

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Take Stock in Children and Take Stock in College are affiliated non-profit organizations aiming to assist youth in Florida through preparation for and successful completion of post-secondary education.

Take Stock in Children was founded in 1995 with the goal of preparing sixth through twelfth grade students for post-secondary education. Student participants, who are from families with low incomes, sign a contract to meet weekly with their program-provided mentor and participate in program-sponsored college readiness workshops. Students also pledge to abstain from drug use, avoid criminal activity, and maintain good grades throughout their years in the program as they complete high school. After fulfilling these requirements and graduating from high school, they are awarded a scholarship to a Florida state college, university, or vocational/technical school to enable them to continue their education. Take Stock in Children collaborates with affiliate organizations, including school districts, community colleges, and other non-profit organizations, to provide services to student participants. In addition, Take Stock in Children has a partnership with the state of Florida, which matches every privately raised dollar for scholarship funding at a 1:1 rate.

Take Stock in College was launched in 2018 to provide support to Take Stock in College graduates as they navigate their post-secondary education experiences. The aim is to connect Take Stock in College students with campus resources and increase the secondary education completion rate from 68% to 95%.

The Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida has as a core value to support equitable education for all students, especially students who are historically underserved. Thus, the mission of the Take Stock programs and Lastinger Center are well-aligned. To support the continuing impact of Take Stock in Children and Take Stock in College, the Lastinger Center proposes external evaluation services of these separate but linked programs.

SCOPE OF WORK

Goals for the year-long evaluation of Take Stock in Children and Take Stock in College include the following:

1. Synthesize findings within and across projects regarding fidelity and effectiveness of implementation.
2. Based on the findings, provide recommendations of potential ways to improve areas of implementation.

Take Stock in Children

The Lastinger Center as external evaluator will seek to answer the following questions regarding the Take Stock in Children program:

1. Is Take Stock in Children meeting its annual and quarterly deliverables?
2. What is the level of program participation?
3. What is the program impact on key indicators of high school completion and college readiness?
4. Is Take Stock in Children's model being implemented with fidelity?
5. How can Take Stock in Children improve the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation to reflect the program's significant return on investment for the state of Florida?
6. Is Take Stock in Children making progress toward meeting the mission of the initiative?

Data sources used to answer these questions will be the Take Stock in Children’s STAR database; artifacts such as the organization’s plans, reports, and communications; interviews with students, parents, and mentors; and surveys from students, parents, and mentors.

Take Stock in College

The Lastinger Center as external evaluator will seek to answer the following questions regarding the Take Stock in College program:

1. Is Take Stock in College meeting its annual and quarterly deliverables?
2. What is the level of program participation?
3. Is the program being implemented with fidelity?
4. Is there evidence of statewide post-secondary supports impacting student behavior and postsecondary persistence?
5. How are mini-grants implemented by local programs helping to support Scholars as they transition into postsecondary educational settings?
6. How are formal connections with post-secondary institutions impacting student transitions from high school to post-secondary?
7. In what ways is the texting system supporting postsecondary entry, persistence, and enrollment?
8. Is the online community, Take Stock Connect, helping Scholars engage with campus resources and navigate challenges as they arise?
9. How are campus events being implemented and is there evidence that they are effectively supporting Scholars’ post-secondary experiences?
10. What is the likelihood that an increasing number of Scholars will complete post-secondary education?
11. Are there ways to improve implementation to increase effectiveness?
12. Is Take Stock in College making progress toward meeting the mission of the initiative?

Data sources used to answer these questions will be the STAR database; artifacts such as the organization’s plans, reports, and communications; interviews with students, parents, mentors, and community partners; and surveys from students, parents, mentors, and community partners.

TIMELINE: August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022

Task	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Meet with Take Stock staff												
Complete UF IRB												
Review prior evaluation materials (STAR database, interview protocols, other data collection instruments)												
Review STAR database and program artifacts for evidence of meeting quarterly deliverables												
Conduct Take Stock in College interviews												

Task	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Analyze interviews												
Conduct Take Stock in Children interviews												
Analyze interviews												
Send surveys to Take Stock participants, parents, mentors, and community partners												
Analyze survey responses												
Review STAR database and program artifacts for evidence of meeting yearly deliverables												
Produce evaluation report synthesizing findings across both programs, including recommendations for greater effectiveness												

Name	Role
Mary Bratsch-Hines	Principal Investigator
Eun Byul (Andrea) Kim	Product Marketing Specialist
Anna Clark	Graphic Designer
TBH	Graduate Research Assistant

Principal Investigator:

Mary Bratsch-Hines, Ph.D., Senior Manager for Research and Evaluation, Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida

Dr. Bratsch-Hines is Principal Investigator for the project. She will be responsible for overall management of the project, including attending project meetings and directing all daily activities related to data collection, transcription, management, and analyses. She will write quarterly and final reports.

Qualitative data collection:

Eun Byul (Andrea) Kim, Product Marketing Specialist, Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida

Ms. Kim will be responsible for scheduling and completing interviews as well as analyzing interview data. Ms. Kim will contribute to the writing of quarterly and final reports.

Graphic design:

Anna Clark, Graphic Designer, Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida

Ms. Clark will be responsible for designing the reports.

Deza Free, Research Assistant, Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida

Ms. Free will assist Dr. Bratsch-Hines with completing the IRB, scheduling project meetings, managing project administrative activities, and collecting and analyzing quantitative data. Ms. Free will contribute to the writing of quarterly and final reports.