

THE IRIS CENTER
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT CFDA 84.325E
(PR/Award Number: H325E170001)



IRIS CENTER™

Administrative Progress Report:

Year 1/Quarter 1

Submitted to:

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

13 April 2018

Naomi Tyler, Director

Quarterly Report January–March 2018 [Year 1/Quarter 1]

The IRIS Center produces these Quarterly Reports as both a narrative of our efforts and a detailed account of our work and progress. This document represents the very first report of the new IRIS 4 project. Read on for more information about everything that took place over the last three months.

PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE: *IRIS is engaged in a continuous effort to improve and expand the quality and reach of IRIS resources through ongoing infrastructure development and enhancement.*

- ⇒ **IRIS Kickoff Meeting:** The kickoff meeting for the IRIS Center was held in Washington, DC, in January 2018. Hosted by OSEP, the meeting focused on an overview of IRIS 4, with an emphasis on future resource development, technical assistance, and dissemination activities. Small groups also convened to discuss evaluation (with the assistance of Michele Rovins, IRIS Evaluation Workgroup Lead, and the staff of CIP3) and dissemination activities (with Kori Hamilton Biagas, Workgroup Lead on Dissemination).
- ⇒ **Year 1 Work Plan:** The IRIS work plan for Year 1 of this new project is nearing completion and should be finalized early in the coming quarter.
- ⇒ **IRIS Logo:** IRIS has commissioned the creation of a new logo. More than 20 prospective designs from various contractors were reviewed before a final candidate was selected. Although not quite finalized, the latest draft of the new logo can be found on the cover page of this report, and will appear on the IRIS Website and throughout IRIS resources and materials.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: *IRIS develops online resources about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices to help improve the education outcomes of all students, particularly struggling learners and those with disabilities. Created with the assistance of many of the top experts in their fields, IRIS resources—whether Modules, Case Study Units, IRIS Content Guides, or many others—are innovative, interactive, and practical for use in college and university coursework, and by PD providers and teachers in today’s classrooms.*

⇒ **Product Development Process:** In order to determine IRIS resource topics and types, we are currently conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of our users—the first step in a multi-stage process of topic selection, development, and refinement that relies on the input and expertise of a wide variety of sources. New product development will begin in earnest next year once topic and expert selection has been completed. In the meantime, we will revise and update two of our current IRIS Modules. Of this, more information can be found in the items below.

New Resources: A new project cycle brings with it new concepts for effective resources about evidence-based practices as IRIS works to meet the evolving needs of educators in today's classrooms.

- ⇒ **Fundamental Skill Sheets:** Practical and informative, our Fundamental Skill Sheets offer educators quick primers (or reminders) about discrete skills and practices indispensable to their role as effective classroom teachers. Fundamental Skill Sheets cover everything from specific praise to proximity control, telling teachers What It Is, What the Research and Resources Say, Steps for Implementation, Tips for Implementation, Implementation Examples (including demonstration videos of both correct and incorrect implementation), Things To Keep in Mind, and References & Resources for further study. Content and some of the videos for the fundamental skills sheets have already been completed, with more videos to be completed in the coming quarters.
- ⇒ **Content Guides:** Created with the assistance of top instructional experts in their fields, the IRIS Content Guides are “deep dives” into effective practices like mathematics instruction for students with disabilities. Each IRIS Content Guide consists of multiple digital units that cover a series of topics, organized sequentially and scaffolded to provide a coherent course or training framework across an academic semester. Further, each unit will cover discrete content and be flexible enough to be used either individually or in combination with other Content Guide units. These, in turn, can be complemented and supplemented with our other center resources. A Content Guide on mathematics instruction for students with disabilities is currently in the early stages of development. Content experts for the first IRIS Content Guide—Kim Paulsen, Paul Riccomini, David Allsopp, Sarah van Ingen, Sarah Powell, Brad Witzel, Tricia Strickland, and Diane Bryant—are already developing content, with Sarah Powell, Brad Witzel, and Tricia Strickland recently delivering two units for our review.

Modules: The signature resource of our Center, IRIS Modules cover information about fundamental topics and evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices on a wide variety of topic areas, including classroom behavior management, MTSS/ RTI, and cultural and linguistic diversity, to name but a few.

- ⇒ **IEP Development:** By special request from OSEP, IRIS will begin development of three Modules on high-quality individualized education programs (IEPs). Draft outlines of the Modules will soon be delivered to OSEP for review and talks are underway with at least one content expert/writer.
- ⇒ **Intensive Intervention:** IRIS will be revising our two-part Module series on intensive intervention this year, to reflect more recent work on data-based individualization from the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII).

IRIS Online Tools: From a glossary of terms related to disabilities to the IRIS Book and Film Tools to our Evidence-Based Practices Summaries, IRIS online tools are user-friendly, informative, and always growing.

- ⇒ **Video Vignettes:** This collection of annotated videos will continue to expand in the coming quarters, with all new videos about high-leverage practices developed through a collaboration with CEEDAR, CEC, CCSSO, and AIR. We will also be adding select IRIS videos from our Modules to this collection. For more information on each of these initiatives, see the sections below.

IRIS Professional Development: IRIS' growing number of online professional development options includes our PD Hours Store, School & District Platform, and Micro-credentials.

- ⇒ **Micro-credentials:** Using information gleaned from the pilot process, we will work to revise and update our first "stack" of Micro-credentials in year 1, which can be accessed via the Bloomboard/Digital Promise Website.

DISSEMINATION: *IRIS disseminates news of its resources through a wide variety of means, both universal and targeted. The IRIS Website, conference presentations and appearances, and a multi-part social media presence, all are key components in our plan to reach and communicate with IRIS consumers.*

- ⇒ **Dissemination Plan:** With the indispensable assistance of Kori Hamilton Biagas, IRIS Dissemination Workgroup Lead, we have been working toward the finalization of a multi-part dissemination plan covering

everything from conference exhibition booths and presentations to a possible IRIS digital newsletter to a targeted social media campaign and much more. This work will continue into the coming quarter.

- ⇒ **Website:** IRIS has made significant progress toward the development and launch of an updated and reorganized Website. Though interior pages on the site will receive a relatively minor makeover, our homepage will see substantial upgrading, with better navigability, new features, and a sleeker, more modern appearance. The site will go live in the coming quarter.
- ⇒ **IRIS on YouTube:** In the new quarter, IRIS will begin uploading a significant number of video clips from our Modules onto an updated and expanded IRIS YouTube channel, offering our users yet one more way to access those resources. Presented so that their intended context is fully explained and with a link to their Module homepages, these videos will cover everything from mathematics instruction to reading and language arts and more. Additions to the YouTube channel will continue throughout the coming quarter and beyond.
- ⇒ **Social Media Campaign:** IRIS is working to “scale up” our social media presence, with special emphasis on Facebook and Twitter. We expect to add more social media sites to our campaign throughout the IRIS 4 project.

Presentation & Outreach Efforts: Throughout the year, IRIS attends local, 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 our recent presentations is below.

- ⇒ **Utah Special Education Administrators’ Meeting:** On February 9, IRIS was represented by Kimberly Snow of Utah State University at that state’s Special Education Administrators’ Meeting. With David Forbush of the Utah Professional Development Network, she led a breakout session on the use of IRIS Modules in professional development activities.
- ⇒ **ACRES:** On March 14-17, IRIS attended the annual conference of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) in Salt Lake City, Utah, where we made a pair of presentations on all of the latest IRIS resources. Kimberly Snow represented the Center.
- ⇒ **RTI in Tennessee:** In March, IRIS met with Karen Jensen, the State Director of RTI for Tennessee. IRIS provided some history on the development of the original RTI Module

series that was created with funds from the TN SPDG and then shared information on the various RTI resources, content, and options for using them in professional development as the state moves forward with a new RTI initiative.

- ⇒ **NCSC:** On June 17-20, IRIS will be on hand in the exhibition hall of the National Charter Schools Conference in Austin, Texas, where we will highlight IRIS online resources, PD options, and more.
- ⇒ **Project Directors' Meeting:** In July, IRIS will take part in the annual OSEP Project Directors' Meeting in Washington, DC, where we have proposed several presentations on our latest resources and professional development options.
- ⇒ **Ambassador's Tool Kit:** IRIS continues to develop a tool kit for our IRIS Ambassadors. We have submitted a number of handouts and received feedback from the Ambassadors on their content. In the coming quarter, we will revise the handouts as we continue to create resources for the tool kit.
- ⇒ **IRIS & IHEs:** Next quarter, IRIS will be sending information packets about our Center and the IRIS resources to the 8% of IHEs with state-approved general and special education teacher preparation programs that are not yet using IRIS, some 153 schools.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: *IRIS works to increase the capacity of teacher-preparation programs to expand the range of resources about evidence-based practices (EBPs) in their courses and program curricula, state and local education agencies as well as PD providers to deliver effective professional development, and independent learners to enhance their knowledge and skills regarding EBPs.*

- ⇒ **School & District PD Platform:** A powerful, flexible online professional development tool for school leaders, the IRIS School & District Platform allows administrators to assign Modules to teachers, follow their progress toward PD hours, send reminder or update emails, and easily export data for accountability purposes. As we begin this new grant cycle, IRIS will be significantly ramping up our efforts to amplify word of this platform to school leaders across the country in an effort to expand our PD "footprint" in the months and years ahead.
- ⇒ **Micro-Credentials:** In collaboration with Digital Promise/Bloomboard, IRIS offers a "stack" of micro-credentials. These focused PD units allow educators to learn and gain mastery of discrete instructional practices. Quality control measures established by Bloomboard/Digital Promise

require that each micro-credential must first be field tested by 50 teachers—for a total of 200 teachers for the entirety of our “stack.” IRIS is already in the process of reviewing and grading micro-credentials incoming from teachers nationwide, as well those specifically recruited by Joe Morgan (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) in Clark County, Nevada, with whom we have formed a partnership for this purpose. Grading will continue throughout the coming quarter and beyond or until such a time as all 200 micro-credential submissions have been reviewed.

EVALUATION: *The IRIS evaluation plan is designed to yield information to guide project activities and to assess whether our goals, objectives, and outcomes have been achieved. Formative and summative data are used to monitor project implementation procedures.*

- ⇒ **Logic Model:** IRIS continues to collaborate with the Center to Improve Program and Project Performance (CIP3) on the development of an IRIS logic model. Substantial progress has been made to this end, and we hope to finalize the model during the new quarter. Michele Rovins, Associate Director of the National Center for Systemic Improvement and IRIS Evaluation Workgroup Lead, has been an active participant in this process, which will lead to the development of the IRIS evaluation plan.
- ⇒ **Evaluation Plan:** As with the dissemination plan, the IRIS evaluation plan is currently under construction. The evaluation plan will be our primary roadmap for guiding and monitoring the success of IRIS goals and objectives. We hope to finalize the evaluation plan at some point in the new quarter.
- ⇒ **Needs Assessment:** As mentioned earlier, we have initiated a comprehensive needs assessment survey seeking information from IRIS users about preferred resource development, methods of engagement (e.g., social media or email listserves), user professional roles and areas of focus, and more. Those data are currently being collected and will be used for future product development, dissemination activities, and technical assistance and training activities.
- ⇒ **The IRIS Master List:** IRIS is in the early stages of developing a list of state-approved teacher preparation programs throughout the United States. This list will be used to set the baseline for the number and percentage of programs in which IRIS resources are used. We expect the work on this project to begin in earnest in Summer 2018. Deb Smith, formerly of IRIS@CGU, is coordinating this effort.

Module Feedback: The IRIS Module Feedback Form, an online survey, asks respondents to rate our Modules' quality, relevance, and usefulness on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest rating). This quarter there were 1,266 respondents to this survey. **Table 1** (below) summarizes descriptive information about the respondents. **Table 2** presents this quarter's survey respondents' overall ratings of the IRIS modules for quality, relevance, and usefulness. Finally, we asked respondents to describe their area of work or study. **Table 3** summarizes the responses we received to this question this quarter.

Table 1

Respondents	Number
College Student	494
Graduate Student	363
Experienced Teacher	185
New Teacher	111
Other (e.g., parent)	44
School Leader	35
College Faculty	16
Data missing	11
PD Provider	7
Total	1,266

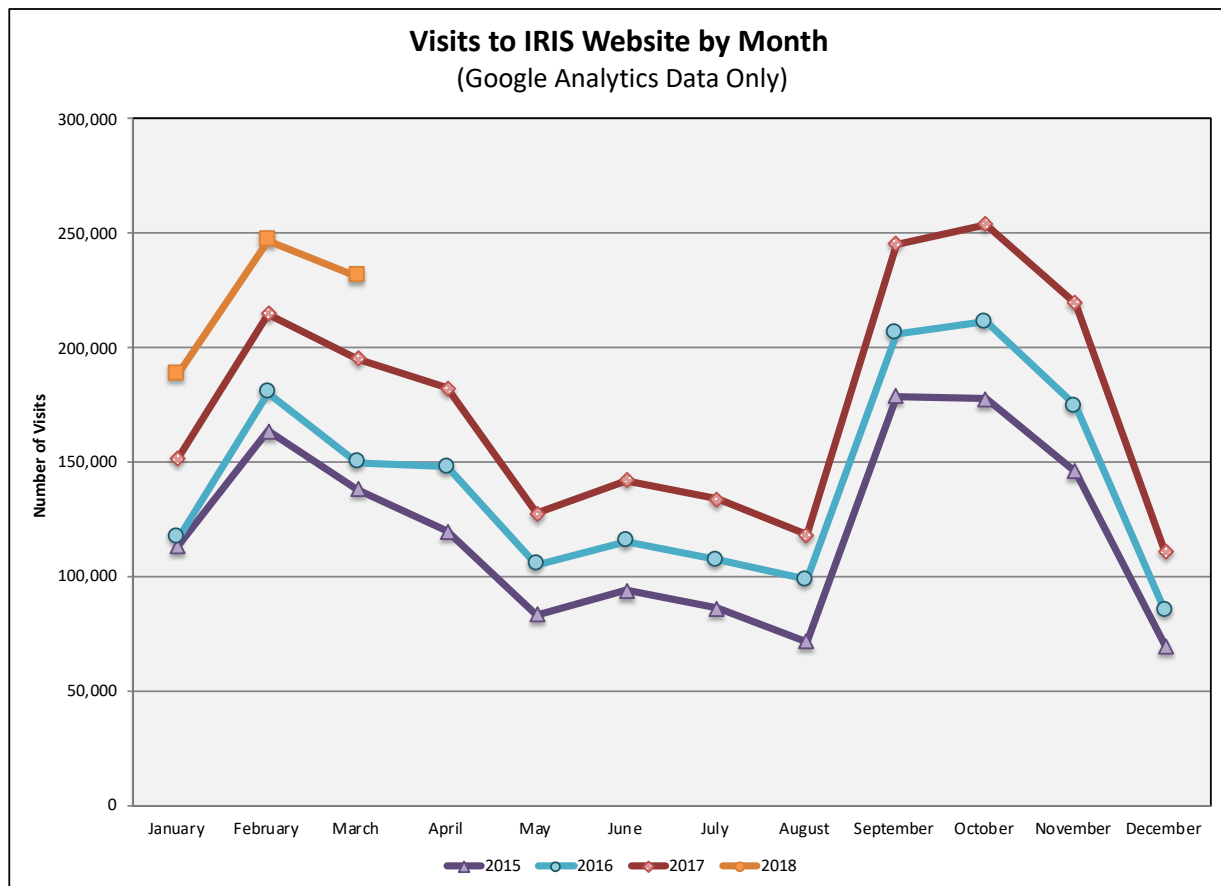
Table 2

	Mean Ratings
Quality	4.5
Relevance	4.6
Usefulness	4.5

Table 3

Response	Number
Special education	413
General education	403
Early childhood education	204
Other	165
Early childhood special education	51
Data missing	19
Early intervention services	11
Total	1,266

Website User Data: There were 666,122 visits to the Website this quarter, an increase of 18.7% compared to the same quarter last year.



COLLABORATION & WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES: *IRIS works alongside other national centers, nationally recognized education experts, and our own IRIS Ambassadors and Workgroups to improve our ability to develop resources, disseminate information about all things IRIS, and offer technical assistance and training.*

- ⇒ **HLP Videos:** IRIS continued to collaborate with CEEDAR, CEC, CCSSO, and AIR as they develop a series of videos on high-leverage practices (HLPs), providing guidance and feedback on the production side of the process. When complete, this new video on the topic of systematically designed instruction will be added to the IRIS Video Vignette Collection.
- ⇒ **NCLII:** IRIS continues to collaborate with the National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII). Through this proposed partnership, NCLII will help student teachers to infuse IRIS resources about intensive interventions into their course syllabi. In turn, IRIS would post those syllabi on our Website as part of our Sample Syllabi collection.

These efforts will continue into the coming quarter and beyond.

- ⇒ **CEC Collaboration Roundup:** IRIS took advantage of our appearance at this year's annual Council for Exceptional Children to meet with a number of our partners and Workgroups. Information about these meetings can be found in the bullets below.
- ❖ **Technical Assistance & Training:** IRIS met with IRIS Ambassador and Clark County, Nevada, school leader Joe Morgan to discuss procedures to field-test our stack of IRIS Micro-credentials. (For more information on this process and its progress, see the Product Development section above.)
 - ❖ **Innovation & Technology Workgroup:** IRIS also met with Lisa Dieker, Pegasus Professor and Lockheed Martin Eminent Scholar and IRIS Innovation and Technology Workgroup Lead for a discussion about possible technological developments and enhancements for our Center, as well as the possibility of sharing a post-doctoral scholar in the future.
 - ❖ **MTSS/Intensive Intervention Workgroup:** Nor was our MTSS/Intensive Intervention Workgroup neglected. IRIS met with Rebecca Zumeta Edmunds, Co-Director of the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) and Workgroup Co-Lead; Amy Peterson of the Center on Response to Intervention; Teri Marx of NCII; and Chris Lemons of Vanderbilt University to discuss current RTI/MTSS terminology, the (eventually rejected) idea to identify resources by tier in the IRIS Resource Locator, a possible Webinar collaboration with NCII, and more.
 - ❖ **Dissemination Workgroup:** Finally, IRIS met with Dissemination Workgroup Lead Kori Hamilton Biagas and IRIS Ambassadors Darcie Peterson (Utah), Sally Barton-Arwood (Tennessee), Victoria Graf (California), and Mary Little (Florida) to discuss the continuing development of an Ambassador Toolkit, including handouts for presentations and appearances. We have selected five of those handouts and intend to finalize this part of the process during the coming quarter.

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

- ⇒ **Resource Developer:** Tanya Collins will assume this role on a part-time basis in mid-April, moving to full-time June 4, 2018. Ms. Collins will support the development of new resources within the Center, work with content experts, write and review instructional resources, and present at conferences both locally and nationwide. Ms. Collins is currently a supervisor in the Southern Region, Illinois Board of Education/Illinois MTSS Network. She has an impressive array of experience that includes working with state systems, professional development, and instructional design.

- ⇒ **Professional Development Liaison:** Samantha Law will begin in this role on July 23, 2018. Ms. Law will recruit and enroll schools and districts in the IRIS School & District Platform, troubleshoot issues that might arise, and provide technical assistance and training on an ongoing basis. Further, Ms. Law will be responsible for participating in IRIS dissemination and outreach efforts, applying for approved PD provider status in those states in which certification is required, and serving as resource reviewer and developer, when appropriate. Ms. Law comes to the IRIS Center with approximately 20 years of experience in special education policy. She is currently employed with Public Consulting Group, Inc.

- ⇒ **Student Workers:** Two undergraduate workers have recently come to IRIS via Vanderbilt's Hire A Dore program. Naomi Forbes and Victoria Offei-Dua will manage routine office tasks such as database entry and updates, office organization and filing, and collecting addresses for institutions of higher education.