Mathematica

Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC)

SFEC Director Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with us today. My name is _____ and this is my colleague, _____. As I explained in my email, our company Mathematica has been hired by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct a study of the implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers, or SFEC, program. Today I want to learn more about the implementation of your SFEC.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary; if you do not feel comfortable answering any specific question, we can skip that question and move on to the next. The report prepared for the study will not associate responses with specific individuals. The study will not disclose the names of individual study respondents, except as required by law. Mathematica follows the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences at the Department of Education [*Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183*].

_____ will take notes during our conversation. We also would like to record our conversation to make sure we capture everything you share. The notes and recording will not be used for any other purpose or shared with anyone outside the study team. Would it be okay to record our conversation?

SFEC Director Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. We will be referring to your responses in the SFEC Director survey and following up for more information about some of the survey questions.

My first set of questions is about your program activities and the SFEC's program priorities.

RQ1.1: What common activities do grantees report providing?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A1 FOLLOWUP

1. In the survey you reported you spent the largest amount of funds on the following three types of activities [INSERT UP TO 3 ACTIVITIES WITH LARGEST FUNDING TOTAL in each of the two time periods in A1]. (4 minutes)

    • We realize that money may not be the best reflection of priorities. Would you say that these three activities reflect your three greatest priorities?

        – [IF YES:] Can you tell me about why these activities are your greatest priorities?

        – [IF NO:] What are your top three priorities? Do you have any insight into why your priorities do not align with the activities where you spent the greatest amount of funding?

2. The survey asked about percentage of funding for technical assistance activities and funding for direct services activities in two fiscal years, October 2020 through September 2021 and then October 2021 through April 2022. Based on your survey responses to those questions, we determined that your percentage of funding focused [more on technical assistance/direct services in [year] than [year]]/[about equally on both technical assistance and direct services in both years] [SELECT BASED ON ANALYSIS FROM SURVEY RESPONSES IN SFEC DIRECTOR A1]. (5 minutes)

    • Why do you think you focused…

        – [IF FOCUSED MORE ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OCTOBER 2020– SEPTEMBER 2021 AND OCTOBER 2021–APRIL 2022]: on technical assistance in both fiscal years?

        – [IF FOCUSED MORE ON DIRECT SERVICES OCTOBER 2020–SEPTEMBER 2021 AND OCTOBER 2021–APRIL 2022]: on direct services in both fiscal years?

        – [IF FOCUS CHANGED FROM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN OCTOBER 2020– SEPTEMBER 2021 TO DIRECT SERVICES IN OCTOBER 2021–APRIL 2022]: changed from technical assistance in the first fiscal year to direct services in the second fiscal year?

        – [IF FOCUS CHANGED FROM DIRECT SERVICES IN OCTOBER 2020– SEPTEMBER 2021 TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN OCTOBER 2021–APRIL 2022]: changed from direct services in the first fiscal year to technical assistance in the second fiscal year?

        – [IF FOCUS WAS EQUALLY BOTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DIRECT SERVICES IN OCTOBER 2020–SEPTEMBER 2021 AND OCTOBER 2021–APRIL 2022]: about equally on both technical assistance and direct services in both fiscal periods?

    • Is the focus different now in 2022 from what you expected in 2018 at the time of your original application? (3 minutes)

        – [IF YES]: How and why did the focus change?

- If the major reason for the change was the pandemic, please describe how and why the pandemic caused the specific kind of change we've just discussed (for example, from direct services to technical assistance, or vice-versa)?

Compared to today, do you plan to continue focusing more or equally on [direct services activities/technical assistance activities/both direct services and technical assistance activities about equally] in the next few years of the grant? (2 minutes)

RQ1.3: Are the common topical areas grantees emphasize in their family engagement activities aligned with the other program priorities (i.e., family literacy, educational choice, evidence-based direct services, and dual capacity-building)? Do the priorities under which grantees applied play a large role in which topics get most attention?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A6 AND A7 FOLLOWUP

3. Next, let's focus on the program priorities of family literacy, educational choice, evidence-based direct services, and dual capacity building and the various activities the SFEC grant supported for each of those.

- [IF ANY A6=1] Looking at your responses to the survey on question A6, how did you implement these evidence-based direct services activities? (4 minutes)

    - [IF A6i=1]: You indicated doing "Other National Centers for Families Learning models or approaches." What are these models or approaches? (2 minutes)

- [IF A7=MULTIPLE SELECTED] On the survey at question A7, you listed [FILL]. Of these, which has been the most impactful? Why? (3 minutes)

RQ2.1: Which key factors do grantees find most influential? Why? What factors contributed to greater SFEC and SEA collaboration?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A9 AND A15 FOLLOWUP

4. You noted the most important factor when making decisions about activities is [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY QUESTION A9 MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR]. Can you tell me what made this factor the most important influence in your decision making about activities? (3 minutes)

- One of the options we included at question A9 was "needs assessments". Would you please describe your needs assessment process? How have you used the findings in your decisions? (1 minute)

- Tell me about the role of the advisory committee. You noted that the committee [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A15=1 OR 2/A15a OPEN ENDED]. How does the committee influence the work conducted by the SFEC? (3 minutes)

> RQ2.1. Which key factors do grantees find most influential? Why? What factors contributed to greater SFEC and SEA collaboration?

SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A10 AND A11 FOLLOWUP

5. Next, let's discuss your partnership with the state education agency. You noted that the frequency of engagement with the SEA is [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A10]. Would you describe how you engage and communicate with the SEA? (2 minutes)

6. In what ways or areas do you think the collaboration between the SFEC and the state education agency was strong or worked well? From your perspective, what contributed to successful collaboration with the state education agency? What factors contributed to those areas of successful collaboration? (3 minutes)

7. You noted the following issues were challenges in your collaboration with your state agency [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY IF A11=1 or 2]. (3 minutes)

   - Why was that?

   - What are some of the lessons you identified in working with the state education agency?

> RQ3.2: To what extent are outreach and services/activities directed toward different types of disadvantaged families and high-need schools and communities?

SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A3 AND B1 FOLLOWUP

8. Next let's discuss the families and schools to which your services are targeted. In your survey, you indicated that some of your direct services were targeted towards [INSERT COLUMNS CHECKED FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A3].

   - How did you engage these specific types of families for direct services? Did your approach differ for different activities or target families? (3 minutes)

   You noted the following populations were difficult to reach [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY B1]. What were the challenges in reaching these populations? (3 minutes)

9. Did you design your technical assistance to specifically reach high-needs schools and communities across the state? (2 minutes)

   - [IF YES:] How did you design the technical assistance to target specific populations? (3 minutes)

   - Did any schools or communities reach out directly to you for information and resources? How did they reach out? (1 minute)

   - Have you experienced any challenges accommodating schools' or communities' needs through your technical assistance? [IF YES:] What were these challenges? (2 minutes)

RQ3.2: To what extent are outreach and services/activities directed toward different types of disadvantaged families and high-need schools and communities?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY A16-A20 FOLLOWUP

10. Next I wanted to ask about the specific districts and schools you work with. The new Annual Performance Report (APR) instructs you to list the districts and schools that your SFEC works with. (5 minutes)

- At question A16, the survey asked about the districts you worked with most intensively. What does it mean for you to be *working intensively* with a district?

- What kinds of direct services did you provide to districts?

- [IF APR LISTS SCHOOLS]: At question A19, we asked about working intensively with schools. What does it mean for you to be *working intensively* with a school?

- [IF APR LISTS SCHOOLS]: What kinds of direct services did you provide to schools?

- At question A17 [IF APR LISTS SCHOOLS: and A20], the survey asked about how you identified these districts [and/or schools] that you worked with. You indicated [INSERT A17 AND/OR A20 RESPONSES}. Can you tell me more about that? Was your SEA involved?

RQ4.1: What challenges have grantees faced providing technical assistance?
RQ4.2: What challenges have grantees encountered providing direct services?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY B3a AND B3b FOLLOWUP

11. You indicated on question B3a that the following issues were challenges to providing technical assistance activities [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY TOP THREE CHALLENGES AT B3a]. Have any of these challenges been particularly significant? Please describe. Were the challenges related to recipients reaching out for services? (3 minutes)

12. You indicated on question B3b that the following issues were challenges to providing direct services to families [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY TOP THREE CHALLENGES AT B3b]. Have any of these challenges been particularly significant? Please describe. (3 minutes)

13. You also noted some strategies your program had used to overcomes these challenges [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY ALL RESPONSES SELECTED AT B4]. Tell me more specifics about the strategies. What are they, and in what ways did they help you overcome challenges? (3 minutes)

RQ4.3: How has COVID challenged grant implementation? Do grantees intend to incorporate any lessons learned into their post-COVID business as usual? Did the SEAs report that SFECs provided support that expanded their capacity to reach LEAs and families in greatest need?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY C1 FOLLOWUP

We are interested in how the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced the implementation of your SFEC program.

14. You cited in your survey the COVID-19 pandemic <u>negatively</u> affected your ability to provide the technical assistance and direct services [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY C1=1]. In what ways were these activities negatively affected? (3 minutes)

15. You cited in your survey the COVID-19 pandemic positively affected your ability to provide the technical assistance and direct services [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY C1=3]. In what ways were these activities positively affected? Did COVID increase the demand for your services? (3 minutes)

RQ3.3 Has the focus on directing services toward disadvantaged populations changed as a result of COVID? How?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY C3 FOLLOWUP

16. Did the COVID-19 shift the extent to which you were directly servicing disadvantaged populations? If so, in what ways? (2 minutes)

17. In your survey, you indicated on question C3 that COVID-19 negatively affected your ability to serve the following populations [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY QC3= 1]. How did the pandemic negatively affect your ability to serve this population? (2 minutes)

18. Did the pandemic increase the need to serve this population? If so, in what ways? (2 minutes)

RQ4.4: What strategies have grantees used to overcome identified challenges? What supports do grantees need to overcome remaining ones?
SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY C4 FOLLOWUP

19. In your survey you indicated that your program used the following strategies to provide services to families during the pandemic, which we defined as starting in March 2020: [INSERT FROM SFEC DIRECTOR SURVEY ALL RESPONSES SELECTED AT C4].

20. Have you incorporated any new strategies or lessons that you think you will continue to use? (3 minutes)
    – [IF YES:] What are they?
      o Why have you decided to continue with these innovations? Tell me about their value.

21. Please give some examples of activities you are using to build SEA, LEA, school, family or parent, or others' capacity that might continue after the grant ends. (4 minutes)

22. In your evaluation activities, are you building evidence for the types of services and activities you are conducting?
    • Can you tell me more about the design of your evaluation? For example, is it an impact evaluation, pre-post study, or something else? What are you focusing on? How are you collecting data.

Thank you very much for your time today. Those are all the questions I had for you. Do you have any other comments you would like to add before we go?

[END]