



**PATHWAYS TO GRADE-LEVEL READING: DATA GAPS ANALYSIS**

**APRIL 18, 2018  
1:00 PM TO 4:00 PM  
630 DAVIS DRIVE  
MORRISVILLE, NC 27560**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**ATTENDEES:**

Mandy Ableidinger, *North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation*

Maggie Bailey, *North Carolina Institute of Medicine*

Anna Carter, *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education*

Dean Duncan, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work*

Nicole Gardner-Neblett, *Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute*

Catherine Joyner, *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health*

Julie Kowal, *BEST NC*

Brieanne Lyda-McDonald, *North Carolina Institute of Medicine*

Katy Malley, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work*

Sarah McCracken, *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health*

Amy Hawn Nelson, *University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy & Practice*

Deborah Nelson, *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services*

Chris Payne, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships*

Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, *Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute*

Belinda Pettiford, *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health*

Michelle Ries, *North Carolina Institute of Medicine*

Katie Rosanbalm, *Center for Child and Family Health*

Melea Rose-Waters, *Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina*

Meghan Shanahan, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health*

Kim McCombs Thornton, *North Carolina Partnership for Children*

Whitney Tucker, *NC Child*

Marianna Walker, *Eastern Carolina University, College of Allied Health Sciences*

Adam Zolotor, *North Carolina Institute of Medicine*



**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** - Michelle Ries, MPH, Project Director, North Carolina Institute of Medicine & Mandy Ableidinger, MPA, Policy and Practice Leader, North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

Michelle Ries and Mandy Ableidinger welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked participants to introduce themselves.

**OVERVIEW OF PATHWAYS TO GRADE-LEVEL READING: PROGRESS TO DATE AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES** - Mandy Ableidinger

Mandy gave a brief overview of the Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative and Progress that has been made thus far. She first discussed recent momentum behind the initiative, including: mentions of Pathways in the 2016 and 2017 budget language and Governor Cooper's executive order reauthorizing the Early Childhood Advisory Council; communities in other states using the Measures of Success framework; the progress toward a standard statewide definition of chronic absence (missing 10% of enrolled days), the recent IEI Forum and KidsReadyNC alignment with Pathways.

Mandy then reviewed the initiative's three phases: 1) develop shared indicators and measures of success framework, 2) convene learning teams to review data for each indicator and select measures, 3) convene design teams who will develop advocacy, policy, and program agendas around the measures of success. The initiative is currently in phase three, and the data gaps analysis is a key step in crafting these agendas. Mandy also discussed the Measures of Success framework, mechanisms for involving family and community voices, decision-making processes, and Pathways' commitment to equity.

Finally, Mandy gave a preview of the Pathways Data Dashboard being developed by SAS.

**OVERVIEW OF ESSENTIALS FOR CHILDHOOD** - Michelle Ries

Michelle provided a brief overview of the Essentials for Childhood, the public-health-oriented CDC framework for child maltreatment prevention. North Carolina has been participating in this work for the past five years—NCIOM convened the Task Force on Essentials for Childhood in 2013 and has been serving as the backbone organization for the implementation of the statewide collective impact framework since September 2016. Michelle reviewed the logic model that is guiding this work.

Michelle then highlighted a few key recommendations and activities in alignment with each of the four CDC goal areas (raise awareness to promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments; use data to inform actions; create the context for healthy children and families through programs and norms change; and create the context for healthy children and families through policies. Key activities to address these goals include convening work groups on trauma-informed practices in schools and evidence-based programs, exploring opportunities for state leadership with a Children's Cabinet, and participating in a social norms survey led by the CDC. The data gaps analysis is an opportunity to address the data goals of the Essentials project and align with Pathways. Finally, Michelle discussed the work of Essentials going forward, including



the meeting to reconvene the Task Force on Essentials for Childhood and the 2012 Task Force on the Mental Health, Social, and Emotional Needs of Young Children and Their Families, as well as other partners, at a meeting on May 18.

### **DISCUSSION OF MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Participants divided into three small groups in accordance with the three categories of the Pathways Measures of Success: Health and Development on Track, Beginning at Birth; Supported and Supportive Families and Communities; High Quality Birth to Eight Learning Environments. Each group discussed the following questions for their category of the Measures of Success:

- Where data is unavailable, do we know why? Could it be collected? What are the barriers to collection? Do we know of additional sources, proxy measures, etc.?
- What resources (time, money, personnel) would be necessary for collection of data on this measure?
- What would need to happen to trigger data collection? (e.g. legislation, agreement with state agency, change to survey modules/methodology, etc.)
- Who would be responsible for instituting these changes and/or collecting new data?

### **REPORT BACK ON DATA GAPS**

The facilitators of the three groups reported back on their discussions about individual measures and major themes that emerged.

- Health and Development on Track, Beginning at Birth
  - Physical Health: *Children with excellent or good health*
    - Lacks disaggregation by county or school district.
    - Group discussed possible advocacy to increase sample size of National Survey of Children's Health to allow for disaggregation or using Medicaid data or NC Detect data for proxy measures looking at certain health conditions.
  - Oral Health: *Children (in Kindergarten and third grade) with untreated tooth decay*
    - Lacks national comparison data and disaggregation by income level for Kindergarten, and trend and disaggregated by income, county, and race for third grade.
    - Oral health surveys happen at Kindergarten and fifth grade, so fifth grade data could be a possible proxy. Group members also discussed connecting with the ECU dental school or stakeholder work groups being convened by DHHS.
  - Early Intervention: *Children showing improvement with early intervention services*
    - Lacks national comparison data and disaggregation by income level
    - The larger group discussed alternative measures, including data to measure the need for interventions services rather than the effectiveness of

- the services, and working with CDSA directors to identify other data sources.
- Social Emotional Health: *Children exhibiting self-regulation, good interpersonal skills, and no behavioral problems*
    - No data available for this measure
    - Group discussed challenges in defining “self-regulation, good interpersonal skills, and no behavioral problems” in a standardized way
    - Possible assessment tools may be the Kindergarten-Entry Assessment (KEA) or the ASQ-SE, although KEA is not intended to be a population-level tool, and a small minority of children complete the ASQ-SE.
    - Well-child visits are the most likely place to assess all children for social emotional problems. ASQ-SE is implemented and reimbursed for in clinical practice, but reliability of data is not certain. There could be an opportunity for an exploratory pilot to look at samples of practices to see how universal screenings, referrals, and data collection works.
    - Advocacy could be helpful around reimbursement for assessments/data collection and integration with EHRs.
    - There is also a question in the National Survey of Children’s Health on “flourishing for young children, age 6 months-5 years” that does not exactly measure behavioral problems but could be a proxy measure.
  - **Major Themes**
    - No data is better than bad data when it comes to disaggregation
    - Ideally, Pathways would like population-level data, but some data may only be possible at a programmatic level
    - Exploratory pilots may serve as an initial point of programmatic data to help make the case for resources to collect population-level data
    - There is a need for specificity in the language of the indicators to be able to identify quality measures for them.
  - Supported and Supportive Families and Communities
    - Safe at Home: *Rate of child abuse or neglect*
      - Lacks data disaggregated by income level—collecting this data would require an assistant secretary-level decision
      - The group discussed the limitations of this data, including potential biases and federal reporting requirements.
      - Other measures for safe at home could be ACEs screenings. The CDC is also exploring fielding their violence against children in North Carolina.
      - May be beneficial to focus on protective factors and not just child abuse or neglect, although those may be included in the influencer measures
    - Positive Parent/Child Interactions: *Average number of minutes per day parents talk or play with their children*
      - Lacks trend data and all categories of disaggregation
      - The recommendations for this measure do change with the age of the child, so there is a need to define the ages of the children in order to benchmark

- Current data is pulled from the American Time Use Survey, which may not be an ideal proxy measure, although there is not a better alternative at the population level.
    - The larger group also discussed the need to measure quality over quantity.
  - Reading with Children: *Average number of days per week that parents read to their children*
    - Lacks disaggregation by county or school district and by age
    - The data from the National Survey of Children’s Health only includes data on reading to children ages 0-5.
    - Disaggregation would require a large sample size
    - The group also discussed using NAEP data (available at school district level) about having books in the home. Data is available for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - Supports for Families: *New mothers with access to sufficient social supports*
    - Lacks trend data, national comparison data, and disaggregation by county and age
    - Current data comes from PRAMS—the sample size is too small for county-level disaggregation, although some data analysis could be done to compare urban and rural.
    - This question could also be included as part of a newborn screening.
  - Skilled and Knowledgeable Parents: *Parents with sufficient knowledge of child development and parenting skills*
    - No data currently available
    - The group discussed the need for more specificity around “sufficient” and “parenting skills.”
    - Parenting skills will look different across the ages of the children
    - This could be included as part of PRAMS, a random telephone survey, or a well-visit—which would need to be accessed through EHR, but specific questions would be needed to measure sufficient parenting skills.
  - **Major Themes**
    - Specificity in language is needed in order to determine ways to measure things that may be subjective or more qualitative in nature
    - Different levels of geographic disaggregation may be more appropriate or feasible for certain measures, although county data is often most useful to drive action.
- High Quality Birth to Eight Learning Environments
  - High Quality Early Care and Education: *Children birth-to-five attending licensed child care who are in high quality centers and homes (4 and 5-star) & Children birth-to-five receiving subsidy attending licensed child care who are in high-quality centers, homes (4 and 5-star)*
    - Both lack national comparison data. All children birth-to-five in high quality centers lacks disaggregated data by race/ethnicity and income.
    - National comparison data is not obtainable—since different states have different licensure requirements and standards. However, research could

be done to map common elements from NC licensure and other similar states to see what they have in common. Thus there could be a comparison with a few states. However, this might not be worth the effort at this time if there are other priorities for data advocacy.

- Disaggregated data is not possible for all children in licensed care, since the state can only collect data for children who are receiving subsidies.
- Promotion to Next Grade: *Children promoted to next grade level (K-3) & Children promoted to next grade level (3<sup>rd</sup> grade Read to Achieve retentions)*
  - Children promoted to next grade level lacks trend data, national comparison data, and disaggregated by income level; Read to Achieve retentions lacks disaggregated data by race/ethnicity and income level.
  - DPI has this data, as they track the race/ethnicity and free/reduced lunch status of each child, however this is not publicly available. This would require a data request from DPI and someone willing to merge the two spreadsheets together and do some basic analysis.
- Positive School Climate: *Schools employing social-emotional strategies*
  - No data currently available
  - The group discussed the broad nature of this measure. Pathways looked at what schools are using PBIS or MTSS, but there is not widely available data.
  - The group discussed other ways of defining positive school climate beyond social-emotional supports. Positive school climate may be better measured with by a portfolio of measures including rates of suspensions and expulsions, teacher working conditions, incidence of violence, some count of social emotional strategies.
  - DPI has been talking about doing a parent and student survey; there is currently a teacher working condition survey that could be another source of data about positive school climate
  - Head Start data could be a source for early childhood school climate
- Summer Learning: *Children who maintain literacy gains over the summer*
  - No data currently available
  - In theory, this could compare the scores on standardized tests at the end of one academic year and the beginning of the next. According to Mandy, SAS could do this analysis, but the necessary agreements are not in place.
  - This is also problematic because the tests are not necessarily the same tests or administered at the same time.
  - There is some data for certain school districts available. This could be used for research that could provide evidence for it to be worthwhile to extend across the state.
- Regular School Attendance: *Students in NC schools (K-3<sup>rd</sup>) who are chronically absent & Average days attended for children enrolled in NC Pre-K*
  - The first measure lacks trend data and disaggregation by income and age; the second lacks national comparison data and disaggregation by income.
  - Reporting absences in a standardized way is not required by DPI



- Pathways is working to have the State Board of Education adopt a common definition of chronic absence. Advocacy is required to get reporting processes in place.
- **Major Themes**
  - Specificity
  - Any new surveys will need require further work to make sure they can measure the desired indicators
  - The role of research in providing evidence to inform and legitimize advocacy
  - There will need to be an organization that can institutionalize the Pathways data management.

### **DISCUSSION OF PRIORITIES FOR DATA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

Participants discussed the common elements that emerged from the small group work to begin to identify priorities to be developed further by NCIOM and NCECF staff as recommendations from the Data Action team for the next phase of Pathways' data work.

Common themes that emerged from the group include

- No data is better than bad data
- Specificity on measures is key
- Program data may exist for many measures but not population-level data
- At this point, do not need to focus on national data

Actions/items for prioritization that emerged:

- Funding for research and smaller-scale pilot studies, particularly as is relates to summer learning, social-emotional strategies in schools, and skilled and knowledgeable parents
- Integrating data collection and analysis across research institutions/universities. Possibility for partnership among the universities in fielding a survey.
- Reinstating the Early Childhood Integrated Data System – advocacy for more resources to ensure staffing, collecting new data, etc.
- Exploring potential for additional questions to be asked in well-child visits.

### **REVIEW OF NEXT STEPS**

Mandy concluded the meeting by sharing that the goal is for this data pre-work/development of recommendations to be done by July. NCIOM and NCECF will summarize the discussions from today and determine the best way to proceed to analyze the rest of the measures. There will likely be a survey sent via email and another in-person meeting. Mandy and Michelle thanked everyone for their time and ended the meeting at 4:00 p.m.