

## INTRODUCTION

This poster describes a qualitative interview study to explore the use of data to make decisions by state Part C Coordinators.

- The state goal was to better understand how state administrators use data to inform decisions
- Qualitative interviews with four Part C Coordinators were conducted.

## BACKGROUND

- There has been an increased focus on use of data to inform policy in state government administration.
- U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) policy for results-driven accountability is seen in the requirement for all states to create state system improvement plans (SSIP).
- Part C Coordinators are now required to use their data to make decisions in their state and demonstrate how they did so to OSEP.
- Data-driven decision-making- "pertains to the systematic collection, analysis, examination, and interpretation of data to inform practice and policy in educational settings. It is a generic process that can be applied in classrooms to improve instruction as well as in administrative and policy settings." (Mandinach & Jackson, 2012, p. 71).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This qualitative study investigates how Part C Coordinators use data to inform the decisions they make in their role within the state. The specific research questions of this study were:

- How do Part C state administrators describe their roles in supporting data-driven decision-making in their state?
- How do Part C state administrators describe their use of data in their own decision making?



## METHOD

### Sample of four Part C Coordinators

- All were female
- All were Caucasian
- Two were full time; two were part time
- All had M.A. or Ph.D. degrees

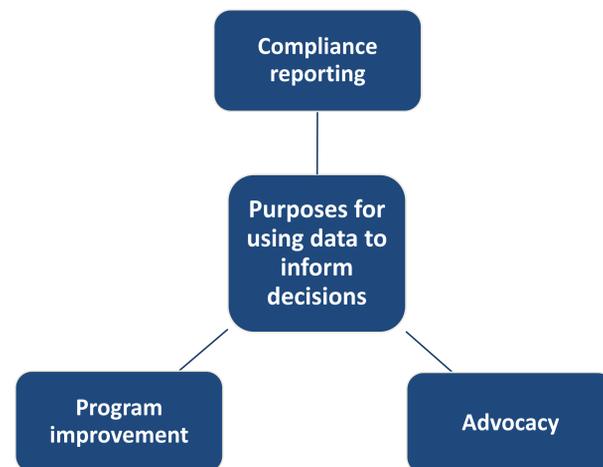
### Data collection

- 45 minute interviews and memos (Maxwell, 2013)

### Data analysis

- Develop the coding based on literature review
- Transcribed verbatim
- Coded interviews to identify themes
- Used an interpretive community to review the analysis

### Data-informed decision-making



## IMPLICATIONS

- Inform OSEP RDA Policy Implementation and how data can be used to support continuous program improvement
- With various stances and purposes for data use it is important to better understand how to support state administrators as they use data in their role.

## FINDINGS

### All four Part C Coordinators view themselves as both data producers and consumers.

In all four cases the Part C Coordinators described their role as both a data consumer and producer.

- Data consumer, "those that use data" (Wang & Strong, 1996, p.6)
  - "we use data on a day-to-day basis for program operations, for legislative and policy needs, for program evaluation, monitoring... Just many, many different ways that we consume data and use data...as a data producer, increasingly over the years, there have been, you know, again, needs for us to produce data for our own state, you know, for our department, for our legislature, for the Governor's Office." (Coordinator 2)
- Data producer, "people, groups, or other sources who generate data" (Strong, Lee, & Wang, 1997, p. 104)
  - "We ran all the reports for 618 data, which is child count, but also the annual performance reports. So, timely indicators of the 45 days, the transition notification." (Coordinator 4)

### Part C Coordinators described two stances towards data-informed decision-making.

- Two coordinators were more oriented towards complying with regulations in their use of data
- Two coordinators were more oriented towards using data for continuous improvement

### Part C Coordinators use data for multiple purposes.

- Compliance reporting–Coordinators 1 and 4 described using data for compliance, "So we report it [data] in the APR." (Coordinator 1) and "We're going to be using it [data] in the SSIP." (Coordinator 4)
- Program Improvement–Participants described three key areas of program improvement where they used data to inform decisions: program operations, funding, and workforce training.
- Policy Development–"...if the Governor's Office is interested in making a change related to the Early Intervention Program, then we use data very intensively during the phase of the process where we're developing proposals, understanding what the implications of those proposals would be, and then providing data to, you know, be it fiscal data, or numbers of children served, or other ways that... those kinds of proposals might impact [the program]." (Coordinator 2)



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How could you as a researcher support state data use? What strategies are most effective?
- Based on the results of the study, how could researchers support states to develop the capacity to use data?
- What are other methods that could be used to better understand and inform the research on early childhood data-informed decision making?

## REFERENCES

- Mandinach, E. B., & Jackson, S. (2012). *Transforming teaching and learning through data-driven decision making*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strong, D. M., Lee, Y. W., & Wang, R. Y. (1997). Data quality in context. *Communications of the ACM*, 40(5), 103-110. DOI=<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/253769.253804>