

# Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC)

## State Education Agency Interview Protocol

### THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to provide the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, with information to help refine and guide program development in the area of family engagement. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 45 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number and expiration date for this collection are XXXX-XXXX, Exp: XX/XX/XXX. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to ICDOcketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-XXXX. Do NOT return the completed survey to this address.

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. One part of this study is understanding how SFECs work with their state education agencies.

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?

# State Education Agency Interview Protocol

## Program Priorities

1. Tell me about how the SFEC works to engage the state education agency on family engagement activities. What's the process for that? What kinds of family engagement activities have you focused on with the SFEC? These could be activities related to, for example, literacy, educational choice, or capacity building.
  - Are you involved in identifying or selecting the districts and schools that the SFEC works with? If so, what criteria guides you?

RQ1.6: Did SEAs report alignment and support from the SFEC on the pressing state family engagement priorities?

SEA SURVEY Q1 and Q2

2. Let's talk next about how well the priorities of the SFEC align with the top state priorities around family engagement. You indicated in the survey that the top state priorities were [INSERT SEA SURVEY RESPONSES Q1]. And you felt the SFEC technical assistance or direct services activities were [INSERT SEA SURVEY RESPONSE Q2] with the state-level family engagement priorities.
  - In what ways is the work of the SFEC currently aligned with the five current top priorities? How do you work with the SFEC to align with these pressing state priorities?
  - [IF SEA SURVEY Q2= 1 OR 2; ALIGNED:] What activities are aligned well? How did you achieve this alignment?
  - [IF SEA SURVEY Q2= 3 OR 4; IF NOT ALIGNED:] What activities are misaligned? What factors do you think have led to the misalignment?
  - Have your priorities changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how? Has the alignment of the SFEC's work changed over the course of the pandemic, and if so, how?

RQ1.6: Did SEAs report alignment and support from the SFEC on the pressing state family engagement priorities?

SEA SURVEY Q3

3. I'm also interested in learning about how the activities of the SFEC specifically support the top state family engagement priorities. On question 3 in the survey, you indicated the SFEC has most commonly supported the state education agency on [INSERT RESPONSES AT SEA SURVEY Q3].
  - How did these SFEC activities support the top state priorities? Could you give an example of a major activity that supports a top state priority? What makes this activity supportive?
  - Are there top state priorities the SFEC activities do not support or any SFEC activities that you view as ineffective? Could you give an example of an activity you think is ineffective in supporting a state priority?

## Increased State Capacity

RQ1.5: Did the SFECs increase the capacity of SEAs to implement and sustain family engagement activities? Specifically, did SEAs report increased capacity across their state to implement direct services? Did SEAs report learning about family engagement activities that could be implemented across the state?

### SEA SURVEY Q4

4. Let's talk next about the ways in which the SFEC specifically supports and increases the state's *capacity* to improve family engagement. *These reflect responses to the survey question 4.* Of the areas where the SFEC helped increase or develop your capacity, which has been the most important? At the SEA level? At the district level? At the school level?
- Give a prime example (individual, organizational, policy, or resource) of how the SFEC builds capacity at the SEA level.
  - Give a prime example (individual, organizational, policy, or resource) of how the SFEC builds capacity at the district level.
  - Give a prime example (individual, organizational, policy, or resource) of how the SFEC builds capacity at the school level.

## Next, I'd like to hear more about your partnership with the SFEC.

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

### SEA SURVEY Q5, Q8, Q9

5. You indicated in the survey (Q8) that overall you felt [satisfied/dissatisfied] with the partnership between the SEA and SFEC.
- Do you think the frequency of communication (Q5) is appropriate?  
Are the areas of collaboration (Q5) the right ones? Are there others where you would like to see more collaboration? Are there ones where you would like to have less?
6. You noted some challenges in collaborating with the SFEC [Q9 any row = 1 or 2]. What is an example of when it was particularly challenging, and how did it affect the SEA or the SFEC's ability to conduct family engagement activities? What do you think would need to change in your SEA or the SFEC to contribute to a stronger collaboration on family engagement?
- Can you give an example of an area where you felt it was particularly easy to use SFEC services? Which elements do you think contribute to the ease in collaboration in this example? (For example, areas you said were not challenging were available staff, time to partner, support for family engagement from leadership).
  - [IF Q9 (ANY ROW a-h= 3): [You also/You] indicated that it was [Q9 IF ANY ROW a-g=3: not at all challenging to collaborate on [INSERT Q9 ROWS a-h=1 OR 2] with the SFEC over the course of the grant period. [IF Q9 (ANY ROW a-h= 3]. In what ways or areas do you think the collaboration was strong or worked well?

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 SFECs provide support that expanded SEA capacity to reach LEAs and families in greatest need?

SEA SURVEY Q10

7. The COVID-19 pandemic may have affected the state and SFEC collaboration in both negative and positive ways. I'm interested in learning your perception about the role of the SFEC during this time.
- [IF SEA SURVEY RESPONSES FROM Q10= 1 OR 2]: In the survey (Q10) you indicated that the SFEC was supportive of [INSERT SEA SURVEY RESPONSES FROM Q10= 1 OR 2]. Where do you think the SFEC was most useful: to LEAs, to schools, or to families, and how?
  - Did SFECs do a particularly good job addressing specific needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic among LEAs, schools, or families?
  - Did SFECs struggle to meet specific needs that arose from the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - Did the SFEC develop new ways of doing family engagement at the local level over the course of the pandemic? If so, which ones do you see as valuable and plan to promote to LEAs and schools to sustain beyond the pandemic period? What is particularly useful about this way of doing things?

RQ1.6: Did SEAs report alignment and support from the SFEC on the pressing state family engagement priorities?

SEA SURVEY Q7

8. You indicated in your survey (Q7) that the areas of collaboration with the SFEC
- [If Q7 = 1] ...have changed over the grant period. In what ways and in what areas has collaboration changed? Has the pandemic increased or decreased collaboration and support between the SFEC and the state education agency? Has collaboration changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - [If Q7 = 2] ...have not changed over the grant period. What do you think has contributed to the consistency of the collaboration?

QUESTION TO UNDERSTAND PROMISING STRATEGIES THAT THE SEAs HAVE SEEN

Finally, I'd like to ask you about promising strategies for family engagement that should be studied further. The U.S. Department of Education is considering conducting additional research to investigate the effectiveness of specific strategies.

9. What do you think are the important outcomes of family engagement efforts that should be the focus of such studies? Are there outcomes at the student, family, or school level?
- Have you seen specific strategies in your state that you think should be studied to learn whether they are working? Can you point to any evidence, even preliminary, that they are working?
  - Have you heard of specific strategies being implemented elsewhere that you think should be studied?