



ICI INSTITUTE *on* COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

Ensuring that all people with disabilities have the opportunity to be participating members in their communities of choice

JANUARY 2018

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FEATURE STORIES

MNLEND Fellows and Minneapolis Schools Improving Service Delivery to Young Children with ASD

[MNLEND Fellows](#) from ICI and the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) are working together to improve service delivery to multilingual and underserved young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families. The local school district and MNLEND launched the partnership known as the ASD Family Voices Project during the 2016-17 school year to evaluate the effectiveness of MPS services and processes for multilingual children and families who receive services in the Early Education, Special Education, and Multilingual Departments.



The project was designed by a multicultural team of LEND Fellows and MPS staff (pictured). The design included a literature review, an analysis of MPS student data, development and implementation of a family survey (which the MNLEND Fellows conducted by phone), analysis of survey results and recommendations for an ASD Family Voices Project 2.0. The survey cohort included MPS multilingual families, whose children received early childhood screening, special education evaluation and an IEP under the education eligibility of ASD. The team reviewed each student's information, identifying 8 Somali-speaking and 10 Spanish-speaking families who completed surveys.

The 2017-18 MNLEND Fellows will address access to services in health and human services and family supports. They will create map links to services and use person- and family-centered design theory while working with families to address gaps in services. The work will be aligned with other MPS projects underway. The survey cohort will be expanded to include all underrepresented and underserved

ethnically diverse groups with the aim of completing 50 family surveys in total.

"As a parent of a 23-year-old son with autism, it gives me a sense of satisfaction and utility in helping families understand their child's unique needs, navigate complex systems, and overcome what must seem like insurmountable barriers," says MNLEND Fellow [Nancy Gonzalez](#) (lower right). The other MNLEND Fellows on the project are [Eleanor Chenoweth](#) (top left) and [Mariana Walther](#) (top right). The MPS staff on the ASD Family Voices Project are Cynthia Hillyer, Director of Early Childhood Education (top center); and associate educator Suad Salad (lower left).

Systems Improvement Group Shares Expertise with Clients

The [Systems Improvement Group \(SIG\)](#) at ICI provides evaluation, training, and technical assistance services to K-12 education systems around the country as they strive to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, other students at risk for poor educational outcomes, and their families. "We know the needs are great in U.S. states and territories," says SIG Co-Director [Michael Sharpe](#). "The Systems Improvement Group is ready to help."



SIG staff provide clients with high-quality, relevant, and useful technical assistance in the areas of implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices, program evaluation, strategic planning, stakeholder facilitation, data analytics, and leadership development services to monitor program performance and demonstrate accountability with federal and state education requirements. All of these areas are critical to enhancing systems striving to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, those at-risk, and their families.

Since its launch in 2015, SIG staff have applied their expertise to a growing list of complex projects. They have conducted state education agency evaluations focused on State Systemic Improvement Plans, Reading First Grants, State Personnel Development Grants, and State Improvement Grants. In addition, they have directed a number of statewide surveys by state departments of education, including surveys examining the nature and range of the supply and demand of Speech and Language Pathologists, assessing whether schools facilitated parental involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities, and collecting data for postschool outcomes for high school leavers with disabilities. "The approach taken by SIG staff is to listen very carefully to what clients want and need in order to address challenging evaluation and systems-improvement issues," says [Maureen Hawes](#), SIG Co-Director. "The client is an active collaborator in developing creative and innovative solutions."

SIG's client list continues to grow. "We are always looking for new contracts, especially evaluation and state department of education technical assistance projects related to the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," says Hawes (pictured on left with colleague [Arlene Russell Bender](#)).

ICI Welcomes Visit by Russian Partners on Peer-to-Peer Project

Anna Chistokhina (left) and Zoya Berdnikova (center) from the Social Innovation Fund in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, traveled to ICI in January for a scouting trip as part of the [U.S.-Russia Peer-to-Peer Project](#), a collaborative project with ICI's [Global Resource Center on Inclusive Education \(GRC\)](#). The project, funded by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, is developing systems to support the community inclusion and employment of young adults with disabilities.



Chistokhina and Berdnikova, along with GRC co-directors [Renáta Tichá](#) (far right) and [Brian Abery](#), visited sites focused on transition from secondary school to community living and employment by young adults with disabilities, and discussed similarities and differences between service and support approaches in the U.S. and the Russian Federation. Among the sites were the Success Beyond program in St. Paul (pictured), Lionsgate Academy, and The Arc of Minnesota; they also shadowed professionals who support young adults with disabilities in community-based settings. This was part of the preparation and planning for a larger Russian delegation coming to ICI in April.

The Peer-to-Peer project is a continuation of a long-standing partnership between Krasnoyarsk State University and ICI. "What I really enjoy about this continued collaboration between Krasnoyarsk and Minnesota is how sincere and dedicated our Russian partners are to making a difference in the lives of children and young adults with disabilities back home," says Tichá.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



Featured on [ICI's Facebook](#) on December 20, 2017

RTC-OM measures HCBS outcomes for people with disabilities and has introduced a new website detailing the center's work. Read more about RTC-OM and other ICI news and resources

at <https://z.umn.edu/fyi-december-2017>

NEW RELEASES

NCEO Report 406: Alternate Assessments for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Participation Guidelines and Definitions



Authors: [Martha Thurlow](#), [Sheryl Lazarus](#), [Erik Larson](#), [Deb Albus](#), [Kristin Liu](#), and Elena Kwong

This [report](#) documents the status of states' assessment participation guidelines and definitions of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that were in place just prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year. With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015, renewed attention was paid to the importance of guidelines for participation in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) and to understanding who the students are with significant cognitive disabilities. The analysis includes the factors that states indicated should and should not be considered when making decisions about participation in the AA-AAS. It also documents the format of the guidelines that states made available to decision makers. Finally, it examines the extent to which states provided an explicit definition of "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities." Published by ICI's National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO).

EVENTS

A Deeper Look at the *Frontline Initiative* DSP Newsletter on Supporting Choice, Direction, and Control

Free webinar

February 5, 1 p.m. Central Standard Time



The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) and ICI's [Research and Training Center on Community Living \(RTC-CL\)](#) are offering this webinar to explore topics covered in their recent joint publication, *Frontline Initiative: Choice, Direction, and Control*. Hosted by John Raffaele, NADSP Director of Educational Services, the webinar will feature DSPs Desiree Loucks Baer and Hezzy Smith discussing their efforts to make supported decision-making and informed decision-making available to people in New York. NADSP is hosting the webinar on its [website](#); registration will soon be available.

AUCD for All 2018 Gala: Celebrating Leadership in State Policy

March 20, 6-10 p.m.

Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center - Pavilion

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington, DC



ICI is among the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) providing sponsorship and planning support for the upcoming AUCD for All 2018 Gala. This [Association of](#)

[University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\) event](#) celebrates state-level leadership in disability policy. States are often the catalysts for innovation, and AUCD members are engaging with policy makers and coalition partners in every state and territory by presenting research, conducting training, and developing and advocating for policies that will improve the lives of children and adults with disabilities. This event honor those who are transforming policy and leading the way toward inclusion, opportunity, and social justice for all. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available at aucd4all.org.

STAFF UPDATES

Amy Hewitt, Susan O'Neil, Barbara Kleist, Kristin Dean, and Merrie Haskins: The Administration for Community Living's (ACL) [No Wrong Door website](#), which recently launched, includes the [DirectCourse Person Centered Counseling Training curriculum](#). This marks the culmination of a multi-year project between ACL, Lewin, RTC-CL, Elsevier, and The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices to develop an online training program for person centered counseling professionals working in the No Wrong Door system. Primary ICI staff involved in this work include [Hewitt](#), [O'Neil](#), [Kleist](#), [Dean](#), and [Haskins](#).



Rachel Freeman: In October, [Freeman](#) was named a professional council member of the British Institute on Learning Disabilities in Birmingham, United Kingdom. She was also recently elected a board member of the International Association for Positive Behavior Support; her two-year term begins in March 2018.

Jennifer Hall-Lande, Amy Hewitt, and Julie Kramme: On November 5-8, several ICI staff presented at the 2017 Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Conference in Washington, DC. [Kramme](#), [Hall-Lande](#), and [Hewitt](#) were among the presenters of, "An Updated National Review of Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders." Hall-Lande and Hewitt were among the presenters of, "State of the States in Self-direction for Individuals with IDD." Hall-Lande co-presented, "Family Engagement in Developmental Monitoring Using 'Learn the Signs, Act Early' Campaign."

Barbara Kleist and Jeffrey Nurick: On December 8, [Kleist](#) and [Nurick](#) presented, "Why Person Centered Practices Matter" at the Accessible Space, Inc. annual meeting.



Amy Hewitt: [Hewitt](#) presented a research colloquium titled, "Progress in Community Living and Inclusion," at the TASH conference in Atlanta, December 12-15.

Joseph Angaran: On December 14, [Angaran](#) completed a certificate program through the University of Minnesota's College of Continuing and Professional Studies. The certificate is called "Professional Train-The-Trainer" and coursework emphasized needs assessments,



incorporating instructional design principles to develop training solutions, and developing technical skills to create an engaging and interactive learning environment.



Anab Gulaid: On December 19, [Gulaid](#) was accepted into Georgetown University's Leadership Academy for Cultural Diversity and Cultural and Linguistic Competence. The academy will be held April 30 - May 3 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



David R. Johnson: On January 3, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) announced that [Johnson](#) will receive its [2018 Education Award](#). Each year, AAIDD honors selected individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions to the field and Johnson is among this year's honorees. The awards will be presented at AAIDD's annual meeting, which in 2018 will be in St. Louis, Missouri, June 25-28.

ALUMNI UPDATES



James Thompson: Professor Thompson teaches and publishes his research on developmental disabilities at the University of Kansas. He is the lead author of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities' *Supports Intensity Scales* (both adult and children's versions), the first assessment tools to provide standardized measures of the support needs of people with disabilities. The *Supports Intensity Scales* have been translated and published in 13 languages, and are used throughout the world. The *Supports Intensity Scales*, indeed his entire research agenda for the past 25 years, began with his doctoral dissertation study at ICI in the early 1990s when he was a Graduate Research Assistant in the [Community Living program area](#), Project Coordinator, and student in the [Certificate in Disability Policy and Services program](#).

"Funded through a grant that ICI secured... I collected post-school outcome data on former students who had received special education services during high school in Minnesota," he recalls. "My dissertation was to identify dimensions of community adjustment. The data supported a robust model which included multiple dimensions of community adjustment such as employment and community living, but there was one dimension that did not make sense. It was labeled 'Need for Support' and it was qualitatively different from the outcome dimensions identified in my model. 'Need for Support' was not a community adjustment domain, but rather an internal psychological construct like anxiety, happiness, morality, and intelligence. This was the beginning of my research efforts to develop ways to better understand people with disabilities by their support needs, and it ultimately led to the creation of the *Supports Intensity Scales*. I owe so much to my ICI dissertation committee members, including [David Johnson](#), who inspired and encouraged me to think deeply about people's needs for support, and how understanding people by their support needs could serve as a basis for assessment and planning activities. What I remember most about ICI is the warmth, kindness, and respect that people showed to me and to one another. I was so

fortunate to study at the University of Minnesota."

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