

Evaluation Capacity Building Towards Developing
a Special Education System in a Large Midwestern School District

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Mark, who supported me with ongoing encouragement, patience, and understanding while I was completing my life-long goal for this pursuit of greater knowledge and personal growth. I have also dedicated this paper to my three children, Matthew, David, and Danielle, who have made me a better person through our shared personal experiences. I believe that my children, along with all children, have importance, meaning, and do make a difference in our world.

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Abstract

This study researched the continued practice of evaluation capacity building (ECB) in an educational context, specifically the special education department of a large Midwestern school district. This descriptive and exploratory study studied the activities, processes, and outcomes of ECB that followed King's case study (2002) fifteen years later. The Two-County School District was very large (e.g., geography, number of schools, student enrollment) and, as a result, had extensive resources for ECB, which included access to evaluation experts and data tools for sophisticated data use. The breadth and depth of the resources in this large school district put them in a positive place, where the Director of Special Education and other special education evaluation champions did the work of ECB, using the expanded and modified program evaluation model and process that Campbell initiated in 1999 to 2001. Galles, the district's evaluation leader since 2007, contributed to ECB as the district's highly skilled evaluation leader. Her evaluation leadership and expertise as well as the technical assistance from the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment positively supported the special education department's ECB projects. Taylor, the Director of Special Education (2009 – 2013), and several special education evaluation champions demonstrated a strong ECB vision and commitment to achieve change and improve the quality of special education programs. An evaluation leader, committed evaluation champions at multiple levels, dedicated resources, and clear communication are critical to lead and sustain ECB efforts.

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Chapter 1

Purpose and Significance

Introduction

Evaluation can serve many purposes in an organization, with a traditional purpose of determining merit or worth. Evaluation can serve other valuable purposes, such as “assisting in decision-making; improving programs, organizations, and society as a whole; enhancing democracy by giving voice to those with less power; and adding to one’s base of knowledge” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011, p. 16). Evaluation evolved from “large government structures aimed at concentrating limited resources on seemingly unlimited problems” (Patton, 1994, p. 312). Patton, internationally-known for his work with utilization-focused evaluation (UFE), developed an evaluation process and framework that emphasizes a set of steps that an evaluator can take together to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be useful and actually used (Patton, 2012). He noted that evaluators committed to enhancing the use of evaluation have both an opportunity and a responsibility to train others in evaluation processes and the uses of information (Patton, 2008).

Evaluation capacity building (ECB) is a broad concept (King, 2007). ECB is “an overarching meta-approach that an evaluator can use with clients regardless of how a study is conducted” (King, 2007, p. 46). ECB is different from other evaluative approaches (King, 2007). Stockdill, Baizerman, and Compton (2002) define ECB in a practical and usable way as “the intentional work to continuously create and sustain

overall organizational processes that make quality evaluation and its use routine” (Stockdill, Baizerman, & Compton, 2002, p. 14). This is the most often cited definition of ECB (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Although ECB resembles program evaluation processes and practice, ECB processes and practices are unique and accepted within the evaluation community as a legitimate evaluation approach (Baizerman et al., 2002). A variety of organizations, whether in education, government, business, or health, can use and sustain ECB for ordinary and everyday practices.

This qualitative research specifically studied the perceptions of special education leaders and district-level evaluation leaders who have been involved in ECB and have contributed to targeted school improvement activities in a special education system of a large Midwestern school. Their perceptions were studied to determine how leadership and evaluation activities related to building capacity for evaluation and continuously developing special education programs and practices towards strengthening organizational and continuous improvement efforts. This chapter will explain the problem and conditions of ECB. Next, it will expound on the significance of the study. The research purpose and questions will be described. Finally, this chapter will conclude with the definitions of key terms.

Problem Statement and Conditions of ECB

Although ECB is practiced in schools, nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), ECB “is often taken for granted and hence is invisible, not noticed, not named as distinct, intentional work” (Baizerman et al., 2002, p. 1). Baizerman et al. (2002) discuss the future of ECB toward usable ECB indicators.

They feel that “little has been shared about doing and designing ECB” (Baizerman et al., 2002, p. 110). They also discuss the challenge of describing the overall ECB process, “given the early stage of attention to ECB, the limited explicit ECB literature, the minimal diffusion of ECB terminology, and the early stage of mapping the ECB family of similar processes and practice” (Baizerman et al., 2002, p. 110).

Preskill and Boyle (2008) believe that ECB has the potential of transforming the field of evaluation and represents the next evolution of this professional practice. ECB has the potential to transform organizations, such as our complex public educational systems in the United States. As more people gain increased knowledge of the value of evaluation, the usefulness of the findings, and what constitutes professional evaluation practice, the evaluation field may be in a stronger position to influence the development of more effective and humane organizations as well as a more just and healthy society (Preskill & Boyle, 2008).

ECB as an intentional evaluation approach towards developing educational programs is a timely area of study to begin building a more robust knowledge base through empirical research (Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Cousins & Shulha, 2006). The difficulty lies in realizing that ongoing ECB is a worthy area of research (Stockdill et al., 2002). ECB is a relatively new participatory evaluation process, and more research needs to be done to study the ways that the results and consequences of past ECB efforts have supported the continuous organizational learning, program improvement, and accountability in school districts.

The primary problem focuses on the limited research and knowledge base in ECB, specifically in the special education context. A limited research base creates a problematic gap between research and practice. The use of evidence-based practice is important for linking ECB research to everyday practice in program evaluation. The research is important to build a foundation for this gap from which ECB practices are developed and improved in the special education context. This research adds to the limited literature when considering and conducting future ECB research. Important to ECB literature, this research study will follow up fifteen years later on King's case study (2002) of building the evaluation capacity of a school district. It will also study the ECB special education process described in King's case study. The past contributions of King as an internal evaluator in a large Midwestern district, the Two-County School District, from 1999-2001 will be studied. Finally, the research will study the successive efforts of school leaders to build a sustainable process and ongoing capacity of special education staff to conduct evaluations in a school district towards special education improvement (King, 2002).

ECB within the field of evaluation in a special education context is a deserving area of study because of the complexity of meeting the diverse academic needs of students with disabilities, the high level of federally-mandated accountability requirements, and the challenges of implementing change towards continuous organizational learning and program improvement in a complex educational system. In the next section, the special educational system will be explained further in order to

understand why ECB within this specialized educational system is an important area of study.

Significance of Study: ECB in the Context of Special Education

The federal accountability system of special education is mandated by the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which was signed in law on December 3, 2004 by President George W. Bush. The provisions of this act became effective on July 1, 2005, with the exception of some of the elements pertaining to the definition of a “highly qualified teacher” that took effect upon the signing of the act. The final regulations were published on August 14, 2006. The result of this mandate has created a complicated system that supports children and youth with disabilities. Creating a positive system for academic achievement for students with severe disabilities requires alignment of this mandate at the national, state, local school district, and finally at the classroom level.

ECB is a worthy area of further study in the context of special education because of several key reasons. First, accountability requirements of IDEA have created a complicated system that supports children and youth with disabilities from birth to the age of twenty-one. The special education system needs to respond to the achievement needs of a wide variety of student conditions with unique educational needs. The achievement needs of students with disabilities are also part of a larger general educational system as aligned with the federal mandate and accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This intricate system aligns with the overall goal of

improving academic achievement and independence that translates toward building a better quality of life for children and youth with disabilities.

Second, the education of special education students requires a systematic program approach that makes good literacy and math instruction accessible to this student population given the nature of their significant differences and academic challenges towards learning how to read, write, and solve problems with numbers. In addition, there needs to be a clear vision and purpose of how a district's educational philosophy or approach will meet the academic needs of students with mild to severe disabilities towards a continuum of achievement of learning. To create a system of continuous improvement, change must be coordinated across multiple elements of a district's special education system. Because of the complexity of the needs of the students with disabilities and the manner of how to implement change in a school district, the field of evaluation and ECB within the context of special education becomes an important area to study.

Also aligned with district-level program evaluation leaders, special education leaders, general education leaders, and special education teacher leaders, professionalism requires one to self-evaluate and determine what practices have merit. Contributing to improving professionalism with school leaders, ECB is an important evaluation process that helps district-level program evaluation leaders and special education leaders make sense of their special education programs and how these programs align with the district as a whole. ECB goes beyond conducting specific evaluation studies by involving program staff in evaluation activities, thus making contributions to an organization's evaluation capacity. ECB is an important area of study because ECB can become a viable

tool for organizational development and a method to make continuous improvements with the instructional practices at all levels of special education.

Finally, the results of the literature review of ECB generated additional thoughts about why ECB in the context of special education is a worthy area of study. When school leaders learn the key skills found in the ECB thinking and ECB practice (including both the evaluation process and evaluation use), they can apply these evaluation skills to manage the complex demands of special education. For example, program evaluation requires knowledge and skills using and analyzing data. Special education leaders need to develop and set up data systems at a district and program level because of the strict accountability requirements and need for continuous improvement of special education programs.

On a much smaller scale, special education teachers need to develop, set up, and use data systems routinely and systematically to measure student progress on their annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) objectives and the use of evaluation methods to complete three-year student evaluations. The term IEP means a written statement that specifies the needs of a student with a disability, ages three to twenty-one, and what special education services are necessary to meet those needs. The IEP is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with the federal mandate or statute IDEA Part B (Sec. 300.320 through 300.324). Finally, as special education administrators develop their program evaluation knowledge and skills towards thinking like an evaluator, these program evaluation skills also support them when deciding on how to

provide specialized instruction to a variety of students with a wide range of disabilities and educational needs.

Research Purpose

This qualitative research studied the perceptions of current district-level program evaluation leaders, special education leaders, and a special education teacher leader who was currently involved with program evaluation in this school district in the Midwest. In addition, this research studied the perceptions of special education leaders who worked at this school district and were involved in ECB since the time from 1999-2001 when a university professor, serving as an internal program evaluator, set up the initial district program evaluation department.

This study contributes additional literature to the current small literature base in ECB, adding to the field of evaluation by increasing our understanding of ECB in the educational setting, specifically how ECB efforts have contributed to school change efforts. As a follow-up fifteen years after King's (2002) ECB case study, this research studied the "students" in ECB at this school district, specifically studying how their commitment to learning and using program evaluation had affected their own professional practice with special education leadership and the development of their programs. The leaders in this school district were studied to determine how they built their evaluation capacity and if and how "evaluations occurred as part of how the organization engages in its everyday business" of special education (King, 2007).

The school district leaders' perceptions were studied to determine how evaluation and leadership activities related to building capacity for evaluation and how the

evaluation process and use of evaluation activities developed special education programs and practices towards strengthening organizational and continuous improvement efforts. In addition, the research studied how the special education leaders were using program evaluation routinely and systematically. Finally, the study examined how program evaluation efforts have contributed to targeted school improvement activities in this extensive special education system.

It is the hope that this study contributes to the ECB literature in gaining more insight on how ECB helped these special education leaders translate new knowledge gained from routine evaluative thinking and activities into the ongoing and continuous development of special education programs. Finally, the findings gained from this study resulted in a new ECB framework of themes that aligns with an educational program evaluation context.

Research Questions

One central question guided this study: In what ways have the results and consequences of past evaluation capacity building (ECB) efforts improved the continuous organizational learning, special education program development, and accountability in the Two-County School District? There were five sub-questions:

- a. In what ways has past ECB affected the special education knowledge and skills in individual leadership and professional practices in the past and today?
- b. In what ways has past ECB affected knowledge and practice in building capacity for conducting future evaluations?

- c. Which ECB evaluation components did the participants (e.g., Director of Special Education, Assistant Director of Special Education, special education supervisors, a special education teacher who conducted program evaluation, Director of Research and Evaluation, and district-level Research and Evaluation departmental staff who supported the special education program evaluation projects) find the most beneficial and least beneficial?
- d. How did the participants in ECB evaluations or other related evaluation activity perceive and report the evaluation process?
- e. As a result of staff participation with ECB efforts, what was the perceived and reported impact on student engagement and learning in the district's special education programs?

Definition of Key Terms

To understand the framework of this research study, several key terms and concepts are defined that related to this study.

Program evaluation. Program evaluation is “the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object’s value (worth or merit) in relation to those criteria” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, p. 7). In this study, the term *program evaluation* will also be called *evaluation*.

Stakeholders. “Stakeholders are various individuals and groups who have a direct interest in and may be affected by the program being evaluated or the evaluation’s results” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, p. 9).

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE). In 1994, Patton defined UFE as “a process for making decisions about and focusing an evaluation on intended use by intended users” (Patton, 1994, p. 317). In 2008, Patton wrote:

Utilization-focused program evaluation is evaluation done for and with specific intended primary users for specific, intended uses. Utilization-focused evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design any evaluation with careful consideration for how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use. Use concerns how real people in the real world apply evaluation findings and experience the evaluation process. Therefore, the focus in UFE is an *intended use* by *intended users*. (Patton, 2008, p. 37)

Appreciative Inquiry. “Appreciative Inquiry is a process that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of what is in organizations in order to create a better future” (Coglan, Preskill, & Catsambas, 2003, p. 5).

Process use. Process use refers to “the individual changes in thinking, attitudes, and behavior, and program or organizational changes in procedures and culture that occur among those involved in evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process” (Patton, 2008, p. 156).

Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB). ECB is “a process, an occupational orientation, and a practice - part art, part craft and part science” (Baizerman et al., 2002, p. 109). Stockdill et al. (2002) conceptually defined ECB as

. . . a context-dependent, intentional action system of guided processes and practices for bringing about and sustaining a state of affairs in which quality program evaluation and its appropriate uses are ordinary and ongoing practices within and/or between one or more organizations/programs/sites. (Stockdill et al., 2002, p. 8)

King further defines ECB as “using an evaluation for its results and using an evaluation for the explicit purpose of building people’s capacity to evaluate again” (King, 2010, PowerPoint slide 3).

This dissertation consists of five chapters. This first chapter addressed the study’s problem and conditions, expounded on the significance of the study, described the research purpose, stated the research questions, and defined key terms. Next, Chapter 2 will summarize the five key concepts or themes identified in ECB literature and then detail how these themes are connected to ECB in an educational context. Next, three ECB conceptual models and frameworks, along with a preliminary idea of an alternate conceptual framework in an educational context, will be described. Chapter 3 describes the qualitative research design and methods, explains the research site and participant selection, describes the individual interview sample and protocol, details the record review, addresses the limitations, expounds on positionality, and describes fully the qualitative analysis and interpretation process. Chapter 4 presents the findings, which include the study’s primary themes. Using the findings, Chapter 5 summarizes answers to the research questions, explains the ECB implications for ECB and the broader evaluation field, and presents future research considerations in ECB.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter will present the five key ECB concepts or themes identified in this study's extensive literature search and detail how these themes are connected to ECB in an education and special education context. Next, three conceptual ECB models or frameworks will be described further, including Preskill and Boyle's (2008) Multidisciplinary ECB model, Volkov and King's (2007) checklist for building organizational evaluation capacity, and Labin's (2014) Integrated ECB model (IECB). Last, a preliminary idea of an alternate conceptual framework in an educational context will be described.

The ECB literature revealed five key themes:

1. ECB is a form of evaluation process use.
2. ECB focuses efforts on organizational learning.
3. ECB is a form of developmental evaluation.
4. Context is important in ECB.
5. "Evaluation champions" (King, 2007) or change agents play an important role in ECB.

Key Themes in the ECB Literature

Theme One- ECB is a form of evaluation process use. Process use is a primary concept of ECB. "Process use occurs when those involved in the evaluation learn from the evaluation process itself or make program changes based on the evaluation process rather than just the evaluation's findings (Patton, 2008, p. 156). The key to the process of

ECB is the engagement in the evaluation process and learning to think evaluatively, which aligns with King and Pechman's (1984) case study when the term *use process* was introduced, Patton's (1998) article in which he describes *process use*, Cousins and Shulha's (2006) evidence to indicate how the act of inquiry while engaging others in this process can support the increased collective knowledge of individuals in an organization, and Harnar and Preskill's (2007) research of what evaluators thought process use looked like. According to Patton (2012),

. . . process use, then, includes cognitive, attitudinal, and behavior changes in individuals, and program or organizational changes resulting, either directly or indirectly, from engagement in the evaluation process and learning to think evaluatively (e.g., increased evaluation capacity, integrating evaluation into the program, goals clarification, conceptualizing the program's logic model, setting evaluation priorities, and improving outcomes measurement). (p. 143)

The literature revealed the results of King and Pechman's (1984) case study of a large city research and evaluation unit in a school district. Published prior to Patton's term *process use* (1997), this case study describes the term, *use process*, describing how an "awareness of this process on both evaluators' and users' parts may enable the evaluation community once again to look upon the completion of an evaluation as a worthwhile activity with the potential to improve education" (King & Pechman, 1984, p. 251). This research originated prior to 1997, which suggests that other evaluation researchers and practitioners were describing and discovering the importance of the process of evaluation as compared to only using the findings of evaluation. King and Pechman's context is education, applying the use process as a tool and an important component in school change efforts.

In 1998, Patton defined *process use* as “relating to and being indicated by individual changes in thinking and behaving that occur among those involved in evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process” (Patton, 1998, p. 225). Process use “refers to using evaluation logic and processes to help people in programs and organizations to learn to think evaluatively” (Patton, 1998, p. 226).

“Process use is distinct from use of findings” (Patton, 2012, p. 142). Patton explains that

. . . it’s equivalent to the difference between learning how to learn versus learning substantive knowledge about something. Learning how to think evaluatively is learning how to value evidence, think more critically and those who become involved in an evaluation learn by doing. (Patton, 2012, p. 142)

“Changes in program or organizational procedures and culture may also be manifestations of process impacts” (Patton, 1998, p. 225). When people participate in the evaluation process, they are learning about evaluation culture, and they are frequently learning how to think like an evaluator (Patton, 1998). Process use relates to using evaluation logic and processes to help people learn to think evaluatively in programs and organizations (Patton, 1998). “Learning how to think evaluatively is learning how to learn” (Patton, 1998, p. 226). Process use is the type of process that affects an organization in becoming a learning organization when people build their capacity to engage in this kind of evaluative thinking (Patton, 1998, p. 226).

Cousins and Shulha (2006) examine the relationship among current developments in research, evaluation, and knowledge use. In the past decade, they noted that there has been acceptance that how researchers and evaluators work with clients and practitioners can be as meaningful as what is learned from their methods. Process use has been linked

to collaborative, participatory, empowerment, utilization-focused, and learning-oriented approaches to evaluation that promote direct or indirect involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process (Amo & Cousins, 2007). Evidence continues to indicate how the act of inquiry while engaging others in this process can support the increased collective knowledge of individuals in an organization (Cousins & Shulha, 2006). Process use can be considered an important evaluation concept regarding the integration of evaluation into the learning culture of an organization (Cousins & Shulha, 2006).

Harnar and Preskill (2007) researched what evaluators thought process use looked like, following the increasing involvement of stakeholders in evaluation processes and the growing research based on process use. To address the research question, “What does process use look like?” a question was included on a web-based survey as part of a larger study on evaluation use conducted by Fleischer in 2007. Fleischer’s study was a follow up to a survey conducted by Preskill and Caracelli (1997) that sought to understand how members of the Evaluation Use Topical Interest Group of the American Evaluation Association perceived evaluation use relative to designing and implementing evaluations. The majority of evaluators who responded to this question discussed process use as something that happens during the evaluation process or as an outcome of having engaged in an evaluation. A smaller percentage described process use as evaluation being embedded in work practices, as learning or change, and evaluation capacity building (Harnar & Preskill, 2007). “Their responses primarily focused on training or teaching others about evaluation” (Harnar & Preskill, 2007, p. 38). This research supports the ECB condition stated earlier in this chapter when ECB was named as an evaluation process

requiring distinct or intentional work to make quality evaluation and its use routine. (Baizerman et al., 2002).

In ECB, “the term process refers to the overall intentional effort to create and sustain an ECB action system” (Stockdill et al., 2002, p. 8). Involving stakeholders is another key to the ECB process. When looking at the concept of process use and comparing it to ECB, one needs to look at the following:

1. The evaluation process itself,
2. The outcomes of stakeholder engagement in the evaluation process,
3. How the evaluation is embedded into the daily routines of an organization,
4. The organizational learning of individuals,
5. Programs and the organization as a whole, and
6. The overall intentional effort to create and sustain an ECB action system.

ECB is an excellent example of process use (Patton, 2008). ECB involves “working intentionally and continuously to create and sustain overall organizational processes that make quality evaluation and its uses routine (Baizerman et al., 2002, p.114).

Similar to process use, ECB is about helping leaders in an organization pay attention to something important that may be happening around them (Patton, 2011). As ECB takes place or is in an organizational process, importantly, when the leaders or stakeholders are involved in the process, changes are taking place with the people, programs, and organizations (Patton, 2011). In ECB, process use matters and “can become a matter of intention” (Patton, 2011). Finally, results of ECB are evident when a leader or a stakeholder learns evaluation skills from the evaluative process.

Theme Two- ECB focuses efforts on organizational learning. Organizational change involves making a difference in how an organization functions, who its members and leaders are, what form it takes or how it allocates its resources (Weick & Quinn, 1999). From the perspective of an organization, organizational development change was a set of behavioral science-based theories, values, strategies, and techniques aimed at the planned change of the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organizational performance, through the alteration of organizational members on the job behaviors (Weick & Quinn, 1999).

Kruse and Louis (2009) define the concept of organizational learning (OL) as involving a continuous improvement process. OL occurs when leaders and staff promote and participate in a collective engagement of new ideas that further develop their improved educational practices. This collective process is also a catalyst for gaining a greater understanding of how an organization improves as a result of this learning process (Kruse & Louis, 2009). Kruse and Louis emphasize that it is difficult to predict which structures and experiences will produce a shift in the culture of OL from old to new values, beliefs, and practices (Kruse & Louis, 2009). OL occurs when new ideas are brought into an organization, whether this process is a random reflection of novel ideas or a structured effort when programs are considered, evaluated, and the ways in which school organizations retain and use the knowledge generated from them (Kruse & Louis, 2009). Kruse and Louis further emphasize that “OL generally occurs when groups acknowledge small failures and consider alternatives, and this occurs more often when

more people take responsibility for problem finding and problem solving” (Kruse & Louis, 2009, p. 9).

The evaluation literature revealed a similar definition for OL. Russ-Eft and Preskill note that programs and organizations grow and improve when the continuous learning process is integrated into the daily activities of an organization. Second, programs improve when there is alignment of values, attitudes, and perceptions among the members of an organization (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001). OL occurs when members use information or feedback about the processes and outcomes to make changes (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001).

OL is critical to the sustainability and success of ECB with its members’ use of evaluation in an organization. ECB is the means of facilitating evaluative thinking and opens up new possibilities for sustaining efforts toward learning in an organization. The concept of process use has prompted many evaluators to focus their efforts on organizational and individual learning (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). As noted above, when evaluation plays a role in developing OL, it is considered to be an example of process use (Cousins & Shulha, 2006). Similar to the relationship of OL and process use, ECB and OL are also relational concepts. When evaluations, including ECB, are conducted in support of organizational learning, this continuous process develops a community of inquirers and harnesses the knowledge capital of its members (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001).

Preskill and Boyle stated that in order to insure that the efforts of ECB are designed in ways that are appropriate, culturally competent, and effective, it is useful to

connect with theories from other disciplines (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). The theories may include the following areas: (1) evaluation, (2) adult learning (e.g., social constructivism, transformational learning, experiential learning), (3) workplace learning (e.g., situated learning, transfer of learning, and incidental, informal, formal learning), and (4) organizational change (e.g., Lewin's three-stage model, systems theory, Weick's episodic/continuous change, Roger's five-stage diffusion of innovation) (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Each of these theories contributes content that addresses some aspect of how an individual, group, or organization responds to learning and change (Preskill & Boyle, 2008)

Because ECB is intentional work, it is important to understand how these theories will translate into change in an organization. When organizational leaders are committed to ECB, there is an expectation that the organization will build a process that makes quality evaluation and its use routine with staff members. Organizational leaders are continuously creating opportunities for their program staff to think like an evaluator and know how to do evaluative activities within their programs. For ECB learning to occur, “[T]he users/clients function as students or learners, the evaluator as teacher; and the evaluation process and its findings become the curriculum” (King, 2007, p. 47). Labin suggest that the “organizational outcomes of ECB include doing and using evaluations, planning future evaluations, and evaluating as part of staff jobs” (Labin, 2014, p. 107).

Preskill and Torres' (2005) ideas emphasize how the use of evaluation in an organization facilitates learning, specifically transformative learning in organizational contexts. OL can be influenced by intentional uses of the evaluation process over time.

OL can also occur from unintentional uses of the evaluation findings. Preskill and Torres' focus is on "the learning that occurs through the evaluative process—learning about job processes, the diverse perspectives of different coworkers, organizational culture and personal understanding at the individual, team, and organizational levels" (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 25). In addition, organizational "learning can be advanced through an evaluative process that is collaborative, dialogic, and action oriented" (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 25).

When people are actively learning in an organization, the organization grows, too. Preskill and Torres argue that evaluation offers a unique opportunity and process for individuals, professional learning communities, and organizations to learn from their past and their current practices (Preskill & Torres, 2000). They further suggest that when the members of an organization engage in collaborative, dialogic, and reflective forms of evaluation practice, organizational learning will occur (Preskill & Torres, 2000).

Organizational learning is influenced by constructivist learning theory, transformative learning, and developing communities of practice (Preskill & Torres, 2000).

"Constructivist learning theory suggests that individuals and groups learn by interpreting, understanding, and making sense of their experiences, often within a social context" (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 28). These individuals are "active participants in the construction of their own knowledge and the use of that knowledge in their work" (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 28). When the members of an organization are provided with opportunities for constructivist learning, they are often transformed by their experiences in a community of practice (Preskill & Torres, 2000). The importance of these places for

organizational learning is reflected in the following statement by Preskill and Torres (2000):

Communities of practice are places where organization members participate in common practices, depend on one another, make decisions together, identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships, and commit themselves to their own and the group's well-being. (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 28)

Preskill and Torres (2000) believe that:

Learning from evaluation and from organization members' subsequent use of what they learn will most likely occur when evaluation is collaborative, is grounded in constructivist and transformational learning theories, and builds communities of evaluation practice. A constructivist and transformational perspective on workplace learning – much like collaborative, participatory, and empowerment approaches to evaluation. (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 29)

In addition to learning at the individual and group level, Preskill and Torres emphasize the importance of building the learning from past learning and experiences over time. They also state that “use needs to be considered along a continuum of time, from the beginning of an evaluation's design to several months or even years after it has been completed” (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 30).

When beginning any new inquiry, transformative learning can be facilitated by “examining the evaluation process of previous studies” in an organization (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 30). They also promote responsive methods when using data, dialogue, reflection, and sense making to support transformational learning. In addition, responsive methods includes opportunities for staff to gain experiences in forming judgments about the level of analysis and presentation of data that will be useful to the organization members Social constructivist learning often occurs when members are reviewing the

evaluation data and pertinent information as a process together. Finally, whether the facilitator is an internal or an external evaluator, this person will facilitate transformative learning and his/her roles may also be an educator, consultant, interpreter, or mediator as he or she provides technical assistance in the evaluation process (Preskill & Torres, 2000). “Evaluation that is collaborative, reflective, and dialogic is a mechanism for creating communities of evaluation practice that can take, organization members down this path of learning, which is both intentional and transformative” (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 35).

Theme Three- ECB has a developmental purpose. ECB emphasizes the importance of the program evaluation process. It is developmental in nature when stakeholders are involved in the process of program evaluation that results in developmental changes within an organization’s programs. The results of ECB are evident when a leader or stakeholder learns evaluation skills from the evaluation process.

In 1994, Patton defined developmental evaluation and discussed its process: Evaluation processes and activities that support program, project, product, personnel and/or organizational development (usually the latter). The evaluator is part of a team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, on-going process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. The evaluator’s primary function in the team is to elucidate team discussions with evaluative data and logic, and to facilitate data-based decision-making in the developmental process. (Patton, 1994, p. 317)

In a developmental evaluation, the intended use is development that complements and fits within the ECB framework that emphasizes a leader’s routine use of program evaluation within an organizational context. Developmental evaluation communicates an approach

to conducting evaluations that specifically supports program development within an organization.

Patton began using the phrase *developmental evaluation* to describe the long-term and partnering relationship with his clients who were engaged in ongoing program development. He felt these relationships were different from the other kinds of evaluations he conducted and felt his role became more personally satisfying and developmental. In developmental evaluation, the teaming and collaboration are important because all team members deliver decisions together and decide how to apply their evaluation results for the next stage of development (Patton, 1994, p. 314). Patton described developmental evaluation when “the evaluator becomes part of a design team helping to monitor what’s happening, both processes and outcomes, in an evolving, rapidly changing environment of constant feedback and change” (Patton, 1994, p. 313). He further described teaming and collaboration:

Developmental evaluation isn’t a model. It’s a relationship founded on a shared purpose: development. What I bring to the design team is evaluation logic, knowledge about effective programming based on evaluation wisdom, and some methods expertise to help set up monitoring and feedback systems. I become part of the team. I participate in decision-making about the program and facilitate discussion about how to evaluate whatever happens. All team members render evaluation judgments together and decide how to apply the implications of results for the next stage of development. (Patton, 1994, pp. 313-314)

In ECB, the leader of a school program has identified a problem or an issue that warrants potential solutions or interventions. In ECB, the internal evaluation practitioner is a leader who is facilitating the evaluation process with his or her team members. The leader understands that the team members’ participation play a major role in goal setting

and collaborating to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, ongoing process of continuous improvement, ongoing adaptation, and rapid responsiveness (Patton, 1994, p. 313). In a developmental evaluation approach, there is variability with the program at all levels: causes of the problems, outcomes, interventions, and the interaction of all of the program components. An entire program can become a learning organization when the ongoing developmental process of incremental change, informed by data and judgment, leads to significant cumulative evolution of the entire program (Patton, 1994, p. 315).

Programs need to develop and evolve, and the “process is the outcome” (Patton, 1994, p. 312). “Change is not necessarily progress. Change is adaptation. . . The developmental perspective feels different from a traditional logic of programming in which goals are predetermined and plans are carefully made for achieving those goals” (Patton, 1994, p. 313). As noted in the description of developmental evaluation, ECB is driven by a commitment to change in order to make a program better. Like a developmental evaluation, ECB is not easily defined by a model, method, theory, or use; but ECB is founded on a shared purpose for using an evaluation process routinely for program development and program improvement. Importantly, ECB is a developmental evaluation approach because ECB emphasizes how school leaders will develop their program processes and outcomes as their program evolves, develops, and changes over time. Thus, ECB is developmental in its process and the ways in which leaders use evaluation for continuous program improvement.

Theme Four- The importance of context in ECB. Context is important in ECB and is related to an organization's history, external environments, and type. ECB is a context-dependent system of guided processes and practices in an organization, program, or site (Stockdill et al., 2002). Because it is context-dependent, how ECB is carried out depends on the realities of each particular organizational site (Stockdill et al., 2002). When using process use, King (2007) suggested assessing the organizational context to determine whether or not ECB is viable. ECB is highly context sensitive. In assessing intentional process use for ECB, both external and internal organizational contexts are important. An example of an external context would include the explicit accountability requirements of special education (King, 2007). King emphasizes the importance of assessing the external environment by looking specifically at the organization's potential for change.

When looking at the internal organizational context, King recommends an initial examination of the organizational readiness for building evaluation capacity and its existing evaluation capacity. King further explains that "it is helpful to know early on the extent to which people who will participate in capacity-building activities have sufficient input into organizational decision making" (King, 2007, p. 49). King notes that the context of ECB is also influenced by affective considerations, which include "people's willingness to generate new knowledge and question basic organizational assumptions as well as their inclination to use external information" (King, 2007, p. 49). King states ECB has four primary goals for an organization: "(a) increase an organization's capacity to design, implement, and manage evaluation projects, (b) access, build, and use evaluative

knowledge and skills, (c) create support for program evaluation as a performance improvement strategy, and (d) cultivate a spirit of continuous organizational learning, improvement, and accountability” (King, 2010, PowerPoint slides 6-7).

Preskill and Torres (2000) emphasize the importance of context in an organization’s infrastructure, such as culture, leadership, forms of communication, and systems and structures for evaluative inquiry. When evaluators design and carry out their evaluations, they are building on the infrastructure of an organization. When an evaluator diagnoses which aspects of the organization’s culture, leadership, forms of communication, and systems and structures are in place in an organization, he or she is specifically looking at how these aspects are present to support evaluative inquiry and which aspects are serving as barriers to the process. This process of diagnosing the organization’s capacity for learning from the process of evaluative inquiry “can help evaluators set realistic expectations for learning and refine and adapt their approach so as to maximize the likelihood of transformative learning” (Preskill & Torres, 2000, p. 33).

ECB is evident in public health, governmental, and educational contexts, and “ECB is a type of everyday organizational work” (Baizerman et al., 2002, p. 101). The ECB literature includes four well known case studies summarizing ECB efforts (e.g., personnel, training, resources) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Cancer Society, a large suburban school district, and the World Bank. There was a story in each of these case studies regarding the context of ECB. Without looking at the context of each of these organizations, the ECB story does not make sense without understanding the culture, everyday situations, people who make up this

organization, and how ECB was implemented in real time and real places (Baizerman et al., 2002).

King's case study (2002) documented a two-year process (1999-2001) of building evaluation capacity in a school district. The two ECB processes described in this case study included a viable way to organize large-scale participatory studies and an interactive, cost-effective means of collecting qualitative data (King, 2002). King's special education ECB model was aligned with the external context of federal mandates and aligned with the internal organizational context. The internal evaluation context utilized cooperative learning methods and promoted participation by district personnel with the evaluation process that framed questions, analyzed data, and made recommendations.

Theme Five- The necessity of change agents or “evaluation champions” in ECB. In the field of organization learning and development, researchers Van DeVen and Poole (1995) described four basic theories that serve as building blocks for explaining processes of change in organizations. Their theories of organizational development and change suggested that the change process is influenced by diverse units and actors, both inside and outside of an organization. The actions of these actors or “*change agents*” may be acting simultaneously on multiple levels in an organization (Van DeVen & Poole, 1995). In addition, theories of organizational development and change suggested that it is influenced by diverse units and actors, both inside and outside of an organization.

In the program evaluation field, King (2007) uses a concept similar to a change agent when she describes an *evaluation champion* as an important role for the

sustainability and success of ECB in an organization. When planning intentional process use, King recommended identifying and supporting evaluation champions who will nurture evaluative thinking in themselves and others. She referred to these evaluation champions as engaged people who are alive, well, and living in the process of ECB (King, 2007). King recommended the need to quickly identify these evaluation champions who will be willing to collaborate and spend time with the ECB leader, discussing evaluation options, thinking about how to involve others, and making sense of data. In ECB, the “evaluation champions” (King, 2007) are real people who are committed to program evaluation in their organization.

Three ECB Conceptual Frameworks

ECB framework one- A multidisciplinary of Evaluation Capacity Building.

Preskill and Boyle state “there appears [sic] to be few comprehensive conceptual frameworks or models that could be used to guide ECB efforts and/or empirically test the effectiveness of ECB processes, activities, and outcomes” (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444). They present their multidisciplinary ECB model to “illustrate and describe a set of factors that may influence the initiation, design, implementation, and impact that ECB activities and processes have on sustainable evaluation practice” (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444). Their model “applies to all ECB contexts and ECB often takes place with clusters of programs in geographically diverse locations as well as across organizations” (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444). Preskill and Boyle’s explain the concepts presented in their ECB model:

ECB involves the design and implementation of teaching and learning strategies to help individuals, groups, and organizations, learn about what constitutes effective, useful, and professional evaluation practice. The ultimate goal of ECB is sustainable evaluation practice – where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision-making and action. For evaluation practice to be sustained, participants must be provided with leadership support, incentives, resources, and opportunities to transfer their learning about evaluation to their everyday work. Sustainable evaluation practice also requires the development of systems, processes, policies, and plans that help embed evaluation work into the way the organization accomplishes its mission and strategic goals. (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444)

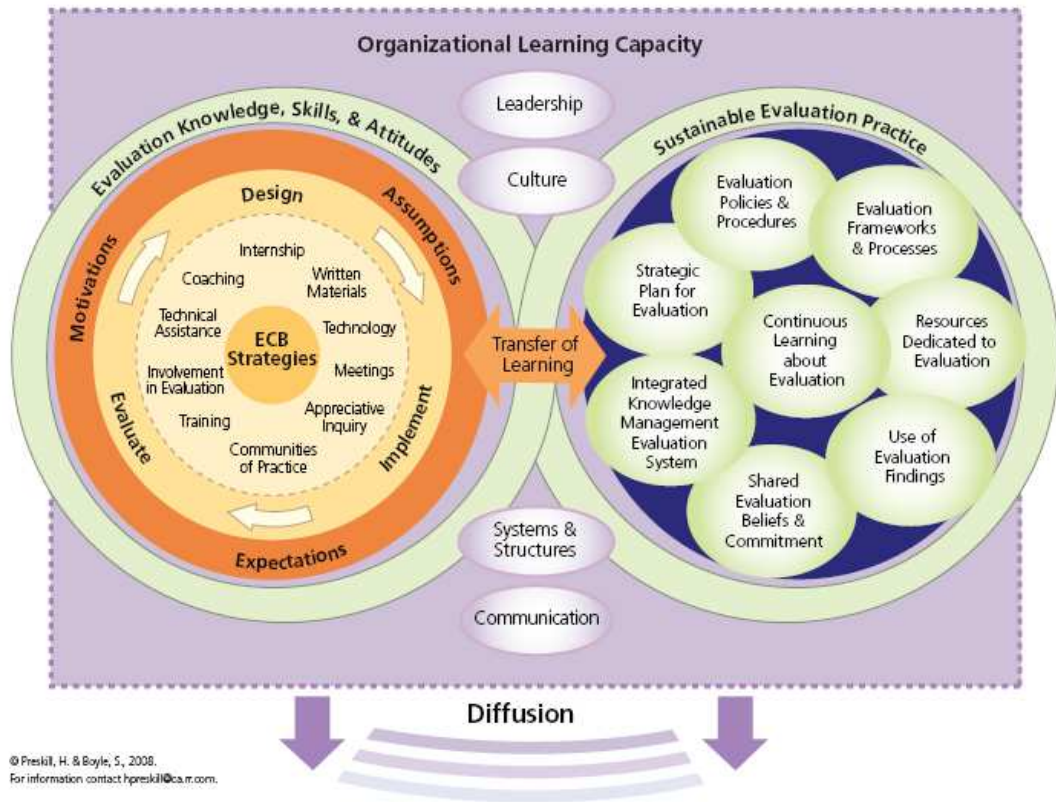
Preskill and Boyle's (2008) multidisciplinary model of ECB provides a graphic to increase the understanding of evaluation concepts and practices. In an effort to create evaluation cultures, many organizations have been designing and implementing a variety of strategies as a means of helping their members learn about and engage in evaluation practices. The purpose of this model of ECB may be used for designing and implementing capacity building activities and processes as well as for conducting empirical research on this topic.

Preskill and Boyle developed this model using the fields of evaluation, organizational learning and change, and adult workplace learning. Their model was depicted by a figure eight design. On the left side of the model, the researchers represented ECB efforts, such as initiation, planning, designing, and implementation. The outer circle reflected the overall goal of ECB, which included the development of evaluation knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Within this circle, Preskill and Boyle acknowledged the importance of leaders who initiated ECB activities and processes in their organization. Their motivations, assumptions, and expectations will affect the design and implementation of all ECB activities (Preskill & Boyle, 2008).

In the middle circles are ten ECB strategies that reflect various teaching and learning approaches for helping people develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to think evaluatively and to engage in evaluation practice . . . The two circles are connected with a double-sided arrow, transfer of learning, which refers to the application of evaluation knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the work context. (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444)

The large circle on the right side of the model represented the processes, practices, policies, and resources necessary to sustain ECB. Diffusion was the final component of this model with two arrows pointing outward, which reflected the potential for ECB participants to share their knowledge, skills, and attitudes with others (Preskill & Boyle, 2008).

Figure 1. A Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building

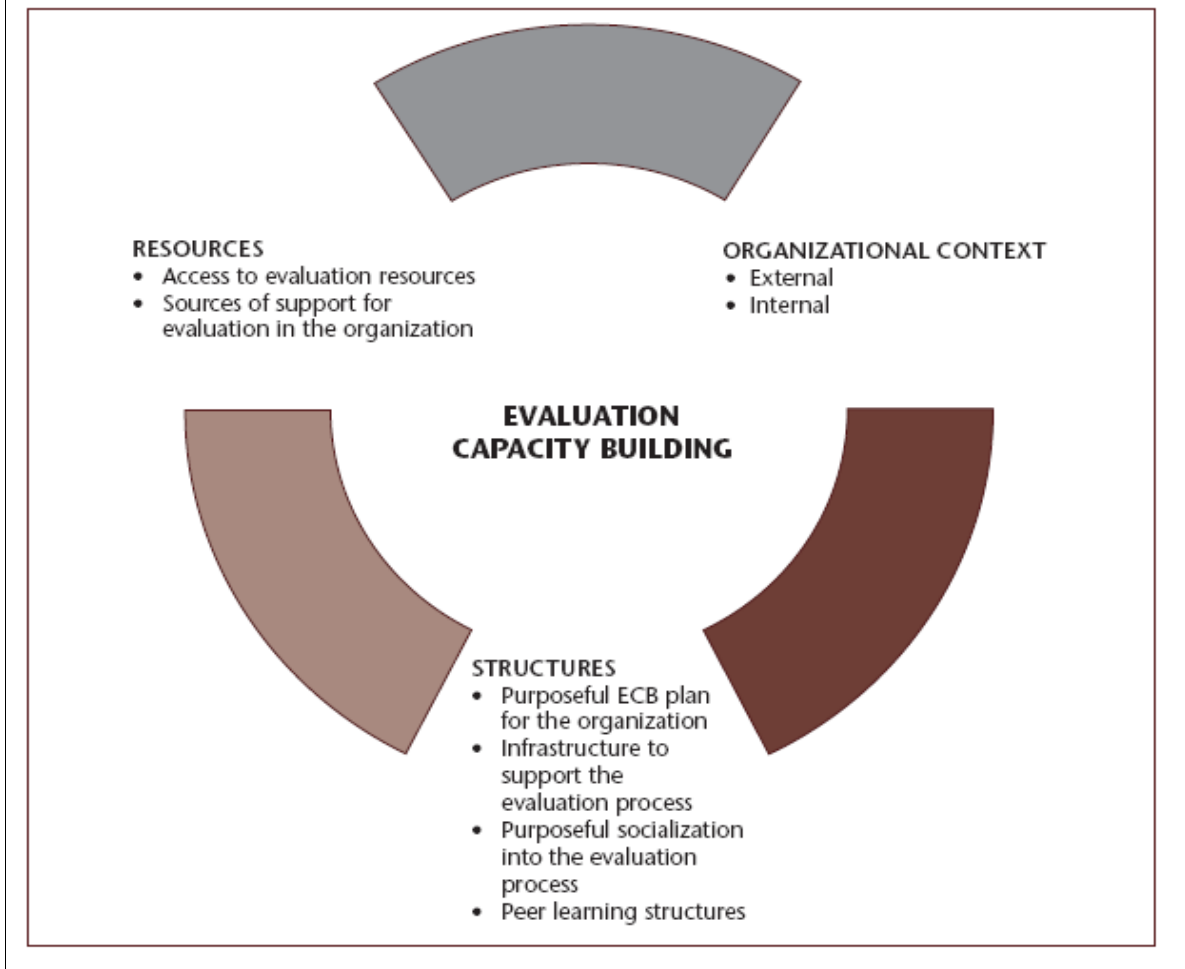


(H. Preskill & Boyle, 2008)

ECB framework two- A checklist for building organizational evaluation

capacity. The literature indicated a second conceptual entitled, “A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity.” The framework of ECB. Volkov and King (2007) provided a checklist for ECB in an organization purpose of this checklist was to provide a set of categories to consider when incorporating ECB routinely into the daily work of an organization. Volkov and King developed this checklist from case study data and an extensive literature review. The checklist can be a resource for a wide range of stakeholders in an organization for the sustainability of ECB, specifically to increase their long-term capacity to conduct and use program evaluations routinely. It was divided in three main sections: (1) organizational context, (2) ECB structures, and (3) resources. Organizational context focused on identifying the internal and external organizational context, power hierarchies, administrative culture, and the decision-making processes in an organization (Volkov & King, 2007). ECB structures referred to “purposefully creating the structures—mechanisms within the organization—that enable the development of evaluation capacity” (Volkov & King, 2007, p. 2). [See Appendix A]

Figure 2. Elements of a Grounded Framework for Evaluation Capacity Building



ECB framework three- Integrated Evaluation Capacity Building (IECB)

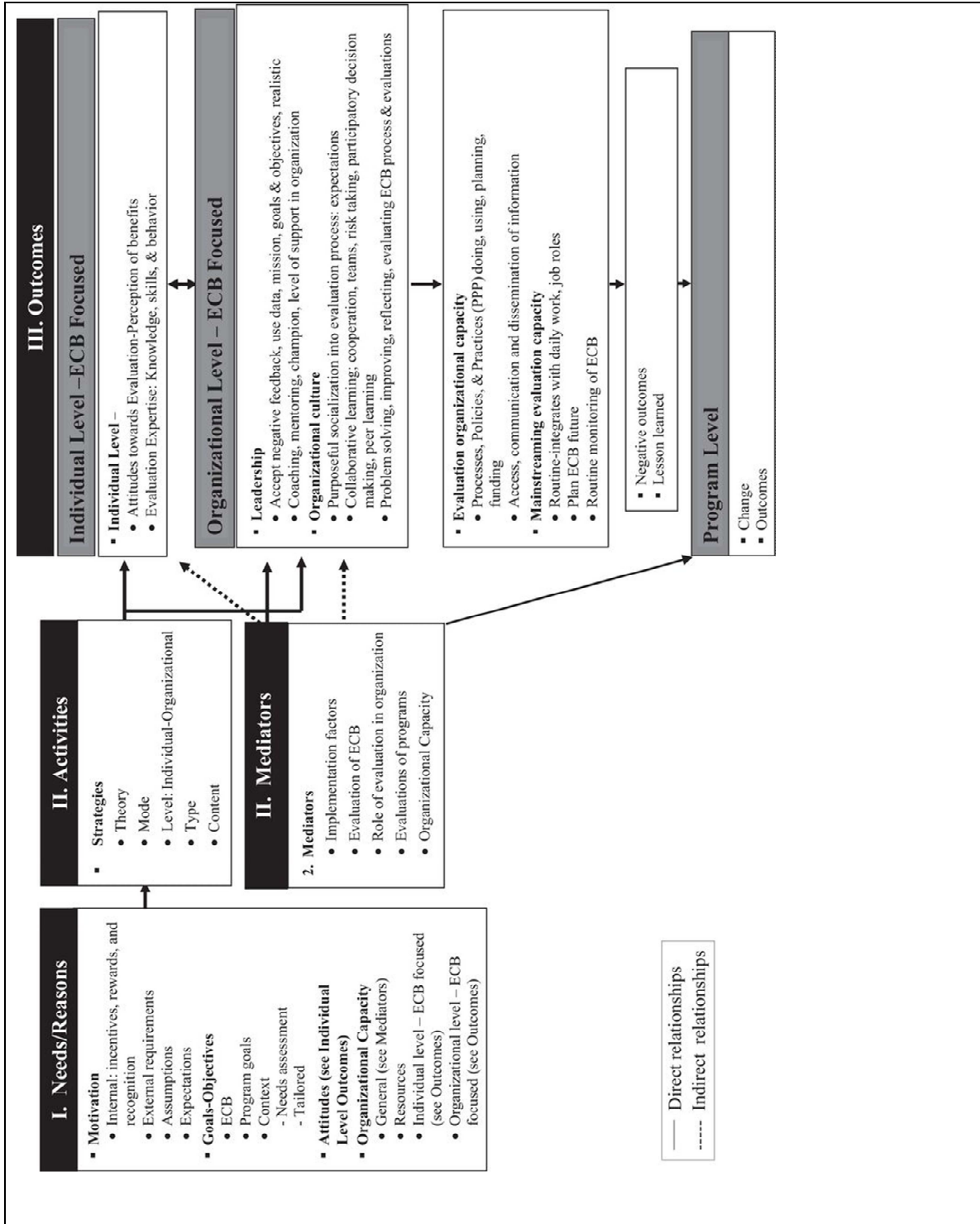
model. The literature included a third conceptual model of ECB. The IECB model was originally derived from existing ECB models and the ECB literature (Labin, 2014). Labin (2014) presents an updated and expanded IECB model of a common ECB framework. The ECB model's purpose is a learning and discovery tool to visualize relationships in the ECB process. The expanded IECB model indicates direct and indirect relationships [See Figure 3]. The IECB model is linear and two-dimensional, representing a snapshot at a point of time (Labin, 2014). Labin explains the expanded IECB model:

(Column I) affect the nature of the ECB strategies (Column II), and the effectiveness of strategies will be mediated by implementation, evaluation, and organizational capacity factors. (Labin, 2014, p. 108)

Three levels of outcomes are delineated, which indicate that the outcomes at the individual and organizational level will affect program-level changes and outcomes. Some degree of organizational factors is necessary for individual outcomes to occur at a sustained level.

Although the model captures a snapshot of time in ECB, Labin explains that the IECB model does not capture the dynamic ECB process. Threshold levels or readiness for ECB may be quantified by measuring the baseline of needs (Column I), associated activities and mediators (Column II), in relation to outcomes (Column III). Labin's (2014) updated IECB can support an organization's self-evaluation process by using common constructs and indicators to identify and target readiness gaps in ECB.

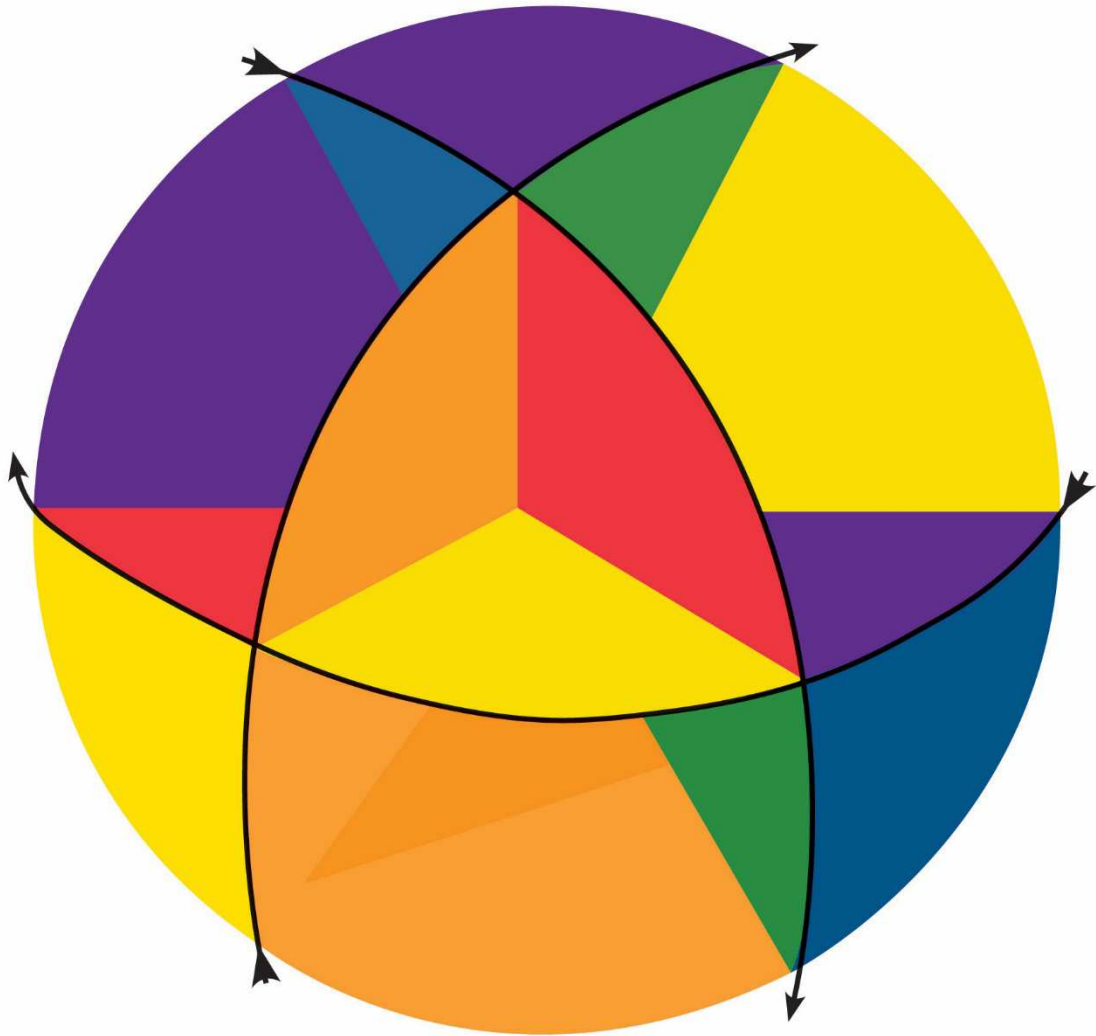
Figure 3. Integrated Evaluation Capacity Building (IECB) Model (Labin, 2014)



Preliminary ECB Model for an Educational Context

Grounded in the literature, a preliminary metaphor of ECB within the special education context should demonstrate dynamic movement, depicting continuous change, development, and evolution of ECB. In searching for an appropriate metaphor, ECB in an organization or department (e.g., special education) was visualized as a spherical form with patterns of open triangles and squares. Combinations of four circle planes (e.g., two-dimensional) intersect to form a spherical form (e.g., three-dimensional), as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. A Preliminary ECB Metaphor for an Educational Context



The actions of this sphere signify ECB's continuous, developmental, and dynamic process and use as the sphere moves across multiple types of planes or surfaces. The sphere rolls up and down at different speeds and directions depending on the angled height of a surface. The process of making this sphere demonstrates a geometric progression, expanding into space and rotating in multiple directions. The spherical form's changing rotational movement and varied speed signifies the rate of the evaluation process. The amount of geometric expansion and growth into space represents the amount of evaluation use and the degree of using evaluation again in the organization's future.

A circle plane represents a program evaluation project, and each circle plane is folded three different ways to create six pie-shaped spaces. A sphere is comprised of four circle planes, forming a unique spherical pattern of open triangles and squares and represents ECB. The creation of the sphere's unique visual patterns represents important contextual components, characteristics, and barriers of ECB within an educational program, department, or organization, which can include the following:

ECB- Structures. The structures need to be in place in an organization, including time for staff to complete evaluation activities, ongoing professional development, and an ECB district-wide special education leadership committee that provides leadership, coaching, and ongoing oversight of the special education evaluation activities.

ECB- Internal organizational context. A supportive internal context is important to sustain ECB initiatives in a school district. The internal context begins with knowledgeable evaluation leaders, supportive school principals and special education

administration who promote a trusting school culture, and the process and use of evaluation thinking and evaluation activities. Program improvement is considered a continuous process of change. The school leaders promote a culture of high expectations and achievement for promoting quality and engaging special education programs. The special education ECB champions (King, 2007) or change agents are recognized and integrated into a participatory and distributed leadership model in the organization.

ECB- Developmental processes. All special education staff members are actively involved in a professional learning community promoting the continuous organizational learning of special education and evaluation topics, specifically for the improvement of special education programs. ECB activities are integrated into these work-alike communities at all different grade levels.

ECB- Organizational culture of high student achievement. The superintendent and school leaders at all levels promote a culture of high learning targets and high expectations for the achievement of all students in the school district, including students with disabilities. As part of this data-driven decision-making culture (DDDM), the staff members actively collaborate to create common formative assessments and use student data to plan student instruction during their professional learning communities. Data retreats, held annually with school administrators and teacher leaders, are also an example of how DDDM is embedded into the organizational culture.

ECB- Organizational external context. Organizational external context for special education includes the accountability requirements of the federal mandates, IDEA, and NCLB.

ECB- Resources. The resources include the Director of Research and Evaluation, who provides the ongoing coaching of ECB activities, the Director of Special Education, who leads the program evaluation efforts and allocates the funding for ECB within the internal context of special education department, and the special education leaders who engage in the special education process. Professional development sessions are planned at the district level to increase the knowledge of evaluation methods and strategies. Resources are provided to the special education leaders, such as the use of evaluation tools (e.g., web-based survey tools) and data analysis by evaluation staff from the central office research and evaluation department.

Conclusion

Five key themes were identified in an extensive literature search: (1) ECB is a form of evaluation process use, (2) ECB focuses efforts on organizational learning, (3) ECB is a form of developmental evaluation, (4) context is important in ECB, and (5) “evaluation champions” (King, 2007) or change agents play an important role in ECB. When organizational leaders, who are the change agents of an organization, are committed to ECB, there is an expectation that the organization will build an evaluation process that makes quality evaluation and its use routine with staff members. In ECB, organizational leaders are continuously creating opportunities for their program staff members to think like an evaluator and know how to do evaluative activities within their programs. Individual special education leaders using ECB may be viewed as change agents in their organization when these individuals use their evaluative knowledge and

skills for the program evaluation process. Through ECB, these individuals can make significant contributions towards organizational development and change.

In the ECB literature, four case studies of ECB in business, health organizations, government, and schools suggested that ECB was significantly driven by the context of the specific organization. The evaluation process can make a significant difference on multiple levels in an organization. Within a school context, ECB is about helping school leaders pay attention to the evaluation process and the changes that are taking place around them with the people, programs, and within their organization as a result of their continued ECB use.

Three ECB conceptual models and frameworks were described, which included Preskill and Boyle's Multidisciplinary ECB Model (2008), Volkov and King's Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity (2007), and Labin's IECB model (2014). An alternate conceptual ECB framework in a special education context was described, which included structures, an organizational internal context, developmental processes, an organizational culture of high student achievement, an organizational external context, and finally resources.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methods

This chapter will describe background information for understanding the study's design and methods. Second, the research design and methods will be fully explained, including the site and participant selection, individual interview sample and protocol, record review, and resources. Third, the qualitative analysis will be described, which includes a description of the descriptive data analysis phase and the interpretative data analysis phase. Last, the limitations, ethics, organizational politics, and positionality of the researcher will be explained.

Background Information

Formal special education evaluation study from September 2000 to June 2001. This qualitative study followed up fifteen years later on King's case study (2002), which documented a two-year process (1999 – 2001) when she served as an internal evaluator and contributed to building the evaluation capacity in the Two-County School District. A self-study of the Special Education Department was described in King's case study (2002) as an example of supporting ECB by developing two processes that were integral to the district's evaluation function, which included (1) a viable way to organize large-scale participatory studies and (2) an interactive, cost-effective means of collecting qualitative data. Since this special education self-study, this research sought to understand and learn more about how ECB developed and evolved within the special education department during these fifteen years.

The special education self-study was designed as a large-scale participatory study, developing a two-part structure that became a model or the so-called “gold standard” for all large evaluation studies in the Two-County School District (King, 2002). The district evaluation coordinator worked with two external evaluation consultants to support the designing and facilitating of the evaluation study’s participatory process for all phases. “Owing to the highly political nature of special education in the district, the self-study team had an initial membership of over one hundred people (representatives from different grade levels, roles, disabilities, and so on), fifty of whom eventually attended monthly meetings for over a year” (King, 2002, p. 70). The first structure involved setting up a six- to eight-person data collection team (DCT), which was made up of district personnel most closely involved with the study’s focus. The DCT had primary responsibilities for the implementation of the special education study, which included inviting people to meetings, following up on absences, compiling existing data, and arranging logistics. The second structure was a large committee, comprised of thirty to fifty people, that framed evaluation questions, analyzed data, and made recommendations.

King’s first goal of her ECB work (1999 – 2001) focused on developing staff commitment and skills in program evaluation and its use. Her work with the formal special education self-study aligned with this goal. King’s case study noted that the individuals who participated in the monthly meetings of the special education study committee “reported that they enjoyed both the special education content of the process and what they had learned about evaluation through their participation” (King, 2002, p.

70). King further described the methods for the monthly meetings aligned with a cooperative learning approach. Evaluation activities at these monthly meetings focused on “short presentations, table teamwork on data analysis, development of claims based on the data, and eventual creation and prioritizing of recommendations” (King, 2002).

The internal evaluation leader and two external evaluation consultants developed a second ECB process, in which small groups of two or three participants discussed questions related to the study and then recorded their own data. This ECB process was first labeled “dialogue groups” and then labeled as “data dialogues” in the Two-County School District. The study committee felt parents’ voices were needed. Parental focus groups were not feasible because of the district’s budget constraints. This second ECB process developed a method and a process where large numbers of people (e.g., parents of students who received special education services) can “give data and simultaneously have a good conversation with other parents” (King, 2002).

Background information for current study. Qualitative data were primarily collected from eleven standardized open-ended and inductive interviews with ten of the district’s past and current program evaluation and special education leaders to (1) gather their perceptions, thoughts, and experiences with program evaluation, (2) study how these ten leaders routinely and systematically incorporated program evaluation into their daily life, and (3) study their successive efforts to build a sustainable process and ongoing capacity to conduct evaluations towards special education improvement. A record review of 30 records was also completed. Next, the data were analyzed to develop themes that described ECB within the special education context and determined how the special

education evaluation activities related to building capacity for more. Finally, the analysis determined the extent of ECB and how the evaluation process and use developed, strengthened, and improved the school district's special education programs and practices.¹

Each of ten individuals described her story during the interview, specifically perceptions, thoughts, and experiences with using program evaluation within the special education context. The study's analysis and interpretation discovered the importance of each of these characters (e.g., study's participants) and her individual story (e.g., evidence of evaluation process and use) to gain an understanding of the essential components, primary themes, and the importance of context when building evaluation capacity.

Site and Participant Selection

This study utilized a sampling approach. The researcher established a relationship with the Director of Special Education and the Director of Research and Evaluation, who both had positional leadership roles within the district administration. They had primary

¹ In the original study design, a quantitative component of the study was to be based upon the results of a web-based survey of Two-County staff who played an active role in some way in the special education program evaluation projects. The 115 survey recipients included special education DCD teachers, special education supervisors, staff members of a special education setting IV program, school administrators of six schools where the DCD K-12 center-based programs were located, and special education teaching and learning/evaluation specialists who participated in multiple special education program evaluation projects. The survey was launched in April 2013, but the sample size of fourteen responses was very low (12 %). These data were unreliable, and, therefore, the analysis did not include quantitative data. Please see Appendix B for the survey.

importance in identifying the ten subjects for the interviews, who were selected because they had involvement with special education program evaluation.

Seven of the ten subjects formerly or currently participated in the special education program evaluation while in a leadership capacity. The seven subjects included a former and a current Director of Special Education, a current Assistant Director of Special Education, three current special education supervisors, and a current lead special education teacher who was actively involved with the Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD) program evaluation project. The district-wide center-based DCD programs extended across the Two-County School District in six different schools at the elementary, middle, and high schools for students with significant academic and school functional needs.

Two interviews were conducted with a former and a current district-level Director of Research and Evaluation who provided program evaluation expertise, leadership, and coaching in special education. The tenth subject served as a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) in the Department of Research and Evaluation and provided program evaluation technical assistance, primarily for the special education program evaluation projects.

To ensure the confidentiality of the data collected for this study, the actual names of the participating school district, special education leaders, special education programs, and program evaluation leaders are not identified. The subjects' pseudonyms with their professional title include the following:

1. **Barbara Ritz-** A person who served as a TOSA for the district-wide DCD Program Evaluation Study.
2. **Amelia Neumann-** A person who formerly served as the Assistant Director of Special Education and currently served as the Director of Special Education at the Two-County School district in Summer 2013. At the time of her interview in Spring 2013, she served as the Assistant Director of Special Education.
3. **Anna Campbell-** A person who served as the former Coordinator of Research and Evaluation at the Two-County School District from 1999 to 2001 and was currently a professor at a nearby higher education institution. From 2009 to 2011 she worked as an external program evaluation consultant for special education program evaluation projects.
4. **Danielle O'Connor-** A person who served as the Program Special Education Supervisor of a full-day Special Education Setting Level IV Program for students K-12. All students at this school had a disability, a current Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), and significant emotional/behavioral needs.
5. **Hazel Clayton-** A person who served as a Program Special Education Supervisor of the district-wide center-based DCD program that extends across the Two-County School District in six different schools.
6. **Tiffany O'Neil-** A person who served as a TOSA in the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment and provided program evaluation technical assistance, primarily for the special education department.

7. **Christina Hames-** A person who served as a Supervisor of the Special Education District-wide Evaluation Team.
8. **Veronica Galles-** A person who currently served as the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment for the Two-County School District.
9. **Carol Schwartzkopf-** The former Director of Special Education, including the time period of 1999 to 2001.
10. **Gwendolyn Taylor-** A person who served as the former Director of Special Education, Two-County School District for five years during the time period of 2008 to 2013. She moved during the summer of 2013 to another school district and was interviewed a year later.

At the time of the interviews, Two-County School District served 39,000 students and 248,000 residents living in thirteen suburban communities spread out over 172 square miles north of a large Midwestern metropolitan area. This district operated 24 elementary schools, 6 middle schools (grades six through eight), and 5 high schools, plus alternative middle and high school sites.

Related to the diverse special education needs, demographics, and the geography of this district, the district-wide special education system was extensive to meet the needs of all of their district's 5,000 special education students (Galles, 2009). The school district's special education students received instruction in a number of diverse and varied settings, which included (a) students' attendance at their neighborhood elementary, middle, and high schools; (b) preschool students' attendance at the early childhood center; (c) students' attendance at district-wide center-based programs (e.g.,

Developmental Cognitive Disabilities program) whose special education needs could not be served in their neighborhood schools; (d) students' attendance at the school district's most restrictive special education setting (level IV) program for K-12 students with significant emotional/behavioral needs; and (e) a transition program designed for special education students between 18 and 21 years of age.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota in March 2013 and through the approval process of the participating school district. As part of the consent process prior to each interview, the research procedure was described, emphasizing that participation was voluntary. A written consent information sheet was given to all of the participants, disclosing this research information and providing them with the name and contact information of the researcher and her advisor at the higher education institution.

Individual Interview Sample and Protocol

To determine the ECB evidence in the special education department, in-depth data were gathered to analyze how subjects' evaluation experiences built their capacity to use program evaluation again. The researcher designed and used a standardized, open-ended, interactive, and inductive interview approach to discover the meaning of ECB. Because all of the subjects had experience with evaluation, the research questions were developed to seek a higher level of understanding regarding their perceptions and experiences with their evaluation process and the extent of their program evaluation use. The interview questions used language (e.g., "What is?" "What are some ways?") to gather detailed and descriptive responses from these leaders about their degree of ECB participation. Because

of the developmental nature of ECB, each of the subjects would have a unique perspective and involvement in his or her ECB process and use. Also, their results would most likely vary within each of the special education programs and/or sites (e.g., DCD, Setting IV program). [See Appendix C for the interview documentation].

Eight of the 11 individual interviews were completed during the spring of 2013, and others continued occasionally through July 2014. Following the data analysis of 8 of these structured interviews, Taylor, the former Director of Special Education, was interviewed as well as a second interview with Galles, the current Director of Research and Evaluation. Taylor transitioned in the summer 2013 as Director of Special Education at another metropolitan school district. In summer 2014, Taylor was interviewed at her new school district.

These final interviews were an opportunity to clarify data and expand emerging themes from the data analysis from the previous interviews. Galles and Taylor did not complete the ECB Worksheet (King & Bucinca, 2006), but this document was used to prepare for these interviews by gathering specific information about how these positional leaders developed their ECB vision, plan, process, and led other special education supervisors in program evaluation use. [See Appendix D]. The following table lists the names of the participants and a description of the interviews:

Table 1

List and Description of Interviews

Interview	Name of Participant	Title	Date	Duration
1	Ritz, B.	DCD Program Specialist (TOSA)	3.14.2013	42 minutes
2	Neumann, A.	Assistant Special Education Director	3.27.2013	53 minutes
3	Campbell, A.	Former Coordinator of Research, Evaluation	4.3.2013	31 minutes
4	O'Connor, D.	Setting IV Program Supervisor	4.4.2013	1 hour, 26 minutes
5	Clayton, H.	DCD Program Supervisor	4.11.2013	26 minutes
6	O'Neil, T.	Evaluation Specialist (TOSA)	4.12.2013	45 minutes
7	Hames, C.	Evaluation Team Supervisor	4.26.2013	35 minutes
8	Galles, V.	Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	2.27.2014	1 hour, 15 minutes
9	Schwartzkopf, C.	Former Director of Special Education	3.10.2014	42 minutes

Interview	Name of Participant	Title	Date	Duration
10	Taylor, G.	Former Director of Special Education	7.15.2014	1 hour, 37 minutes
11	Galles, V.	Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	7.15.2014	1 hour, 30 minutes

Record Review

The second data collection source included an extensive review of 30 written and electronic documents that described the district’s program evaluation process and efforts. The records included presentations used for program evaluation events, program evaluation products with several specific to special education, REA program evaluations and related documents, three special education continuous improvement plans for the state department of education from 2007 - 2010, a detailed transcribed interview of Taylor by a non-partisan organization regarding special education funding on May 10, 2013, and an article about Taylor in a local community paper dated May 20, 2013.

Galles, the Director of Research and Evaluation at the Two-County School district, authored several key documents regarding the district and special education’s program evaluation process. Galles shared these documents during her two interviews, including the Two-District Program Evaluation Process (2013-2014) [Appendix E]; Object Description and Context Analysis of the Two-District Special Education Program Evaluation (2009-2010); a Setting IV Program Evaluation Summary; a DCD Program

Evaluation Summary; and four additional documents that related to the DCD program evaluation project. The information gathered from the detailed record review of the school district and the special education program evaluation documents was analyzed, interpreted, and integrated with the other interview data parts while the study's primary themes were developed. Table 2 lists and describes the reviewed records.

Table 2

List and Description of Reviewed Records

Name of Document	Date	Author	Content
1. Object Description of Two-County Special Education Program Evaluation	Fall 2009	Galles, V.	This 6-page 2009-10 document describes the special education program evaluation, specifically background/history, program rationale, goals/outcomes, setting, program staff, program participants (i.e., special education students with disabilities), organization structure, special education activities, and special education budget. Galles obtained this content through her evaluation leadership position, active involvement with Taylor, Director of Special Education, and Neumann, Assistant Director of Special Education.
2. Context Analysis of Two-County Special Education Program Evaluation	Fall 2009	Galles, V.	This 6-page 2009-10 document describes the purpose of special education evaluation with rationale, evaluation stakeholders/audiences, and their concerns, primary intended users, evaluation questions, constraints, and a logic model detailing short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes. Galles obtained this information through her evaluation leadership position, active involvement with Taylor, Director of Special Education, and Neumann, Assistant Director of Special Education.
3. Two-County Program Evaluation Process	Updated February 2014	Galles, V.	This 8-page document describes the Two-County's program evaluation process. Evaluations are conducted using a participant-oriented approach to maximize utilization and capacity-building throughout their organization.

Name of Document	Date	Author	Content
4. Two-County Program Evaluation Framework	February 2014	Galles, V.	This colored graphic shows the program evaluation process and integrates context, action research, and data-informed decision making into the Two-County REA framework.
5. Two-County Research Evaluation Assessment Status Reports	September 8, 2011	Galles, V.	The two documents include one report for all REA program evaluations and one report for all special education program evaluations for 2011-12
6. Two-County Special Education Administrative Structure	September 2009	Taylor, G.	This one-page, colored administrative structure shows the role and responsibilities of the special education administration team.
7. Two-County REA Program Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities	Date Unknown	Galles, V.	This two-page document describes the roles and responsibilities of the Director of REA, Director of Special Education, Evaluation Specialist, Supervisor/Consultant, and Teaching and Learning Specialist.
8. Two-County REA Technical Manual for Minnesota's Title I and Title III Assessments, Table 1.1. Minnesota Assessment System Chronology	2013-2014	Galles, V.	The table's content on pp. 13-14 shows a timeline (1995 – 2014) that highlighted the years and events of the administration of the state assessment system.
9. Two-County Special Education Early Childhood Special	November 3 and 4, 2009 and	REA Department	This two-page document gives the ECSE Summit agenda on November 3 and 4, 2009. An additional 15-page document summarizes the ECSE Program Evaluation Summit for the

Name of Document	Date	Author	Content
Education (ECSE) Program Evaluation: Summit agenda and program evaluation comprehensive document	April 14, 2010		follow-up meeting on April 14, 2010.
10. Two-County Special Education Setting IV Program Evaluation: Summary and Progress/Status Report	Updated February 27, 2012 and September 2010	REA Department	This 11-page document measures and summarizes the five targeted areas, which includes behavioral and environmental management, comprehensive academics, mental health student support, collaborative school culture, accountability and due process. The second two-page report shows a chronological timeline of the Setting IV program evaluation progress and status of the activities.
11. Two-County Special Education DCD Program Evaluation Vision Card and two related documents	Updated January 30, 2014	REA Department	This 11-page document details the four DCD focal areas and criteria, specifically (a) Technology - High tech & low tech to meet student and teacher needs, (b) Collaboration & Communication, (c) Culture & Climate, and (d) Teaching & Learning. A three-page document updates the technology focal area on 8/26/14. A third three-page document describes the Vision Card Key Messages for the DCD Program Evaluation [See Appendix F].
12. Two-County DCD Program Evaluation “Look For’s” Tool A	Updated April 26, 2012 and November 14, 2013	REA Department	This two-page document shows a table with five columns, titled Focal Area, Description, Measurement, Check if you see, and Notes/Comments List. The vision card focal areas/standards include three different areas: technology, collaboration and communication, climate and culture for the purpose of data

Name of Document	Date	Author	Content
			collection in the district-wide DCD programs [See Appendix G].
13.Two-County Special Education DCD Vision Card Item 4g Data Knowledge and Use in the fourth focal area Teaching and Learning	November 7, 2013	REA Department	This one-page document was a response to comments gathered at a staff development day on October 16, 2013. The document describes the edited changes for the criteria in the fourth focal area Teaching and Learning 4g Data Knowledge and Use.
14.Two-County Special Education DCD Rubric to measure DCD 4g Data Knowledge and Use in the fourth focal area Teaching and Learning	Updated November 11, 2013	REA Department	This two-page document shows a table and reflects the edited text from document # 8 above, describing the criteria for the two-step process for data knowledge and use. The two steps focus on (a) data collection is in place and (b) data collection is used to inform instruction and programming.
15.Two-County Special Education DCD Data Collection	Beginning February 2014	REA Department	This document specifically describes the guiding questions for the interviews with special education teachers. These guiding questions are matched to the DCD Look-For tool in the four DCD focal areas.
16.Two-County Special Education DCD Program Evaluation Power-Point presentations	October 26, 2010 and April 13, 2011	REA Department	These five documents were created for the DCD Summit I and II as well as the DCD core program evaluation groups. Power-Point presentations documented a timeline of program evaluation activities as well as documentation of the program evaluation process for creating the DCD vision card.

Name of Document	Date	Author	Content
17. Two-County Special Education DCD Program Evaluation Timeline	Date not known	REA Department	This two-page document lists the DCD program evaluation timeline from October 2009 to June 2011.
18. Two-County Special Education Transition (for students ages 18 – 21) Program Evaluation: Progress and Status Report, “Save The Date”, and Power-Point Presentation	May 2010 and August 8, 2011	REA Department	These records include the “save the date” for the Transition Summit on August 8, 2011, which included the Summit program evaluation activities and participants. A third record includes the Transition program evaluation Power Point presentation created and used on August 8, 2011.
19. Two-County Special Education Setting III EBD program evaluation Power-Point presentation	August 1, 2011	REA Department	Power Point presentation used for the August 1, 2011 for the Setting III EBD Summit.
20. Special Education Annual Continuous Improvement Plans (CIMP) to the State Department of Education	2007-08 2008-09 2009-10	Schwartzkopf 2007-08 Report; Galles 2008-09 and 2009-10 Reports	These three plans were submitted (CIMP) to the State Department of Education for the purpose of special education compliance monitoring at the end of these school years. Schwartzkopf was the Director of Special Education during 2007-08, and Galles was the Director of Special Education during this time period for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 CIMP submissions.

Name of Document	Date	Author	Content
21. An interview transcript of the Two-County Superintendent and Director of Special Education	May 10, 2013	The Civic Caucus	Taylor was interviewed by a non-partisan organization that examined issues in government, politics, and civic life.
22. An online article about Taylor's leadership award in a local community paper	May 20, 2013	ABC Newspapers	The article reported Taylor's New Special Education Leader Award, highlighting her special education vision, philosophy, and special education professional achievements.

Resources

There was no budget for this study. The expenses were minimal for this research, and personal funds were used for general expenses. A personal computer and software were used for managing the qualitative research data.

Description of the Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis transformed data into findings, and, according to Patton, no formula exists for that transformation (Patton, 2002). This qualitative study resulted in large amount of data, and the challenge of this study as well as with other qualitative research studies focused on making sense of the data (Patton, 2002). Learning that there are no formulas or rules for determining significance, current knowledge and skills (e.g., research and evaluation), familiarity of the special education context, judgment, attention to details, and a personal commitment were used to make sense of the data by identifying significant patterns, constructing a framework of themes, and communicating the findings in a clear and concise manner.

The primary goal for data analysis was to discover the primary ECB themes in an effort to understand the perceptions of the administrator and teacher leaders who participated in program evaluation. The connection of all of the primary and secondary themes became important in understanding ECB in the special education department of the Two-County School District, looking for similarities and differences among the individual subjects and the identified themes. To determine the ECB evidence in the special education department, the manner of how the subjects' evaluation results built their capacity to evaluate again needed to be analyzed.

A deductive analytical process analyzed the data according to an existing framework, *A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity* (Volkov & King, 2007). This ECB checklist included the categories of organizational context, structures, and resources. These categories proved valuable when the data parts of transcribed information were sorted and organized into broader themes and issues. For the deductive analysis, this existing framework provided the labels for the data obtained from the interviews. Most important, the checklist supported the initial phase of the deductive analysis until the framework of ECB themes emerged. It was the combination of this existing ECB checklist (Volkov & King, 2007), ECB literature, and the emergent ECB theoretical framework that provided the cognitive support for discovering the themes and identifying the relationships among all of the connected statements, events, and documents.

Description of the descriptive data analysis phase. During the descriptive data analysis phase, the qualitative data from the interviews were classified and coded. Then the coded data parts were organized into themes. This descriptive phase of the qualitative analysis built a foundation for the interpretative phase.

Initially, data analysis began with the audio taping of all the structured interviews. On the date of each interview, notes were made to capture reflections following each of the individual interviews, which were transcribed. Each one-hour interview required eight hours to transcribe the audio recording into a Microsoft Word text document. Each text document was color-coded with a unique color for each subject to provide visual support during the analysis process.

The primary purpose of this second step was to separate, break down, and code each transcribed interview into the subject's smaller data parts (e.g., an individual thought, one example). The workbook feature of the spreadsheet served as an electronic bin during the descriptive phase in order to manage the large amount of data from the interviews. For this second step, the color-coded data parts from all of the interviews were organized collectively into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet separated by each of the interview questions using the workbook feature. Each of the data parts was coded with two numbers and a letter to pinpoint the location of the data part, such as noted by this example (e.g., [2_1_e]). In this example, the first number referred to the second of the ten interviewees, and the second number referred to the first question. Within each question, each data part was given an alphabetical lower-case letter. When a question had more than twenty-six data parts, then the next data part was given two lower-case letters, such as in this example (2_1_aa). To ensure the organization of the data and the efficiency to locate the data parts in an interview transcription, the data parts were labeled using this coding system. These codes are included throughout Chapter Four and the accompanying appendices.

During this second step of the coding process, every data part from each of the interview questions was labeled and coded again using a systematic and comprehensive coding scheme made up of the nine primary categories with the subcategories from the Volkov & King (2007) ECB checklist. The nine primary categories included the following:

- 1. ECB Organizational Context-** Positive internal organizational context,

- 2. ECB Organizational Context-** Influence of external environment on the organization,
- 3. ECB Structures-** Develop and implement a purposeful long-term ECB plan for organization,
- 4. ECB Structures-** Build ECB infrastructure for evaluation process and communication,
- 5. ECB Structures-** Introduce and maintain purposeful socialization into special education's evaluation process,
- 6. ECB Structures-** Build and expand peer learning structures,
- 7. ECB Structures-** Build and expand program evaluation process,
- 8. ECB Resources-** Provide access to evaluation resources, and
- 9. ECB Resources-** Secure sources of support for program evaluation in special education.

This was a time-intensive process because it required reading through all of the data to look at what was there and what could be done with the different parts. The data were analyzed to come up with a label, assign a code, and assign a theme, using the ECB checklist's primary and secondary categories. This process was like matching and constructing the labels for a folder system for an ECB file cabinet. Importantly, themes or meaning was assigned for each of the data parts.

Here is an example of an assigned code: [STR_Infra_0110], which aligned with the fourth of the eight ECB categories - ECB Structures: Build ECB infrastructure for evaluation process and communication. A statement in another spreadsheet column was written to explain the coded theme for each data part as shown here:

Purposefully create structures within the organization that enable a variety of stakeholders to participate in program evaluation.

The third step of the descriptive data analysis phase focused on sorting the labeled and color-coded data parts into nine primary ECB categories or themes. A ninth category was added that corresponded to leadership. The coded data parts were copied from the first Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and pasted into a second Microsoft Excel document, using the workbook feature to separate the labeled data parts into the nine primary ECB themes.

Description of the interpretative data analysis phase. The primary purpose of the interpretative data analysis phase focused on arranging and rearranging the coded data parts into primary and secondary themes to produce a preliminary ECB framework specific to this study's findings. The coded themes from the second Microsoft Excel spreadsheet were sorted into a Microsoft Word document. A preliminary framework of primary and secondary themes was produced to describe what was emerging from the integration of all of the data parts.

Similar to the descriptive phase, the interpretative phase was also complex and time consuming. Ideas and categories were developed and supported when the coded data parts were physically arranged and rearranged into the primary themes. During this interpretative phase, the writing process made connections and facilitated a process of extracting meaning from the data, making continuous comparisons, constructing a framework for interpretation, drawing conclusions, and determining the significance of the findings. Analytical thinking about the data was frequently captured throughout the research writing process, positively contributing to the overall research findings. For

example, informal notes were made to capture thoughts when away from the research work and while Chapter Four was rewritten and refined to explain the findings in a clearer and more concise manner. The writing process also facilitated self-reflection, in-depth thinking, and stimulated analytical insight (Maxwell, 2005). During this interpretative phase, a framework of primary ECB themes was generated as a result of this complex qualitative analysis, which included the following areas:

1. An evaluation leader and champions are critical to direct and sustain ECB efforts.
2. ECB requires an evaluation leader to create a formal infrastructure – structure, equipment, and resources.
3. ECB promotes a participatory process through engagement with stakeholders.
4. Evaluation use facilitates reflective thinking about change.
5. ECB is a communication tool that facilitates communication use.
6. ECB requires sophisticated data use for special education’s internal and external accountability contexts.
7. ECB adapts and changes over time to fit the organization’s internal and external contexts.

Limitations

The study had several limitations. A primary limitation focused on the reliance of existing data during the fifteen-year time period in this school district. Although several of the key school leaders were no longer accessible for interviews, an adequate sample from the available interviewees obtained the needed data for the study. The results of the relatively small number of interviews revealed in-depth data as each participant openly

shared his or her perceptions regarding personal experiences with program evaluation. Second, because ECB is complex and specific to contextual issues (e.g., political, organizational), the study may not have captured the complexities of ECB. Third, the participants shared authentic perceptions during the interviews, but a validity threat can occur if the participants are not accurate with their self-reporting during structured interviews. Fourth, the participants' perceptions, beliefs, feelings and opinions were treated as real and authentic. These data were the evidence during the data analysis phase for developing the themes, answering the research questions, and developing conclusions. The main risk with this approach is that it may have overly relied on inferences that may have resulted in unwarranted or invalid conclusions (Maxwell, 2005).

Finally, triangulation of the data methods, using interview, survey, and record review data was planned. Because the survey data were insufficient and not used for this study, the full triangulation did not occur. The validity threat was minimal because of the rich qualitative data gathered from the interviews. There is a possibility, however, that the data gathered and analyzed from a survey may have contributed different themes because of the complex special education ECB context.

Ethics

Michael Patton gives advice to young evaluators: "Work closely with decision makers to establish trust and rapport, but maintain distance to guarantee objectivity and credibility" (Patton, 2008, p. 36). It was not likely that the special education administrators interviewed were familiar, thus a potential bias was minimal. The Director of Research and Evaluation was also completing her doctorate at the same higher education institution and approached her interviews and research involvement

professionally. Because she was familiar with the researcher from enrollment in a shared course, an appropriate distance was maintained to insure objectivity and credibility.

Organizational Politics

The subjects discussed their program evaluation projects as their efforts sought to improve their current special education programs. As the special education leaders discussed their program evaluation efforts, both positive and negative tensions became evident regarding the politics of the district's special education department. These moments were used to gain an understanding of their experiences with the ECB process and use. Because ECB has a developmental nature and purpose, their perceived negative experiences and tensions were not judged as inadequate efforts or less effective.

Positionality

The researcher's positionality potentially contributed bias in two ways. First, she has worked in special education for over 25 years and is currently employed as a district-wide K-12+ licensed occupational therapist (OTR/L) in another Midwestern metropolitan school district. Although the researcher acknowledges this study's bias, this positionality may have affected the results in a positive way. The researcher has experienced the challenges first hand of striving to educate K-12+ students with a variety of disabilities in multiple special education programs and settings, which include a K-12 setting IV program, secondary autism (ASD) program, secondary multiple needs (DCD) programs, and a transition special education program for students 18 years to 21 years of age. Because of these special education experiences and expertise, the researcher understood fully and confidently when the subjects described evaluation in the context of their special education programs. The researcher sought to manage her bias by actively

listening during the interviews, maintaining focus on the complex evaluation content, and striving to maintain neutrality throughout the study. The researcher felt it would have been difficult to fully understand how ECB supported the special education system in the Two-County School District without this positionality in a similar special education context.

Second, the researcher's relationship with Dr. Jean King, her research advisor and university professor of two semester courses in evaluation, potentially contributed bias. King's primary research emphasis includes interactive evaluation practice, participatory approaches to program evaluation, evaluation capacity building, and evaluator competencies. The initial research idea and plan originated separately from King during a university course with another professor, when the researcher began the focus of the literature review in participatory approaches to program evaluation. The researcher actively managed this bias by meeting with her advisor following the completion of key tasks during the interpretative data analysis phase, which included the plan for the coding process, the emergence of the primary and secondary themes, and the writing process for each chapter in the dissertation. To reduce the potential bias, the researcher strived to maintain neutrality from the advisor's research and perceptions throughout the study to ensure a quality research study.

To fully understand how the researcher's positivity may have contributed to this qualitative study, her (a) professional expertise, (b) personal qualities, (c) beliefs, (d) related professional experiences in multiple organizational contexts, and (e) how her related professional occupational therapy (OT) competencies and skills will be described

further in this section. It is her opinion that her positivity explained further in these next examples affected the study's results in a positive manner.

Beyond the typical competencies of a school-based OTR/L, the researcher developed a passion and expertise towards working with students with significant disabilities (e.g., cognitive, autism, and emotional/behavioral disabilities), promoting proactive behavior strategies, teaching and learning of emergent literacy, augmenting communication skills, and using assistive technology skills. She has always challenged herself professionally to be the best. She collaborated, coached, mentored, and allowed other special educators around her to grow as well. As an OTR/L, she strives to improve a student's functional task performance with their everyday learning and to enhance a student's ability to interact within his or her physical and social environments within their classrooms.

The researcher's beliefs focus on a commitment for democratic and ethical values to design an education that is accessible for all students of all abilities. Her educational and occupational therapy (OT) beliefs are:

1. All students can learn.
2. All students need to experience quality teaching and learning, in core curriculum areas. Literacy skills are essential for increasing the functional skills and employability for individuals with a variety of conditions.
3. All students benefit from learning through studying the humanities (e.g., art, music, history, and literature) and exploring content that appeals to their senses (e.g., natural and environmental sciences).

ECB is context dependent, and the researcher's professional experiences in multiple organizational contexts were significantly helpful in understanding the organizational contexts in the ECB literature and during this study. Throughout her professional career, she has worked in a variety of settings and contexts, which have included long-term care, cardiac rehabilitation, short term rehabilitation (i.e., health care), state government, and her current special education context. These settings allowed her to serve people of all ages, develop her therapeutic skills, expand her leadership skills, and engage in evaluation process and use. Early in the researcher's career, the researcher served as an occupational therapy supervisor at a long-term care facility and a metropolitan hospital. Within the hospital context, she was first introduced to routine evaluation where the process and use was used to solve health-care problems, such as reducing the frequency of patient falls. Following the researcher's graduate degree in learning technology, the researcher served as a Distance Education and Technology Coordinator at the State Department of Education, where she worked closely with an outside evaluator to set up an evaluation process for state department technology projects.

In the educational context, she served as a parent and professional representative on multiple district-level, school-level, and professional committees, which have included special education, technology, general education curriculum, and evaluation *think tanks* in special education, community mental health, and technology. She was the lead for the OT and physical therapy (PT) department in her current school district for many years. Besides improving her OT competencies, these opportunities expanded her leadership, project management, and evaluation skills, which gave her a positive perspective for this study.

For the higher level reflective thinking required in this qualitative study, the researcher also used a unique OT perspective and skill of analyzing a task (also referred to as task analysis) in which an OT client's performance is analyzed into components of underlying ability and skill to solve a client's problem. Gained from the researcher's professional training and experience as an OTR/L, a task analysis is a process that also considers the supports and the barriers in a client's environment. Through observation, testing, and interviewing, the researcher has extensive OT experiences in gathering information to determine which components of performance are interfering with the person's ability to complete everyday functional tasks. The researcher used her interviewing skills and her reflective thinking was continuously used for the ECB "task analysis" or making meaning of ECB in the special education system.

Important to OT competencies and for this study, the researcher used her personal relational qualities to build a trusting climate and immediate relationship with the subjects during the interviews. Important for this qualitative study, the researcher needed to gather the subjects' perceptions and experiences in this special education ECB context through these relational interviews. During the qualitative analysis and interpretative process, the researcher reflected on the importance of the reciprocal relationship between the subject and their environment. The researcher has managed many successful projects and building effective relationships between colleagues, related professionals, support staff, and administrators. As a result, these experiences have been critical for her success. The researcher is a positive person and respectful to all people she encounters in a variety of settings. The researcher's personal quality was important for connecting personally with the subjects in order to gather the most meaningful ECB data.

Like all organizations, schools and special education classrooms can be a stressful environment where negativity brews discontent and dissatisfaction among the program staff. The researcher routinely experiences both positive and negative school cultures and tension while delivering OT services in her special education programs. Because of the researcher's intentional practice to remain professional, she felt she was prepared to strive to remain in a neutral or unbiased position when the subjects shared their positive and negative perceptions during the interviews.

Significantly motivated to ensure quality, objective, and credible research, the researcher sought to manage her bias and promote strong ethics by striving to maintain neutrality and distance throughout the study, which included the following strategies and approaches:

1. Completed the initial part of the literature review to determine the initial research idea in ECB within an educational context;
2. Created the preliminary plan to study ECB in the special education context as a follow-up to King's (2002) special education self-study, before initiating an active advisee relationship and actively meeting with her research advisor;
3. Consistently used the interview structure with all of the participants;
4. Planfully interviewed the Director of REA and the Director of Special Education following the data analysis phase;
5. Actively listened during the interviews and maintained focus on the complex evaluation content because of her familiarity with the special education context;

6. Independently determined the plan to use *A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity* (Volkov & King, 2007) for coding the data during the deductive analytical process, without prior consultation from her research advisor. This checklist was independently discovered and retrieved in March 2011, when the researcher completed a presentation on Michael Scriven's work for one of her evaluation courses before the initiation of this study. Additional codes were created when the data did not align with the existing codes.
7. Independently completed the data analysis descriptive and interpretation phases, without input and assistance from the research advisor. The themes were identified first, before meeting and sharing the results with her research advisor.
8. Independently completed this research study, which included the writing of each chapter, creation of the ECB Theoretical and Conceptual Framework, ECB definition, ECB models, and other ECB graphics to expound on the findings.

In summary, Chapter Three explained this study's research design and methods, which included an individual interview sample of ten subjects and a detailed record review of twenty-five documents. Next, the site and participant selection was described. The qualitative analysis was explained in detail, which included the descriptive and interpretative data analysis phases. Limitations, which included ethics, organizational politics, and resources, were explained. Finally, the positionality statement detailed that the researcher's positivity may have affected this research study, potentially contributing

bias because of her extensive special education experiences and her relationship with her research advisor and university professor who taught two semester courses in evaluation. Her adviser's primary research emphasizes participatory evaluation and evaluation capacity building. However, the researcher's positivity was useful and contributed to this study in unique ways. In the next chapter, the study's findings will be presented.

Chapter 4

Key Themes in the Study's Findings

Chapter Four will expound on the study's seven themes and detail how these themes and examples of evaluation use are connected to ECB in the Two-County's special education context. The results revealed positive evidence of an evaluation process and use in the Two-County's special education department from 2000 to 2015. The data gathered from the interviews and records revealed the following examples:

1. From September 2000 to June 2001, Anna Campbell, an internal program evaluator, completed a formal special education evaluation study and referred to as the original "Gold Standard" by several of the leaders.
2. From 2001 to 2002, Carol Schwartzkopf, a former Director of Special Education, initiated and launched the first formal continuous improvement process, aligned with the state government. In 2002, the federal mandate, NCLB, was passed and the Two-County school district set up a district infrastructure for these accountability requirements, which positively contributed to the district's context with using data for ECB.
3. In July 2009, Gwendolyn Taylor, a second Director of Special Education and Veronica Galles, a top-level evaluation leader, launched three evaluation projects in three special education programs.
4. In August 2011, these same two individuals launched three more evaluation projects in three more special education programs.

Chapter Four will present the key themes from the data collection. They are as follows: (1) An evaluation leader and champions are critical to direct and sustain ECB efforts, (2) ECB requires an evaluation leader to create a formal infrastructure, (3) ECB promotes a participatory process through engagement with stakeholders, (4) evaluation use facilitates reflective thinking and decision making about change, (5) ECB develops a communication tool that facilitates communication use, (6) ECB requires sophisticated data use for special education's internal and external accountability contexts, and (7) ECB adapts and changes over time to fit the organization's internal and external contexts. This chapter will expound on these seven ECB themes highlighting special education's continuous improvement efforts for its complex district-wide special education programs.

Several detailed timelines of the subjects' program evaluation contributions documented the evidence of Two-County's program evaluation projects, related evaluation activities, evaluative thinking, and critical events or contexts supporting evaluation. [See Appendix G for these timelines.]

An Evaluation Leader and Champions Are Critical to Build, Direct, and Sustain ECB Efforts

As the Two-County School District built its evaluation capacity over the years, ECB required leaders and champions with expertise and skills to build, direct, and sustain program evaluation efforts at multiple levels within a program, department, or an organizational context.

An evaluation leader has finely honed evaluation and leadership skills. He or she has the essential role and responsibilities to build, grow, and sustain ECB in an organization. First, an evaluation leader creates a vision and promotes a plan to guide his

or her leadership practices and integrates ECB principles and practices within an organization. Aligned with the vision and plan, the leader builds an evaluation infrastructure and sets up an evaluation process for routinely modeling and using program evaluation. An evaluation leader directs, mentors, and coaches other top departmental leaders or evaluation champions in key organizational positions to integrate and use components of the evaluation process within their department's improvement process. Next, the evaluation leader develops organizational relationships with top organizational and departmental leaders (e.g., Superintendent and Director of Special Education) to understand, value, promote, and increase the demand for routine evaluation use. Finally, the organization's evaluation leader and other evaluation champions demonstrate leadership skills that are closely aligned with their organizational capacity to use evaluation routinely with other people in their organization, department, or program.

Nine of the ten participants reported the importance of leadership for their program evaluation work in the Two-County School District. The data pointed to two evaluation leaders and five champions over time. These seven individuals had different ECB roles and responsibilities, but they all demonstrated a high level of evaluative thinking, knowledge, and skills. There were two evaluation leaders: (1) Anna Campbell, Coordinator of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA) from 1999-2001, and (2) Veronica Galles, Director of REA from 2008 to current time. Evaluation champions are real people who are committed to program evaluation in their organization (King, 2007). The third individual was an evaluation champion, named Gwendolyn Taylor, Director of Special Education from 2008 – 2013, who demonstrated the importance of having an ECB vision and a plan for the implementation of several special education evaluation

projects. The four other evaluation champions who led evaluation projects for their special education programs included: (4) Danielle O'Connor, Special Education Setting IV Program Supervisor; (5) Hazel Clayton, Special Education DCD supervisor; (6) Barbara Ritz, DCD teacher lead; and (7) Tiffany O'Neil, an Evaluation Specialist who worked collaboratively at the district and the classroom levels.

Case studies demonstrate the important role of leadership in ECB.

A top-level evaluation leader creates a vision, provides the necessary expertise with program evaluation to lead a research and evaluation department, and puts an evaluation infrastructure in place within an organization. Anna Campbell, former Coordinator of REA, was the first evaluation leader who demonstrated strong leadership during the time period of 1999-2001. The Associate Superintendent brought Campbell in to the school district to create a vision for the evaluation unit. Then, Campbell implemented evaluation by putting the infrastructure in place and modeling the behavior. Danielle O'Connor, special education Setting IV program supervisor, shared how she learned a tremendous amount from Campbell during her evaluation experiences since 2000.

What I am recalling is a number of different phases, working with Dr. Campbell. She was a phenomenal woman, and I learned a tremendous amount from her. And I always appreciated her expertise she brought into our district. I recalled doing some action research for our program evaluation in terms of action-based research in which we were looking at some different things within this special education program.

In 1999-2001, Campbell was successful with her program evaluation work, but she worked within a different organizational structure and context than Galles' current organizational structure and context to impact ECB positive growth and change.

Campbell's work in 1999-2001 showed her high level of program evaluation expertise, necessary to launch a new department and conduct the formal special education evaluation in 2000. Her less important title of REA Coordinator did not necessarily mean she had less importance. Campbell directly reported to the Associate Superintendent, who may not have shared Campbell's ECB work with the Superintendent. Surprisingly, Campbell had little access to the Superintendent, meeting with him only once during her two-year tenure.

A top-level evaluation leader demonstrates effective organizational leadership skills to build the capacity to use evaluation routinely with other key leaders in an organization. Galles was identified as the study's second evaluation champion. She was distinguished for her evaluation expertise as well as her exceptional organizational and leadership qualities. In 2000, Galles shared her role in the Two-County School District:

My main role was to help facilitate instructional and reflective conversations with staff, around their teaching practices. One of the things I did, related to my current position, was to help implement a district-wide assessment system. Each building was doing their own thing, so I was instrumental in creating and facilitating district-wide conversations around test prep, using the data, and what did the data mean – those kinds of things. So, it was a different role than where I'm at now, and we were just on the cusp of the whole accountability era when there was No Child Left Behind coming in.

Galles directed the research, evaluation, and testing requirements and demands of the school district. Galles started her key program evaluation leadership position a year before Gwendolyn Taylor returned to the school district as the Interim Director of Special Education. As an evaluation leader, Galles directed, facilitated, coached, and moved forward her evaluation vision, expanded the infrastructure, and developed the process that Campbell had initiated and modeled in 1999-2001. Her role and responsibilities led to successive ECB efforts to build a sustainable process and ongoing capacity of special

education leaders to use program evaluation for special education improvement. Galles emphasized the importance of leadership and described her role:

The most important things that I learned – we learned through the process – is that leadership matters. One of my main roles was and is to encourage the leadership, facilitate, move forward the leadership team, and then support them in that work. I provide insight and expertise when they need it and ask questions when they need it. I see my role as an advocacy role and not an advocacy role for results, but an advocacy role for evaluation processes because if you don't have leadership supports, then there is no authority behind it in the program, and that is critical.

There were four organizational conditions that significantly influenced the redevelopment and growth of ECB in 2009. First, the REA department was attached to a newly hired associate superintendent with oversight of K-12 central departments. The outgoing superintendent decided to change the district's organizational structure, upon the retirement of the two former associate superintendents. Three new associate superintendents were hired all at once: one in charge of K-12 central departments (e.g., REA department), one in charge of secondary schools and secondary curriculum, and one in charge of elementary schools and elementary curriculum. The secondary superintendent did not want any of the central departments.

Second, in order for Galles to interact with the staff who reported to him, the K-12 associate superintendent required his approval for all of Galles' interactions. Second, the elementary associate superintendent, secondary associate superintendent, and the K-12 administrators (e.g., elementary and secondary administrators) were organizationally separate and not routinely connected with the central departments (e.g., REA and special education departments).

Third, as part of Taylor's new employment in 2008, the superintendent and the school board gave her a directive to evaluate district-wide special education programs.

Because of Galles' disconnect with the other two associate superintendents (e.g., elementary and secondary), her time and workload became available to support Taylor's new directive to operationalize and develop a program evaluation model for the special education department. According to Galles, these four conditions were significant for ECB and "learning from doing" through her shared program evaluation work with Taylor.

Fourth, Taylor used federal stimulus special education funds to hire Campbell as an external evaluation expert to provide coaching and expertise to both Galles and Taylor as ECB was operationalized again for the launching of multiple special education program evaluation projects.

The findings show significant changes in Galles' internal organizational structure and context from 2008 to 2015. Galles' professional and organizational work in the REA department now connects to every department in this educational system. At that time, Galles became politically and organizationally well-connected to the superintendent, the cabinet, and the members of the school board, which was a contrast to Campbell's experience in 1999-2001. Effective July 2015, over a decade after Campbell left the district, Galles reported directly to the superintendent for the supervision of her REA departmental work.

Galles understood the resources within the school district, and she collaborated with Taylor to use them for special education evaluation needs, such as promoting the same access to the data dashboard as the building principals. Galles stated:

My main role is to make sure that the top leaders – the Director in this case and the program supervisors -- understand and value program evaluation because it then transcends and moves forward.

Galles reflected about her progress with ECB in the Two-County school district:

I would say that there are definitely components in the organization that are excellent. There are pockets of excellence. Would I say everybody is completely there? No. We will still have some work to do. But again, I would say that everybody is on a continuum of evaluative thinking and evaluative use, all the way from knowing something about it, to being able to somewhat plan, and facilitate a formal evaluation on their own. But we still have work to do, and we are moving in the right direction.

Galles felt ECB was similar in the special education department as experienced in the entire organization. However, she felt the DCD and Setting IV special education programs were much further down the path. Galles said, “But in terms of the whole department, I would say that they are probably on a continuum like the district.”

A top-level evaluation leader provides ongoing coaching and mentoring in promoting and growing other evaluation leaders and champions’ evaluation skills. As the top evaluation leaders, Campbell and Galles demonstrated the importance of ongoing coaching and mentoring in ECB. The findings showed three types of coaching and mentoring: (a) an evaluation leader coaching and mentoring another evaluation leader, (b) an evaluation leader coaching and mentoring a top special education champion, and (c) an evaluation leader coaching and mentoring program special education champions who were implementing evaluation projects.

The first example showed how Campbell, an experienced evaluation leader, coached and mentored Galles, who was rebuilding the district’s evaluation infrastructure and process Campbell had established in 1999-2001. Later in 2009, Campbell returned to the school district as an external evaluation expert and consultant from 2009 - 2011. Since her time in 1999-2001 as an internal evaluation leader, she served in a different

evaluation and leadership capacity to coach Galles. Working with Galles, the evaluation process was applied to special education's context and moved Taylor's vision forward for using evaluation for the special education department's continuous improvement.

Campbell stated, "The first time I was only an evaluator. The second time, I was a coach to the very talented Head of Evaluation" (3_3_a). Here is what Galles said of Campbell's coaching:

Campbell was an active collaborator in that process, and she was an expert absolutely. She is an expert, but she plays the coaching role really well. She works alongside and encourages people in terms of the thought process and validating people's ideas, expanding people's ideas, and tying that to the process. She does not have to do "I'm an evaluation expert." She does the work without having to come in and be the leader of everything. She is a phenomenal collaborator, coach, and encourager of the work that is happening and an active participant in what is going on.

The second example demonstrated how Galles provided ongoing coaching and mentoring in promoting and growing Taylor's evaluation skills while she was the Director of Special Education (2008-2013). Special education leaders valued Galles' program evaluation expertise and leadership and felt that she was an exceptional person (6_6_af). Tiffany O'Neil, who serves as a TOSA in the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment said:

We have a super powerhouse. I mean she is-- her ability to bring you along, mentor you, and point out things that you need to work on in a way that's positive. It has been refreshing for me. Trust me; this hasn't always been the case (6_6_b).

In 2008 Galles was relatively new to her leadership role in the REA department as Taylor became the Director of Special Education. Both of these women had mutual respect for each other, which set up a strong catalyst for their shared and collaborative

evaluation role and responsibilities. Taylor positively described her professional relationship with Galles:

Then I went back to Two-County as a Director. Then Veronica and I worked closely together. We both brought different perspectives to the table which was great because the work can be hard work and frustrating. I tend to be less patient. I just want the work to get done. I am not into word smithing. I think there were parts that were still learning and still needing to refine. It was good work.

An example of Galles' ongoing coaching and mentoring as an evaluation leader was noted in several situations, such as when she attended portions of Taylor's monthly core leadership meeting for the special education administrators and coaching the DCD evaluation champions (2_4b_a). Second, her exceptional evaluation insight and expertise were used when she collaborated closely with Taylor for her State Department of Education's Continuous Improvement Process (CIMP) by building Taylor's capacity to use the program evaluation process in an active and routine manner during these important and mandatory meetings. Third, Galles asked necessary questions when meeting with the special education administrators regarding their evaluation projects.

Galles further discussed Taylor's weekly meetings:

My attendance at the weekly meetings with Taylor was extremely critical, and Taylor got it! Taylor was a natural evaluator which made that easier. She understood the importance of knowing what was happening to the program and finding the critical pieces and goal components that needed improvement. It was extremely important to have a shared understanding of what were the critical components of a program and by having me in the mix with them. Her whole team understood the significance and importance of evaluation.

Table 3 summarizes the evaluation leader's role and responsibilities that came from these data.

Table 3

Role and Responsibilities of a Program Evaluation Leader

Purpose: Lead other key leaders in an organization to build their capacity to use a defined evaluation process routinely.

1. Lead, facilitate, model, coach, and move forward the evaluation knowledge and skills of other district leaders (e.g., Director of Special Education, special education supervisors);
 2. Attend core leadership meetings of a department to model and build the leaders' capacity to use a program evaluation process;
 3. Provide evaluation insight and expertise to other leaders;
 4. Ask questions when needed with other leaders to promote their evaluative thinking;
 5. Serve in an advocacy role for the evaluation process and use in an organization; and
 6. Organizationally align with other top leaders of an organization to promote their understanding and value for evaluation.
-

ECB requires evaluation champions in multiple levels of an organization.

ECB requires a dedicated evaluation champion who leads a department's program evaluation. Taylor felt that ECB sustainability required an administrator who led program evaluation and was the most critical piece for evaluation (10_2). Taylor felt if an organization did not have an evaluation champion who was committed to the program evaluation process, a champion who stuck with it, and a leader who supported it, ECB would dissolve. As she expressed it, a leader dedicated to evaluation was critical because program evaluation was really hard work (10_2).

Taylor continued to rigorously develop the purpose of the special education program evaluation process from 2009 to 2013, working closely and effectively with Galles and the other evaluation champions. A critical finding, Taylor shared how she and the other evaluation champions learned as they went, and this theme was evident throughout all of her special education program evaluation projects. The only way that ECB happened was if the organization had leadership that held people accountable, provided support and resources, supported principals, understood what program evaluation looked like, and finally accepted that ECB took time.

As the study's third evaluation champion, Taylor showed that she was firmly committed to an evaluation infrastructure and model, a participatory evaluation process, and evaluation's developmental nature when she decided which special education programs needed to be evaluated and promoted routine use at the classroom level. Her role and responsibilities as an evaluation champion led to successive ECB efforts to build a sustainable process and ongoing capacity of special education leaders to use program evaluation in special education improvement.

An evaluation champion identifies multiple group possibilities for organizational improvements and uses ECB to move the leader's mindset for change forward. Through the evaluation process and as part of its use, Taylor identified multiple group possibilities for the improvement of the special education department. She did not have any issues with moving change forward during this time and was supportive of program evaluation because she knew it was one way she and the other special education administrators could give information to people who did not understand special education and highlight the growth her programs made. Taylor needed to be clear about what she

needed to know and what she wanted to find out when launching a program evaluation summit (10_2). She had access to sophisticated data tools and could analyze the data in many different ways, but she felt that program evaluation provided clarity and guided her special education work towards change and continuous improvement.

An evaluation champion understands ECB concepts, creates an ECB vision for continuous improvement, and systematically operationalizes the program evaluation process and use. The evaluation champion's visionary leadership for ECB was systematically operationalized by building the capacity to use program evaluation routinely in the program, department, or organization. Taylor, Director of Special Education from 2008-2013, was the third evaluation champion and a visionary special education leader. She led significant ECB efforts to operationalize and build the capacity to use evaluation routinely in the special education department. Taylor's five-year commitment to launching a series of special education evaluation projects showed strong evidence for defining her as an evaluation champion. The former Assistant Director of Special Education, who worked closely with Taylor during this time period, revealed that the special education department had not used program evaluation since Campbell's departure in 2001.

Evaluation resumed for special education when Taylor relaunched the updated evaluation process in 2009 during her second year of leadership (2_5a_h), following a directive from the superintendent when she was offered employment in the Two-County School District. Taylor launched the ECSE, DCD, and Setting IV Summits in 2009, which showed an important transitional ECB phase from Campbell's formal special

education evaluation work in 2000 to Taylor's informal program development work in 2002 with the district's Launch program, specifically targeted for students with autism.

Taylor continued to rigorously develop the purpose of the special education evaluation process from 2009 to 2013, working closely and effectively with Galles and Campbell. Taylor's valuing of evaluation was demonstrated by her more formalized participatory evaluation process and the use of data for decision making, as noted with her initial ECSE, DCD, and Setting IV evaluation projects. In 2011, she sponsored the Setting III EBD, Transition Program (for 18 – 21 year old students), and the Student Evaluation (i.e., student due process) summits. As an evaluation champion, Taylor was firmly committed to developing the evaluation infrastructure and participatory evaluation process and to acknowledging its developmental nature when she decided which special education programs needed to be evaluated. This finding will be described later when details related to the participatory process and its developmental form and use are presented.

ECB requires an evaluation leader and champions to provide clarity for stakeholders and a circular path to sustain the process and continue the momentum necessary for the routine use of ECB. When Taylor launched the ECSE program evaluation project in 2009, she inadvertently modeled a negative leadership example when she failed to provide clarity in setting up the evaluation's vision and purpose with the early childhood special education supervisor. The ECSE was a two-day extensive summit with internal and external stakeholders and experts. Following the summit, Taylor felt that the ECSE evaluation project failed to get the necessary traction to develop at the program level because of the staff's lack of commitment to the purpose of

evaluation or value for ECSE program improvement. Taylor considered the ECSE evaluation project her first formalized project as the Director of Special Education. She started the evaluation process with ECSE because this program operated out of one site as compared to the district-wide center-based special education Developmental Cognitive Disability (DCD) programs that extended across the district in six different schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. DCD was a special education disability category. The students served under this special education category had conditions that resulted in intellectual functioning significantly below average, which is associated with concurrent deficits in adaptive behavior that require special education and related services.

Taylor explained that the ECSE evaluation project was their first time through the retooled evaluation plan and process (aligned with Galles and Campbell), and, unfortunately, the ECSE staff did not know what they were doing. This project was the first time that Taylor worked with Galles and Campbell in a close, collaborative manner.

Taylor felt the ECSE evaluation process put too much emphasis on their current early childhood context. For the ECSE two-day summit, the formal participatory and inclusive process brought together a large group of stakeholders in early childhood to determine the core early childhood focus areas. They had all of the stakeholders at the table and brought in experts (10_2). Campbell began this evaluation process by providing training in terms of “What is program evaluation?” (5_1_ca). Two university professors (from one in-state and one out-of-state university) defined what the ECSE summit needed to accomplish, presented the EC data, and provided extensive research so that there were resources to determine evidence-based practices in the early childhood field. In

retrospect, early childhood data and relevant research were not what the teachers were interested in because they perceived that they already were really doing good work. When the early childhood teachers heard about these so-called “best practices,” they felt it happened to be everything they were currently doing (10_2).

In retrospect Taylor believed that the evaluation process was not clear enough to the stakeholders to move the ECSE program evaluation forward. Because of the lack of clarity with the stakeholders, the evaluation process did not define a vision, and the process did not gather enough information about how program evaluation would offer meaningful change and better outcomes than their current programs. Taylor felt Galles and she did not iron out all of the bugs in advance, but they did manage to gather a strong picture of their current early childhood program. Taylor felt that the special education department did not frame the question correctly with where the special education department needed to go with their early childhood program. She concluded that someone neutral like Galles, Director of REA, who worked outside of the special education department, could have helped to better frame their evaluation questions.

The program evaluation process was fully initiated in the early childhood department, but evaluation use did not develop in a similar, positive manner as the DCD evaluation project because there was no champion for it. The evaluation process stalled, and use failed to gain significant traction in early childhood because of the ECSE leadership and ECSE organizational structural changes. O’Neil, who participated in the ECSE summit as a lead ECSE teacher and who now works as an evaluation specialist, felt the lack of traction could be attributed to the early childhood leaders and not Taylor and Galles. The program evaluation was for the early childhood special education leaders

to own, and a perception was shared that the ECSE leadership did not own it enough for the rest of the group of early childhood special education teachers (6_4b_c).

O'Neil discussed how the program evaluation process for the early childhood program lacked the circular path to sustain the process and continue the momentum that was necessary for the routine use of ECB. O'Neil stated:

I think about the early childhood one that I was so closely involved with. We had a lot of changes with staff, changes in the program structure, and so now I'm thinking we needed to really visit that. They were still changing their leadership, and they were not at a place where they could do it. When we did EC program eval, it went on the shelf, and again it was not sustained. We did not, as a program, take it out and have it help us drive a lot of our work. We did some staff development around it, and we implemented new projects based on what we discovered in the program eval, but EC hasn't been revisited like we needed to do. It hasn't been that circular path that we talked about – you either go this way or this way. It has kind of stalled (6_3_ag).

O'Neil further reflected on the program evaluation process in early childhood:

And I think that one of the areas that we didn't do a good job was sustaining with the early childhood program. Because as intimately as involved as I was with the early childhood evaluation at the beginning, I don't think I clearly understood that we were going to need to keep this front and forward (6_4b_bf).

According to Galles, leadership influenced the slow pace since the 2009 ECSE summit. She stated:

They have changed in leadership, and again it comes down to leadership. There has been change in leadership at the ECSE level as well as now at the Director level. We were trying to build an understanding of what we have done, where we were, and trying to find time in the midst of two brand new SpEd Supervisors. They did not have any experience. They were really learning a role, and so if you think about the basic needs of learning a new role, they were at the bottom level, infancy, of trying to figure out what is this role and let alone managing the components on top of it. Now, if that would have been strong with embedding in evaluation, that could have helped knowing the critical components and what the shared vision of the typical components up front. We did some of that conversation, but that one was the very first one that we had done.

ECB needs evaluation champions who continuously refine the process and demonstrate sustained efforts over time. First, the DCD program evaluation project demonstrated a positive example of leadership because of the continuous refinement of the evaluation process and use. According to Taylor, the DCD K-12 program evaluation process was somewhat better than that of the ECSE. When Taylor targeted the DCD K-12 district-wide programs for the next evaluation project, her evaluation and leadership skills were somewhat better developed than during the previous ECSE evaluation process. Taylor accessed and summarized different DCD research practices to show the range and possibilities of DCD evidence-based practices. She involved all of the stakeholders as she did for the ECSE evaluation project, but, because the process included a wider variety of people, the results were reportedly better. Taylor explained that their program evaluation process was constantly refined as they went and stated:

Taylor commented on the DCD evaluation:

When we went to DCD center-based programs, we were a little bit better. We summarized some of that data. We were able to get multiple pieces of research about “What is best practice out there?” There are different practices. There isn’t just one way. We did involve all the stakeholders. We had a wider variety of people, and so we got better. And it constantly needed refinement as we went. I think that really understanding the purpose of the data, what we wanted to happen, and being comfortable with going back and changing; and knowing it is a process. So I think that was good.

Second, the DCD evaluation project was a positive example of the sustained efforts of the following three evaluation champions: (1) Hazel Clayton, Special Education DCD supervisor; (2) Barbara Ritz, DCD teacher lead; and (3) Tiffany O’Neil, an Evaluation Specialist who worked collaboratively at the district and the classroom levels. Taylor considered this program evaluation core leadership team her strongest ECB team

and reported that it was hands-down the most effective evaluation project. She felt the DCD program evaluation project had the strongest evaluation champions. These three showed a strong commitment for the completion of the routine evaluation work of this project. It is worth noting that the DCD programs are challenging to manage because they extend geographically across the district.

Taylor hoped to see an improvement in the DCD student outcomes because the evaluation champions demonstrated consistency and high quality with their DCD program evaluation project. From a continuous improvement perspective, she successfully supported program evaluation improvements more consistently across classrooms. The implementation of a district-wide curriculum and how the DCD teachers delivered the curriculum with fidelity was considered an ultimate achievement for her (10_7). For a Director of Special Education to say, “See our students become more independent” as an outcome of the evaluation process and use was considered an achievement for her. If special education had a tool to measure this along with other outcomes such as the students’ ability to do the work and function more sufficiently in their program, this would ultimately be how a Director of Special Education would determine student learning within the district’s special education system (10_7).

Until program evaluation was used and institutionalized in the department, ECB did not occur. In special education, there was high turnover in staffing. Like any other practice, Taylor felt that unless program evaluation was being watched, measured, and communicated by a top leader, ECB died out (10_2). In addition, Taylor felt ECB would continue in her school district because the practice of special education was too nebulous to understand the work of special education. ECB provided a means and a method to

create a plan for improvement with these students and to understand what was happening in the special education programs. Taylor also felt her special education programs needed consistency in leadership through ECB in order to sustain the process. Taylor stated:

The other most hands-down critical piece is you have to have an administrator that will lead it. If you do not have someone that is committed to the process, that can stick with it, that supports it, it will dissolve. Especially, in the continuous improvement process, it is really hard. It is not as concrete as saying, "Okay, we have data and 60% of our kids are proficient in reading. We need to move to 70% proficient in reading, so these are the reading strategies that we are going to do across the district." - because it is really hard-core data. This is much more subjective, and it takes more time. Until it is being utilized and institutionalized, it does not happen. Because you have such a high turmoil in special education, it would like any other practice - unless it is being watched, being measured, and being communicated about, it [evaluation] dies out.

Program evaluation required a higher level of data analysis and interpretation and took more time. When Taylor explained an ECB principle from her program evaluation experiences, it showed that ECB data use was not as concrete as the use of hard-core data. But special education was a complex system with too many variables and too small a population for the most part to have consistency with the special education specialized strategies.

Frequently, special education leaders could not give the specialized instruction or strategies in a box and tell teachers how to implement them. They could not train the special education teachers on a specific technique; rather, special education teachers needed to develop these strategies themselves. Through the ECB process and its outcome, evaluation capacity, evaluation champions' leadership was critical for building quality special education programs district-wide.

An evaluation champion uses a very thorough and comprehensive evaluation process for change during a program's transition phase. Special education

administrators faced challenges with the timing the launch of an initial evaluation process within a set of complex organizational and program changes, as noted in the 2009 Setting IV EBD evaluation project. Setting IV EBD program evaluation was less formalized than the ECSE evaluation, but showed another positive example of the work of another evaluation champion, Danielle O'Connor, who increased program evaluation capacity in the special education department. [Please see Figure 15 in Appendix G for a detailed timeline of her work.] In 2009, O'Connor served as the special education supervisor of a full-day special education Setting IV EBD program for K-12 students when Taylor launched the Setting IV EBD program evaluation summit. O'Connor was a veteran special education administrator who had been in the district for a number of years working in four different special education programs. Besides her being an evaluation champion, the findings showed a general positive perception that O'Connor was an effective leader in a tough Setting IV EBD program. O'Connor's program did not have the high staff turn-over that is typical for a challenging special education program like this one.

O'Connor was an evaluation champion who was committed to the use of program evaluation, naturally integrated the guiding principles of their five areas with their school improvement plan, and found evaluation affirming, which included: (a) behavioral and environmental management, (b) comprehensive academics, (c) mental health student support, (d) collaborative school culture, and (e) accountability and due process (Two-County Setting IV Program Evaluation Summary, 2012, 4_1_s). Contributing to her development as an evaluation champion, she was involved in multiple special education evaluation projects, which included Campbell's 2000 formal special education

evaluation, the 2001 Launch program development project with Taylor, and the 2009 Setting IV EBD program evaluation project. O'Connor described how the purpose of their program evaluation process was less formalized than the early childhood project.

(4_1_a). The Setting IV supervisor stated,

Because of some of the things you hear about on a day to day basis, staff members were all over the board, and there were times when I was all over the board with it, too. You know because it was a lot. There was a lot on my plate. Program evaluation just wasn't the thing I would have added on my plate at that time. In all honesty, timing of it was "you're crazy." This just is not a good time. You know I just couldn't understand why it had to be right now, but it did (4_1_o).

O'Connor used the program evaluation process as a leadership tool to meet the demands of her significant program changes during this state of transition and confusion. This turmoil was challenging for two primary reasons. First, in a cost-saving move, the special education department started to bring back their district's students with complex disabilities from other out-of-district placements. In addition, the school district was building a new school, but the change and transitions of these challenging students back to the Two-County School district started before the Setting IV program moved into its new building. O'Connor did not have time to plan for the new students coming back. She originally thought that she would have had a year to do evaluation before bringing this complex student population back to the Two-County School District. The Setting IV supervisor reflected,

But we had to and we are still doing this, figuring it out as we go. You know there were people who were in very different places in terms of how they felt about that (4_1_1).

Program staff members were used to working with students with conditions who demonstrated average to above average cognitive abilities with mental health needs. The

students who were transitioning back to this Setting IV program demonstrated significant conduct disorders and severe acting out behaviors. In 2009, students with autism were not typically in this program, including students with lower cognitive functioning with high challenging behaviors. They had a couple of students with autism, but not the numbers they began to serve (4_1_1).

O'Connor, who skillfully facilitated this informal program evaluation participatory process, was gifted at bringing the Setting IV EBD teachers along in developing a common belief and a common practice that could be implemented in their programs. As a result of this process, everyone in her program reportedly knew what they needed to be doing.

Working with Galles, O'Connor reflected how they used an Appreciative Inquiry approach in which they came up with their vision, their program strengths, and then their evaluation plan. Out of their evaluation plan, they developed a vision card and rubrics. Although it was less formalized than the ECSE process, they brought together all the Setting IV special education teachers who went through a thorough and comprehensive process in looking at their Setting IV EBD program. O'Connor reflected on how their evaluation process looked at where their program was in 2009. In addition, their evaluation work looked at what process could be built so their program evaluation document was living and breathing, meaning an evaluation document that was used and could vary in depth, as opposed to sitting on a shelf (4_1_c). An evaluation leader described O'Connor's evaluation model and process:

She can use her unique program. It's not a cookie cutter – here's the box you have to be inside of it. It's more – here's the process guidelines, and we will support you in understanding the process components- collecting data, helping you

interpret, and analyze data as you need. But she really has tailored it to have each of her building leadership team members own a component of it. They help monitor it and facilitate that with the staff. So, that's a model that is working.

Taylor felt that the Setting IV informal evaluation process got everybody grounded in evaluation. They looked at which practices were out there in the special education field of working with children and youth with mental illness and behavioral challenges. The evaluation process also included a book study. As a result of this process, O'Connor and the Setting IV teachers came to an agreement on what were the critical elements of this program and how were they going to measure student progress. They made it up as they went. That is how their Setting IV evaluation developed.

O'Connor recalled the good part of it was that the process ended up being extremely affirming. It validated a lot of what teachers were doing and helped them put a framework on it. They worked together to be able to communicate readily to others what they were about, whom they served, how they looked at progress, what were the areas that were important to them in terms of programs, and to go back to their evaluation framework when looking at funding. Five areas were identified that were important to the Setting IV program to meet the complex needs of the students and their families. This evaluation work found them a way to say something that could be used to assist the program administrator on an ongoing basis to move the program forward. It was more than just going through an evaluation process for the district (4_1_p). Here is what O'Connor stated about the process:

The core values remain . . . very strong. No, that didn't surprise me at all. No, that is where it was really validating. The process was really affirming, and it really validated the work that we had been doing. Certainly there were things that we were able to add in through the research. Julie [a staff member] had done a ton of research, gathered a lot of data and information together for us to look at as we

went on further in terms of the program evaluation process. But no, I wasn't really surprised. I was curious about the time because we were in such turmoil, and it was one of those situations where we were really told that we were going to be bringing these students back and we had to be starting this now. The change started to happen before we got into the new building, so there wasn't time to plan for the new students to be coming in. You would like to think that you would have a year to do program development before you bring this whole population back, but we had to and we are still doing this – figuring it out as we go.

A top-level department leader allocates funding to directly support ECB

sustainability. The special education funding for this high level of evaluation implementation was indicative of Taylor's vision for an intentional evaluation process and its use.

Another important ECB event in 2009 was evidence of Taylor's financial commitment to developing and supporting the special education program evaluation process. She dedicated federal funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), a federal economic stimulus package enacted by the 111th United States Congress in February 2009 and signed into law on February 17, 2009, by President Barack Obama. The ARRA provided supplemental financial appropriations for job preservation and creation, infrastructure investment, energy efficiency and science, assistance to the unemployed and local fiscal stabilization, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009 (Pub. L. 111-5). The ARRA included direct spending in infrastructure and coaching, which was a timely financial resource for Galles', Taylor's, and Campbell's development of the evaluation process. It should also be noted that the ARRA provided funding for O'Neil's salary, a teacher on special assignment (TOSA), who worked in the REA department as an evaluation specialist, exclusively supporting special education evaluation needs and projects.

Another critical point of evidence for Taylor’s vital leadership as an evaluation champion was her rehiring of Campbell as an external evaluation expert and coach, funded with federal stimulus money. Other departments in this school district did not have the opportunity to develop and fund evaluation with a federal funding source like ARRA because special education is the only mandated federal program. The special education department had access to this ARRA funding, which was used for Taylor’s evaluation needs in a different way than general education funding. Taylor’s use of this unique funding source was a critical ECB event because the special education department developed a viable evaluation model during this time period. The evidence is limited, and it is difficult to know if and how this school district would have funded the special education evaluation projects if they had used their existing general education and special education funding (3_5a_c).

In summary, the following table describes some of an evaluation champion’s role and responsibilities when leading ECB in a department and/or program:

Table 4

Role and Responsibilities of a Program Evaluation Champion

Purpose: Lead a department or program’s ECB to build and sustain their capacity to use a defined evaluation process routinely.

1. Articulate a future ECB vision that aligns with promoting change within a department’s and/or program’s continuous improvement process.
 2. Lead, facilitate, model, coach, and move forward the evaluation knowledge and skills of other departmental leaders (e.g., special education supervisors) through their intentional involvement with the evaluation process.
 3. Routinely integrate and use program evaluation activities in core leadership meetings to model and build leaders’ (departmental meeting) and staff members’ (program level meeting) capacity to use the program evaluation
-

process to increase their evaluative thinking.

4. Provide evaluation insight and expertise to other leaders and program staff.
 5. Ask questions when needed with other leaders and program staff to promote their evaluative thinking.
 6. Serve in an advocacy role for the evaluation process and use in a department and/or program.
 7. Support departmental and/or program ECB efforts with resources (e.g., funding for .internal evaluation specialist, external evaluation specialist; time for staff to participate in the evaluation process; data tools).
 8. Organizationally align and communicate with other leaders (e.g., evaluation leader, other evaluation champions, and building principals) of an organization to promote their understanding and value for evaluation.
-

Evaluation Capacity Building Requires an Evaluation Leader to Create a Formal Infrastructure

An evaluation infrastructure is essential for ECB success. The primary role and responsibility of an evaluation leader is to put the evaluation infrastructure (i.e., set-up of established evaluation mechanisms) in place and model evaluation behavior with evaluation champions and stakeholders.

All 10 participants discussed how an evaluation infrastructure supported their program evaluation work during the study's 15 years. Evaluation infrastructure includes the (a) evaluation purpose, plan, and process, (b) basic structures (e.g., organizational and social structures), (c) equipment, and (d) resources (e.g., dedicated funding, access to internal and/or external evaluation experts, evaluation journals) needed for the program evaluation to function properly. Structure is defined as the way that an organization,

department, or program is built, arranged, and organized for an evaluation process. Specifically, a social structure is the way that an individual and/or group of people are organized to enable their participation in evaluation activities. The program evaluation infrastructure needs equipment, supplies, and tools for the evaluation process (e.g., computers, access to data, data analysis software/web subscriptions). Last, the infrastructure resources are broadly defined as what an organization has and uses for program evaluation. For example, resources can be stable special education funding to support a TOSA position in the REA department, evaluation journals, and external evaluation experts. The evaluation infrastructure will be described further using examples of what Campbell created in 1999 and what Galles rebuilt and remodeled in 2008 when she started as the Director of REA.

Campbell created the district's program evaluation infrastructure in 1999 and modeled the evaluation process in 2000 for the first formal study of special education. During this initial period, Campbell was brought in to the district to create and implement her vision for an evaluation infrastructure, which included a district-wide evaluation plan and process. Campbell started this partnership at an August 1999 retreat with central office administrators and remembered feeling committed to this vision – "I really want to do this. I am ready" (Campbell, 2013).

Campbell's REA department during 1999-2001 was small and limited. Campbell functioned as an internal evaluator, and she worked "in the trenches" to get the evaluation infrastructure in place. Although she was given the message by the Associate Superintendent who hired her, "Let's do what we can (3_5a_b)," Campbell did not get to engage with the people who ultimately would have the resources to do it (3_5a_a). When

she arrived in the district, technology was far more limited than it is more than a decade later. At that time, the only way to access student test scores was through the technology staff in the central office who pulled from the district's available data. The testing staff in the REA department did not have access to student data, and the idea that a teacher could easily get his or her student data did not exist.

Another organizational challenge for Campbell's evaluation work during 1999-2001 was access to top decision makers. Campbell met with the school district's superintendent exactly once. Because she did not have access to the superintendent, her influence with the district's school board to change school policy regarding the initial set-up of evaluation infrastructure was limited. Rather, she had access to an Associate Superintendent who was organizationally positioned directly beneath the superintendent. The Associate Superintendent preferred to communicate and collaborate with the superintendent directly. This person did not think it was Campbell's role to communicate about the school district's new evaluation infrastructure (3_1_c). The current Director of REA gets to engage with the superintendent, who can provide her evaluation resources. Campbell shared her perceptions about this organizational change from 1999-2001 to the current time:

So, it is good, but it is also puts incredible stress on her. I think they demand program evaluation now. It is a classic thing. You build the demand for it, and then they want it. But resources are limited for everybody, so I wonder about that (3_5a_b).

The contributions of Campbell as the first Coordinator of REA were significant and set up a potentially strong evaluation infrastructure, comprised of structure, equipment, and resources to facilitate an evaluation process. Campbell's significant

evaluation leadership efforts to create and maintain the evaluation infrastructure did not influence the district's superintendent, school board, and school policy regarding the potential and sustainability for future evaluation. This evidence may suggest a plausible reason why Campbell's newly created evaluation infrastructure and process went on hiatus and was not maintained when she left in 2001. Fifteen years later, Campbell explained that the evaluation process needed to be built into the evaluation infrastructure to sustain ECB.

Campbell, the first Coordinator of REA stated:

If I learned anything, it is the idea of how do you have a process that can live in the school district. Because it is very hard to sustain these efforts, so it has to be built into the infrastructure, people have to value it, and then it really does have to support teachers in the classroom, not just the supervisors, not just the central office people, and that is really hard to do.

Evaluation leaders have a powerful effect on infrastructure. Galles, Director of Research and Evaluation, recreated and rebuilt the district's evaluation infrastructure beginning in 2008. The data from the interviews and the record review revealed strong evidence for this evaluation champion's renewed commitment to the district's evaluation infrastructure, including (a) a viable evaluation purpose, plan, and process, (b) organizational structure, and (c) social structures following Campbell's departure in 2001. Galles continued to expand Campbell's initial evaluation infrastructure by adding system components (e.g., technology tools), equipment, and resources to facilitate special education evaluation. Taylor dedicated the funding for a TOSA in the evaluation department, who primarily worked on the special education evaluation projects. Galles' evaluation infrastructure included the following multiple evaluation purposes:

1. Improve programs,
2. Provide information for the continuous improvement process,
3. Inform decisions,
4. Meet accountability mandates,
5. Investigate fidelity of implementation and process,
6. Explore the effectiveness and efficiency of programs,
7. Document ongoing activities,
8. Gain program support amongst stakeholders, and
9. Promote understanding (Two-County Program Evaluation Process, 2014).

For programs like the DCD and the Setting IV special education programs, an administrator determined the need for evaluation and established a team of approximately five to eight people to develop the evaluation question(s), and purpose for evaluation. This team, comprised of key administrators, staff, and other stakeholders, provided the social structure and leadership throughout the process. To facilitate adequate progress, meetings were held at least monthly. An additional check-in meeting with the primary intended users and the REA Department occurred at the beginning and end of each evaluation phase to ensure quality control and accountability of the evaluation process. The evaluation process was reduced or adjusted based on pinpointed evaluation questions, criteria, available funding, program priorities, or other factors or recommendations. The Director of REA stated:

Part of my role is to understand critical leadership and to get to know what each leader values and build on that. I meet them where they are and make inroads to building their capacity in a way that they find valuable as opposed to fighting the battle of it – it only has to be this way – you need to do this and this is why, because that's not necessarily a battle that I will win. So if I can build

relationships and recognize their needs and then work to supply evaluative thinking and build evaluative thinking to meet their needs – that to me is capacity building, too.

Here was how O'Connor, a special education program supervisor, positively perceived the REA's infrastructure as additional support for her evaluation process. The program supervisor said:

I think it has been a really positive support. I really do. I think that it has been an important component with program evaluation. I could not have done this without them. There is no way that a person could do program evaluation and do it with fidelity, without having that additional support (4_5a_a).

The Research, Evaluation, and Assessment department can play a critical role in a successful ECB organization. The research, evaluation, and assessment roles of the REA department included the following district-wide role and responsibilities:

1. Provide assistance and support to measure the effectiveness of a variety of their district's programs to determine which programs and processes are getting the desired results,
2. Conduct evaluation studies and surveys on selective district initiatives,
3. Assist the curriculum study and text-book adoption committees in assessing curricular achievement needs,
4. Complete data analysis, both individual and aggregated, for teachers, principals, and district leadership,
5. Promote and measure accountability to meet local, state, and federal educational requirements; and
6. Promote and facilitate the use of data to better meet the needs of every student in the district.

The REA department demonstrated a strong evaluation culture by their commitment to improve student achievement through gathering and analyzing data through multiple methods, which included staff and parent perceptions, program information, demographic information, and student performance. According to Galles, the district evaluation infrastructure was strong:

You know, I think the systems are in place, and we are in pretty good shape. One of the things I think that we continuously need to keep being reminded of is you can't do it all at once. And so don't try and do all of the different places, but we always tend to have new special education administrators. We have one that just started right around January, somebody is retiring this summer, so I know that there is always a need to bring these new people on in terms of "this is why we are doing evaluation and this is what evaluation means." I think it is really different a lot of places, but with REA – the systems are in place, the technology is good, and there is support from above. The Associates and the superintendent support that kind of a model so as long as those things are in place, I think we are okay.

The REA's established evaluation infrastructure provided a framework of a plan and process as documented in the Two-County Program Evaluation Process (2014). It included the following elements:

1. Develops overarching evaluation question(s),
2. Determines potential information needs,
3. Decides possible methods for collecting information,
4. Establishes a proposed timeline, considering key decision points;
5. Identifies a process for communicating progress, determining most effective ways to facilitate utilization and reporting results, and
6. Assign responsibilities for the evaluation project (e.g., create a task matrix, timeline, costs, and resources if needed).

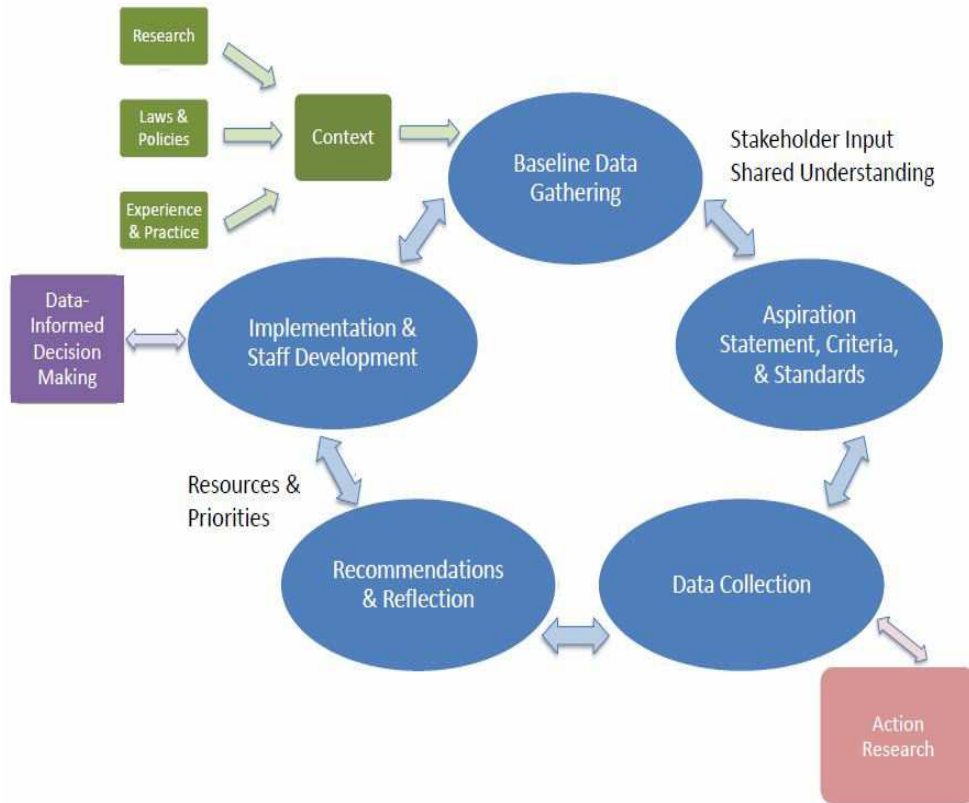
[Please refer to the accompanying Appendix E for a detailed description of Two-County’s program evaluation process and to Table 7 in Appendix F for the data analysis of the evaluation process.]

Next, Figure 5 presents a visual representation of the framework for the Two-County District Program Evaluation. Taylor described how this visual representation aligned with their district’s special education context:

It has a whole bunch of circles, and this is what we ended up doing. You know there are some critical components. You have to do program evaluation through a lens of the law because special education is steeped in litigation. You have to do best practice. What does research say about whatever you are looking at? The other three tiers we had were the law, best practice, and the context of the district. So through the Two-County School District, how does the context that we live in also have to embed with these other two tiers – law and best practice? I think that early on, we spent so much time living in this context, that’s where you start, and it is hard to get beyond that. So that when we framed the question, we would say something like “What is best practice on inclusion? What is best practice for our speech services? You are asking the speech clinicians that are providing the services to say okay “Here read this. “ They don’t have any desire to read it. We should have said, “Reviewing the best practice, what did you learn from this?” Take out anything that’s not in our current context. We should have ended in context and worked from the law and best practice (tiers).

Figure 5. Framework for Two-County District Program Evaluation (February 2014)

Framework for Two-County Program Evaluation



1. Context analysis and baseline data gathering
2. Develop aspiration statement, criteria and standards
3. Data collection relative to criteria and standards
4. Recommendations and reflection
5. Implementation and staff development

(Two-County Program Evaluation Process, 2014).

Organizational and social structures build a strong foundation for the evaluation process. Structures provide a method to organize integrated and routine evaluation actions and activities, including standardized development and implementation of the evaluation process. The findings showed two types of structure: an organizational structure, and social structures.

The first type, an organizational structure for special education, included a typical hierarchical arrangement of the leaders' names/titles, their assigned roles and responsibilities, and contact information. A hierarchical arrangement accommodated multiple levels in an organization, such as the school district's central office top departmental administrators (e.g., Director of Special Education, Director of REA, superintendent). The organizational structure's purpose was to provide communication to staff, parents, and the public regarding their assigned roles and responsibilities, routine and typical work, and information flows were coordinated between and among the levels of leadership in the special education department, school district, or an individual program.

Social structures, the second type, enable individuals and groups to participate and contribute to the overall organization. Within these social structures, participants' perceptions are routinely and systematically gathered during the participatory groups of the special education evaluation projects, CIMP meetings, staff development (e.g., DCD), and professional learning communities (PLC) for the DCD special education teachers. Evaluation champions built a strong foundation for the participatory evaluation process

by offering stakeholders opportunities to promote their evaluative thinking. They also used and integrated evaluation tools in the process, and routinely shared their perceptions.

Galles stated:

We're helping leadership understand the process, especially when we have limited resources. We are committed to getting people involved because we found out people have talked about that it's one of the best staff development that they have received to be able to have these collegial conversations, look at research, look at data, and determine what is an indicator of a quality DCD program in one of our cases. So it's critical for us to not just know where the program is, but to improve the program by including participants, broad stakeholders over in a group, that are able to lend voice, expertise, and own the process because we are finding that is how changes are made.

High-quality data tools and specialized staff lead to higher quality

evaluations. Evaluation was routinely used and sustained when data were systematically gathered and analyzed by the evaluation champion(s) to guide and influence their continuous improvement efforts (e.g., reflective practice, decision-making process). The evaluation project was positively shaped by subsequent evaluation actions and activities within these existing social structures (e.g., PLC, staff development, CIMP meetings).

Evaluation resources were a critical component of the infrastructure, necessary for supporting learning during the evaluation process. To meet special education's evaluation infrastructure needs in 2000 and again in 2009, evaluation personnel were recruited, funded, and used effectively as a "human" resource. These individuals, who were highly skilled in evaluation, were very important for the learning and advancement of the special education administrators' evaluation skills.

According to Taylor, it was critical to have someone who was knowledgeable in evaluation, but that person did not necessary need to know "a ton about special education." She felt it was almost better that these district evaluation specialists did not

have in-depth special education knowledge because it offered them objectivity to ask more neutral questions. Taylor felt it was helpful to her and to others in the special education department to have someone like Galles, who was knowledgeable in evaluation practices because these experts facilitated her job as the full-time Director of Special Education. Taylor had a strong opinion regarding the use of specialists outside the special education department to gather the evaluation data (e.g., the evaluation TOSA was funded with special education funding). Evaluation specialists who worked with data all day long gave evaluation legitimacy because that was their sole job.

Galles and the evaluation specialists came to Taylor with a wealth of evaluation knowledge, strategized with her to get what she wanted, and framed (or reframed) the evaluation questions to obtain desirable (or to prevent skewed) results. Taylor needed the evaluation specialists to gather data about what was working and what was not working. They also helped her think about how to strategically set up her evaluation plans for desirable results. In reciprocal fashion, the evaluation specialists felt Taylor facilitated their jobs with her wealth of special education knowledge and programming for students with a variety of conditions.

Financial resources are critical to sustaining ECB efforts. Taylor's allocation of funding proved she valued evaluation and was committed to its success. Taylor felt program evaluation was resource intensive and that there was only so much time in a day to do the work. To meet this intensive resource need, Taylor financially supported an evaluation specialist position in the REA's central office and exclusively provided technical assistance (e.g., accessing relevant research, gathering data) to special education administrators regarding their individual evaluation projects. Taylor paid for the

evaluation specialist's salary in the REA department for most of the five-year time from 2009 to 2014 (2_4b_b), and she felt having this evaluation specialist position sent a message to others in the district about how she valued evaluation in the special education department.

The special education department also used one teacher lead in the DCD evaluation project. A special education administrator described how a teacher leader supported her:

I have a new lead teacher coming on to help me, and so my goal is definitely to incorporate and utilize data. I think we can communicate with buildings that this is what we are doing well. These are areas we need to improve. Then we can know if we are being effective and also we can measure our due process. It is not just us depending on the State Department of Education coming in to audit us (7_2_cf).

ECB Promotes a Participatory Process through Engagement with Stakeholders

The third theme focused on how the evaluation form promoted participation and engaged stakeholders during evaluation activities within a systematic process. The primary purpose of the evaluation process put the evaluation infrastructure in place (i.e., a set-up of an established evaluation mechanism) and modeled evaluation behavior with stakeholders. Nine of the ten participants described many examples of how an evaluation leader and champion modeled a participatory evaluation process.

Campbell's formalized evaluation encompassed several approaches during the 1999 – 2000 time period. Campbell did challenging evaluations on her own, but also led participatory and social structures by talking with and engaging groups of people during meetings. Campbell was rarely in her office in central administration because she was more often meeting with school staff, setting up meetings, going out to buildings, collecting data, and attending central office meetings. The social structures brought

people together and enabled them to participate in the evaluation process. The weekly meetings were also important because they provided a time for communication between the program evaluation participants.

At this time, Campbell's special education evaluation plan, structure, and process had a formal organizational context. Neumann, Assistant Director of Special Education, collaborated closely with Campbell for this evaluation, and she further explained the reason the special education department got involved with her during this challenging organizational context and time period:

We were under an immense attack by an attorney and some families that we had multiple due process with some allegations that we had systematic problems in the district. It was very much a matter of trying to figure out if we had problems, where the systemic problems were, and how to deal with them. So I don't know if we would have thought about it at that time for the start of evaluation, but we certainly looked at where we were at and how we needed to improve (2_1_a).

This was the primary reason Campbell's formal evaluation was extremely visible (3_2_a)-- because the special education department was in notable trouble around due process compliance issues and facing lawsuits from families of students with disabilities. Campbell's primary purpose for the formalized special education evaluation process was to use it as an effective problem-solving tool and to engage all levels of stakeholders to participate in solving special education problems. The legal and compliance problems in special education also facilitated the need for Campbell to use a formal program evaluation process, in an effort to evaluate the district's special education programs and to gain a thorough understanding of the district's compliance with special education due process mandates.

When Campbell modeled evaluation behavior, she reflected on how she varied her approach with the evaluation process:

. . . [S]ometimes the evaluator does the evaluation to just to show how it is done. Other times you collaborate, and the people would help you collect the data. Other times you are coaching them to do it. All of those are appropriate. It just depends on the resources available and the problem you are trying to solve. In the first special education study, it was the only time ever I was called Dr. Campbell. They said, “Dr. Campbell from a nearby higher institution” all the time because they were trying to make it “objective.” We had two external evaluators [in addition], and we were very pompous and serious because that context demanded that. We were in trouble with the state.

One special education administrator who served as the Assistant Director of Special Education during this period shared her memories. This administrator recalled that the teaching and learning specialists facilitated the focus groups, and she reported that it really felt good to know that the State Department of Education was involved. It was also good to know that Campbell drove the program evaluation process and did all of the data analysis. During this time, this administrator further recalled that the school district had different ways to gather data. Campbell pulled other people in to help plan the focus groups (2_1_c). Campbell commented that “we spent a lot of money on that study,” receiving an estimated \$100,000 for the cost of the work on special education’s first program evaluation project in addition to the district’s covering her salary for this two-year period (3_2_a).

Because of the significant due process issues, a special education monitoring and compliance leader from the state educational agency was required to participate in the associate superintendent’s weekly meetings. Campbell needed a full school year to complete the formalized special education evaluation, pulling in many stakeholders – in and outside the school district. This communicated an important message to the public

(e.g., parents of the students with special education) that the results of the special education program evaluation were accurate and not influenced by any other factor. It was also important for stakeholders outside of the school district to participate in this important special education program evaluation.

The data gathered from Galles' interviews and her authored REA documents described a participant-oriented evaluation approach to maximize utilization and capacity-building throughout the organization. The participatory evaluation process was inclusive and committed to involving internal experts, external experts and various stakeholder groups in the evaluation process. Galles' participatory process started in 2008. Galles put the rebuilt evaluation infrastructure in place and continued to model a participant-oriented process to (a) facilitate evaluative thinking with program participants, (b) embed evaluative practice into the participants' work routines, (c) promote meaningful evaluation work, not merely more work, and (d) the sustainability of ECB. Galles described the importance of participant-oriented evaluation for sustainability:

Sustainability will always be something that is difficult because even as you bring new people in, that was one of the pieces with ECSE, is getting people up to speed and teaching and training them everything you've undergone up to this point. Again that is a really important reason why participant-oriented evaluation in this setting is so important. Because when people are part of something, they have a different level of understanding and a different level of commitment than when they are just told about it or come in at the end or here it is. So, when you have changes in leadership or just changes in staff, that sustainability and bringing people into the fold is always something that we have to be mindful of.

The participant-oriented evaluation process emphasized the importance of designing evaluation activities that accurately reflected the special education experiences, expertise, and concerns of the participants, as demonstrated with the DCD and Setting IV

projects. The DCD evaluation process promoted participation by having the program teachers and building principals use their developed evaluation tools (e.g., vision card and look for's) to improve district-wide DCD programs at the classroom level. The initial DCD process gathered information about what was working and what was not working in individual programs in an effort to improve the programs. Their positive attitudes with the DCD evaluation project were summed up when the DCD special education supervisor said, "We should all be doing it" (5_3_ae).

O'Connor described her positive experiences using the participatory evaluation process for her Setting IV program. Because of the evaluation methods, the inquiry approach, and how the process gathered perceptions and input from staff, parent(s), and students, the process was reportedly validating. In addition, because the evaluation process was so respectful, the staff gained insight and program evaluation skills from their participation and experiences. Specifically, overarching evaluation questions were a valuable part of the process with the stakeholders.

1. The first question focused on making a personal connection and set up the group's ability to answer the subsequent evaluation questions, like "What brings you to work every day?" (4_4b_s)
2. The second group of questions focused on gathering information for the evaluation process, specifically bringing out the positive qualities about their special education work place, what they did, as well as how they served their students and their families.
3. The third group of questions focused on how the special education program could look different or what aspects they wanted to change.

There were not a lot of questions, but the program evaluation process was about dialogue and listening, gathering data, and taking in information from all of the participants. The program evaluation process was respectful and affirming, rather than threatening.

In 2009, when the Setting IV program staff met about their evaluation process, the staff were engaged “so they lived and breathed the process” (4_4b_s). O’Connor felt their engagement was more than she anticipated before they started. She fully understood the challenges of her program and the importance of her staff. O’Connor felt her program staff offered responses that aligned with their participatory process, but the program staff did not know the details of how their perceptions fit within their evaluation process.

Through this process, a comprehensive evaluation framework was developed and integrated in the special education teachers’ professional learning communities (PLCs), specifically when the classroom teachers were working on their social skill instruction.

Parts of the Setting IV evaluation process were also integrated with their building school improvement plan. Here are the comments from O’Connor who reflected on the evaluation process for her Setting IV program:

The core values remained very strong. No, that did not surprise me at all. No, that is where it was really validating. The process was really affirming, and it really validated the work that we had been doing. Certainly there were things that we were able to add in to the research. Julie (evaluation specialist) had done a ton of research, gathered a lot of data, and pulled information together for us to look at as we went on further in terms of the program evaluation process. But no, I wasn’t really surprised (4_1_k).

Several leaders discussed how staff needed to own the program evaluation process in order to increase their level of participation in it. When these leaders paid attention to the attitudes of program staff, it helped them gauge the readiness of their staff to participate in the process. The leaders informally determined the extent of how their

program staff supported and valued the evaluation efforts by looking at their team's buy-in or ownership of the evaluation process.

Three of the individuals who were interviewed experienced the importance of staff owning the participatory evaluation process. "Program evaluation has to be owned by the program. The program staff won't participate in it if it's not theirs. If they do not feel invested in it, it is not going to go further" (6_4b_be). Another special education administrator emphasized that, "You know it is our goal to be a part of their reality, too" (5_5a_am). The third special education administrator commented, "I still have my dream that we will someday have those committees and that structuring in place. It is about timing and it is a process. Anything I have learned through this whole evaluation experience, it's a process" (4_1_ee).

Evaluation Use Facilitates Reflective Thinking and Decision Making Toward Program Change

Evaluation use results in giving people permission to try new things, do things in a different way, and focus priorities in their special education program. Evaluation use is defined as the act or practice of using the established evaluation process routinely and systematically within a program (i.e., Setting IV, DCD), department (i.e., special education department), and organization (i.e., Two-County School District). While evaluation is designed to be used in one way, leaders can find other ways to integrate evaluation use into their ongoing practice. Nine of the ten participants discussed how evaluation use changed their thinking and the way leaders made decisions based on their experiences and outcomes developed during their program evaluation process. Under this theme, O'Connor's evaluation use will be described, specifically how she used the

evaluation process to facilitate reflective thinking for making changes with her Setting IV program. Secondly, mutual trust between administrators and teachers was needed for the evaluation process in an effort to improve special education programs, as evidenced with the DCD program evaluation project.

Taylor practiced the program evaluation process and use towards continuous improvement of her special education programs. Evaluation use facilitated and shaped her reflective thinking towards positive change. Taylor and O'Connor worked closely together during multiple evaluation and leadership activities, such as the Launch program development (i.e., action research) project in 2001 and the Setting IV evaluation project in 2009. Taylor shared that O'Connor hands-down was the "best of the best" in her program's shared evaluation process, procedures, and repeated use.

Looking back at the timing of the 2009 Setting IV evaluation project, the evaluation use was not ideal because it took place during a time of extensive organizational change. O'Connor and her program staff were facing the difficult task of opening their new separate Setting IV program (i.e., new building and expanded program). Initially, she felt evaluation would be too challenging on top of all of her leadership demands with opening her program in a new building as well as expanding her current program with more of their district's students with significant conditions.

For O'Connor, the evaluation process and use started reflective thinking – to take risks and try new things. O'Connor found program evaluation validating and vital to her building school improvement plan of the Setting IV program. Evaluation use gave her permission to say to her program staff, "We are going to try something." O'Connor felt the evaluation process and use also gave program staff permission to try new things as

well as do things in a different way (4_1_s). Reflecting back to her results, her evaluation use resulted in changes in her special education practices and gave her permission to use evaluation in unintended ways. In addition, evaluation use was about having a data collection process and a way to communicate with staff that they were going to collect and look at the data. Finally, evaluation use to her was about having a process to evaluate whether an approach or strategy was something they should continue doing or not.

O'Connor stated:

We had to step back and really rethink about whether, given the new charge, can we continue to do business in the same way that we have always done? We may need to change some things given the population. I think through that evaluation process. The one thing that has still carried on with this program, even though things have needed to change with the changing population, was our core values and our core beliefs in terms of best practice and research-based type of thing. . . And if that is where you are operating from, then hopefully that is reflected in the practice, and the evaluation in which you put together in terms of the plan, the vision card, and the rubric – that is what can be reflected and embraced.

O'Neil, an evaluation specialist who routinely supported special education evaluation projects, felt evaluation use promoted an understanding of where to do things differently (6_2_ae). On the one hand, special education leaders and educators found out that they were already doing things that were really good. On the other hand, when they took a critical look at their programs, they found things that they wanted to change to improve student learning. According to O'Neill, evaluation use provided a means to look at a program, asking, "What if you could dream big? Teachers got so involved with the here and now that they did not look forward to what they could do to change things."

(6_7_bc)

People can be typically uncomfortable with program changes (e.g., new administrator, program move, new students with complex needs), which the program

staff of this Setting IV program experienced. This program had previously had an internal context and building climate where there was not a lot of turmoil, even for their staff, which was exceptional for a Setting IV special education program where staff burn-out can be generally high because of the constant management of severe and challenging student behaviors. As a result of that stable climate, the staff members were steeped in program traditions, and there was a certain way that the teachers did business for years in this Setting IV program. O'Connor explained all that traditional behavior was challenged during their program evaluation process. The staff had to step back and rethink whether, given the new charge of their primary evaluation question, "Can we continue to do business in the same way that we have always done?" (4_1_e) O'Connor worked to build the trust of her program staff in order to not be fearful of the evaluation process, "Part of it is getting people to think in that way, reflecting, and being okay with it. It isn't something we should be afraid of, and it isn't a personal attack" (4_1_vv).

For O'Connor, program evaluation use involved creating detailed program documents that continued to provide a blueprint for her challenging leadership demands. Her continued use was observed as these documents were routinely accessible to her in her office. She used these guiding documents when there were questions about program resources, questions about programming, or if she felt she was going off in a direction her program should not be going. Program evaluation use was based on who the staff were and what they believed. Finally, documented evaluation use insured O'Connor's integrity when she brought her program vision and principles back to the staff, stating, "This was what we talked about, and this is still who we are" (4_1_dd).

O'Connor described how her program evaluation project evolved and how she used her program evaluation summary as a blueprint:

I think it has evolved in a lot of ways. ... Some things have not played out exactly as I had hoped it would. ...because of just some of the practical things working day to day with kids and families and all of the demands that you have within the job . . . If I'm thinking we are missing something, or if something is feeling not quite where it needs to be, I will go back to this document as a reference. So it grounds me in what we said was important, based on research, where we are, and where we said we wanted to be. (Two-County Special Education Setting IV Program Evaluation Summary, Updated February 27, 2012)

The evaluation process improved decision making because it looked at the past, the present, and the future contexts of their program. The Setting IV program was experiencing many big organizational changes when the evaluation process was launched, which included moving the program to another building while the program was in the process of reorganizing and restructuring. Leaders can experience decision-making changes with evaluation use because the process requires them to look at the past, present, and future. Another special education program supervisor stated:

I think one of the biggest things is that when I think back prior to this, I think we have made a lot of decisions based on what we had in front of us. And I think one thing I have realized now is I needed to look at the past, present, and the future. I think that has been a definite difference (7_3_aa).

Although leaders may have an initial perception that program evaluation should not be used because of increased workload demands while undergoing program changes, the evaluation process could be timely during organizational transitional changes. Evaluation could be positively used when a program is experiencing significant changes in order to pinpoint what is going well for the program and to determine the program's needs to focus their efforts. A special education program supervisor shared her perceptions about evaluation use during times of change:

We have had quite a few changes. As we have more stability with staff, we are actually taking the time to say let's get back into this. What is going well? Where do we need to focus our efforts? (7_7_aj)

Mutual trust between administrators and teachers was needed for the evaluation process. Some special education teachers had a false understanding and felt a little nervous for the evaluation process with the DCD and the Setting IV evaluations. The special education administrators needed to make sure the program staff understood that the evaluation process was an opportunity for them to reflect with each other on what was working and to identify an area together for change. The special education administrators needed to emphasize that the evaluation process was a way the administrators and the program staff could work together to improve their practices of their special education program for improving student learning.

In summary, the program challenges never ended as a leader continuously measured a program's effectiveness and pinpointed what she and the program staff needed to do differently. Here was what a special education leader stated about putting her evaluation framework in place, capturing the essence and importance of the evaluation use for change:

There is a lot more I could do. It is looking at how I can use this framework to put things in place, something that would be familiar to staff. They would know the purpose of why I'm using program evaluation. So it is not to say that they are not doing something, but it is used to measure effectiveness and what we need to do differently. (7_2_cj)

Aligned with special education's continuous improvement process, the evaluation process and its use are leadership tools for reflecting and thinking about change. Evaluation can be used anytime, even during a challenging time period when a program is experiencing organizational and transitional changes.

Evaluation Capacity Building Develop Tools That Facilitate Communication Use

Nine of the ten participants described how communication was an essential part of their program evaluation work. First, ECB developed tools that could be used to communicate ECB results to top departmental leaders in key organizational positions, administrators, educators, and other individuals in the multilevel social structures of the school district. ECB results were also communicated to individuals, parents, community members, and state government specialists outside the school district. Communication tools included a binder of completed program evaluation projects, departmental print materials, the superintendent's and school board reports, the school district webpage (both intranet and internet), state government reports, committee print materials and presentation materials, school district publications, and visual supports to communicate data findings.

Second, ECB communication use was the practice by an evaluation leader or a champion to use evaluation tools to accurately, routinely, intentionally, and systematically communicate and disseminate program evaluation findings to the primary intended user(s) and the stakeholder groups within the targeted ECB social structures. There were three principles of how communication use was shown, i.e., when ECB: (1) became a process to facilitate communication and gather perceptions among the social structures within a department, program, or across programs within the organization; (2) integrated a participatory process of using program evaluation to express or exchange ideas, thoughts, and feelings to other stakeholders within a program, department, or organization; and (3) had a primary purpose of documenting and conveying program

evaluation information and results in an accurate, meaningful, explicit, and timely way for improving an organization, department, or program.

According to Taylor, the communication aspect of ECB was important at multiple levels. First, Taylor organized a binder of completed program evaluation projects, highlighting the program evaluation products and process for each of the projects. She used this communication tool (i.e., binder) to explain and communicate an important message to the superintendent about the effectiveness of special education programming. Second, communication use of Taylor's special education evaluation tools, model, and process was powerful when connecting with building principals. Third, the ECB communication tool facilitated use at the program and student level, which promoted a shared understanding between program supervisor and program staff for creating a complex special education Setting IV program. Fourth, the DCD evaluation leadership team purposefully and strategically communicated a consistent message throughout the DCD program evaluation process with the district-wide DCD special education teachers and building level principals.

Leaders use ECB tools to communicate important messages at multiple levels within the evaluation process. Upon being hired in 2008, Taylor received a directive from the superintendent and the school board to develop and implement an evaluation model for the district's special education system. Taylor needed to figure out a way to measure and develop different aspects within the special education system (10_9). Near the time of her hire, the Two-County School district consulted with Team Works, an external consulting firm that promoted and developed their concept of communicating program measures through vision cards. Their program's vision card was used to measure

organizational effectiveness in the Two-County School District. Taylor remembered how the school district moved away from using vision cards to measure program progress, but she did not know what should be the next process or measurement tool for the special education department (10_7). This was a primary reason Taylor worked closely with Galles to develop this idea further within their new special education program evaluation model. Taylor wanted to align their collaborative program evaluation model to whatever system the district wanted to use to communicate program progress, not just to a structured system designed by consultants. Taylor's collaboration with Galles, Director of REA, and also with Campbell, external program evaluation specialist, resulted in a system of evaluating special education programs with a clear way to communicate to the superintendent and the school board members about their effectiveness. At that time in 2008, there were a lot of questions and scrutiny around special education, so Taylor was highly motivated to show the quality work that was being done in special education programs (10_7).

As noted, there was considerable interest from the superintendent in special education program evaluation when Taylor, the new Director of Special Education, was hired in 2008. In the internal context of the school district, there was a belief or a perception that special education was ineffective. Taylor recalled that special education "had a really bad rap for whatever reason" (10_7). Even though she believed the perception was unfounded, she focused on "cleaning up special education" (10_7). So Taylor's job was to be able to say,

Let me explain what we are doing in special education, and let me do it in a concrete enough fashion that can describe the reality of what is happening in special education (10_7).

After Taylor's first year, she outlined all of the program evaluation work she did and, as previously described, provided this information to the superintendent in a binder. In this binder, Taylor communicated about the programs staff were beginning to evaluate, such as information pertaining to early childhood and third party billing. The findings showed how Taylor put a participatory process and structure in place to make communication happen around evaluation and Taylor's ability to "paint the picture" by communicating what the special education department did with the program evaluation.

Another example showed how Taylor used the ECB tools to communicate powerful messages with the building principals. The ECB communication tools improved special education programs through a shared understanding of the DCD and the Setting IV programs between Taylor and the building principals. The vision card was a communication tool and used a communicative process to facilitate program changes. Using information gathered through a participatory evaluation process, a program's vision card was developed for the targeted focus areas, combined with multiple levels of expected performance, and integrated to measure special education programs.

In another communication tool example, a look-for tool was used to collect data and make observations, which aligned with the program vision card. A building principal might say to Taylor, "We don't know what a DCD classroom should look like. If I'm going to evaluate a teacher, what am I looking for?" Taylor might reply to this principal:

Well, these are the tools. From the vision card, we are going to identify the look for's. Let me explain this to you. Here are the things that you should be able to observe in a DCD classroom. When you are over at Building A, here's what we looked for, and here's how they are performing. This is an area that they are working on, whether it will be technology or whether it will be parent communication. (Two-County DCD Program Evaluation Vision Card, 2014)

The look for's were a useful communication tool for any novice administrator to walk into a special education classroom to be able to observe or ask a question to gather that information.

The evaluation tools, such as the vision card, created district-wide DCD evaluation standards in an effort to determine program outcomes and measure results. The REA department supported the development of the DCD evaluation tools by making the language common within an educational and evaluation context as well as easily understood by DCD special education teachers (1_4b_c). Since launching the initial process in 2009, the DCD evaluation project continued to use an evaluation process. In addition, there was evidence of future plans with their project, refining their vision card, redoing the look for card, and their data collection process starting in the 2013-14 school year (1_4b_c).

This type of use of the ECB communication tools was powerful at the teacher level because it fostered significant change when a special education program (e.g., DCD and Setting IV) developed to that point with their program evaluation process and use. The look-for document also became a communication tool between O'Connor and her program staff. She felt any teacher unfamiliar with her Setting IV program could come in from the outside and go into one of their classrooms. This teacher could use her look for tool and see, "Is this occurring or not occurring?" (4_1_pp)

Importantly, this example shows how ECB was also about communicating what was happening with the students in the special education programs (6_3_ad). Successful ECB in this case was making sure that students with disabilities were learning in their

classrooms (6_3_aa). ECB focused on helping the special education staff define meaningful teaching and learning experiences in their program. ECB was more than looking at a special education program to see if it was a good program. According to the evaluation specialist, ECB was about asking this question, “Are our students with disabilities moving and making changes in what they are doing?” (6_3_ae)

One of the special education administrators shared that initially the quality of special education was deemed adequate when a staff member was satisfied with the status quo. Now she felt program evaluation helped teachers move away from the status quo of special education to ask questions such as these:

Are we really doing the best for our kids as we can? Are they growing like they should be growing? I think that is a big part of program evaluation. It really helps us to measure how we are helping students. ...I like the fact that we can still have the same expectations for them. We can also measure our programs helping them to make progress for our students because they are able to make the gains and be back in the regular classroom with all of their regular peers. To me, that is the huge benefit of program evaluation- just seeing how it is helping our students who qualify in the area of special education. (7_3_ai)

A big part of program evaluation was helping the special education department measure and communicate how they were helping students and having the same expectations as their general education peers.

Taylor fully understood that the work with program evaluation needed to be at the teacher level because that was where change happened for students. In an effort to strive for high-quality special education, it was important for teachers to deliver high quality programming. If a special education teacher was not doing that, then a special education administrator communicated with the teacher to figure out how this teacher could improve his or her knowledge and skill level. Administrators can improve their special

education programming by giving the special education teachers the necessary training and resources. A special education administrator can improve special education programming which will in turn improve student learning (5_3_af).

The ECB communication tools facilitated communication at the program and student level. This promoted communication between program supervisors and staff members for creating a shared understanding of a complex special education Setting IV program. For O'Connor, ECB freed staff members to be creative and think outside of the box when they worked with special education students and their families.

Communication became important both for their complex internal special education context and their external context of mandated special education due process and community mental health services. Communication supported understanding of the significant academic, mental health and socio-economic student needs. Students were placed at this Setting IV program because they had not been successful any place else. O'Connor felt their program and staff members "were it," and they could not use the same strategies and techniques that other educators used in other building programs. Those previous strategies and techniques did not prove to be successful, so O'Connor and program teachers needed to think of better alternative ways their students could be more successful at school (4_1_ww). ECB became the communication tool for them to have shared conversations around successful program strategies and techniques for their students.

The program evaluation process became the starting point for her communication when O'Connor brought her program staff together to focus on improving their program's comprehensive academics (4_1_mm). The work of the Setting IV

comprehensive academics included students in kindergarten through twelfth grade, students with different kinds of conditions, and students with mental health needs. The communication tool (e.g., vision card) focused their communication on access to the general education curriculum. This became important for the students who demonstrated average to above average abilities who needed to transition back to their neighborhood school or to a less restrictive type of placement when they no longer needed an intensive special education program, like the Setting IV program, for their social/emotional learning and mental health needs (4_1_00). Here is what O'Connor said:

. . . I really go back to a communication tool about who you are and what you do. Something concrete to go back to, and I think I will explain the helpfulness we developed for some of our Q-Comp things [a voluntary incentive program that allowed Two-County school district to meet the five components of state law]. Again I will be bringing this out again because it is around instruction, and we have one on comprehensive academics. So when I bring those groups together in April and May, I will bring it out then. Okay, here is a great starting point, so that is how I have done it.

Communication use of the ECB tools focuses on student program needs.

Looking at ECB communication use at the program level, the vision card facilitated conversations around a program's best practices (4_1_00). The Setting IV program vision card facilitated a broader focus that aligned with broader student needs. In addition to access to general education curriculum, some of the students needed access to a functional curriculum, which focused on learning functional skills to promote independent living.

O'Connor used the program evaluation process to communicate and define the ways to meet the diversity of student needs within her Setting IV program. The communication tool and use between O'Connor and the program staff were also at the

student level, which was based on answering questions about their special education student needs. An example of this type of question is, “Do our program standards and our learning targets align with where the students’ developmental cognitive needs?” The next step in the program evaluation process would take their vision card and develop the look-for tool for each of the focal areas.

Communication use of the ECB tools focused on student program needs within O’Connor’s Setting IV program. In addition to communicating around their comprehensive academics, O’Connor and program staff identified four other areas: (1) behavioral and environmental management, (2) mental health student support, (3) collaborative school culture, and (4) accountability and due process (Two-County Setting IV Program Evaluation Summary, 2012). Once they developed this first area, she felt it would be easier to develop the four other focal areas.

I think we are going to develop a few different areas, but I’m very thankful that we have this, as we go into having this conversation, because part of the work is done (4_1_qq).

The program evaluation process was helpful when the Setting IV program staff spoke about their differences of opinion or what they believed their students really needed. Their communication centered on answering questions like, “What do we need to be focusing on?” When teachers talked about their students, they discussed how was it or why did they need to focus on this rather than that (e.g., lacked social skills)? The Setting IV program staff believed their students’ conditions were also important when developing these different areas (e.g., social skills and restitution). O’Connor felt the program evaluation process was a way to go back to having conversations when people

had differences of opinions. When that happens, the leader could bring out their program vision card and use it to communicate to her program staff:

Let's take a look at what we have talked about, and again we can change it if we have data that supports that it is not appropriate any more or we need to be looking at it differently. (4_1_uu)

O'Connor felt using program evaluation data affected student learning, especially their students' IEPs, communicating with staff regarding these program evaluation focal areas, communicating how the classrooms needed to be designed to meet the varying needs of their students, and working together to make progress on their K-12 common focal areas. For O'Connor to go back and say program evaluation impacted student learning at the classroom level, she needed to get a sense that teachers were doing more social skills groups because of their students' high social-emotional and mental health needs. The program transitioned more students in 2013 from this separate special education program to another less restrictive program. This was one of their targeted focal areas-- they monitored which students were ready for this transition. They also looked at how their classrooms were set up and arranged. O'Connor felt they had not done it all, but currently they could point to and identify what they had done on their vision card. Their program evaluation vision card had been integrated into their teachers' PLCs (4_7_a).

Communication use consistently overcame mistrust. The DCD evaluation leadership team purposefully and strategically communicated a consistent message throughout the DCD program evaluation process with the district-wide DCD special education teachers and building-level principals. The DCD evaluation leadership team included Clayton, DCD special education program supervisor, Ritz, the DCD special

education TOSA, and O’Neil, the evaluation specialist who supported the DCD program evaluation routinely. At the time of the interview, Clayton led the DCD district-wide school improvement efforts, and she reported how she shared the vision cards with their elementary teachers. At this time, she was completing this process with the middle and high school teachers (5_2_ah). When the vision card was shared with the grade-level DCD special education teachers at each individual school where the DCD programs were located, the teachers raised good questions (1_4_a). These communication tools were designed to generate a reflective, questioning, participatory, and interactive communication process with building staff, such as: “Oh, that’s where we are at,” “Why aren’t we over here?” “How did you come to that?” and “How did you get those numbers?” Clayton and Ritz knew the information thoroughly on the communication tools (e.g., DCD vision card, look-for tool) in order for them to use consistent communication district-wide. If she did not know an answer to one of these questions regarding the vision cards, she demonstrated confidence because she could seek the answer with O’Neil, who served as a TOSA in the REA department and provided program evaluation technical assistance, primarily for the special education department (1_4_a). In addition to the program supervisor, these two individuals provided consistent communication to the DCD special education teachers, which was an important aspect of the communication use in the DCD school improvement efforts. Here is what an administrator stated:

Completely! It is a tool for building a shared understanding, collaboration, and trust. Everybody being on the same page in terms of what are the expectations. Absolutely! It builds the culture and climate of the program as well as the individual skill level of the staff member for which ultimately impacts the students and their families. Absolutely! That’s the main goal . . . that students and

families have access to a quality program with staff that we are all working towards the student and family experience.

The DCD evaluation leadership team needed first to communicate with clarity about how the DCD program evaluation results were used for the continuous improvement of their special education programs. Second, the DCD evaluation leadership team needed to develop its professional capability for effective communication during all aspects of program evaluation. The team understood that currently there was a lot on the DCD teachers' plates (i.e., workload). If there was a pause in their communication with the DCD teachers, the leaders understood that their conversation would need to happen again as part of the program evaluation process. The leaders would keep bringing up and restarting those conversations with the DCD teachers in multiple communicative ways (5_7_gc).

How the DCD evaluation leaders shared their vision cards with the DCD teachers was important for ECB communication. The DCD evaluation leadership team was surprised that they did not get any push back from the DCD elementary teachers. Together, the DCD program supervisor and the DCD TOSA went out to the programs as a unified effort, sharing the same information and the same message with everybody. They felt it went really well continuing the communication in this manner. The DCD leaders could not speak for the middle and high school DCD teachers because they were in the process of communicating and sharing of their DCD vision card with them (5_5a_bi).

Strategic communication use was evident in how Clayton and Ritz communicated with clarity about how the program evaluation results would be used to strive for

consistent DCD program practices within the continuous improvement process of their special education DCD programs. The communication used with the DCD teachers focused on where their DCD program was developing and changing, not because they were judging the special education teachers. In addition, their communication was not about how the school principals and the DCD elementary teachers were not doing certain tasks. They were worried about how the DCD teachers would perceive their communication message. O’Neil recalled they purposefully came in and communicated what the DCD teachers and building principals were doing well. They wanted them to be actively involved when receiving their message, participating in the evaluation process through their shared communication, and working together with them on their shared commitment for program changes (6_7_be).

The communication tools established and facilitated clear and timely communication at the building level about how the data on the vision cards was used for improved action at the program level. They also shared how they populated the vision card, which was a detailed written program document.

Consistent district-wide communication use was critical because of the extensive size of the Two-County School District when “word of mouth” communication could be inaccurate and affect the positive intention of the ECB communication. For example, the DCD evaluation leadership team dealt with this challenge when the DCD teachers initially thought they were being evaluated and the evaluation results were going to affect their teacher performance appraisal. This was most noted when the DCD supervisor and TOSA began meeting with the building principals and DCD staff, discussing the current program evaluation look-for tool and what one would see in a good DCD program. The

special education DCD teachers became resistant, suspicious, and fearful, unsure what the evaluation process meant to them.

Also, when the DCD teachers participated in the program evaluation process, they wondered if this was something new. Then, after they participated, they asked about what difference it had made. Looking ahead in two years, the DCD teachers also wondered if they would be made to do something different (2_5a_f). Their perceptions and opinions were communicated to others (e.g., other district-wide DCD teachers) and traveled quickly across this large school district. The situation improved, however, by building the support and trust from district-wide DCD teachers through communication use, telling them that the information found using the communication tool (e.g., look for tool) was specific for their program at each of their schools where the DCD programs were located (2_5_e). The Assistant Director of Special Education described this context when Clayton, DCD program supervisor, shared the findings with the DCD special education teachers at their buildings and their initial attitudes towards program evaluation:

One of our other barriers relates to the size of our district ...I know that one of the things that we dealt with the DCD initially was the teachers thought we were evaluating them and that this was going to effect their performance appraisal when we talked about what were the look for's and what you would see in a good program. They were suspicious. What does this mean to us? That word traveled so quickly. ...and that sort of fear-based. ...I think it was a matter of telling principals about the things that we find, but are not on an equitable basis. I think they got over it, but I think we had resistance. I think the other thing that happens here is wondering if it is something new. Now, we are doing this. What difference will this make? In two years, they will make us do something different.

The ECB direction for DCD was aligned with the DCD vision cards, and their next step would be to see how they were doing in the DCD programs where their vision cards would be in the forefront of their conversations (5_7_de).

ECB Requires Sophisticated Data Use for Special Education’s Internal and External Accountability Contexts

The program evaluation process facilitates data measurement and use, which complements the internal context of district accountability and the external context of the state accountability system and federal compliance with special education due process and practices. Eight of the ten participants described how sophisticated data use was required for their program evaluation project. Data use was demonstrated when these eight individuals routinely measured, analyzed, interpreted, and shared data in a meaningful way. Program evaluation routinely used data to make informed decisions at the program and student level. In this theme, several examples of how data use contributed to the positive development of ECB efforts, specifically within the external special education accountability context and the internal district context. Both Schwarzkopf and Taylor contributed to data use uniquely and individually with their special education continuous improvement efforts as demonstrated with the state-level CIMP plan and process, sophisticated data use, and supporting data use with program evaluation projects and at the student level.

Data use requires both federal and state law to monitor special education.

School districts are directly required by both federal (i.e., IDEA Pub. L. 105-17) and state law to monitor education for pupils participating in special education. The continuous improvement monitoring process (CIMP) generally focuses on due process and procedural safeguards, conferred education benefit for special education students, as well as the provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs

and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including federal funds (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

CIMP was defined by the State Department of Education as an external special education accountability system. The State Department of Education used CIMP for two complementary processes: (1) ongoing special education compliance monitoring, and (2) the submission of the special education annual continuous improvement plan at the end of each school year for participating schools. The State Department of Education used the monitoring data from participating school districts to report to the Federal Office of Special Education Programs each year.

In the 2001-02 school year, Schwarzkopf, Director of Special Education, initiated and launched the Continuous Improvement Process (CIMP) for the special education system, which was more aligned with program evaluation than with the current CIMP requirements. Schwartzkopf, former Director of Special Education who worked with Campbell during 1999-2001, revealed strong evidence suggesting the importance of data-informed decision making and transparency when leading special education. While Campbell was the internal program evaluation specialist, Schwartzkopf voluntarily initiated and entered into the Continuous Improvement Process (CIMP) with the State Department of Education during the 2001-02 school year (report submitted June 2002).

Schwartzkopf revealed positive experiences with CIMP for the special education department. When Schwartzkopf initiated the process of the continuous improvement monitoring, it was an opportunity for her to find out where they were and to make a strong plan about where they wanted to go. This special education administrator described how her position felt like the job of fire fighter, called to “put out fires.”

Importantly, Schwarzkopf needed to “do fire prevention” by making a plan to bring the special education department along with her leadership strategy. Prior to creating this CIMP plan, special education and general education were distinctly separate departments. When the laws changed, notably with the federal mandate NCLB, special education implemented the same curriculum as general education, and this external context created opportunities and challenges for her and the special education department. Schwartzkopf said,

We had opportunities then to know where we were instructionally and to make some plans where we could make some curricula adoptions in special education that were supportive of the regular education and could allow students to make progress in regular education curriculum, but still meet their individual educational IEP needs... I saw the whole continuous improvement monitoring process as a huge opportunity for us to begin to make a difference – to begin to quantify the differences we were making and to establish plans that would allow us to enhance the progress for students. I was the biggest fan in the world for all of this plan.

Another top special educator contributed positively to special education’s data use while directly supporting the leadership and continuous improvement efforts of both Schwartzkopf and Taylor from 1999 to 2013. Neumann was the former Assistant Director of Special Education and became the Director of Special Education when Taylor left the district. Neumann explained how it was really hard to say how much the original CIMP project or the shifting need for accountability both nationally and statewide contributed to the need for program evaluation (2_3_b). Neumann stated that CIMP came in place sometime after Campbell initiated the study group of stakeholders for the formal special education program evaluation process during the 2000-2001 school year. Neumann further explained there were other ways that the State Department of Education did evaluations before this time period, but the first one was completed and submitted in

June 2002 for the special education department at the Two-County School District. There was a focus and shift towards program instruction, specifically in reading in their district's internal context. Neumann discussed the program evaluation process as it related to CIMP further:

So, since then, the state had required this CIMP process which we had used as our driving force for special education. We chose to not use it as just a way to report back to the state, but we set our goals from there. We had tried to make sure they were measureable and set up. We used that as our way of driving our focus and then evaluating the next year.

The record reviews of due process student files were part of the district's five-year formal teacher performance appraisal and a process for special education administrators to monitor due process of special education students, not merely for CIMP. For example, the first year probationary special education teachers completed a record review together with a special education administrator in a staff development class. During their second year of employment, special education teachers gave a student file to a special education administrator that they would like reviewed. For their third year, a special education administrator pulled and reviewed a student file from each of the probationary teachers. For tenured staff, one student record review was done as part of their five-year formal teacher performance appraisal. The special education administrators used a record review process to make sure the school was conforming to due process requirements (2_4a_b), which continued to align with the Campbell's primary purposes for creating, planning, and delivering a visible and transparent special education formal program evaluation participatory process during the time period of 1999-2001.

Neumann explained that CIMP was based on data and more like program evaluation in terms of the surveying of stakeholders and “certainly evaluation that we can continue to base it on data and coming back every year and analyzing how we’ve done” (2_2_a). CIMP required evaluation of early childhood and surveys of specific groups of parents at each school district at a certain cycle.

In 2001- 2002, the initial CIMP plan was about writing goals that would align with the work the special education leaders were doing. CIMP had changed since that time, but this earlier CIMP work was all about special education programming. Like an IEP for a department, Schwartzkopf and her administrative special education team wrote a plan to the state Department of Education, answering questions such as “Where are you?” “What are your goals?” and “How are you going to measure your goals?” which guided the content in the CIMP plan. Based on what came out of Campbell’s independent, comprehensive, and formalized program evaluation study of special education, Schwartzkopf and the special education administration identified their special education needs and goals to guide their CIMP written proposal.

Campbell’s data gathering, analysis, and interpretation were comprehensive and extensive, as evidenced by how she visited all of the special education programs within the district. Her data were gathered from observations and interviews with different people throughout the special education department and school district. Special education administration identified their CIMP needs, which primarily focused on staff trainings on due process and making sure they had consistency with due process evaluation practices and identification of students with disabilities. For example, at the elementary schools, there was a disproportionate amount of parent referrals. The special education department

needed to do staff training around that area of need. In June, at the end of each school year, the special education department reported that they improved this area by a specific percentage point measurement. A lot of work with the development of special education evaluation (due process) teams came out of Campbell's formal program evaluation report of special education (10_1).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Schwartzkopf's special education's CIMP plan and process were more aligned with program evaluation than with Taylor's CIMP requirements during her leadership in the Two-County School District. For Schwartzkopf, there was much more flexibility and latitude on how a special education administrator determined the CIMP plan and process to focus staff attention on continuous improvement. A special education administrator could say, "You know what, we really feel we need to work on this" (e.g., due process, specialized special education instruction), and an administrator would write a goal for that area. When Schwartzkopf completed the CIMP plan, she could choose anything for her area of focus. For example, the special education administrators anecdotally knew that they had inconsistency with instructional approaches (e.g., inclusion opportunities, varied curriculum) and classroom management strategies (e.g., point systems, restitution) in their Setting III EBD programs.

During this time period, it was a random mix of approaches, and the special department did not have a system for collecting data to measure the internal context of their programs (10_1). Here is how Taylor described CIMP at the turn of the century:

Carol Schwartzkopf, who was the Director at the time, said "Let's do a comprehensive study of special education." So we looked at really all the different components. . . . So based on what came out of Campbell's independent study, where she went and visited all of the programs, that's where "We need to do something with training around due process and making sure we have

consistency with evaluation practices and identification.” There was a lot of work done developing evaluation teams that came out that report. . . . It has changed over time, but it was all around programming - Tell the State (1) where are you, (2) what are your goals, and (3) how are you going to measure these goals? So it was like an IEP for the department. You know you had due process and wrote goals on it. This is our data. . . The CIMP report continued to be to some extent the ongoing evaluation.

During Taylor’s leadership from 2008 to 2013, the CIMP plan and process changed significantly. CIMP was more directed by the State Department of Education and based on the many types of federal special education outcomes, such as the achievement gap in special education. Each school district was given its special educational departmental data to focus their CIMP plan. CIMP was data-driven with consistent data across the whole state system and was explicit regarding the special education department’s focus, whether or not the school district agreed with the data. The data sent by the State Department of Education gave Taylor a place to start. She was unable to identify her own ideas of what the special education department needed to focus on for the special education continuous improvement process.

Each school district needed to analyze the data provided to explore why these data indicated what they did. For example, in the area of achievement, special education administration needed to analyze whether or not all of the special education students were achieving and specifically identify what groups of special education students were falling behind. In another example, a school district might have to analyze the reason why they had a disproportionate number of special education students who were served in more restricted settings with less time with their general education peers as compared to other school districts. Next, a school district’s special education department needed to indicate what they were going to do to change that condition by setting goals around this federal

government outcome. CIMP did not tell Taylor how to address it, and that was where there was some flexibility for her.

CIMP was an accountability measure for the State Department of Education and not an example of ECB. Taylor shared her perception that some people (e.g., other Directors of Special Education, special education administrators) thought CIMP was far too formal and too directive, but Taylor liked the consistent data across the whole state system. Her school district was measured from the state's perspectives, which was based on federal government outcomes in order to tell what was working and what was not working in special education. Taylor felt that she had a standardized way to measure the data, a common way to show growth, and she had documentation showing what districts were doing because there was flexibility in how the data were presented.

She felt the piece that was not helpful with CIMP was that special education administrators did not get feedback from the state department of education. Taylor felt another challenge with CIMP was that there were different ways in which school districts collected and reported their data, so the usefulness of the statewide data was only as good as each school district consistently and accurately reporting data. In addition, she felt it would have been great if CIMP had said, for example, these five districts had issues providing education in the least restrictive settings and here are their action plans. Ideally, districts would show what they reported and how their data changed over the previous three years. This application of data use would have been helpful to Taylor because the special education administrator could approach this as action research rather than just taking a look at what certain school districts did that made the difference with the data. So Taylor felt that CIMP had not come a complete full circle yet, but it had made

progress towards data use for special education's continuous improvement (10_1). Taylor described the changes with CIMP when she served as a Director of Special Education:

Now, the CIMP report has changed significantly, and it is more directed by the State based on the federal outcomes. Special education has so many types of federal outcomes, such as the achievement gap in special education. You have to analyze the data and document, (1) What groups of students in special education are really falling behind or is it all of special education?, (2) What are you going to do to change that?, and (3) you set goals around your plan. Our Department of Education gives us data and whether we agree with it, this is what we should focus on or not....The piece that I like about it is consistent data across the whole system....The piece that isn't helpful is we don't get feedback. To us, CIMP is an accountability measure for the state. What would be great is to [view]what five districts reported. Here is how their data changed over the last three years. To me, that would be helpful because you have basically action research....So CIMP hasn't come in complete full circle yet. It has made progress.

Data use requires sophisticated tools to analyze each building's special education services. The special education administrators had the means to access sophisticated data tools in order to share data with building administrators and question why some of the students with disabilities were not making progress. Here was an example of how special education's continuous improvement process focused on a sophisticated data use (2_7_a). At the end of each month, special education administrators pulled the data for all of the special education services of all of the students with IEPs in the district. They also pulled the data of all of the students with only academic services in each of the elementary buildings. The results of this data analysis showed that there were buildings that were discrepant in the amount of special education services they were providing to their students with IEPs. The special education administrators gave this analysis to the building principals with a comparison of the elementary buildings by free and reduced lunches, ethnicity, and size, so the principals

could see how their special education programs compared to the group. The principals did not know the name of the other buildings associated with the data analysis.

The data analysis also looked at the service delivery of the students with IEPs, such as special education math. For example, as a service on the IEP, the pulled data were calculated to determine how much time per week each academic service was given. The special education administrators determined that probably a third of their buildings were providing services fewer than two hours per week to students with IEPs. Some special education students were receiving more individual special education services, such as the group of five to six schools that provided more than three hours of instruction. They also had six schools that provided three to five hours to almost all of their students with IEPs.

A team made up of building intervention specialists, special education administrators, principal, and program staff met together at each building to analyze why their building's special education staff were spending such different amounts of time with their students with IEPs than other buildings. The building teams were ready to hear about these findings, and they collaborated about the reasons for this discrepancy in their special education service delivery. The team needed to look at the data of the students to also determine the discrepancy. The special education administration sent an email to the elementary leads with the data and other information about the discrepancy. Special education administration also produced a video that talked building staff through the data so they would know and understand the findings. This was a good example of how the special education department used available data routinely, a collaborative data analysis

with building principals and staff, and an interpretative process to improve special education services at each of the targeted buildings.

These perceptions of special education administrators emphasized that special education teachers could no longer work in isolation in a building with their door shut and do the practices that they preferred to do; their special education practices would be revealed through the data about their students' IEPs and how they compared to other student data. Finally, special education administrators could easily point out to special education teachers how they provided services in the mainstream of a general education classroom. The data tools could show which schools provided any service in the mainstream and could look at the differences in student test scores. This type of data use helped special education administration with program improvement and direction for the special education staff who found a hard time arguing with them about this type of finding (2_7_a).

The special education department routinely measured, analyzed, and shared data in a meaningful way. They had the data tools to track due process and timelines at the central special education department as well as at the buildings. The REA department supported the special education department by pulling data that focused on student discipline and other available due process data. Because the building special education programs could be busy doing other things, the special education department at the district central office routinely shared the data so that this was not something that fell by the wayside at the buildings (2_4b_d). An administrator from the REA department described her focus with data:

There is [sic] also all of these other pieces, components that they can utilize to improve the special education offerings and delivering services to our students in this district. So continuing on the path of the broad range of evaluation activities, not just formal evaluation, but some of those related informal pieces is where we need to go. We need to continue to build their capacity to use, understand, and ask good questions about the data. That is probably more of our broad focus right now.

The technology for data use was good (2_6_a), and the district's technology department was part of special education's management of the student information system and other data, such as student suspensions. A special education administrator described a problem where they identified seven individual student discrepancies with data and used those discrepancies as a basis to collectively look at the problem. The Director of Special Education, Director of REA, the Director of Technology, and other individuals who routinely used data met together for several hours to look at the data, figured out what was going on, and collaboratively generated a solution (2_5a_d).

Data use facilitates the integration of data analysis and interpretation with other routine program demands to measure program effectiveness collectively and to inform a leader's decisions. The special education department had always used data, but the program evaluation process used data in more of a collective and integrative way to measure and look at their programs. A special education administrator who routinely used data in her leadership role commented that this collective way to look at special education programs with data had been "neat to see," but she thought the most important result was seeing how the data use connected to all aspects of the program (7_3_ae). She further commented that several years back the special education department was seen as a separate department, and now there was a lot more collaboration with it becoming an integral part of the district. A big part of program evaluation resulted in special education

coming together to integrate its work with the various departments of the school district (7_3_ad).

Special education staff measured how they used the data within ECB to foster a program's continuous improvement process. In the program improvement process of ECB, the reflection process focused on stepping back and critically looking at the data. The reflection process with data use also facilitated and promoted special education leaders to think about where they started, where they were now, and where they needed to go (7_2_cg). An example of this reflective process showed how a special education leader looked at the building-based student data, what the building teaching staff practiced with their students with disabilities, and what the special education leaders promoted for their continuous improvement efforts (7_4b_ab). For this special education administrator, the most important aspect of program evaluation and the continuous improvement process was how she used data to measure effectiveness and inform her decisions (7_4b_ae).

Another example showed how Taylor felt she was the most successful with the implementation of the third party billing (TPB) project, primarily using a quantitative data analysis and an interpretation process. Federal and state laws required all public schools to bill and request third party payment for Individualized Education Program (IEP) health-related services from public and private health insurers. Third party billing is a process in which schools are reimbursed when a student has a disability and an IEP or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), requires health-related services in order to benefit from special education, and the student is eligible for reimbursable health care programs (e.g., Medical Assistance [MA] and other public/government health programs).

Reimbursable IEP health related services included assessments and services for physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, hearing, oral and sign language interpreter services, personal care assistance services, mental health, assistive technology devices, and special transportation during the above services.

Taylor considered the TPB project one of her favorites. She valued a formalized evaluation like the ECSE project, but she also valued how she could use quantitative data analysis and interpretation for informing special education decisions like the TPB project. This was the easiest project for her and resulted in a big financial win for the special education department. TPB started with the generation of \$300,000 to \$500,000, and then, following this project, they increased their reimbursement to \$3 million dollars. The logical and linear process required her to track third party billing, reimbursement, and make sure her third party billing system was correctly in place.

Data use supports special education’s continuous improvement work at the student level. The special education department still had work to do with ECB’s data use at the student level while also working on many other special education initiatives. The department had recently implemented standards-based IEPs. Special education teachers were required to gauge student’s IEPs (based on state standards), which created a different lens for the department to look through for their students with disabilities. One special education administrator felt she could do more to help support the teachers’ growth in this area of collecting better data. On a broader perspective, the special education teachers improved in developing their students’ IEPs, but needed more support on collecting better data on the actual student goals to show if the students were making progress. The continuous work of the special education department would also focus on

doing a better job of collecting student data and showing student IEP progress to parents and families (7_5a_c).

A few special education leaders formalized the student data to routinely share with building teams. In the Two-County School district, building principals and special education administrators had access to a data dashboard. Galles advocated for the same access to these sophisticated data tools for the special education administrators. Special education leaders looked for meaningful ways to make their data analysis have an everyday look on which both the leaders and teachers could take action. Questions for shaping this vision for a data product and presentation with an everyday look included: “What do you think about this? How can I share this? Who should I share it with? When should I share it? What format should I share it in?” (7_6_b).

O’Neil, a person who routinely prepared special education data, thought special education’s data use informed decisions and was a way to understand a program as a whole (6_2_ad). In addition, data use identified priorities that required deeper focus as the special education system moved forward with program evaluation (6_2_af). As part of data use, technology tools were important for her to learn, and her learning built upon all of the opportunities to prepare and use the data for special education. Program evaluation was not a skill she learned through her formal academic studies at the doctoral level. O’Neil demonstrated the attitude and thinking of an evaluation champion with her professional background as an evaluation specialist and experienced special educator. Working closely with the special education leaders on their program evaluation projects, her sophisticated data use met the department’s high demands for pulling special education data. O’Neil felt there were many pieces to figure out and many different ways

to get the data. For her data use requirements, she needed to decide where to get the special education data from the multiple databases and data sources, how to figure out the necessary calculations, and how to make sense of the data (6_5a_ag).

Her work station in the REA department provided her with opportunities to learn more about program evaluation, developed her data use, and advanced her evaluative thinking through a coaching and mentoring relationship with her REA colleagues. Until that time, the special education department funded an evaluation specialist position, and she had the potential of having an isolated program evaluation position and role in the special education department. The REA department had a supportive learning environment, providing technical assistance with program evaluation and data use. Galles and other REA staff collaborated and promoted ideas necessary for her evaluation specialist position (6_5a_ag). Without this close relationship and collaboration with others in the REA department, O’Neil could have done her job, but in her opinion she would not have been as effective supporting the data use requirements for special education ECB and other accountability requirements (6_6_ae). An administrator from the REA department described how she built capacity to use data with the special education department:

We’re doing more than just formal evaluation that aligns to evaluation capacity building. So, even the programs that we’re not formally evaluating, we are building skills to use and understand data related to a variety of components. For example, we are building their capacity to apply them, helping them access and interpret the restrictive procedures data – holds, seclusions, locked quiet rooms, . . . discipline data, proportionality, the number of students, especially students of color, that are being suspended for ten or more days. . . As part of that, we have created and are working with them to refine a dashboard to display data such as the number of students IEPs are out of compliance that are past 365 days – so we may not always do formal evaluation, but part of my role is to keep it in front of them.

ECB Adapts and Changes Over Time to Fit the Organization's Internal and External Contexts

Eight of the ten participants discussed how their program evaluation projects adapted and changed over time to fit their organizational, department, and/or program contexts. The findings indicated that ECB is both a developmental form and has various developmental uses in an organization. ECB is a developmental form through which the evaluation plan, purpose, and process adapts and changes to fit the internal and external context of the school district and the special education department. Second, ECB is a developmental form, demonstrated by the distinct methods or ways that evaluation champions create and produce program evaluation.

The developmental use was indicated by how eight of the ten evaluation leaders and champions actively made changes with their subsequent program evaluation process based on what worked and what did not work well during their previous evaluation project(s). Also, ECB had unique developmental uses by the different methods or ways program evaluations were experienced by the leaders, champions, and stakeholders in an organization. Galles stated:

I think that those individuals engaged in program eval [sic] are in varying stages in their leadership. The administrative leadership team (e.g., special education supervisors) is in different places. So the people who are engaged in the process are definitely viewing it as developmental.

This theme will discuss how the special education program evaluation projects developed in a unique and different manner because of their internal context and continuous improvement needs.

Developmental form and use showed how (1) the first evaluation projects in 2009 started out to be extremely formal, (2) subsequent evaluation projects in 2011 adapted to each program's internal context, (3) evaluation champions learned through the process, and (4), as a result of this evaluation learning, they adapted Campbell's special education 2000 gold standard to their more functional evaluation form and use for special education's internal and external contexts. The DCD program evaluation project showed the most dynamic developmental form and the most intentional developmental use. There was ECB evident in the good work of the DCD project as it paved the path for future program evaluation because of the way that this program developed the vision cards, look for's, and other data collection tools. This theme will show how special education teachers, administrators, and evaluation specialists took the time to work through the developmental evaluation form and use, mostly focusing on the DCD evaluation project.

A challenging organizational context and time period requires Campbell to formally develop and use the 2000 "gold standard." In 2000, Campbell's special education formal evaluation process was considered the gold standard to fit the turbulent internal and external special education contexts. The systematic problems around special education due process compliance issues and lawsuits from special education families required this "gold standard" form and were a primary reason why this program evaluation study was extremely visible (3_2_a). Campbell planned formalized participatory structures and modeled a process that aligned with this challenging organizational context and time period. Neumann, who was part of the program evaluation core leadership team, explained that the program evaluation was used to solve problems, and it made sense to develop a way to gather input from multiple stakeholders.

Neumann was a part of the program evaluation core leadership team to “drive how we went about doing that” (2_1_a). The State Department of Education required a state department monitor and compliance administrator to be on this core team. Two external evaluation specialists were hired to complete the evaluation requirements with Campbell.

According to Campbell, she and her colleagues from the Research and Evaluation Office had to be the ones doing the formal evaluation activities because this type of evaluation required it. No one else could do it at this advanced evaluation skill level during this time period. Campbell’s context was not like that of 2015, when the Two-County school district had many more opportunities for varied evaluative approaches. Owing to less political concerns, the current special education needs did not require this formalized approach, and the district had built a greater capacity for others to engage in the program evaluation process. Campbell recalled that in 2000 she chose not to have group facilitators from the special education department, but chose instead to have teacher leaders in the district with curriculum involvement or a district-wide leadership role (2_1_e).

The turbulent internal context changed when the legal challenges went away. The attorney for the seven families moved away from the area and out of the state. Although the legal challenges ended, the special education department continued to have a high profile in the district because of their external accountability due process requirements. During this time, special education administrators felt their practices improved their due process outcomes as a result of this formal evaluation. It was possible the special education department over-emphasized the accuracy of their due process paperwork because they tried to protect themselves from future litigation. Currently, and in 2000, the

special education students' due process paperwork was managed and processed by special education teachers.

Evaluation developed its form and use to reflect the need for common expectations, common outcomes, and common language in the internal context. During the 2000 time period, the school district's internal context showed the district was switching from outcome-based education (OBE) to standards-based education. Outcome-based education aligned with an outcome-based system, in which the philosophy for student learning was built on a clearly defined framework of exit outcomes. The outcome-based system focused on increasing students' learning to the highest possible level. In OBE, the curriculum, instructional strategies, assessments, and performance standards were flexibly developed, organized, and implemented to facilitate the clearly defined learning end or key outcomes (Spady, W., 1994).

Aligned with school improvement, standards-based education was an educational system where the teachers knew exactly what the students needed to learn, what to teach, where to improve, and what to work on with their other colleagues. Standards-based education was a system where the teaching aligned with clear common learning standards (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999). The common learning standards were manageable in number in order to promote better results. In addition, the common standards were essential to the teachers for focus and coherence in schools where teachers knew exactly what essential skills and knowledge students should learn. Teachers collaborated with other teachers on their lessons and units using the same standards. This teacher collaboration and sharing could potentially lead to a common bank of standards-

referenced instructional materials and lessons, units, and assessments, which would be refined through action research (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999).

Campbell acknowledged that these focused efforts were hard work, but wondered how ECB would evolve at the teacher level with the current and subsequent special education evaluation projects. Campbell recalled:

Well, we worked hard, and I will be curious to see if the current program evaluation leader says the same thing to build the infrastructure. So, having that position, paid from special education dollars, to support evaluation, was important. Because that is modeling, you know, that it is part of what we do. What I don't know is how much has it gotten out to the teachers ...presumably everybody is in the mix, but that is very hard to do. (3_4b_a)

The 2009 DCD evaluation project shows a dynamic developmental form and intentional use at the teacher level. Following Campbell's 2000 formal special education evaluation study, three special education program evaluation projects were launched under Taylor and Galles' evaluation leadership in 2009, which included the ECSE, DCD, and Setting IV EBD summits and the Setting III EBD, Transition, and Student Evaluation (i.e., due process) Team summits in 2011. These summits used a participatory process of engaging people in a shared social structure for two days (2009) and one day (2011), bringing them through similar steps of the evaluation process that Campbell used in 2000. Taylor learned that she needed a clear process as the most important evaluation strategy, as experienced during the ECSE evaluation process:

I think being clear about what we need to know and what we want to find out is the most critical piece. So you have data and you can analyze that data a thousand different ways because that kind of guides you into the work you are going to do. Let me give you an example. In Two-County School District, when we started our evaluation on early childhood, it was our first time through the process. We really didn't know what we were doing. We hadn't ironed out all the bugs and what we ended up doing was gathering a really strong picture of ECSE because we weren't clear about how to define a vision and gathering enough information about

possibilities of what was different. . . . So we needed to get clear about what we wanted, how we wanted to move forward, and I don't think we did that very well. So, we didn't have a real clear process when we started. We just had to learn through that.

The DCD program evaluation project showed the most dynamic developmental form and more intentional developmental use than the five other 2009 and 2011 evaluation projects. The DCD disability area for K-12 students with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities was strategically targeted because of their similar internal context, in order to focus on improving the 70 district-wide special education DCD K-12 center-based classrooms. There were other factors for considering the DCD program evaluation. First, the DCD program had a small enough group of approximately 70 DCD special education teachers who taught in a center-based DCD classroom to “get their hands around” learning and using the evaluation process. Second, the district-wide DCD center-based programs had similar instructional strategies. Third, the 70 DCD teachers had a similar job, had similar students, and had examples of both good and bad teaching performance. Fourth, Clayton, the special education DCD supervisor, was truly versed in program evaluation, specifically with using data. It should be noted that Clayton participated in the ECSE Summit and that she had a doctorate. For these several reasons it made sense to evaluate the special education DCD student population. Special education administration considered other small groups like the Setting III EBD center-based programs, but this disability area was not considered for program evaluation until 2011, because the new Setting III EBD leader transitioned to this program with limited program evaluation experiences and skills.

So, with DCD, it really felt that this was some, place that we really could accomplish - get some standards in place and improve systems.... If we had

identified Learning Disability (LD) teachers, they have the full gambit of kids. But those DCD center-based kids are much more similar to each other. It was kind of like dealing with apples and apples (2_2_d).

The change in how evaluation evolved was noted in how the DCD program evaluation process developed from the ECSE evaluation in 2009. Clayton, special education DCD program supervisor, engaged and used the program evaluation process for both ECSE and the DCD. Because Clayton had background and experience from the ECSE program evaluation process (5_1_d), she learned some lessons about what to do and not to do with her second (DCD) evaluation project (2_5a_g).

Reflecting back on how the evaluation process was used for the early childhood program evaluation project, several special education and evaluation leaders who participated in the ECSE process revealed that there was not a good understanding of the early childhood program. Some felt that a shared understanding of where the ECSE program was and its history could have been helpful and possibly improved the results of the evaluation. Since the ECSE evaluation project, these individuals learned how to frame questions, a necessary part of launching the initial evaluation process and developing data collection tools (e.g., surveys). When special education launched the early childhood program evaluation project in 2009, the department was just starting to get somebody on board in the REA department to do background research and evaluation work, data analysis and interpretation, and technical support for the special education evaluation projects.

A major difference with the DCD program evaluation process from that of ECSE was how it brought everyone from their different buildings versus just the special education ECSE program staff from one site. Clayton wanted the DCD program

evaluation project to be a good thing for the DCD teachers, in knowing that their collective voices were being heard and the DCD program was not forgotten (5_6_c). There was a perception from the evaluation and special education leaders that the DCD teachers should be proud of the program evaluation work they did. There were routine staffing changes with the DCD program, which was a common internal event for special education programs. Collaborating with the DCD teachers, Clayton used the DCD Vision Card to look at where the DCD teachers were in their program and identified ways they wanted to improve. The DCD vision card provided a tool for the DCD teachers to indicate their performance, using the shared criteria in the four focal areas. A DCD teacher might learn that she was already at the vision level, or he might learn he was not there yet, but in another focal area they were making some gains.

Several special education leaders gained more insight because of their experience using the program evaluation process intentionally with multiple special education projects, which was a positive result of ECB learning and further developed their evaluative thinking. When Taylor, Clayton, O'Connor, and O'Neil used program evaluation, they became familiar with the process, thus making it easier to use program evaluation for future projects. Clayton took the evaluation skill set she learned in ECSE and applied it to the DCD center-based program evaluation (5_1_cf). With an annual professional learning goal, Clayton acknowledged she became better at using program evaluation (5_2_ag). O'Connor developed her evaluation thinking and skills from her participation with multiple evaluation projects throughout her professional career in the Two-County School District.

Since the 2000 formal special education study, the program evaluation developmental form continued to reflect the district's standards-based approach. The evaluation process used a participatory approach to answer questions like, "Who are we and what do we believe?" The participatory process used stakeholder input to develop a shared understanding of the program's focal areas, with each focal area having an aspiration statement, criteria, and program standards. This shared common understanding aligned with the vision card's purpose (e.g., Setting IV, DCD district-wide center-based programs) to communicate with common language the program's focus (i.e., focal area). Each focal area had a purpose (i.e., aspiration statement), common expectations (i.e., criteria), and common outcomes (i.e., standards) for developing consistency. In October 2010, the DCD program developed four focal areas, which included (1) technology use, (2) collaboration and communication, (3) culture and climate, and (4) teaching and learning (Two-County DCD Vision Card, 2014). In September 2010, the Setting IV program developed five focal areas, which included (1) behavioral and environmental management, (2) comprehensive academics, (3) mental health student support, (4) collaborative school culture, and (5) accountability and due process (Two-County Setting IV Program Evaluation Summary, 2012).

The vision card's purpose provided clarity on how an administrator and a special education teacher would judge an effective or ineffective special education program (e.g., center-based DCD classroom, setting IV classroom). Each focal area of the program's vision cards showed five levels of program outcomes or standards, specifically (1) intervene, (2) concern, (3) baseline, (4) progress, and the targeted (5) vision level. [See Appendix H].

The DCD program's shared understanding determined how program expectations measured and systematized what good teachers did every day. Many times in a day, DCD special educators made decisions based on something they saw and how they thought about it. Special education teachers collected data in an informal way. Program evaluation used this same process, but in a more formal way by executing a common process across a program to make decisions for student learning by everyday educators (3_7_d). Program evaluation looked through a lens for teachers regarding student learning by asking these questions: How are we benefitting teachers and the students they teach in their classrooms? Are the students making gains that are keeping up with the district's goals and measures for student achievement? (6_3_ah).

Taylor's future vision articulates a developmental form aligned with continuous improvement, a faster and flexible process, and a user-friendly approach at the teacher level for special education's ECB gold standard. The research ended about the time Taylor departed from the Two-County School District. At her interview, Taylor reflected on how program evaluation developed during her leadership. Taylor felt the special education department was getting closer to developing its gold standard as demonstrated with the DCD program evaluation project.

Taylor's multiple evaluation projects in 2009 and 2011 developed to show a different form and use than Campbell's 2000 gold standard. Currently and possibly in the future, special education's ECB gold standard was useful for promoting improvement within special education programs. The program evaluation projects launched under Taylor and Galles' evaluation leadership were in various stages. Very important to ECB's developmental form and use, each of the original program evaluation projects was

initiated and developed in a unique manner because of its internal context. For example, the two-day summits in 2009 became too expensive because the special education department did not have the budget to pay teachers for their extra time beyond their contracted school year or to pay substitutes for releasing teachers during a typical school day (3_2_b). More recent evaluation projects (e.g., Setting III EBD, Transition, and Student Evaluation [i.e., due process] Team in 2011) did not include a two-day summit, but a shorter time period (e.g., one staff development day). There was a lack of adequate teacher substitutes to release and bring the special education teachers together for their program evaluation process (i.e., synchronous time and place).

The greatest challenge that Taylor's special education department faced with ECB was the actual amount of time program evaluation required. According to Taylor, another ECB change for future evaluation projects would be an evaluation process that would move through the evaluation steps in a thorough way, but reduce the timeline. To reduce the timeline, the process of gathering the needed materials and doing more of the background work (e.g., literature review) would occur ahead of time by somebody like O'Neil, who served as an evaluation specialist in the REA department. The special education department and the REA department worked exceptionally well together, which contributed positively to ECB in the Two-County School District. The REA department demonstrated how they get certain data out in a timely fashion, but O'Neil felt, "The program evaluation process needed to be faster, down and dirty, and user-friendly" (10_5a).

This was an important ECB principle because the actual amount of time program evaluation created a disconnect between the routine life of program evaluation and the

daily life of a special education teacher. Sometimes the amount of time program evaluation required during the three-year process reduced the special education teachers' willingness and ability to participate. When Taylor saw significant change, it was at the teacher level when they were using the data to change and improve their special education practices (10_5b).

Taylor felt that this disconnect caused tension because special education teachers did not have time to “mess around” and go through a program evaluation process for three years. Special education teachers needed their evaluation process to be done quickly so they could focus on their teaching. Another experienced special education administrator commented that it was a long process to go through, even when the DCD center-based program evaluation project was small enough to get their hands around (2_5a_a).

Next, a developmental ECB purpose promoted evaluation activities that were aligned with Taylor's commitment to continuous improvement, which promoted results and changes in the department's ongoing organizational development. When the research ended in 2013, all newly-hired special education center-based teachers completed a program evaluation component as part of their three-day new teacher training. Other teachers who demonstrated some challenges in organizing their classrooms were highly encouraged to attend. The new special education center-based teachers learned about the purpose of the vision cards. The content of the new teacher training discussed what a center-based classroom should look like, based on the program evaluation DCD vision cards. Taylor shared that some of the center-based teachers set up their classrooms so everything was ready for them at the beginning of the school year.

The center-based teachers knew what their classroom expectations were and how these were aligned with the vision cards so they could continually reflect back on what their classrooms should look like, what they were supposed to be doing with their teaching, and what were their DCD program expectations. In addition, these new teachers were using these vision cards with their principals. Reciprocally, the administrators were using the vision cards with teachers, by talking about what this teacher should focus on, identifying the teacher's areas of strength, and what support the teacher needed.

Predicting future program evaluation efforts, Taylor felt it would be interesting to see how much further special education's ECB gold standard would evolve and develop at the classroom level. Taylor's ECB vision included a closer connection between the use of program evaluation and teacher performance evaluation. According to Taylor, special education's program evaluation use was not supposed to be for teachers' performance evaluations, but she wanted program evaluation to evolve and develop so administrators and special education teachers would have a common understanding and language about what would be expected and how these expectations would be measured. Taylor's future vision for the development of special education program evaluation included a more refined, facilitated, systematic, and unified process for a special education teacher, his/her building principal, and the special education program supervisor to go into the teacher's center-based DCD classroom and use the evaluation tools to measure in a collaborative fashion. Participation in the program evaluation process might possibly develop to provide opportunities for special education teams to solve problems with relevant strategies.

Taylor's future vision for ECB was that it needed to be at the teacher level within the teachers' professional development, making program evaluation the focus of their professional learning communities (PLC). The PLC's teacher leader would be someone who would lead the program evaluation work of constantly, continuing, and insuring that the special education teams (i.e., PLCs) are continually following the ECB cycle of using the program evaluation tools and its process. If program evaluation became integrated at the teacher level, Taylor felt it would be "truly phenomenal" because there would be a chance that program evaluation would continue to become established and grow over time. According to Taylor, if the organizational systems were put in place to make sure all of the ECB components could happen, then this would be the only way program evaluation would occur routinely as part of the daily life of a special education teacher.

At the end of this research, Taylor's ECB work was closer to the teacher level because the special education department hired new special education teachers and trained them on the integration of the new program evaluation tools, process, and how to use the tools for their classroom teaching and learning. Finally, the district's program evaluation process was sustainable, dedicated to developing the capacity of the district to employ and use evaluative thinking as an intentional, uniform, and cost-effective way of operating. ECB was not as concrete as using "hard-core data," but facilitated Taylor's special education system's continuous improvement process. Data use for program evaluation, data-informed decision making for district accountability, and CIMP for the special education federal and state system were aligned processes. From 2008 to 2013, Taylor launched six program evaluation projects to show a continued high commitment

to ECB and a strong indication of Taylor's commitment to lead change towards quality special education programs.

In the next and final chapter, the overall findings will be summarized from this study, literature that supports the findings will be briefly reviewed, implications for practice will be offered, including an ECB definition and model, suggestions for sustaining ECB, and, finally, considerations for future ECB research will be presented.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

This final chapter will (1) review the study's overall purpose; (2) summarize the findings' seven themes; (3) answer the research questions and identify literature that supports the findings; (4) offer implications for practice, which will include an ECB definition, a framework, and several conceptual models; and, finally, (5) make suggestions for considering future research in ECB.

Review of the Study's Purpose

This study followed up on King's 2002 case study and focused on the limited research and knowledge base in ECB. The study's primary purpose focused on five considerations. First, the literature revealed a limited knowledge base and research in ECB, specifically in the special education context. This condition created a problematic gap between research and ECB practices in this context. This study's purpose linked existing ECB research with additional findings to develop an increased understanding of everyday ECB practices. Second, this research added to the limited literature when considering and conducting ECB research. Third, this study's problem followed up fifteen years later from King's case study (2002) of building the program evaluation capacity from 1999-2001 of the large Midwestern Two-County School District (King, 2002). Important to ECB literature, this study specifically focused on special education's evaluation process and context described in King's case study. Fourth, a question was raised for this inquiry of how King's past ECB contributions influenced the successive efforts of the district's special education leaders to build a sustainable process and ongoing capacity to conduct evaluations towards improvement. Finally, ECB within the

field of evaluation in a special education context was a deserving area of study because of the complexity of meeting the diverse academic needs of students with disabilities, the high level of federally-mandated accountability requirements, and the challenges of implementing change towards continuous organizational learning and program improvement in a complex educational system.

The federal accountability system of special education was mandated by the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), signed into law on December 3, 2004 by President George W. Bush and effective on July 1, 2005. The result of this mandate created a complicated special education system that supports children and youth with severe and diverse disabilities. The Two-County special education leaders faced significant leadership challenges when creating and facilitating a positive system for promoting academic achievement for these students, requiring alignment of this mandate at the national, state, local school district, and finally at the classroom level.

Summary of Findings

The data were analyzed and interpreted to determine the extent of ECB and how the evaluation process and its use strengthened and improved the district's special education practices while strengthening organizational and continuous improvement outcomes and efforts. The overall findings of this study revealed seven themes, as follows:

1. An evaluation leader and champions are critical to lead and sustain ECB efforts.
2. ECB requires an evaluation leader to create a formal infrastructure.
3. ECB promotes a participatory process through engagement with stakeholders.

4. Evaluation use facilitates reflective thinking and decision-making toward change.
5. ECB develops tools that facilitate communication use.
6. ECB requires sophisticated data use for special education's internal and external accountability.
7. ECB adapts and changes over time to fit the organization's internal and external contexts.

A valuable finding of this study was the importance of leadership in building and sustaining ECB. During the past fifteen years, the Two-County School District needed leaders and champions with skills to build and sustain program evaluation efforts at multiple levels, including within a given special education program (e.g., DCD, Setting IV), the special education department, and the broader organizational context of the district. During the fifteen years, the data pointed to two evaluation leaders: (1) Anna Campbell, Coordinator of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA) from 1999-2001, and (2) Veronica Galles, Director of REA from 2008 to the current time. In addition, the data pointed to five evaluation champions:

1. Gwendolyn Taylor, Director of Special Education from 2008-2013;
2. Danielle O'Connor, Special Education Setting IV Program Supervisor;
3. Hazel Clayton, Special Education DCD Supervisor;
4. Barbara Ritz, DCD teacher lead; and
5. Tiffany O'Neil, an Evaluation Specialist who worked collaboratively at the district and classroom levels.

These seven individuals had different ECB roles and responsibilities, but they all demonstrated and developed a high level of evaluative thinking, knowledge, and skills through their engagement with the process. These individuals were also committed to the growth and development of program evaluation in the special education department. A summary of the findings for the primary question and the five sub-questions is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Findings for the Primary Research Question and Its Five Sub-Questions

Primary Research Question	Findings
<p>In what ways have the results and consequences of past evaluation capacity building (ECB) efforts improved the continuous organizational learning, special education program development, and accountability in the Two-County School District?</p>	<p>Taylor, Director of Special Education (2009-2013), and several other dedicated special education champions were critical for directing and sustaining ECB efforts toward change and improvements within special education programs, mostly noted in the Setting IV and DCD district-wide K-12 center-based programs. Other ways included: (a) evaluation leader rebuilding infrastructure in 2008, (b) strategically choosing programs for evaluation, even during program transitions, (c) a participatory process at the special education teacher level, (d) sophisticated data tools and use, (e) coaching and modeling by evaluation leaders, (f) dedicated evaluation resources, (g) organizational alignment with top-level district leaders, and (h) routine integration and use of evaluation activities in core leadership meetings to model and build capacity to use process and increase evaluative thinking.</p>
Research Sub-Question One: Part One	Findings
<p>In what ways has past ECB affected the special education knowledge and skills in their individual leadership and professional practices in the past?</p>	<p>From 1999-2008, ECB (a) contributed to an emerging vision of aligning ECB with special education’s continuous improvement efforts, (b) supported the growth of district and department’s data use culture, (c) included formal results in the initial state-level CIMP plan and process, (d) helped leaders learn how to do action research, and (e) fostered a decision-making process with the top-level special education leader.</p>
Research Sub-Question One: Part Two	Findings
<p>In what ways has past ECB affected the special</p>	<p>From 2008 to current time, ECB reportedly (a) integrated routine data use to make informed decisions at program and student levels, (b) increased people’s opportunity to use reflective</p>

<p>education knowledge and skills in their individual leadership and professional practices in the past and today?</p>	<p>practices, (c) aided their decision-making process, (d) improved their evaluative thinking, (f) increased their communication practices, and (g) taught program evaluation skills through participation (e.g., group facilitation skills using evaluation activities).</p>
<p>Research Sub-Question Two</p>	<p>Findings</p>
<p>In what ways has past ECB affected knowledge and practice in building capacity for conducting future program evaluations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth and depth of the evaluation resources in this large school district put them in a positive place for future ECB, where the Director of Special Education and other special education evaluation champions did the hard work of ECB, using the expanded and modified program evaluation model and process that Campbell initiated in 1999 to 2001. • The DCD evaluation project showed the most dynamic and intentional development, paving the path for future evaluation because of how they developed the vision cards, look-for tool, and other collaborative data collection methods between administrators and teachers. • Future projects will look different and will most likely be launched with less formality than Campbell’s 2000 gold standard. Process will move through the steps in a thorough way, but with a reduced timeline. Special education teachers will participate during staff development and after school, rather than during elaborate and expensive two-day summits.
<p>Research Sub-Question Three: Part One</p>	<p>Findings</p>
<p>Which ECB program evaluation components did the participants (e.g., special education administrators and district-level evaluation leaders) find the most beneficial?</p>	<p>All participants felt the evaluation leader and REA department were most beneficial for special education ECB. They felt if the evaluation expertise, support, and resources (e.g., data tools and evaluation specialists) were eliminated, they would face challenges with sustaining ECB.</p>

Research Sub-Question Three: Part Two	Findings
Which ECB program evaluation components did the participants (e.g., special education administrators and district-level evaluation leaders) find the least beneficial?	The least beneficial included: (a) amount of time ECB required created a disconnection between the routine life of program evaluation and daily life of special education teacher, (b) communication traveled quickly between teachers creating mistrust and tension about purpose, (c) challenges with accessing teachers for participation because of difficulties getting substitutes, (d) perception that some leaders lacked adequate skills to use, share, and communicate data with others, and (f) widespread size of district, large number of students, and extensive amount of programs impacted the amount of time DCD evaluation process required (e.g., data collection).
Research Sub-Question Four	Findings
How did the participants in ECB program evaluations or other related program evaluation activity perceive and report the evaluation process?	Most of participants perceived (a) the evaluation process as essential and important for sustaining ECB, (b) the need of a participatory, flexible, and systematic process through engagement with stakeholders (e.g., program staff) during evaluation activities, (c) process needed to be at the teacher level where change was likely to facilitate program improvement. The primary purpose of the evaluation process was to put the evaluation infrastructure in place (i.e., a set-up of an established evaluation mechanism), and evaluation leaders (e.g., Campbell and Galles) modeled evaluation behavior with stakeholders.
Research Sub-Question Five	Findings
As a result of staff participation with ECB efforts, what was the perceived and reported impact on student engagement and learning in the district's special education programs?	The perceived and reported impact on student engagement and learning: (a) routinely measured, analyzed, and shared data in a meaningful way, (b) helped teachers to move away from the status quo of special education by asking questions, like this one – Are we doing the best we can for our students with disabilities?, (c) with the vision card, provided clarity on how a program was judged effective, (d) focused on student program needs through communication use, (e) was a collaborative data collection process with teacher and administrators, and (f) facilitated quality group discussions on how to improve a program's comprehensive academics.

These findings closely aligned with the ECB literature in multiple ways. Previous case studies suggested that ECB is significantly driven by the context of the specific organization (Stockdill et al., 2002; King, 2002; King, 2007; Preskill & Torres, 2000; Baizerman et al., 2002). Within a school context, the literature described the purpose of ECB as helping organizational leaders pay attention to the evaluation process and the changes that are taking place around them with the people, programs, and within their organization as a result of their continued ECB use (King, 2002; King, 2007; Patton, 1994; Patton, 1998; Coglan, Preskill, & Catsambas, 2003; Stockdill et al., 2002; Baizerman et al., 2002; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001) When the evaluation leaders and champions of an organization are committed to ECB; they share an expectation that the organization will build an evaluation process that makes quality evaluation and its use routine with staff members (King, 2007; King, 2010; Harnar & Preskill, 2007; Cousins & Shulha, 2006; King & Pechman, 1984; Amo & Cousins, 2007; Preskill & Torres, 2000)

The ECB literature stated that organizational leaders are continuously creating opportunities for their program staff members to think like evaluators and know how to do evaluative activities within their programs (King, 2007; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Labin, 2014). Individual special education leaders using ECB may be viewed as evaluation champions in their organization when these individuals use their evaluative knowledge and skills for the program evaluation process. Through ECB, these individuals can make significant contributions towards organizational development and change (King, 2007).

The ECB literature stated that programs need to develop and evolve, and the “process is the outcome . . . Change is not necessarily progress. Change is adaptation”

(Patton, 1994, pp. 312-313). In ECB, a leader identifies a problem or an issue that warrants potential solutions or interventions. The leader understands that the team members' participation plays a major role in goal-setting and collaborating to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, ongoing process of continuous improvement, ongoing adaptation, and rapid responsiveness (Patton, 1994).

Context is important in ECB and is related to an organization's history, external environments, and type. ECB is a context-dependent system of guided processes and practices in an organization, program, or site (Stockdill et al., 2002, Volkov & King, 2007) suggested assessing the organizational context to determine whether or not ECB is viable. Preskill and Torres (2000) emphasized the importance of context in an organization's infrastructure, such as culture, leadership, forms of communication, and systems and structures for evaluative inquiry. Volkov and King's (2007) checklist for ECB provided a set of categories to consider when incorporating ECB into the daily work of an organization.

The literature emphasized that ECB is intentional work, and the findings showed multiple examples in the Two-County School District. The evaluation process can make a significant difference on multiple levels in an organization as noted explicitly in the findings. Labin explained that the "organizational outcomes of ECB included doing and using evaluations, planning future evaluations, and evaluating as part of staff jobs" (Labin, 2014, p. 107). ECB activities are part of a larger process linking an organization's goals, activities, resources to ongoing program evaluation and its uses (Baizerman et al., 2002). "Reflective practice is basic to actual ECB" (Baizerman et al., 2002, p. 113). Reflective practice increased self-awareness in order to understand the complexities of

program evaluation, while making planning and intentional actions possible (Baizerman et al., 2002).

These findings are a follow-up with King's case study (2002), which documented a two-year process of building evaluation capacity in the Two-County School District. The findings documented the continued development of ECB for the Two-County's special education department and showed how King's special education ECB model (2002) continued to be aligned with the external context of federal mandates and aligned with the internal organizational context of diverse special education programs. King's (2002) internal evaluation context utilized cooperative learning methods and promoted participation by district personnel with the evaluation process that framed questions, analyzed data, and made special education recommendations (King, 2002).

Finally, the positive alignment of the findings with King's case study (2002) showed that the Two-County's evaluation leaders and evaluation champions were firmly committed to an expanded and modified evaluation infrastructure and model, a participatory evaluation process, and ECB's developmental nature. The leadership role and responsibilities of these individuals led to successive ECB efforts to build a sustainable process and ongoing capacity of these special education leaders to use program evaluation in their special education program improvements.

ECB Definition, Theoretical Framework, and Conceptual Models

ECB definition. A nuanced ECB definition emerged from the findings, which facilitated a greater understanding of ECB: ECB is a distinctive form of developmental evaluation and use as demonstrated by an evaluation leader's and champions' commitment to:

1. Create, plan, build, and maintain an evaluation infrastructure (i.e., evaluation plan, evaluation process, social structures, and dedicated resources);
2. Evolve a participatory evaluation process (i.e., both a person-centered and action-centered process) through people’s “learning by doing;”
3. Informally or formally communicate with other individuals (i.e., evaluation champions, stakeholders, community members, state government educational leaders) routinely during the evaluation process; and
4. Routinely adapt and sustain evaluation within an organization’s internal (i.e., evaluation resources, data informed decision making, evaluation expertise, evaluation culture, workload) and external contexts (i.e., state accountability requirements, federal mandates) towards change and a commitment for an organization’s quality programs (i.e., entire organization, department, and/or program).

The findings also suggested an ECB theoretical framework with six core components (Table 6) that summarized the working definitions and basic principles that developed from the findings.

Table 6

An ECB Theoretical Framework with Role Definitions and Responsibilities

**ECB requires an evaluation leader and evaluation champions with leadership skills
to build, direct, and sustain program evaluation.**

An evaluation leader and champions are critical to build, direct, and sustain ECB efforts in an organization.

Evaluation Leader

Role of an Evaluation Leader

An evaluation leader who has finely honed evaluation and leadership skills is a necessary component for ECB.

He or she:

1. Creates an evaluation vision,
2. Provides the necessary program evaluation expertise to lead an evaluation department,
3. Puts an evaluation infrastructure in place within an organization, and
4. Leads other evaluation champions to build their capacity to use a defined evaluation process routinely

Responsibilities of an Evaluation Leader

He or she:

1. Directs, facilitates, models, coaches, and moves forward the evaluation knowledge and skills of other evaluation champions;
 2. Attends core leadership meetings of a department to model and build other leaders' capacity to use a program evaluation process,
 3. Provides evaluation insight and expertise to other leaders,
 4. Asks questions when needed with other leaders to promote their evaluative thinking,
 5. Serves in an advocacy role for the evaluation process and use in an organization, and
 6. Organizationally aligns with other top leaders (e.g., superintendent, directors, and building principals) of an organization to promote their understanding and value for evaluation.
-

Evaluation Champion

Role of an Evaluation Champion

ECB requires dedicated and committed evaluation champions who direct a department or program's evaluation efforts to build and sustain their capacity to use a defined evaluation process routinely.

He or she:

1. Supports a department's program evaluation vision,
2. Directs implementation of a department's evaluation plan,
3. Identifies multiple group possibilities for organizational improvements,
4. Uses evaluation to move other champions' mindset for change forward, and
5. Demonstrates sustained efforts using the evaluation process routinely with a program's stakeholders.

Responsibilities of Evaluation Champion

He or she:

1. Articulates a future ECB vision that aligns with promoting change within a department's and/or program's continuous improvement process,
 2. Leads, facilitates, models, coaches, and moves forward the evaluation knowledge and skills of other departmental leaders (e.g., special education supervisors) through their intentional involvement with the evaluation process,
 3. Routinely integrates and uses program evaluation activities in core leadership meetings to model and build leaders' (departmental meeting) and staff members' (program level meeting) capacity to use the program evaluation process to increase their evaluative thinking,
 4. Provides evaluation insight, expertise, and clarity to other leaders and program stakeholders;
 5. Asks questions when needed with other leaders and program staff to promote their evaluative thinking,
 6. Serves in an advocacy role for the evaluation process and use in a department and/or program,
 7. Supports departmental and/or program ECB efforts with resources (e.g., funding for internal evaluation specialist, external evaluation specialist; time for staff to participate in the evaluation process; data tools), and
 8. Organizationally aligns and communicates with other leaders (e.g., evaluation leader, other evaluation champions, and building principals) of an organization to promote their understanding and value for evaluation.
-

ECB requires an evaluation leader to

create a formal infrastructure

ECB requires an evaluation leader to create, build, and maintain a formal infrastructure, specifically setting up the evaluation purposes, plans, and processes.

Evaluation infrastructure, including the following components, is essential:

1. Organizational and social structures build a strong foundation for the evaluation process.
 - a. Organizational structure is the way an organization, department, or program is built, arranged, and organized for an evaluation process.
 - b. Social structure is the way that an individual and/or group of people are organized to enable their participation in evaluation activities.
2. Equipment, supplies and tools for the evaluation process (e.g., computers, access to data tools and data dashboards, data analysis software/web subscriptions).
3. Resources are critical to sustaining ECB efforts and include, at best, a formal department, dedicated funding for an evaluation specialist to support ECB projects, access to internal and/or external evaluation experts, and evaluation journals.

ECB promotes a participatory process

through engagement with stakeholders

ECB promotes a participatory process through engagement with stakeholders at multiple levels in an organization.

1. The evaluation participatory process has three primary purposes:

- a. It puts the evaluation infrastructure (i.e., a set-up of an established evaluation mechanism) in place.
 - b. Evaluation leaders and/or champions model evaluation behavior with stakeholders during evaluation activities.
 - c. It brings groups of stakeholders together within a program to engage and participate in evaluation meetings (e.g.,
-

summits)

2. The evaluation participatory process:

- a. Emphasizes the importance of designing evaluation activities that accurately reflect the experience, expertise, and concerns of the evaluation participants,
- b. Promotes evaluation activities that are aligned with the organization's commitment to continuous improvement, which promotes results and changes in their ongoing organizational development,
- c. Uses stakeholder input to develop a shared understanding of a program's focal areas, with each focal area having an aspiration statement, criteria, and program standards,
- d. Provides opportunities for program teams to solve problems with relevant strategies, and
- e. Facilitates a systematic and unified process for staff to use the evaluation tools to measure a program in a collaborative fashion

3. Evaluation participatory activities:

- a. Identify the strengths of a program while the participants create a program's vision for the future, and
- b. Answer questions like "who are we and what do we believe?"

Evaluation use facilitates

reflective thinking and decision making toward program change

Evaluation use is defined as the act or practice of using the established evaluation process routinely and systematically within a program department (i.e., special education department) and organization (i.e., school district).

1. Evaluation use results in several outcomes:
 - a. Gives people permission to try new things or do things in a different way,
 - b. Focuses a program's priorities,
 - c. Facilitates reflective thinking for program changes, and
 - d. Improves a leader's decision making
 2. Mutual trust between administrators and stakeholders can improve evaluation use
-

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3. Evaluation use requires sophisticated data use for special education's internal and external accountability contexts
 - a. Data use in the internal contexts:
 - i. Requires sophisticated tools to analyze each building's special education services,
 - ii. Facilitates the integration of data analysis and interpretation with other routine program demands to collectively measure program effectiveness,
 - iii. Informs a leader's decisions, and
 - iv. Supports special education's continuous improvement work at the student level.
 - b. Supports required data use in the external context (both federal and state law that monitor special education).
-

**ECB adapts and changes over time to
fit the internal and external contexts**

Evaluation planning, purposes, and processes adapt and change over time to fit the internal and external contexts of an organization, department, or program.

1. An evaluation leader and champions actively make changes with the subsequent program evaluation process based on what worked and what did not work well during the previous program evaluation projects.
2. The developmental evaluation form, processes, and intentional uses evolve in subsequent program evaluation projects:
 - a. Develops differently and dynamically to fit a program's continuous improvement needs and context,
 - b. Paves the path for future program evaluation because of how an evaluation project develops the communication tools (e.g., vision cards, "look for's") and other data collection tools, and
 - c. Shows developmental changes, but moves through the steps in a similar way. Examples include:
 - i. Reducing the timeline,
 - ii. Gathering the needed materials and doing more of the background work (e.g., literature review) could occur ahead of time by an evaluation specialist.

**ECB develop communication tools that
facilitate communication use**

ECB develops communication tools that facilitate communication use.

Communication Tools

1. A communication tool is defined as something used to communicate program evaluation results and important messages at multiple levels.
 - a. Multiple levels include:
 - i. Top departmental leaders in key organizational positions, administrators, educators, and other individuals in the multilevel social structures of the school district, and
 - ii. Individuals, parents, community members, and state government specialists outside the school district
 - b. Types of communication tools include:
 - i. Departmental print materials,
 - ii. Superintendent and school board reports,
 - iii. School district webpages (both intranet and internet),
 - iv. State government reports,
 - v. Committee print materials and presentation materials,
 - vi. School district publications, and
 - vii. Visual supports to communicate data findings.

Communication Use

2. Communication use is defined as the practice of using communication tools to accurately, routinely, intentionally, and systematically communicate and disseminate program evaluation findings to the primary intended user(s) and the stakeholder groups within the targeted ECB social structures.

Communication use:

- a. Becomes a process to facilitate communication and gather perceptions among the social structures within a department, program, or across programs within the organization;
-

-
- b. Integrates a participatory process of using program evaluation to express or exchange ideas, thoughts, and feelings to other stakeholders within a program, department, or organization;
 - c. Has a primary purpose of documenting and conveying program evaluation information and results in an accurate, meaningful, explicit, and timely way for improving an organization, department, or program; and
 - d. Focuses on student program needs within special education programs.
-

ECB conceptual model for an educational context. Figure 6 presents a visual representation of six core components and concepts of ECB within an educational context. This ECB circular model displays symbols that align with the working definitions and basic principles presented in Table 6. The symbols are explained further in each of the six sections, followed by a description of the arrows and the dotted circumference of the circle.

Section 1 - ECB requires an evaluation leader and evaluation champions with leadership skills to build, direct, and sustain program evaluation. The main heading states “Leaders Build, Direct, and Sustain Efforts.” The subheading states “Competent Evaluation Leader, Committed Champions.” The symbol in this section shows both an evaluation leader and an evaluation champion, which emphasizes the unique roles and critical responsibilities of each of these individuals. Based on the study, the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment is an evaluation leader who provides the ongoing leadership, direction, modeling, and coaching of the ECB process and activities. The Director of Special Education is an evaluation champion, who leads the program evaluation efforts and allocates the funding for ECB within the internal context of special education department. Evaluation champions can include other committed individuals who engage in the evaluation process at multiple levels of an organization.

Section 2 - ECB requires an evaluation leader to create a formal infrastructure. The main heading states “Evaluation Leader Creates a Formal Infrastructure,” and the sub-heading states “Plan, Structure, Equipment, Resources”. The symbols (e.g., buildings, triangle shape of three individuals with the letters PLC) represent the three components of a formal infrastructure, which are the (a) organizational and social

structures, (b) equipment, supplies, and tools for the evaluation process; and (c) resources for sustaining ECB efforts. The structures need to be in place in an organization, including the following examples:

1. An established evaluation mechanism that an evaluation leader sets up,
2. Time for staff to complete evaluation activities,
3. Ongoing professional development, and
4. A district-wide special education leadership committee that provides leadership, coaching, and ongoing oversight of evaluation activities.

Special education staff members are actively involved in a professional learning community (e.g., symbol of PLC), promoting the continuous organizational learning of special education and integrating evaluation activities into their improvement of their special education programs. ECB activities are integrated into these job-alike communities at all different grade levels. Program leaders who are intentional about increasing their participation with evaluation methods and strategies plan professional development sessions at the district level. Resources are provided to the special education leaders, such as the use of evaluation tools (e.g., web-based survey tools) and data analysis by evaluation staff from the central office evaluation department (by whatever name).

Section 3 - ECB promotes a participatory process through engagement with stakeholders. The main heading states “Process Engages Stakeholders to Participate,” and the sub-heading states “Who Are We?, What Do We Believe?” The symbol of the three linked individuals shows the importance of a participatory process with diverse stakeholders. First, the participatory process brings groups of stakeholders together

within a program to engage and participate in evaluation. Second, the three different individuals also emphasize the importance of designing evaluation activities that accurately reflect the experience, expertise, and concerns of the participants. Third, the evaluation participatory activities are designed to answer questions like “Who are we?” and “What do we believe?” when looking at a specific program.

Section 4 - Evaluation use facilitates reflective thinking about change. The main heading states “Use of Results Facilitates Thinking & Decision Making,” and the sub-heading states “Continuous Improvement, Flexible Process.” The symbol of the brain shows how evaluation use: (a) facilitates reflective thinking about change, (b) improves a leader’s decision making, (c) focuses a program’s priorities, and (d) gives people permission to explore new concepts and practices. The symbol of the measurement data number ##% shows how evaluation use requires sophisticated data use to inform a leader’s decision.

Section 5 - ECB adapts and changes over time to fit the organization’s internal and external contexts. The main heading states “Adapts Over Time to Fit Organizational Contexts,” and the sub-heading states “Routine, Developmental, Integrated, Dynamic.” Evaluation planning, purposes, and processes adapt and change over time to fit the internal and external contexts of an organization, department, or program. The two symbols in this section include a circular shape of four circles and a square shape divided into three sections. The four circles represent the developmental form and use of ECB in an organization. The square shape shows the importance of increasing evaluation use in an organization over time. The square-shaped symbol will be explained further in the next two sections.

Section 6 - ECB develops communication tools that facilitate communication

use. The main heading states “Tools Facilitate a Systematic Communication Practice,” and the sub-heading states “CommunicationTool” and “Communication Use.” The symbol of the binder shows how ECB develops communication tools, which are something used by leaders to communicate evaluation results and messages at multiple levels. The group of people surrounded by a thinking bubble is a symbol for communication use, which is the practice of using communication tools to accurately, routinely, intentionally, and systematically communicate and disseminate evaluation findings to the stakeholders within the organization’s social structures.

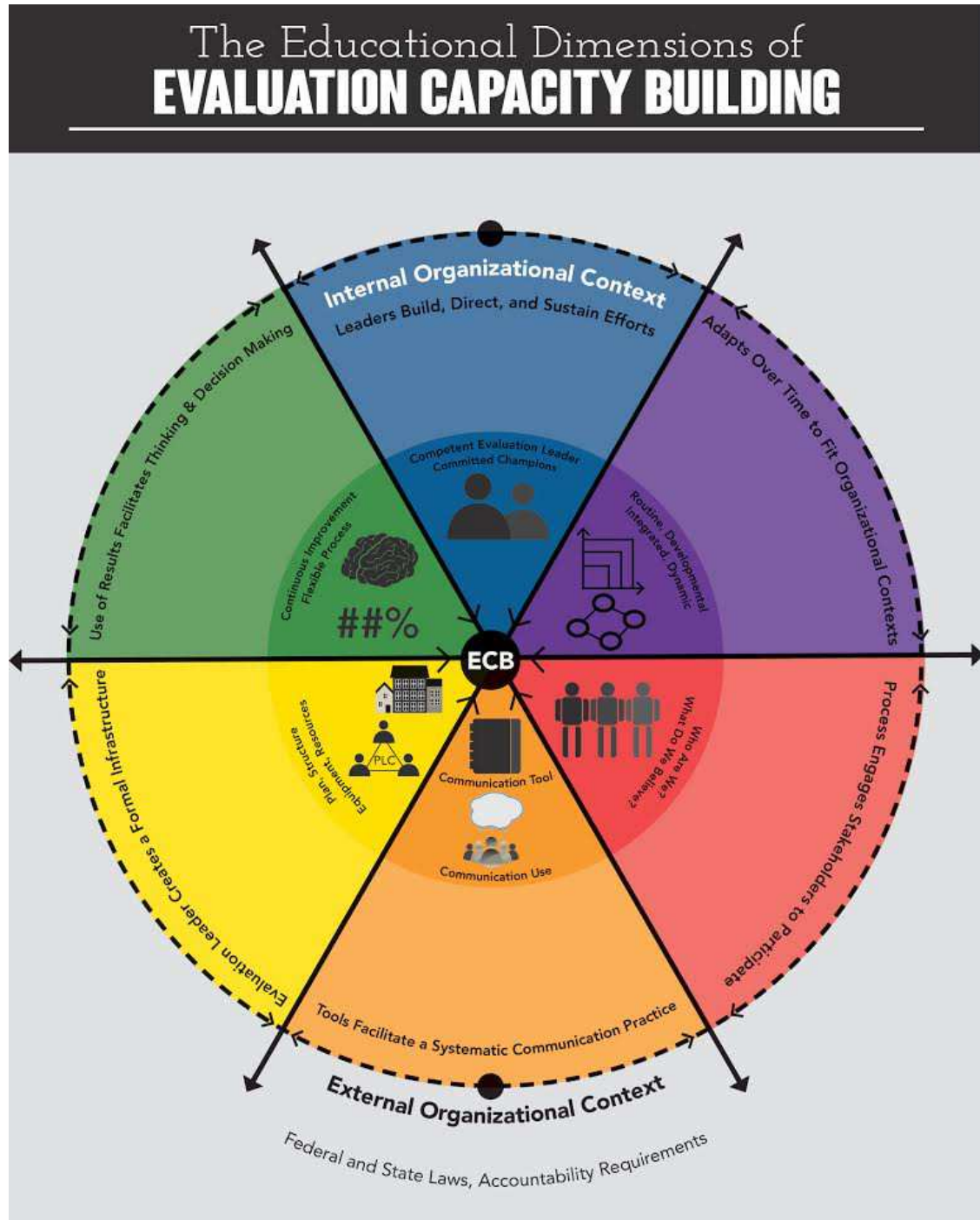
Organizational context and culture. The directional arrows and the dotted circumference of the large circle represent the importance of the organizational contexts (e.g., internal and external) for ECB’s dynamic and developmental form and use. A supportive internal context is important to sustain the ECB initiatives in a school district. The internal context begins with knowledgeable evaluation leaders and supportive school principals and special education administrators who promote evaluation at multiple levels, including (a) a trusting school culture; (b) a participatory evaluation process, and (c) increased routine use of evaluation thinking and evaluation activities, (d) reflective practices, and (e) routine and systematic data use for supporting a decision-making process. Program improvement is considered a continuous process of change and aligned with ECB. Evaluation champions are recognized and integrated into a participatory and distributed leadership model within the organization.

An internal organizational context aligns with a culture of promoting high student achievement for all students. The superintendent and school leaders at all levels promote

a culture of high learning targets and high expectations for the achievement of all students in the school district, including students who receive special education services. For students with disabilities, the special education leaders promote a culture of high expectations and achievement for promoting quality and engaging special education programs. As part of this culture, data-informed decision making aligns with promoting student achievement. Teachers actively collaborate to create common formative assessments and use student data to plan student instruction during their professional learning communities' ongoing discussions. Data retreats, held annually with school administrators and teacher leaders, would also be an example of how data use is embedded into the organizational culture of achievement.

An external organizational context for special education includes the accountability requirements of the federal mandates, IDEA, and NCLB. The dotted circumference shows the interconnectedness of both the internal and external educational contexts.

Figure 6. The Educational Dimensions of ECB

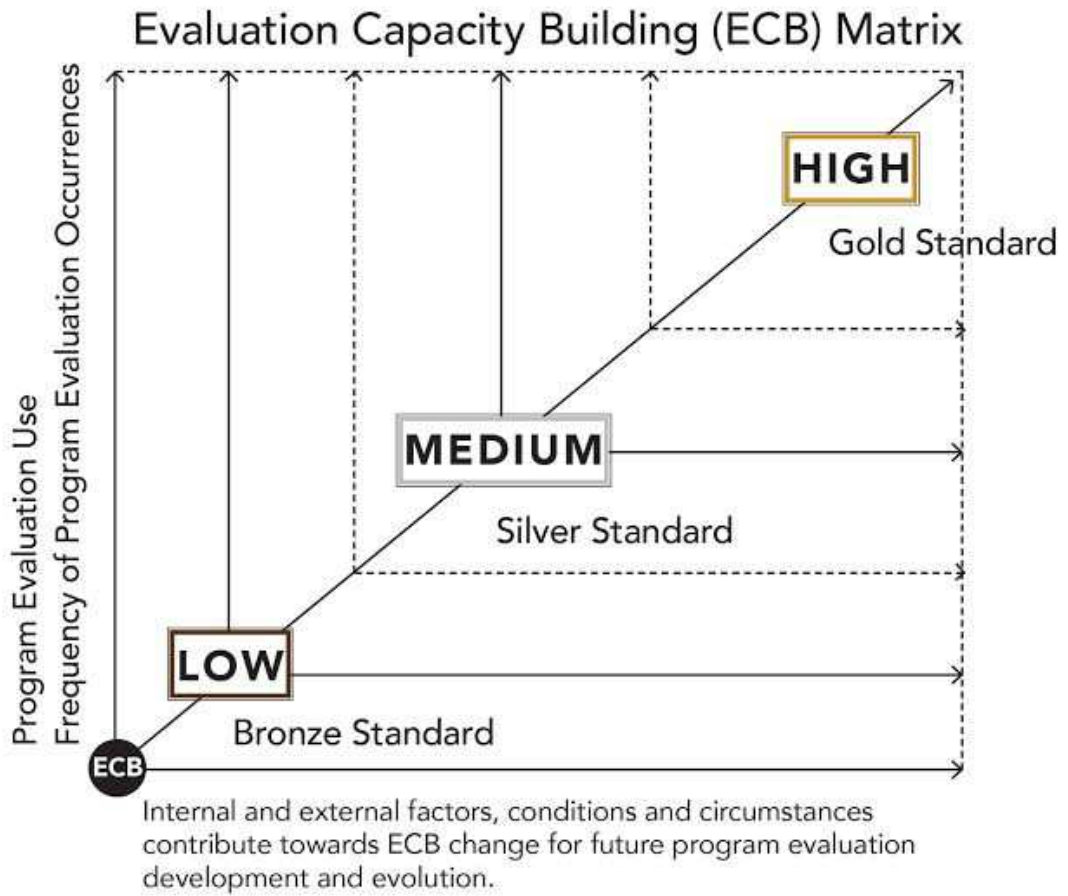


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ECB conceptual model: Combination of evaluation use and manner of development towards a future “gold standard.” Combining the literature and findings, a model emerged. Aligned with the subsequent model (See Figure 8), this model (See Figure 7) shows how the Two-County’s evaluation leaders and champions strived to reach their vision of ECB’s “gold standard.” Taylor articulated her future vision for ECB, which included a developmental form aligned with continuous improvement, a faster and flexible process, and a process that was user-friendly at the teacher level. In reaching for the ECB gold standard, the findings show the importance of evaluation use and are indicated by the frequency of program evaluation occurrences (e.g., evaluation activities) on the vertical axis. The findings showed high frequency of program evaluation occurrences for the Two-County special education department.

As indicated on the horizontal axis, internal and external factors, conditions, and circumstances in an organization, department, or program contribute towards ECB change for future program evaluation development and evolution. This model shows the combination of evaluation use (e.g., vertical axis) and the factors (e.g., internal and external contexts), evolution of the projects, conditions (e.g., political influences, federal mandates, state-level educational accountability requirements), climate (e.g., level of trust with program staff), and circumstances (e.g., horizontal axis); facilitate the development and evolution of ECB towards a gold standard.

Figure 7. An ECB Conceptual Model of Striving for the Gold Standard



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ECB model for the Two-County special education department:

Developmental form and use towards future growth. Combining the literature and findings, ECB within an educational context (e.g., special education) should be dynamic, depicting continuous change and evolution. Aligned with the previous model (See Figure 7), this next visual model (See Figure 8) shows how the Two-County’s evaluation leaders and special education champions strived to reach their vision of ECB’s “gold standard.” Figure 8 demonstrates how ECB has a developmental form, demonstrated by the distinct methods or ways program evaluation activities are created and produced by an evaluation leader and evaluation champions. Because the evaluation plan, purposes, and processes adapt and change over time to fit the internal and external contexts of an organization, department, or program, ECB also has various developmental uses, which is illustrated by the different ways program evaluation is experienced by the evaluation leader, evaluation champions, and stakeholders.

The findings showed that the simple expression “gold standard” was articulated by the evaluation leaders and champions when describing their evaluation use, which aligned with their shared vision and commitment to sustain ECB in an organization or program, such as the special education department of the Two-County School District. Indicated by the diagonal arrow directed towards their ECB target, this so called ECB gold standard was useful for promoting improvement and changes with how the subsequent evaluation projects were implemented. Each evaluation project developed differently and dynamically to fit a program’s continuous improvement needs and context. Each project paved the path for future program evaluation because of the way it

developed over time. The evaluation process showed developmental changes, but moved through the steps in a similar way.

As an appropriate metaphor, a developmental form is visualized as a paver or tile that begins at the right angle of this ECB space in the lower left corner. Each subsequent paver of evaluation use aligns with the vertical axis, starting at the lower left corner. The pavers stack in an upward direction and mark in time towards the upper left corner. For example, paver one indicates the formal special education evaluation Campbell completed in 2000, which was referred to as the initial “gold standard.” Paver two indicates Schwartzkopf’s leadership initiative by her launching of the first formalized continuous improvement effort in the special education department, aligned with the state-level educational agency in 2001-2002. Paver three indicates the multiple evaluation projects launched in 2009 (e.g., ECSE, Setting IV, DCD) by Taylor and Galles. Paver four indicates the additional multiple evaluation projects launched in 2011 by Taylor and Galles for the special education department. Paver five represents the future ECB in this organization. Developmental form is visualized by the unique visual patterns (e.g., color, shade), and the repeated pavers of multiple special education evaluation projects show the increased evaluation use in an extended time period.

The mosaic indicates the compilation of evaluation use with the multiple evaluation projects for the special education department (e.g., program level) in the Two-County School District (e.g., organizational level). The combination and unique patterns of all of the pavers depict the developmental use of the Two-County’s special education ECB. Developmental use is indicated in several ways:

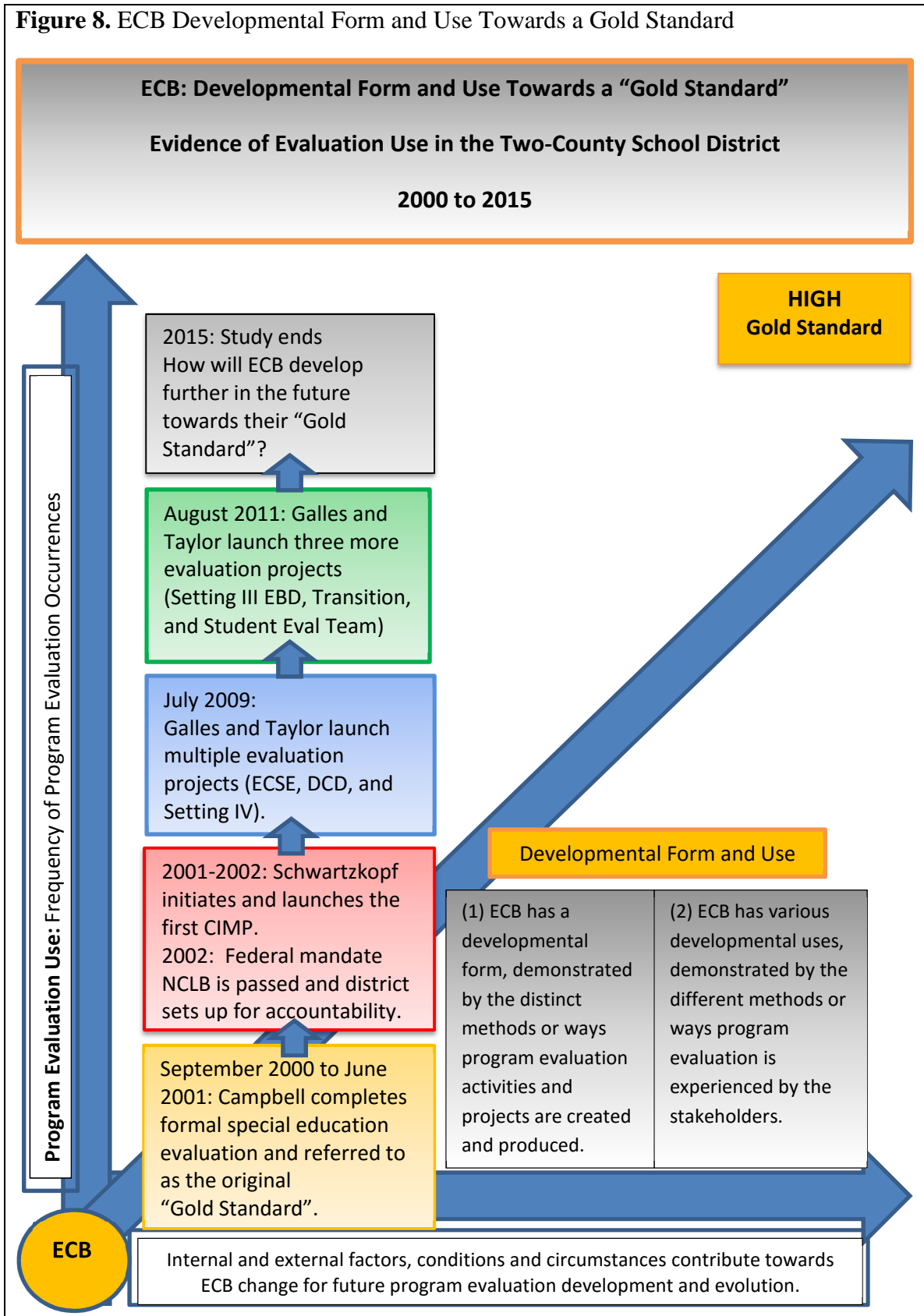
1. How the evaluation leaders (e.g., Campbell and Galles) and champions (e.g., Taylor, Setting IV supervisor, DCD evaluation core team) actively made changes with their subsequent program evaluation process based on what worked and what did not work well during their previous program evaluation project(s),
2. The different ways program evaluation was experienced by the leaders champions, and stakeholders in an organization,
3. The context of a program, department, and/or organization; and
4. The purpose of each evaluation study or project

There are stories in each of these ECB pavers regarding their context and purpose during a specific time period. These stories or evaluation projects are modeled by a unique paver to indicate the essential components and context of building evaluation capacity for the targeted programs. Looking at the context of each of the projects, the ECB story does not make sense without understanding the culture, everyday situations, the people who make up this project's social structure, and how ECB was implemented in real time and real places (Baizerman et al., 2002).

The horizontal axis represents important internal and external factors, conditions, and circumstances that contribute towards change for future program evaluation development and evolution towards an organization or program's high "gold" standard. There are also internal and external contextual components, characteristics that serve as a barrier of ECB developmental form and use within an educational organization or program.

Connected to each other, the actions along these two planes (e.g., vertical and horizontal axis) signify ECB's developmental form and use as each of the pavers are added across time (e.g., vertical axis) in multiple types of internal and external factors, conditions, and circumstances (e.g., horizontal axis) towards ECB for future program development and evolution, within a continuous space (e.g., organization, program, individual level). Next, Figure 8 demonstrates how ECB has a developmental form and evolves through developmental use towards a gold standard.

Figure 8. ECB Developmental Form and Use Towards a Gold Standard



Implications for Sustaining ECB Practice for Top-Level Leaders

Top-Level Evaluation Leader. ECB requires leadership from an organization's top-level evaluation leader. The following recommendations offer considerations for growing, developing, and sustaining ECB in an educational context. Evaluation leaders are champions with finely honed evaluation and leadership skills. They have an essential role and responsibilities to (1) create a vision and a plan, (2) build an evaluation infrastructure, (3) set up an evaluation process, and (4) direct, mentor, and coach top-level departmental leaders to sustain ECB in an organization. Their leadership skills are closely aligned with their organizational capacity to use a defined evaluation process routinely with other people in their organization, multiple departments, and individual programs.

An evaluation leader should consider the following recommendations:

1. Create a vision and promote a plan to guide his or her leadership practices and integration of ECB principles and practices within an organization;
2. Aligning with this vision and plan, create and build an evaluation infrastructure;
3. Set up an evaluation process that routinely models and uses program evaluation during summits and the everyday work of the stakeholders (e.g., special education teachers);
4. Direct, mentor, and coach other top-level departmental leaders or evaluation champions in key organizational positions to integrate and use components of the evaluation process within their department's improvement process;

5. Develop organizational relationships with top organizational and departmental leaders to understand value, promote, and increase the demand for routine evaluation use;
6. Look for opportunities to attend departmental core leadership meetings to model and build other leaders' capacity to use a program evaluation process;
7. Informally coach and mentor evaluation champions at multiple organizational levels to promote and grow their evaluation skills and develop their evaluative thinking;
8. Recruit new evaluation champions in their organization, specifically from multiple departments (e.g., general education, special education, nutrition services) and from targeted programs completing program evaluation projects (e.g., Setting IV and DCD special education programs); and
9. Provide access to high-quality data tools and evaluation specialists to support individuals with their projects, which can lead to better evaluations.

Top-Level Departmental Leader. The findings showed a top-level special education leader has an essential role and responsibility to grow, develop, and sustain ECB in multiple programs of a special education department. Aligned with this study's findings, ECB practice required a dedicated and committed top-level special education leader who directed the special education department's program evaluation efforts to build and sustain their capacity to use a defined evaluation process routinely.

Both of the top-level special education leaders (e.g., Directors of Special Education) in this study shared that program evaluation provided a huge opportunity for them to begin to quantify and show how their special education programs were making a

difference for students with disabilities. In addition, the two Directors of Special Education felt their program evaluation work established plans in targeted programs (e.g., Setting IV, DCD) that allowed them to improve these programs and indirectly enhance the progress for students with a variety of conditions, who were enrolled in these programs (e.g., DCD district-wide program).

Based on the top-level special education leaders' experiences and perceptions, a top-level departmental leader (e.g., Director of Special Education) should consider the following recommendations to establish, grow, and sustain ECB over time:

1. Recruit an internal and/or external evaluation leader who is knowledgeable and skillful in evaluation to support his or her efforts because this person can model and coach an evaluation process, offer an objective viewpoint, ask neutral questions, and promote evaluative thinking;
2. Use the program evaluation system (e.g., infrastructure and process) with the leadership team to discuss and problem-solve departmental and program needs;
3. Continuously refine the evaluation process and direct evaluation projects with other program leaders to maintain their focus and promote sustained efforts over time;
4. Promote a shared understanding and communicate the purpose of the evaluation process to promote mutual trust between administrators and teachers;
5. Consider launching an initial evaluation process for a targeted program, even when a program undertakes complex organizational and program changes;

6. Allocate funding to directly support ECB sustainability (e.g., external evaluation expert/coach; evaluation specialist, who can exclusively provide technical assistance to administrators regarding their individual projects);
7. Intentionally communicate about the growth that was made with the ECB projects at all levels of an organization to promote a shared understanding (e.g., superintendent, school board, parent meetings);
8. Create a binder to document evaluation projects when communicating ECB results to top departmental leaders in key organizational positions; other evaluation champions should keep their program evaluation documents available and accessible in an effort to align their ECB efforts with other leadership requirements; and
9. Purposefully integrate program evaluation activities during district-wide professional learning sessions, new teacher professional development, and building-level network meetings that enable a variety of stakeholders (e.g., special education teachers, parents of students with disabilities) to participate in program evaluation.

Implications for Using and Sustaining ECB Practice for a Program-Level Leader

The findings showed an ECB practice required multiple dedicated and committed special education leaders who routinely used and directed their evaluation efforts with their program staff. The program supervisors of the Setting IV and the district-wide DCD program reported their evaluation use influenced positive changes for their special education students as their programs improved.

Based on the special education leaders' perceptions and experiences, the study's findings offer benefits and considerations for using, developing, and sustaining ECB for other program-level leaders:

1. Design and direct the professional development sessions so that program special education teachers have a common language around what is expected and a common understanding about how the program expectations are going to be measured using the evaluation tools (e.g., vision card, look for's tool);
2. Provide clarity and train the building principals with how to use the look-for evaluation tool when walking in a special education classroom, giving feedback to a special education teacher, and identifying areas of strength and areas that may need some support;
3. Allow a special education teacher to have autonomy to plan and organize his or her classroom in anticipation of the look for's by the building administrator
4. Understand you will "learn as you go," what the literature refers to as process use (Patton, 2008);
5. Access high-quality data tools and seek assistance from evaluation specialists to support data use with projects, which can lead to better evaluations;
6. Routinely plan program evaluation activities to promote staff participation and learning (e.g., defining program vision, data analysis and interpretation of the collected data) during the district's professional development days and other staff meetings within the program;
7. Create a binder to document the program's evaluation project when communicating ECB results to the top-level departmental leader and program

staff. This binder should contain the program evaluation documents and kept available and accessible in an effort to align ECB efforts with other leadership requirements; and

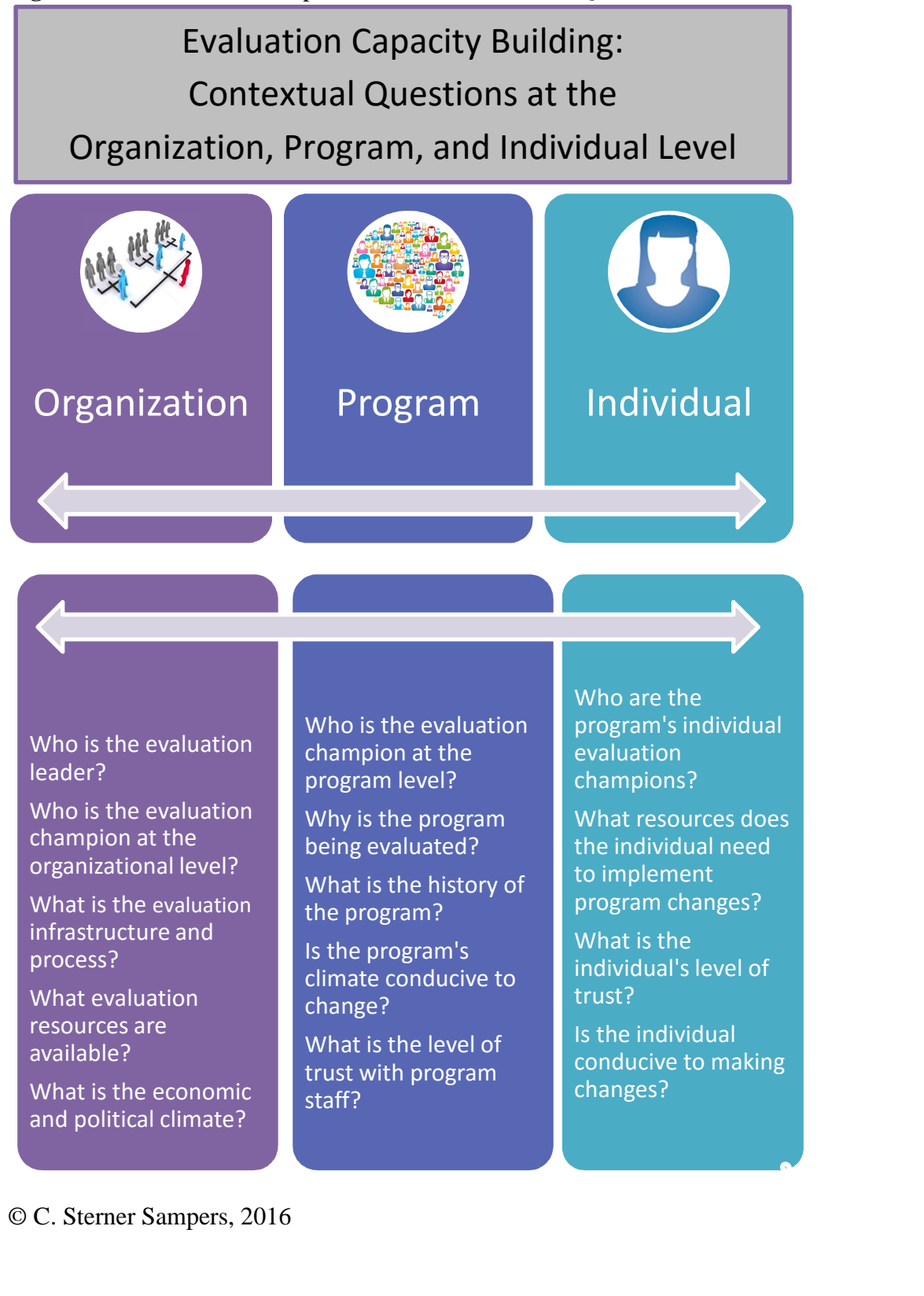
8. Intentionally communicate about the progress and growth that was made with the ECB project with program staff to promote a shared understanding, maintain transparency with the collected data, and build trust

ECB Contextual Questions to Promote Sustainability in an Organization

Based on the literature and findings, because program evaluation requires a strong commitment and significant efforts by top-level leaders and champions, ECB is difficult to sustain. To promote ECB sustainability, the following are required: (a) formal and informal program evaluation activities that occur routinely and continuously with a variety of stakeholders at multiple levels of an organization for learning and integration of ECB into typical educational routines (e.g., special education teachers are key), (b) evaluation champions in multiple levels of an organization, (c) ongoing access to an internal or external evaluation specialist, (d) a top-level evaluation champion (e.g., Director of Special Education) who allocates funding for evaluation resources to directly support ECB sustainability, (e) allocation of time to complete routine evaluation activities, (f) a program leader who communicates with clarity about what he or she is looking for and how the program evaluation's expectations are going to be measured, and (g) most importantly, an evaluation champion who will lead program evaluation efforts. Taylor felt strongly that "unless ECB is being watched, measured, and communicated about, program evaluation dies out." Figure 9 presents contextual questions for

facilitating a leader's thinking and reflections about how to promote ECB sustainability at the organizational, program, and individual levels.

Figure 9. An ECB Visual Representation of Contextual Questions



Suggestions for Future Research

Further research in an educational setting may offer additional insight for the field of ECB. Four recommendations for future ECB research in an education setting include the following: (a) research ECB in a smaller school district; (b) explore the leadership qualities of evaluation leaders and evaluation champions for the influence, growth, and sustainability of ECB; (c) investigate how evaluation leaders and evaluation champions dedicate program evaluation resources to impact and sustain ECB; and (d) study the future development of ECB in the Two-County School District in the next decade.

Researching ECB in a smaller school district could offer a different perspective and context as compared to the large school district of this study. It would be interesting to investigate how the size of a school district influences the pacing and development of program evaluation projects.

This study revealed the importance of an evaluation leader and evaluation champions for ECB. Further research would be helpful to explore the leadership qualities of a district's evaluation leader and evaluation champions. Research questions could include: Who are these evaluation leaders and champions in ECB practice? How did a district's evaluation leader direct and build an evaluation infrastructure to support ECB? How did the evaluation champions develop their evaluative thinking, vision, knowledge and skills to lead their ECB efforts for change and improved outcomes?

Future research could investigate how the allocation of resources influences the development and sustainability of ECB. In this study, Taylor purposefully increased the demand for program evaluation for the special education department through the ARRA federal stimulus funding. The special education department had access to funding that

was used in a unique way from general education, revealing a developmental purpose for program evaluation. During this time period of additional stimulus funding, special education developed a viable ECB model, but additional research in how school districts fund program evaluation would be worthwhile.

ECB grows and develops in time. Future research could study how ECB grew, further developed, and sustained over time with the different special education leaders in the Two-County School District. In the special education department, Taylor and O'Connor were considered evaluation champions, and they left the district at the conclusion of this study. In addition, the future research could study how ECB developed at the special education teacher level. According to Taylor, special education teachers were important for special education program improvement. Finally, future research could study how ECB continued to align with Two-County's special education improvement process since the completion of this study.

Conclusion

In summary, the Two-County School District is a large educational organization with many resources, including intellectual knowledge for program evaluation. The breadth and depth of the resources in this large school district showed a place where Taylor, the Director of Special Education, and other key special education evaluation champions did the work of ECB, using the expanded and modified program evaluation infrastructure that Campbell initiated in 1999 to 2001. Taylor and the other special education administrators who contributed to ECB felt positively supported by Galles, the Director, and departmental staff of REA who provided essential program evaluation technical assistance to them.

Taylor was a top-level evaluation champion for the special education department. The findings showed strong evidence that she was firmly committed to the re-creation and the rebuilding of Campbell's evaluation infrastructure and model (1999-2001). The findings also showed that ECB promoted a participatory evaluation process through engagement with diverse stakeholders. Evaluation use was developmental and routine, mostly evident with the Setting IV and the DCD evaluation projects.

Taylor aligned her leadership demands with her ECB efforts, as demonstrated by (a) her decision about which special education programs needed to be evaluated, (b) special education's program changes and continuous improvement efforts, and (c) how she promoted routine use at the classroom level, specifically noted with the DCD program evaluation project. Taylor's vision for the alignment with program evaluation with special education's continuous improvement process, her effective leadership, and her dedication to providing evaluation resources were critical and positively contributed to ECB, specifically (a) supporting Galles' efforts with the rebuilding of the ECB infrastructure, (b) supporting administrators' and teachers' learning during the evaluation process (i.e., "learned as they went"), (c) developing the special education's evaluation projects, and (d) sustaining evaluation use throughout the special education department.

ECB aligned, influenced, and contributed in several ways to the special education demands in both internal and external contexts. First, Taylor felt the pros of this large school district's organizational system focused on access to extensive resources; the cons focused on the actual amount of time program evaluation required, specifically experienced with the DCD evaluation project. Taylor felt this condition created a disconnect between the routine life of program evaluation and the daily life of a special

education teacher. As a result of her experiences, Taylor shared a perception that ECB astronomically would require more time than possible in another lesser-sized school district. Second, ECB required sophisticated data use for both the internal (e.g., individual evaluation projects) and external accountability requirements of the state-level continuous improvement process (e.g., CIMP for the state department of education). Third, the district's large size contributed to an internal context when communication spread between the district-wide DCD special education teachers about the DCD program evaluation project. This caused mistrust from the DCD teachers about understanding the intentions and purpose of the program evaluation process. Fourth, the internal context also showed the challenges of arranging substitute teachers, which affected the social infrastructure of bringing teachers together during a school day for participating during the evaluation process.

In closing, the study added to the ECB literature when considering program evaluation practice for the special education context and conducting future ECB research. Second, the study's findings were important for bridging the gap between ECB research and everyday practice in program evaluation. Finally, the findings answered the study's primary research question. During the last fifteen years, the results and consequences of past ECB efforts positively improved continuous organizational learning, special education program development, continuous improvement process, and supported special education's accountability demands contexts in this large Midwestern school district.

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Appendix A

A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity

(Volkov & King, 2007)

The purpose of this checklist is to provide a set of guidelines for organizational evaluation capacity building (ECB), i.e., for incorporating evaluation routinely into the life of an organization. The checklist, which was developed from case study data and an extensive literature review, can be a resource for a wide range of stakeholders in organizations seeking to increase their long-term capacity to conduct and use program evaluations in everyday activities.

Organizational Context: Be aware of the internal and external organizational context, power hierarchies, administrative culture, and decision-making processes.

1. Cultivate a positive, ECB-friendly *internal organizational context*.

- Make sure that key leaders of the organization support and share responsibility for ECB.
- Locate existing and enlist new evaluation champion(s) in the organization.
- Determine and work to increase the organization's interest in and demand for evaluation information.
- Determine if and to what extent the internal environment is supportive of change.
- Provide opportunities for sufficient input in decision making, ensuring that people in the organization are able to use data to make decisions.
- Organization opportunities for socializing around evaluation activities during the workday (for example, working on a survey collaboratively or discussing evaluation findings at brown bag lunches).

2. Understand and take advantage of the *external environment* and its influence on the organization.

- Identify external mandates/accountability requirements and expectations, and integrate them into the ECB efforts.
- Determine if and to what extent the external environment is supportive of change (for example, accreditation agencies encourage innovation, professional communities promote evaluation activities, external stakeholders provide support for evaluation).

ECB Structures: Purposefully create structures—mechanisms within the organization—that enable the development of evaluation capacity.

3. Develop and implement a *purposeful long-term ECB plan for the organization*.

- Establish a capable ECB oversight group (composed of members of the staff, board of directors, and community) to initiate, evaluate, and advance evaluation processes continually in the organization.
 - Generate an appropriate conception of evaluation for organizational policies
-

and procedures.

- Create a strategy for conducting and using evaluations in the organization that applies existing evaluation frameworks, guidelines, and professional standards.
- Integrate evaluation processes purposefully into organizational policies and procedures.
- Make sure that a detailed written ECB plan exists, is distributed throughout the organization, and is used to assess progress.
- Evaluate the capacity building activities routinely to insure that capacity is increasing and the evaluation function is growing.

4. Build and reinforce *infrastructure to support specific components of the evaluation process and communication systems.*

- Create organizational structures that will facilitate evaluation activities (for example, framing evaluation questions; generating needed studies; conducting needs assessments; designing evaluations; and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data).
- Assign responsibility for facilitating the ongoing development and evaluation of evaluation processes.
- Build individuals' readiness and skills to implement evaluation activities.
- Develop and use an internal reporting/monitoring/tracking system.
- Develop an effective communication and reporting capability to explain evaluation processes and disseminate findings, both positive and negative, to stakeholder groups.

5. Introduce and maintain *purposeful socialization into the organization's evaluation process.*

- Establish clear expectations for people's evaluation roles and provide sufficient time during the work day for evaluation activities.
- Offer tangible incentives for participation in the evaluation process.
- Provide or make available formal training, professional development, and coaching in evaluation.
- Promote and facilitate people's learning evaluation by involving them in meaningful ways in evaluation planning and implementation ("learning by doing").
- Model a willingness to be evaluated by insuring that evaluations and the ECB process itself are routinely and visibly evaluated.

6. Build and expand *peer learning structures.*

- Emphasize and implement purposeful trust building (both interpersonal and organizational) and interdependent roles in the evaluation process.
 - Incorporate a feedback mechanism in the decision-making process and an effective communication system so that people will learn from evaluation activities.
 - Create ongoing learning activities through which people interact around evaluation processes and results.
-

-
- Provide ample opportunities for both individual and group reflection (for example, data-based discussions of successes, challenges, and failures in the organization).
-

Resources: Make evaluation resources available and see them.

7. Provide and continuously expand *access to evaluation resources.*

- Use evaluation personnel effectively (for example, have internal professionals model high quality practice, teach evaluation processes by engaging staff in evaluation activities, have external consultants present findings to staff).
- Provide easy access to relevant research bases that contain “best practice” content for evaluation in general and for evaluation in specific program content and to examples of high quality evaluation descriptions and reports
- Ensure the availability of sufficient information on how to access existing evaluation resources (for example, websites, professional organizations, evaluation consultants).

8. Secure sources of *support for program evaluation in the organization.*

- Assure long-term fiscal support from the board or administration—explicit, dedicated funding for program evaluation activities.
 - Provide basic resources (copying, equipment for data collection and analysis, computers and software, etc.).
 - Allow adequate time and opportunities to collaborate on evaluation activities, including, when possible, being physically together in an environment free from interruptions.
 - If needed, develop revenue-generating strategies to support program evaluation (for example, selling copies of data collection instruments or serving as evaluation consultants to other organizations for pay).
-

Appendix B

Survey

Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Towards Developing a Special Education System

Camille L. Sterner Sampers (2015)

There are two main sections in this survey with a completion time estimate of 15-30 minutes.

After this section, there is only one more section left regarding you and your involvement with the evaluation (ECB) process.

Section 1 We would like to know more about your perceptions and experiences with the evaluation (ECB) process.

Please read each statement below and choose one of the responses that best reflects your current perception of how evaluation capacity building (ECB) has been intentionally and routinely integrated within your school district's special education system and other interconnected district departments.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	(Not Applicable, Unaware)
1. Key leaders in our school district share responsibility for evaluation (ECB)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Our superintendent assures long-term fiscal support, dedicating funding for the evaluation (ECB) process in our school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Our school board members assure long-term fiscal support, dedicating funding for the evaluation (ECB) process in our school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Our special education director assures long-term fiscal support, dedicating funding for evaluation (ECB) process in our school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There is a core team in special education that provides evaluation (ECB) leadership in special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Special education staff support the routine use of evaluation (ECB).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. School district staff in other departments support the routine use of evaluation (ECB).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I observe many instances of evaluation (ECB) activities in my school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I observe many instances of evaluation (ECB) activities in special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. There is an increase in the use of evaluation (ECB) activities in special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I am committed to the routine use of evaluation (ECB) activities in special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. There are others outside of my school district who support my evaluation (ECB) activities (e.g., consultants, university faculty).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. There are others outside of my school district who support evaluation (ECB) activities with others in my district (e.g., consultants, university faculty).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Special education leaders share verbal or written information about the importance of the evaluation (ECB).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I can identify written procedures for using evaluation (ECB) with special education staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I use these written ECB procedures for my evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I use these written ECB procedures for assessing progress in other special education program(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I know that the ECB written procedures are distributed throughout the special education department in my school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I can access a digital version of the ECB written procedures within our special education intranet site when needed for my evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I think about federal laws (e.g., Special Education IDEA 2004) during the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I know my role in the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I receive an incentive (e.g., stipend, paid time) for my participation in the evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I attend formal training/professional development for my evaluation (ECB) process IN our school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I attend formal training/professional development for the evaluation (ECB) process OUTSIDE our school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I routinely learn about the evaluation (ECB) process (e.g., frame question(s), plan, create instrument, implement, and summarize evaluation results).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know (Not Applicable, Unaware)
26. I routinely learn how to use (collect, analyze, interpret) data to make decisions to improve special education program(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. I have enough evaluation (ECB) skills to INITIATE evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. I have enough time during my workday for evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. I CONTINUE to develop my evaluation (ECB) skills through ongoing evaluation (ECB) professional learning opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. I facilitate network meetings with other special education staff for evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. I am willing to have my evaluation (ECB) activities routinely critiqued by others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. I routinely CRITIQUE my evaluation (ECB) process to make sure I continue to USE evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. I routinely CRITIQUE my evaluation (ECB) process to make sure I continue to INCREASE my use of evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. I routinely COLLABORATE with other special education staff who use the ECB process to make sure that the use of ECB increases within the special education department.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. I have enough opportunities to meet with COLLEAGUES during the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. I develop more trust with COLLEAGUES as a result of meeting with them for evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. I develop more trust with special education administrator(s) as a result of my participation with evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. I develop more trust with building administrator(s) as a result of my participation with evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. I have a better working relationship with other special education staff as a result of my participation with evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. I have a better working relationship with other special education administrator(s) as a result of my participation with evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. I receive enough feedback during the evaluation (ECB) process from other special education staff .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. I receive enough feedback during the evaluation (ECB) process from special education administrator(s) .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. I receive enough feedback during the evaluation (ECB) process from other school leader(s) .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. I learn more about the evaluation (ECB) process when my special education colleagues provide spontaneous FEEDBACK to me throughout the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. I learn more about the evaluation (ECB) process when my special education colleagues COMMUNICATE (e.g., verbal and/or written) with me during the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. I reflect INDIVIDUALLY throughout the evaluation (ECB) process, thinking about how to use the results to improve special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. I reflect in a GROUP with other special education staff, discussing how to use the evaluation results to improve special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. I use my evaluation results to improve special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. I use the evaluation (ECB) results of other special education staff to improve special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. There is a reporting process for my evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51. There is a process I can follow to share my evaluation (ECB) results, both positive and negative to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know (Not Applicable, Unaware)
52. I informally share my evaluation (ECB) results, both positive and negative to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53. I formally report my evaluation (ECB) results, both positive and negative to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54. I seek support from school district evaluation personnel for my evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55. I use school district resources (e.g., research, resources, technology) to support my evaluation (ECB) activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56. I have enough basic resources for the evaluation (ECB) process in our special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57. I have enough access to the district evaluation personnel throughout the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58. I have enough access to relevant research to support me during the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59. I have enough access to relevant research for making decisions to improve our special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60. I have enough access to examples of "exemplar" evaluation (ECB) products, summarizing the results of the evaluation (ECB) process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
61. I have enough access to other evaluation (ECB) resources IN my school district (e.g., written materials, books, software, computers, resources on intranet, evaluation consultants, other district staff).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62. I have enough access to evaluation (ECB) resources OUTSIDE my school district (e.g., professional evaluation organizations, university faculty, websites, other individuals in other districts).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2/FINAL We would like to know a little bit about you.

Tell us about you and your involvement with the evaluation capacity building (ECB) process.

You are nearly done! This is the last important section regarding specific information about you and your level of involvement with the evaluation capacity building (ECB) process.

1. Are you a:

- Special education teacher
- Related service provider (SP/L, OT, Social Worker, Psychologist)
- Special Education Lead
- Teaching & Learning Specialist/Evaluation Specialist
- Special Education Supervisor
- School Principal
- None of the categories listed
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Are you currently teaching in special education?

- Yes
- No (skip to question 5)

3. If you currently teach in special education, do you teach in:

- Early Childhood
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Transition Program (18-21 year old students)

4. If you are currently teaching in special education, how many years have you been teaching?

- This is my first year.
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31 years or greater

5. My age is:

- 20-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- 60-69 years old
- 70+ years old

6. Are you a member of an external professional organization?

- Yes
- No, never have been
- Not now, but I was in the past.

7. When do you think you last completed an evaluation activity or a related evaluation task for special education?

- Fall 2012
- Summer 2012
- Spring 2012
- Last Fall (2011)
- Last Spring (2011)
- Fall 2010
- Before the 2010-11 School Year
- Other (please specify) _____

8. On a scale of 1-4, what do you think of the overall evaluation process within the special education department of your school district?

	1 (Very Poor)	2 (Mediocre)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
I think the overall process is:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. If you participated in one of the following special education activities for the continuous improvement process of our special education system, please rate your experience on a scale of 1-4:

Meeting discussion to introduce program evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group interview/input session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria/standards setting process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria/standards review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection process and/or tool review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting providing status update	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis/review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendation writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendation review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning meeting (Program Evaluation Leadership Team Participation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. How much time do you spend in the evaluation capacity building (ECB) process during a typical month in the school year?

- I don't spend any time.
- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-8 hours
- 8 hours
- More than 8 hours
- Other (please specify) _____

11. In what ways, has your involvement in the special education evaluation (ECB) process built your capacity (e.g., program evaluation skills) for conducting future evaluations?

12. What aspects of the evaluation (ECB) process did you find the least beneficial?

13. Please add any additional comments about your perceptions and/or experiences with evaluation capacity building (ECB).

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development
College of Education and Human Development
University of Minnesota
Camille Sterner Sampers
[smp0009@umn.edu](mailto:samp0009@umn.edu)

February 1, 2013

Principal Investigator (PI): Camille Sterner Sampers, Researcher and Doctoral Student at the University of Minnesota

Name of Organization: University of Minnesota

Name of Project: Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Towards Developing a Special Education System in a Large Midwestern School District

Purpose: The researcher will learn more about the subjects' perceptions and experiences about evaluation capacity building in a large suburban school district and how ECB has influenced the subjects' leadership practices. Educational leaders in special education and evaluation will be asked to complete an interview with the researcher.

This research study will involve a standardized open-ended and inductive interview approach to discover the meaning and influences of ECB. The questions during the interview will probably not be sensitive or potentially cause embarrassment.

The seven primary interview questions are noted below:

- (1) If I had worked with you ten years ago in the Anoka-Hennepin School District as another special educator (alternative language if not applicable "educational leader"), what would I have seen you doing in the evaluation area?
- (2) Since you completed your ECB project, what is the most important evaluation strategy you've implemented as a special education leader?
- (3) Since you completed your ECB project, how has your thinking changed when approaching problems related to students' learning in your special education programs?
- (4) a. What are some ways the district-level research and evaluation staff supported your ECB in the past?
b. What are some ways the district-level research and evaluation staff can support your ECB in the future?
- (5) a. What are some ways that negatively supported you or served as a barrier for you when you completed your ECB in the past?
b. What are some ways that would negatively support you or serve as a barrier

when you complete ECB in the future?

- (6) What opportunities do you need to support your ECB efforts and continued improvement in your special education programs?
- (7) In your opinion, how has your ECB participation affected student learning in your special education programs or within your district's special education system?

The entire interview will be recorded, using a digital voice recorder and the researcher will also take personal notes to keep track of key points during our interview. The subjects will not be identified by name on the digital voice file. The recorded information will be confidential and no one else except the researcher will have access to the raw interview information that can be identified with a person's name. The researcher will delete the voice file from the digital voice recorder after the subject's interview has been transcribed to Microsoft Word and a database. The researcher will also assign a number to your name when organizing my raw data into a database. If the researcher needs to consult with her university advisor during her research, she will be using the transcribed data that cannot identify a personal name.

Appendix D

Evaluation Capacity Building Worksheet

Adapted for TCNA by Jean A. King & Edita Bucinca (2006)

1. Develop and implement a purposeful long-term ECB plan for organization.	<i>How would know this is happening? What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?</i>
Does a formal ECB document exist, and is it used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A plan exists and is incorporated into day-to-day operations, regularly reviewed and updated as needed.• Incremental steps are noted when benchmarks are reached.• The board is aware of and supportive of the Evaluation Plan.
Have you established an evaluation oversight group in the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An oversight group exists and meets regularly to initiate, evaluate, and advance evaluation processes.
Who are the evaluation champions in your organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One or more visible “champions” are responsible for evaluation.• Leaders/line staff members who show an interest take on thinking about it.• Staff are involved and take responsibility for the process: they are ware of evaluations that are happening.• People actively engage in evaluation; share the purpose of evaluation and its process and results.• Board members focus on it.
To what extent do organizational policies and procedures include and support evaluation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industry-accepted evaluation best practice strategies are referenced in organizing policies and procedures.

2. Build and reinforce infrastructure to support the evaluation process.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

To what extent is there organizational and individual ability and readiness to implement evaluation activities?

- Staff are adequately trained in evaluation.
- Training opportunities are available.
- People are assigned to the evaluation role; it appears in everyone's job description.

To what has your organization developed and used an internal reporting/monitoring/tracking system?

- Routine program data collection strategies are in place.
- The data are readily available in a usable format.
- There is a checklist of when reports are due to different funders and a timeline for evaluation activities.
- For each funding source, required data and reporting deadlines are documented and monitored.

To what extent has your organization developed an effective communication and public relations capability to relay evaluation findings?

- Reports to funders (share information widely) are generated in a timely manner.
- There is systematic reporting to diverse audiences, including participants, recipients of services, and the community.
- Reports appear in diverse formats appropriate to different audiences (newsletters, websites, formal documents, etc.).

To what extent does your evaluation system meet industry-accepted standards for program evaluation?

- Periodically the organization conducts a meta-evaluation using an appropriate set of standards (e.g., the Program Evaluation Standards, etc.)

3. Understand and take advantage of the external context and its influence on the organization.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

What external mandates/accountability requirements and expectations must be included in the ECB efforts?

- External mandates and accountability requirements are identified in an organized manner, and it is clear who is responsible for completing each.
- Staff members examine external mandates and accountability requirements before accepting funding to insure fit with organizational mission and goals.
- External stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process and in developing an ongoing ECB plan (can document they were involved – accept evaluation data – generate, rather than impose their own).
- Best practices are sought and used. There is evidence of continued learning.
- There is evidence of open communication with funders, community members, and program participants.

To what extent is the external environment supportive of change?

4. Cultivate a positive, ECB-friendly internal organizational context.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

In what ways does the leadership of your organization support and share responsibility for ECB?

- The CEO visibly supports evaluation and actively engages in it.
- Board members are involved in evaluation at some level (e.g., a committee).
- Overseeing evaluation may be one

	<p>person's or a few persons' responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for evaluation extends from the top down to line staff. • Staff periodically review evaluation results.
<p>To what extent is there an interest in and demand for evaluation information in your organization?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation appears in strategic planning documents and outcome reporting requirements. • Evaluation information is shared with all staff. • Evaluation results are used to guide program development. • There is evidence that evaluation ideas are used (e.g., staff discussion, analysis of data collected, action planning).
<p>To what extent is there support for change within your organization?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is openness to new ideas from evaluations. • Staff is knowledgeable of and enthusiastic about change. • There is a feedback loop with constant improvement of evaluation tools and processes. • Staff participate in reflective practice to insure outcomes.
<p>To what extent does your organization provide opportunities for meaningful input in decision making (i.e., allow people in the organization to use data to make decisions)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are examples of data being used in decisions about program change. • Staff report that they have seen and used data. • There are venues and vehicles for staff to provide input.
<p>To what extent does your organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are meetings to discuss the

provide opportunities for socializing around evaluation activities during the workday?

evaluation process and outcomes at designated times (e.g., coffee dates, committee sessions).

- Staff support each other in evaluation efforts throughout the workday.
- Data discussions come up in everyday conversations.
- There are opportunities for empowering people to think through how things could be improved based on evaluation data.
- People celebrate successes shown by the data.

5. Build and expand peer learning structures.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

To what extent does your organization develop and support internal collaboration?

- People work together, share information, accept and provide feedback.
- There is evidence of purposeful trust building (both interpersonal and organizational) and interdependent roles.

To what extent does your organization incorporate a feedback mechanism in the decision-making process and communication system?

- There is evidence of a communication/feedback loop.
- Management recognizes the value of group process.
- Evaluation results are shared and used to guide program.

To what extent does your organization provide opportunities for reflection?

- Times are set aside for reflection (e.g., open discussions of successes, challenges, and failures in the organization, a book group).
 - People are encouraged/required to
-

have conversations about evaluations.

- Staff are able to participate in conferences and trainings.

6. Introduce and maintain purposeful socialization into the organization's evaluation process.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

To what extent are there clear expectations of evaluation roles in your organization?

- There is an evaluation point person in each department/program area.
- People are assigned to evaluation roles.
- Evaluation appears in everyone's job description.

To what extent does your organization offer incentives for participation in the evaluation process?

- There is recognition for evaluation efforts (e.g., during performance reviews).
- People are motivated to participate because of tangible incentives for doing so.

To what extent does your organization provide formal training/professional development/coaching in evaluation?

- New hires are systematically trained in the organization's evaluation processes.
- Refresher courses are held annually to review the organization's evaluation processes with staff.
- There is evidence of formal training provided both within the organization and externally.
- Staff are encouraged to develop their evaluation skills over time.
- Internal staff coach others on evaluation practice.

To what extent does your organization

- There is an expectation that people

promote and facilitate learning evaluation by doing it?

will participate in and reflect on evaluation studies.

- There are numerous and continued chances to learn about evaluation by taking part in evaluations.

7. Provide and continuously expand access to evaluation resources.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

To what extent does your organization make the most of evaluation personnel (internal professionals or/and external consultants)?

- External consultants/graduate students design materials that can be used (or go out and find existing instruments).
- Staff purposefully interface with and learn from external evaluators.
- Staff use internal evaluators purposefully.
 - to provide QA in evaluation process
 - to interpret program-, dept.-, and agency-level data
 - to keep big picture in view
- Internal and external evaluators present to appropriate audiences.

To what extent does your organization utilize and encourage the use of relevant research bases that contain “best practice” content?

- The agency has electronic access to Web-based resources.
- Attendance at professional development opportunities in evaluation is encouraged.
- Time is allowed during workdays to identify information/trends.
- Best practice research and resources are available.

To what extent does your organization insure the availability of information on

- The agency has electronic access to Web-based evaluation resources.

resources for evaluation?

- An evaluation resource library exists.

8. Secure sources of support for program evaluation in the organization.

How would you know this is happening?

What evidence or indicators would demonstrate this?

To what extent does your organization insure long-term fiscal support (i.e., explicit, dedicated funding) for program evaluation activities?

- There is dedicated, recurring funding for evaluation activities.
- The agency has representation on the TCNA evaluation group.
- Board approves evaluation resources in annual operating budget.

To what extent does your organization provide basic resources to support the evaluation process?

- Basic evaluation resources (copying, equipment for data collection and analysis, computers and software, etc.) are available.

To what extent does your organization allow adequate time and opportunities to collaborate on evaluation activities?

- The agency encourages regular attendance at TCNA evaluation group meetings.
- Evaluation appears on department and committee meeting agendas.
- There are regular meetings of an evaluation workgroup and periodic evaluation “retreats.”

If needed, has your organization developed revenue-generating strategies to support ECB?

- Evaluation finding is included in all external funding requests.
 - People are intentional about finding ways to support evaluation.
 - Revenue-generating strategies for evaluation exist (e.g., selling products, services).
-

Appendix E

Two-County Program Evaluation Process, 2014

1. Context analysis and baseline data gathering

- a. Identify Primary Intended Users, participants, stakeholders, audience and potential format/contents of report for the program evaluation
- b. Project manager describes the program to be evaluated in a program description document with the following components:
 - i. Program purpose
 - ii. Program history (i.e., Why was it developed?)
 - iii. Program participants
 - iv. Context (e.g., economic, political, environment)
 - v. Resources dedicated to this program? (e.g., facility, staffing, materials, budget)
 - vi. Program goals and objectives
 - vii. Program activities
- c. Establish a logic model for the program, if appropriate
- d. Determine resources and time that can be committed to the evaluation work.
- e. Gather, review and summarize literature and most current research.
- f. Compile applicable laws, policies, and regulations.
- g. Learn the needs, experiences, practices and perceptions of the program from different stakeholders, including program side effects. (summit, focus groups, surveys, interviews, brainstorming sessions)
- h. Compile and analyze baseline data such as interview data, observation data, demographic data, attendance data, achievement data, discipline data and applicable information about the current program to determine focal areas.
 - i. Consider engaging stakeholders to leverage unique perspectives (e.g., focus groups, surveys).
 - ii. Determine appropriate statistical methods to analyze quantitative data.
 - iii. Determine appropriate methods to analyze qualitative data. (Look for patterns and themes.)

2. Develop aspiration statement, criteria and standards

- a. Review evaluation question(s) to be answered through the program evaluation to ensure alignment with Primary Intended Users' information needs.
- b. Engage participants, as previously determined, in aspiration statement, criteria and standard development and/or review (summit, focus groups, surveys, interviews, brainstorming sessions). – Be sure to define role of participants upfront, especially in relation to decision making.
 - i. Identify the ideal to which each focal area aspires (It may be helpful to use a graphic organizer, such as a mind map).
 - ii. Identify the elements that are essential to attain desired program outcomes (Criteria).
 - iii. Identify the desired level of performance relative to each criterion (vision level), together with accompanying levels for intervene,

- concern, baseline, and progress (Standards). – Start with vision and concern levels and then fill in the other ranges from there.
- iv. Consider research, laws and practice (trends, issues, case studies, best practices).
- c. Develop a vision card for monitoring continuous improvement using criteria and standard levels established.

3. Data collection relative to criteria and standards

- a. Develop a detailed evaluation data collection/management plan.
 - i. Include data collection questions and/or criteria, if appropriate.
 - ii. Determine what information is required.
 - iii. Determine information sources.
 - iv. Decide what methods and tools are most appropriate for collecting information (either through an existing source or potentially new data collection).
 - v. Establish a timeline to collect data and/or implement new data collection processes. (Include plan for criteria not yet assessable.)
 - vi. Assign responsibilities (may choose to create matrix of task, timeline, costs, resources needed, etc.).
- b. Collect, record, compile and analyze data.
 - i. Consider engaging stakeholders to leverage unique perspectives (e.g., focus groups, surveys).
 - ii. Determine appropriate statistical methods to analyze quantitative data.
 - iii. Determine appropriate methods to analyze qualitative data. (Look for patterns and themes.)
- c. Indicate program performance on the vision card measures.

4. Recommendations and reflection

- a. Reflect on vision card performance.
- b. Interpret results, giving consideration to areas of low performance on the vision card.
- c. Formulate recommendations and potential action steps to reach recommendations.
- d. Determine recommendations to follow based upon priorities, strategic plan, and continuous improvement efforts. – Done by program leadership (primary intended users) with possible consideration given to program stakeholders' perception.
- e. Facilitate process to encourage utilization of results.
- f. Report findings: Consider format, audience, timing, etc.
 - i. Regularly report progress of the evaluation to primary intended users.
 - ii. Write a final report, if appropriate. Sections could include:
 - Executive Summary
 - Introduction
 - Brief object description (detail depends upon target audience)
 - Purpose of the evaluation

- Audiences for the evaluation report
- Evaluation questions
- Methods used (include meta-evaluation if used)
- Limitations of the evaluation and explanation of disclaimers
- Results
 - a. Findings for each question
 - b. Discussion/judgments based on standards
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Appendices
 - a. Detailed tabulations or analyses of data
 - b. Copies of instruments and/or detailed procedures used
 - c. Other information

5. Implementation and staff development

- a. Primary intended users determine plan to implement recommendations, including timeline and needed staff development.
- b. Develop a data collection plan to monitor progress toward vision standard and ongoing evaluation plan/timeline.
- c. Primary intended users adjust action plans, as needed, based on recorded outcomes.
- d. Review emergent data, vision card (criteria and standards) and data collection tools/timelines. Revise as warranted.

Appendix F

Research Qualitative Analysis

Interpretative Data Analysis Phase

Table A7

Research Qualitative Analysis of Two-County's Program Evaluation Process

1. Research Data Analysis:

ECB Process - Framing Program Evaluation Questions

Critically thinking about questions that need to be asked. There was not a lot (referring to questions), but it was really about dialogue and really people listening, and gathering the data, taking in information, so it wasn't threatening at all. It was very respectful and very affirming (4_1_f).

2. Research Data Analysis:

ECB Process - Designing program evaluation

Engage staff in program evaluation process as compared to making them feel defensive about how the data will be used in their programs. There were three simple questions. There was not a lot, but it was really about dialogue and really people listening, and gathering the data, taking in information, so it wasn't threatening at all. It was very respectful and very affirming. It was during a time when there was a lot of change going on. People were uncomfortable. There happens to have a staff here – where there is not a lot of turmoil – which is phenomenal for a setting 4 program – but what comes from that – is that staff are steeped in traditions – there is a certain way that you have done business for years – and so all of that was challenged? We had to step back and really rethink about whether – given the new charge – “Can we continue to do business in the same way that we have always done?” (4_1_f)

That is why I think it is powerful if you can figure out how to engage people – and not be defensive about it – I think it can be a very productive approach (3_7_e).

our effort we wanted to make sure people understood that this was an opportunity for us to reflect with them on what is working, an area we can improve on together, and we didn't want people to take these personally, by any means (5_5a_bd).

Yes. I think many of them are looking from a building perspective which is different from us. We look at programs and programs across the district and so we have a different scope of things. They look at things at the building level so sometimes they look at the people in those positions versus looking at the products of those people. Sometimes that can be different. They get kind of stuck with the person in mind versus actually looking beyond and not looking at the data. Because the data I share

with them is regards to the interventions and the evaluation referral. Are they good referrals? Did the students qualify? They take a lot of ownership in that. I don't know if they always actually look at the data to see if what does this mean? What should I do about this data versus this person did it? This person is a really good person. I don't want to say a percentage, but it is helping them to move away from just the person to actual data on how it impacts students (7_5b_b).

But it is really – let's see where your program is at – not because we are judging you – “you are not doing this, you are not doing that” and I think we are always worried about that – you are judging me – you are coming in and doing well – I am going to tell you what you are doing right and I want you to be involved in the process so we are going to work together on this (6_7_be).

Evidence of trust between administrators and teachers occur when they engage in the process of program evaluation. There was not a lot (referring to questions), but it was really about dialogue and really people listening, and gathering the data, taking in information, so it wasn't threatening at all. It was very respectful and very affirming (4_1_f).

3. Research Data Analysis: ECB Process - Collecting Data

A detailed written program evaluation document (tool) was used as a guiding document in a program. And doing the site visits with the lead teacher – we went out she did some look for's – going and looking at the data (6_2_aa).

An interesting process: It was interesting because when we did the look for observations (5_7_b).

So now when we go out, now we need to look at doing another look-for going out there, so exactly what are we looking at? Because we have our baseline now and now we want to go out and see what is happening with that in the schools. And so, she and I are both learning things we need to do look for's in a better way. You know in a more defined way than what we did (6_2_cg).

But I also think a lot of it is just working together and collectively getting data. Because it is the people who make an organization and look at what is going to help motivate them (7_2_ch).

I do feel – I look at the different DCD programs that I support in the different schools – it's important for me to make sure there – if people are struggling, “Let's look at – Are we implementing the components to the vision cards – Are we implementing structured teaching in related services? Are we implementing behavior intervention plans? (5_3_ac) (5_3_ab)

Collecting Data facilitates compliance with accountability requirements. But also, what do I need to provide to them as the leader to – A big part is to get at that data. I have started to look at the little pieces. I have little things I have started to provide to staff – data as far as with due process – this is one step I have taken – there is a lot more I could do (7_2_ci)

Collecting Data Using the Evaluation Tool - Look For's
The vision cards and look for cards are also an effective tool for special education teachers (5_5a_ca). I think the vision card gives a nice big picture to look at for teachers.

Most important evaluation process: Developed the look for's tool from the vision card, then going out and visiting every classroom, meeting with all of the teachers three times, gathering data, presenting the data back, and observation next year to look for sustainability (1_2_a).

I think the vision card gives a nice big picture to look at. I think of the vision card – it is what we are aspiring to – we are aiming towards – so looking at those big areas and then of course and drilling down the details in all of those different areas – but that gives them a vision and a direction to move towards (5_5a_cb).

You have heard from her (referring to the DCD TOSA) about the disaster with the “Look For” (laughter) She felt it was a disaster, but really it wasn't (6_2_e).

I don't think it is a direct link. I do think – I don't know how teachers are involved, but to the extent they are involved – thinking about these things – you know that they have those rubrics prepared for the different programs – the extent that those are getting used – and I assume they are – I do think that would help the program level – Now to improve the program? You have to also improve at the classroom level. But what do you do with the highly gifted practitioner. You know – I assume she would be an example of a model teacher – but she would help other teachers – I'm not answering your question (3_7_a).

I see visual supports being used. That is part of the look for's, part of our vision card (5_7_aa).

4. Research Data Analysis: ECB Process - Analyzing Data

Evidence of a key leader modeling the importance of ACTION by using data and analysis to improve programs. and the surveys have been going out with her (6_2_ab)

And I think a lot of times you see that through data, but you can also see that through your past practices. Just because past practices are best practices, then looking at past practices, then bringing in best practices to say what should we be

doing (7_3_af)

I think that we were working with the people there that could pull what data was available to us (2_4a_a).

Other barriers. We have had some technology barriers. In fact, yesterday we met because we were finding that one of the sources that TOSA – Program Evaluation was using to gather discipline data was Viewpoint and we were finding that Viewpoint was not consistent with the discipline records in Synergy. And no one really knew why. So we met yesterday and went through a bunch of those and we know that some of it was human error but we have a technology problem so getting that technology problem fixed will take some computer programming. Things like that certainly have impacted (2_5a_c).

5. Research Data Analysis:

ECB Process - Interpreting Data

Data is routinely measured, analyzed, and shared in a meaningful way. The data that they give me in regards to discipline and due process. They do that for me. The data that I want to start to formalize and provide for buildings. I have not done that yet. So, my vision is that I will go to them for support and maybe I will create something at first. “What do you think about this?” How can I share this? Who should I share it with? When should I share it? What format should I share it in? That is where I would want to utilize that support again. What do you suggest? I share data all of the time and now the principals have the data dashboards which I have seen it once. We don’t have access to it yet. We will eventually have access to it. I am sort of looking for ways to incorporate it into an everyday look at data. But make it a meaningful way, but it is also I want it to be a way for them to take action based on that data (7_6_b).

Evidence of staff across a program collecting data and acting upon it to make decisions in a systematic manner. Because of the method and how we did it – in terms of the inquiry – and getting staff input – parent input – and student input – it was very validating for staff – and so the process was so respectful – that I believe that staff gained a lot from that – just in terms to being able to answer the simple questions – such as – I’m going off the top of my head here - There were things like “What makes you get up and want to go to work in the morning?” You know, it was really trying to bring out those positive things about the work place, and what you do, as well as how you serve students and families, as well as there were questions getting at – you know – “How would it look different?” or “What would you want to change?” There were three simple questions (4_1_e).

The mechanism of program evaluation is a continuous process. Well first of all, when I think about program evaluation, I look at program evaluation as a cyclical continuous process (5_2_aa).

As a continuous process where we are constantly looking at – so, what are we doing well, what are areas that we need to improve on, and how can we creatively and collectively move forward (5_2_ac).

Another with this, they would support us through program evaluation which I was brand new to my position last year as supervisor for the evaluation team. And so I was starting program evaluation with the evaluation team and then they was many many changes - we moved buildings – many big changes – we restructured things – we haven’t really moved forward with that yet. We talked about potential ways to start program evaluation, but we haven’t done that yet. So those are the biggest ways I interface with the Research and Evaluation department (7_2_cc).

– there is a lot more I could do – It is looking at how I can use this framework to put things in place – something that would be familiar to staff, They would know the purpose of why I’m using that and so it is not to say that they are not doing something but it is us to measure effectiveness and what we need to do differently (7_2_cj).

So, program evaluation is continuous because we are going to continue to evaluate to see “Have we improved in the different areas? (5_2_aj)

– we can also measure where we are at in regards to that – we can look for that continuous improvement with the department – part of that is the reflection piece of stepping back and looking at the data and just thinking about where do we start and wher e are we now and where do we need to get to (7_2_cg).

Evaluation staff can help make the language easy to understand. We have to redo the look for card, and data collection again starting this coming year (2013-14) We will start and do it again the next year. Just making it so it is teacher friendly. Put it in common language really helps (1_4b_c).

6. Research Data Analysis:

ECB Process - Communication findings to stakeholder groups

Evidence of staff across a program collecting data and acting upon it to make decisions in a systematic manner. Because of the method and how we did it – in terms of the inquiry – and getting staff input – parent input – and student input – it was very validating for staff – and so the process was so respectful – that I believe that staff gained a lot from that – just in terms to being able to answer the simple questions – such as – I’m going off the top of my head here - There were things like “What makes you get up and want to go to work in the morning?” You know, it was really trying to bring out those positive things about the work place, and what you do, as well as how you serve students and families, as well as there were questions getting at – you know – “How would it look different?” or “What would you want to change?” There were three simple questions (4_1_e).

7. Research Data Analysis:**ECB Process - Disseminating findings**

Disseminating findings to stakeholder groups in a manner to facilitate reflection of what makes sense for program improvement. I think sometimes I can be cautious and worried a little bit about “Will I misuse the data?” Because sometimes you step in a position when you are sharing the data, you realize how powerful it is to individuals. I had an experience when I shared information with all of the middle school principals so across the whole district and that is when I saw some of the emotion come into it. I had to step back and look “Is that how I wanted to share it?” I did not realize that they would take it so strongly. I have to think how I present the data and what I want to get from having the data. Maybe guiding them and how they want to reflect on that data versus just giving them the data. They are going to look at that data differently based on their experience with what they know about their building. I have to think about how I want them to use their data and why (7_5b_a).

Develop an effective reporting capability to explain evaluation processes. I think the one thing I would really like to do is – I know I talked about we collect a lot of data through our department and I would really like to...I have thought about things such as having a format of sharing it back with buildings so they can understand the data we collect (7_4b_aa).

And how we that data looks like to us based on their building and what their building has done and practiced. And what we have done (7_4b_ab).

Develop an effective reporting capability to explain evaluation process. I think another one can be - not understanding the data and what it means. I think you need to have the common language and common understanding about what that data means. So I think I’m not sure how we would want to do that because the district is so large and there are so many different groups. I go to various different meetings. Sometimes when you are part of the meeting like once a year for example – you don’t always have the connection to share the data. So how do you share the data where it is going to be taken away and it is going to be comfortable way to share? It is also going to be way people will utilize the data and not take it and put it in their drawer (7_5a_b).

8. Research Data Analysis:**ECB Process - Evaluating program evaluation activities routinely**

Evaluating the Process

Learning the steps in the program evaluation process will make it easier for future evaluations. We both have talked about how things would be done differently. But just knowing – making sure the criteria – the exact thing we were looking for – was really what we were getting at, not just “Is it there?” “Is it being used?” and I think we need to do that a little bit better (6_2_f).

And it is that constant evaluation. Are we doing what we say we are to be doing? That is a big thing that really shifted for me (7_3_ag).

And I think sometimes people think okay we have this goal and we have met that goal. Now we are good. No, I mean you have to always continue to grow and you have to always continue to measure yourself to see where you are at and I am very excited to see this because just being – previous to this work in this district – I was a special education teacher and then I came to the district. I have never taught in the district but I have always been in a leadership role (7_3_ah).

I know that they have gone along and done their programs. I know it has changed. They are not doing it as comprehensively as we did here. Or I don't believe they are in all areas. I think they have pulled back (4_4b_d).

Researcher: For the DCD evaluation project, how would you do things differently? Defining a little bit better what we were exactly looking for when we did the “Look For’s” (6_2_ca)

A detailed written program evaluation plan is used to assess progress in special education department. And so now, when we go out and do the look for's, we are going to look for that sustainability piece. Yes, it is there. We saw it there. They reported it that it was there, but it wasn't being used and the manner that they needed to (6_2_cd).

Evaluation Tool - Look For's Example: Technology refers to the technology as assistive technology - the technology for improving the function of the students? And they also said technology was available to the teachers to use for computers and stuff. It was there but it just wasn't in a location that they could use it readily. It was there and that was the question we asked. What we were looking for – but not the use of it. So, and people kind of rated themselves differently too – We have that –(6_2_ce)

– or the other piece we found out too that the lead teacher told them when she was coming out. So, when she came out, it was definitely there. So, when she looked for it, it was there. Then she knows that it is not always used. So, the assistive technology piece, schedules, some of those sort of basic things for students, they would be back up on the shelf often the next time she come because she – so, yes there were there, but the use of it (was not observed) (6_2_cf).

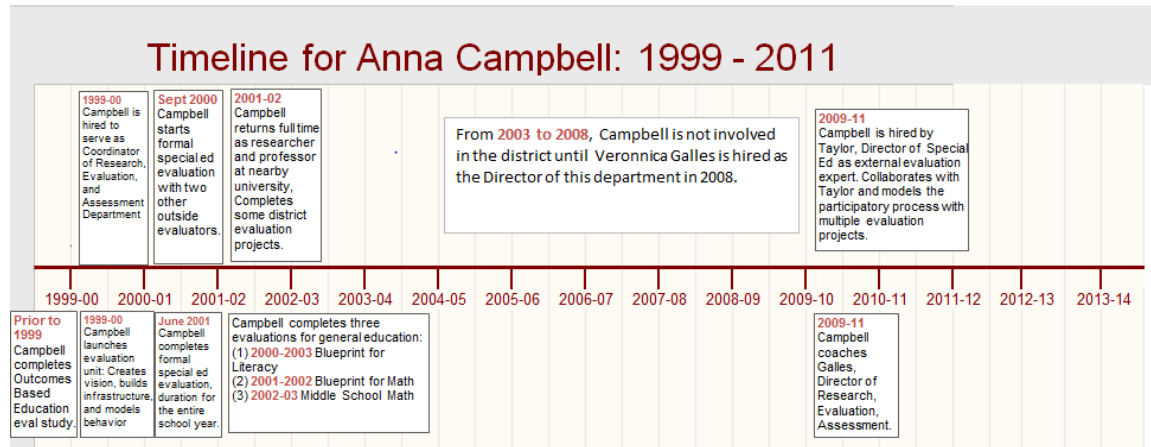
Evaluation staff can help make the language easy to understand. We have to redo the look for card, and data collection again starting this coming year (2013-14) We will start and do it again the next year. Just making it so it is teacher friendly. Put it in common language really helps (1_4b_c).

Appendix G

Two-County School District

Timelines and Background Information

Figure A10. Timeline for Anna Campbell, Coordinator of Research, Assessment, and Testing (REA) 1999 – 2011



From 2001 to 2008, Campbell was not involved in the district until Galle was hired as the Director of REA in Two-County School District in 2008.

Figure A11. Timeline for Veronica Galle, Director of REA 1999 – 2014

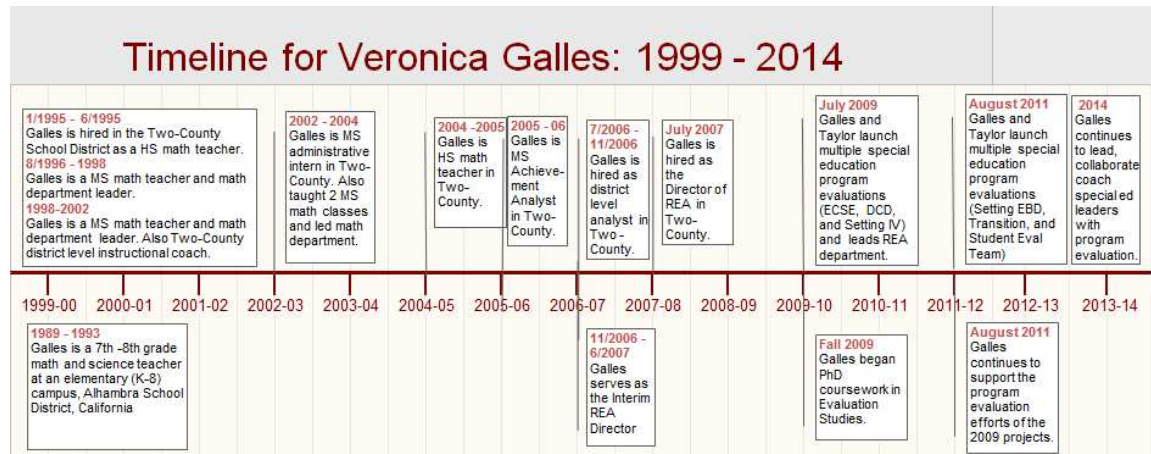


Figure A12. Timeline for Carol Schwartzkopf, Director of Special Education 1999 – 2008

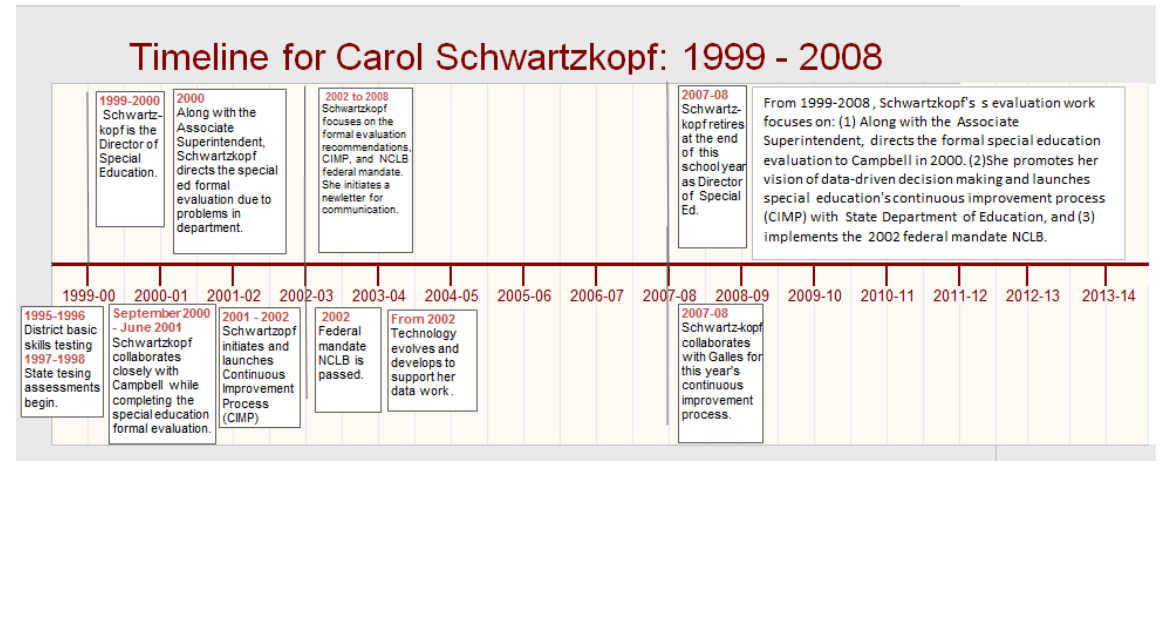


Figure A13. Timeline for Gwendolyn Taylor, Director of Special Education 2001 – 2013

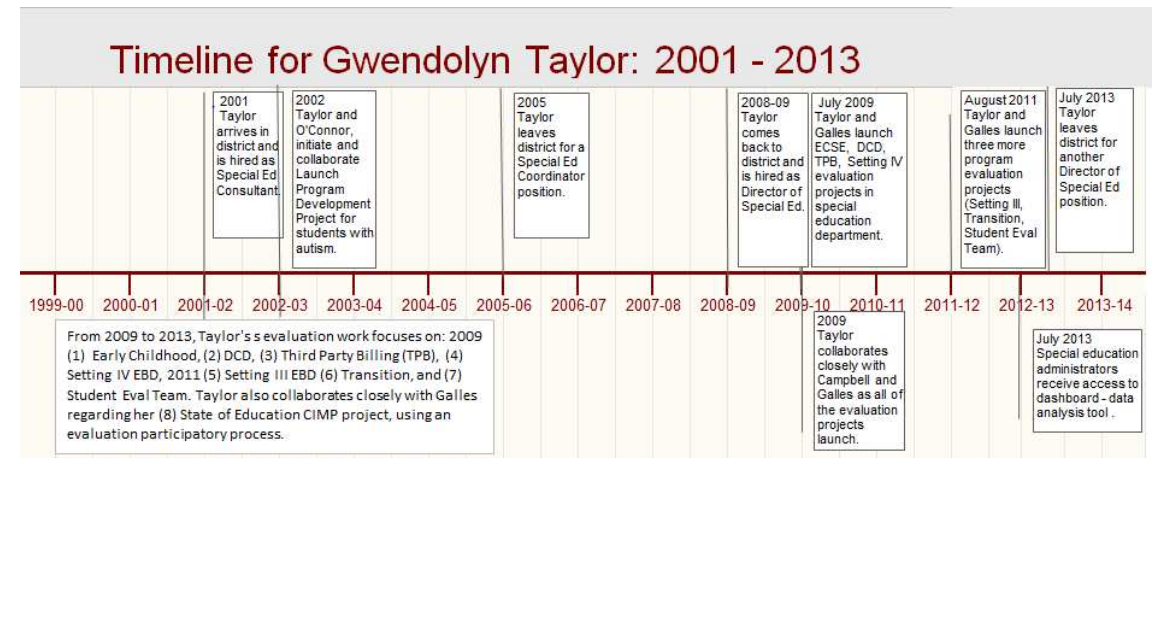


Figure A14. Timeline for Amelia Neumann, Assistant Director of Special Education

1999 – 2014

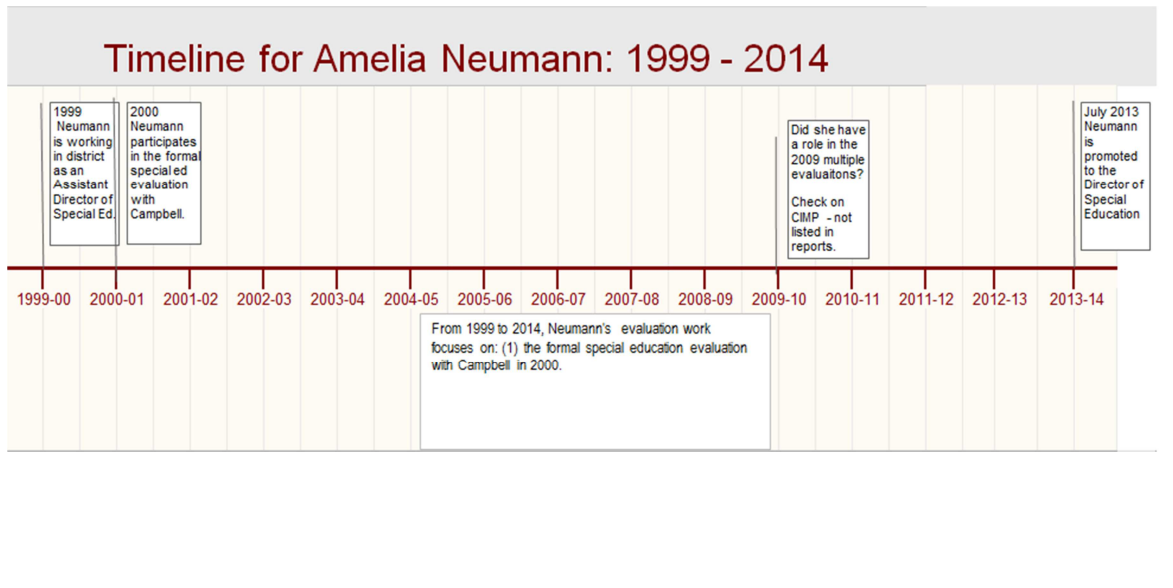
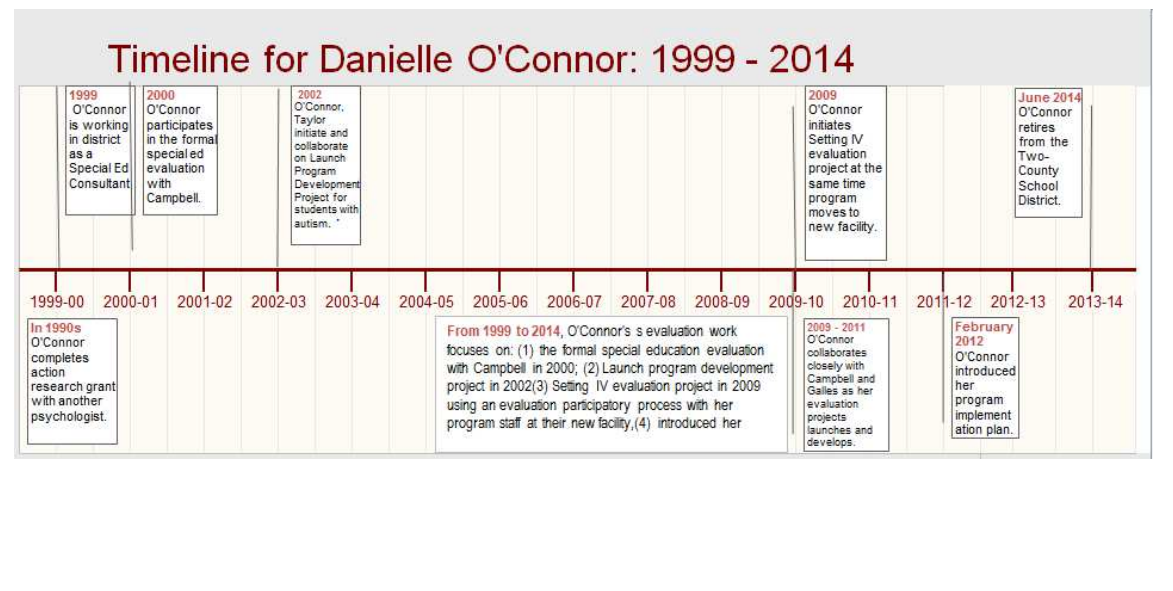


Figure A15. Timeline for Danielle O'Connor, Setting IV Program Supervisor 1999 – 2014



Appendix H

Two-County Special Education

DCD Program Evaluation Vision Card

District Level								
Special Education Developmental Cognitive Delay (DCD) Vision Card - Program Evaluation 2013-2014								
J. Focal Area:	Technology - High Tech & Low Tech to meet student and teacher needs							
Aspiration Statement:	<i>The School District will make appropriate technology readily available to staff and students in the Anoka-Hennepin DCD programs. DCD staff will use appropriate technology consistently to enhance instruction, support continuous improvement, and increase student access to the general curriculum.</i>							
Criteria:	Standards:					Data:		
(measurement)	Intervene	Level of Concern	Baseline	Progress	Vision Level	Date	Data	Trend
Availability of Technology 1a. (Look-for tool)	Less than 70% of DCD staff have access to available district wide special ed technology for instructional use.	70-79% of DCD staff have access to available district wide special ed technology for instructional use.	80-89% of DCD staff have access to available district wide special ed technology for instructional use.	90-95% of DCD staff have access to available district wide special ed technology for instructional use.	Greater than 95% of DCD staff have access to available district wide special ed technology for instructional use.	2011-2012	97.90%	Measure in 2014-2015
Availability of Technology 1b. (Look-for tool)	Less than 70% of DCD staff have access to available district wide technology for instructional use.	70-79% of DCD staff have access to available district wide technology for instructional use.	80-89% of DCD staff have access to available district wide technology for instructional use.	90-95% of DCD staff have access to available district wide technology for instructional use.	Greater than 95% of DCD staff have access to available district wide technology for instructional use.	2011-2012	97.90%	Measure in 2014-2015
Availability of Technology 1c. (Look-for tool)	Less than 70% of DCD classroom technology funded through special ed is fully functional.	70-79% of DCD classroom technology funded through special ed is fully functional.	80-89% of DCD classroom technology funded through special ed is fully functional.	90-95% of DCD classroom technology funded through special ed is fully functional.	Greater than 95% of DCD classroom technology funded through special ed is fully functional.	2011-2012	99%	Measure in 2014-2015
Instructional Use 1d. (Look-for tool)	Appropriate technology is not used.	Appropriate technology (low and high) is incorporated into instruction less than 1 time per week.	Appropriate technology (low and high) is incorporated into instruction at least 1 time per week.	Appropriate technology (low and high) is incorporated into instruction at least 2 times per week.	Appropriate technology (low and high) is incorporated into daily instruction.	2011-2012	100%	Measure in 2014-2015

District Level

Criteria: (measurement)	Standards:					Data:		
	Intervene	Level of Concern	Baseline	Progress	Vision Level	Date	Data	Trend
Student Communication Ie. (Comm. Device Trial Document)	Written documentation of use and trials of various communication systems is documented and stored in student's cumulative file for less than 70% of cases involving communication systems.	Written documentation of use and trials of various communication systems is documented and stored in student's cumulative file for 70-79% of cases involving communication systems.	Written documentation of use and trials of various communication systems is documented and stored in student's cumulative file for 80-89% of cases involving communication systems.	Written documentation of use and trials of various communication systems is documented and stored in student's cumulative file for 90-95% of cases involving communication systems.	Written documentation of use and trials of various communication systems is documented and stored in student's cumulative file for greater than 95% of cases involving communication systems.	Not measured 2011-2012 or 2013-2014		Measure in 2014-2015
Student Communication If. (Look-for tool)	Less than 80% of students who need assistive technology and/or specialized communication systems use these systems throughout their day and across curriculum areas.	80-84% of students who need assistive technology and/or specialized communication systems use these systems throughout their day and across curriculum areas.	85-89% of students who need assistive technology and/or specialized communication systems use these systems throughout their day and across curriculum areas.	90-95% of students who need assistive technology and/or specialized communication systems use these systems throughout their day and across curriculum areas.	Greater than 95% of students who need assistive technology and/or specialized communication systems use these systems throughout their day and across curriculum areas.	2013-2014	91.4% MS, HS & Elem did not collect Look-for	Decrease 1.9%
Staff Development Ig. (DCD teacher Survey)	Less than 80% of staff members report proficiency using available special ed technology.	80-84% of staff members report proficiency using available special ed technology.	85-89% of staff members report proficiency using available special ed technology.	90-95% of staff members report proficiency using available special ed technology.	Greater than 95% of staff members report proficiency using available special ed technology.	2011-2012	47.60%	Measure in 2014-2015

District Level

<i>Criteria: (measurement)</i>	<i>Standards:</i>					<i>Data:</i>		
	Intervene	Level of Concern	Baseline	Progress	Vision Level	Date	Data	Trend
Use of Technology 1b. (Look-for tool and follow-up discussion)	Technology (low, medium, high) is not being used in the student's daily routine.	Technology (low, medium, high) is used inconsistently in the student's daily routine.	Technology (low, medium, high) is used only as an add on, reward or break in the student's daily routine.	Technology (low, medium, high) is used only in specific curricular, subject or activity areas.	Technology (low, medium, high) is an integral part of the student's daily routine used across subjects, curriculum, activities, routines	2013-2014	<i>MS, HS & Bridges only - Elem. did not collect Look-fors: 93.5% of respondents report technology is an integral part of the student's daily routine</i>	New 2013-2014

Note. 1b Use of Technology Standards: Levels will need to be redefined in quantifiable terms.

Appendix I

Two-County Special Education

DCD Program Evaluation “Look For’s” Tool A

DCD Program Evaluation “Look Fors”-Tool A

Focal Area*	Description	Measurement	√ if you see	Notes/Comments List
Technology 1f	Student Communication	Students who have an identified need in their IEP for a device assigned to them or owned by them, will have access and use throughout the day and across curriculum areas - see Assistive Technology Appendix		
Technology 1h	Use	Based on student needs technology (from low to high) is used throughout the student's day.		
Collaboration & Communication 2b	Communication	Teacher has a communication system in place to communicate with parents/guardians (i.e. phone log, communication book, notebook, e-mail file, student planner)		Define what does effectively communicate mean? Quality is key – how do we measure this?
Culture and Climate 3a	Behavior Management	Proactive behavior supports are in place - see Proactive Behavior Supports Appendix		Tied to the student's needs
Climate and Culture 3a	Behavior Management	Data on behaviors is reviewed and used to make programming decisions. How is staff tracking behaviors?		Is the system the Look-For? Where is it recorded, how often, who do you review it with, how does this affect programming decisions?
Culture and Climate 3c.	Consistent Physical Environment (CPE)	Classroom schedule or daily agenda is posted and tells who, what, where, when for both staff and students		
Climate and Culture 3c.	CPE	Posted Classroom schedule or agenda is being followed		
Culture and Climate 3c.	CPE	Every student has a daily schedule at his or her own level (picture schedule, picture/word schedule, word schedule, or class schedule), length (varies with student's level), and is used throughout the day		Student understands how to use the schedule as evidenced by being able to: -check schedule - transition to next activity at own level (level of prompt)

* Vision Card focal area/standard

Updated 04-26-12 cm

Culture and Climate 3c.	CPE	Students have individualized work systems that tell what work, how much work, concept of finished, and what's next - see Individualized Work System Appendix		
Culture and Climate 3c.	CPE	Instructions for work tasks are visually clear and at the students level - written instructions, jigs, or pictures		
Culture and Climate 3c.	CPE	Based on the student's needs, visuals are used throughout the day - at specials, during lunch, grooming, outings - see Visual Structure Appendix		

* Vision Card focal area/standard

Updated 04-26-12 cm

Appendix J
Two-County Special Education
DCD Program Evaluation Timeline

Table A8

Two-County Special Education DCD Program Evaluation Timeline

Date	Program Evaluation Activities
October 2009	Began pulling baseline data
November 16, 2009 January 11, 2010	Started looking at the evaluation context and current research Visited DCD sites
February 2010	Overall plan created to conduct evaluation
March 2010	Continued collecting data from stakeholders
April 2010	Data collected Context well defined
May 2010	Core group met to go over all of the data collected and look for themes
June 2010	Core group used data and themes to select criteria and some standards
August 2010	Small group met to fine tune criteria and standards Planned what's next
September 2010	Met to organize and plan Summit I
October 26, 2010	DCD Summit I: Reviewed and revised vision and concern standards Completed vision card
November 2010 to March 2011	Gathered data in the DCD classrooms to determine where the DCD program was on their vision card
April 13, 2011	DCD Summit II: Made recommendations for actions based on DCD collected data
May 2011	Decision makers (administrators) determined action plan priorities Decision makers determined staff development and program needs
June 2011	Wrote program evaluation report Systematically shared with stakeholders

Appendix K

Two-County Special Education

DCD Program Evaluation Vision Card Key Messages

Developmental Cognitive Delay (DCD) Program Evaluation
Vision Card Key Messages

February 3, 2015

Developmental Cognitive Delay (DCD) Special Education Program Evaluation Vision Card Key Messages

The Developmental Cognitive Delay (DCD) vision cards, first populated through data collected during the 2011-2012 school year, assist the special education DCD leadership team in prioritizing needs and focal areas throughout the DCD program. Data collected during the 2013-2014 school year through surveys and observations in the form of Look-for tools are reflected in the current DCD vision cards.

Overall, performance levels across the district, middle school, high school and Bridges levels increase or decrease at similar points along the continuum from Intervene to the optimal Vision levels. Look-fors were not completed at the elementary level during the 2013-2014 school year due to pending changes in DCD center-based elementary classroom locations for the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

The findings for each focal area are listed, followed by bulleted current or planned action steps in italics.

Continuum of Performance Levels

Performance levels in the DCD vision card are measured across five (5) standards ranging from Intervene to the optimal target Vision level.

Intervene Level	Level of Concern	Baseline Level	Progress Level	Vision Level
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Technology Focal Area

Criteria items 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d availability of technology and technology for instructional use were measured in 2011-2012 with Look-for tools but not measured in 2013-2014. These criteria items may potentially be measured in 2015-2016.

Criteria item 1e, student communication, was not measured in 2011-2012 or in 2013-2014. This criteria item may potentially be measured in 2015-2016.

Look-for results at the middle school level and Bridges remain in the Vision level while at the high school level remain at the Baseline level. At the district level Look-for results remain at the Progress level, indicating students who need assistive technology and/or specialized communication systems use these systems throughout their day and across curriculum areas (criteria item 1f).

Criteria item 1g, staff development proficiency using available special education technology, was measured in 2011-2012 with DCD teacher survey but not measured in 2013-2014. This criteria item may potentially be measured in 2015-2016.

- *Staff development training on iPad applications occurred during the 2013-2014 school year.*
- *Each center-based classroom at the elementary, middle school and high school levels received two student desktop computers and each teacher received an iPad in 2014-2015.*

- *Additional training on iPad applications is planned to occur in 2014-2015.*

A new criteria item (1h), integrating technology throughout a student's day, was added in 2013-2014. Look-for results at the high school, Bridges and district levels are at the Vision level whereas Look-for results at the middle school level are at the Progress level.

Collaboration and Communication Focal Area

Increased participation in collaborative teams is evident in Look-for results at the middle school, high school and district levels indicating DCD teachers are at the Vision level whereas Bridges Look-for results indicate DCD teachers are at the Level of Concern for this criteria item (2a).

Communicating essential information with and between parents (2b), regular education teachers (2c), paraeducators (2d) and related service providers (2e) continues to decrease significantly across all levels with results falling at the Concern or Intervene performance levels.

- *Building level action plans for improved communication systems with regular education teachers, related service providers, paraeducators and parents will be developed at all levels.*

DCD teacher surveys collected in 2013-2014 at the elementary, middle school, high school and district levels decreased and remained at the Intervene level for (criteria item 2f), DCD teachers asking parents if they would like an outside agency representative invited to IEP meetings. Results at Bridges increased, for criteria item 2f, moving from the Concern to the Baseline performance levels for this criteria item.

Culture and Climate Focal Area

Look-for results in 2013-2014 at the middle school and district levels decreased slightly resulting in a move down one level from Vision to Progress levels for having proactive behavior supports in place to prevent challenging student behaviors and teach replacement skills (criteria item 3a). Results for this criteria item at the high school level moved from Progress to Baseline levels, whereas Bridges remained at the Vision level from the 2011-2012 data collection period.

Criteria item 3b, access to sensory, motor and life skills areas were measured by Look-fors in 2011-2012, and will be measured again potentially in 2015-2016.

Look-for results in 2013-2014 indicate a decrease at the middle school, high school and district levels with results at the Progress or Baseline levels for incorporating classroom schedules, student schedules, individualized work systems, instructions for work tasks, and visuals (criteria item 3c). Look-for results at Bridges increased moving from the Progress to the Vision performance levels for these indicators.

- *Professional development across levels is planned for the 2014-2015 school year related to Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA's).*

- *New DCD center-based teachers were offered Structured Teaching and Related Strategies (STARS) training at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.*
- *Elementary DCD center-based classrooms with new programs received assistance with classroom set-up prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year.*
- *All elementary DCD center-based classrooms received sensory items.*

Criteria item 3d, belonging to the school culture, were measured by surveys in 2011-2012, and will be measured again potentially in 2015-2016.

Teaching and Learning Focal Area

The DCD leadership team is working toward formally monitoring curriculum criteria items 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d.

- *District-wide, a progression of skills for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math has been developed to address Curriculum criteria items 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d.*
- *Modified curriculum for Social Studies and Science are being developed at the elementary level.*
- *Changes to high school curriculum for the 2015-2016 school year will occur in Functional and Resource Independent Living (RIL) classes.*

Criteria items 4e and 4f regarding service delivery models and future outcomes were measured by parent survey in 2011-2012, and will be measured again potentially in 2015-2016.

Look-for results at the high school and district levels indicate program results are at the Intervene level while results at the middle school level indicate program results are at the Level of Concern in using data to inform instruction and programming (criteria 4g). Look-for results at Bridges indicate program results are at the Vision level for this indicator. This criteria item was not measured in 2011-2012.