In this month’s FOCUS on Young Children’s Learning Newsletter, we feature Clovis Municipal School Principal, Jeremy Martin, as a recipient of the New Mexico PED FOCUS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System Outstanding Educator Award. Our Professional Development topic is the Early Childhood Observational Tool. In our Bright Spots segment, we share information about the Full Participation Training Pilot Project—highlighting one participant’s experience with this work. The What’s in it for Me? column provides an update from the Annual PED FOCUS Stakeholders Meeting. This month’s Consultant Spotlight features Nancy Treat.

There is a magic bullet in education—it is the teacher.

—Trina Raper
Executive Director for Curriculum and Professional Development
Santa Fe Public Schools

Outstanding Educator Award

Clovis Public School Principal Recognized as Outstanding Educator

Jeremy Martin, Principal of Los Niños Early Intervention Center and Lincoln Jackson Family Center in Clovis, New Mexico, was awarded the New Mexico PED FOCUS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System Outstanding Educator Award at the Clovis Municipal Schools Board Meeting on April 25, 2017. In addition, the following teachers and educational assistants were recognized for their exceptional work in the preschool programs:

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Mr. Martin is a creative and strategic leader. He knew it would be difficult for many of the educational assistants (EAs) at his two campuses to attend early childhood education classes outside of the school day. He brought together educators from four institutions: Clovis Municipal Schools, Clovis Community College (CCC), Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU), and The New Mexico T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program to support the EAs’ success. These EAs take college classes onsite during their duty day. CCC provides the course textbooks. They, in partnership with ENMU’s Title V Cooperative Grant, also provide laptops for the duration of the course to the students. Five EAs received T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships with an additional 16 tuitions paid for by Clovis Municipal Schools. In the true spirit of this award, Mr. Martin “dared greatly” to make sure his staff had his support to meet the FOCUS professional development goals. This is just one example of why we are recognizing Principal Jeremy Martin with this award.
Documentation: Both Mirror and Light

From WestEd’s Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation Report: “The majority of New Mexico kindergarten teachers agree that the Kindergarten Observational Tool (KOT) provides a helpful snapshot of students’ skills, knowledge, and behavior at the beginning of school.” Observations recorded in the KOT reports help to identify students’ strengths and challenges. “We really appreciate that the KOT is a measure of the whole child,” said Michelle Trujillo, a teacher at Zia Elementary. The rubrics provide an outline that is not only helpful for teachers but the families as well. Kindergarten teacher, Rachel Norris, shared, “The rubrics provide us, and the families, clear and specific guidelines for child development. They help to identify gaps for each student in our classroom, so we could plan to support their individual needs.” Finally, the teachers express how they have been able to use KOT data to inform instruction. “As a team, we collaborated in conversations around the data to see what we may need to do differently to support our students.”

The New Mexico PED, encouraged by this positive response and feedback from FOCUS participants, worked to expand the KOT to preschool-age children. The PED re-designed the Kindergarten Observation Tool Application (KOTA) to create the Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT). The ECOT includes both the KOT and PreK Observational Assessment Tools. All PED preschool programs (PED, Title I, and special education) now have access to the same online tool that the kindergarten teachers use to record, track, and submit their observations. Training on the new system offers the opportunity for preschool and kindergarten teachers to be trained in a collaborative setting. This provides preschool teachers a platform to share their expertise and experience in observational assessments with kindergarten teachers. Watch for information regarding dates and locations of the ECOT trainings.

1 Information for this article was provided by Joe Manley, Kindergarten Entry Assessment Coordinator, Central Region Educational Cooperative

Bright Spots

PED FOCUS Launches the Full Participation of Each Child Pilot Project

Preschool teachers from throughout the state are taking part in the Full Participation of Each Child course. This pilot program is designed to provide early childhood professionals with the content, evidence-based practices, and resources to support each and every child and their family in classroom, home, and community settings. Course content aligns with New Mexico’s Guiding Principles and the FOCUS criteria by emphasizing family engagement; inclusive practices for children with diverse abilities; culture; language, including the support of children who are dual language learners; and promoting social-emotional development.

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What's in it for me?

Updates from the Annual PED FOCUS Stakeholder Meeting

On March 31, 2017, early childhood public school educators from throughout the state convened in Albuquerque for the annual PED FOCUS Stakeholders meeting. Terri Tapia, Education and Development Program Manager, PED FOCUS, University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability, facilitated the meeting. The objectives of this meeting were to solicit updates from the Public Education Department and from FOCUS, share celebrations from the field, and to solicit input from the FOCUS stakeholders on the sustainability of the FOCUS initiative. Ms. Tapia shared data on the impact FOCUS is having in our state.

PED FOCUS employs four full-time and four part-time consultants. The consultants support 5,124 children and their families. This program serves 218 classrooms spread over 51 school districts statewide. Of the children served, 90 percent qualify for special education services.

The PED FOCUS program provides high-quality, early-childhood-based professional development to public school preschool teachers. Here is a list of trainings and enrollment data:

- **ECERS-3 offered online**: 1000+ trained
- **Intentional Teaching**: 485 trained
- **LETRS-EC**: 104 trained
- **NM Pyramid Framework**: 574 trained
- **Full Participation Pilot**: 155 trained
- **Full Participation Institute**: 500 trained
Throughout the day, participants shared the positive impact the FOCUS program is having in their schools and districts. Terri led the group in a PED FOCUS Sustainability Activity. Below are some of the highlights of the questions and group responses for this activity.

**What are the benefits of implementing PED FOCUS?**

PED FOCUS works to support high-quality, early childhood programs in schools and districts across the state. It is a tiered quality rating and improvement system used to evaluate the quality of educational services provided to young children ages 3–5 and their families. There is a systematic focus on preschool/early childhood best practices. Again and again, educators expressed their appreciation for the early-childhood-specific trainings and that the trainings are held locally.

The information and support for inclusive practices is appreciated, as well as the support from consultants. This support helps the teachers to go from theory into practice.

**What are some of the barriers to implementing the PED FOCUS?**

The number one response was lack of funding. There were also concerns about three other areas—including inadequate space for programs and the need for “buy-in”

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Following is a sampling of participants’ comments on the trainings:

LETRS-EC Training—There was a wealth of information, strategies, and materials that were provided which help in the comprehension process.

Pyramid Training—We learned many new activities that we can use today to supplement, extend, and enrich lessons on social emotional development and lots of fresh ideas for implementing the Pyramid Model.

Full Participation Pilot—This course was very informative, and you gave a lot of great resources. I was very impressed with how much the teachers and their assistants genuinely care about each individual child and his/her needs.

Full Participation Pilot—I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in your field test!! It was very informative and gave me even more understanding for the challenges that our teachers overcome and how well they take care of our children. As a parent, it was very successful in opening my eyes to be more patient with my own children. In addition, it truly made me want to become more involved with the teachers in my children’s school. I really appreciate the resources you provided and the handouts that can be referenced later on. Overall, you did an amazing job with this training! And our facilitator, Emily, was great! She knew the subject matter very well, was very kind, and had the experience to back it up. I really enjoyed it all! Thank you again for the opportunity!

What are the benefits of implementing PED FOCUS?

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from administrators in their districts: “The leaders need to understand and believe in the value of early childhood education.” Finally, in several districts, there is concern that the top leaders change frequently. This affects stability in programs and levels of support.

What are some potential consequences if we do not continue implementing the PED's FOCUS?

Participants cited a number of concerns should FOCUS be discontinued. These worries included a lack of consistent PreK structure and curriculum implementation and the fear that its lack would have a negative effect on the students and student achievement. Participants anticipated that there would be missed professional development opportunities, which would negatively impact teacher growth.

Participants worry that there could be a lack of consistency or equity throughout the state. They listed several losses that would occur including the loss of

- accountability support for special education preschoolers
- developmentally appropriate practices (DAP)
- long-term student success in K-12
- sustainability/knowledge

To whom do we need to reach out in order to seek continued funding for PED FOCUS?

Participants generated varied and creative responses to this question. Generally, they stressed the need for support from parents, school boards, superintendents, and legislators. They listed families; local, state, and federal agencies; charitable foundations; special education; Title I; and NM PreK as funding sources. On a more whimsical note, two groups included bake sales and GoFundMe accounts.

The stakeholders clearly support the work PED FOCUS is doing to reinforce high-quality programming for preschoolers in New Mexico’s public schools. The successes and challenges the PED FOCUS program faces were highlighted at this meeting.

References


Consultant Spotlight

Nancy Treat

I am a native New Mexican, having grown up in Socorro and Santa Fe. I am married and have two sons and five wonderful grandchildren. I am also the proud mother-in-law of an occupational therapist working in the early intervention field. My career has been in the field of early childhood education. I have my master’s degree in educational leadership from the University of New Mexico. I taught in a preschool setting in Farmington, NM for fourteen years and served on the early childhood advisory board of San Juan College. In the summers, I ran a program for the Farmington Summer Recreation Program, serving children with varying disabilities.

After my youngest son graduated from high school, my husband and I moved back to Santa Fe. I was very privileged to begin working in the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) at its inception. I spent most of my twenty years at CYFD working in the Office of Child Development as a program manager for early childhood programs that received funding from the department—which included programs using the Focused Portfolios (the forerunner to our current portfolio process), child care programs serving homeless children and families, and TEACH scholarship contracts; I worked very closely with the NM PreK programs. At one point, I was responsible for the issuance of the developmental specializations for those individuals working in early intervention programs across the state. I was also involved in the monitoring of the training and technical assistance programs that provide training to child care staff and delivered the AIM HIGH program.

Upon retiring from CYFD, I worked for NMSU as a contractor with the Citizens Review Board. I was a meetings facilitator for the Santa Fe, Taos, Raton, and Las Vegas boards. These boards are charged with reviewing cases of children in foster care and making recommendations to the courts on the cases. This was a very rewarding job with a heavy burden of reviewing the very serious situations in which some young children of New Mexico find themselves.

About two years ago, I was very fortunate to become a part-time consultant for the PED FOCUS Initiative. It is such a pleasure to work with several school districts and their dedicated staff who serve some of our youngest children. The children are a delight to observe over time as they grow in their independence in the classroom and gain new skills. I feel that the trainings offered through PED FOCUS have furthered the professionalism of the already dedicated staff. I look forward to moving through all the PED FOCUS requirements and seeing program staff blossom as they take on the new challenges that further their commitment to quality for all young children.

Welcome Nancy!

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