

**2. Problems/Challenges**

N/A

**3. Significant findings and events**

N/A

**4. Dissemination activities**

*Prior Learning Assessment Project:* Institutions outreached to local workforce members to enroll in the Prior Learning Assessment and/or to individuals who may need to ‘retake’ the assessment. INCCRRA staff and C-BEN consultants continued to support learners (English and Spanish) in registering and scheduling for Prior Learning Assessment sessions with Mursion.

*Pyramid Model Implementation Project:* The Pyramid Model Consortium disseminated the following information in Q3:

- Provided tokens for programs to access the Trauma-Informed Care & the Pyramid Model and Wellness modules
- The “Six Phases of Implementation Manual” for Process Coaches was reviewed
- Posted Illinois’ Pyramid Model documents on the PMC website, including the 2022 End of Year Summary Brief, IL Implementation Guide, How to Become an Implementation Site and developed data quarterly reporting template for STAR NET, ECPL, CC, HS

**5. Equity-related activities**

*Prior Learning Assessment Project:* During Q3, English and Spanish assessments continued to be offered to learners participating in the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) project from the participating pilot higher education institutions. There were eight (8) learners who participated.

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**6. Other activities**

*Prior Learning Assessment Project:* INCCRRA staff and C-BEN consultants continue to support learners (English and Spanish) in registering and scheduling for Prior Learning Assessment sessions with Mursion.

**7. Activities planned for next reporting period**

*Prior Learning Assessment Project:* In Q4, INCCRRA will develop the first draft of the final report which will include Prior Learning Assessment project workforce data, credit earned by incumbent workforce members, and recommendations for statewide scale up.

*Pyramid Model Implementation Project:* The Pyramid Model Consortium will complete the following activities in Q3: 1.) Pyramid Model Implementation programs will complete the Birth-to-Five modules, 2.) continue Statewide Cohort meetings, individual coaching, and community of practices, 3.) gather and enter the second set of Benchmarks of Quality from all programs, 4.) develop State Leadership Team Implementation Plan and 5.) review and revise “Readiness checklist” with Implementation Workgroup.

**Activity Five: Support Program Quality Improvement**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period**

*Pilot Strategies for Inclusive Community-Based Early Childhood Special Education Project:* The School Association for Special Education in DuPage (SASED) serves as the contractor to lead the work related to the Pilot Strategies for Inclusive Community-Based Early Childhood Special Education Project. SASED has sub-contracted with Early CHOICES, Inc. to facilitate the activities listed in the contract deliverables. Early CHOICES, Inc. worked with the three communities that were selected to receive a \$25,000 stipend to serve as Community Inclusion Teams (CIT’s). The three communities that were selected include Collinsville, Quad Cities (Moline area) and Peoria County. Each community signed a contract with SASED and have been approved for payment. Collinsville, Peoria and the Quad Cities hosted meetings in September 2023. Each CIT leader also met with Early CHOICES to plan the work and the agenda for the meeting.

Early CHOICES, Inc. continued to interview programs to identify major cost components and drivers, and any policy changes necessary for communities to implement itinerant services. The program finalized the Inclusion brochure updates from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and sent the brochure to be translated into the top five languages that are represented across Illinois early childhood households as reported by ISBE. A copy of the brochure can be found here:

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Inclusion-Brochure.pdf>

*Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners:* The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning serves as the contractor to lead the work related to the Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners Project. Early Childhood Professional Learning (ECPL) is a division within The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning that facilitates the activities outlined

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in the deliverables of the contract. During Q3, ECPL held two project overview sessions for potential ECPL consultants interested in supporting community-based organizations with PFA programs. The program also hosted two kick-off webinars. During Q3, eight ECPL consultants completed the Pre-IPT training and received their screening materials. By the end of the quarter, nine community-based organizations that have PFA programs committed to participating in this project and six programs submitted ISBE HLS data.

- 435 children have been screened with the ISBE Home Language Survey
- 373 indicated only English in the home. No further screening needed
- 62 indicated a language other than English (LOTE) in the home and will be screened with the English Pre-IPT

*Multi-State Research on Early Intervention (EI) Models:* The Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) was fully executed in August 2023. During Q3, IDHS worked with their training partner, University of Illinois, to add to their budget, include contract deliverables and hire a contractor. The University of Illinois will hire a consultant to begin the work.

## **2. Problems/Challenges**

*Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners:* Some of the contact information data provided by ISBE was either incorrect or missing, which caused a short delay for some programs to be notified of the webinar held in Q3. ECPL received a few returned emails after sending the invitation because contact information was incorrect. No contact information was listed for CBOs in Chicago, only Chicago Public Schools (CPS) staff contact information was provided. By the end of July, all programs on the list received an invitation. Also, ECPL discovered that some CBOs, including several large PFA programs, are already screening children and putting the data into SIS. Therefore, they do not qualify for this project. For the first kickoff, 21 people registered but only 12 attended. ECPL then called each CBO with a downstate PFA program. For the second kickoff, 37 people registered and 34 people attended. The phone calls resulted in a higher registration rate and higher attendance rate. During the phone calls, ECPL learned of a perceived data entry issue resulting in programs entering incorrect home language/native language data into SIS.

*Multi-State Research on Early Intervention (EI) Models:* There was a delay in finalizing the IGA between ISBE and IDHS. IDHS accounted for the time lost by reducing the original scope of work and the budget amount. The scope of work was scaled back to only include a Phase 1 planning process with the following deliverables:

- Identify Project Coordinator
- Analyze Service Delay Data/ baseline data
- Identify necessary modifications to policy and procedure
- Develop a PD plan

Recruitment and training (may occur in 2 phases)

- Identification of 1 area for initial pilot phase.
- Identification of 2 additional areas for 2<sup>nd</sup> phase

Develop evaluation plan

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Additional planning procedures and processes as needed.

IDHS is concerned given the timing that they will not be able to spend down and meet the deliverables. Therefore, they would like to request a no cost extension.

### **3. Significant findings and events**

*Pilot Strategies for Inclusive Community-Based Early Childhood Special Education Project:* In Q3, the CIT's shared an update with the advisory group and Early CHOICES, Inc. began reviewing a draft policy scan. Early CHOICES, Inc. offered ongoing technical assistance and professional development to the communities that were not selected to serve as a Community Inclusion Team.

*Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners:* There are a sufficient number of programs with more than 20 children enrolled in the PFA program per site in need of screening. As a result, ECPL is now planning for most programs to have on-site test examiners supported by a traveling test examiner.

In Q3, ECPL learned:

- some CBOs are using the Creative Curriculum Home Language Survey instead of the ISBE HLS
- some CBOs were unaware of the ISBE Home Language Survey
- some CBOs do not give out an HLS because they believe that all their students speak only English
- some CBOs are experiencing difficulty inputting home language/native language into SIS
- some CBOs submit their data to another entity (e.g., school district, DFSS) but because they don't have access to SIS, they can't check to see if/when that data is uploaded into SIS

The following reasons were given for not attending a kickoff and/or not participating in this project:

- the timeline for this project is not convenient
- the program is understaffed
- too tight of a budget for the next two years
- the program will not receive a monetary stipend from PDG for their on-site staff to screen children
- the program has never had an English Learner enrolled at their site

### **4. Dissemination activities**

*Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners:*

In Q3, an overview of the Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners project was presented to community-based organizations that have PFA programs in Illinois.

### **5. Equity-related activities**

*Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners:*

The English Learner Identification Project is an equity initiative. According to Illinois School Code, PFA programs operated by school districts are required to screen, identify and serve English Learners. PFA programs operated by CBOs do not have these requirements. This project seeks to determine, for the

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first time, the number of English Learners in PFA community-based organizations across the state by screening an estimated 7,600 children using the two-step ISBE screening process of the Home Language Survey and, when indicated, the Pre-IPT.

**6. Other activities**

N/A

**7. Activities planned for next reporting period**

*Pilot Strategies for Inclusive Community-Based Early Childhood Special Education Project:* In Q4, Early CHOICES, Inc. will 1.) continue Communities of Practice for CIT leaders, 2.) develop an action plan for each CIT and 3.) create materials as needed to support community-based organizations and school districts.

*Developing a Common Process to Identify English Language Learners:* Activities planned for the next reporting period include: 1.) determine which sites qualify to have on-site test examiners, 2.) purchase Pre-IPT test kits, 3.) order iPads, 4.) begin screening with Home Language Surveys and determine students needing Pre-IPT assessments, 5.) set testing schedules for Pre-IPT test administration and 6.) on-site test examiners will complete the online Pre-IPT training and submit their certificate to ECPL.

*Multi-State Research on Early Intervention (EI) Models:* The activities planned for the next period include: 1.) analyze service delay data/ baseline data, 2.) identify necessary modifications to policy and procedure, 3.) begin the development of a professional development plan, 4.) recruitment and training for pilot, 5) develop an evaluation plan and 6.) create additional planning procedures and processes as needed.

**Program Performance Evaluation**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period**

*Program Performance Evaluation:* The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) contracted with the University of Illinois- Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC) to facilitate the Program Performance Evaluation during the 2023 PDG B-5 Planning Grant cycle. In Q3, IWERC revised the quarterly evaluation form (the Continuous Quality Improvement “CQI” form) to tailor it more carefully to each PDG B-5 project activity. The IWERC Team also curated a list of data issues and set a meeting to begin investigation of these issues with the ILDS/IECAM project leads. During this reporting period, IWERC revised, finalized, and disseminated a survey for first use by the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council.

**2. Problems/Challenges**

The IWERC Team is awaiting completion of projects by other PDG B-5 activities, as well as the resumption of the Early Learning Council (ELC) committees, to move forward on some pieces of the work.

**3. Significant findings and events**

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N/A

**4. Dissemination activities**

N/A

**5. Equity-related activities**

N/A

**6. Other activities**

N/A

**7. Activities planned for next reporting period**

Activities planned for the next reporting period include: 1.) disseminate survey, 2.) facilitate data structure meeting with ILDS & IECAM teams; outline key issues, 3.) finalize metrics for each PDG B-5 activity and 4.) finalize PDG B-5 database.