The National Center Presents...

The National Center Presents: Tools to Examine ARP-Funded Interventions

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Session Summary

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Session Highlights

- Introduction and overview of the Evidence-Based Interventions: Using American Rescue Plan Funds to Accelerate Learning Community of Practice (CoP)
  - The purpose of this CoP is to build capacity of cross departmental state education agency (SEA) teams to work collaboratively with local education agencies (LEAs) to support the effective use of the 20 percent set-aside for learning recovery.
- Overview of three federal coronavirus relief programs, Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds I, II and III
  - ESSER III, also known as the American Rescue Plan (ARP) is the primary focus of this presentation, as it is the largest in terms of the initial allocation and the amount that remains to be spent. At least 20 percent of the funds at the local level must address learning loss.

  - The Edunomics Lab has created a dashboard to track the expenditure of ESSER funds at the district level.

- While it is important to spend faster to utilize all funds, we encourage SEAs and LEAs to slow down and apply the continuous improvement framework to strengthen the effectiveness of the ARP investments. The following are tools that SEAs and LEAs can use, modify, and adjust along the continuous improvement cycle:
  - Investment Grid: Linking Costs and Outcomes – this tool helps SEAs and LEAs identify which evidence-based intervention to use, identifying cost per intervention per student served.
  - ARP PATHS Tool – the *Monitoring and Measuring Progress* section is particularly relevant now that SEAs and LEAs have moved past initial ARP ESSER implementation. It can help SEAs reflect on their progress and note promising practices.
  - ARP/ESSER Financial Monitoring Checklist – this tool helps SEAs identify LEAs most in need of support considering ARP spending (e.g., percent unspent, amount spent on salaries) and other factors (e.g., declining enrollment, numbers of CSI/TSI schools).
  - Evaluating the Impact of ARP-Funded Programs Using Logic Models – this tool can help SEAs and LEAs understand the impact of learning-recovery activities by defining a challenge, implementing an intervention, and articulating the intended outcomes of ARP-funded programs. A logic model on high-dosage tutoring is provided, accompanied by example statements that illustrate how to use a logic model to communicate with stakeholders as well as a blank logic model template with communication prompts for SEAs and LEAs to personalize.

- From Theory to Practice: Panel discussion on how these tools have and can be used by LEAs
  - *North Carolina has used the PATHS tool with districts this past summer. What was the context for using it and what advice would you give to those interested in using it?*
    - The state decided to use the PATHS tool with districts because the language and layout is approachable. District teams can use this tool as a strategic planning instrument and can modify it to have an LEA focus. The tool was introduced at an ARP convening for LEAs that explored the use of data to make evidence-based decisions, and particular attention was given to the 20 percent set-aside. The SEA is continuing the conversation with LEAs on a quarterly basis, providing trainings with additional support about how to use the tool strategically.
  - *How can tools help determine if interventions are making a difference for the students that need them the most?*
    - The *Financial Monitoring Checklist*, for example, can help SEAs focus on monitoring and prioritize which districts need the most support and in which areas.
    - The logic model tool can also help articulate what outcome will occur as a result of a particular intervention. This tool not only helps measure tangible and easy to measure outcomes like service hours or percentage of teachers trained, but also helps map out how an intervention will affect students in the short and long term. The logic model gives SEAs

and LEAs the opportunity to get specific about the difference that you hope to see and the methods used to measure that difference. In addition, the Investment Grid can also be used alongside the Logic Model tool to calculate what it costs per student to achieve the desired gains.

› *What are some of the most important ARP-related milestones for SEAs and LEAs? How can these tools help?*

- In North Carolina, the SEA is looking to leverage these tools to help districts focus on fiscal and programmatic revisions to their local ARP plans. Districts should be able to shape the narrative around their spending and the communication section of the Logic Model tool can help LEAs connect the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes into a coherent spending narrative.
- We are halfway through the time to spend the ESSER funds, so now is a great time to think about sustainability. How can we identify programs that have worked well and how can we sustain them? The *Investment Grid* tool was designed for SEAs and LEAs to select investments in the first place but can be adapted, for instance by adding columns (e.g., actual outcomes and students served), to determine how investments have been working so far.

› *What are some challenges and opportunities in translating these tools from paper to practice?*

- The more an SEA or LEA is able to customize the tool to its regional or local context, the more relevant, meaningful, and applicable it will be. These four tools are all pretty flexible to adapting to individual LEAs. At the state agency level, the *Financial Monitoring Checklist* can be adapted with additional columns to see if a particular intervention or spending aligns with SEA's strategic plan, or even strategic plans at the local level. Tools can also be used by SEAs and LEAs to track implementation over time. Comprehensive Centers can also use these tools to work collaboratively and identify those districts that are in most need of support.
- SEAs are often seen as a solution providers or solution connectors. The challenge is to find ways to support LEAs in using these tools, or even finding time for LEAs to use these tools. As an SEA we can provide training and professional development but also do some of the leg work, begin to fill out some of these tools, so LEAs can fully utilize them.