



Transcript

Webinar: Supporting the Evaluation of Early Childhood Educators

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

JOSHUA STEWART: So, let's get started. My name is Josh Stewart, and I'm the facilitator of this REL Central webinar, Supporting the Evaluation of Early Childhood Educators. First, we want to welcome all of you who registered to this event.

Next, a little bit of background on the Regional Educational Laboratories, referred to as RELs, REL Central is one of 10 regional educational laboratories that provides training, coaching, technical support, and research services. States within our region include Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. All of our work is federally funded and conducted in partnership with stakeholders. In this case, the work we're going to present today was done in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education and its network of early childhood experts.

Our work in REL Central is organized under research alliances, which are made up of projects that share a similar focus. In this case, the work we plan to present today falls under the Early Childhood Education Research Alliance, with a particular focus on supporting the growth and development of early childhood educators. The REL presenters on the webinar today include myself, Josh Stewart, and Jeanette Joyce, researcher here at REL Central.

Our guest presenters today include Jana Martella, co-director at the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, Courtney Cabrera, educator effectiveness manager at Colorado Department of Education, Jennifer O'Brien, director of early childhood workforce development at Colorado Department of Education. So, in order to get a sense of the participants on today's call, please respond to the question here so we can provide a brief overview of who has joined in person.

And I'm going to use the Q&A feature just to demonstrate how it works. So, I'm also going to ask you which states you're from in order to get a sense of who's represented on the call today. So you should see a question pop up on your screen. Please fill it out. Okay, so we have, which of the following best describes your role in evaluating early childhood educators? It looks like we've got 21% are evaluators, 2% are evaluatees, 21% are support persons, 23% policymakers, and then we have 33% are none of the above.



And then you should have seen—if you can use the Q&A feature below, just let us know which state you're from. And I see Illinois is in here, Alaska, Wyoming, New Mexico, Florida, West Virginia, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Rhode Island, Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Delaware, Minnesota, some more Nebraska folks, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Virginia, Iowa, Florida.

Looks like we've got a lot of good representation here—British Columbia. Excellent.

Great. Well, thank you for providing that information. It will help set the stage for our webinar as we move forward. So next, I just wanted to briefly review the goals for our webinar today. Our first is to understand the professional growth needs of early childhood educators and the evidence-based resources that can be leveraged to support them.

Our second goal is understand the *Practical Ideas for Evaluating Early Childhood Educators* guide and other resources that can be used to support educators in early childhood contexts. So for the next section, I'm going to turn the presentation here over to Jana Martella, who will provide an overview of early childhood evaluation across 50 states. So, I'm going to go ahead and hand things over to Jana now.

JANA MARTELLA: Thank you. So, as we're doing the handoff here, I will forward the slides, which takes a minute or two. But let me introduce myself. I'm Jana Martella. I am the co-director of CEELo, the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, which is one of the content centers of the Comprehensive Center Program. We're partnered with the RELs across the country, providing technical assistance and supports to all states and territories.

Our mission, really, is to build the capacity of state agencies in order to lead sustained improvements in their early learning opportunities. Part of that charge actually revolves around supporting and sustaining improvements in the early childhood workforce. And this was a component part as well of today's talk. Throughout our seven years of being, actually, that particular scope assisting with the workforce has led us down a path of multiple ways of researching and supporting and providing technical assistance to state education agencies and their offices of early learning around early childhood teachers.

Within that context, I should highlight for you that for our scope, that means children birth through third grade, age prenatal through age eight and their teachers. So indeed, we consider teachers in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade, those primary years, a part of the early learning landscape. Today's talk will address the context of teacher evaluation systems within that landscape. Also, we'll touch briefly on a 2013 study that we conducted, actually, my colleagues Lori Connors-Tadros and Michelle Horowitz conducted on the state of early childhood teacher evaluation systems.



We did a national scan in 2015 and a more recent update related to teacher evaluation in the early childhood environments. And we'll also provide you some selected resources. And I'll continue, actually, to add resources to the chat as they come to mind and as they relate to our other speakers. Sorry, I'm figuring out how quickly the slides go forward. In 2013, keeping in mind that as part of the accountability systems that we're developing at that time, we took a look at how teacher evaluation systems were changing relative to early childhood teachers.

At that time, there were 40 states that were implementing their evaluation systems. And they dealt with young learners to varied degrees. As you can see on this slide, there were 29 states that used achievement as a measure of teacher-student learning objectives. Those varied because learning looks different in the earlier years, even in kindergarten, first, and second grade, the non-testing years.

And so, what does high-quality teaching look like in those years, and how can it be measured? That was a question then, is a question now. And states are redesigning their evaluation systems, even in the upper grades. So, we'll give you some context for that within the purview that was taken in 2013 and again reviewed in 2015.

So CEELO conducted research on state policies in its beginning year, particularly around teachers, children birth through grade three, as I've mentioned, what stage of implementation they were in for the state system and for early childhood education teachers, what models the evaluation system was using and what district, what flexibility was provided for districts in the early years, and the components of teacher effectiveness ratings and how they related to early childhood.

The most important component, of course, is what the results of the evaluation systems might mean for early childhood educators and for the ongoing professional learning that they were engaged in. So, the methodology for the data collection was through interviews and document reviews of the teacher evaluation system within some sample states, which you see here. Colorado—it sounds like a number of these states are actually on the call today. Data was collected through interviews with early childhood specialists within the state departments of education along with their teacher talent managers or their teacher evaluation systems from June through January.

So, you can see through this chart that the teachers that were included in the teacher evaluation system are increase over time. Very few states included infants through toddlers within their system. And these states have public pre-K systems. All of the states that were interviewed do and did include pre-K teachers. And of course, kindergarten through third grade, as well, were included.

The key findings in 2013 were that most profiled states had fully implemented their new statewide teacher evaluation systems in the school year. They all, as previously shown, included



kindergarten through third grade teachers in their evaluation systems. But whether pre-K teachers were included varied greatly from state to state and how they were included. Of course, student achievement really does look different in those early grades. How student achievement was measured varied grade by grade. Most states used standardized measures of professional practice to rate their teachers. And many reported challenges in using student learning objectives. But there were a number of states that actually developed SLOs for those particular grades.

In 2015, we updated the 50-state scan. You'll be able to find a report of that scan. And you can see here how the states varied. The most important thing to keep in mind is that 13 of the 50 states during that time did not mention or identify preschool teachers specifically in their systems. Some states did include evaluation for the broader, non-tested grades or for special education students as well.

So, in 2019, a major question—and it will be great to dig in with our partners states coming up next—are state educator evaluation system early childhood-wise. Most are in a revision phase. And a few notable examples to keep in mind. Washington, DC, provides IMPACT early childhood education teacher guidance. Illinois has a validated pre-K through third grade set of indicators using the Danielson framework. And Tennessee does a portfolio assessment early learning model for pre-K, K, and grades one and two.

So we do have a few policy recommendations that derive from the research that was conducted by my colleagues, one to assure that teacher evaluation and early childhood offices meet together frequently, that there is coordination across their endeavors, and that the early childhood offices have a say in what high-quality teaching actually looks like in the early grades, in the design and implementation of the teacher evaluation system, and in keeping student attributions of how teachers are evaluated at a lower level in order to accommodate the idea that learning looks different in those early grades.

Of course, teacher evaluation systems are meant to provide professional learning opportunities for the states engaged in those evaluation system and to improve teaching in those early grades. The evidence documents for principals and for directors who are conducting the evaluation needs to be very clear and supporting what teaching and learning looks like in those early grades.

There are three resources here that I want to point you to. The state evaluation scan that was described—you will find it here. How early childhood teachers are faring in the evaluation system—this is the earlier scan. We also conducted an early childhood version of the *Practical Guide for Evaluating Early Childhood Educators*. I think that this still has a great deal of relevance for folks and encourage you all to take a look at this document.



I'm going to enter into the chat as well a couple additional resources. Throughout our five years, CEELo conducted a learning table on teaching and learning around curriculum implementation, teacher supports. And I would like to point you to that document. In addition, CEELo was a partner in a unified foundation to support a highly qualified early childhood workforce that derived from the National Academies of Medicine. [AUDIO OUT] that document within the chat room as well. I'm going to hand off here to our next speaker and let Josh take it away from there.

JOSHUA STEWART: Great. Thank you, Jana. So, I'm just waiting to get control here. And let's see. I should be able to move ahead. There's a little bit of a lag. I just don't want to go too fast. Great. So now I'm going to turn the presentation over to Courtney Cabrera at Colorado Department of Education, who will talk about the Colorado state evaluation model for teachers.

COURTNEY CABRERA: Thank you so much, Josh, and thank you all for joining us this morning slash afternoon. I will apologize in advance. I apparently have caught the beginning-of-school-year cold already, even though I feel like we are just starting school. So, that was my gift at the start of the school year. So, my apologies for any sniffles or coughs that you may hear. I'll do my best. I've got a bunch of water sitting in front of me.

So, I'm so appreciative to be able to share with you just an overview of some of the expectations that were outlined in Colorado's education legislation. And so that's where I'll start. And then we'll get to some really good nitty-gritty stuff with my partner here at the department and her talking you through how we took this content-agnostic state model rubric and really made it applicable for early childhood educators. So that's sort of my role today.

So, first and foremost, just wanted to give you an overview of what we call Senate Bill 10-191, or our Great Teachers and Leaders Act here in Colorado. So, as we think about just big picture, what did this legislation require? So, when it was passed in 2010, three big buckets, if you will.

The first one was really thinking about providing meaningful feedback for professional growth and continuous improvement in a more systemic way. The second was really around this evaluating of licensed personnel through a system. And so as Jana mentioned, we actually have here in Colorado a set of teacher quality standards that every district in our state is required to either have a system aligned to, or if they choose to use the state model system, the state model system is aligned to our teacher quality standards. And those come from our state board of education. So, we now have, as a result of this legislation, a systemic approach to thinking about the expectations for our licensed personnel.

And then the last big bucket was really around using information that comes from our evaluation systems to make better decisions for kids. So, you've got some opportunities there that are provided, whether it's staffing or professional development compensation. There are a



variety of others. But as we think about the data that comes out of evaluation systems, how do we use that either at the state level, the local level, whether that's district wide or building, to really make informed decisions for our educators?

So, a great example when we think about professional development—how do we use the results from our state model rubric, or our teacher quality standards for those not using the state model, to be really targeted in the PD that we provide at the local level? So those are the big-picture components or values of our legislation. What you have in front of you now are some of the nitty-gritty requirements.

So that first one, all licensed educators must be evaluated annually-- that was certainly a shift for our state as we think about evaluation requirements previously. And I think that word "licensed" is really important, especially as we think in relation to early childhood educators. So, our districts have quite a bit of autonomy. if you will, when it comes to the requirement of their early childhood educators being licensed, specifically in our birth to pre-K grouping there.

And so, in Colorado, if a district requires that their early childhood educators have a license, the requirements for our teacher evaluation legislation falls to them as well. But there's some flexibility there, specifically with that group from birth to pre-K, where either centers or districts have some flexibility in determining that licensure requirement. So, for us in our office, we worked very closely with Jennifer O'Brien in the early childhood office to clarify what that means.

But for us, it's really about that license. Does the district require that license? And if so, then those educators would have to meet these expectations. The second provision there is around measures of student learning. And so here in Colorado, 50% of the evaluation for every licensed educator is related to those teacher quality standards, where we have them for principals or our special services providers. The other 50% is related to what we call measures of student learning. And so, Jana talked about whether it was state assessment data or SLOs.

Here in Colorado, districts have a ton of autonomy to determine what those measures of student learning look like. And certainly, as you can imagine for early childhood educators, taking into account a lot of what Jana shared—how can they think about measures that are appropriate for that group? And also, what are some measures that might already be utilized at the local level that can be a part of that 50%? But here in Colorado, that 50% is one very specific requirement.

We also have this idea of non-probationary and probationary status. So, some people think about that in terms of tenure. So here in Colorado, you can earn non-probationary status after three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness. But you can also lose it after two consecutive years of less-than-effective ratings. We also have folks the ability to take their non-probationary status with them, which is portability. And then we also have some requirements



under the idea of forced placement of teachers within districts and some clearly outlined expectations and rules, if you will, for moving teachers from a building to a building.

So those are all our critical components of Senate Bill 10-191. Now I'll share with you some of the priorities and implementation that we used at the department when we first rolled out our evaluation systems, but also that we continue to go back to as we think about continuous improvement of our system or implementation practices. And so, these priorities of implementation were gifted to us from a group called the State Council for Educator Effectiveness. And that group was really created in response to the legislation. And they really helped mold and shape not only what came out in our state board rules but also some of the ideals embodied in our state model evaluation system.

So, the first one, as you can see there, is this idea of human judgment. We really want folks to remember that they've been evaluating educators for years and years and years, so we don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. But we also want to remember that we can't be so black and white in our data-driven mindset that we forget that we're not evaluating widgets, but we're evaluating educators who are supporting students, who have good days and bad days. And so, we really try to highlight that importance of human judgment has to be a component of evaluation.

That second one is really important when we think about the revisions that we've gone through with our state model. And I'll talk to you about that here in a second. But as a priority for us here at the state, we've said that our state model evaluation system, our rules that come from the state board of education—all of those are always continuously improving. And so how do we capture that information to know what's working and what's not? How do we maintain our pulse on emerging research and best practices? And then how do we take all of that information and improve our system?

And that's actually what we've done recently, which I'll talk about here in a couple minutes. I've talked about the next priority as really being a guidepost for our legislation, but the importance of providing credible and meaningful feedback specifically through that actionable lens. So how do we ensure that not only we're identifying areas of greatness or areas of challenge, but we're also providing truly actionable feedback for folks to improve?

We also think it's really important as we think about implementation practices that this is a collaborative process that's involving all stakeholders at all levels. So, as districts think about implementation of their evaluation systems, there's a requirement that they have a council that talks about and discusses evaluation practices, policies, and procedures at the local level. But also, how do we keep that in mind here at the state level?

And then our last one. How do we honor that we don't want evaluation to be a silo within a larger system? We really want it to be aligned and a part of just the work that is done at the



local level. And so how do we help districts to do that, but also how do we do that here at the state level, thinking about evaluation within a larger system? So those are our priorities of implementation that have really guided both our creation of resources, the way in which we created our state model system, but also how we support districts and their understanding and development of their local systems?

So, with that, we have been implementing a state model system, really, since 2012 and have been continually collecting feedback over the years and really took a big effort to do a significant revision to our state model system for all of our licensed educators. And so, for our system, that's 11 different groups of licensed educators, from teachers to principals to our special services providers. And there are nine groups of those.

And so, as a result of that feedback, we've really gone through and thought about what was embodied in our standards and elements that came from our state board, but also, how did that play out in the explicitness of our state model rubric. And we have done some significant changes. So, we've really shortened each rubric in an effort to reduce redundancies, because we heard throughout all 11 systems that we were measuring a number of things multiple times. But we also really wanted to ramp up the rigor.

And not only are we ramping up the rigor in the expectations outlined in the rubric, but we also changed the way in which we score our state model evaluation system as a result of feedback that we were receiving from the field. And so, on this slide here, you'll see the different systems and the revisions that each one has undergone. And so, for today, we're really focusing on the teacher systems here. So, we went from five standards down to four, 27 elements down to 17 elements. As you can imagine, our standards are very high-level umbrella, so leadership, content.

Our elements further unpack those standards. So, what does it mean to lead as an educator? What does it mean to know your content? And then we have, at our state model, one further level that's unpacked. And we refer to those as our professional practices. And we went from 309 professional practices down to 165 for teachers. And so, you can see how that played out with our other systems for principals and SSPs. But as you can imagine, when you think about revising a system for educators, that also means that we're revising—of all of the support materials that we provided, we think through.

And so that's really where Jennifer will be able to share with you—as a result of this revision, it gave us this opportunity to really think about the supports that we provide in a content-agnostic rubric for our early childhood educators. So now I just want to walk you through a couple of slides on how the Colorado State Model Evaluation System rubric looks and feels. Before I was here in Colorado, I came from the Indiana Department of Education, and I worked in their educator effectiveness office. And the Colorado rubric was a very different rubric for me, moving from the Indiana rubric.



So, I just want to give you an overview of what that rubric looks like, because you are going to be asked to engage with it here shortly. So, first and foremost, the rubric is standards based. We've talked about the quality standards and elements that were gifted to us from the state board of education. But really, we're thinking about mastery of those things when it comes to scoring. The rubric itself is cumulative in content. So, every level—and we have five here. Every level is measuring and looking at discrete practices differently.

So, we like to use the example of a shades-of-gray rubric versus this discrete practice rubric. So, in some of those shades-of-gray rubrics, you think about one element of instructional practice, or maybe it's differentiation. And you do it really well. You do it well. You do it okay. You do it not so great. So here in Colorado, our rubric looks very different in that every professional practice is measuring a discrete practice, rather than how well you're doing that practice.

And so, when we think about every level, it's increasing in quality or intensity, consistency, breadth, depth. All of those different things look and feel very differently across the levels. So, let me show you what that looks like here in practice. So, as you can see, we've got five levels here. Level 1 is really outlining those foundational practices for our educators. So just because a practice is at level 1, doesn't mean that it's a lower level of quality. Educators at level 1 practices should still be displaying high levels of quality as it relates to these expectations.

So, levels 1, 2, and 3 in our teacher rubric relate to the actions of the teacher. So, what is the teacher doing? And then when we move to levels 4 and 5, now we're looking at demonstrated skills from students, or it might be other stakeholders. It might be parents or community members, depending on the actual element. So here in this example, you can see that the two areas of focus for levels 4 and 5 are students. And so, the expectation, then, is that what you're doing at levels 1, 2, and 3 in your instructional practices impact what happens at levels 4 and 5.

And so as we went through this revision, our technical working group, who were really our drafters of our new professional practices standards and elements, really focused on making sure that there was alignment in what happens on levels 1, 2, and 3, and what would we then expect to see as a result of that educator doing those actions in students at levels 4 and 5. So here's just a quick map of what you actually see in our rubric here in Colorado. So up here at the top is our teacher quality standards. So, this one that we're looking at here is quality standard 3.

Below that, you'll see our performance rating levels. So, we go from levels 1 to 5. And actually, in our revision, those used to appear as different labels. And we've changed them to say level 1 practices through level 5. Beneath those, then, you'll find the element that relates to the standard. So, as I mentioned earlier, our standard is a very high-level expectation. Our elements further unpack that standard. And then here in Colorado, we go one step further in unpacking what that element means through our professional practices.



And so here, we also have, in at least the teacher rubric—and this is the only rubric that this appears in—this designation down here at the bottom of what is observable in a traditional classroom observation. So, anything that you see that's bolded and italicized is potentially observable in a traditional classroom observation. And something that is not would then be observable in some other way, potentially, or through the [INAUDIBLE] artifact. So that's a road map, if you will, of what you would see here in the Colorado rubric.

And then, lastly, I just want to walk you through how we actually score the rubric, keeping in mind that standards-based mastery expectation and that cumulative-in-nature expectation with the actual components. So here in Colorado, the first thing we do is rate the elements. We take those element ratings, wrap them up into a standard rating. And then once we have all four standards rated, then we can determine an overall professional practice rating. That overall professional practice rating is worth 50% of an educator's evaluation. And remember that other 50% is coming from our measures of student learning, which are very, very locally determined. There's few requirements related to that.

So, first and foremost, when you read the rubric, we always talk about the importance of starting at level 1 and looking for those things, whether it's in a classroom observation or it's just in the teacher's body of evidence. I think what's also really important to remember about the Colorado rubric is that it is not a solely observational rubric. And that is why we have delineated observational practices versus non-observational practices.

So we have our evaluator as they're going through—whether it's at the midyear or the end of year or after they conducted an observation, they're going in and starting at level 1 and then moving to level 2 all the way across the rubric to ensure that if there's something happening at level 4, but maybe there was something missed in level 3, that educator is still receiving the credit for that particular professional practice in level 4. So then when it comes to actually scoring the rubric and, in this case, the elements, what we look for first is the first unchecked box, if you will, or circle, as it relates to the actual rubric.

So in the example you see in front of you, if this were an evaluator, the evaluator has gone through and checked off these professional practices and saying, yes, I've seen these things occurring in the educator's classroom, and they've occurred at a high level of quality, so I'm giving them that check to say, yes, I've seen that. As we look at this example, our first unchecked professional practice would be here in level 4. And so, as a result—let me go back here.

So, our first unchecked box is here in level 4. So, then we would drop back a level to say that the actual rating for this element would be a level 3, because the educator has mastered everything through the level 3 practices. So, here is another example of how that plays out. So, looking for that first unchecked box, there it is in level 4. So, our actual rating would be our level 3 rating. And my fancy a little animations were coming in kind of silly. So, our first



unchecked box is here in level 4. So, we dropped back a level here, and this would actually be our rating in level 3.

So, if you think about that value of standards based, mastery based, we're really saying that although the educator has a check here in level 5, they haven't mastered everything across all five levels. There is a gap here in level 4. So, what a great piece of opportunity of conversation with that educator that's very specific. So how can we work with that educator to support them in their students' development of demonstrating their acquired skills based on standards?

So that's the structure and the components of the rubric. And as I mentioned, and as you can see here, this is a rubric that's content agnostic, which starts to pose some challenges. And that's where Jennifer will pick up here. But before I pass it on to her, I did want to first share this link that has all of our state model evaluation system resources, the state model rubric, and a bunch of other things that relate to that. And then I'm also looking at our Q&A box, and I don't see any questions. But I will pause here for a second if anybody has a question before I turn it over to Jennifer.

JOSHUA STEWART: Great. Thank you, Courtney. So, we'll now turn the presentation over to Jennifer O'Brien, who will talk about the need for early childhood evaluation resources under the Colorado model.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Hi, everybody. Thanks, Courtney. Thanks, Josh. So, I'm going to talk about some of the challenges that Colorado has experienced around applying the state model in an early childhood setting. First, though, we'd like to hear a little bit about your context. So, on the next few slides, there will be three questions that we'd like you to answer by using the polling functionality that we have set up or by typing into the Q&A box. So, the first two will use the polling functionality, and the last one you'll type into the Q&A box.

Let's see here. There we go. Good. So, our first question is, does your state or district have an evaluation system specific to early childhood? So, when the poll pops up onto your screen, you can go ahead and answer it. So, the answers to our first question is 26% said yes, that their state or district does have an evaluation system specific to early childhood. 45% of you all said no, and then 30% of you said that you weren't sure.

Okay, so our second question is, how does your state or district define early childhood? So again, when the poll pops up, go ahead and answer. So here it looks like it's split, actually, fairly evenly, with 40% of states defining early childhood as birth to five and then 46% of states defining it as birth to eight, and then 15% of you weren't sure. Our last question is, what challenges does your state or district face in evaluating early childhood educators? For this question, go ahead and type your answer into the Q&A box.



So, I see an answer related to high teacher turnover as being one of the challenges, shortage of early childhood educators, one that has to do with the geography of the state—it's a large state with remote areas that are not reached by car—a challenge around aligning to standards, a challenge around pre-K teachers and student performance, one challenge related to selecting an appropriate model specific to the content—or the context, excuse me, one challenge related to not included in measures of student progress, the cost of evaluators, lack of funding for assessment tools and evaluation, the challenge of observation when it comes to assessing child behavior.

Okay, good. Thank you, everybody. Thank you for participating in that. It was good to hear from everyone. So, I'm going to advance our slide here. For some reason, I'm having trouble advancing the slide. Okay, good. Thank you. Okay, so turning to our challenges in Colorado with applying the state model in an early childhood setting—as we all know, most of us know on this webinar, early childhood is a unique [AUDIO OUT], children in this age band have different characteristics and needs, and that early educators require a unique set of knowledge, skills, and supports.

As Jana said earlier, teaching and learning really look different in the early years. There was concern that evaluators whose expertise was really in—their expertise was in the later grades, that they might have trouble evaluating through an early childhood lens, so the lens being, you know, knowing that play is really important at this age, the emphasis on foundations of learning, those social and emotional pieces, and then the interrelated nature of all the domains of growth and learning. Okay, so I'm trying to advance the slide here. Thank you.

So, there were also concerns around observing student behavior. Level 4 and 5 practices, as Courtney mentioned earlier, are related to student behavior. So, there was concern that an evaluator might have trouble with seeing and assessing student behavior. You'll see in the last column of the slide, which is a screenshot of the rubric, is the student behavior. Students can provide a relevant connection to the standard in their words. So, what does that look like in an early childhood setting? All right, so I will go ahead and turn it over to Jeanette for the next part of our presentation.

JEANETTE JOYCE: Okay, good afternoon. I'm going to talk a little bit about the work that REL Central did with the CDE to create some supports around this evaluation system in the early childhood context. So, in the summer of 2017, we began our partnership with CDE in their efforts to make sure that the P3 educators were able to have that fair, valid, and transparent rigorous evaluation. I'm waiting for my slides to advance here. They'll catch up momentarily.

We went too far. Now it's clicking like crazy. We'll go back a little bit here. There we go. Thank you. And what we want you to do here is work with a diverse set of stakeholders. So a committee was convened that included the Early Childhood Professional Development Team, the Educator Talent Team, the Preschool Special Education Team, an organization that serves



children in the Denver area, the Preschool Team, the Literacy Team, so getting voices from all of those groups to begin to discuss how to best support evaluators and evaluating in this new system.

So, the first step was to look at the work that had already been done on how early childhood educators could be evaluated, similar to what Jana was talking to us about earlier and what was already known. And these references are there for you to look at. But the committee also went through many of these references to get a sense of, what should it look like? What should the supports look like? And this was after the committee had reached the decision that it wouldn't be the best idea to start from scratch and have a completely separate rubric but to develop support.

So, we went to the Practical Ideas guide, which was the support that had been written for the previous system. And we worked together to extend an update to reflect the evolved standards. This included information about who should use the guide. In the comment box earlier, you saw that one of our listeners here said that evaluators are not always experts in early childhood and aren't used to that lens. And that if it's perceived as impossible to attain the higher levels, there might be pushback from educators.

So, these were some of the concerns that Colorado had, as Jennifer discussed. And so, we made sure that the guide was accessible to both the evaluators and the evaluatees. We also included information on the legislation so that folks would know why this had been done, why the standards had been changed, and how these aligned with already existing structural elements in early childhood. And those best practices were involved there as well.

So, the greatest area of revision in the guidance was around look-fors, or the observable behaviors that an evaluator might see in the early childhood setting. And so, I'm going to go back for a moment to this rubric that we looked for. And that became part of our Exhibit 6, which is the standard, the elements, and then how might that look at the pre-school, kindergarten, and grades one through three levels. So, what we did was create different look-fors with our group of experts, and we pulled in as many voices as we could to give some concrete examples. And that's what I want to show you now.

So, this you saw just a moment ago, right? This is that quality standard 1, element A. And we talked a little bit about that idea of that high level 5 practice, the student would provide a relevant connection to the standard in their own words. Well, what might that look for with a three- or four-year-old? They're not going to be referencing the Colorado standards and saying, I see how this relates. So, we wanted to give some context that would allow early childhood educators to still achieve that level with an evaluator who was familiar with what that might look like.



So here you can see the preschool look-fors. And in that far to the right column, it talks about that three- and four-year-olds might provide a connection through behavior instead of, or in addition to, words. So, for example, a student might be showing their understanding of new material by drawing and putting in the habitat for an animal in the picture. They may not say, I understand that we've discussed habitats, and now I'm putting this water in for the fish, but they might just draw it in.

Or a student might be moving their finger along the text in the picture book, demonstrating their understanding that reading moves from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page. So, we've put in as many concrete examples as we could to make it accessible to, again, both the evaluator and the evaluatee. And what we're going to do now is I'm going to turn it back over to Jennifer so that she can show you an example of how we worked with this. Before I do that, though, I want to pause because we put a lot of information out here in the last few sections and give you the opportunity to write something in the Q&A box if you have a question for any of us.

So, we have a question about NAEYC's Power to the Profession agenda and how that fit with the idea of ECE evaluation. I'm going to open that up to Jennifer and Courtney and perhaps Jana, if you had some thoughts about that. Again, just my initial response to that would be that one of the things that—being equipped to show your evaluator your best practices does, in fact, power the profession.

One of the reasons we wanted to make sure this was accessible to the evaluatee is so that they could then point their evaluator towards these behaviors and have an understanding of what they were looking at in the early childhood classroom. So, it does put some power in the hands of the teacher having the evaluation as well as giving some guidance to the evaluator. But as we switch back here, I'll let Courtney and Jana and Jennifer weigh in.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Yeah, that's a really great question. So, I think about the work that's being done in the Power to the Profession around defining the profession versus the field, what it is they need to be able to know and be able to do to work effectively with children and families. And I think that the phase where they were defining competencies relates to this work, because it's essentially saying—both systems are essentially saying, here's what teachers need to know and be able to do to work effectively.

And then we're going to put systems in place, pathways in place, where there is regular assessments and then, of course, resources in place for improvement. I would love to hold them both side by side. I think that looking at the Power to the Profession work, in my mind, anyway, could make Colorado's work stronger. So, I'm excited to see how those other pieces fall out with Power to the Profession.



JANA MARTELLA: Yeah, this is Jana. And I would agree that there is an opportunity for alignment as folks are considering what good practice looks like and what the knowledge, skills, and competencies are that drive that practice and how it is evaluated. I think NAEYC actually provides some shape and form to those teachers who are driving towards certification. So, there may be a little bit of delineation between the evaluation practices as described throughout this webinar and those practitioners who are not yet bachelored and certified, as an example.

But there also is a great opportunity to kind of drive home what developmentally appropriate practice looks like in early childhood programs and how, in particular, school leaders, lead teachers and principals, can become acquainted with that knowledge, skills, and competencies so that they are, indeed, good evaluators and have incorporated good practice in their evaluation models. So, I do think there is an opportunity. There may be some synapses between them. And I love hearing the idea of connecting the dots between Power to the Profession and the state teacher evaluation practices.

JOSHUA STEWART: And I can answer the question about the amount of time that it took, although Courtney and Jennifer and Jeanette certainly weigh in. But I believe it was just over a year with the amount of folks that were involved in that. We wanted to make sure that the process was as inclusive as possible. And so obviously, trying to find a time to meet for all those folks and get those on the calendar—I think it was just over a year from start to finish, if I'm not mistaken.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: We also have a question around can these evaluations replace degree requirements? Courtney, has there been any talk of that that you are aware of?

COURTNEY CABRERA: I think a lot of states have talked about at least connecting licensure to evaluation. I haven't heard of a talk of a replacement of one versus the other. But there has been some talk—and maybe Jana knows, having a pulse on the national landscape. Colorado was one of those states that created a group of folks to discuss, is there value in connecting evaluation to licensure?

And the decision through that collaborative group was, no, there's certainly value, but it's not the value that they were looking for and what they were hoping to get out of that connection. So here in Colorado, that's not been the path that was charted for with this collaborative group. But I don't know if other states have talked about that. I just know that we've talked about the connection between email and licensure, not necessarily the replace of one for the other.

JANA MARTELLA: So, I'm not sure of the direct link in those states. I know states are re-evaluating their licensure systems relative to age ranges, et cetera. The question is a very interesting one, evaluations replacing degree requirements. I think this actually may derive



from Power to the Profession, or this question may derive from Power to the Profession. In the context of teacher evaluation systems, it is certified teachers who are being evaluated within these systems.

And the bachelors degree question that the early childhood field wrestles with constantly, to be a or not to be a, is a moot question. In the public schooling system, all are required to have degrees. And I actually don't see that ending. How we get our paraprofessionals and non-degreed personnel to that point in their profession is, of course, a conundrum facing the field, but one that I think most within public schooling, anyway, would be heading towards.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: I also see a question, do these systems evaluate paraprofessionals? And in Colorado, this system applies to positions that require a license. And correct me if I'm wrong here, Courtney, but paraprofessionals, I think in no district in Colorado, are required to have a license.

COURTNEY CABRERA: That's correct. Yeah, so they are either certified or have an authorization, which is different here in Colorado. But what we do talk about is there might be components of the rubric that might be helpful in providing paraprofessionals growth-producing feedback, right? So how could you think about an evaluation system that might not carry the same level of expectation as the state model for those licensed educators, but are there some components that might be helpful in helping them to grow?

We also have some districts who are really thinking about a career ladder for their paraprofessionals and offering some specific supports, whether it's through grant funding to take them from a paraprofessional through a program into either a bachelors degree or some other authorization or designation. So, while it's not intended for that group, it's certainly hopefully one of those opportunities to engage in a conversation about what supports are we providing our paras, especially because they're the ones who are often working one on one with our students. And there may be a gap there in the feedback and support that they receive.

JANA MARTELLA: Yeah, this is Jana again as well, and I will look this up and enter into the chat room. But in addition to the supplement that CELO helped to create with the Great Teachers and Leaders content center, which was a supplement to their practical guide, they have other supplements as well. And I know they created a supplement for teachers of children with special needs. And I believe they've also created a supplement for evaluating paraprofessionals. So, I'll do a little online research even as we respond to additional questions and then try to enter that in the chat box.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: All right, so now I'm going to walk you through how the Practical Ideas guide can help with evaluation in an early childhood context. Great. Thank you. So here we have an excerpt from the teacher standards, quality standard 1, element B. So, take note of



levels 4 and 5 practices, which are about student behavior. And if you're not near a screen, I will read them.

Students apply literacy skills and concepts. Students apply mathematical skills and concepts. The level 5 practices are students elaborate on current lesson within the content area, and then students draw real-world connections to other content areas. So, keep those in mind. And we'll go to our next slide that has a video on it. And we'll imagine that we're observing this interaction within a classroom.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CHILD: This is actually going to be a beautiful caterpillar that is going to turn into a beautiful butterfly. This [INAUDIBLE] the wings are going to happen. [INAUDIBLE] caterpillar in the egg.

TEACHER: Hm. And what is this here?

CHILD: A caterpillar, and this is the head. All these other things-- this is all the decorations on the eggs. Then they're going to pop out. And this right here—all this part—we have to erase it, because it was by accident.

TEACHER: Okay, but I'm really excited. What is that?

CHILD: Butterfly.

TEACHER: You wrote that word?

CHILD: Yep, all by myself.

TEACHER: All by yourself? How did you figure that out?

CHILD: Because I sound "BUTT-ER," "BUTT-ER." Then I got this sound out, then made the R, then the F, then the I. Then wrote my name. Because I know my name pretty well.

TEACHER: That is very amazing. What should you guys tell him about—

CHILD 2: But where's the L?



TEACHER: That's okay. What should you tell him about his picture?

CHILD 3: It's nice.

CHILD 2: [INAUDIBLE] do the L.

TEACHER: Oh, so you told him, what about the L?

CHILD 2: Mhm.

TEACHER: Wow, okay. So, I would say you worked really, really hard, and you told us a whole butterfly story here. And you were able to write the word "butterfly." And look at those decorations on there. And you know what else I noticed about your wings? What did he do about his wings that's really, truly amazing?

CHILD 3: He put them the same on both sides.

CHILD 3: He put them the same on both sides.

CHILD: Only this part is different than this one.

TEACHER: A tiny bit. But what is that word called when it's the same on both sides? Anybody remember?

CHILD 3: Sy...Symme...

CHILD 2: Symmetrical.

TEACHER: It's symmetrical. His butterfly's pretty symmetrical. And I also noticed you put these. What are these? Tell me about these.

CHILD: Sometimes these are—

CHILD 3: Are they the ears?

CHILD: Yeah.

TEACHER: Yeah, they do here with them. And they feel with them. And what else? What are they called?



CHILD: These are antennas right here.

TEACHER: Those are antennas.

CHILD: I forgot to put the eye. I'll be right back.

CHILD 2: They both have dresses inside.

TEACHER: Do you love those dresses?

CHILD 2: Yeah.

CHILD 2: We have a dress under and over.

CHILD: You love the eggs.

TEACHER: I love the eggs. You going to put eyes?

CHILD: Yep.

CHILD 3: Hey, we both got one.

CHILD 2: Do you have a dress under the dress that they gave us? [INAUDIBLE]

I have a dress [INAUDIBLE] they gave me.

CHILD 3: And look. They're both wearing those crown things.

TEACHER: What is that? Oh, we're having a flower?

[END PLAYBACK]

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Okay, that's such a good video. I love that video. So, thinking about Alex, the young child, and his behavior in that video, let's read the look-fors for standard 1, element B, paying really close attention to the fifth column, which is guidance around student behavior you might see. So, it says, students are engaged as listeners or as speakers in conversations, possibly teacher prompted, that make connections between one activity and another.

So, the look-fors give guidance or a hint that-- when observing an early childhood classroom, you'll want to pay really close attention to conversations and interactions and that the teacher



will very likely do a little bit of prompting. That's really good practice, in the same way that the teacher is prompting the children to recall the word "symmetrical" in the video. So that's an example of how an evaluator might use the Practical Ideas guide to strengthen their observation and evaluation.

[INAUDIBLE] hear from you. The question for you, which you can type your answer into the Q&A box. How would guidance like the Practical Ideas guide be of use in your state or district? I see a few questions in the Q&A box, which we'll go back to. But for right now, we're looking for, as you think about your context, how would guidance like this be used in your state or district?

So far, I'm not seeing any—oh, wait. This one might just take a little bit longer to answer. Let's see. Guidance can help both teachers and evaluators understand and apply appropriate behaviors and practices, provide some common expectations. Good. Another person writes, I think that having something like this would raise the bar for K3 teachers and help school leaders support teachers in strong ESE instruction, especially school leaders at K5 schools who sometimes have middle or high school experience—yes—and extremely limited ECE context or knowledge. Right, so the same situation that we were thinking a lot about in Colorado.

Another answer to the question—the guides provide concrete examples that can be observed in P3-classrooms and help educators reach those higher levels. These levels were hard to reach earlier. Thank you. Practical guidance, easily scoreable for evaluators, it provides good information on best practices. Good. Thank you, everybody. I think I'll read one more here. provide success criteria that demonstrate differing levels of expected teacher behavior. Good. Good. Thank you, everybody.

So, what I'm going to do is go back to our two questions that I saw. The first one is, I'm wondering if Colorado has considered how their evaluation system may be adapted to support coaching or apprenticeship for educators at an AA level in private early education settings. Yep, that's a really great thought, to make some of these supports and resources available outside of public pre-school education settings. We're having conversations about that, but I have to say it has not really-- it's just at the conversation level at this point. Does anyone else on the webinar have anything else to add to that answer?

JANA MARTELLA: So, it's a very good question. I know that most of the states that were engaged—and there were 18 engaged in what was called the legacy preschool development and preschool expansion grants within the states—considered, actually, high-quality teacher qualifications and requirements in the context of building out coaching models. I'll also look for a couple resources related to that on our teaching and learning website.

I know that the certified and evaluated teachers were engaged. Those deemed highly qualified in some school districts were engaged in learning and incorporated as lead teachers in coaching for the paraprofessionals and AA-level teachers as well. So, I will look for that. If I don't find it



between now and the close of the webinar, I'll pass it along to the webinar hosts to make sure that the attendees have those resources.

COURTNEY CABRERA: And I would just add that all of our resources here in Colorado are available for anybody to use or modify for their needs. We talk about that with our districts on the flexibility that is inherent in our legislation, that anybody could take any of our resources and make them applicable. Because ultimately, that's what we want in evaluation. We want folks to be evaluated on something that's applicable and meaningful for them and that drives feedback and continuous improvement of their practice. So, feel free to use those however you see fit to moving forward.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: I'll also say that these teacher quality standards have been crosswalked to our competency framework, our core knowledge and standards framework in Colorado. And that particular framework is more likely to be used in a private early care and education setting, but there are definite similarities. We have another question. Does the Colorado [AUDIO OUT] evaluation system for infant-toddler teachers? And the answer to that is no. That preschool age band is the youngest group of children and teachers that this applies to.

COURTNEY CABRERA: And I'm happy to answer the second half of that question, which was, if so, is there a distinction between general ed and special ed? We get that question, K12 educators, not just ECE educators. And as I mentioned, our rubric is content agnostic. So, we don't have specific rubrics for teachers of certain content areas, but we do have a variety of these practical idea guides for our non-traditional classroom teachers.

So if you think about that traditional classroom teacher who has his or her set of kids, and they're in that classroom with him or her throughout the school day—so when you think about our special ed teachers or our teachers of the arts or our teachers of bilingual students, our teacher librarians, we have similar guides for each of those groups to try to get at that value of providing meaningful feedback and accurately assessing their performance. And so those guides do similar things that you see here with the ECE guide, although they are not nearly as built out as the ECE guide. The ECE guide, out of all of ours, is the most comprehensive when it comes to providing supports for the educator and evaluator.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Okay, so I'll go ahead and turn it over to Josh do the wrap-up here.

JOSHUA STEWART: Great. Well, that's the end of the webinar today. I want to thank Jana, Courtney, Jennifer, and Jeanette for presenting. I also want to thank all of you for attending. And if you have any more questions or would like to learn more about this topic, please feel free to email us. One thing to also note—you'll be receiving a link to the recording of the webinar within three to four weeks.



At the close of this webinar, you will be redirected to a short survey. Please take a moment to fill that out. It helps us improve the webinars and make them more useful to you and others. Thank you in advance for your help with that. And with that, thank you again for attending, and we look forward to having you join us for future webinars. Thank you.

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