Research & Evaluation Capacity Building in Massachusetts:

A Partnership Story to Promote the Quality Rating and Improvement System

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Partnership Description

- Abt’s work has focused on various EEC priorities
  - Workforce development (including coaching)
  - Preschool expansion
  - Quality improvements, including QRIS
- Abt interfaces with EEC staff across units/divisions
  - Work also involves other EEC stakeholders
  - e.g., board members, Program Quality Unit

2005
Abt won solicitation to evaluate MA’s Universal Pre-K Pilot Program

2009
Abt wins latest contract to support EEC workforce & quality initiatives
Nature of the Partnership for QRIS Tasks

• Abt supports EEC in revising its QRIS by:

  – Making recommendations about criteria and scoring, based on:
    • How other states design/implement policies (“state scans”)
    • Research/evidence for a particular topic
    • Gathering stakeholder input within EEC

  – Developing tools to facilitate implementation
Nature of the Partnership for QRIS Tasks

- Examples of Abt’s role in QRIS development
  - Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP)
  - Curriculum requirements in QRIS
  - Rubrics and scoring criteria

- Frequency of communication

- Changes over time
Barriers/Facilitators

• Barriers/Challenges
  – Quickly evolving work
  – Operationalizing priorities
  – Developing criteria that balance evidence and support for programs

• Facilitators
  – Flexibility to change scope quickly
  – Finding balance across priorities
  – Working on multiple components of QRIS simultaneously
Institutional Support and Sustainability

- Abt’s contract with EEC goes until summer 2019
- Awareness of Abt’s institutional knowledge
- However, MA must follow procurement laws so an open-ended partnership is not possible
Closing Remarks
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