

THE IRIS CENTER  
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT CFDA 84.325E  
(PR/Award Number: H325E120002)



Administrative Progress Report  
for  
Year 4, Quarter 2

Submitted to:

Sarah Allen  
Research to Practice Division  
Office of Special Education Programs  
Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services  
United States Department of Education

10 July 2016

Naomi Tyler  
Deborah Deutsch Smith



*The contents of this report were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, # H325E120002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Sarah Allen.*

## The IRIS Center Quarterly Report/April–June 2016 [Year 4, Quarter 2]

---

The IRIS Center produces these Quarterly Reports as both a narrative of our effort and a detailed account of our work and progress. This Second Quarter of Year Four found the Center piloting our new online PD Hours Store for schools and districts. As always, we were also busy creating new instructional resources and materials, updating others, and hosting IRIS Trainings and Seminars. Read on to learn all the latest from the IRIS Center.

---

### MAINTAIN PROJECT BUDGET

*The co-directors and budget managers at both locations carefully monitor expenditures and encumbrances. Costs for events and activities are under close scrutiny to ensure that no over-expenditures occur in Year 4.*

### THE IRIS CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE

*The current IRIS Steering Committee format convenes small work groups to offer their guidance and expertise on a wide variety of key topics (i.e., Website and teacher preparation technology advances, district-level online PD, IRIS resources that support SiMR topics). Information from these work groups will guide the IRIS staff as we move forward on related initiatives.*

*Activities and Progress in This Quarter:*

- **PD Hours Store Platform Focus Group:** Prior to our larger PD Hours Store pilot program (see **DEVELOP** below), IRIS hosted a PD Hours Store Platform focus group. Taking part were educators from Washington State, Idaho, and the Alabama SPDG.
- **Technology Focus Group:** The Center is currently in discussions with Lisa Dieker of the University of Central Florida, Dave Edyburn of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Pamela Winton of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute regarding the creation of new, cutting-edge technology to assist the Center's delivery of resources about evidence-based practices. Early conversations have focused on online micro-credentials. For more information, see **COLLABORATION** below.

## DEVELOP

*The Center develops teaching and learning tools, and content and training Modules reflecting evidence-based instructional and intervention practices. These tools are designed for use by IHE faculty, professional development providers, and practicing educators, and are high quality, useful, relevant, and non-duplicative.*

### *Activities and Progress in This Quarter:*

- **The IRIS PD Hours Store:** IRIS continues to make significant progress in upgrading, expanding, and promoting our recently launched PD Hours Store. Phase 2 of the store's development is now underway. More items of interest can be found below.
  - **State-Approved PD Provider Status:** In a major undertaking, the IRIS Center is working toward achieving state-approved PD provider status in as many states as possible. Many states have no guidelines, some have guidelines that they expect their schools and districts to adhere to, and some have more-or-less complex application and approval processes. We anticipate bringing this effort to completion early in the coming quarter.
  - **School- and District-Level Platform Pilot:** In June, IRIS began Phase 2 of our PD Hours Store pilot program: the school- and district-level platform and dashboard feature. Response to the Center's request for assistance was overwhelming, and we were not able to accommodate all of the schools and districts who asked to take part. The new functionality allows schools or districts to create, customize, and control their own, unique PD Hours Store dashboard. Through it, they can send reminder emails and monitor teacher PD progress. We will begin examining data and feedback from the pilot program in the coming quarter and plan to launch the platform officially in August.
- **STAR Legacy Modules:** Our signature products, these resources offer in-depth looks at topics of great importance to educators in today's classrooms.
  - **Post-Secondary Transitions: Interagency Collaboration:** IRIS is now in the internal review phase of a Module having to do with collaborations between agencies for high school students with disabilities. Mary Morningstar of the University of Kansas Department of Special Education has provided content for this resource. The Module will be sent out for external expert review in the coming quarter.

- **Student-Centered Transition Planning:** A resource about students and young adults ages 18–21 focusing on student-centered transition planning is in the very early stages of development. Erik Carter of Vanderbilt University has provided expert content.
  - **Autism Spectrum Disorder:** Content for a second IRIS Module on autism has been gathered. This content, developed by Ilene Schwartz, focuses on evidence-based practices.
  - **Perceptions of Disabilities:** The Center is working on a revision of our Module on disability awareness, *What Do You See? Perceptions of Disability*. We anticipate that it will be posted to our Website sometime during the coming quarter.
  - **Young People with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System:** By special request (and with additional funding) from OSEP, IRIS is developing a pair of Modules having to do with young people with disabilities in the juvenile justice system. The first will deal with evidence-based practices for delivering special education services to young people in confinement. The second will overview strategies for preparing young people for transition back to life, employment, or further education.
  - **Spanish-Language Resources: Autism:** A Spanish-translation of our *Autism Spectrum Disorder: An Overview for Educators* Module is currently in the works. We expect it to post sometime in the coming quarter.
- **Case Study Units:** These resources ask users to analyze and respond to a number of problem-based classroom issues through increasing levels of complexity and detail.
    - **Student Errors: Reading:** A new Case Study Unit, “Reading: Identifying and Addressing Student Errors,” is out for expert review. The resource will serve as accompaniment to our *STAR Legacy* Modules on intensive intervention.
  - **IRIS Online Tools:** The IRIS Website is home to a variety of online tools about or having to do with young people with disabilities and evidence-based instructional practices.
    - **Curriculum Matrices:** IRIS has developed new curriculum matrices in conjunction with California State University, Dominguez Hills to reflect a new licensure program being developed through the OSEP personnel preparation project. One of the purposes of

that effort is to integrate IRIS resources about response-to-intervention (RTI) throughout coursework for a newly funded credential pathway, the Secondary Special Education Teacher Interventionist. We expect to finalize the new resource early in the new quarter.

- **Films: Portrayals of People with Disabilities:** This tool, an attempt to catalogue the representation of people with disabilities in motion pictures, was revised and updated with new movies during the previous quarter.

#### *Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:*

- **Evidence-Based Practices Summaries:** These summaries of research about the effectiveness of instructional strategies and interventions contain links to research reports and include information about an intervention's level of effectiveness and the age groups for which it is designed. The tool will undergo expansion and revision in the new quarter.
- 

## **DISSEMINATE**

*The Center will build IHE faculty and PD providers' awareness and knowledge regarding the infusion of IRIS and other federally funded products into their courses, program curricula, and PD trainings through multiple dissemination efforts.*

#### *Activities and Progress in This Quarter:*

- **IHE State-Approved Programs:** IRIS is currently updating its list, created in 2014, of approved special education and general education teacher preparation programs for all fifty states. Although the previous list included all of the approved special education programs at that time, only a sample of general education programs were incorporated. This revision and update will provide that information for all teacher education programs as well as indicating each IHE served, and other demographics about each IHE. Work will continue on this task throughout the summer months.
- **Presentations and Outreach Efforts:** Throughout the year, the IRIS Center attends regional and national conferences to present on our training and instructional resources and to keep audiences up-to-date on everything that is new with IRIS. Information about presentations is below.
  - **CCTE:** On April 1–2, IRIS made multiple presentations at the California Council on Teacher Education's (CCTE) annual

conference in San Jose. A poster session was followed by a pair of back-to-back presentations, one an introduction to IRIS, the second an overview of our newest resources and materials with a special focus on using IRIS for faculty. Further, IRIS used this platform to test out a new format for a mini-IRIS Faculty Seminar, something that was offered as part of the conference agenda.

- **CEC:** On April 13–16, IRIS took part in the annual Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) conference in St. Louis, Missouri, where we presented on all our latest materials and resources. An invited presentation covered IRIS resources for students K–12, while a second overviewed our recent early childhood resources and materials. We also hosted a booth in the conference exhibition hall, where we dispensed information about our resources, Website, and services. Finally, IRIS took part in an OSEP-sponsored panel, “Supporting Teachers Through Comprehensive Systems,” along with representatives from CEDAR, the PBIS Center, and the Alabama SPDG. IRIS resources and services were highlighted.

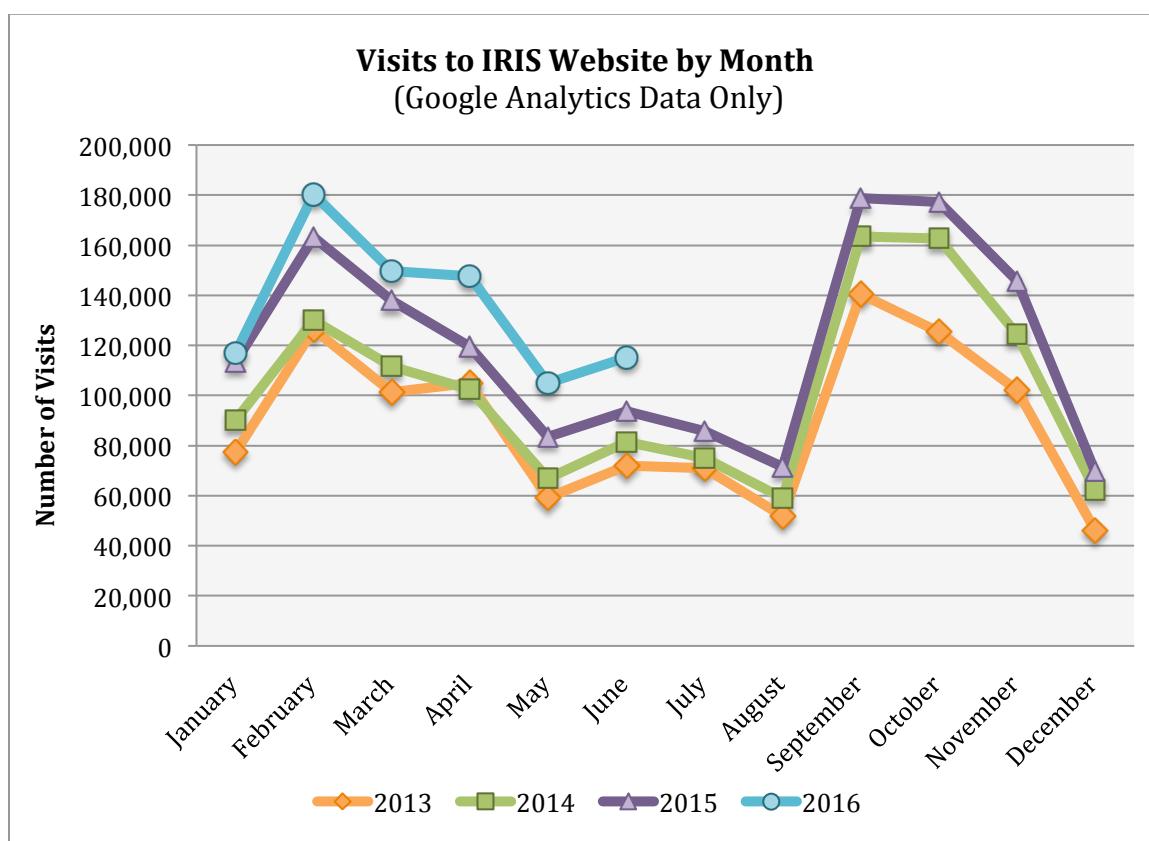
*Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:*

- **OSEP Project Directors Meeting:** In August, IRIS will take part in the OSEP Project Directors Meeting in Washington, DC.
- **Webinars:** IRIS frequently partners with other centers and organizations to present on our resources and materials to a broader audience.
  - **ECTA:** On April 27, IRIS took part in a Webinar hosted by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. The session overviewed the IRIS Center Module *Early Childhood Environments: Designing Effective Classrooms* and provided details about the interrelated physical, social, and temporal components of effective early childhood environments, as well as information on the ways in which well-designed early childhood environments benefit all young children.
  - **NCSI:** On June 2, the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) hosted a Webinar as part of their monthly TA Facilitators call for which IRIS provided an overview of our Website and resources. TA Facilitators will now be able to recommend relevant resources to state personnel with whom they work. In addition, during the Webinar we presented on our newly created IRIS/SiMR Alignment Tools, which link IRIS resources to SiMR targeted topics. For more details, see **COLLABORATE** below.

- **Web Tours:** IRIS Web Tours offer groups of faculty, professional development providers, state department administrators, and others an in-depth guided look at the IRIS Website.
  - **MAAPS:** On May 20, IRIS hosted a Web Tour for Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (maaps).
- **Social Media:** The IRIS Center uses various social media platforms to get the word out about IRIS resources, presentations, Seminars and Trainings, and PD Hours Store special offers.
  - **Social Media Plan Update:** For 2016, the Center has created a revised and more active social media plan that incorporates national awareness events and days of special interest to educators and school leaders as its guiding theme.

## WEBSITE VISITOR DATA

For the Second Quarter of 2016, there were a total of 367,802 visits to the IRIS Website, per the Google Analytics software. This is a remarkable increase of 24% from the same period last year.



## TA/TRAINING

*The Center will raise IHE faculty and PD providers' awareness and knowledge regarding the infusion of IRIS and other federally funded products into their courses, program curricula, and PD trainings through a targeted and intensive system of technical assistance and training; and the development of high quality, useful, relevant and non-duplicative products and services.*

*Activities and Progress in This Quarter:*

- **Faculty Seminars:** These events bring together educators from across a state or region for some hands-on work. Particular focus is on using the IRIS Website and instructional resources, embedding IRIS resources into course-management systems, and revising course syllabi.
  - **CEEDAR:** On June 22–24, IRIS took part in a joint conference with the CEEDAR Center in Reston, Virginia. The CEEDAR-IRIS Cross-State Convening: Enhancing Systems for Personnel Preparation conference brought together faculty members from sixteen different states. For the event, IRIS created Alignment Tools that directly link IRIS resources associated with each state's CEEDAR Blueprints.
  - **California Seminars:** IRIS continues to work on what has become a double seminar for Fall 2016. The Northern California Seminar will take place September 15–17. Response has been huge. We anticipate hosting some 42 faculty from 14 colleges.

---

## DATA-BASED DECISION-MAKING

*The Center will implement a process for making decisions about development, technical assistance and training services, and dissemination efforts that align with developments in the field, reflect evidence-based instructional and intervention practices, and are responsive to the needs of IHE faculty, professional development providers, and practicing educators.*

*Activities and Progress in This Quarter:*

- **Faculty Evaluation Survey:** Beginning on January 20, 2016, IRIS users who self-identify as faculty were invited to complete a summative evaluation survey and given two weeks to do so. This summative evaluation—created and overseen by an independent evaluator—was guided by interest in collecting data around four key areas: (1) who is using the IRIS Center's resources (i.e., Modules); (2) how IRIS is satisfying current needs, (3) how the IRIS Center's resources are being

infused in courses, curricula, and professional development, and (4) future needs. Some 906 faculty began the survey, with 894 completing it, a 99% completion rate. A draft report was submitted to IRIS during the First Quarter of Year Four. A final report will be issued next quarter.

- **PD Provider Evaluation Survey:** During February 2016, individuals self-identifying as professional development providers and who visited the IRIS Center Website were invited to participate in a needs assessment survey. This summative evaluation—created and overseen by an independent evaluator—was guided by our interest in collecting data around four key areas: (1) who is using The IRIS Center's resources (i.e., Modules); (2) how IRIS is satisfying current needs, (3) how the IRIS Center's resources are being infused in courses, curricula, and professional development, and (4) future needs. Data analyses are underway. A draft report was submitted to IRIS during the First Quarter of Year Four. A final report will be issued next quarter.
  - **PD Hours Store Survey:** The IRIS Center is currently gathering feedback from school administrators and teachers involved in the pilot of the new school- and district-platform of the PD Hours Store. We expect to review this information in the coming quarter.
- 

## COLLABORATE

*The Center will support development, technical assistance and training services, and dissemination efforts through collaborative processes to ensure that products and services align with developments in the field.*

### *Activities and Progress in This Quarter:*

- **NCSI (2):** As part of a partnership with the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), a set of materials was developed that aligns IRIS Modules and Case Studies with states' SiMRs on targeted topics. These digital documents link to IRIS resources that relate specifically to SiMR topics as identified by individual states. These tables are now posted on the NCSI Website for its TA providers' use with SEA's PD providers.
- **CSU-Dominguez Hills:** IRIS has worked with California State University, Dominguez Hills, to create new curriculum matrices, reflecting a new licensure program being developed through the OSEP personnel preparation project. One of the purposes of that effort is to integrate IRIS resources about response-to-intervention (RTI) throughout coursework for a newly funded credential pathway, the Secondary Special Education Teacher Interventionist.

The matrices are now complete and will be posted sometime early in the coming quarter.

- **Bloomboard/Digital Promise:** The IRIS Center is in the process of partnering with Bloomboard/Digital Promise, an online provider of professional development micro-credentials. To do so, we are adapting IRIS materials to better suit the micro-credential format. Our first efforts will focus on resources related to accommodations for students with disabilities and understanding second-language development and instructional practices for English-language learners.
  - **NASP:** We continue to work with the National Association of School Psychologists, who has made recommendations regarding outside reviewers for our forthcoming Module on autism spectrum disorder.
  - **CEEDAR (2):** The CEDAR-IRIS Cross-State Convening: Enhancing Systems for Personnel Preparation was held June 22–24. For more detail, see **TA/TRAINING** above.
  - **TEA:** In May, the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) featured IRIS resources on its Website homepage and, in conjunction with our Center, offered its members a discount on PD hours in the IRIS PD Hours Store. The IRIS Center is now one of TEA's recommended providers.
- 

## EVALUATE

The IRIS online Module Feedback Form asks respondents to rate the Modules' usefulness, relevance, and quality on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest rating). This quarter there were 808 respondents to this survey. The first table (below) summarizes descriptive information about them.

Respondents	Number
Graduate Student	284
College Student	182
Experienced Teacher	180
New Teacher	91
School Leader	14
College Faculty	12
PD Provider	7
Other (e.g., parent)	20
missing	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>808</b>

This next table (below) presents this quarter's survey respondents' overall ratings of the IRIS Modules for quality, relevance, and usefulness.

	Mean Ratings
<b>Quality</b>	4.4
<b>Relevance</b>	4.5
<b>Usefulness</b>	4.5

Respondents were asked to describe the area they worked or studied in. The table below summarizes their responses.

Response	Number
General education	258
Special education	277
Early childhood education	86
Early childhood special education	33
Early intervention services	5
Other	126
Not Provided	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>808</b>

---

## PERSONNEL

See this space for notes and information on new or outgoing IRIS personnel.

- **Kadiri Vaquer Fernández:** IRIS@VU welcomed Kadiri Vaquer Fernández, who will serve as the Center's new Spanish translator.
- **Louise Yoho:** IRIS@CGU welcomed new doctoral student Louise Yoho.