

## **SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN EVALUATION: 2020-21 FACT SHEET FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION SITES (BIRTH – GRADE 3)**

### **Evaluation Overview**

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan was introduced in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2015. It offers an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing income- and race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. The evaluation of the plan's full implementation School as Hub approach was updated in 2018-19 to provide information about shifts in practices and progress in school systems, family processes and engagement, and student learning. The goals for the 2020-21 evaluation were designed to:

- Align the evaluation with the updated change strategies and theory of change for the School as Hub approach including:
  - Implementation of the *Growing Great Kids* curriculum for the parents of children from birth through age 5
  - Addition of personal visits for families after children age out of home visits up to age 5
  - Focus on school-based system change via the School as Hub approach
- Maximize the number of children and families participating in the evaluation in order to draw meaningful conclusions about the quality and effectiveness of program components.
- Maximize the scope of the evaluation while minimizing the time schools, families, and children spend directly involved in evaluation activities.
- Examine changes in programmatic and school-based activities due to COVID-19.

### **Key Areas of Focus**

1. School System: The evaluation will address questions about school-level change from the perspective of principals and staff responsible for implementing change strategies. Issues of interest include family engagement, coaching, and transitions across the early childhood years and into school.
2. Quality of Program Components: The evaluation will address questions about the quality of home visits, personal visits, and classroom practices over time.
3. Family Support and Engagement: The evaluation will address questions about how schools enhance engagement with and support of families over time.
4. Child Learning and Development: The evaluation will address questions about the academic and social-emotional development of children, birth to Grade 3, over time.

### **Participants**

Ten schools in six school districts participate in the full implementation School as Hub birth – Grade 3



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approach and are included in the evaluation, including approximately 200 teachers in PreK – Grade 3 classrooms. Families participating in home visiting and/or personal visits will be invited to participate in the evaluation, which will assess the quality of home visiting and personal visits. Children enrolled in home visiting and/or personal visits complete cognitive and socio-emotional assessments when they turn age 3. All children at full implementation schools in Kindergarten through Grade 3 are included in the evaluation assessment of social-emotional development and learning as recorded by school achievement tests.

#### **Data Collection and Use**

Multiple data collection tools and approaches are being used to examine each of the key areas presented above, utilizing a formative and summative perspective. In an effort to build sustainability for evaluation activities, the evaluation team prioritized the inclusion of data already in use at schools, and data that could be used to support continuous improvement efforts in schools.

#### **Evaluation Team**

The research and evaluation unit of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute will facilitate the evaluation of the plan's full implementation birth – Grade 3 approach. The evaluation will be co-led by Lisa Knoche at the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and Jolene Johnson at the Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation of the Munroe-Meyer Institute at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Kathleen Gallagher, director of research and evaluation at the Buffett Institute, and Greg Welch, associate director of research and evaluation, provide oversight and guidance for the evaluation components and implementation studies.

For specific questions relating to the evaluation, please contact Marie Geist, program evaluation coordinator, Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation, at [mgeist@nebraska.edu](mailto:mgeist@nebraska.edu) or 402-554-6525.