Administrative Progress Report:

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Submitted to:

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IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

Quarterly Report
July – September 2018
[Year 1/Quarter 2]

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 latest activities of the IRIS Center. 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.*

⇒ **Vision & Mission Statements:** Our Vision and Mission statements are expressions of the center's goals and aspirations, as well as general overviews of how we plan to go about achieving them. Revised and updated versions of these statements are posted to the IRIS Website. They read as follows:

Vision Statement
The IRIS Center is a national leader supporting the increased use of evidence-based practices by educators to improve outcomes for all students, especially struggling learners and those with disabilities.

Mission Statement
The IRIS Center offers high-quality online, open educational resources (OERs) that translate research to practice for use in personnel preparation and ongoing professional development so that educators have the knowledge and skills they need to use evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for all students, especially struggling learners and those with disabilities.

⇒ **Website Visitor Numbers:** Following an unexpected drop in our Website's monthly visitor data at the end of May, the IRIS Center has undertaken extensive and ongoing efforts to locate the cause of the change and to address it in all due haste. Our investigation suggests that the decrease began almost precisely at the moment the European Union's new data privacy initiative, the General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR], took effect (May 25), which had a dramatic effect on the number of international visits. Although the IRIS team had prepared in advance for the initiative, including the addition of key security and privacy features, subsequent efforts to bring the IRIS Center into complete compliance were swiftly undertaken. In the months since

the May GDPR start date, our Web visitor numbers have rebounded. As part of our evaluation process, IRIS will continue to closely monitor Website visitor data. When anomalies, such as this arise, IRIS will try to identify and address the issue quickly and efficiently.

⇒ **Website Programming Updates & Improvements:** Many of the most significant improvements to the IRIS Website happen "behind the scenes" at the programming level and are therefore virtually invisible to our users and visitors. Whether they're noticeable or not, these adjustments and fine tunings are indispensable to a smooth running, user-friendly online experience. A log of our recent activities follows.

- o jQuery migration: Initially, the IRIS Website used a library of javascript routines called "MooTools" to build tabbed objects, lightboxes, image sliders, and interactive activities, among other features. However, following our migration to the WordPress CMS, there has been a need to move the underpinnings of our MooTools supported IRIS features to a different group of javascript libraries called "jQuery," which is native to Wordpress. In practical terms, this has entailed a long-term re-scripting of IRIS interactive activities, games, and sample syllabi. This process will be completed in the coming quarter.

- o User filtering: Our investigation of our registered user accounts for the professional development certificates suggests that the number is much greater than it should be. In response, IRIS created a PHP script to determine the validity of each user and whether each was a legitimate visitor to the IRIS Website. Those not considered valid were deleted. Maintenance of the registered visitor list will be ongoing.

⇒ **Data Privacy Policy:** Vanderbilt's increased requirements for Personal Credit Industry (PCI) compliance, require that WPEngine, the IRIS Website host, provide an Attestation of Compliance (AoC). Although all security standards are met via the Google cloud on which the site is hosted, WP Engine does not provide AoCs. As a result, IRIS is considering our options. Switching to a new host would require the migration of thousands of pages and months of subsequent coding cleanup, not to mention leaving a Web hosting company with outstanding customer service and support. With the help of the VU Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations, IRIS is seeking foundation support for the PD certificates. This would allow teachers to earn the certificates for free and allow IRIS to remove the credit card payment programming from the site, eliminating the need for PCI Compliance.

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 studies, CORE content units, or many others—are innovative, interactive, and practical for use in college and university coursework, by PD providers, and by teachers in today's classrooms.*

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 (coming soon):** Practical and informative, our fundamental skill sheets will offer educators quick primers (or reminders) about discrete skills and practices indispensable to their role as effective classroom teachers. Five fundamental skill sheets on classroom behavior management are currently in development:

   ❖ Behavior Specific Praise
   ❖ Proximity Control
   ❖ Wait-Time
   ❖ High-Probability Requests
   ❖ Choice Making

During this current quarter, IRIS oversaw the creation of example and non-example skills videos filmed at a local high school in Nashville. Early in the new quarter, we will oversee production of example and non-example videos in an elementary school classroom. We anticipate posting this first set of fundamental skill sheets during the next quarter.

⇒ **CORE Content Units (coming soon):** Created with the assistance of top instructional experts in their fields, the IRIS CORE (Comprehensive, Organized, Reliable, Engaging) Content Units will be "deep dives" into effective practices for students with disabilities. IRIS is currently editing several units for our upcoming CORE unit on effective mathematics instruction and will continue to do so in the coming quarter as more units are delivered to us. Currently providing content are Barbara Dougherty of the University of Hawaii (for a unit on measurements), and Jessica Namkung of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (for two units on fractions and rational numbers).

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 Module Series:** By special request from OSEP, our center is developing a trio of modules about high-quality IEPs. The first of these will overview the best practices in the development of high-quality IEPs, explaining their crucial role in the education of students with disabilities. The second module will detail the ins-and-outs of creating high-quality IEPs, align with the latest findings from *Endrew F.,* and discuss how to use the IEP to guide instruction in the classroom. Finally, the third module is specifically designed with administrators and school leaders in mind, going further than the legal context in which high-quality IEPs are required and offering guidance on how to support school personnel in the development of high-quality IEPs. Mitchell Yell agreed to write content for the first two modules, with the content for the first already delivered. David Bateman will develop the content for the third module. We hope to be able to post the first module in the series during the fourth quarter of this year.

⇒ **Module Revision:** IRIS is currently revising a number of modules and module series with updated information and revised and expanded resources.

❖ **Accommodations:** A revision of our popular *Accommodations: Instructional and Testing Supports for Students with Disabilities* module will include more information about selecting and implementing accommodations and evaluating whether they were effective for the student. This module will be sent out for external review early in the coming quarter, with the revision replacing the existing version on the IRIS Website at the end of the academic year once the current slate of courses has come to an end.

❖ **Vision Series:** Our three-module "vision" series is undergoing significant revision and expansion. Content for each of the modules—*Accommodations to the Physical Environment: Setting Up a Classroom for Students with Visual Disabilities, Instructional Accommodations: Making the Learning Environment Accessible to Students with Visual Disabilities*, and *Serving Students with Visual Disabilities: The Importance of Collaboration*—is currently being updated by Brenda Naimy of the University of Cal State

University-Los Angeles. As part of this process, IRIS will also update the overall look of the modules to match our current standards, reformatting individual elements as well as replacing existing illustrations with photographs.

❖ **Assessment Series:** Our two-module series on classroom assessment—*Classroom Assessment (Part 1): An Introduction To Monitoring Academic Achievement in the Classroom* and *Classroom Assessment (Part 2): Evaluating Reading Progress*—are currently undergoing revision by Erica Lembke of the University of Missouri and Robert Alexander Smith of the University of Southern Mississippi.

⟹ **IRIS Modules in Spanish:** A Spanish-language version of our *Evidence-Based Practices (Part 2): Implementing a Practice of Program with Fidelity* is now available on the IRIS Website.

⟹ **Module Answer Keys in Spanish:** Assessment answer keys for each of our modules available in Spanish are in development and will be posted on the IRIS Website in the new quarter.

⟹ **IRIS "Quizlets":** Coming soon from IRIS: IRIS Quizlets! Under the direction of Angelica Fulchini, the IRIS Technology Innovation Postdoctoral Scholar, every IRIS Module will soon come with its own quizlet, an interactive quiz designed to help users better understand and remember key terminology and definitions from the main resource.

Case Studies: These multi-part resources ask users to analyze and respond to a number of problem-based classroom issues and challenges—for example classroom norms and expectations, algebra instruction, or classroom arrangement—through increasing levels of complexity and detail.

⟹ **Room Arrangement:** A substantial revision of our "Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary" case study is currently in the works.

Course/PD Activities: Handy, focused resources for use as independent assignments or to promote classroom discussion, IRIS Course/PD Activities cover a diverse range of topics, including behavior management, language disorders, disability related language in federal law, and many others.

⟹ **Course/PD Activities Update:** IRIS is currently reviewing our course/PD activities collection (110 in all), which will undergo revision to change or remove outdated terminology and information. We hope to complete this task in the coming quarter.

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 Update:** IRIS has added the high-leverage practice videos created by CEEDAR and the Council for Exceptional Children to our online video vignette collection. High-leverage practices are 22 essential special education techniques that all K-12 special education teachers should master for use across a variety of classroom circumstances. The current videos are:

   ❖ Welcome to our new series on High-Leverage Practices
   ❖ HLPs #8 and #22: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students' Learning and Behavior
   ❖ HLP #12: Systematically Design Instruction Towards Learning Goals
   ❖ HLP #16: Use Explicit Instruction
   ❖ HLP #18: Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement

⇒ **Book Tool Update:** Curated in conjunction with Mary Anne Prater, the author or co-author of seven books and dozens of academic journal articles on teaching students with developmental difficulties as well as special and general education topics, this searchable tool contains information and synopses of children's and young adult literature about or having to do with people with disabilities. This information includes the name of the author and illustrator, year of publication, publisher, appropriate grade level, and award status. During this quarter, IRIS updated the book tool with some 50 new titles and annotations.

⇒ **New IRIS Format Templates:** With the unveiling of the new IRIS Website, we have reformatted our wrap-around content maps, coursework planning forms, sample syllabi, PD planning forms, and curriculum matrices to include the new IRIS logo, as well as to give them a sleeker, more modern appearance. Our module answer keys, activities, and module outlines are currently undergoing similar treatment and will be reposted during the new quarter. In response to user feedback, module outlines will now also include interactive "windows" below each major module component that will allow users to take notes and record answers to the Assessment questions.

Information Briefs: These online resources developed by other programs and centers are collected and curated by IRIS as supplemental materials. Information briefs cover everything from accommodations for students with disabilities to Universal Design for Learning and peer-assisted interventions.

⇒ **Collection Update:** Part of an ongoing process, IRIS is currently taking a look at our current collection of 338 information briefs with an eye toward removing older or outdated resources and, if possible, replacing them with newer versions. This effort is currently underway and will be completed in the first portion of Year 2.

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

Dissemination Infrastructure: Key to our center's ongoing dissemination efforts is the development and expansion of multiple elements that, together, form the basis of our campaign to get the word out about IRIS and our resources. More about these can be found in the items below.

⇒ **Communications Plan:** IRIS has developed a detailed communication plan to provide specifics on the various ways in which the release of information about newly posted resources will occur, how often key constituents will be contacted, and the vehicles and means through which those communications are most likely to take place.

⇒ **IRIS Stories:** IRIS resources are used throughout the United States and around the world. Now, for the first time, we're sharing the stories and experiences of our users in their own words. Whether told by college and university faculty, state or district personnel, school principals, or classroom teachers, every IRIS story teaches us something new. New IRIS stories as told by Mary Little, Professor of Education at the University of Central Florida, as well as a select group of her students are currently in the works and should be posted to our Website at some point in the new quarter.

⇒ **The IRIS Newsletter:** A new element of our dissemination efforts, a periodic IRIS newsletter will be made available to members of our email listserv, some 10,000 IRIS users. The newsletter will contain updates on IRIS and our resources, features about the center itself, information about conference presentations and appearances, and relevant information about the work of our partners. The first newsletter will be published in January of the new year.

⇒ **IRIS Summary:** The IRIS Data Summary is an annual publication designed to highlight information about the center, its users, and our most popular resources. A new summary has been created and submitted to OSEP for comment and approval. We hope to post it to the IRIS Website in the coming quarter.

⇒ **Updated Brochures:** IRIS has revised our six IRIS brochures with updated information about the new IRIS Center and the IRIS resources. The brochures cover:

- ❖ The IRIS Center (a general overview)
- ❖ Mathematics
- ❖ Behavior
- ❖ Reading Instruction
- ❖ MTSS/RTI
- ❖ Early Childhood

⇒ **Supplies:** Key supplies used for dissemination and training purposes (e.g., notepads, pens) have been reordered and feature the new IRIS logo.

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.

⇒ **Ambassador's Tool Kit:** IRIS has developed a tool kit for our IRIS Ambassadors, which currently includes five handouts and a general overview PowerPoint presentation. More handouts will be completed in the coming quarter—including revised versions of our top tips for professional development providers and top tips for faculty—as we continue to create resources for the tool kit.

⇒ **OSEP Project Directors' Meeting:** In July, IRIS took part in the annual OSEP Project Directors' Meeting in Washington, DC, where we presented on our latest resources, updated Website, and professional development options. In addition, IRIS hosted a poster session to highlight new resources.

⇒ **West TN Special Education Conference:** On September 20-21, IRIS took part in the 2018 West Tennessee Special Education Conference in Memphis. There, we presented on our classroom behavior management resources and represented IRIS and our resources in the conference's exhibition hall.

⇒ **Christ the King School:** In early October, the IRIS Center will present on our resources related to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) at Christ the King School, a private K-8 Catholic school in Nashville, Tennessee. Although the center does not normally provide in-service training, this presentation, to a school a few blocks from our offices, is part of our initiative to expand IRIS resources into the Catholic school system. Because of the increased inclusion of students with disabilities in the Catholic schools, and a lack of funding for professional development for school staff, administrators are looking for free resources to help improve their teachers' knowledge and skills. As the word about IRIS resources continues to spread, this group of educators has become a source of new users.

⇒ **Tennessee CEC Conference:** In October, IRIS will host a pair of presentations at the 2018 Tennessee Council for Exceptional Children Conference in Franklin, Tennessee. There, we will highlight our resources on effective mathematics instructions, as well as a general overview of the IRIS Center, our resources, and our updated and expanded Website.

⇒ **LEAD:** In October, IRIS will be present at the Tennessee Department of Education's annual LEAD Conference in Nashville, where we will host a booth to highlight the IRIS Website, resources, and professional development options.

⇒ **OSEP IEP SYMPOSIUM:** On October 15, 2018, IRIS will present at the third, and final, virtual event in the series: Effective Strategies to Enhance High-Quality Implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Naomi Tyler will highlight the types of resources and professional development options that can increase the capacity of school leaders and teachers to utilize evidence-based and high-leverage practices and improve the implementation of high-quality IEPs in their schools.

⇒ **California CEC Conference:** In October, IRIS Ambassadors Cammy Purper and Victoria Graf will present on the IRIS resources at the annual meeting of the California Council for Exceptional Children in Burlingame, California.

⇒ **Florida CEC Conference:** In October, IRIS Ambassador Mary Little will present on the IRIS resources at the 2018 conference of the Florida Council for Exceptional Children in Ponte Vedra, Florida.

⇒ **Teacher Education Division Conference:** In November, IRIS will make a pair of presentations at the annual meeting of the Teacher Education Division (TED) in Las Vegas, Nevada. Our *IRIS 101* presentation will cover the basics of our center and our resources for those who are currently unfamiliar with both, whereas *IRIS Advanced* will offer a more in-depth look at everything we have to offer for long-time users.

⇒ **ASCD:** In November, IRIS will host an exhibit booth at the annual ASCD meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, where we will be on hand with information on our center, resources, and professional development options.

⇒ **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC):** A trio of presentations about IRIS resources has been accepted for inclusions in the CEC 2019 Convention and Expo, to be held January 29-February 2 in Indianapolis, Indiana. We will present on our new MTSS/RTI: Mathematics module, new resources, and professional development options. A fourth presentation is currently waitlisted. IRIS will also host a booth in the exhibition hall.

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.*

⇒ **Micro-Credentials:** In collaboration with Digital Promise, IRIS offers a "stack" of micro-credentials (MCs) on accommodations for students with disabilities. These focused PD units allow educators to learn and gain mastery of discrete instructional practices. We are currently developing comprehensive grading guidelines for each of the four micro-credentials in our stack.

❖ **IRIS & Digital Promise:** Digital Promise has launched a new micro-credentials platform. We have finalized the major revisions to the content of our micro-credentials accordingly. The new micro-credentials were posted in September.

❖ **IRIS & Bloomboard:** With the separation of the Digital Promise and Bloomboard platforms, Bloomboard is moving in a different direction and revising the format of their MCs. We are awaiting VU approval of the proposed contract with Bloomboard in order to work within the new template so that different versions of the

IRIS MC stacks—each with its own focus and audience—can be offered on both platforms.

⇒ **Navigation Videos:** An updated and revised Website requires updated navigation videos. These brief video tutorials help our visitors to navigate our Website, use the IRIS Resource Locator, navigate our modules, and explore our various professional development options. A new Website navigation video has been completed and is now available. Other revised videos will be added in the coming quarter.

⇒ **The IRIS Strategic Plan:** IRIS is currently working with a consultant to develop a strategic plan to increase the use of our School & District Platform and PD certificates for teachers. The center is also working with a consultant with extensive educational leadership experience to increase use of these platforms, and is seeking to hire a permanent staff member to help manage these duties. Updates will follow in subsequent quarterly reports.

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 collaborated with the Center to Improve Program and Project Performance (CIP3) on the development of an IRIS logic model. This revised model is now posted on the IRIS Website.

⇒ **Evaluation Plan:** The IRIS evaluation plan has been approved and we are beginning to implement it. A presentation feedback survey has been developed and data related to the evaluation questions will begin to be collected during IRIS presentations. IRIS will continue to collaborate with CIP3 on work related to the evaluation, such as the development of new surveys and assessments.

⇒ **Establishing Baselines:** One of the tasks outlined in the evaluation plan is the establishing of baseline levels of awareness of the IRIS resources. That work was begun during this quarter.

⇒ **The IRIS Master List:** IRIS has developed a list of state-approved teacher preparation programs throughout the United States. This list will be used to collect data about the number and percentage of programs in which IRIS resources are used. Deb Smith, formerly of IRIS@CGU, is coordinating this effort. We have gathered information about which programs have visited the IRIS Website during the period from January 1,

2018 through August 31, 2018. We will conduct the last phase of data collection for 2018 in January 2019.

⟹ **Implementation Projects:** In collaboration with our partners at CIP3 and with the guidance of our project officer, Sarah Allen, IRIS has decided to use a new model to collect project evaluation data. Instead of posting a request for applications and providing support for six to eight small evaluation projects (i.e., implementation projects), IRIS has chosen to utilize one concerted evaluation effort that involves a systematic sequence of three projects:

❖ **Impact Survey:** This survey will evaluate the impact of IRIS Open Educational Resources (OERs) on the delivery of training and professional development of teachers.

❖ **Knowledge and Decision-Making Assessments:** This project will evaluate the impact of engagement with specific IRIS OERs on preservice teachers' level of knowledge and ability to make instructional decisions at two university sites (initial and replication).

❖ **Fidelity of Implementation:** This project will evaluate the impact of engagement with specific IRIS OERs on preservice and practicing teachers' fidelity of implementation of specific evidence-based practices. The project will begin with one university site and then continue to at least two university and one LEA replication sites.

Kristin Sayeski, at the University of Georgia, will oversee the IRIS evaluation projects in close collaboration with Deb Smith. Dr. Sayeski is currently working on the development of the first evaluation project, a data collection survey that is scheduled to be piloted this fall.

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 1251 respondents to this survey. **Table 1** (below) summarizes descriptive information about the respondents. **Table 2** presents the respondents' overall mean ratings of the IRIS Modules for quality, relevance, and usefulness. **Table 3** summarizes the respondents' area of work or study.

Table 1

Respondents	Number
College Student	455
Graduate Student	415
Experienced Teacher	174
New Teacher	127
Other (e.g., parent)	36
School Leader	21
Data missing	10
College Faculty	8
PD Provider	5
Total	1251

Table 2

	Mean Ratings
Quality	4.5
Relevance	4.6
Usefulness	4.6

Table 3

Response	Number
General education	392
Special education	392
Early childhood education	190
Other	170
Early childhood special education	79
Data missing	18
Early intervention services	10
Total	1251

Website User Data: There were 510,751 visits to the Website this quarter, an increase of 2.8% compared to the same quarter last year. However, as illustrated in the graph below, the number of visits to the Website did not maintain its increasing trend during the months of June and July 2018. There were fewer visits to the Website in those months than there were in the same period in 2017**.** This same trend occurred for much of August as well, which accounts for the small increase in visits over the same period last year. IRIS staff has examined these data to try to determine what factors might have led to these lower numbers. Our best theory is that the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU led to fewer visits from users in foreign countries.
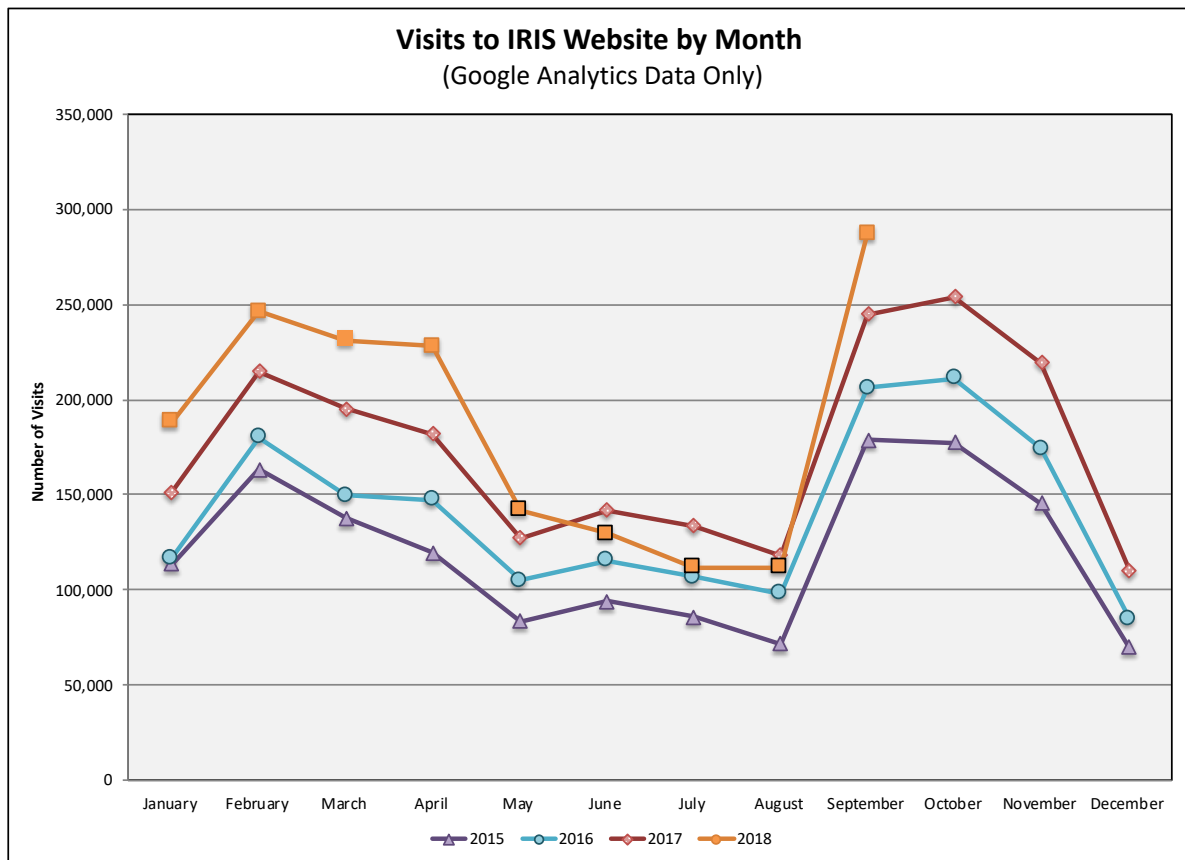
COLLABORATION & WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES: *IRIS works in collaboration with other national centers, nationally recognized education experts, and our own IRIS Ambassadors and Workgroups to improve our ability to develop resources, disseminate information about all things IRIS, and offer technical assistance and training.*

⇒ **HLP Videos:** IRIS continues to collaborate with CEEDAR, CEC, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, CCSSO, and OSEP as they develop a series of videos on high-leverage practices (HLPs), providing guidance and feedback on the production side of the process. Five videos were launched at the end of July and subsequently posted to the IRIS Website as part of our video vignette collection.

⇒ **National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII):** IRIS continues to collaborate with the National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII). Through this proposed partnership, NCLII doctoral students will develop and pilot courses about intensive interventions. In turn, IRIS will post the syllabi from those courses on our Website as part of our Sample Syllabi collection. These efforts will continue into the coming quarter and beyond.

⇒ **National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII)**: During the Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC, IRIS consulted with the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) to discuss a potential collaboration related to a module on intensive intervention, a topic identified through our needs assessment process.

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

Technology Innovation Postdoctoral Scholar: The IRIS Center is sharing a post-doctoral position with Lisa Dieker—the IRIS Technology and Innovation Workgroup Lead—at the University of Central Florida. Angela Fulchini assumed this position in August.

Student Worker: IRIS is pleased to welcome Naomi Forbes to the center as our current undergraduate student worker.