

Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention

Phase III Interim Report

This project was funded by The Wallace Foundation.

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Summary

Since 2013 the David P. Weikart Center (Weikart Center) and National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) have been collaborating on a project to improve the quality of summer learning programs. The work is now in its third phase, and this Interim Report provides evaluation findings and recommendations for year-one of the two-year project. The overall evaluation is focused on improving the intervention design, benchmarking implementation fidelity at scale in high capacity systems, and documenting program and classroom level innovations in the quality of instruction.

The *Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention* (SLPQI) is a continuous improvement intervention for summer learning programs that includes four core components: (1) a standard and measures for quality of management and instructional practices – the *Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment* (SLPQA); (2) training and technical assistance supports, (3) performance data products and (4) a continuous improvement cycle that fits the prior three elements for use in summer learning organizations. The SLPQI and the SLPQA were designed to advance the science and practice of continuous improvement by focusing on qualities of staff instructional practice and learner experience that build student skills in multiple domains related to school success.

This Phase III Interim Report describes implementation of the SLPQI in 31 summer learning programs in Denver, Colorado and St Paul, Minnesota during the summer of 2015. This report also provides recommendations for intervention design and implementation in year two. Key findings from year one include:

- The SLPQI was implemented at high fidelity in both systems.
 - We made critical improvements to the SLPQI design to make it more effective including assessors serving as coaches and improving the timing and quality of performance feedback.
 - The proportion of sites implementing the four improvement practices—training, assessing, coaching, and program improvement planning—substantially increased from Phase II implementation.
- Summer program staff introduced instructional innovations as a result of the SLPQI process in several domains, including greater youth involvement in decisions, incorporation of reflection and planning, and increased adult engagement with youth.
- We have clear recommendations for the second year of Phase III. These include: beginning timeline planning with network leads early in 2016, updating the SLPQI handbook with guidance for the role of assessor-coach, and use of the online Scores Reporter system for data entry and reporting.

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I. Introduction

Since 2013 the David P. Weikart Center (Weikart Center) and National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) have been collaborating on a project to improve the quality of summer learning programs. The work is now in its third phase, and this Phase III Interim Report provides evaluation findings and recommendations for year-one of the two-year project. The overall Phase III evaluation is focused on improving the intervention design, benchmarking implementation fidelity at scale in high capacity systems, and documenting program and classroom level innovations in the quality of instruction.

The *Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention (SLPQI)* is a continuous improvement intervention for summer learning programs that includes four core components: (1) a standard and measures for quality of management and instructional practices – the *Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment (SLPQA)*; (2) training and technical assistance supports, (3) performance data products and (4) a continuous improvement cycle that fits the prior three elements for use in summer learning organizations. The SLPQI and the SLPQA were designed to advance the science and practice of continuous improvement in by focusing on qualities of staff instructional practice and learner experience that build student skills in multiple domains related to school success.

Background

In Phase I, Weikart Center conducted a proof-of-concept pilot to design the SLPQA standard/measure¹ and explore application in a continuous improvement cycle at 16 sites in Baltimore, MD, Grand Rapids, MI and Oakland, CA. Additional detail is available in a report, *Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment: 2013 Phase I Pilot Report* (Ramaswamy, Gersh, Sniegowski, McGovern, & Smith, 2014). The Phase II study explored feasibility and fidelity of the SLPQI when implemented at scale in summer systems in Seattle, WA, Northern California and Grand Rapids, MI. The report, *Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention (SLPQI): Phase II Feasibility Study*, provides additional detail (Smith, Ramaswamy, Gersh, & McGovern, 2015).

Phase III also focuses on implementation at scale but with an emphasis on exploring how to best implement and support a full, city-wide SLPQI with high fidelity. Experiences from Phase I and II led us

¹ Note on language: When considered together, the level-5 descriptors in the Program Quality Assessment rubrics are a quality standard (singular) for management and instruction in the out-of-school time field. In this sense, the performance standard and performance measure are integrated.

to believe that a network with an already established continuous quality improvement infrastructure for the school-year would be best suited to extending quality improvement efforts into the summer. The Denver Afterschool Alliance of Denver, CO (Denver) and Sprockets of St. Paul, MN (St. Paul) both manage high capacity quality improvement systems, anchored by the Youth Program Quality Intervention, and were selected through a request for qualifications from the Wallace Foundation.

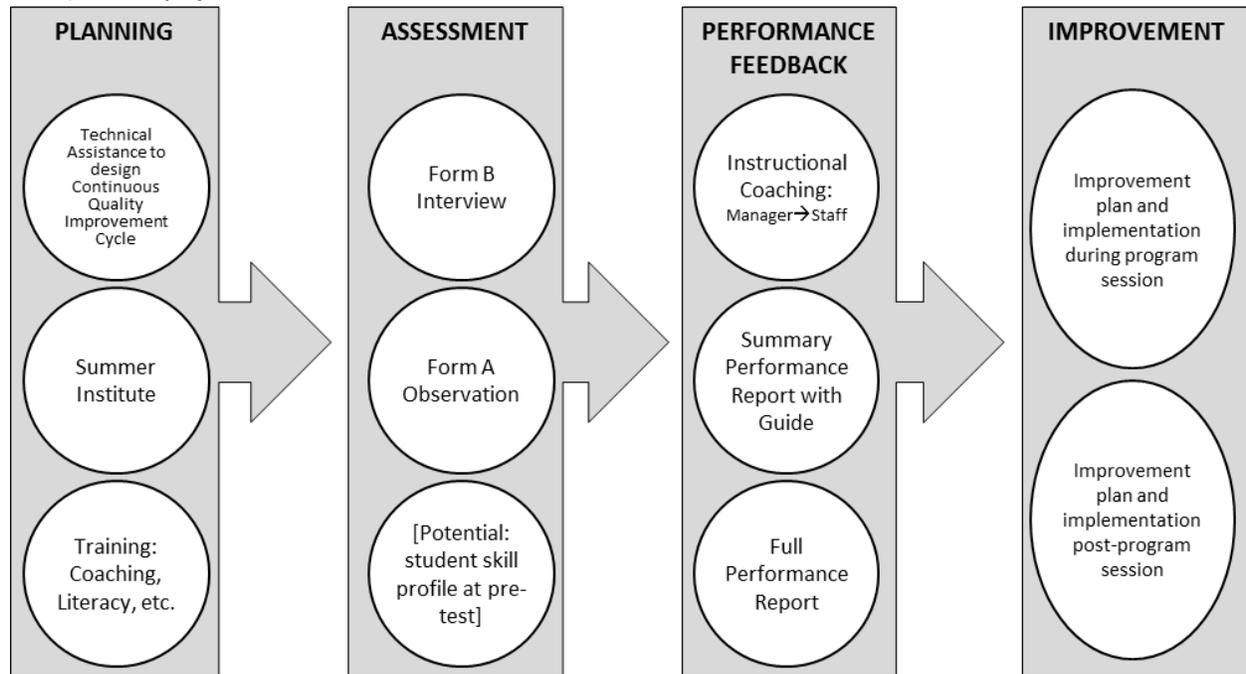
II. Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention (SLPQI)

Figure 1 summarizes the SLPQI sequence, which is modeled after the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI), an evidence-based continuous improvement model for out-of-school time programs.² Summer system leads receive technical assistance to adapt the organization-level continuous quality improvement cycle that programs will implement and training supports for site teams. Then, program managers³ and staff are engaged with workshops and training to learn the methods entailed by the continuous improvement cycle and plan for implementation. Next, an assessor/coach visits each site and produces a performance report based on interview and observation data. They take this report back to program managers to discuss strengths and areas for improvement apparent from the data and options for making mid-course adjustments to strengthen quality. Program managers then use the performance feedback during individual interactions with instructional staff as well as during improvement planning workshops that can occur during the summer program session, after the session in preparation for the following school year and summer, or both. The four SLPQI elements – quality standard/measure, supports, data products, and improvement cycle – are each described below.

²The Youth Program Quality Intervention is the most widely used quality assurance process in the afterschool field and was the subject of a randomized trial which demonstrated that high fidelity to the same four continuous improvement elements improved the quality of instructional experiences for at-risk youth (Smith et al., 2012). Subsequent validation studies have linked exposure to high quality instructional practices, as defined by the Youth Program Quality Assessment, to improved school success outcomes (Naftzger, 2014; Naftzger et al., 2013; Naftzger, Tanyu, & Stonehill, 2010; Naftzger, Vinson, Manzeske, & Gibbs, 2011).

³Program managers, also referred to variously as program managers or site leads, are site level managers who sometimes also provide direct instruction as program staff.

Figure 1
SLPQI Theory of Action



Standard/Measure: Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment (SLPQA)

In this study, external assessors spent a day of observation and interview to score the SLPQA. The Form A portion of the SLPQA is designed to measure instructional quality at the point of service in six domains: Safe Environment, Supportive Environment, Interaction, Engagement, Math, and Literacy. The data collection method for the Form A observation was configured to produce quality ratings that best represent the most prevalent summer program designs: academic content in the morning session and enrichment in the afternoon, or academically-focused morning-only programs that are more like traditional summer school. The Form B interview with the program manager assesses management practices in four domains: Planning, Staff Training, Family Connection and Individualization. Information on the reliability and validity of the SLPQA measures are provided in the Phase II report.

The data from Forms A and B was the basis for feedback and recommendations given to site managers in a Summary Report given to program managers after the observation. Managers also responded to a survey, administered online, which provided a rating of implementation fidelity for each site and an assessment of management practices in use at the site. Table 1 describes the method used to complete each form and the measurement objective achieved.

Table 1
Component Quality Measures of the SLPQI

Target	Measure	Method	Objective
Instructional Practices	Form A Program Observation	External assessor observes and scores SLPQA separately for morning and afternoon	To rate the quality of specific instructional practices and produce an overall quality rating for the site
Management Practices	Interviews with site supervisors/managers	Form B interviews	To assess quality regarding planning, staff training, family connections and individualization
	Program Manager survey	Survey of program managers (53 items) about implementation, satisfaction, and management practices	To produce an implementation rating for the site and assess customer satisfaction with the SLPQI
Assessment process	Survey of assessors	Assessor survey (34 items on background and implementation plus questions about the 27 items unique to the SLPQA)	To assess satisfaction with training and implementation and validity of the SLPQA items

Performance Reports

The assessor scored the SLPQA and drew from the performance data to produce recommendations for improvement that would be feasible to implement in the remaining weeks of the program. This data was entered into a spreadsheet, sent to the Weikart Center where the data and recommendations were incorporated into a performance report packet sent by email a day or two later to the program manager, assessor, and network lead. The reports include:

- The morning and afternoon scores for all SLPQA items and scales
- One-page guide about how and where the data could be used during their summer session
- One-page overview of the quality standards referenced by the performance data
- Take-it-back agenda for a 30-minute workshop on the Summary Report
- Guidance on interpreting PQA data
- The Summary Report, a one-page narrative summary of strengths, suggested improvement actions, and other specific feedback from the assessor

Table 2 shows the timeline for when data was submitted and reports were sent to sites. All data packets were sent to sites within one business day of receiving the data. The majority of sites received their data packets with more than three weeks remaining in the program to implement changes based on the feedback.

Table 2
Dates for Performance Report Turnaround and Program End Date

		Data Received	Data Packet Sent to Site	Program End Date
Denver				
YMCA	Wyatt Academy - Power Scholars	6/30/15	7/1/15	7/24/2015
OpenWorld Learning	Metro State University - OWL	6/18/15	6/19/15	7/24/2015
Summer Scholars	Stedman Elementary	6/25/15	6/26/15	7/24/2015
Mi Casa Resource Center	Lake Campus @ Colfax Elem.	7/7/15	7/7/15	7/24/2015
BGCMD	Arthur Johnson Branch	6/25/15	6/26/15	7/31/2015
BGCMD	Johnson Beacons	6/30/15	7/1/15	7/31/2015
BGCMD	Cole Beacons	7/8/15	7/8/15	7/31/2015
DU Bridge Project	Westwood	6/25/15	6/26/15	8/7/2015
DU Bridge Project	Lincoln Park	7/8/15	7/8/15	8/7/2015
DU Bridge Project	Columbine	6/29/15	6/30/15	8/7/2015
DELCS	Summer Slam at Munroe	6/29/15	7/1/15	8/7/2015
DU Bridge Project	Quigg Newton	7/7/15	7/7/15	8/7/2015
DELCS	Westerly Creek ES	7/13/15	7/13/15	8/14/2015

Table 2 (continued)*Dates for Performance Report Turnaround and Program End Date*

		Data Received	Data Packet Sent to Site	Program End Date
St. Paul				
Saint Paul Urban Tennis	Harding High School	6/26/15	6/26/15	7/30/2015
DIVINE Institute	Resurrection Temple	7/22/15	7/22/15	7/31/2015
Breakthrough Twin Cities	Mounds Park Academy	7/4/15	7/6/15	7/31/2015
Interfaith Action	American Indian Magnet	7/13/15	7/13/15	8/7/2015
St. Paul Public Schools ISD 625	Flipside @ Wellstone Elementary	7/23/15	7/23/15	8/7/2015
ACES & Boys & Girls Club	Mount Airy Club	7/6/15	7/6/15	8/13/2015
The Sanneh Foundation	Conway	7/22/15	7/22/15	8/14/2015
Urban Battle Tutoring/mentoring	Berean Church	7/26/15	7/27/15	8/19/2015
Saint Paul Parks and Rec	Edgumbe	7/14/15	7/14/15	8/20/2015
Saint Paul Parks and Rec	Dayton's Bluff	7/20/15	7/20/15	8/20/2015
ACES & Boys & Girls Club	Eastside Club	7/14/15	7/14/15	8/20/2015
Saint Paul Parks and Rec	Hancock	7/16/15	7/16/15	8/20/2015
Saint Paul Parks and Rec	North Dale	7/10/15	7/10/15	8/20/2015
Saint Paul Parks and Rec	Langford	7/14/15	7/15/15	8/20/2015
Sabo Center	Youth Guides	7/13/15	7/13/15	8/20/2015
Conservation Corps	Summer Youth Corp	7/16/15	7/16/15	8/21/2015
YWCA St. Paul	Youth Achievers Program	7/14/15	7/20/15*	8/21/2015
Opportunity Neighborhood	Ames Lake	7/28/15	7/29/15	8/21/2015

*Sent back for completion

Supports: Training and Technical Assistance

Several types of supports are provided through the SLPQI, including (1) technical assistance for system leaders supporting summer learning systems, (2) training for program managers on the content of the SLPQI and (3) training for program assessors. Full descriptions of the supports can be found in the report, *Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention (SLPQI): Phase II Feasibility Study*. In addition to the supports described for Phase II, Phase III included several improvements to training and technical assistance including:

- Denver and St. Paul network leaders were brought together several times by the Weikart Project Manager to share their experiences and reflections.
- The SLPQI process was reviewed during the Summer Learning Institute, and participants were asked to make plans based on the Form B items focused on management practices.
- An adaptation of the Quality Instructional Coaching training for assessor-coaches was piloted in St. Paul, MN.
- Planning with Data workshops, which were held in September, asked program managers to use 2015 summer data to plan for 2016. The intention is to use 2015's improvement plans as a point of reference and planning for the 2016 cycle.
- Performance report recommendations were not automated, but generated by the assessor/coach with the intention of providing sites with a more personalized experience.

Improvement Cycle

The SLPQI improvement cycle occurs within each distinct program (i.e., at the organization level) but requires planning across programs (i.e., at the system level). The cycle is essentially a set of dates describing when parts of the SLPQI get implemented and plans to receive support for implementation. Determining the sequence of elements that support the program level improvement cycle is a critical part of the technical assistance that system leaders receive early in the process.

III. Study Questions, Sample, and Procedures

The evaluation component of the Phase III Implementation Study addresses the following questions: How well was the SLPQI process implemented? How can implementation be improved? Was the SLPQI useful and therefore a good use of time? Did the SLPQA identify areas of low quality? What best practices emerged as a result of the SLPQI? This section describes the sample and procedures used to collect evaluation data.

Sample

For Phase III of the project, 31 sites in two networks participated in the study: 13 sites from Denver and 18 sites from St. Paul. Both networks had implemented the full Youth Program Quality Intervention in the previous year. Table 3 provides detail regarding the study sample.

Table 3
Participating Phase III System Characteristics

	Denver Network	St. Paul Network
Number of Organizations	7	13
Number of Sites	13	18
Grades Served	K-12	K-12
Average Program Duration (weeks)	7.11	7.91

Procedures

Data collection for the study included the following measures and sources of performance information.

Project records. Project records included records of training attendance, assessor reliability test results, dates for submission of Excel workbooks, dates when performance reports were sent to each of the 31 programs, and notes from technical assistance calls.

SLPQA Forms A and B. Form A is an observational measure designed to evaluate “point of service” contact between youth and instructional staff. Each observation, morning and afternoon, utilized a “walkthrough” method where the assessors collected systematic anecdotal notes, a detailed running record of staff behavior and youth responses, during 15-30 minute observation blocks in a cross-section of program offerings led by different program staff. Each rating was based on a total of approximately 90-minutes of observation time. Assessors then used the anecdotal records to score the rubrics that constitute Form A, typically requiring about 60-minutes of time to convert the anecdotal records into a complete

Form A rating. For full-day programs, a distinct Form A rating was produced for the morning and afternoon sessions. For half-day programs, only the respective morning or afternoon rating was produced. Form B is an interview-based assessment of management practices. To complete Form B, the assessor interviews the program manager and records written responses. Later this written record is used to score the Form B rubrics, typically requiring about 30 minutes.

Assessor survey. The assessor survey was developed to better understand successes and challenges in the assessment process and to gain assessor perspective on the SLPQA. All 18 external assessors completed an assessor survey via an online data collection system.

Program manager survey. The program manager survey was developed to assess a number of attributes at each site, including: (1) fidelity of SLPQI implementation, (2) customer satisfaction with SLPQI and SLPQA, (3) any innovations or changes during the program as a result of receiving the SLPQA data, and (4) the implementation of management practices regarding the staffing model, targeting students at academic risk for the program, and accessing student data. The program manager was also asked to supply contact information for two staff members who demonstrated innovation as a result of participating the SLPQI process. A program manager survey was received for every site via an online data collection system.

Staff interviews. Interviews were conducted with five staff members from each network who were nominated by their program manager as making changes or innovations as a result of the SLPQI process. As some of the sites did not nominate innovative staff and some staff were not available to be interviewed, interviews were conducted with five available nominated staff from each network.

The total response rate for post-program information about implementation of the SLPQI was 100%. Table 4 shows the sample sizes by measure.

Table 4
Sample Sizes by Measure

Data Source	Number	Percent
SLPQA	31	100
Assessor survey	34	100
Program Manager survey	31	100
Staff interviews	10	N/A

IV. Summary of Findings for Implementation and Customer Satisfaction

In this section we describe evaluative findings for implementation and customer satisfaction. We first describe implementation of SLPQI supports, then fidelity and feasibility of the SLPQI sequence in the 31 programs, and finally, we describe participant satisfaction with the process.

Implementation of SLPQI Supports

SLPQI supports are the training and technical assistance necessary for program managers to implement the work.

Program Manager Training. Program managers from both St. Paul and Denver were invited to attend live trainings including the Summer Learning Institute, Quality Instructional Coaching and Planning with Data. The top panel of Table 5 describes training dates and attendance. In general, participants gave the trainings positive ratings (see discussion of customer satisfaction below) and made a number of additional comments. Specifically, participants were positive about “being able to have discussions, share ideas” and the “chance to practice the coaching skills and collaborate with others.”

Assessor Training. Thirty assessors reported attending live training for reliability. Eight reported webinar training as refreshers. Most (80%) of the Summer Learning External Assessors reported previous experience with YPQI. In all cases of reliability training, assessors were required to achieve 80 percent or greater perfect agreement with gold standard scores of a video-taped program offering. After completing their subsequent training on the SLPQA, all except two said they were adequately prepared for doing Summer Learning Assessments. The SLPQA training focused on two major content areas: understanding of the measures unique to the SLPQA and instruction on the data collection protocol.

Assessors completed training evaluations and reported that the events were worth their time and they acquired new skills or strengthened skills they already had. Participants stated, “I enjoyed learning about the new indicators. Very excited about some of the larger Weikart changes around getting data quicker,” “It was good to examine and practice the new items and scales with others.” There were mixed reactions to working in groups— primarily cited as something especially liked, but also as something disliked. One commenter noted, “I wish we had more time to get familiar and work with materials - it felt too rushed.”

Table 5
Training Events

Program Staff Training Events	Location	Date	Attendance
Summer Learning Institute	Denver, CO	May 4, 2015	36
Summer Learning Institute	St. Paul, MN	May 5, 2015	18
Quality Instructional Coaching	Denver, CO	May 21, 2015	23
Quality Instructional Coaching	St. Paul, MN	April 10, 2015 June 11, 2015	15
Planning with Data	Denver, CO	September 17, 2015	46
Planning with Data	St. Paul, MN	September 11, 2015	25
Assessor Training Events			
Assessor Reliability Training	Denver, CO	May 20, 2015	19
Assessor Reliability Training	St. Paul, MN	June 1, 2015	16
Assessor-Coach Training	St. Paul, MN	June 2, 2015	9

SLPQI Implementation Fidelity and Feasibility

To learn about implementation of the SLPQI, program managers were asked about the relative ease or difficulty they experienced coordinating the four SLPQI elements, specific issues or obstacles that arose during the sequence and the overall success of the improvement cycle. Assessors were asked questions about their ability to implement the specific aspects of the intervention in a timely fashion.

Implementation Fidelity. To assess the level of process fidelity at the 31 programs, an index was created to describe overall implementation of the four SLPQI elements. The index presented in Figure 2 was created from responses to four items (1=implemented in program, 0=not implemented) and ranges between 0 and 4. The items were: program staff participated in intervention supports (e.g., training); the SLPQA assessment was completed; the program manager provided instructional coaching to staff; and the program staff engaged in improvement planning with their SLPQI performance report. Some sites had not completed Program Improvement Plans at the time the survey was administered, but all sites except one completed Performance Improvement Plans prior to the writing of this report. The implementation scores represented in Figure 2 include all Program Improvement Plans received.

A majority of the participating sites implemented all four elements of the intervention--nineteen were able to complete all four implementation elements included in the index. All but three of the remainder had completed three of the four implementation elements. Most program managers (77%) stated they attended the Summer Learning Institute. Twenty-five (81%) stated they were able to coach

their staff on quality instructional practices using the SLPQA as a guide. Table 6 indicates which SLPQI elements were implemented at each site.

Figure 2
SLPQI Implementation Index

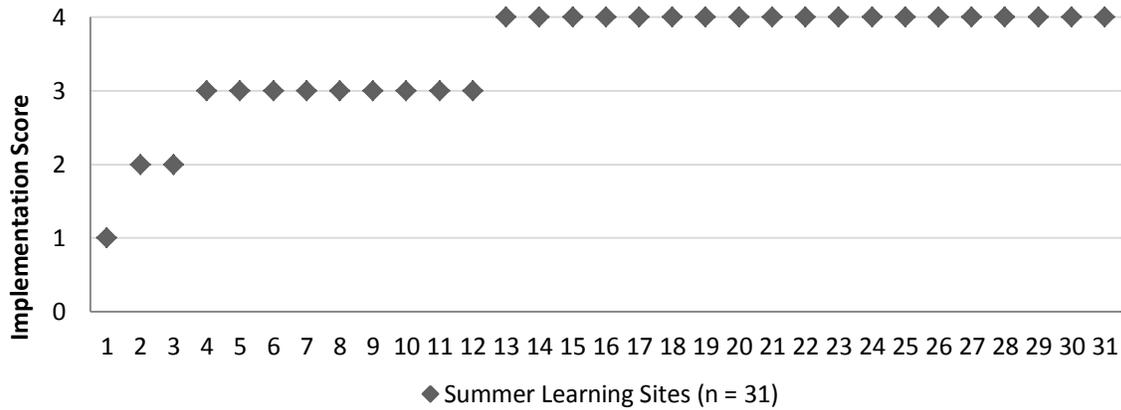


Table 6
Implementation Elements by Site

Organization	Site	Summer Institute	Assessor Visit	Coach Staff	Improve ment Plan
Denver					
BGCMD	Arthur Johnson Branch	1	1	1	1
BGCMD	Johnson Beacons	1	1	1	1
BGCMD	Cole Beacons	1	1	1	1
DELCS	Summer Slam at Munroe	1	1	1	1
DELCS	Westerly Creek Elem School		1	1	1
DU Bridge Project	Westwood	1	1		1
DU Bridge Project	Lincoln Park		1	1	1
DU Bridge Project	Columbine	1	1	1	1
DU Bridge Project	Quigg Newton		1	1	1
Mi Casa Resource Center	Colfax Elem.	1	1	1	1
OpenWorld Learning	Metro State University - OWL Summer Tech Camp		1	1	1
Summer Scholars	Stedman Elementary	1	1	1	1
YMCA	Wyatt Academy - Power Scholars	1	1	1	1

Table 6 (continued)*Implementation Elements by Site*

Organization	Site	Summer Institute	Assessor Visit	Coach Staff	Improve ment Plan
St. Paul					
ACES & Boys & Girls Club	Mount Airy Club	1	1		1
ACES & Boys & Girls Club	Eastside Club	1	1		1
Breakthrough Twin Cities	Mounds Park Academy	1	1	1	1
Conservation Corps	St. Croix State Park	1	1	1	1
DIVINE Institute	Resurrection Temple		1		
Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, Dept of Indian work	American Indian Magnet		1	1	1
Opportunity Neighborhood	Ames Lake	1	1	1	1
Sabo Center for Democracy and Citizenship	Youth Guides	1	1	1	1
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation	Edgcumbe		1	1	1
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation	Dayton's Bluff		1		1
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation	Hancock		1		1
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation	North Dale	1	1	1	1
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation	Langford	1	1	1	1
Saint Paul Urban Tennis	Harding High School	1	1	1	1
St. Paul Public Schools ISD 625	Flipside @ Wellstone Elementary	1	1	1	1
The Sanneh Foundation	Conway	1	1	1	1
Urban Battle Tutoring/mentoring	Berean Church	1	1	1	1
YWCA St. Paul	Youth Achievers Program	1	1	1	1

While these results are of interest, they do not of themselves explain whether or not implementation fidelity for the SLPQI was good or bad. To offer an answer to this question, we explore the context of implementation.

Context of implementation. We know from these surveys, and other sources of project data, that there were numerous supports in place for implementation. Training and coaching were utilized, and all 31 program managers talked with their staff about the project. Most study sites were represented at the Summer Learning Institute and Quality Instructional Coaching trainings. All study sites received an assessment and were sent a performance report. In all but one case, the data packet with the Summary Report, data and recommendations was sent by email to network leads, program managers and assessor/coaches within one or two business days after the data was received (see Table 2). Looking at an implementation index for another program quality intervention (see Table 7) provides a benchmark of comparison for the 2015 implementation index data. It presents a summary of implementation for the four SLPQI practices alongside similar figures for Phase II implementation from summer 2014 and the Youth Program Quality Intervention study conducted in 89 afterschool programs in four states in 2008 (Smith et al., 2012). There were challenges to full implementation in Phase II that were also reflected in a low survey response rate, and we sought to address both of those issues for Phase III. As planned, Phase III achieved very high fidelity in high capacity systems, much higher than in Phase II. Also note that implementation fidelity for the YPQI treatment group is comparable to the Phase III group while YPQI study control sites implemented at a much lower level than the Phase III group.

Table 7
Comparison of Implementation Index with YPQI Study Treatment and Control Groups After One Intervention Cycle

	Implementation Index for 31 Sites	Implementation Index SLPQI Phase II* for 11 sites	YPQI Study Treatment	YPQI Study Control
% sites 1 practice	3	0	4	40
% sites 2 practices	7	36	13	34
% sites 3 practices	29	54	32	10
% sites 4 practices	61	9	53	16

Note: Practices include training, assessing, coaching, and program improvement planning

*Phase II had low response rate for staff survey

Feasibility. To address the question of feasibility, we asked program managers their opinions about the timeliness of trainings and the success of their implementation. Assessors and program managers were asked about their feelings about how well the SLPQA assessed the presence of academic practices and meaningfulness of the report for the site. Assessors were also asked how well the SLPQA

captured differences between programs. Table 8 shows the percentage of program managers responding “yes” on survey items about implementing the SLPQI.

Table 8
Feasibility of SLPQI

	Percentage of Program Managers responding “Yes” (N=31)
Were the trainings (Summer Learning Institute, Quality Coaching) provided in a timely fashion to meet the needs of your program?	85.19
In general, do you feel your site was able to successfully implement the Summer Learning PQI?	67.74

The difficulty assessors experience in conducting the various facets of the intervention can also affect implementation. Data in Table 9 indicates assessors often found scoring Form A *difficult* or *time consuming but okay*. However, they were able to conduct the observation, interview, score Form B and use the Excel workbook for recording data with more ease over time.

Table 9
Feasibility of Assessor Tasks

Assessor Tasks	All Assessors (n=23) (1= difficult, 2= time consuming but ok, 3=easy)
Conduct the observation	2.26
Score Form A	1.68
Conduct the interview	2.67
Score Form B	2.36
Use the Excel workbook	2.04

Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the SLPQA. Program managers and assessors were asked if they felt the SLPQA tool was able to accurately assess the presence of academic practices (specifically; math, literacy, and higher order thinking skills) at their site. Almost all of the assessors (82.4%) said yes, although fewer, but still a majority of the program managers (64.5%), said yes. Only two program managers gave reasons for why the observation might not be an accurate reflection of quality when asked for additional thoughts. One stated “The observation process did not work very well because the external assessor did not get to view full classes. He was only able to get a snippet of the programs that are run. This was a problem because some of what we were evaluated on may only take place once during a class (i.e., Reflection,

Student Leadership, etc.).” Another said, “It was too much education based and we are not an education based program.” One program manager stated, “It was helpful. However, if it would have been any other camps I don’t think it would have fit into the structure we have at our other camps.” The assessors (94.1%) also said the tool captured essential differences in the quality of programs. See Table 10 for a summary.

Table 10
Customer Satisfaction with the SLPQA

	Percentage of Program Managers responding “Yes” (N=31)	Percentage of Assessors responding “Yes” (N=34)
Overall, do you believe the updated Summer Learning PQA is an accurate assessment of the presence of academic practices (specifically; math, literacy, and higher order thinking skills) at your site?	64.52	82.35
Were the scores on the interview portion of the assessment meaningful for improvement planning?	90.32	79.41
Do you believe the Summer Learning PQA was able to capture essential differences in the quality of programs?	N/A	94.12

Overall Satisfaction with the SLPQI. With respect to overall satisfaction with the SLPQI, 71% of program managers agreed with the statement that it was “a good use of their time and effort” to implement the SLPQI. Less than 10% disagreed with that statement. See Table 11 for further satisfaction results from program managers.

Table 11
Program Manager Satisfaction with the SLPQI

SLPQI Customer Satisfaction Item	% Agree
Participation in the SLPQI was worth my time and effort.	70.97
The SLPQI is applicable to my current job position and fits my current work.	83.87
I have administrative support at my program to implement the SLPQI.	74.19

When asked to describe what was most valuable about the process, two-thirds mentioned the process of external assessment and/or the resulting conversations with the assessor coach. One said, “Getting to talk with the observer was most helpful! She had specific ideas and resources she could connect me with to help with improvement.” Several others mentioned the value of an outside

perspective, “A set of trained eyes giving feedback and suggestions,” and appreciated the opportunity to talk through findings in person. Tables 12 and 13 present all the responses to “What aspect of your experience with the SLPQI was most valuable?” and “Please share any additional thoughts you may have about any aspect of your experience with the Summer Learning PQI.” in their entirety.

Table 12

Program Manager Survey text responses to “What aspect of your experience with the SLPQI was most valuable?”

Working with External Assessor

The external assessment

Being able to talk to other directors implementing SLPQI at their sites and sharing opinions and struggles

The way coaching was done, I think it is valuable that you sit with the staff before an observation and focus on only that while coaching. I think this is a very practical and easy way to improve performance that the employee wants improved, which I think gets more buy in for the process.

Meeting with coach to review observation data in person.

The interview with the Program Manager.

Having experience with the school year YPQI/YPQA, I feel that the SLPQI process is more helpful in my role. I like that there were opportunities for the external assessor to view more programs that are offered on-site and have suggestions for improvement. This process felt more neutral (less bias) and more supportive.

Having Joey come in the program and observe. He had some very good ideas and thoughts for us to use in the program.

I have retired from my position. I hope my replacement will be involved.

Understanding what expected best practices for summer programming are.

Feedback from the outside assessor was most valuable.

The most valuable experience was hearing the feedback and comments about our program from an outside source. It is easy to get caught up in the your own program but is helpful when you have someone who may have other experiences observing a variety of programs to compare to and be able to share their insights on how they viewed the day of our program. And it is helpful to have a set of eyes besides my own to see how my staff are producing really good work amongst our program and also in areas where we can grow in.

The flexibility of the tool.

Helpful to have a set of trained eyes giving feedback and suggestions on how to improve Langford's Summer Blast programming.

I like having the opportunity to network with other youth providers and brainstorm motivations for behavior and interventions with coaches.

Getting to talk with the observer was the most helpful! She had specific ideas and resources she could connect me with to help with improvement.

Feedback for improvement and also learning more about myself during feedback discussion.

reviewing the data

having an outside perspective was most useful and I think had the biggest effect on staff.

The assessment person was great! he was very helpful

Getting feedback from an outside observer about what could be improved.

Table 12 (continued)

Program Manager Survey text responses to “What aspect of your experience with the SLPQI was most valuable?”

I always appreciate an outside perspective to bring back a sense of equilibrium in the program. We can almost always see the negatives that show through, but sometimes seeing the positives and successes can be difficult. The equilibrium comes when we can take an objective look at both the positives and negatives and move forward to make change.

Thinking about aspects of our programming that I hadn't considered a part of our quality assessment, i.e., I had never previously considered the location of fire extinguishers in our programming site.

Being able to talk out the findings with the assessor and then speaking about the findings and a plan with my team.

The initial training, quality coaching workshop, and external assessor were all valuable parts of the program. We were able to make some easy changes during the summer program and are looking forward to making some more positive changes to enhance program quality next summer. Our staff have discussed the full results and this process was a great addition to standard customer satisfaction surveys that will be helpful during Planning with Data day. I liked that the Quality Coaching workshop was offered during the Summer Youth Institute even though we didn't participate in that one due to too many participants (30+). I attended previously and led a condensed version on site for our head coaches...as part of planning for next year I want to figure out how best to incorporate into our initial coach training.

Learning the results of outside observer to the program during a time which is often so busy; gives valuable feedback to areas in which we can improve!

The opportunity to have a fresh yet experienced set of eyes on the program was fantastic as most of us have been with the program for a long while and it is more challenging to see areas for improvement within.

Table 13

Program Manager Survey text responses to “Please share any additional thoughts you may have about any aspect of your experience with the Summer Learning PQI.”

We should be able to host more trainings where we are allowed to bring our PT staff. It is better if they are hearing the information for themselves.

In my survey answers we didn't target any kids to be in our program, any youth are free to sign up. However, many of the kids that sign up fit the description in the first group of questions, we just didn't target them due to our enrollment policies

The observation process did not work very well because the external assessor did not get to view full classes. He was only able to get a snippet of the programs that are run. This was a problem because some of what we were evaluated on may only take place once during a class (i.e., Reflection, Student Leadership, etc). It was difficult to implement our SLPQI goals in such a short time. The results, making goals and implementation was done in a 3 week period.

Sara did mini observations throughout the summer which helped us with knowing what the staff needed to work on. I am very excited that we were able to use YPQI in the summer because staff and students already know about it and was a smooth process.

It is hard to implement suggestions at the end of the program. This is good info for next summer.

It would have been nice to receive training during the school year and not the month before programming was to start.

Having time to evaluate groups and meet with staff was a challenge.

I think it was tricky in how our program was observed because we were a site that had an all-day camp and we were observed based on two separate programs, i.e. a morning and an afternoon observation. It was interesting though to see it picked apart that way because the day did have two separate components to it and was helpful however, if it would have been any other camps I don't think it would have fit into the structure we have at our other camps.

Table 13 (continued)

Program Manager Survey text responses to “Please share any additional thoughts you may have about any aspect of your experience with the Summer Learning PQI.

This survey was somewhat bemusing with the way it was worded.

N/A

I am looking forward to using the data and suggestions to improve NEXT summer, and believe it was worth doing because of that.

good experience it would have been helpful to get this information earlier in the summer to provide staff with more training and an opportunity to implement the changes in the program based on the data

Too much was education based and we are not an education based program. I think this would be more useful in our pre-k.

I can't wait to implement it next year.

Thank you for offering the support! Jocelyn specifically provides excellent customer service and we value our partnership with Sprockets tremendously. This is a great benefit for programs looking to continuously improve program quality and gives a great standard to gauge progress.

I am so happy to have gone through the process; future summers will benefit from the results! It was a transitional summer with many new staff and many programs staff were involved in and future summers will hopefully not be quite as chaotic and stressful--which will be much easier in implementing needed changes.

Table 14 provides customer satisfaction data from seven of the 10 SLPQI training events for which evaluation feedback was submitted. The ratings range between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement. All training types received generally high satisfaction levels, with the Assessor-Coach training reporting the highest satisfaction levels. Close to 90 to 100% of participants felt that attending each of the training events were worth their time, with the exception of the Summer Learning Institute.

Table 14*Customer Satisfaction Data from Training Events: Percentage responding agree or strongly agree*

	Summer Learning Institute 5/4/15 5/5/15 (N=54) (N*=41)	Assessor Reliability Training 5/20/15** 6/1/15 (N=35) (N*=12)	Assessor Coach Training 6/2/15 (N=9)	Quality Instructional Coaching 4/10/15 5/21/15 6/11/15 (N=38) (N*=20)***	Planning with Data 9/11/15 9/17/15 (N=71) (N*=45)	Average across all events
Information provided was of high quality	78.1%	91.6 %	100%	95%	93.3%	91.60%
Workshop materials were useful.	100%	100%	100%	95%	95.6%	98.12%
I feel that today's workshop was worth my time.	70.7%	100%	100%	95%	88.9%	90.92%
I feel that within the next 30 days, I will implement the information or skills that I learned.	92.7%	91.7%	100%	80%	86.7%	90.22%
I feel that the content is applicable to my current job or position.	92.6%	91.7%	100%	90%	97.8%	94.42%
I feel that I have administrative support at my program to implement the content.	74.6%	75%	85.7%	70%	88.9%	78.84%

Notes:

N = number of participants.

N* = number of evaluation forms received, if different from the number of participants.

** Feedback not available for this training

*** Feedback from Denver Quality Coaching only. Quality coaching training was delivered locally in St. Paul and training evaluations were not available for this report.

Based on participant comments about the Summer Learning Institute needing “more time actually looking at the tool” and “more time working on plans” with “less on research,” we think that the main challenge was alignment of content with expectations and the needs of the process. Since this training is not part of the traditional YPQI and is normally built around a different set of tools (the CASP and “Summer Starts in September” guide), it is understandable that there was some disequilibrium among training participants.

V. Results for Quality of Summer Programs

Implementation of the SLPQI in the 31 study programs also produced detailed performance information about the quality of management and instructional practice. Because few summer learning programs have been examined at this level of detail – measurement of specific managerial and instructional practices – this section provides an aggregate description of summer learning practices using SLPQA data. These findings reflect the type of secondary data product that SLPQI systems can produce as an aggregate description of quality across many individual programs. The SLPQA includes eight domains composed from 18 scales and descriptive data at the item, scale and domain level are provided in the *Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention (SLPQI): Phase II Feasibility Study*. The final report for Phase III will include additional reliability data on the SLPQA measure.

Quality of Instructional Practices

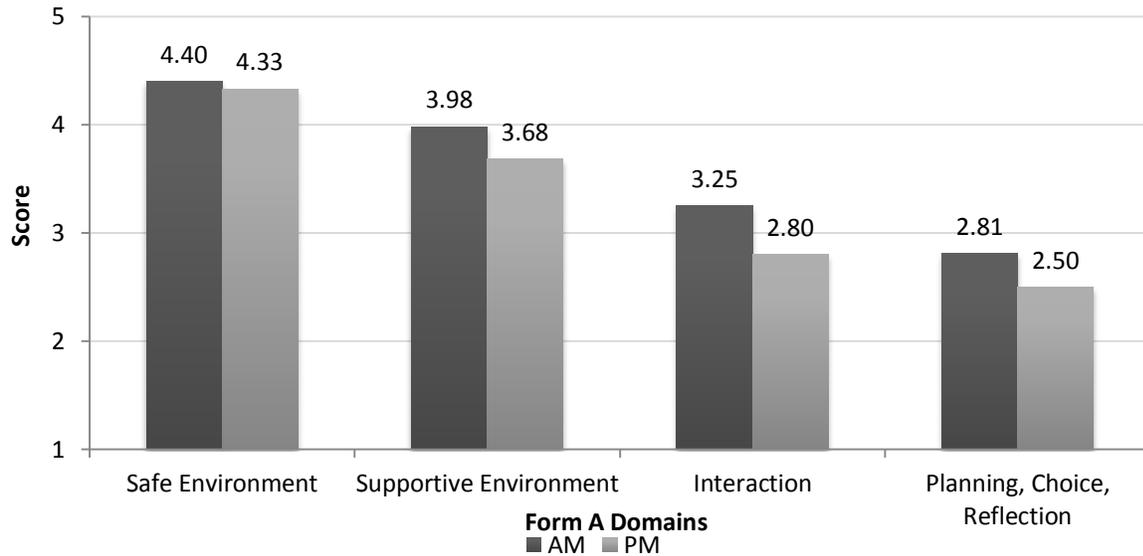
This section presents performance information based on Form A data, in some cases differentiating between an *active-participatory* definition of quality practice and an *academic* definition of quality practice, and in some cases presenting a composite Instructional Total Score that combines measures across Supportive Environment, Interaction, and Engagement domains. The Instructional Total Score does not include the content-area specific scales for Literacy and Math. The Pearson-r correlation coefficient for the AM and PM sessions for the Instructional Total Score was $r = 0.65^4$ for the 22 programs with both AM and PM ratings. The mean Instructional Total Score across all programs from both networks was 3.34 for AM and 2.99 for PM. A paired sample t-test indicates these are statistically significant differences ($df=21$, $\alpha=.025$).

Active-Participatory Instruction. Figure 3 shows average quality ratings for four Form A domains that represent a definition of quality derived from an *active-participatory* instructional method that constitutes the standard Youth PQA (Smith & Hohmann, 2005). Overall, the 31 summer learning programs demonstrated a profile of practice with a very similar shape to profiles generated from the Weikart Center's normative data bases. In general, scores for planning, choice and reflection are lower than scores for safe environment or supportive environment domains.

⁴ None of the correlations presented in this report have been disattenuated to correct for measurement error that is certainly present, suggesting that these correlation coefficients represent the lower bound for a true score correlation that would be higher.

Figure 3

Average Scores for Active-Participatory Quality in AM and PM Sessions



Academic Instruction. Figure 4 provides a look at the scales most focused on academic learning—Learning Strategies, Higher Order Thinking, Math and Literacy—again comparing the mean scores for morning and afternoon sessions. In general, the quality of instruction was higher in the morning sessions, without taking into account practices specifically supporting math and literacy (See Figure 5). Figure 5 presents the Instructional Total Score, an average across all Form A Domains (except Safety, Math, and Literacy), by morning and afternoon session for each program, again indicating that interpretation about program level performance can only be made from program level data (i.e., system averages cannot be used to describe individual sites). Specifically, while most sites had approximately the same scores in morning and afternoon or higher instructional total scores in the morning, four sites demonstrated higher instructional practices in the afternoon. As a rough guideline, programs with Instructional Total Scores below 2.9 can be considered low quality⁵. Six of the AM Instructional Total scores were below that threshold, while 15 of the PM sessions did not score above that threshold.

⁵ Based on a recent national convenience sample of Youth PQA data, collected by trained external assessors (n= 505), Instructional Total Scores below 2.87 were in the bottom quartile of all scores. Previously established thresholds of quality for the Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA) identified instructional total scores (the average total score of the Support, Interaction and Engagement domains) below 2.9 as indicative of low levels of interest, challenge and belonging for the young people in those settings (Akiva et al., 2010) . More recent norming work based on multiple years of PQA data in Palm Beach County, Fla. designate an Instructional Total Score of 4.1 as the bottom of the high quality category (Smith, 2013).

Programs with an Instructional Total Score above 4.1 can be considered high quality and five AM scores and three PM scores were above 4.1

Figure 4
Average Scores for Academic Quality in, AM and PM Sessions

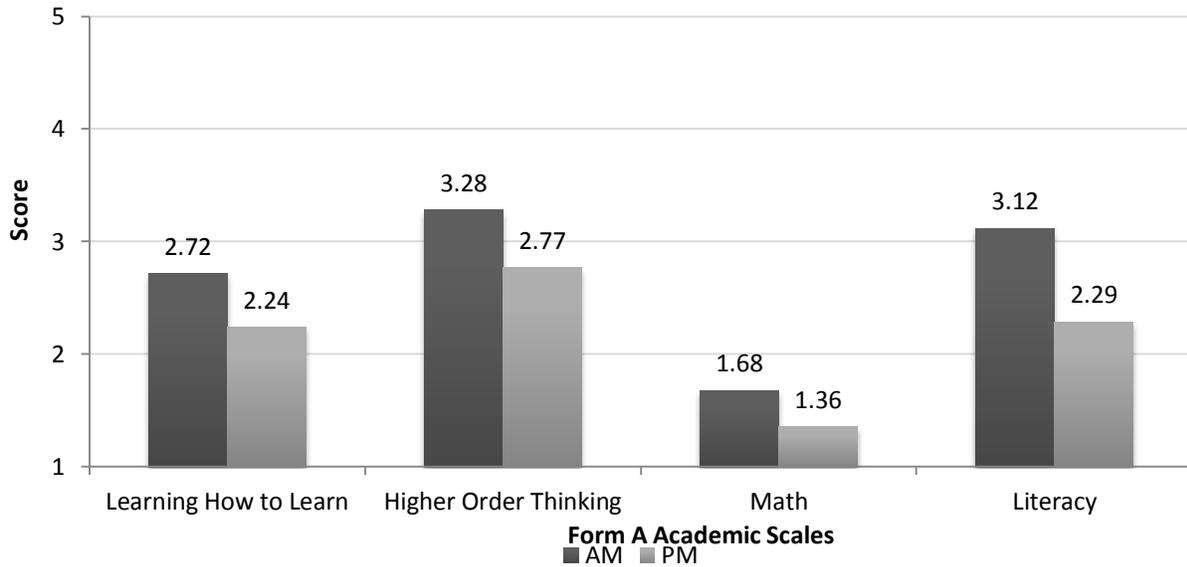
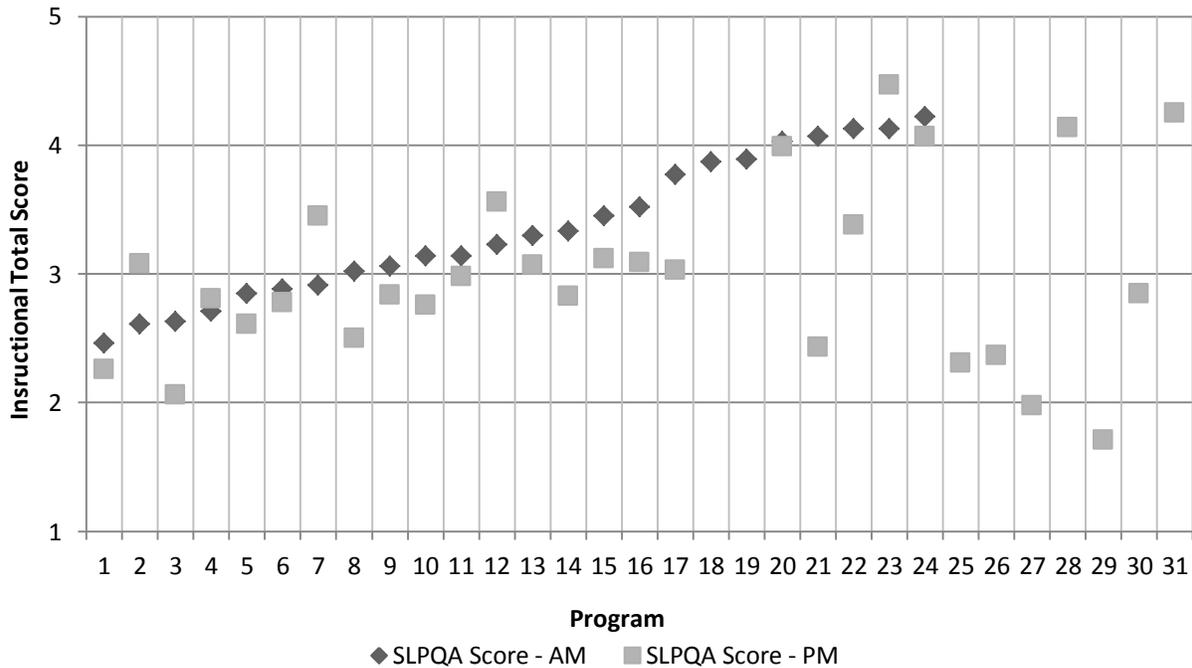


Figure 5
Instructional Total Scores by Program for AM and PM



Finally, Table 15 presents a selection of lowest scoring items across the four Form A domains and supplemental Math and Literacy scales from AM observations and Table 16 presents those for PM observations. Across 31 distinct morning or afternoon quality ratings, the listed staff practices were not present during 40 percent or more of those ratings, i.e., the practices are rare.

Table 15
Low Scoring Items: AM SLPQA Form A, N=24Ratings

Item	% scoring 1
II.MF.3 Helps children respond appropriately	40.0*
II.MF.4 Children suggest solutions	75.0*
III.CL.1 Interdependent roles	50.0
III.CL.4 All youth lead group	75.0
III.AP.1 Staff shares control with youth	45.8
IV.PCR.1 Opportunities to make plans	62.5
IV.PCR.3 Process alternatives	41.7
IV.PCR.4 Intentional reflection	54.2
IV. PCR.5 Structured opportunities to provide feedback	50.0
IV.LtL.2 Identify learning strategies	75.0
IV.HOT.1 Staff encourage youth to deepen knowledge	41.7
V.Math.1 Participate in problem solving	50.0
V.Math.2 Opportunities to apply knowledge and skills	50.0
V.Math.3 Use reasoning to evaluate	70.8
V.Math.4 Linking concrete examples	66.7
V.Math.5 Support the conveying of concepts	62.5
VI.Lit.3 Staff encourage expression in writing	58.3
VI.Lit.5 Available materials and reading environment	50.0

*N=5, not all sites are required to score Reframing Conflict observations

Table 16
Low Scoring Items: PM SLPQA Form A, N=29 Ratings

Item	% scoring 1
II.SbE.1 Learning focus linked to activity	41.4
II.SbE.4 Staff breaks down tasks	41.4
II.RF.2 Staff seeks youth input	100.0*
II.RF.3 Youth examine actions and consequence	100.0*
II.RF.4 Staff acknowledges and follows up	66.7*
II.MF.1 Staff acknowledges feelings	55.6**
II.MF.4 Children suggest solutions	77.8**
III.Be.2 Values communicated and integrated	48.3
III.CL.4 All youth lead group	79.3
III.AP.1 Staff shares control with youth	51.7
IV.PCR.1 Opportunities to make plans	48.3
IV.PCR.2 Content alternatives	41.4
IV.PCR.3 Process alternatives	44.8
IV.PCR.4 Intentional reflection	44.8
IV.PCR.5 Structured opportunities to provide feedback	48.3
IV.LtL.1 Staff guide youth toward improvement	40.7
IV.LtL.2 Identify learning strategies	86.2
IV.HOT.1 Staff encourages youth to deepen knowledge	58.6
IV.HOT.2 Connecting activity and other knowledge	41.4
V.Math.1 Participate in problem solving	58.6
V.Math.2 Opportunities to apply knowledge and skills	58.6
V.Math.3 Use reasoning to evaluate	75.9
V.Math.4 Lining concrete examples	62.1
V.Math.5 Supporting the conveying of concepts	69.0
VI.Lit.2 Opportunities to read in multiple settings	41.4
VI.Lit.3 Staff encourage expression in writing	58.6
VI.Lit.4 Vocabulary discussed	44.8
VI.Lit.5 Available materials and reading environment	48.3
VI.Lit.6 Multiple reading and writing activities	41.4

*N=3, **N=9, not all sites are required to score Reframing Conflict observations

Greetings, Transitions and Departures

Assessors also completed a checklist related to basic best practices for three transition periods in the program day. Ratings for the Greetings Index were only collected during morning observations while ratings for the Departures Index were collected only during afternoon observations. Ratings for Activity Transitions Index were collected during all observation periods. Table 17 suggests most programs have the basics established for the Greeting, Departure and Transition times. However, far fewer of the programs take advantage of these times to incorporate lessons, constructive activities, themes, or aspects of program culture.

Table 17
Percentage of Programs Implementing Specific Transition Practices

Index Item	% of Ratings,	
Greetings: Opening and arrival time--	(AM, N= 24)	
Children greeted by staff	79.2%	
Session starts within 10 minutes of scheduled time	87.5%	
Welcoming activity or icebreaker	50.0%	
Incorporates themes or aspects of program culture	54.2%	
Activity Transitions: When a group of children moves to another activity in a different location	AM	PM
Smooth and quick transition times	83.3%	69.0%
Clear transition communication	87.5%	89.7%
On task and ready for transition	87.5%	82.8%
Activity choices clearly communicated	83.3%	93.1%
Program lessons incorporated	33.3%	34.5%
Departure: When children leave for the day.	(PM, N = 29)	
Organized process	72.4%	
Smooth process	79.3%	
Constructive activities while waiting	51.7%	
Children left unattended	6.9%	
Utilizes parent engagement opportunity	58.6%	
Verification system	44.8%	
Program incorporated	34.5%	

Note: Percentages refer to the percentage of all observations where this quality practice was observed.

Mid-Summer Innovations and Improvements

The purpose of the Summary Report and having the coach/assessor go over the data and provide recommendations is to allow for mid-course improvements in program instruction. A large majority of the program managers surveyed found this feedback to be the most valuable part of the process. Most of the program managers (80.6%) reported coaching their staff based on the results of the Summary Report. When asked “How did instruction change as a result of participation in the SLPQI?” most of the program managers who coached staff reported some innovation or change. Some of the changes reported were improvements in staff investment, understanding or engagement. For instance staff:

- Were more unified with site goals and supported each other when needed
- Were more focused on the learning objective of the program
- Had better understanding on what helps to run a successful class
- Had more buy-in

Staff members interviewed cited that they:

- Incorporated more youth voice
- Incorporated reflection with more one-on-one and group discussions
- Felt that managers were more supportive to the staff and had better communication with staff
- Incorporated smaller and more frequent staff meetings
- Were seen as a resource, shared team effort on tasks
- Received coaching to recognize strengths and make improvements

Interviewees also mentioned adjustments in the implementation of curriculum, types of lessons and other innovations saying that they:

- Created a safer environment
- Greeted all youth
- Posted expectations and guidelines for youth and staff
- Reworked overall physical setup to make sure that children were mixing in smaller groups
- Provided healthier eating using kid-friendly videos and incorporating gardening
- Established more adult-youth partnering, youth driven space
- Incorporated effective ways to reframe conflict
- Fostered more youth engagement and active learning
- Incorporated youth surveys around programming

- Incorporated youth voice and choice
- Incorporated planning to allow time to finish
- Incorporated reflection
- Implemented a more effective staffing model

Other program managers or staff interviewed reported specific changes in practices. Innovations most frequently involved providing more choice, reflection and leadership for youth. These adjustments in response to SLPQI feedback ranged from more simple practices like having youth choose games and give the directions to having youth work cooperatively to write their own song. Providing greater staff supervision and involvement particularly at lunch and recess was another change in response to the SLPQA Summary Report Data. The process of conveying the information from the assessment varied widely—from frequent staff meetings with lots of discussion around improvements to the assessor/coach meeting with the program manager without reviewing the data with the staff person interviewed.

The staff persons interviewed perceived benefits for the youth as a result of the innovations or adjustments to practices they made. Several reported improved behavior: it cut down on behavioral issues because youth had a role, it reduced recess and lunch conflicts because staff were more actively involved and supervising. Some reported youth experienced a greater sense of belonging or had more fun. Although the staff interviewed reported innovations during the summer of 2015 based on the 2015 SLPQI process, the consensus was still that getting feedback earlier in the summer would have made change more likely. Many of the interviewees reported that that the innovation and improvement would be primarily carried out the following summer or during the school year program.

Quality of Management Practices

The SLPQA Form B includes four domains: planning, staff training, family connection and individualization. Figure 6 provides domain averages for all 31 sites in the study sample. Figure 7 provides the Form B interview total score for management practices (a mean score across the four domains) alongside the Form A AM and PM Instructional Total Scores to present a profile of site quality in terms of management practices and instructional practices. When the AM and PM Instructional Total Scores are averaged, there is only a modest correlation between management practices and instructional quality (Pearson-*r* correlation coefficient of $r = 0.30$).

Figure 6
Average Scores for Management Quality across 31 sites

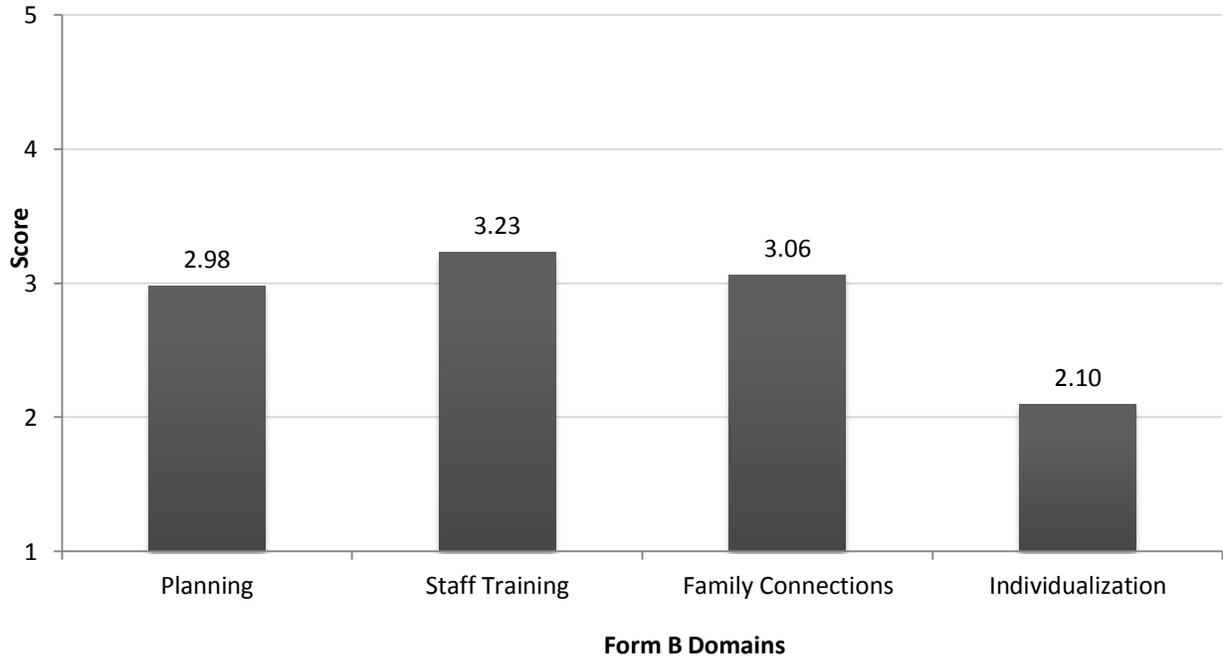
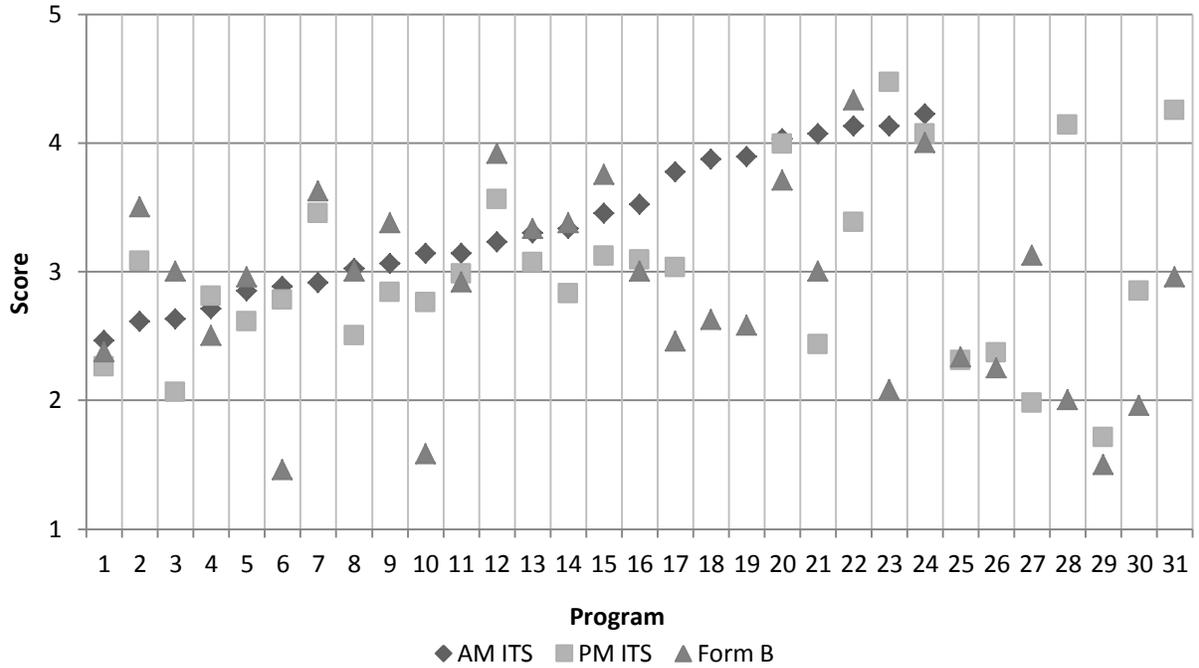
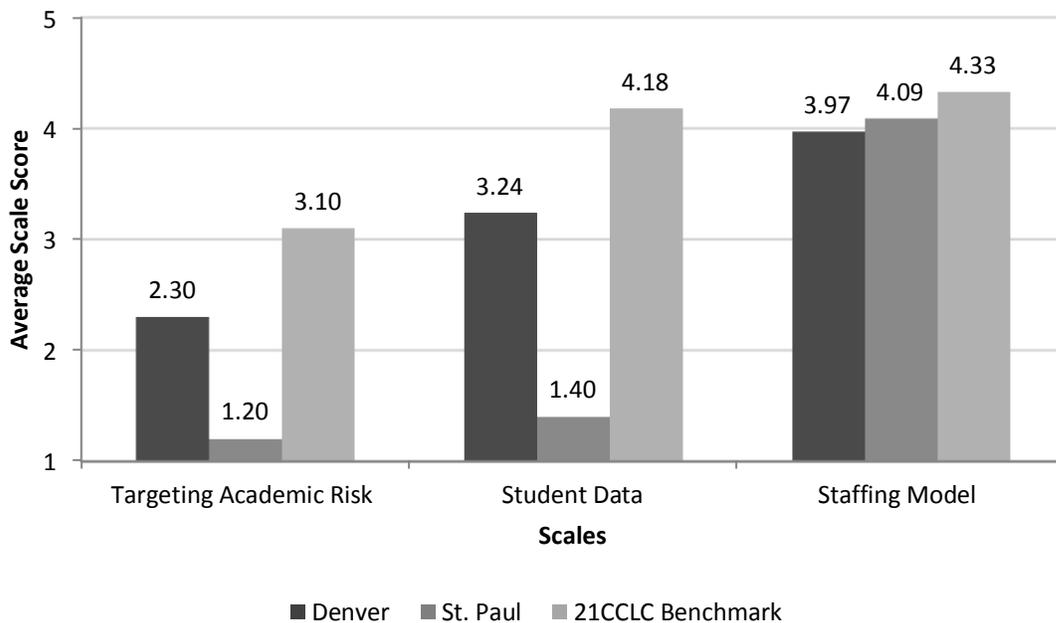


Figure 7
Management and Instructional Quality AM/PM by Program for 31 sites



Some management practices vary widely by network. Table 12 below compares the St. Paul and Denver networks on the practices of targeting at-risk youth, experienced and qualified staff, and utilizing student data, as reported on the program manager survey. If the purpose of the program is to improve academic performance for academically at-risk youth or to close achievement gaps, the practices of intentionally targeting those youth and having access to and utilizing information about grades, progress reports or diagnostic data is important. These practices are not relevant for all types of programs. Figure 8 below compares St. Paul and Denver to a performance benchmark of 200 21st Century Community Learning Center programs in 2014. The 21st Century programs are intended to support academically at-risk youth. Scores are lower than the comparison for both Denver and St. Paul sites, but the profile of scores for Denver is similar to that of the comparison networks. These results reveal differing relationships with schools across systems. As summer learning programs are intended to reduce summer learning loss and prepare students for the upcoming academic year, we recommend that measures that provide information about the programs' connection to the school be included as a part of SLPQI implementation. These measures can provide important context for interpreting the quality data.

Figure 8
Comparison of Quality Management Practices Across Networks



The sample of 31 summer learning programs contained a mix of higher and lower quality features, with differing profiles for active-participatory versus academic instructional quality. Summer learning programs in the study sample demonstrated wide variation in quality overall, and high quality

management practices and high quality instructional practices tended to occur in the same programs. Quality also varied within programs themselves, particularly in the PM sessions where almost half (48%) would be considered low quality and only 10% high quality. In the morning sessions only 19% of the sites had scores indicating low quality. As expected, academically focused sessions tended to score higher than enrichment sessions on measures of academic instructional quality.

VI. Discussion and Recommendations

This interim study was shaped around the five project goals described below and sought to answer the following questions: a) How feasible was implementation of the full SLPQI?, b) How can the implementation of the SLPQI be improved?, c) Was the SLPQI useful and therefore a good use of time?, and d) Did the SLPQA identify areas of high and low quality? This section of the report summarizes the general findings so far, as well as discussing the progress toward each of the project's five goals and recommendations for the next cycle.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the above data analysis, our primary findings for this cycle include:

- 1) *Overall satisfaction with SLPQI and SLPQA was high.* Nearly all respondents gave a positive endorsement to their participation in the SLPQI, indicating that the SLPQI was a good use of staff time and that it was feasible to implement. Further, most program managers and all assessors said that the SLPQA was useful as a standard, and scores described real differences in the quality of programs.
- 2) *High implementation of the four elements of the SLPQI.* The majority (61%) of the sites achieved participation in all four SLPQI elements and 90% participated in at least three of the four. All sites received an assessment of management and instructional practices by a trained assessor and all but one completed program improvement plans. Most (80.6%) reported coaching their staff using the assessment data. Just over two-thirds (67.7%) of the program managers felt they successfully implemented the SLPQI with the variation occurring in training participation. Overall rates of implementation are slightly higher than those seen in other studies of similar interventions. Notably, implementation in Phase III was higher than in Phase II. We suspect this was because the Denver and St. Paul networks had high capacity.
- 3) *Innovation is occurring at the classroom or program offering level.* Although program managers reported that they could have made more substantial changes with more time, many still reported key innovations occurring as a result of participating in the SLPQI, and this finding is supported by the 10 interviews that were conducted with staff. With examples ranging from greeting youth and improving the physical set-up of the space to providing more opportunities for higher level skills such as planning, reflection and youth voice, the SLPQI process is providing the space and tools for these improvements to occur.

Progress on Project Goals and Recommendations for Next Cycle

There are five primary goals to this phase of the SLPQI work, and progress toward each one is summarized below along with recommendations for continued work in each area.

Project Goal 1 – Implement the SLPQI with two intermediary networks over two consecutive summers, 2015-2016.

Based on our findings of high implementation and high satisfaction after this first cycle, progress toward this goal is on track. The high fidelity is clear evidence that the two networks chosen through the request for qualifications process, Denver and St. Paul, were ready to engage in SLPQI implementation. While timing was a challenge due to the project beginning in the spring, the network leaders were proactive in their planning and in providing ongoing feedback, as well as being adequately supported by technical assistance from Weikart Center and NSLA. As this goal is an overarching one, there are a few key recommendations to consider.

Establish the SLPQI timeline for the spring/summer of 2016 before the end of the 2015 calendar year. Network leads need time to recruit new sites and assessors, align training events with other ongoing improvement efforts and communicate and socialize the process as early as possible with everyone involved.

Ensure that trainings are relevant to both new and returning program managers and assessors. Weikart Center and NSLA will work to fit the Summer Learning Institute, Assessor Training, Quality Instructional Coaching and Planning with Data to each network's particular needs.

Revise support materials, in particular the SLPQI Handbook and Online Scores Reporter. This year, the handbook was used as a pilot edition and served to support managers and assessors. There is room for additional content, particularly around how to successfully carry out the assessor/coach role. Another support material that will make data collection much easier is the use of the Online Scores Reporter platform, which will be ready for next year.

Project Goal 2 – Refine the SLPQI, including development of a logic model for summer learning, review and development of assessment measures, and development of aligned training and technical assistance for summer learning implementation sites.

The data collection across the 31 sites, including feedback from program managers and assessors, provides us with an increasingly detailed picture of how well the SLPQA functions as a measure of quality and what the key markers for summer learning program quality are. By increasing the number of

sites next year (target is 60 total sites), we will be on track to confirm the utility of the SLPQA as a measure and the SLPQI as a viable and effective improvement process.

Basic data collection protocol should stay the same with a small extension to Form B. While assessors did report that scoring the SLPQA Form A twice took a substantial amount of time, there appears to be a statistically significant difference between AM and PM scores, so we recommend that the protocol for Form A stay the same. In addition, NSLA and Weikart Center had originally intended to add a more comprehensive Form B (including checklists, expanded interview, and document review) to the SLPQA, but given the already large data collection burden for assessors, we recommend a simple checklist be created to accompany the Form B interview as it currently exists. This checklist could provide a way to assess the presence of appropriate policies, plans, connections to schools and curriculum for each program and not require substantially more time on the part of the assessor. NSLA will take the lead on this development and base the items in the CASP.

Project Goal 3 – Refine NSLA-Weikart Center collaboration and work through the implementation of a collaborative business plan.

This project provided a unique opportunity to pilot a full SLPQI cycle simultaneously in two networks, which has led to productive conversations between the two organizations around our distinctive expertise and roles in technical assistance. While the finalization of a formal agreement is taking longer than originally planned, the continued conversations centered on the actual work of this project have been an essential part of the process.

Weikart Center and NSLA need to prioritize finalizing a short-term agreement before the end of 2015 in order to launch new SLPQI work in 2016. While we are still working on the ideal design of the SLPQI's series of trainings and supports, participants in the process to date have clearly stated that it was worth their time and had a positive impact on their work. We believe we can and should be bringing the SLPQI to more networks as soon as they are ready.

Project Goal 4 – Evaluate the Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention.

This interim report, including its analysis and findings, represents a successful halfway point to the full evaluation of the SLPQI to be completed after the second cycle in 2016.

Structures that were in place this past year to ensure fidelity to the process and response rates for surveys and interviews should continue. This success can be attributed in large part to the network leads due diligence in communicating with SLPQI participants while receiving support from their Weikart

Center Project Manager. With complete data in place, we'll be well positioned to provide a thorough final evaluation of the two years of work.

Project Goal 5 – Share lessons about the Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention.

NSLA and Weikart Center have presented at two conferences to date (Summer Changes Everything 2015, Bridge to Afterschool and Back 2015) and have submitted for a session at the 2016 Ready by 21 National Meeting. The format for the last session at NSLA's conference involved the two network leads from this project along with the leads from School's Out Washington and Seattle Public Schools, providing a comprehensive overview of different aspects of the SLPQI.

Continue to involve network leads and other SLPQI participants in presentations. While NSLA and Weikart Center play a key facilitation and convening role, the most compelling voices to support and promote the work and lessons learned are from the participants themselves, particularly the network leads. We have at least two well-positioned opportunities to do this type of presentation – the 2016 Ready by 21 National Meeting in Baltimore, MD and the combined 2016 Summer Changed Everything and Bridge Conference in Seattle, WA.

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