Evaluation of the Innovative Programs for Students in the Care of, or Receiving Services from, Children’s Aid Societies

Appendix A: Evaluation Plan

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1. Overview

Working from the identified project outcomes and following the decision-oriented evaluation framework and methods, Directions developed, in consultation with the Ministry project team, the present evaluation plan that describes the methodology and underlying theoretical framework; the evaluation questions for each of the goals, rational, discrepancy, and impact evaluations; the methods for the literature review, data collection, and analysis; a detailed work plan; resources to be used by Directions; and the reporting framework.

Directions also populated an evaluation framework with essential details about the Ministry's goals and the objectives of the funded programs, the intended participants for its efforts, the resources devoted to those efforts, the activities and processes it undertakes as part of those efforts, and the outcomes it expects to achieve from those efforts. Included with framework is an overarching logic model for the innovative strategies and delivery model programs, elaborating on the Ministry’s existing logic model for Children and Youth in Care.

2. Methodology: Decision-Oriented Evaluation Framework

The evaluation methods were designed within a decision-oriented evaluation framework, distilled from the work of Popham\(^1\), Stake\(^2\), and Stufflebeam\(^3\), to examine the implementation, impact, and effectiveness of the programs for students in care of, or receiving services from, Children’s Aid Societies (hereafter students in care). A decision-oriented approach focuses on generating information that will be useful to decision makers. Such an approach also supports evaluation of every component of a program and stresses the timely use of feedback by decision makers. The participation of decision makers in the design of the evaluation plan helps to generate potentially important questions and can ensure that the evaluation and its results will be easily understood by audiences who may not have expertise in evaluation.

The framework consists of (1) the goals and objectives of the Ministry and the various funded programs; (2) the participants, resources, activities, and outcomes that have

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been designed to achieve the goals and objectives; and (3) the participants, resources, activities, and outcomes that have been actually employed or achieved.

The terms participants, resources, activities, and outcomes have specific meanings.

- **Participants** are the intended recipients and human resources for the innovative strategies and delivery models for students in care. For example, participants include students in care taking part in the funded programs, as well as the staff from school boards and schools delivering the programming.

- **Resources**, or inputs, are the material means (e.g., funding, curriculum development) that the Ministry, school boards, and schools devote to any particular activity.

- **Activities**, or processes, are the actions that the Ministry, school boards and schools employ to achieve the specified goals and objectives for students in care.

- **Outcomes** are the results that the Ministry, school boards, and schools anticipate will occur as a result of the planned activities. These outcomes include impacts on educational outcomes (e.g., credits attempted, credit accumulation, pathway planning) and well-being (e.g., cognitive, emotional, social and physical well-being).

The framework is represented diagrammatically in Figure 1. The first element in this diagram - the box on the left-hand side, labelled “Goals and Objectives” – will specify the Ministry’s goals and objectives as well as the goals and objectives of the specific school board projects. The vertical dimension of Figure 1 represents the two major frames of reference for specifying the four sets of factors described above. “Intended” implies that it is possible to specify for each goal or objective the participants, resources, activities, and outcome factors. “Observed” implies that the stated intentions can be verified by empirical and objective means.
Figure 1. Intentions and Observations

The goals and objectives, participants, resources, activities, and outcomes were to be defined at the level of the Ministry and the level of the funded programs. The following section provides a definition of these elements at the level of the Ministry initiative to support Innovative Programs for Students in the Care of, or Receiving Services from, Children’s Aid Societies (IPSCCAS). These elements were also to be defined at the program level for the eleven funded programs selected for site visits.

2.1. Goals and Objectives – Ministry Level

2.1.1. Goals

Ontario’s renewed goals for Education, as set out in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (2014), are:

- **Achieving Excellence**: Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.

- **Ensuring Equity**: All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.

- **Promoting Well-Being**: All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.
• **Enhancing Public Confidence:** Ontarians will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable and caring citizens.

### 2.1.2. Objectives

With respect to children and youth in care, the objectives are to:

- Support students in the care of, or receiving services from Children’s Aid Societies, to benefit from all the learning opportunities, supports, and interventions available in all schools.
- Improve educational outcomes for students in care.
- Close the achievement gap for children and youth in the care of Children’s Aid Societies (CASs).
- Ensure that all students in care develop enhanced mental and physical health and a positive sense of self and belonging.

### 2.2. Intended Participants – Ministry Level

- School boards and school authorities (receiving funding for programs)
- Students in Care of or receiving services from Children’s Aid Societies (secondary in 2013-14, elementary or secondary in 2014-15, secondary in 2015-16)
- Board and school staff delivering programming
- Advisory group to guide implementation (could include school administration, Student Success Team, attendance and guidance counselors, CAS staff, teachers delivering the courses, students in care)
- Community partners to support students beyond the classroom.

### 2.3. Intended Resources – Ministry Level

- Funding for programs
- Communications to boards (e.g., memo to boards, Call for Proposals)
- Supporting Educational Outcomes of Students in Care Symposium 2016
- Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in Care Symposium 2015
- Improving the Educational Outcomes of Children and Youth in Care Symposium 2015
- Improving the Educational Outcomes of Children and Youth in Care – Capacity Building Series K-12, August 2014
2.4. **Intended Activities – Ministry Level**

The primary focus for the support was vulnerable secondary school students. In 2014-15, support was also provided for summer programming for elementary school students.

The Ministry’s activities/processes were to:

- Issue calls for proposals (2013-14 and 2014-15) and fund Innovative Programs for Students in the Care of, or Receiving Services from, Children’s Aid Societies (2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16). Programs are to involve:
  - Bundles of credits to be delivered to the cohort that may stay together as one class. The bundle may reflect a school, class and/or student focus. Following are examples of themed studies achieved by bundling credits:
    - The Arts: Media Studies, Drama, Family Studies, English
    - The Environment: Environmental Science, English, Geography, Green Industries
    - Sports: Biology, Healthy Active Living, English, Technological Education.
  - Instructional approaches that include hands-on-learning, cross curricular linkages, and experiential learning.
  - Content addressing career exploration, Essential Skills, and certifications.
  - Delivery in a student-centered, caring environment.
  - Tracking mechanisms to support success for participating students.
  - Literacy and numeracy learning for elementary students (added in 2014-15 only)
  - Systemic processes for sharing relevant information that may impact the educational outcomes of students in care between school boards and CASs. This would include the process used to identify students in care for targeted supports and interventions.

2.5. **Intended Outcomes – Ministry Level**

For youth in care, including summer programming:

- increased engagement through targeted learning opportunities and creative, relevant programming;
- improved educational outcomes related to accumulation of credits, attendance, reduced disciplinary actions and enhanced pathways planning for secondary students;
• access to supports and interventions including connections to a “caring adult”;
• tracking and monitoring educational progress;
• opportunities for education sector and CASs to work together to identify student participants and share relevant information.
• collaboration with community partners to support the academic success and well-being of students in the pilot (added in 2014-15)

For summer programming for elementary students (added in 2014-15):
• improved literacy and numeracy outcomes;
• increased engagement through targeted learning opportunities and creative, relevant programming;
• collaboration with community partners to support the academic success and well-being of students in the pilot; and
• opportunities for the education sector and CASs to work together to identify students in care and share relevant information.

3. Evaluation Stages

Using the decision-oriented evaluation framework, Directions carried out the following:

1. **Goals Evaluation**: Judgement of the extent to which the Ministry’s goals are explicitly stated and refined into specific objectives that imply operations and outcomes.
2. **Rational Evaluation**: Judgement of whether or not the intended participants, resources, activities, and outcomes are consistent with the Ministry’s goals. Given a coherent and mutually consistent set of goals and objectives for the Ministry, what participants, resources, activities, and outcomes are perceived to be necessary and sufficient evidence of their attainment?
3. **Discrepancy Evaluation**: Judgement of the congruence between intended and observed participants, resources, activities, and outcomes. This stage of evaluation will allow for examination of where the actual implementation and impact of the programs differ from the intended implementation and impact.
4. **Impact Evaluation**: Judgment of the extent to which observed outcomes (e.g., student engagement, educational achievement, well-being) are related to the organization of the participants, resources, and especially activities, and to the interactions among them.⁴

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⁴ In the absence of random assignment to (or subject-matching) comparison groups the strength of the inferences drawn will be limited.
All four types of evaluation were appropriate for meeting the Ministry’s evaluation goals for the following reasons:

- The goals evaluation was a necessary first step in understanding how the Ministry’s goals in supporting innovative strategies and delivery models were explicitly stated and refined into specific objectives that imply operations and outcomes for school boards, schools, and students.

- The rational evaluation would examine whether the intended participants (e.g., boards, schools, students), resources (e.g., funding), activities (e.g., programs, community partnerships), and outcomes (e.g., educational achievement, well-being) for the funded programs were consistent with the Ministry’s goals for supporting programs for students in care.

- The discrepancy evaluation would address the match between the intended and actual participants, resources, activities, and outcomes, which answers questions of whether the implementation and impact of the programs was as intended.

- The impact evaluation would address whether the participants, resources, and activities were responsible for the observed outcomes for students in care, though, in the absence of random assignment to (or subject-matching) comparison groups the strength of the inferences drawn will be limited.
4. Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions were specified at the levels of (1) the Ministry initiative to support Innovative Programs for Students in Care of, or Receiving Services from, Children’s Aid Societies (IPSCCAS), and (2) the eleven programs that were to be examined in the site visits. The evaluation questions specified in RFS 2636 are included below in **boldfaced** type. For each set of questions, the data sources that were used to answer each question are specified at the level of the Ministry and at the level of each program that was selected for site visits.

4.1. Goals Evaluation

*Directions* evaluated the extent to which the Ministry’s goals and program goals were explicitly stated and refined into specific objectives that imply operations and outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry level</th>
<th>Program level</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are the goals of IPSCCAS aligned with the broad goals of the Ministry?</td>
<td>• Are the goals of this program aligned with the goals of IPSCCAS?</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are the goals of IPSCCAS explicitly stated and refined into specific objectives that imply operations and outcomes?</td>
<td>• Are the goals of this program explicitly stated and refined into specific objectives that imply operations and outcomes?</td>
<td>• Ministry strategic documents (e.g., Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision of Education in Ontario, Student Success documents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CYIC logic model</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Program proposals and contracts for each site</td>
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</table>
4.2. Rational Evaluation

The rational evaluation took place at the IPSCCAS level and at an individual program level. At the IPSCCAS level, there was an examination of the Ministry’s call for proposals and related activities to see if they aligned with the Ministry’s goals. At the program level, there was an examination of the program plan to see if it aligned with the program goals. The guiding question at the Ministry and program level was: Are the participants, resources, activities, and outcomes that are perceived to be necessary for IPSCCAS or the program coherent and aligned with the goals of IPSCCAS or the program, respectively?

The rational evaluation stage identifies any misalignment of intended participants, resources, activities, and outcomes with the goals and objectives. The rational evaluation is presented schematically in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Rational Evaluation

Goals & Objectives

Intended Participants → Intended Resources → Intended Activities → Intended Outcomes

Observed Participants → Observed Resources → Observed Activities → Observed Outcomes
Questions guiding the rational evaluation were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry level</th>
<th>Program level</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Was the call for proposals designed to meet the goals of IPSCCAS?</td>
<td>• Was the program plan designed to meet the goals of the program?</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the intended participants (e.g., students in programs, staff planning and delivering services) appropriate to IPSCCAS goals?</td>
<td>• Were the intended participants appropriate to program goals?</td>
<td>• Ministry memos to boards and calls for proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the intended resources (e.g., material means devoted, funding, program activities in the call for proposals, curriculum, community partners involved) appropriate to IPSCCAS goals?</td>
<td>• Were the intended resources appropriate to program goals?</td>
<td>• CYIC Logic Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the intended activities (e.g., funding to programs) appropriate to IPSCCAS goals?</td>
<td>• Were the intended activities appropriate to program goals?</td>
<td>Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the intended outcomes (e.g., student engagement, educational and well-being outcomes, access to supports and services, tracking and monitoring educational progress, cooperation between schools and Children’s Aid Societies) appropriate to IPSCCAS goals?</td>
<td>• Were the intended outcomes appropriate to program goals?</td>
<td>• Contracts for each site</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interviews with board members</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Focus groups with staff and community partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Implementation (Discrepancy) Evaluation

There are two levels of discrepancy: (1) between the IPSCCAS goals and the programs that were funded, and (2) between the funded program goals and their actual implementation. The overarching question at both levels was: What is the congruence between intended and observed participants, resources, activities, and outcomes?

This stage of evaluation allowed for examination of where the actual implementation and impact of the programs differ from the intended implementation and impact. Discrepancy evaluation is presented schematically in Figure 3.
Figure 3. Discrepancy Evaluation

Questions guiding the discrepancy evaluation were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry level</th>
<th>Program level</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are the goals of the programs that received Ministry funding congruent with the Ministry’s goals for IPSCCAS? • Were the actual participants described in the funded program applications aligned with the intended participants? • Were the actual resources described in the funded program applications aligned with the intended resources?</td>
<td>• To what extent have boards implemented the key criteria of the programs (i.e., selection of students, design, best practice, deliverables, funding)? In instances where modifications/changes were made, what were the modifications and why? Participants • Were the actual participants in the program aligned with the intended participants specified in the work plan? o How is the role of the teacher implemented to support the programs?</td>
<td>Ministry • Evaluation rubric for selecting programs for funding • Program proposals for each site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with board members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Were the actual activities described in the funded program applications aligned with the intended activities?
- Were the actual outcomes described in the funded program applications aligned with the intended outcomes?
- If there were discrepancies between intended and actual participants, resources, activities, and outcomes, what was the discrepancy and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were the actual resources (e.g., time, materials, facilities, etc.) in the program aligned with the intended resources?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What processes did boards and schools put in place to support the implementation of the programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were the actual activities/processes in the program aligned with the intended activities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the programs produced the following intended outcomes for students in care?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased engagement through targeted learning opportunities and creative, relevant programming,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved educational outcomes related to the accumulation of credits, attendance, reduced disciplinary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Focus groups with staff, community partners, and students
- Quantitative and qualitative program data on student outcomes
actions and enhanced pathways planning,
  o Access to supports and interventions including connections to a ‘caring adult,’
  o Tracking and monitoring educational progress,
  o Opportunities for education and CASs to work together to identify student participants and share relevant information.

- Were these outcomes observed?
- Were these outcomes specific to students in care or receiving services from CAS, in comparison to students who are not in care but considered at risk?
- For whom were the programs most successful? Were there students who did not benefit from participation in the program? Why not?
- Were the actual outcomes in the program aligned with the intended outcomes?
- If there were discrepancies between intended and actual participants, resources, activities, and outcomes, what were the discrepancies and why?
- **What processes might boards and schools adopt to strengthen the implementation of the programs?**
  - What challenges did school boards and schools experience in implementing the programs? How were these challenges overcome?
4.4. Impact Evaluation

There are two levels of outcomes: (1) the outcomes of the IPSCCAS in terms of the programs that were funded, and (2) the outcomes of the individual funded programs. The guiding question for the impact evaluation at the Ministry and program level was: *To what extent are the observed outcomes related to the configuration of the participants, resources, and activities, and to the interactions among them?*

Impact evaluation has as its objective the description of cause-effect relationships among the variables (indicators) incorporated into the “observations” sequence of the evaluation plan. This type of evaluation is empirical. It is dependent upon structural aspects of the research design, and statistical inference is the primary system of logic employed. This is the most technical phase, while also the most crucial one from the decision-making perspective, of a comprehensive policy or program evaluation plan. Ideally, to make judgements about cause and effect, outcomes should be examined for students in care participating in the programs and a comparable group of students in care not participating in the programs. In the absence of a comparator group, one cannot use statistical inference to draw cause and effect relationships, so inferences would need to be drawn on the basis of alignment of all the elements and the lack of discrepancy between the plan and its execution. If there is a coherent plan that is faithfully implemented, all other things being equal, the program should produce the desired outcomes. However, without a comparator group, strong inference as to causality is not warranted because one cannot be certain that some other factor did not produce the outcomes.

Impact evaluation is schematically portrayed in Figure 4.
Questions guiding the impact evaluation were:

**Ministry level**
- What was the extent of take up of the opportunities afforded by the Ministry initiative?
  - What proportion of projects were funded?
  - How were the projects distributed by geography?
  - Did the geographical distribution of proposals and funded proposals match the geographical distribution of students in care?

**Program level**
- Were outcomes related to the program activities and processes? What evidence was collected regarding outcomes? By whom was it collected? With what frequency?
- What evidence is there that the outcomes were related to program activities and processes?
- How enduring are the outcomes? Over what time period were outcomes assessed?
- **What aspects of the programs (e.g.,**

**Data Sources**
- Ministry
  - Data on distribution of funded programs
  - Data on the distribution of students in care
  - Data on applicants for funding

- Program
  - Program midterm and final reports
  - Interviews with board members
  - Focus groups with staff,
| Were there locations of high need that were not involved in the Ministry initiative? | process, criteria) have been most effective in realizing the intended outcomes of the initiative?  
  - What characteristics of resources and activities (e.g., teacher characteristics, partnerships, specific activities) were related to the greatest impact in terms of positive outcomes? What was effective for students in care or receiving services from CASs? What was effective for teachers?  
  - How have the programs impacted teacher practices?  
  - What is the evidence that teacher practice was impacted specifically by the programs?  
  - To what extent have the programs been supported by the school and local community? To what extent are students in care connected to the rest of the school?  
  - Further to the Ministry’s intended outcomes for the programs, are there other notable unintended outcomes? | Quantitative and qualitative program data on student outcomes  
  - community partners, and students |
4.5. Recommendations for Effectiveness

- What suggestions can be made regarding the programs (e.g., processes, criteria) that would better enable the intended outcomes? (See CYIC Logic Model.)
  - Were there any mismatches between intended and actual participants, activities, and resources that would have been a barrier to achieving intended outcomes?

- What suggestions can be made to inform future strategic directions to support the educational achievement and well-being of students in care?
  - What promising practices could be shared with other school boards?

5. Logic Models

*Directions* developed a detailed logic model for the innovative strategies and delivery model programs, elaborating on the Ministry’s existing logic model for Children and Youth in Care. Logic models are graphical representations of: (a) the activities and inputs provided to reach the project objectives, and (b) the intended outputs and outcomes produced as a consequence of the activities and inputs. Within the decision-oriented evaluation framework, logic models are a specification of the *rational evaluation* questions. That is, the developed logic models capture: (a) the goal of funded program activities and how they are associated to desired outcomes, (b) the intended participants, (c) the intended resources, (d) the intended activities, (e) and the intended short and long term outcomes.
5.1. **Ministry Pilot Program**

The first section presents program elements. The second section presents operational indicators / performance measures for program elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Activities and Processes</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Ministry of Education goals:  
  o Achieving Excellence: Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.  
  o Ensuring Equity: All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning | • Funding: Up to $50,000 per semester or summer session to school boards to run programs for secondary and/or elementary students (summer only)  
• Human resources (Ministry staff, board staff, school administration, Student Success Team, attendance and guidance counselors, child and youth workers, social workers, mental health leads, Student Success Leaders, Children’s Aid Society staff, teachers delivering the courses)  
• Community partnerships | • Applications for funding from school boards  
  o 2013-14: applications submitted by February 15, 2013 for adjudication by February 28, 2013  
  o 2014-15: applications submitted by December 17, 2014 for adjudication by January 5, 2015  
  o 2015-16: proposed budgets for renewal of existing programs submitted by June 15, 2015  
• Proposal evaluation rubrics in 2013-14 and 2014-15 based on following criteria (no | • Immediate outcomes  
  o CYIC participate in programs to support educational outcomes and well-being  
  o increased engagement of CYIC through targeted learning opportunities and creative, relevant programming  
  o improved educational outcomes related to accumulation of credits, attendance, reduced disciplinary actions and enhanced pathways planning for secondary students |

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5 Logic Models provide a clear roadmap to a specified end. Program logic model details resources, planned activities, and their outputs and outcomes over time that reflect intended results. Logic models offer a way to describe and share an understanding of relationships among elements necessary to operate a program or change effort. Knowlton & Phillips (2008)

6 Define the resources/inputs that link directly to and will “supply” the activities: What do you need to accomplish the named activities to occur? Include human, financial, organizational, community, or system resources in any combination

7 Name all the activities/processes needed to generate the outcomes: What are you going to be doing? Describe the specific action steps that will bring about the intended results. Description should include tools, processes, events, technology, devices and actions that are intentional

8 Describe the stepwise series of outcomes (or changes) that will show progress toward ultimate intended change. Outcomes: Changes, often in program participants or organization, as a result of the program; often include specific changes in awareness, knowledge, skill and behaviour. Dependent on preceding resources, activities, and outputs. Parsed by time increments into immediate, intermediate, and long term.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Activities and Processes</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.</td>
<td>proposal evaluation took place for 2015-16 renewal):</td>
<td>o access to supports and interventions including connections to a “caring adult”</td>
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<tr>
<td>o <strong>Promoting Well-Being:</strong> All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.</td>
<td>2013-14: intended outcomes, implementation plan, staffing details, supports for students, improved outcomes for participating students, credit bundling, timetabling, activities, instructional approaches, composition of the pilot advisory team, key partners, students in the pilot, data collection plan, budget, and pilot evaluation plan</td>
<td>o tracking, monitoring and reporting on educational progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>o <strong>Enhancing Public Confidence:</strong> Ontarians will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable and caring citizens.</td>
<td>2014-15: program components, intended outcomes, pilot advisory team / key partners, and budget</td>
<td>o opportunities for the education sector and CASs to work together to identify students in care and share relevant information; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High school graduation rates and post-secondary attendance rates lower for CYIC than for general high school population.</td>
<td><strong>Project funding provided:</strong></td>
<td>o collaboration with community partners to support the academic success and well-being of students in the pilot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• CYIC experience challenges related specifically to child welfare status.</td>
<td>2013-14: 18 school boards funded to deliver 20 programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (EDU and MCYS) to set minimum expectations for collaborative practices and process between school boards and</td>
<td>2014-15: 24 school boards funded to deliver 44 programs</td>
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<td>2015-16: 24 school boards funded to deliver 32 programs</td>
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<td>Intermediate outcomes (2-5 years)</td>
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<td>o Improvements in student engagement, educational outcomes, and well-being are sustained</td>
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<td>o Education sector and CASs continue to work together to share information in CYIC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Partnerships between education sector and community organizations are sustained</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Tracking, monitoring and</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group, LLP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Input⁶</th>
<th>Activities and Processes⁷</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASs to support improved educational outcomes for children and youth in care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reporting on educational progress are sustained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support to ESAB to establish province-wide collection an reporting of aggregate educational data for CYIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Promising practices in school-based programs for CYIC are shared with schools and school boards in Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding program goals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Promising practices are adopted in other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o explore conditions for children and youth in care of or receiving services from CASs that result in improved educational achievement and well-being.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Long-term outcomes (5+ years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o improve educational outcomes and well-being and close the achievement gap for CYIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Achievement gap between CYIC students and non-CYIC students is diminished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o explore the effectiveness and scalability of a variety of approaches to support increased achievement of students in care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o CYIC leaving care successfully transition to adulthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stakeholders in Ontario</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Effective programs supporting CYIC are maintained in school boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ministry of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Ministry of Children and Youth Services</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o School districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Schools</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Teachers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Students</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

⁶ Input: Identification and input of CSAs and stakeholders
⁷ Activities and Processes: The activities and processes to be undertaken

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### Context Indicators
- Evaluation questions
- Ministry memos to Directors of Education, Calls for Proposals
- Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education
- Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education

### Input Indicators

### Process/Output<sup>9</sup> Indicators
- Project contracts reviewed and approved
- Proposal evaluation rubric for 2013-14 & 2014-15 is developed
- Program midterm and final reports submitted for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16
- Data on student achievement for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 is analyzed
- 
  *Directions* produces interim reports describing:
  - Context
  - Funded programs
  - Regional and school board distribution of grantees
  - Program activity types
  - Implementation challenges
- Site Visits conducted
- *Directions* produces final report

### Outcomes Indicators

### Immediate outcomes<sup>10</sup>
- Program midterm and final reports submitted 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 with indicators on:
  - Student achievement
  - Challenges
  - Successes
  - Lessons learned
- Site Visits: *Directions* will visit 10 sites to document implementation, impact, and effectiveness of programs.
- *Directions* final report will:
  - Review literature pertinent to school-related practices for the support of CYIC
  - Evaluate implementation of programs
  - Describe program outcomes
  - Describe promising practices in programs for CYIC to achieve positive outcomes related to educational achievement and well-being
  - Identify challenges in

---

*Name the outputs or products that reflect the accomplishment of activities:* Quantified and qualified, describes types, levels, & audiences or target delivered. Who/when/where do we reach? What? How many? How often?

*What would tell you that these outcomes are achieved?*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Indicators</th>
<th>Input Indicators</th>
<th>Process/Output$^9$ Indicators</th>
<th>Outcomes Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>implementing programs</td>
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<td>o Recommend actions for</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>improving effectiveness</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>of programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Intermediate outcomes (2-5 years)**
- Increase in number of Ontario schools adopting promising practices
- Improved outcomes for CYIC in schools throughout Ontario become more widespread
- New partnerships between education sector and community organizations in support of CYIC students are established and existing relationships are sustained
- Collaboration between education sector and CASs to identify and share information on CYIC students is continued
- Tracking, monitoring and reporting on educational progress of CYIC students is enhanced and regularized
- Ministry of Education mobilizes knowledge of promising practices in all boards

**Long-term outcomes (5+ years)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Indicators</th>
<th>Input Indicators</th>
<th>Process/Output&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt; Indicators</th>
<th>Outcomes Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Achievement gap for CYIC is reduced in comparison to the provincial average</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CYIC leaving care successfully transition to adulthood (e.g., make labour market transitions, participate in post-secondary education, demonstrate positive life skills, sustain positive relationships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Programs and partnerships supporting CYIC are sustained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.  School Board Pilot Programs

Given the potential diversity of the funded innovative strategies and delivery models for
students in care, Directions originally proposed to develop program-specific logic
models and theories of change for each program selected for evaluation. Thus, in
addition to the overarching logic model for the Ministry’s program, Directions intended to
develop (1) program-specific logic models that specified the goal of funded program
activities and how they are associated to desired outcomes, the intended participants,
the necessary resources, the intended activities, and the intended short- and long-term
outcomes, and (2) a theory of change that described how the elements of the logic
model are considered related. However, upon reviewing the program contracts and
reports for 2013-14 and 2014-15, it became apparent that a program-specific logic
model for each site was not appropriate because goals were often not specified beyond
the level of the Ministry goals; intended participants, resources, and activities changed
over the program years--programs evolved frequently as the staff came to understand
the particular needs of each student and cohort of students; and supports and planning
for students were often quite individualized. Thus, instead of developing program-
specific logic models, Directions created a general logic model and theory of change
that characterizes programs; these are presented in the main final report.

6. Data Collection and Analysis approach

Directions created detailed protocols for all major evaluation activities, including those
for quantitative or qualitative data collection. Approval of protocols by the Ministry
project team was secured before deployment. Document and data requests were
recorded so that they can be replicated. The literature search was guided by a detailed
search strategy and documented in a search diary. Quantitative protocols included
definitions of variables, methods of collection, and verification of data. Qualitative
protocols included creation of detailed interview and observational protocols,
benchmarking of observations and coding, and double-coding to examine coding
reliability. Verification mechanisms involved data and protocol checks to ensure
consistency, correctness, and completeness, as well as to identify and address errors,
conflicts, and omissions. Analyses were by the specific research questions and the
research or evaluation framework. Methods also involved documentation of all tasks
performed with data.
6.1. **Document and Data Sources**

At the outset of the project, *Directions* requested all relevant project and program materials available from the Ministry so that the document and data review could begin immediately. The document request included:

- Relevant Student Success Policy Branch materials (overview of Student Success Strategy; Capacity Building Series monograph on Improving the Educational Outcomes of Children and Youth in Care; the Children and Youth in Care of Children’s Aid Societies logic model; overview of program implementation, key communications, monitoring, and reporting requirements).
- Ministry-sponsored studies and evaluations related to the evaluation.
- Any aggregate student achievement and administrative data from school boards (e.g., credit accumulation, attendance, graduation rate, drop-out rate), grouped into data on (a) students in care and participating in programming, (b) students in care and not participating in programming, and (c) students not in care, so as to facilitate comparisons between groups. Ideally, information would be provided on achievement before, during, at the conclusion of the program implementation cycle, and at several times after the conclusion of the implementation in order to examine change over time.
- Key communications, interim, and final reports of all programs as available from 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 (2015-16 final reports may not be available at the outset of the evaluation)
- Applications of all funded programs, if they contain relevant descriptions of funded programs that are not available in interim or final reports.
- Logic models of funded programs, if available.
- Other relevant material as made available to *Directions* (e.g., Ministry call for proposals, policy and implementation documents, literature and evidence upon which the initiative was based, literature and evidence on Ontario’s students in care, other program-level documents).

A high-level review of the materials was used to inform the development of the present evaluation plan deliverable. The high-level review allowed *Directions* to extract information on the goals, contexts, participants, resources, activities, and outcomes for the Ministry and the funded programs.
6.2. Literature Review Method

6.2.1. Objectives of the literature review

*Directions* conducted a literature review in English and French to examine academic and grey literature on effective programming to improve student engagement, achievement and well-being for students in care across jurisdictions. Two questions were to be addressed by the literature review:

1. What are the issues and outcomes in terms of student achievement, engagement, or well-being for students in care / wards of State / students who have Crown and Society ward status / students in foster care / students who are at risk of not succeeding in school? (This question provides context for the types of issues and outcomes faced by this population.)
2. What evidence is there for effective school-based programming and interventions to improve student achievement, engagement, or well-being for students in care / wards of State / students who have Crown and Society ward status / students in foster care / students who are at risk of not succeeding in school?

In the project initiation meeting of April 18, 2016, the following indicators were agreed upon by the Ministry and *Directions* as providing guidance to literature search and review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic performance and outcomes</th>
<th>Well-being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% students with IEPs</td>
<td>Attendance rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credit accumulation</td>
<td>Mental health referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic/applied enrolment</td>
<td>School suspensions or expulsions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAO Assessments 3, 6, 9 OSSLT participation and results</td>
<td>Responses to surveys about Equity and Inclusion, Bullying/Harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graduation rates (Ontario Secondary School Diploma)</td>
<td>Physical health measures (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dropout (early school leaving) rates</td>
<td>Connection to a caring adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mark distribution</td>
<td>Monitoring mobility and transportation to schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Equitable attainment* - comparisons of:
- Students in care and participating in programming,
- Students in care and not participating in programming, and
- Students not in care.
Findings from the literature review were used to develop observations on best practices in school-based programming to improve educational outcomes, engagement, and well-being for students in care. Directions also examined the alignment between funded programs and best practices as identified in the literature.

Detailed methods for the literature review are described in Appendix C.

6.3. Document and Data Review

An initial review of the documents and data at the Ministry level and the level of the individual programs was used to populate the evaluation framework.

Directions compiled and assessed Ministry-level information on the goals and objectives of the Ministry’s initiative to support innovative strategies and delivery models for students in care using the relevant Student Success Policy Branch and Ministry documents on the initiative, including any literature or evidence upon which the initiative was based. From these sources, Directions compiled information about (a) goals and objectives and (b) intended participants, resources, activities, and outcomes of the Ministry initiative.

The program-level data for sites to be visited was also used to extract themes on the (a) goals and objectives of the funded programs for students in care, (b) intended participants, resources, activities, and outcomes of the programs, and (c) observed participants, resources, activities, and outcomes of the programs. This include a description of the range of goals and objectives of the programs, the types of participants in the programs (e.g., criteria for admittance in the programs), the range of human and material resources devoted to the programs (e.g., community resources), the types of activities within the programs (e.g., specific program activities, tracking and monitoring of students), and outcomes for students and teachers. Quantitative data (e.g., credits attempted, credit accumulation, attendance) was analyzed using descriptive statistics. If suitable for the available data, advanced inferential analyses (e.g., regressions, correlations) was to be conducted to explore factors that might be influencing the outcomes for students in care, as well as examine the differences between populations of students in care and students not in care. These findings were summarized in the first interim report on key themes.

6.4. Program Site Visits

The Ministry selected eleven programs for evaluation to maximize variation in the
characteristics specified in RFS 2636: English and French, public and Catholic, geographic region, large/small school board, urban/rural boards, secondary school implementation, First Nations Métis Inuit (FNMI) representation, and at least 2 years of implementation.

Detailed methods for the literature review are described in Appendix D.

### 6.5. Analysis framework

The analysis at the Ministry and program levels throughout the evaluation will follow the decision-oriented framework as specified earlier in this document and briefly summarized below.

- **Goals evaluation**: *Directions* will analyze goals and objectives at the Ministry level and at the program level to determine whether and to what extent goals are explicitly stated and refined into specific objectives that imply operations and outcomes.

- **Rational evaluation**: *Directions* will determine whether or not the intended participants, resources, activities, and outcomes that have been specified are consistent with and sufficient to achieve the Ministry- and program-level goals.

- **Discrepancy evaluation**: *Directions* will determine the congruence between the intended and observed participants, resources, activities, and outcomes at the Ministry and program levels.

- **Outcomes evaluation**: *Directions* will analyze how the observed behavioural outcomes at the Ministry and program levels are systematically related to participants, resources, and activities, and to the interactions among them.

While the goals and rational evaluations will be informed primarily by the document and data review and the interview with Ministry-level staff, the discrepancy and outcomes evaluations will be informed by the analysis of the interviews and focus groups in addition to the document and data review.

### 6.5.1. Qualitative data analysis

The narrative reports from each program year, interviews, focus groups, and field notes from interviews and focus groups were analyzed using a detailing coding protocol developed by *Directions*. Based on an initial review of selected documents and the questions that the evaluation is meant to address, a starting list of codes was developed to capture statements relevant to the research questions, with a view to eventually identifying major relevant conceptual categories. Guidelines containing exemplary statements were also developed to assist in the capture of relevant statements and their
assignment to pre-established codes. Prior to commencing coding, the qualitative analysis team met to review the initial codes, clarify interpretations, review code applications and exemplars, and discuss overall coding procedures. At regular intervals during the coding process, the team met to review the codes in use, develop and implement new codes as necessary, address re-coding needs, and systematically document any decisions affecting coding and analysis procedures in a coding journal. Following the initial coding stage, the starting codes were collapsed into thematic categories that emerged logically from the initial coding process. This secondary coding stage included analyses to identify dominant themes related to the research questions and focus on emergent patterns in the data. A limited audit of the data was conducted during the initial coding stage to optimize inter-coder agreement and to ensure the validity and reliability of the project’s findings.

6.5.2. Quantitative data analysis

Under ideal circumstances, analyses would be conducted using student level data. Because such data were not available, Directions conducted an analysis of available quantitative data provide by the sites. It was not possible given the data to make comparisons for students before, during, and after program participation; between students in care who are participating in the programs, students in care who are not participating in the programs, and students not in care; and between programs. Directions attempted to examine whether outcomes data could be aligned with program characteristics (e.g., nature of resources, activity type) to see which features appear to be correlated with outcomes, but the data did not allow for such an analysis (i.e., heterogeneity of supports was too great, program numbers were low, program participant numbers were low). The data also did not permit for an examination of program-level and overall trends for educational outcomes across years.

7. Reporting, Knowledge Transfer and Mobilization

The primary audience for knowledge transfer and mobilization is the Ministry of Education. At the discretion of the Ministry, results may also be shared with the groups (e.g., school boards, schools, community partners) who participate in the evaluation.

Directions’ deliverables for this evaluation are:

1. A literature review.
2. A first interim report on key themes arising from the data and document review, including a synthesis of lessons learned from the review.
3. A second interim report on findings to date, including analysis of school board
reports from 2015-16.
4. A draft final report, written in language that is accessible to a broad audience, addressing the evaluation questions on implementation, impact, effectiveness, and associated recommendations. The report will include the project's conceptual framework, the final literature review, and the evaluation design (i.e., methodology, data collection, data analysis, findings and suggestions, and copies of data collection tools). Specific topics addressed in the final report include the intended and actual outcomes of the programs; the schools’ and boards’ experiences in implementing the programs; the effectiveness of the school’s, boards’ and Ministry’s implementation of the programs; and suggestions for implementation that would lead to improved outcomes.
5. A final report and executive summary.
6. A presentation to Ministry and stakeholders.
7. An audited financial report that contains all expenditures made by Directions for this project.