Is NJ on the Right Track to Improving ECE Teaching Practice?

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About CEELO

What did CEELO do and why?

- What?
  - Studied 11 states teacher evaluation systems
  - Collected data from public documents and interviews
- Why?
  - To better understand how B-3rd grade teachers were evaluated
  - Opportunities and challenges in implementing SLO's

What did we find?

- Most states fully implementing the system, but developing training and resources
- In some states/districts, B- age 3 or PreK teachers may not be included
- All states attribute student learning to teacher ratings but five states adjust the weight for early childhood teachers
- State standards of professional practice and Danielson Framework are most common teacher observation tools

New Jersey Findings

- NJ's 15% attribution for student learning is the lowest of the 5 states that adjust weights for untested grades

- Districts decide whether to include PK teachers in state funded collaboratives

- Strong emphasis on professional development

- Observations performed by trained staff

- NJSMART- data tracking

Student Learning Objectives are Most Challenging to Implement

- Due to:
  - a) the lack of appropriate assessments of young children's learning;
  - b) difficulty creating appropriate growth targets that are rigorous, but realistic, given the variability in development in this age span; and
  - c) the significant amount of training and implementation support that is needed.

Assessments Used to Set SLOs

- **MD**, **MA** , and **PA --**District-developed measures, curriculum-embedded assessments, and portfolios aligned to state standards and curriculum frameworks

- **CO, DE**, **MA**, and **NJ**-- Teaching Strategies Gold was the most common tool

- In **DE**, early childhood teachers setting growth goals are required to use at least four measures from a state approved list of standardized and observational measures.

- In **OH**, state-funded pre-K programs are required to assess children with Get It, Got It, Go (literacy), Ages and Stages (social-emotional), and program-adopted curriculum-based assessment tools

- **IL** and **MD** are also developing assessment item banks where teachers can select specific assessment items for identified learning objectives.

Training on Assessment

- **RI** Assessment Toolkit (1) guidance on developing and selecting quality assessments; (2) using baseline data: guidance and worksheet; (3) assessment review tool and companion document; and (4) protocols for analyzing and scoring student work.

- **OH** an assessment literacy specialist for teachers and building/district administrators on selecting assessments that can measure student learning.

- **CO, IL, MA** developing resources to improve teacher "assessment literacy" including guidance documents and webinars designed for district-based teams of educators working on identifying/developing student learning measures.

Policy recommendations

1. Ensure inter-departmental coordination across teacher evaluation and early childhood offices
2. Involve early childhood experts and personnel early and often in the design of the system
3. Keep student achievement attributions within regulatory requirements for ECE teachers
4. Develop sustained professional development for early childhood teachers
5. Provide evidence documents for principals or other evaluators
6. Systematically examine how early childhood teachers are implementing the teacher evaluation system at the district level
7. Set realistic timelines for implementing multiple policy reforms and provide training on how multiple policy reforms align to achieve goals for students

Research Questions?

- What professional development is most effective for early childhood teachers to improve scores and implement the system effectively?
- In what ways do the specific working conditions of early childhood teachers--such as compensation, education, class size, school day--affect improvements in practice?
- What specific knowledge of early childhood pedagogy and developmentally appropriate practice is needed for evaluators to be effective raters of early childhood teachers?
- Are the commonly used measures of professional practice effectively recognizing and differentiating early childhood teachers?

NJ is on the right track

- Established teacher evaluation system with low attributions for student learning

- Targeted professional development; evidence document and sample SGOs for EC teachers

- Established data linking system

How is the system working for you?

Thank You!

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