Summary of Main Findings

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has contracted WestEd to study its School Improvement Grants (SIG) program since 2011. The current evaluation is a continuation of a study of the fourth cohort of school improvement grants (SIG IV). This cohort of schools, all located in the Lansing School District, adopted the early learning intervention model, providing an interesting opportunity to study the implementation of one of the newer SIG models in a cohort of schools within a single district. The current evaluation was conducted during the second year of SIG implementation and focused on examining progress in relation to systems-level reform, coordination of efforts and support, and impact on school culture.

The Year 1 evaluation of the SIG IV cohort uncovered some early successes, promising practices, and challenges associated with implementing the early learning intervention model. Overall, the evaluation found that many of the early successes and promising practices from Year 1 continued into Year 2. Additionally, schools made progress addressing some Year 1 challenges, though a few challenges persisted into Year 2. Of particular note, staff at all schools and the district had begun to think about and plan for sustainability of critical functions and efforts, although it was only the second year of the five-year SIG. Some of the more significant successes from Year 2 included:

- **Improved alignment, understanding, and collaboration between Pre-K and K–3.** In Year 1 there was some disconnect between the philosophy of aligning the curriculum and expectations from Pre-K through third grade and actual
classroom practices. Systemic efforts from the second year contributed to bridging this gap and improving the alignment of both the philosophy and practices between Pre-K and kindergarten.

- **Leveraging a district-cohort approach to SIG to create a cohesive system of support.** The fact that a group of schools within one district adopted the same reform model and shared resources, including key staff positions, created a high degree of cohesion, collaboration, and connection among staff and reform efforts. This approach also contributed to the district identifying a specific systemic area of need: the continuity of students attending the same school from preschool to early elementary grades.

- **Implementing key systemic reforms.** The district and its partner Intermediate School District (ISD) successfully initiated cohort- and district-wide reforms in the following key areas: fostering a growth mindset among staff and students, integrating and merging key data elements and fostering their use, and establishing a regular schedule of professional development and teacher collaboration that was responsive to district and school priorities.

- **Improving coordination of efforts and support.** Schools benefited from a high level of coordination of support from the district, the ISD, and the MDE, most notably in the areas of coaching and monitoring. Two factors critical to schools benefiting from coordinated support were establishing integrated data systems and finding the optimal balance between systemic changes and school-level autonomy and flexibility.

- **Fostering data-oriented culture.** The district successfully created structures and procedures to support a culture of data use and continuous improvement across schools. Data coaches were particularly critical to supporting data-oriented efforts and facilitating this cultural shift.

- **Improving school climate and culture.** Efforts and training related to Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (CR-PBIS) and growth mindset were key to improving school climate and culture among staff and students.

- **Performance improvements.** Although a future research brief will report on student academic performance as measured by state-level achievement data, some preliminary indicators point to performance improvements in Year 2.

The Year 2 evaluation also sought to identify potential promising practices that could be of value to the MDE or other districts as they support school turnaround and reform efforts. Most of the promising practices identified were rooted in the fact the SIG schools were from a single cohort, as well as in systemic changes in their practices. These promising practices included:
• Leveraging a cohort of SIGs and SIG funding to incubate improvement ideas, identify promising practices, and serve as a launching point for sharing and scaling successful practices across the district.

• Using key positions shared across sites (i.e., SIG coordinator, data coach) to increase collaboration on improvement activities and improve cohesion within a reform effort.

• Using a cohort approach and coordinating use of funds to increase efficiency, namely through higher levels of collaboration on how to spend SIG dollars, leveraging of different funding streams to accomplish common goals, and sharing roles across schools.

• Facilitating systems change through a comprehensive and cohesive coaching model, integrated and shared data system, positive data culture, and concerted efforts to improve school climate and culture.

Although cohort IV schools experienced meaningful and significant successes during Year 2—including the exit of two SIGs from Priority status—and made progress in addressing some Year 1 challenges, several challenges persisted into Year 2. The alignment of expectations and instructional practices between preschool and early elementary improved in Year 2, but remained a challenge. Teachers also continued to share that staff planning and collaboration remained more limited than they would have liked.

In addition, staff identified sustainability as a challenge during Year 2. Specifically, staff discussed addressing the challenge of sustaining key functions performed by SIG staff versus SIG-funded staff positions, increasing staff capacity to teach core content versus sustaining interventions and SIG-funded interventionists, and further scaling improvement and growth mindset. Although these are indeed challenges, the level of consideration and thought placed on sustainability in Year 2 of a five-year grant is promising.
Introduction and Background

Between 2009 and 2016, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) awarded school improvement grants (SIGs) to over 100 schools across five cohorts (2010, 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2016). For the first three cohorts, there were four reform model options: turnaround, transformation, restart, or closure. Beginning with the MDE’s fourth cohort of SIG (SIG IV), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) allowed local education agencies (LEAs) to apply for SIG funds under two additional models: early learning intervention and state-identified evidence-based whole-school reform.

WestEd has studied Michigan’s SIG program since 2011, which has included SIG cohorts I through IV. In the current year of the SIG evaluation, WestEd continued its examination of cohort IV, which comprised four schools in the Lansing School District that all implemented the early learning intervention model. All schools in Michigan’s SIG cohort IV (SIG IV) were in Lansing School District, and all four schools in the cohort were Pre-K to grade 3 schools that adopted the early learning intervention model. This combination of factors presented a unique opportunity to study one of the newer SIG models. Additionally, in 2012 the Lansing School District instituted a districtwide restructuring plan rooted in an early literacy focus. The district restructured its schools using research-based child development grade span cohorts to re-group students into early learning schools serving Pre-K to grade 3, middle years schools serving grades 4–6, and high schools serving grades 7–12. The principles of the restructuring included:

- Focusing on long-term instructional vision
- Creating learning environments that meet the needs of 21st-century learners
- Maximizing facility capacity
- Incorporating elements of previous proposals and community feedback

Evaluation activities examined the ongoing progress of SIG IV schools with a specific focus on the extent to which SIG and the early learning intervention model have influenced school culture, system-level reform, and district ability to leverage resources. Additionally, the evaluation set out to identify lessons learned from SIG IV’s district-cohort approach.

The following research questions guided the evaluation:

1. What progress have schools made under the early learning intervention model in supporting school turnaround?

2. What lessons have been learned from a “district-cohort approach” to supporting school turnaround that can be leveraged in other system-focused improvement efforts?

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1 Previous evaluation reports are available on the MDE website: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140--238570--,00.html
The 2017 evaluation scope also included an examination of SIG impact on student achievement in the Lansing School District. Interviews provided anecdotal information and preliminary indications of impact on student achievement, which are briefly discussed in this document. However, analysis of student achievement data collected through the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) assessment system will be addressed in a separate research brief.

**Method**

A two-person WestEd evaluation team conducted site visits and interviews at each of the four SIG IV schools in spring of the 2016–17 school year. The team also interviewed the SIG coordinator and visited the district office where they interviewed three district staff working with SIG schools: Deputy Superintendent, Executive Director of School Improvement, and Director of Special Populations and Programs. A total of 20 individuals were interviewed one-on-one. While at school sites, the team interviewed the principal, Early Childhood Interventionists (ECI), and teacher leaders. At one school site, the team also interviewed the data coach. Family and Community Liaisons (FCL), data coaches, and pre-school teachers were interviewed in separate focus groups of three to five individuals each. The evaluation team also interviewed representatives from the Ingham Intermediate School District (IISD).

**Interview Protocol and Analysis**

Interviews were conducted using structured interview protocols and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Separate interview protocols were created for principals, ECIs, FCLs, coaches, teacher leaders, and the SIG coordinator. Interview protocols included questions about: implementation of the early learning intervention model and SIG plan, school culture and climate, district role and support, ISD role and support, professional development and coaching, coordination and collaboration of support and funding, perceptions of the impact on student performance, and initial efforts related to sustainability. (See Appendix for interview protocols.)

Interview data analyses focused on summarizing implementation progress and accomplishments, identifying promising and successful practices, and discussing ongoing challenges. Three members of the evaluation team used prior SIG evaluations and a sample of interviews to develop a preliminary coding strategy. Interview data were then analyzed iteratively by evaluation team members with experience coding, analyzing, and synthesizing interview data. Emerging themes were coded and modified throughout the coding process.

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2 The IISD is a regional education service agency that provides a wide variety of administrative and instructional supports, services, and programs to school districts within its service area and around the state. The IISD serves twelve public school districts and ten public school academies across seven counties.
Findings from the Implementation of the Early Learning Intervention Model

In this section, we present findings from site visits and interviews with district, IISD, and school staff. Our discussion of findings is integrated throughout the brief as we present successes and progress made through two years of implementation of the early learning intervention model. Following the discussion of findings, we attempt to cull promising practices from areas of notable progress, and discuss ongoing challenges. We conclude by presenting our key takeaways from these findings and potential next steps and further areas of study.

Progress Through Two Years of the Early Learning Intervention Model

Year 1 efforts to implement the early learning intervention model in the Lansing School District generally focused on hiring staff, analyzing and understanding site needs, goal setting, strategic planning, and putting elements in place in order to foster systemic improvement across and within each of the four SIG IV schools. During Year 2, schools began to benefit from coordinated efforts as school and district plans were implemented. The evaluation team examined the initial impact and improvements resulting from these efforts. In Year 2, the four SIG IV schools experienced notable progress and improvements in the following areas:

- Alignment, understanding, and collaboration between Pre-K and K–3
- District-cohort approach to SIG
- Systems-level reform
- Coordination of efforts and support
- Fostering data-oriented culture
- School climate and culture

In addition to these specific areas of progress and improvement, feedback indicated that SIG helped to center, focus, and make purposeful schools’ varied efforts and initiatives; contributed to schools’ sense of belonging (i.e., being part of a cohort created a sentiment among schools that they are not in this alone); and increased collaboration and coherence within different roles (e.g., principals, data coaches, early childhood interventionists) among the schools.

Improved Alignment and Collaboration: Pre-K to K–3

The implementation of the early learning intervention model across a cohort of Pre-K to 3rd grade schools presented a unique application of a SIG model, especially given that the schools had recently been restructured to include only Pre-K to grade 3. Because these schools
contained only these grade levels, the district and schools were optimally situated to benefit from an early learning intervention model. District staff reported continued improvements to alignment, understanding, and collaboration between Pre-K and kindergarten through 3rd grade during the second year of SIG. Staff at some of the schools reported that in previous years there had been a significant divide between the philosophy of aligning the curricula from Pre-K through 3rd grade and actual classroom practices. This disconnect between philosophy and practice was particularly evident for the link between the practices in Pre-K and kindergarten classrooms, likely stemming from the unique nature of the GSRP-adopted HighScope preschool curriculum: a structured, research-based approach to early learning that has been successful with underprivileged young children born into poverty.\(^3\) The details of HighScope were not clearly articulated to or understood by the kindergarten teachers, who structure their school day to more closely resemble first grade than Pre-K. Additionally, preschool teachers reported last year that they did not feel integrated with the rest of the school staff.

Overall, the early learning focus of SIG contributed to the integration of Pre-K with the entire school. ECIs were critical in sharing information across Pre-K (GSRP) and K–3 classrooms. Specific systemic efforts from Year 2 that contributed to bridging this gap and improving the alignment of both the philosophy and practices between Pre-K and kindergarten include:

- HighScope training offered to all district kindergarten teachers
- The GSRP schedule shifted to align with late start Wednesday professional learning and collaboration time established by the district
- Pre-K and kindergarten teachers participated in PLCs together in coordination with the IISD
- ECIs worked across sites to coordinate practices and share lessons learned through meetings

**District-Cohort Approach to SIG**

Among the reported successes of the district-cohort approach is that school staff feel part of a network of schools, collectively working toward improvement. Similarly, district staff reported realizing the critical role the district has in a comprehensive system of support and reform, shifting away from considering SIG as solely a school-level reform. For example, a district leader stated, “We have realized we can’t work with just a school, but need to work with schools within the district. As we think about all priority schools, we need to have a system at the district that can support them all.” Additionally, the district made intentional efforts to use SIG in general, and the SIG IV cohort in particular, as an incubator for innovative ideas. Ideas, interventions, or systems that proved successful in SIG schools were pushed out to other schools or districtwide to maximize the impact of lessons learned through SIG.

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As an example of an effort the district initiated within the context of SIGs that holds benefit districtwide, the SIG coordinator has begun to track students to determine where they attended preschool, recognizing that students with strong preschool experiences and continuity from Pre-K to K–3 would be best prepared for the early elementary grades. The district acknowledges there are structural issues embedded in the GSRP system (e.g., enrollment procedures, Head Start eligibility, parent choice) that make it difficult to maintain the continuity for young children’s Pre-K to early elementary experience. Although selection of a K–3 elementary school is largely based on parent choice and/or neighborhood, the GSRP Pre-K program includes prioritization categories that give spots first to families at the highest poverty level and with educational risk factors (automatic qualification is given to homeless students and those with special education needs). Pre-K seats are reserved in the following order: highest to lowest poverty levels, Head Start, and tuition-based. Staff estimated that across SIG IV schools, approximately 50% of kindergarten students were from district GSRP sites. Therefore, families may not always get their children placed in the preschool program at the school they would plan to attend for grades K–3. District SIG staff realize the issue and are in the process of gathering background data on current kindergarten students at SIG sites to better understand the trends and challenges associated with the transition from Pre-K to early elementary. The work to unpack these data and improve the pipeline from Pre-K to K would benefit the entire district.

Another success of the early learning intervention model that is being maximized by the district’s cohort approach and efforts to improve the continuity of experience for students from preschool to early elementary grades is fostering strong relationships between school and family. Feedback from some school staff indicate parents are more invested when they stay in a single school community for a longer period and have time to understand the services offered through the school, how the school can support their families, and how they can support the school.

**Systems-Level Reform**

One of the key underpinnings of SIG IV’s success was developing systems to support reform efforts. Lansing School District and the IISD were intentional about establishing robust structural and systemic support for initiatives and other support efforts. Key among these were creating a growth mindset across the district and facilitating use of broad range of data.

**Growth Mindset**

The district has invested in building a pervasive growth mindset across all schools by providing coordinated professional development on this topic and reinforcing a growth mindset through efforts that offer systemic support, such as coaching; a data culture of reflection and improvement; the i-Collaborate initiative of observation, reflection on practice, and improvement; and a focus on continuously improving the culture and climate for students and staff. The i-Collaborate initiative, a systemic collection of instructional process data, is critical to the district’s focus on instructional improvements and efforts to build a culture of reflection and
inquiry where teachers can feel safe reflecting on data about their own practices and engaging in discussion about their own growth.

Additionally, at the outset of SIG IV the district began training on Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (CR-PBIS)—districtwide—to establish a common set of norms, values, and behaviors. CR-PBIS has been instrumental in shifting staff and student mindset in a positive way. Across all schools, staff describe a stronger culture of inclusion and mutual respect in the school community.

**Integrated Data Use**

Year 2 featured a significant effort to integrate and merge behavior and attendance data with existing instructional, academic, and process data (e.g., data gathered through i-Collaborate). Although data use has been a focus since SIG IV began, Year 2 saw a more concerted effort to develop infrastructure to support the use of a wider range of academic and behavioral data for improvement purposes, including facilitating the district’s growth mindset priority. Staff regularly review several types of data (e.g., academic, behavioral, attendance), reflect on instructional practices, identify areas of growth and gaps, and make plans to address the gaps through interventions and supports. Data coaches attempt to identify how attendance, behavioral, and academic measures can be used together to improve student outcomes.

For example, one component of these new integrated data systems attempts to track positive teacher/parent interactions and relate it to other factors, such as attendance and student behavior. Whereas previously schools tracked disciplinary calls to parents, schools can now use a Google Document to track their phone calls that offer positive feedback to families. Data coaches then compile the data in concert with attendance and behavioral data and share it with teachers and administrators in an effort to build school-level capacity to review data, identify areas for improvement, and develop plans to address needs. Data coaches indicated these documents, processes, and systems are designed to be used by school staff when the data coach positions are no longer funded.

Data coaches and other staff see these efforts as building long-term capacity for more targeted instruction and intervention. Teachers generally reported improvement in their understanding of and attitude toward data and data use. The majority of teachers interviewed see the data analysis as useful for improvement, rather than as a punitive effort related to their teaching. Data coaches were identified as significant contributors to this process, particularly through the systems they established for data review and use.

**Late Start Wednesdays**

Lansing School District set up late start Wednesdays each week across the district to allow time for professional development and teacher collaboration. On many of these Wednesdays, the district offers professional development to staff districtwide, including SIG IV schools. Professional development during at least one late start Wednesday per month is structured at the
discretion of each school leader and staff. Late start Wednesdays serve as an example of district flexibility in implementing SIG requirements in a structured way across a cohort of schools, while also recognizing the unique needs and priorities of each site.

**Improved Coordination of Efforts and Support**

A critical element of the success of Lansing School District’s cohort approach has been improved coordination of reform efforts and delivery of support among the district, the IISD, and the MDE. Namely, this effort has required balancing centralized systems and systemic support with school-based autonomy and flexibility; comprehensive coaching, leadership, and instructional support; and integrated grant monitoring and support. In support of these efforts, the IISD has served as a partner and capacity broker to the district. IISD staff assisted in developing and planning the early learning intervention model with the district and were included as a partner in the SIG rather than a subcontractor. This partner-based relationship allowed for meaningful collaboration between the two organizations and positioned the IISD to effectively and efficiently assess and respond to need.

**Balancing Systems with Autonomy and Flexibility**

A critical component of coordinated efforts and support is balancing the implementation of systemic changes with school-level autonomy and flexibility. The district and the IISD established support systems for schools; however, the district also allowed school input, autonomy, and/or flexibility on issues such as sharing SIG staff across schools, setting teacher collaboration time, and professional development topics for late start Wednesdays. In addition, one school reported that the district supported the research-based approaches instituted by the principal to improve staff focus on supporting families in poverty. This principal reported receiving strong support from the district when implementing a voluntary staff book study project, engaging all staff on books relating to students’ and families’ needs around trauma, addiction, and mental illness.

**Comprehensive Coaching, Leadership, and Instructional Support**

Across all four schools, staff reported that SIG data coaches provide essential support to direct all staff toward goal-setting and ongoing improvement. The MDE previously supported the Coaching 101 program, which trained staff to support peers through instructional coaching. The course allowed participants—including ECI’s, data coaches, and math/early literacy specialists—to earn a Coaching 101 credential. When MDE funding for this program ended in fall 2017, the district opted to continue supporting the program on its own by identifying an administrator to continue the effort and utilizing a training-of-trainers model to build internal capacity of coaches. This shift toward an instructional coach model is a district priority and investment aimed at building capacity of teachers and staff. Additionally, in collaboration with the district, the IISD offers coaching for teachers on an as-needed basis on topics such as Go Math implementation and benchmark testing.
IISD staff conduct job-embedded coaching for school leaders, coaches, and teachers on topics such as data use and curriculum. In addition, the IISD follows up professional development on curriculum and interventions (e.g., Rocket Math, PALS) by going back into schools and conducting observations. In supporting school leaders, the IISD provides knowledge on evidence-based practices and interventions, such as the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and teaching core in 90-minute blocks. The IISD also provides follow-up by identifying and supporting necessary interventions after sorting students by skills.

**Data and Leadership Coaching.** The School Improvement Facilitator (SIF)—an IISD position supported by Regional Assistance Grants (RAG)\(^4\)—currently leads data coaches across priority schools in the district, including the four SIG IV schools. The leadership and contribution of this role was reported as invaluable by all data coaches, as well as other school staff. The SIF brought together data coaches from the four SIG IV schools, leading one data coach to report that without the SIF “they would be islands. [The SIF] spends time in every school every week.” The SIF also coordinated leadership coaching with principals at quarterly “data days” during which the SIF worked with principals intensively on data review and reflection. The SIF models professional development and support for principals, who in turn do the same with school staff. This leadership coaching helped a new principal establish solid bearings at a new school. The IISD indicated a priority of support to principals and coaches is increasing knowledge of evidence-based practices. Although the IISD held data days prior to SIG, the presence of data coaches at each school allowed for data days to now be facilitated and led locally by the data coach and principal.

**Instructional Learning Cycles.** Quarterly grade-level ILC meetings are facilitated by the IISD and led by data coaches. IISD staff coordinate funds to secure substitute teachers for staff to participate. In order to sustain ILCs past the SIG funding period, the role of ILC facilitation will shift from data coaches to school staff in the coming year as staff build their capacity to properly implement and lead these efforts.

**SIG Monitoring and Support**

Beginning with the SIG III cohort, the MDE shifted the structure of its support for SIGs, providing more systemized supports and resources in addition to the compliance monitoring. Across all SIG IV schools, staff reported that MDE SIG monitors are influential and supportive figures in SIG implementation. MDE SIG staff offer useful tools to track initiatives and structure all aspects of SIG rollout. Although the MDE-developed *Unpacking Tool for Priority*

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4 RAG funds are available to ISDs that serve school districts with Title I schools identified as Priority or Focus schools. RAG funds may be used for activities and services that build staff capacity, including: school improvement facilitator, intervention specialist, instructional coaches, professional learning activities, culture/climate interventions, and substitute teacher costs to support engagement in professional learning. Use must support rapid improvement and focus on the reason the school was identified as Priority.
Schools received mixed reviews initially, interviewees now note it is an invaluable resource to help see all a school was responsible for doing, as well as organizing and coordinating efforts. In Year 2, staff widely appreciated the benefit of the tool along with the support provided by the SIG monitor from the MDE.

District staff offered mixed reviews of their experiences with the SIG networking meetings. Some SIG staff reported the meetings allowed for sharing with their counterparts across the state. Other staff reported that most topics discussed at networking meetings did not go deep enough to hold specific benefit for them, and that the meetings were often a show-and-tell of a few districts’ practices which were not necessarily new to the staff.

Staff also reported mixed responses about the Blueprint for Rapid School Turnaround. IISD staff and data coaches noted their work is parallel to the content of the Blueprint, but that their understanding and implementation of concepts is often beyond what is outlined in the Blueprint. Some principals and district staff were not familiar the Blueprint. Some SIG staff reported finding value in implementation guides based on the Blueprint that were shared by other districts.

**Fostering Data-Oriented Culture**

Lansing School District created greatly improved structures and procedures that support a culture of data use and continuous improvement across schools. All principals and many staff interviewed described making data-informed decisions. In most cases, these data were available to them as a result of systems or structures implemented or improved through SIG and SIG-related efforts, such as quarterly ILCs that rely heavily on data analysis, i-Collaborate, and teacher and student data binders. The work of SIG data coaches—both collaborative efforts and individual work with school staff—was instrumental in infusing the prioritization of data into school culture.

For example, the effort to link behavioral data with academic data through the Synergy data system allowed for a previously unexplored linkage of data within the district. As school leadership and data coaches realized the need for detailed behavior data linked to academic measures in order to fully support students, they began to make requests of the district for additional reports from Synergy. The district worked with the Synergy data system to integrate several key data elements. Although these reports with integrated data elements were initially assembled in response to requests from SIGs, this improvement (i.e., integrated data reports) benefits non-SIG schools as well. In addition to SIG use of Synergy data system, one site was piloting a new data warehouse program, Illuminate Education, that would further facilitate the integration of various data elements and make them more easily accessible to school leaders.

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5 The Unpacking Tool guides school and district staff through an “unpacking” of its reform plans into actionable, measurable, and trainable steps. The Unpacking Tool addresses five major areas: instruction programs and practices, professional learning, student achievement and student data collection, family and community involvement, and social/emotional needs of students. The plan involves aligning activities across these areas regardless of funding source.
Additionally, the district investment in i-Collaborate, first through Title II then expanded by SIG funding, provides a data-rich, job-embedded feedback loop to teachers about their instructional practices. Through this initiative, Lansing School District set out to establish coherence in instructional practices using an inquiry-based snapshot tool called EduSnap. Data coaches, as opposed to principals, were trained to do the observations of teachers, allowing the process to be viewed as non-evaluative. Observation summary data are provided at school, grade, and classroom levels with the goal of supporting ongoing improvement.

**School Climate and Culture**

Feedback from staff indicated that implementation of the early learning intervention model had an impact on school climate and culture across SIG IV schools. Teacher morale had suffered in recent years due to the lack of time for planning and collaboration, changes in leadership, staffing shifts to cover vacancies, and the restructuring caused by SIG reform and Priority school status. However, in Year 2 teachers and staff reported a positive shift in the climate and culture among faculty. They described this change as a shift toward a culture of improvement and collaboration, and, most notably, recognition that students’ background and home circumstances contribute significantly to student behavior and efforts at school. Staff attributed this shift to the CR-PBIS and training on growth mindset. Teachers reported that CR-PBIS training gave them tools to improve their support of high-need students. Some schools also reported an increase in trust among staff and leaders in the school, further contributing to stronger morale.

In addition to teachers and staff, students also responded positively to the focus on behavior, positive rewards, and motivation for showing respect, kindness, and mutual understanding. School staff reported that the stronger morale borne of increased trust among staff and leaders in the school also contributed to improvements in student behavior and increased attendance. Multiple schools reported improvements in student behavioral data, including decreased referrals to the office and suspension rates.

Feedback from FCLs across the schools also indicated that parents increased their involvement as measured by attendance at parent-teacher conferences and curriculum nights. One school reported an increase in participation on the parent advisory committee over the last year. The FCL made deliberate efforts to build a culture of support where families were welcomed and expected to get involved. Some families increasingly used support services offered by the schools, helping to bolster their engagement with school staff.

**Preliminary Indications of Progress in Student Academic Performance**

Although the results of analyses of state-level student achievement data for SIG IV schools will be provided in a subsequent brief, there are some preliminary indications of progress in student academic achievement. Most notably, two SIG IV schools improved enough to be reclassified out of Priority status. In addition, perceptions and anecdotes shared by district and school staff
provide descriptive indication of some improved student outcomes. For example, district staff reported that math scores at all four schools increased, as measured by local metrics, stating that these findings would be confirmed by upcoming M-STEP math data.

Overall, staff noted that growth occurred in silos, either in specific strands of a subject area or at particular grade levels, rather than across grade levels or student populations. Two schools reported increases on M-STEP data. In one school, performance increased from pre-SIG (when identified as Priority) to first year post-identification (2014–15), then decreased the following year (2015–16). In another, increases were in specific grades. Some staff referred to progress on AIMSweb benchmark assessments, which are nationally normed, administered three times per year, and focus on literacy and numeracy. For example, one school described success in bringing Tier I students from 17% proficiency to 67% in phonemic segmentation. This same school reported some improvements due to the new Rocket Math curriculum in 2nd and 3rd grades, although more improvement is needed to bring all students to grade level. One school principal detailed improvements in kindergarten and 1st grade but shared that 2nd and 3rd grades are struggling and need more intervention. Staff at this school attribute current improvement to interventions in kindergarten and 1st grade, data binders, ILCs, and teacher PLCs.

Promising Practices

In this section, we present practices, culled from the progress described above, that show promise and could be leveraged to yield broader impact across the state. Below, we describe practices related to leveraging SIG, achieving efficiency through coordination, and creating systems change.

Leveraging the District-Cohort Approach to SIG: SIGs as an Idea Incubator

The district was intentional about examining successes and efforts across its SIG-funded schools (current and previous SIGs) to uncover best practices and share those across the district. The focused and collaborative nature of SIG IV schools, supported by a concerted systems orientation, provided the district with an ideal environment to incubate improvement ideas. Key to the success of this practice was having a shared SIG coordinator.

One key finding of the Year 2 interviews was that the district-cohort aspect of SIG IV allowed both SIG and non-SIG schools to work out of Priority status. SIG funding was leveraged to contribute to systemic reform that reached beyond the SIG IV cohort schools (e.g., Coaching 101, curriculum and intervention tools, CR-PBIS, data use strategies). Staff suggested that being part of a network of collaborators was also critical. The SIG IV coordinator shared experiences from working with SIG and non-SIG schools, and both benefited from tools and strategies that might have otherwise been unavailable to them. For example, specific training on the Heggerty phonemic awareness curriculum was a SIG effort that was opened to the entire district. Additionally, when the district contracted speakers or professional development specific to SIG, non-SIG school staff were invited to attend at minimal or no cost. Other ideas that were first
explored within SIGs, found to have value, and then scaled within the district included student support specialists (i.e., staff with social work background that provide mental health and curriculum support), late start Wednesdays, and staff hiring and screening procedures.

**Strategies for Efficiency through Coordination**

The cohort approach resulted in each school receiving less SIG funding than they would have if each school had a single SIG grant. Feedback indicated that a lower amount of SIG funding (compared to recent SIG awards) distributed across four schools resulted in the district and schools needing to be efficient, intentional, and strategic about identifying, prioritizing, and addressing needs collaboratively. Four SIG IV schools, each receiving approximately $350,000 and sharing a single SIG coordinator, worked alongside the partner ISD to build efficiency and coordination in efforts to achieve SIG goals across all four schools. This team environment encouraged staff across schools to learn from one another and allowed the district to use funds creatively to support the entire cohort.

Additionally, the early learning intervention model created a shared sense of purpose given the model’s alignment to the early learning focus and Pre-K through 3rd grade structure of the SIG schools. One principal indicated that SIG helped identify and focus the school on a common purpose across multiple grants and initiatives.

**Shared Roles**

To stretch funds and increase collaboration, some SIG IV schools shared data coaches. In two instances, one data coach split time across two schools. This, in conjunction with the high degree of collaboration among data coaches, resulted in sharing of best practices. As another example, one site used Title I funds combined with SIG funds to hire their FCL through Communities in Schools (CIS). As a result, the FCL at this site has a broader set of responsibilities than in other SIG IV schools and can take advantage of the community connections available through the national CIS model of family engagement.

**Leveraging Funding Streams**

All sites leveraged multiple funding streams to accomplish improvement goals. One site leveraged its SIG with Magnet School, RAG, and Title I funds to create a more purposeful system of support across the range of improvement initiatives for which it was responsible. The principal indicated that funds and reporting requirements were all flawlessly coordinated with help from the district, specifically the SIG coordinator. The administrator also identified the Unpacking Tool as particularly helpful in this coordination.

**Facilitating Systems Change**

The following practices, discussed in greater detail above, illustrate how the district was able to implement and facilitate systemic change across the SIG IV cohort.
Coaching: The coaching model described previously was a critical component of developing the internal capacity to initiate and sustain systemic thinking around data use, growth mindset, and continuous improvement. The coaching model has the potential to support both SIG and non-SIG schools beyond the timeframe of SIG funding.

Integrated and shared data: Lansing School District worked with the operators of its data system (Synergy) to produce integrated reports that improve access to and understanding of the relationship between academic and behavioral data. Requests for these integrated reports were initiated by SIG sites, but the resulting reports benefit all schools in the district.

i-Collaborate: This inquiry-based initiative contributes to coherence in instructional practices by training data coaches and literacy/math specialists to conduct observations of teachers, thereby allowing the process to be viewed as non-evaluative. i-Collaborate data are provided at the school, grade, and classroom level across all SIG IV schools and lead to deep teacher-led small-group discussions at the cohort and district level to improve instruction.

Creating a data-positive culture: The district intentionally endeavored to create a positive data culture through the training-of-trainers model, data sharing, i-Collaborate, and strategies such as the ILCs, data days for school leaders, grade-level meetings, and PLCs. These systems and structures contributed to improving data literacy and data use throughout the district, as well as an overall positive data culture.

Improving school culture and climate: CR-PBIS was an instrumental, system-wide initiative that facilitates adult understanding of the circumstances of high-need children and their families (e.g., poverty, trauma, hunger, homelessness) and establishes both a common language and an understanding of expectations for behavior among adults and children. District staff reported that CR-PBIS implementation contributed to improvements in overall school climate, as well as improvements reflected in behavioral data. One school reported decreases in referrals and behavioral incidents after CR-PBIS improved culture among students and staff. Although staff generally reported teaching in culturally responsive ways, some interviewees indicated some staff still harbor a sense of blame toward parents for children’s home circumstance.

Ongoing Challenges

In this section we discuss some of the ongoing challenges identified by staff across schools and the district. Overall, challenges conveyed by staff were related to sustaining the success or various elements of SIG.
Sustainability of Success

With any funded effort such as SIG, questions pervade about how the work and related successes will be sustained once the funding ceases. Staff at the district and each of the SIG schools have developed some promising ideas for how the SIG IV work will continue. These efforts are notable because schools are having these conversations—and taking intentional sustainability-focused steps—in the second year of their five-year grant. Efforts have focused primarily on increasing teacher and leader capacity, as well as scaling these efforts. Efforts to scale included inviting non-SIG school staff to professional learning opportunities so that practices can spread districtwide, including the commitment to continued reform and improvement. Some of those plans are outlined below.

Maintaining SIG Staff Roles Versus Functions

The SIG coordinator and data coaches have taken on the responsibility for the bulk of the work to plan for sustainability. They focused on transitioning the key functions of their roles to math and literacy specialists, principals, and teaching staff—all non-SIG-funded positions. However, the perception among school staff was varied with regard to sustainability. When asked about sustainability, school staff suggested that the best way to sustain progress and gains made under SIG was to keep SIG-funded personnel on board beyond the SIG grant. Teachers wanted to keep the ECI and did not feel they could serve the neediest students with interventions or one-on-one support without ECIs. The district staff described possible plans to keep some staff as part of the coaching structure once they are all trained in Coaching 101. Although ECIs, FCLs, and data coaches were widely described as highly valuable, it was unclear how funding for their roles would be sustained. In addition to the staffing strategy described above, some key structures put in place by the district to support sustainability were the focus on the 90-minute core blocks, ILCs, and data days—all described in detail above.

Increasing Staff Capacity to Teach the Core

Although staff reported that interventions were key to student academic improvement, they seemed to understand that interventions were not a sustainable solution. As one interviewee indicated, schools were “intervening their way out of priority status…which is not sustainable.” Staff proposed that the focus on building capacity for classroom teachers to teach core instruction would be the key to longer term success. A strong culture of data use led by building leadership, committed focus on and support of core instruction blocks, and ongoing peer-to-peer coaching and support are examples of promising practices that contribute to teacher capacity and minimize the need for intervention staff over time.

Streamlining the Pre-K Pipeline

The early learning intervention model is predicated on supporting young children’s school readiness in their Pre-K to kindergarten years, allowing them to remain on track through the early grades. Efforts to track the pipeline of students entering a school, where they came from,
and what needs they have will be key to targeted support of students when they arrive at their new school. There are structures and processes in place, beyond school leaders’ control and related to GSRP funding, that make this an ongoing challenge to maximizing the benefit of the early learning intervention model.

**Improvement Mindset**

To sustain change over time, staff must be invested in and committed to the drastic changes in mindset and practices that SIG requires. For many, this mindset shift has taken place. However, some staff are still averse to a data-informed culture and significant changes in mindset. Some SIG staff reported that when ILCs, coaching, or professional development are offered, it is common for only 60–70% of teachers to attend unless it is mandatory. Even among willing educators, some SIG staff reported that some teachers are exhausted and spending much more time on behavior modification than instructional improvements.

**Institutionalizing Pre-K to Kindergarten Alignment**

As mentioned above, challenges persist related to connecting the K–3 expectations and instructional practices to the preschools embedded at each site. IISD staff reported that though this gap still exists, they are committed to working with the district to break down barriers. There remains a lack of connection and alignment between the Pre-K HighScope curriculum and approach and the kindergarten curriculum and classroom management style. Additionally, some of the strategies that the district office is putting in place do not include the Pre-K classrooms. For example:

- Lansing School District’s Coaching 101 model is not a practice that reaches the Pre-K teachers
- Challenges were cited with aligning PELI, CLASS, EduSnap, and Early Literacy Inventory with AIMSweb
- Policy related to enrollment in the GSRP program hinders students from starting in the same Pre-K building that they will attend in kindergarten

The early learning intervention model is premised on a student maintaining continuity across the same early learning environment starting at age 4 through 3rd grade. Development of a more continuous structure and incentives for parents to send their child to the same school across these early years continues to be a challenge.

**Limited Staff Planning Time**

The abundance of demands on teachers’ time in the current education climate is a significant challenge under the best of conditions. This ever-present challenge, combined with the lack of designated and structured planning time for teachers in Lansing School District, remains of utmost importance to teachers. The current structural constraints teachers experience on any
given day within the district are noteworthy, including a shortage of substitute teachers and no planning periods. These have been cited consistently as reasons why efforts such as PLCs, ILCs, and informal teacher collaboration may be compromised and at risk of not being done regularly. For example, one barrier to the use of the i-Collaborate/EduSnap system is the lack of substitutes and collaboration time necessary to conduct the observations and engage in the critical teacher-led discussions that follow.

**Key Takeaways and Next Steps**

In this concluding section we present our key takeaways from the findings discussed above. We identify these takeaways as particularly notable given these SIGs were in their second year of a five-year grant. It will be critical to continue monitoring these accomplishments and efforts to ensure they continue into later years of these schools’ SIG.

**Key Takeaways**

- **Early successes and accomplishments of the district-cohort approach:** The strategic manner in which the district and the ISD conceptualized and implemented the SIG model across four schools has allowed for significant early successes in implementation.

- **A systemic focus on creating a growth mindset:** The district has comprehensively approached establishing and reinforcing a growth mindset across administration, teachers, and students.

- **An early focus on sustainability:** At Year 2 of the five-year grant, district and school staff are already grappling with sustainability in a meaningful and strategic manner.

**Accomplishments of the Cohort Approach**

After two years of SIG, the district and schools have created a comprehensive and cohesive system of supports and reform through which schools received coordinated support that includes teacher and administrator coaching and instructional support. Additionally, staff from individual SIGs felt part of a network that collectively moved toward improvement. The district identified a balance between systemic structures and supports and school-level flexibility and autonomy that allowed for ownership and engagement at all levels.

Adopting a common model with an early learning focus that aligns with the K–3 structure of schools allowed for coordinating efforts, sharing resources, and leveraging funds and individuals to maximize the benefits of SIG. Individuals in SIG-funded positions did not report feeling as if they were isolated in their efforts. On the contrary, the nature of the SIG IV cohort created a collaborative team environment. In this vein, sharing a SIG coordinator across multiple SIG schools facilitated both individual school-based efforts and combined cohort efforts. That the
coordinator position and the SIF role worked across sites allowed for perspective that maximized the triage function, allowing for a response that was sensitive to school need while also accessing resources or benefits from across the cohort or district.

Growth Mindset

Along with the data-oriented culture, an overall growth mindset has set in with SIG IV school staff after two years. Principals, teachers, and SIG staff talked about a process of setting goals, reviewing data, and learning from the process. They also described looking at a wide range of data to see where improvements can be made—continuous improvement, reflection on data, and growth are now part of the culture of the schools. One principal mentioned they now have a culture where they can admit struggle and seek support. Principals also acknowledged the value of modeling this culture with their teachers. The growth mindset also permeated students’ day-to-day activities. For example, one school shared that their students have their own data binders that are shared with parents and help identify where the students can improve.

Sustainability Focus

Across sites, there was a strong focus on developing human capacity within the schools and district. Oftentimes participants in school reform identify grant-funded staff positions as critical to success and therefore necessary for sustainability. However, in this case, many district, ISD, and school staff understood the need to develop internal capacity to take on the functions of these roles as opposed to maintaining the additional paid positions themselves. Data coaches in particular understood the need to develop school-based individuals and begin to shift their data coaching functions to principals, math and literacy interventionists, teachers, and other staff. Some school principals mentioned actively assessing or evaluating the effectiveness of efforts and investments supported with SIG funds in order to inform what they choose to sustain.

Next Steps for the Evaluation

- **Analyze impact on student achievement:** Into the third year of SIG, schools will have implemented the necessary elements of their plans to the point that SIG efforts would be expected to have an impact on student learning and achievement. By the spring of 2018–19, 3rd grade students will be the first cohort of tested students that could have been at the SIG IV schools for the full three years of SIG.

- **Examine sustainability efforts:** Cohort IV SIGs and the district opted for a model and implementation schedule built around three years of full implementation and two years of sustainability. Nonetheless, staff at the schools and district began thinking about and planning for sustainability in Year 2. Given the unique nature and confluence of opportunities presented by the systemic nature of SIG implementation in this cohort of schools, we believe additional focused examination of sustainability efforts could yield
meaningful insight into how systems-focused reform efforts can be sustained within a district.

- **Study scaling of a systems-oriented reform effort**: Interviews from districts that received SIG awards in multiple cohorts confirmed the findings in Lansing School District that SIG schools responded positively to systemic shifts in the statewide organization and support structures surrounding SIGs. Lansing’s SIG IV cohort appears to be a “perfect storm” of efforts, initiatives, and priorities in which to study the scaling of a systems-oriented reform effort undertaken with comparatively minimal funding.
Appendix

SIG Coordinator Interview Protocol

1. How has the MDE directly supported SIG school improvement efforts, specifically in this past 2016-17 school year? How have those supports evolved over time?

2. Can you describe your school-level autonomy and flexibility in operational areas such as hiring, length of school day, budgeting, etc.). What about areas of curriculum or instruction?

3. How has the ISD supported efforts to improve your school, specifically in this 2016-17 school year? How have those supports evolved over time?

4. How have various roles/positions of the SIG (PD, data use, curriculum and instruction, FCL) produced success in the district? What are the greatest lessons learned?

5. What role has the Blueprint for Rapid Turnaround in impacting your SIG efforts, if any?

6. How have the schools worked to coordinate SIG funding with other funding sources and initiatives? What are the challenges to those?

7. To what extent, if any, do SIG efforts in the district impact other non-SIG low performing schools? What kind of communication/collaboration/sharing best practices occurs with non-SIG schools?

8. Are there areas for improvement that you can see regarding SIG efforts in the future? If so, what are they?

9. How do you see that the SIG efforts can be sustained over time, beyond the current SIG plan and funding? What are the challenges to sustainability?

10. Is there anything you would like to add or further questions you wish to ask?
Principal Interview Protocol

1. **New Principals**: When did you start your new role as principal? Tell us a little bit about your background and how you came into the role?

**New and Existing Principals**: Over the past year, what would you identify as the major shifts that the SIG model reforms and interventions brought about at your school?

2. After almost two years of SIG IV, do you feel that the SIG efforts have contributed to improving student achievement at the school? If yes, to what would you attribute those improvements?
   - Prompts:
     - curriculum and instruction
     - assessment
     - culture and climate
     - teacher PD
     - staff PD
     - Other?

3. Could you describe the progress your SIG IV schools have made under the Early Learning Intervention model in the area of:
   - School culture and climate?
   - Data use
   - Family and Community Engagement
   - Other

4. Last school year, many new curricula, intervention, and PD related to SIG reform were being implemented at the same time.
   - **CONFIRM THE FOLLOW:**
     - Pre-K MTSS
     - Full-day kindergarten
     - Extended learning time in the summer
     - High Scope Curriculum (Pre-K), Reading Street (K-2)
     - My Sidewalks (supplemental ELA curriculum Pre-K – 1)
     - Professional development and coaching
     - Tier II supports (Intervention Blocks) that are taking place as well as the professional development and coaching for staff in this area

   - Which do you think have had an impact on student achievement? Which has had the largest impact on student achievement?
   - Which has had the greatest impact on non-academic factors (climate and culture, teacher morale, etc.)?

5. How has the district directly supported SIG school improvement efforts, specifically in the 2016-17 school year? And how have those supports evolved over time?

6. Can you describe the autonomy and flexibility you have over operational areas such as hiring, length of school day, budgeting, etc.).
• How about in areas of curriculum or instruction?

7. How has the ISD supported efforts to improve your school, specifically in the 2016-17 school year? And how have those supports evolved over time?

8. How have the additional new staff brought on by SIG (FCL, data coach, ECI) helped to support your school and all of the efforts to improve?
   • What roles have been most influential and how?

9. With the focus squarely on the early learning intervention model, how has that model been operationalized in your school (other than the structure of the school itself)?
   • How have the students benefited from that focus on early learning supports and interventions?

10. How has your school coordinated with other schools in the early learning SIG cohort IV schools to leverage lessons learned, best practices, funding, etc.?

11. How has Michigan’s new legislation about 3rd grade reading proficiency guided practice since it was brought to your attention?
   • What was/is the communication to you about it? From whom?
   • What, if any, has been the communication to the staff about addressing this issue?

12. How do you see the SIG efforts being sustained over time, beyond the current SIG plan and funding?
   • What do you foresee as your most significant challenges to sustainability?

13. How have various aspects of the SIG (PD, data use, curriculum and instruction, FCL) produced success in your school?
   • What are the greatest lessons learned?

14. Is there anything you would like to add or further questions you wish to ask?
Teacher Leaders Interview Protocol

1. Tell us about your role as a teacher leader at the school, how long you have been in the role? What is your specific involvement with SIG related activities?

2. In your role as teacher leader(s), how have you seen the school’s academic achievement improve over the last two years since SIG funding began? In those efforts, what has your role been? What have you seen as the largest impact on student achievement?
   Prompts:
   • curriculum and instruction (interventions)
   • assessment
   • culture and climate
   • teacher PD
   • staff PD

3. How would you characterize climate and culture at your school? How have the SIG-related reform and activities affected the climate and culture at your school? If there has been improvement, in what ways?

4. What kind of PD and coaching do the teachers engage in to support school improvement activities? How has this school year differed from the previous year?

5. How would you describe the evolution of the SIG activities during the current school year?
   Prompts:
   • iCollaborate
   • Leadership Team
   • monthly teacher collaborative time
   • Tiered support/Intervention blocks
   • extended school year program

6. Do teachers at your school engage or coordinate across other SIG IV schools? If yes, how? What structures are in place to do so? How are best practices and lessons learned shared across schools?

7. To what extent do you see direct support from the district? What support does the school (or teachers) receive from IISD? What support could you receive from these entities to more effectively do your job?

8. How do you think the focus on early learning as part of the SIG efforts have helped improve your school? How have those efforts and supports evolved over the last two years?
   Prompts:
   • Academic achievement
   • Data use/culture of data
   • Culture and climate

9. Are you aware of the 3rd grade reading proficiency bill? If so, how are teachers reacting to and/or adjusting to it? What do teachers feel about the ability to address these requirements or retain the students who are behind?
10. How do you see that the SIG efforts be sustained over time, beyond the current SIG plan and funding?
   - How do you see your work being sustained or continued when funding ends?
   - What are the challenges to sustainability?

11. Are there areas for improvement that you can see regarding SIG efforts in the future? If so, what are they?

12. Is there anything you would like to add or further questions you wish to ask?
Data Coach Interview Protocol

1. Describe in detail your day to day role with SIG related initiatives.
   
   Prompts:
   • curriculum and instruction (interventions)
   • assessment
   • culture and climate
   • teacher PD
   • staff PD

2. How has the culture of data changed in the last two school years? What has been the greatest challenge to your job/role? What are the various types of data that you work with staff on in a given day/week/month?

3. How do you [the DCs] engage or coordinate across other SIG IV schools? What structures are in place to do so?
   • What best practices and lessons learned have emerged? How are those shared across schools?

4. Has your work with teachers impacted student achievement? If so, how? What data can you point to that illustrate that impact?

5. To what extent do you see direct support from the district? What support does the school (or teachers) receive from IISD? What support could you receive from these entities to more effectively do your job?

6. Are you aware of the 3rd grade reading proficiency bill? If so, how are teachers/staff reacting to and/or adjusting to it? What do teachers feel about the ability to address these requirements or retain the students who are behind? Are you working with data any differently to specifically address this?

7. How do you see that the SIG efforts be sustained over time, beyond the current SIG plan and funding?
   • How do you see your work being sustained or continued when funding ends?
   • What are the challenges to sustainability?

8. Are there areas for improvement that you can see regarding SIG efforts in the future? If so, what are they?

9. Is there anything you would like to add or further questions you wish to ask?
Family and Community Liaison Interview Protocol

1. In your role as the family and community liaison, what are your specific duties and responsibilities? How have those responsibilities changed/evolved over the last two school years (since SIG IV began)?

2. Have you found your efforts to engage with families successful? In what way? How do you track that over time? What are the biggest challenges?

3. How do you [the FCLs] engage or coordinate across other SIG IV schools?
   - If yes, how? What structures are in place to support this coordination?
   - What best practices and lessons learned have emerged? And how are those shared across schools?

4. How are your efforts coordinated with other elements of the SIG at the school and across the district?
   Prompts:
   • data use,
   • focus on early learning
   • culture climate initiatives (CR PBIS, for example)
   • academic interventions and improving student achievement

5. To what extent do you see direct support for your FCL work from the district office?
   - What support do you receive from the IISD?
   - What support could you receive from these entities to more effectively do your job?

6. What support do you receive from community partners? And are those supports available to all the SIG IV schools?

7. Are there areas for improvement that you can see regarding SIG efforts in the future? If so, what are they?

8. How do you see that the SIG efforts can be sustained over time, beyond the current SIG plan and funding?
   - How do you see your work being sustained or continued when funding ends?
   - What are the challenges to sustainability?

9. Is there anything you would like to add or further questions you wish to ask?
Early Childhood Interventionist Interview Protocol

1. In your role as an ECI, describe your activities related to the following:
   Prompts:
   • curriculum and instruction (interventions)
   • assessment
   • culture and climate
   • teacher PD
   • staff PD
   • other

2. How do you [the ECIs] engage or coordinate across other SIG IV schools? If yes, how? What structures are in place to do so?
   • What best practices and lessons learned have emerged? How are those shared across schools?

3. What kind of PD and coaching do the teachers engage in to support school improvement activities?

4. How has this school year differed from the previous year?

5. To what extent do you receive direct support for your ECI work from the district?
   • What support do you receive from IISD?
   • What support could you receive from these entities to more effectively do your job?

6. How do you think the focus on early learning as part of the SIG efforts helped improve your school? How have those efforts and supports evolved over the last two years?
   Prompts:
   • Academic achievement
   • Data use/culture of data
   • Culture and climate

7. Are you aware of the 3rd grade reading proficiency bill? If so, how are teachers reacting to and/or adjusting to it? What do teachers feel about the ability to address these requirements or retain the students who fall behind for another year?

8. How have ECIs worked to align the Pre-K to Kindergarten? What does that alignment look like? Who or what processes/structures were instrumental in making that happen?

9. What, if any, are the areas for improvement that you can see regarding SIG efforts in the future? If so, what are they?

10. How do you see that the SIG efforts can be sustained over time, beyond the current SIG plan and funding?
    • How do you see your work being sustained or continued when funding ends?
    • What are the challenges to sustainability?

11. Is there anything you would like to add or further questions you wish to ask?