A Tool to Assess the Alignment of State PD Systems and QRIS

Professional development (PD) systems and quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) are two important pieces of a quality improvement system for early childhood and school-age programs. Each of these systems has common elements, and the degree of alignment among the elements contributes to their ability to support improvement over time. This self-assessment tool is intended to help leaders consider the alignment across system elements. It can be used to develop a common understanding of the mission and goals among leaders, and to identify gaps and opportunities to strengthen both PD systems and QRIS.

Please rank your progress on each of these elements according to a five-point scale that assesses whether State leaders (place a check mark in the appropriate column):

1 = Have not started this task
2 = Have started initial conceptual and planning work
3 = Have begun to implement this task
4 = Have made solid progress in implementing this task
5 = Have made significant progress in completing this task

In addition, add any clarifying remarks in the "Comments" columns.

ELEMENT 1: GOVERNANCE						
A coordinating body that is broadly representative of key stakeholders serves to establish a common vision and goals. Representatives provide leadership to the partnerships and collaborative efforts to build a coordinated system. The QRIS and PD governance bodies have clearly defined authority to recommend or implement policies, initiatives, and investments.						
Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. A coordinated governance structure exists for PD and QRIS.						
B. Staff are jointly appointed to serve as liaisons between PD and QRIS governance structures.						
C. Representatives of that have decision-making authority over funding and regulation of PD, licensing, and other quality initiatives are represented on the coordinating body.						
D. Strategic plans for QRIS and PD are aligned by a common vision and goals.						
E. Other indicators?						

ELEMENT 2: REGULATIONS and STANDARDS

Regulations, such as licensing, ensure the health and safety of children in care. Standards, such as core competencies and credentials, program quality standards, and QRIS standards define the qualifications to enter the system and provide a path for meeting expectations of quality at each level of the system. Standards for children's learning and development are aligned and integrated with standards for programs and practitioners.

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. Standards for practitioners are consistent across sectors and embedded in the PD system and QRIS/other program standards.						
B. Standards for programs are supported by PD standards and QRIS.						
C. Licensing regulations form the foundation of standards for PD and QRIS.						
D. Program and/or practitioner standards are linked to the PD and training requirements of the PD system and QRIS.						
E. Training/trainer and practitioner registries collect verified data as an integral component of the PD system and QRIS.						
F. Other indicators?						

ELEMENT 3: FINANCING
Core funding is sufficient for organizational support to develop the governance structure, convene stakeholders, and support the infrastructure (including staffing, data systems, etc.) necessary to start up, scale up, and sustain the systems. Leaders plan for sufficient financing for system elements and initiatives, including costs of developing standards, etc., and funding for program and practitioner supports and incentives.

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. Financial incentives in the PD and QRIS systems are linked to indicators of quality learning environments and sufficient to reward and sustain quality improvement.						
B. Workforce compensation, retention, and PD supports (e.g. scholarships) are embedded in PD system and/or prioritized to those participating in the QRIS.						
C. Funding for the infrastructure of PD and QRIS includes resources to support the alignment of PD and QRIS (data collection, staffing, and coordination activities).						
D. Other indicators?						

ELEMENT 4: ACCOUNTABILITY
An accountability system is developed to identify benchmarks and outcomes for programs, practitioners, and system (policy) change that accounts for the alignment of the PD system and QRIS. An integrated data system tracks indicators for individuals, programs, and systems participating in PD and QRIS in order to monitor short- and long-term goals. Evaluation includes measures that identify the links and alignment practices between the PD system and QRIS.

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. Monitoring of QRIS standards is linked to PD system participation data.						
B. Training and trainers across sectors are monitored and evaluated to ensure that the content and delivery of training meets QRIS standards.						
C. A training/trainers registry exists, and verified data are linked to QRIS standards.						
D. Evaluations track the participation and impact of participation in the PD system and QRIS.						
E. Other indicators?						

ELEMENT 5: PRACTITIONER AND PROGRAM SUPPORT						
Strategies to ensure equitable access for practitioners to PD and QRIS are aligned and inclusive of multiple settings, geographic areas, and characteristics of practitioners. A comprehensive range of professional development and training opportunities to support career growth and quality improvement, from entry to master levels, are embedded in the PD and QRIS.						
Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. Technical assistance is coordinated around PD and QRIS standards. Programs participating in the QRIS or the registry get priority for this technical assistance.						
B. Investments have been made in specialized technical assistance, such as support for caring infants and toddlers, integrating children with special needs, and/or working with school-age children.						
C. The PD system provides a comprehensive range of supports, from access to persistence to mastery.						
D. A mentor or coach/consultant is available to programs to facilitate their movement up the QRIS levels.						
E. Providers are able to obtain career development advising that is linked to PD system requirements.						
F. Training, coursework, and degrees articulate from one level to the next, facilitating career growth and higher program quality.						
G. Other indicators?						

ELEMENT 6: COMMUNICATION

Online and print media, as well as conferences and social media, are used to inform all practitioners and programs about PD and QRIS resources and services. PD and QRIS leaders have a strong internal communication system. Partners work together to increase access and build public support for PD and QRIS. Strategies to support effective coordination with other elements of the quality improvement system (licensing, health, etc.) are implemented.

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. PD and QRIS share a common message and communicate the message consistently to all stakeholders, including parents, practitioners, legislators, and other State and community leaders.						
B. PD and QRIS utilize clear, succinct print media (including easily recognizable symbols) to convey indicators of PD and QRIS quality to providers, parents, policy makers, and the public.						
C. A variety of methods exist to help providers and staff learn about and access training and education opportunities, including online databases that are a required component of PD and QRIS.						
D. Outreach and marketing promotes the alignment of PD and QRIS systems and benefits of participation across sectors.						
E. Other indicators?						