

Meeting Summary: CIMS Part C Project Team

Tuesday, April 17, 2007, 12:30–3:00 PM
Early On® Training & Technical Assistance (EOT&TA) Center, DeWitt

ATTENDANCE

Name	Affiliation
Jeannie Anderson	Gratiot-Isabella RESD
Sister Barbara Cline	EOT&TA
Barb Corbin	Kent ISD
Sam Cornelius	Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle ESD
Anne Dallaire	Macomb ISD
Connie Davidson	Menominee County ISD
Sharon Dietrich	MDE
Karen Fales	MDE OSE-EIS
Shelly Grenier	Menominee County ISD
Charo Hulleza	WSU Center for Urban Studies
Allan Knapp	Interagency Information Systems
Mike McCartan	St. Clair County Community Mental Health
Mischelle McManus	MDE OECE-FS
Tony Thaxton	MDE OSE-EIS
Lis Weston	Public Sector Consultants Inc.
Jessica Wolf	MDE OECE-FS

DEFINING THE TEAM

Goals

The overall objectives of the project team are to provide input to the project manager about *Early On* to help make the Continuous Improvement & Monitoring System (CIMS) service provider self-review (SPSR) operational, and to serve as communicators to the field about the CIMS SPSR. This goal will be achieved largely through a consensus-building process; everyone on the team need not fully agree with every decision, but everyone should be able to support it and share information with outsiders about it. This team process is also designed to be of benefit to each individual on the team. Each team member should be able to learn something new and develop professionally as a result of being on the team, so that at the end of the process each one will believe that the time was well spent.

The goal of this first meeting is to provide each team member with enough general information about the SPSR to make him/her feel more comfortable being a CIMS ambassador, and to map a path for the team's future work. The basis of everything the group will be doing is in the *Stakeholder Interviews for CIMS Part C* report, distributed in advance to all team members.

Composition

In forming the team, PSC sought representation from around the state and from among different levels of *Early On* operations and policymaking. PSC determined this group to be of sufficient expertise and manageable size; part of the team's mission is to reach out to others with interest and expertise and include their perspectives by proxy.

It was noted that there is no family representation on the project team. PSC described its efforts to interview family stakeholders, and team members were encouraged to seek out a few candidates from the local level for the project team who could provide such representation. Project team members will also speak with their own local interagency coordinating council (LICC) parent representatives about the project and will relay parent input to team meetings.

Process

In order to make the most of meeting time, and to keep the discussion on track, PSC instituted several meeting rules and off-limit topics for the purposes of this meeting.

Meeting Rules

- Be prepared
- No electronic interruptions
- No sidebars or other disruptive behavior
- Be positive
- No breaks
- Treat teammates as equals
- Do not dwell on the past
- Give everyone the chance to participate

Off-limit Topics

- Money
- KPI content
- Early On* redesign
- Focused monitoring (completed or ongoing)
- Child outcomes (and similar) activities
- Cohorts
- EOT&TA grant

Communication with Early On Stakeholders

PSC reviewed the project team's responsibilities, particularly the general tasks of focusing on operational issues rather than policy matters. Team members were encouraged not to lament perceived policy flaws, but rather to be creative with practices that will meet current policy requirements. PSC defined "best practices" as not only the methods identified in peer-reviewed publications, but also some current practices at the local level that might benefit other areas. It was also noted that "best practice" is not

necessarily the most exhaustive practice (occasionally the best practice term is used to advocate an “overdone” practice, which may be unnecessarily burdensome to the family and those working with them).

Team members are encouraged not to hold back in sharing such ideas because the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is on this team as an equal, not as a policy compliance monitor.

The team agreed to limit the use of acronyms as much as possible, so that our team communications (and ultimately our public communications) are clear to all audiences.

PSC reviewed the communication plan and clarified that the tier groups listed are simply a means of providing a framework for considering stakeholders and the closeness with which these stakeholders will work in implementing the Part C SPSR in a given region. Team members are responsible for communicating to their own constituencies about CIMS and the SPSR, and they are free to do so in whatever manner and time frame is practical. The MDE mentioned that the administrative team for *Early On* ought to be included in tier 1, so they might have the same information at the same time as *Early On* coordinators in the event that questions for the state team come from the local level. PSC encouraged the MDE to make this part of their unique communication strategy, since the state team is one of MDE’s constituencies.

Several team members wondered whether there would be a communication delay caused by the need to communicate with certain officials before other tiers could be approached. The MDE said that partner agencies like to be able to communicate with their local constituencies about important operational matters, so these agencies need to become aware of this project team’s mission. The MDE will brief the state team at a meeting on April 20, but members of the project team need not wait on a chain of communication before sharing information.

PSC recommended the team suspend discussion on the chain of communication in the absence of anything to communicate. One member cautioned the team not to communicate too much too soon, but rather to do the work and communicate with others as needed.

PSC encouraged the team to consider whether additional communication materials should be developed, and also to let PSC know if it can support team members in other ways (such as making presentations to local groups).

MEETING TASKS

Overview of the CIMS SPSR

PSC reviewed the SPSR operational chart while describing its components in detail. The SPSR is a tool to allow local *Early On* staff to streamline some of their data-gathering activities; it is also a tool for the MDE, allowing the department to examine standardized data from around the state that can then be used in reporting.

CIMS and the SPSR are based on key performance indicators (KPIs), which serve as content guidelines. One team member clarified that CIMS is the state’s model for

monitoring compliance with state and federal regulations. The SPSR is only one of the components of CIMS, and the team should take care to distinguish between the two when communicating with the field.

SPSR Team

The SPSR allows for general self-governance concerning the SPSR team formation. It should be a multidisciplinary team, headed by the *Early On* coordinator (who will be known as the CIMS Part C coordinator). The SPSR team does not necessarily have to be drawn from the LICC, but that is an option. In Part B the local district superintendent has a role to play on the SPSR team, but this is not a requirement for Part C. The SPSR team needs to provide oversight of the CIMS process generally; the bulk of their actual work will take place in the early part of a calendar year when they must meet to analyze and rate the KPIs when the preliminary reports are ready.

One team member envisioned SPSR teams across the state whose composition was quite varied, and questioned whether this would make a difference in the KPI analysis and rating. PSC responded that it may make a difference, but we wouldn't know how significant a difference it will be until we try it. It was easy to be prescriptive about team composition for Part B because there are many more service providers and administrators in that realm; Part C is notably short on personnel so that service areas must compose SPSR teams as best they can.

Training and support on the formation and activities of the SPSR team will be available for service areas participating in the SPSR.

Information Gathering

Part of what the service areas involved in SPSR will be required to do in order to provide data input is a child record review. Other data are being collected through surveys and state data systems. The early intervention benefit review and individualized family service plan (IFSP) implementation review are no longer part of the SPSR for Part C. The child record review and a policies and procedures review* are the only data-gathering activities that will require the *Early On* coordinator's involvement, and they can take place over a four-month period. Currently, the SPSR only calls for the review of a minimum of eight child records (two from each of the four service agencies providing service coordination). Several team members questioned the basis for that number, and whether the data would be valid with such a small sample size. (In Part B, there is a minimum of only 10 records to be reviewed, and the validity of this number is currently being evaluated.) PSC explained that the KPIs were designed to get the same data from a number of different sources, some of which would provide a more representative sample than others; the SPSR team will then be guided by the rating rubrics to consider data differences by source.

* Information regarding the policies and procedures review was inadvertently omitted from PSC's presentation to the project team at the meeting and is being added here for the record.

The policies and procedures review is essentially a checklist of approximately 30 questions that the *Early On* coordinator must answer. It can be completed over the same time frame as that for the child record reviews.

PSC apologizes for the omission.

The group discussed whether the links between CIMS and the state performance plan (SPP) are clear enough for there to be maximum utility in whatever the locals do to gather and submit data. PSC tabled the discussion because it was outside of the purposes for this team. However, PSC is in the process of creating for the MDE a graphical representation of links between CIMS and the SPP, and this flow chart will be shared with the project team when it is developed.

One member questioned whether service areas would still be required to complete the self-review in the Michigan Education Grants System (MEGS) that goes along with their grant application in June of each year. The MDE responded that starting this year, the MEGS questions are going in a different direction and the self-review in MEGS has been eliminated. There will only be a few questions pertaining to collaboration that must be answered when service areas submit their grant applications. This change in procedure will be disseminated to the field in the EOT&TA conference calls scheduled for May 3 and May 9.

PSC encouraged the team to focus on the SPSR process rather than the electronic workbook, which is simply the tool used to collect and tabulate the data for the KPIs. Some team members were concerned about how difficult the workbook would be to learn, and whether they should budget more money for data entry. PSC estimated that budgeting 20 percent more time for data entry than they currently allow would be a prudent decision, to account for the learning curve associated with the electronic workbook.

Improvement Planning

A big part of the SPSR is improvement planning, which will give structure to many improvement activities that are already occurring at the local level in *Early On*. Improvement plans will be written by the SPSR team based on the KPI ratings, and they will be reviewed by the CIMS coordinator twice a year in progress reports submitted to the MDE. Several team members noted that December and June might not be the best months for progress reports to be due (as indicated on the SPSR workflow chart) because child counts are due in those months. PSC will examine the timeline as part of the development of a chart of *Early On* tasks.

One member noted that some of the terminology for CIMS may change to align more closely with terminology used by the federal government and other state agencies. Members of the team were accustomed to such change, noting that it can cause confusion in the field but is not a major problem.

NEXT STEPS

Work Methods

PSC presented the general project plan to the team: (1) the SPSR roll-out is in the planning and preparation phase right now through mid-June; (2) from June through October the electronic workbook and documentation for training will be developed; and (3) beginning in August, service areas in cohort 1 will begin the SPSR process with the formation of their SPSR teams.

Project team members are satisfied with e-mail communication from PSC containing instructions and attachments for review. PSC will also work with staff from EOT&TA to post a page on their website where all team documents can be stored; this will also allow others in the *Early On* field to stay informed about the project team's activities, if they so desire.

Future meeting dates: May 11 and June 6 are both being reserved as probable meeting dates. The specific time and meeting objectives have yet to be established. Team members expressed a desire to meet in person and treat these meetings as work sessions.

Deliverables

For the *Early On* conference beginning April 26, PSC will develop and provide the following documents as handouts. The CIMS Part C project team will view these in advance and have an opportunity for input.

- SPSR components and workflow chart (completed)
- Targeted diagram and timeline of SPSR tasks that have a direct effect on *Early On* staff (including tasks that will be eliminated)
- List of service areas in each cohort
- CIMS Part C project team roster
- Copies of the stakeholder interview report, project team responsibilities, and communication plan (this was not explicitly stated at the meeting)
- Preliminary list of frequently-asked questions, with forms provided for people to add their own questions

As soon as possible, PSC will develop the following documents to be used for communication to *Early On* stakeholders. These, too, will be vetted by the project team.

- Chart of link between CIMS, the SPP, and various other activities relevant to people in Part C (such as the *Early On* redesign and the ongoing child outcomes work)
- Chart of regular tasks undertaken by various *Early On* stakeholder groups over a two-year period to increase understanding across the groups

Before the next team meeting, PSC will develop the following documents that will serve as the basis for discussion.

- SPSR child record review
- SPSR policies and procedures review (see footnote on page 4)
- KPI rating rubrics

Meeting Feedback

PSC asked team members to comment on whether they felt more comfortable in their understanding of the SPSR as a result of this meeting. Several members noted that while they were not completely confident, they were reassured and hopeful that they would attain a greater comfort level in the near term.