**Introduction**

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, in addition to collecting attendance counts for Tier 1, 2 and 3 activities, and providing data from the common enrollment forms, this evaluation design includes additional methods that can be standardized across all grantees. Prior to developing the evaluation design, grantees were asked for instruments that are common across the different sites. These already-existing documents helped inform the current evaluation design.

This evaluation design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data to examine students’ and program staff perceptions of the program. Additionally, this mixed-methods approach will enable First 5 LA to understand if students’ knowledge and interest in the Early Care and Education (ECE) field had changed. This effort will enable a broader understanding of the program and the ability to tell the story of the First 5 LA High School Recruitment Program (HSR).

**Research Questions**

- Did students’ knowledge and interest in the Early Care and Education (ECE) field increase?
- If so, what was the role of the High School Recruitment Program in this observed change? What were some effective practices? (by grantee, across all grantees)
- How might the program be improved?
- What is the nature of the collaboration between partners?

**Methods**

The following table is a summary of the methods used to answer the research questions above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Did students’ knowledge and interest in the ECE field increase? | Primary: Student Survey  
Secondary: Focus Group Interviews with HSR participants |
| 2. What was the role of the High School Recruitment Program? What were some effective practices? | Focus Group Interviews with HSR participants |
| 3. How might the program be improved? | Focus Group Interviews with HSR participants  
Exit Interviews with HSR participants |
| 4. What is the nature of the collaboration between partners | Partner Interviews |
**Student Survey**

In order to answer the first research question, a survey of participants will be used. A pre and post design will be implemented in 2011-2012 so as to examine change in students’ knowledge and interest after they participate in Tier 2 and Tier 3 activities. At the expression of interest in participating in Tier 2 activities, all students will be given the survey to complete. Students who complete Tier 2 and Tier 3 activities will also be asked to complete the survey. Completing the survey during a planned activity is ideal so as to ensure the highest response rate possible. Every effort should be made to contact students who are part of the program but not in attendance during the time when the survey is planned. The grantee will be responsible for trying to maximize the number of students who complete the survey as well as tracking the response rate. The survey instrument is included in the Appendix A.

The survey will collect some demographic information, specifically to gauge whether the students are “non-traditional” ECE candidates, such as males and students planning on attending a 4-year college. We will also ask how they heard about the program as well as how many activities they have participated in. This will give us a sense of their level of involvement. Finally, questions to gauge knowledge and interest will be included in the survey. If it is appropriate, programs may utilize the enrollment form to capture the demographic information.

Analysis of the student survey will include descriptive statistics as well as a comparison of different groups of students. Specifically, the knowledge and interest of those who participated in Tier 2 and Tier 3 will be compared to those who are no longer part of the program. To do this, we will need to collect identifying information on the students to allow for matching, but a unique numerical identifier will be used in lieu of first and last names.

Of course, we will not be able to attribute any change to the program solely, because we are not employing an experimental design and cannot rule out external variables and other explanations for any observed changes. We can only gauge if throughout the year, students’ knowledge and interest changed. As such, triangulating our methods and data sources will be critical.

**Focus Group Interviews with HSR participants**

The second and third research questions lend themselves nicely to interviews with the student participants. This evaluation will seek to understand the perceptions of the intended audience of the program. If students feel like they gained knowledge about the ECE field as well as increased their interest in the field, what programmatic elements influenced this change? In other words, how do they believe the HSR Program increased their knowledge and interest? As well, what changes to the program might students suggest that might improve the program in subsequent years?
In order to hear from as many participants as possible, focus group interviews are proposed. At least two focus groups per school will be conducted, depending on the number of participants at each school. One will include students who completed Tier 2 activities but did not continue on and another with those students who completed Tier 3 activities. The focus group interview guides for both interviews is included in Appendix B.

Each focus group will scheduled for two hours and will scheduled at a time that is convenient for the participants. All Tier 3 participants will recruited for involvement in the focus groups. As many of the Tier 2 participants currently participating as possible will recruited for involvement. Should the totals for these tiers exceed their minimum thresholds of 10 students for Tier 3 and 40 students for Tier 3, we will engage in proportional sampling to ensure sampling of participants from different activities.

Analysis of the focus group interviews will proceed by coding themes across all Tier 2 groups as well as across all Tier 3 groups. As well, we will conduct analyses by site to get a better sense of what worked and what might be improved at the specific school site. This two tiered analysis will enable an examination of the HSR Program more broadly as well as at each site with each grantee.

**Exit interviews with HSR participants**

Many of the grantees have observed attrition of HSR participants. Getting a sense of the reasons why participants may leave the program can allow us to determine whether there is something that can be changed programmatically to encourage participants to continue on or if the students’ reasons are beyond the program’s control.

All students who stop attending Tier 2 and Tier 3 activities after they had expressed interest should be interviewed. Because the interview guide (see Appendix C) is short and does not require a lot of time, this interview can be conducted over the phone, via email or via text messaging, whatever is most convenient for students. Ideally, a phone interview would be best, because the interviewee can ask probing and follow-up questions as needed, but the objective is to obtain as much data from exiting students as possible.

Analysis of all exit interview data will proceed by coding themes by site to determine if programmatic changes can be made to prevent attrition. Reasons for discontinuing involvement in HSR activities will be documented and their typicality examined. For exiting students that cannot be reached, efforts made to contact these students should be documented as part of the data collected.
Partner interviews
One of the goals of the HSR Program is to build collaboration between high schools and colleges in order to connect students to careers and opportunities within the ECE field. To gauge progress towards this goal, interviews with the partners will be conducted. These interviews will ask partners about the successes and challenges of the collaboration (see Appendix D).

All key partners will be recruited for these interviews. The findings will not only allow us to think about what changes to make to improve the collaboration, but they might also help us contemplate how to sustain the collaboration beyond the life of the grant.

Proposed Delegation of Tasks
The proposed evaluation design may add to the work that grantees and their respective evaluators are already engaged in. As such, a delegation of the tasks between the grantee and/or grantees’ evaluators and the First 5 LA Research and Evaluation Department must be worked out. The table below outlines the agreed upon plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible Party - Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution and collection of Student Surveys (including following up with students to ensure a large response rate); Sending of Surveys to First 5 LA without identifying information.</td>
<td>Grantee and/or grantee’s evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Student Surveys including input of data into aggregate database</td>
<td>First 5 LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics related to Focus Group interviews with HSR participants (i.e., recruiting students, finding a location, time and date)</td>
<td>Grantee and/or grantee’s evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation and note-taking of Focus Group interviews with HSR participants</td>
<td>First 5 LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Focus Group data</td>
<td>First 5 LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit Interviews with HSR participants who leave the program</td>
<td>Grantee and/or grantee’s evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Exit Interview data</td>
<td>Grantee and/or grantee’s evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics related to Partner Interviews (contacting, finding a location, time and date)</td>
<td>Grantee and/or grantee’s evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Partner Interviews</td>
<td>First 5 LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Partner Interviews</td>
<td>First 5 LA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timeline
The timeline for the activities listed above will differ for each program as the methods are dependent on the time when Tier 1, 2, and 3 activities are conducted. Generally, though, we know that the student survey will be conducted three times: 1) at the beginning of Tier 2 activities, 2) at close to the end of Tier 2 activities as feasible, and 3) at close to the end of Tier 3 activities as feasible. The exit interviews will be conducted as soon as program staff has determined that students are no longer participating. The partner interviews and the focus groups with students will be conducted in the spring after Tier 3 activities have happened.

Limitations
Using the methods proposed we will be able to observe change among student participants as it relates to their knowledge and interest in the ECE field. The qualitative components of this research design will also enable an exploration of student participants’ perceptions of the program. Their voices are critical to understanding the benefits of the High School Recruitment Program as well as what improvements the primary audiences recommend. The partner interviews will also help us improve the program and to work toward sustaining the collaboration between the high schools and nearby colleges/partners.

Although the main goal of the High School Recruitment Program is to increase the number of high school students interested in pursuing careers in ECE, this research design will not allow us to make such an assertion with a high degree of confidence. The impact of the program alone cannot be gauged without the use of an experimental or quasi-experimental design with comparison groups. Nonetheless, we will gain a lot of insight on how students have changed and how we might contemplate changing our program to bring about even more change and interest in the ECE field.
Appendix A: Student Survey

Name: ____________________________ School: ____________________________

Grade:  □ 9th  □ 10th  □ 11th  □ 12th

Gender:  □ Male  □ Female

Ethnicity:
□ Black/African American  □ Latino
□ Asian  □ Pacific Islander
□ White/Caucasian  □ Native American/Alaskan
□ Decline to state  □ Other: Specify ___________________

Please answer the following questions:

What is your highest educational goal?
□ Community College (Associate Degree)  □ University (B.A./B.S.)
□ Graduate study (M.A./M.D./Ph.D. etc)  □ Certificate program
□ Work only

Why did you participate in the High School Recruitment Program Activities? (Check all that apply)
□ The announcement was interesting
  Where did you hear the announcement ____________________________
□ I wanted to know more about Early Care and Education careers
□ My friends told me about it
□ My teacher/another adult at school encouraged me to participate
□ Other: Specify__________________________________________________

How many High School Recruitment Program Activities have you participated in this school year?
□ 1 – 3  □ 4 – 6  □ 7 – 9  □ 10 or more
Please circle how much you agree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The quality of early childhood education services is extremely important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have learned more about early childhood education career opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have learned more about early care and education career requirements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have learned more about early childhood education college programs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I know what to do if I want to pursue a career in early childhood education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I plan to take college classes in child development and early childhood education in college.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I plan to have a career in early childhood education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer the following questions.

8. So far, what is the most interesting thing you have learned about early childhood education?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

9. What else should we know about the program?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B: 
Student Participant Focus Group Guide

I. Nametags and introductions (5 minutes)

Say a sentence or two about yourself. Introduce the NOTE-TAKER in the room. Give students time to write their names on a nametag and explain that the nametags will only be used so the facilitator can refer to them by name instead of pointing at them.

“Thank you for attending today’s focus group. You were all invited to attend today because you have been involved in the High School Recruitment Program and we’d like to hear from you about your experiences in this program. Your input is very important. Your thoughts will help us keep the activities that seem to be working and to make improvements to the program where you think improvement is needed.”

II. Ground rules (5 minutes)

A. Confidentiality – “Before we begin, I want to remind you that your responses today will be confidential. The information we gather here will be used only to make improvements to the High School Recruitment Program. Responses will not be linked to any particular person. In fact, we would like to ask that you share in the responsibility of confidentiality and not share anything anyone says as part of this meeting with anyone outside of this room once you leave. We want to make sure it is a safe and comfortable space for all of us to share what is on our minds.

B. Note takers and taping “I’ve already introduced you to xxxxxx, our note-taker. He/she will be documenting your comments. Just in case, he/she misses something, we are also taping the interview. Again, these recordings will only be accessible by us and everything that you say will be kept strictly confidential. Because we are trying to capture your thoughts as best we can, we ask that you speak clearly and try not to talk over one another”

C. We want to hear from everybody “My role as a facilitator is to ensure that everyone’s thoughts are heard. I may have to interrupt you, but please be assured I am interrupting you because I want to give others the opportunity to voice their opinions as well.”

D. This isn’t a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Your opinion is valuable and should be expressed. Because there are many of us in this group, it is expected that not everyone will agree all the time. Don’t be shy about saying that you have a different perspective.

Are there any questions at this point? Great. Let’s get started....

[Recording and note-taking start at this point.]
III. Questions

1. Tell us what grade you’re in and one reason you were interested in the High School Recruitment Program (everyone is invited to answer).
2. What activities did you participate in?
3. Tier 3 ONLY: What motivated you to become further involved in this program by participating in Tier 3 activities?
4. Which activity did you find the most useful and why?
5. What did you know about Early Care and Education before you became involved in the High School Recruitment Program? (probe for both what they knew about the field and what they knew about training and requirements)
6. How has this program increased your knowledge of ECE careers/training? Please be specific.
7. What questions do you still have about ECE careers/training?
8. How interested were you in an ECE career before you became involved in the High School Recruitment Program?
9. How has your perspective about ECE careers changed as a result of participating in this program? [Probes: How likely do you think it is that you will eventually have a career in the ECE field? What types of jobs are you interested in?] Please be specific.
10. What do you wish you had learned or experienced?
11. What advice would you give about improving this program for future participants?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to share that you didn’t get a chance to say?

Conversation starters/common probing questions…

- (I’m not sure I understood) Could you tell me more about that?
- This is what I think I heard you say... Did I understand you correctly?
- Could you tell me what you mean by...?
- Can you give me a few examples? or Can you give me an example of...?
- What makes you feel that way?
- Do others in the room have similar or different perspectives?
Appendix C: Exit Interview Guide

We understand that you are no longer active in the High School Recruitment Program. We’re sorry to see you go and are wondering if we can ask you three brief questions to help us improve our program.

1. What did you find useful/helpful about the program, if anything?
2. What are the reasons you are unable to continue participating? (Probing questions: time of events, quality of the events, no longer interested in the Early Care and Education field, too many other obligations)
3. Would you recommend the High School Recruitment Program to your friends?
4. How can this program be improved for future participants?
Appendix D: Partner One-on-one Interview Guide

1. Tell us about your experience working with ____ this year.
2. Do you feel that a relationship/collaboration was built between _____ High School and _____ College? Please explain. [probes: was this relationship an effective one? Why or why not?]
3. What were some things that worked really well this past year?
4. What were some challenges in collaborating with ____ this past year?
5. What were some opportunities that students had to connect to the Early Care and Education field because of the collaboration?
6. What other opportunities for students might you suggest to maximize the collaboration between _____ High School and _____ College?
7. What are some key elements that you’d consider before selecting future partners?