



Florida Migrant Education Program Continuous Improvement Management Team Meeting

Tallahassee, Florida
September 22, 2015
9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In attendance:

Lorraine Husum Allen, Interim Director, FMEP
Margarita Di Salvo, ID&R Office
Lucia Esquivel, PAEC
Mary Imig, Palm Beach County
Ray Melecio, ID&R Office
Jay Rembert, FDOE
Courtney Walker, FDOE
Pamela Wrigley, ESCORT
Courtney Zmach, Collier County

The first meeting of the FMEP Continuous Improvement Management Team (CIMT) began with introductions and a general discussion of the goals of the formation of a team of state and district educators who are tasked with ensuring that all phases and reporting mechanisms of the state “continuous improvement cycle” are aligned in ways that optimally support the program planning-implementation-evaluation cycle.

The meeting objectives were:

- ❖ Review the rationale of the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) and all existing reporting and evaluation tools used by districts.
- ❖ Discuss state and district processes for monitoring “fidelity of implementation” (FOI) of *Service Delivery Plan* performance objectives.
- ❖ Be introduced to FOI examples from other states and agencies.
- ❖ Devise strategies for assisting districts with using data to establish their own coherent planning-implementation-evaluation cycle.

As a foundation for the day’s discussions, the team was asked to identify the characteristics of outcome vs. implementation data. They are the two principal evaluation lenses that enable the state and districts to determine the degree to which their strategies and services are being adequately implemented and are having the desired effects.

Outcome Data Characteristics:

- Identify gap between migrant and non-migrant population
- Identify gaps within migrant population (other sub-groups)
- Measure change over time
- Measure attendance, graduation rate
- Identify if services are closing the gap
- Measure parent involvement – involved in many aspects

Implementation Data Characteristics:

- Research driven – constantly monitored
- Ensure supplementary nature
- Require knowledge of Title I Part A; Title III; and Title X, Part C (Homeless Education)
- Identify if program practices are being implemented with fidelity
 - Example: Reading Coach Strategy
 - Avoid “mission creep”
 - Monitoring Coach’s effectiveness
 - Professional development in specific strategies and for specific populations
 - Can a district afford the Coach?
 - Are they needed full time?
 - Scheduling issues
- Assessment Tools
- Quantity vs. Quality judgments

This brainstorming led to an in-depth discussion of the various dimensions of FMEP program monitoring that occurs at many levels.

Discussion of Benefits of the Monitoring Process

Risk assessment factors are considered when developing the visiting schedule. Self-monitoring and desktop monitoring are other options.

The risk assessment criteria include: student performance, findings from previous year, total number of PFS, budget “burn rates” and record of meeting submission deadlines.

Jay (SEA) -

As an SEA person who conducts on-site monitoring, Jay sees a major benefit of encouraging an open dialogue between the state and district service providers. The state staff works hard to ensure that they are perceived as technical assistance providers rather than evaluators who are searching for “gotcha” issues. The state staff looks at a failure of compliance as an opportunity to learn how the SEA and LEA can do better.

During monitoring visits, the team focuses on a wide variety of fidelity and compliance issues and they focus on budget items to ensure that the MEP funds are well spent. They also strive when possible to meet with parents, MEP staff members and students to obtain their feedback on the scope and quality of the MEP services.

Courtney (SEA) -

Courtney is another SEA person who conducts on-site monitoring. She concurs with Jay’s point that they strive to be helpful to districts and take advantage of any “teachable moments” that may arise. She says that the state staff constantly conducts their own internal needs assessments regarding the monitoring process. They are always searching for ways to make the process more informative and helpful to all participants.

Courtney provided a number of examples of the benefits of the monitoring process:

1. The widely used Reasonable Allowable Necessary (RAN) list was developed as a result of a need that arose from the many questions they were receiving about what items and/or services can be purchased with MEP funds. This list has gained national recognition as a useful document for MEP staff on allowable expenses.
2. The monitoring process enables districts to focus on needs assessment as they prepare for the visits. Courtney admits that some districts are better than others in this area. This topic of needs assessment is emerging as a potential source for actions by the CIMT committee to provide helpful guidance and modeling of best practices.
3. Another example of the benefits of the monitoring process involves changes that were made to the project application to better align it with the evaluation items. This illustrates how monitoring helps to support the continuous improvement cycle.

Mary (Palm Beach County) -

Mary shared a story that highlights another potential benefit of the monitoring process. She told of a particular principal who, during a monitoring visit, was unaware of which of his migrant students were designated as Priority for Services (PFS). As a result, Mary and her staff developed a presentation entitled: "Prepare a New Principal" that has become standard procedure for the district. This is a good example of how monitoring can lead to improved practices and communication due to the inquiries and influence of state monitors. Mary has shared her presentation with other MEPs at state conferences.

Lucia (PAEC Consortium) -

Lucia had many positive things to say about monitoring. She likes it because it is often a confirmation of the fact that they are fulfilling their obligations in the right way. She says that the SEA always asks for feedback on the helpfulness of the ways in which they are conducting the monitoring.

The monitoring visits also provide the state office with insights related to changing demographics occurring in districts. Lucia says that they often use the rich array of migrant data to improve program services. Lastly, she appreciates the technical assistance that is provided both during the monitoring visits and through other mediums such as: meetings, the Implementation Strategies Meeting (ISM) and the Florida Association of State Federal Educational Program Administrators (FASFEP) forum, webinars, and conference calls. All of the district representatives on the CIMT praised the state office staff for their responsiveness to individual requests and questions.

Courtney (Collier County) -

Courtney has a particular interest in data reporting in her county, and she said that the continuous improvement cycle has encouraged them to develop a "shared drive" system that should lead to more efficient collection and timely analysis of key MEP data. She also cites the benefit of leveraging the monitoring of the district MEP program as a golden opportunity to communicate with the various schools and district staff about who their MEP students are and to share the types of supplemental services that they are receiving.

Discussion of Program Planning Practices

Lucia (PAEC Consortium) -

Lucia meets with staff and considers a number of factors when engaging in program planning. In her dispersed, often sparsely populated, consortium, transportation is one of their primary challenges. The planning team looks at the latest demographics and the support services that have been provided. PD is provided for staff as needed and the academic advocates are asked for their opinions and insights on the priority needs/issues of their migrant students. Lucia does not use the SDP as a planning tool because she thinks that the MPOs are embedded in their planning process.

Courtney (Collier County) -

Most of the migrant students in Collier County are also eligible for the Title I (Part A) program. This results in a constant need for their MEP staff to educate district staff about who their migrant students are and the types of supplementary services that the MEP is capable of providing.

Courtney mentioned that after considering their student needs and demographic data, they have recently decided to focus on the needs of their Pre-K population that has few options to enroll in formal preschool. The MEP decided to develop an in-home family literacy project that trains mothers in early literacy strategies and provides them with engaging materials and resources. Courtney adds that they do not generally consult with their tutors about how they might improve the scope and types of services that they are providing. She thinks that it would be helpful to elicit their feedback in the future.

Mary (Palm Beach County) -

Mary shared that they always conduct a recap of the year meeting and discuss in depth what worked well and what areas need improvement. In the past year, two priority areas that were identified were: ensuring that the students who are transitioning into 8th grade have the support they need to succeed in high school, and intensifying their efforts to reach out to other agencies to maximize the efficacy and reach of the MEP services. Mary also said that they study the parent survey results carefully and she and her staff strive to give parents the information and support they need to become empowered to access services on their own. Doing everything for the parents is often easier, but building their capacity pays dividends in the long run.

What is Fidelity?

1. **Adherence:** Program adherence refers to the extent to which program components are delivered as prescribed by the model. Adherence indicators can include program content, methods, and activities. Adherence data are typically reported as the proportion of program components that were delivered compared to the number prescribed. For example, if a provider covered 14 of the 28 content areas of a program, the content adherence score would be 50%.
2. **Exposure:** Program exposure (i.e., dosage) is the amount of program delivered in relation to the amount prescribed by the program model. Exposure can include the number of sessions or contacts, attendance, and the frequency and duration of sessions.

3. **Quality of Delivery:** Quality of delivery reflects the manner in which a program is delivered. Aspects of delivery quality can include provider preparedness, use of relevant examples, enthusiasm, interaction style, respectfulness, confidence, and ability to respond to questions and communicate clearly. The quality of delivery may act as a moderator between an intervention and observed outcomes; for example, if 100% of a program's material is covered but is delivered poorly, positive participant outcomes may not be realized.
4. **Participant Responsiveness:** Participant responsiveness refers to the manner in which participants react to or engage in a program. Aspects of participant responsiveness can include participants' level of interest in the program; perceptions about the relevance and usefulness of a program; and their level of engagement, enthusiasm, and willingness to engage in discussion or activities. Participant responsiveness may play a direct role in outcomes, or may act as a moderator between the intervention and adherence to the program or the quality of service delivery. For example, if participants are not responding well, a provider may omit, modify, or add to the program's content or activities.
5. **Program Differentiation:** Program differentiation is the degree to which the critical components of a program are distinguishable from each other and from other programs. Program differentiation can also refer to the process of identifying the critical components of a program that are essential for producing positive outcomes (i.e., component analysis).

Although the majority of fidelity research has focused on adherence and exposure, evaluations should examine all five dimensions of fidelity to provide the most comprehensive picture of program implementation and to help identify those dimensions of fidelity that have the strongest impact on outcomes.

Why should Fidelity Be Measured?

- ***Understanding Program Implementation:*** Implementation data help program staff and evaluators understand how a program was implemented. These data also allow for the examination of deviations from a program model within and across different settings, thereby providing evidence regarding the contexts in which programs are and are not effective.
- ***Examining theoretical assumptions:*** Implementation data allow evaluators to test theories about the importance of different program components in relation to outcomes.
- ***Interpreting Outcome Findings:*** Implementation data are necessary for understanding why a program succeeds or fails to produce positive outcomes. The data may also elucidate differences in outcomes between sites in multi-site evaluations and ensure internal validity.
- ***Providing Feedback for Continuous Quality Improvement:*** Implementation data allow researchers/monitors to identify program drift and provide corrective feedback to promote positive outcomes.
- ***Providing Feedback to Program Developers about the Program:*** Implementation data can help identify program components that are consistently implemented poorly. Program developers may use this information to modify components to make them easier to administer or provide additional training to improve implementation quality.

(*Evaluation Brief: Measuring Implementation Fidelity*, James Bell Associates, October, 2009)

CIMT Next Steps List (Priority Items)**

- ****Develop** general survey for all districts regarding their needs assessment and data use practices (Student needs v. Program needs)
- ****Run** data to identify top service delivery strategies in each of the six SDP Focus Areas (School Readiness, Reading/English Language Development, Mathematics, Graduation, Out-of-School Youth, Health) used by small, medium and large districts. (Establish criteria to determine numbers of students that constitute small, medium and large)
- ****Interview** people using data in creative ways (e.g. Jodi Bell, Hendry County; Carol Mayo, Hillsborough County)
- Encourage peer mentoring across districts
- Develop process and field test FOI dimensions
- Develop process and field test FOI rubric
- Devise strategies that help districts to conduct data-driven needs assessments (too often the SEA sees the same language on project applications from year to year)
- Devise a bank of needs assessment questions for districts to choose from. (Questions for students, staff, parents, partner agencies)