



EARLY LEARNING REPORT

POLICY ISSUE/SITUATION:

The Beaverton School District has the opportunity to build a district wide early learning system. This 2017-2018 school year, we have started two new pre-k programs at Vose and Aloha Huber Park. We are excited with these pre-k programs as we further develop a comprehensive, intergraded Pre-K Program in Beaverton.

Beaverton's focus for the remainder of the school year is to develop it's comprehensive early learning model, and prepare to begin implementation in the 2018-2019 school year.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the School Board receive the Early Learning report and provide comments and feedback to staff.

District Goal: WE Empower all students to achieve post-high school success.

The Beaverton School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups. It is the policy of the Beaverton School District that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, marital status, age, veterans' status, genetic information or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment.

Beaverton School District Early Learning Inventory & Proposed Strategy¹

A large body of evidence tells us that early childhood education provides a lifelong foundation for learning and development. In the period between birth and age 8 our brains develop more rapidly than at any other point in our lives, and what happens during this sensitive period shapes the way we learn and interact with the environment around us for the rest of our lives. Access to high quality, enriching environments early in life provides children with the opportunity to enter kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed in elementary school.

Unfortunately, many children – especially low income children and children of color – do not have access to such opportunities. We see the impact of this lack of access to opportunity reflected in student outcomes – for example, many of our marginalized children are not reaching the critical benchmark of reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. We know that our children are bright and capable learners; these outcomes do not reflect their potential, but rather uneven access to meaningful and enriching learning opportunities.

Beaverton School District has the opportunity to build a district wide early learning system that will open up life changing opportunities for our students, and to develop a bellwether example of what a comprehensive school-district led early learning system can achieve in Oregon and beyond.

Outcomes: Our goal is to improve outcomes for marginalized students and families, and so our framework for action places children of color, English language learners, children with learning delays or disabilities, and children experiencing poverty and trauma at its center. The following outcomes will measure our success for students who participate in the district’s early learning program:

- **Academic:**
 - An increase in early literacy and math skills as measured by the Kindergarten Assessment (KA).
 - An increase in 3rd grade ELA proficiency.
- **Social-emotional**
 - An increase in social emotional/approaches to learning skills as measured by the KA.
 - A decrease in chronic absenteeism.
 - A decrease in behavior referrals.

Framework for action: The strategy is organized around six system goals designed to increase the quality and coherence of learning and development opportunities,² and organized around five service delivery components:

Our six goals

¹ This document was developed through interviews with 55 internal and external stakeholders and represents the authors best effort to synthesize the ideas, questions, and concerns of each person interviewed.

² Adapted from the University of Washington/Center for Evaluation Innovation Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013).

1. **Cross sector collaboration:** Beaverton has resources and structures in place to develop and sustain a shared vision and collaborative relationships to achieve that vision.
2. **Leadership:** District and school administrators demonstrate a commitment to early learning, actively creating structures to support quality implementation of a prek-3rd grade strategy.
3. **Instructional coherence:** (1) Standards, curriculum, and assessments focus on both social emotional and academic development, support/celebrate children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and are aligned across grade levels from prek – 3rd grade. (2) Teachers have the professional development and support to provide excellent learning experiences.
4. **High quality learning environments:** The learning environment supports the health and safety of children, is welcoming to student's cultures and families, and meets their physical and emotional needs.
5. **Engaged families:** Families are actively and systematically involved as full partners in their children's development, learning, and achievement.
6. **Continuity and pathways:** Every child, especially our most vulnerable, has access to a continuity of services to meet their developmental and educational needs.

Five components of BSD's early learning system:

1. School based preschool experiences. (*Leadership, instructional coherence, high quality early learning environments, engaged families*).
2. Strong and comprehensive summer transition programs/supports. (*Instructional coherence, engaged families, continuity and pathways*).
3. School based parenting education programming. (*Engaged families, continuity and pathways*).
4. Family resource management and referral. (*Continuity and pathways, cross sector collaboration*).
5. Community based, standards driven, professional development that links Beaverton's child care and preschool providers with school based early learning experiences. (*Instructional coherence, cross sector collaboration*).

Implementation planning: As we begin to roll out the elements of our early learning system, Beaverton will select schools to operate as Early Learning Model Schools³ to pioneer implementation of all five elements: 1) pre-k; 2) summer transitions; 3) parenting education; 4) family resource management; 5) community based professional development.

Children served in each school's program will come from within the school catchment area. Eligibility for service will extend up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

Model schools will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **Demonstrated demographic need:** High number of children of color, English language learners, children living in poverty, and children with developmental delay or disability living in the school catchment area.

³ Would love help thinking of a better name!

- **Demonstrated academic need:** Schools where students in our priority populations would benefit academically and social/emotionally from early learning experiences as demonstrated by Kindergarten Assessment results, 3rd grade reading proficiency, and rates of chronic absenteeism for K-3 children.
- **Leadership:** School principal is committed to early learning and wants to be part of pioneering the creation of BSD's early learning system. Principal is willing to commit personal time and teacher time to training and planning, and willing to commit school resources to the effort for all parts of the system.
- **Available space:** The school must have a classroom available inside the building, with a sink and a bathroom inside the room or nearby.

Model schools must be ready to make the following commitments:

- The school commits to **complete a comprehensive needs assessment** using the Portland State University/Oregon Community Foundation Community Needs and Resources Toolkit. Central office staff will support/conduct needs assessment process, but need strong commitment from school leadership to ensure success.
- The school's pk-3rd grade team, relevant support staff, and principal agree to **attend an intensive summer training institute, and commit to monthly PD/participation** in an early learning professional learning community.
- The school commits to **use the district's pre-k instructional model**, tools (curricula), and assessment.
- The school commits to **implement the district's evidence based summer transition program**.
- The school commits to working with its elementary executive, administrator for early learning, and family resource manager to **make a school based plan for early learning service coordination**.

In the early years of implementing its early learning system, Beaverton will have to balance the need to build on existing momentum and excitement regarding early learning, and the need to build an early learning program that is well put together and will last over time. To strike this balance we will need to develop multiple ways for schools and community members to be involved in the work. Because the five components of our system go from intensive to lighter touch, schools don't have to have a preschool to start developing early learning supports. Schools that don't have preschool can still:

- Complete the community needs assessment with support from the district.
- Develop an early learning service coordination plan, bringing in parenting education, summer transition programs, family resource management, and connecting with community providers in a thoughtful way.
- Participate in training and professional development about early learning.

We should support and encourage this kind of participation to help build the runway for more schools to be ready to implement the full model in the future.

The five strategies

SCHOOL BASED PRE-K: BSD will build school based prekindergarten classrooms, through partnerships between the district, its schools, Northwest Regional ESD, and Washington County Community Action Head Start. Our classrooms will be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and will offer a learning experience that places social emotional development and learning at the core, as the foundation for academic learning.

History and current state of preschool in BSD: Beaverton School District has a history of school based prekindergarten. Previously, the district has partnered with Head Start to place classrooms at Vose, Barnes, William Walker, Kinnaman, and Beaver Acres elementary schools, and others. Head Start also has had a classroom at Conestoga Middle School for several years. Additionally, prior to budget cuts as a result of the 2008 recession, Aloha Huber Park Elementary School had a school funded prekindergarten classroom. By 2017, all of these programs were no longer located at BSD schools, except for the Head Start classroom at Conestoga. The most frequently cited reasons why are lack of space and budget cuts.

Today, BSD has begun to re-develop the presence of pre-k in its elementary schools. Aloha Huber Park and Vose Elementary schools have started prek programs funded with Title I dollars, Head Start has located a classroom at Barnes Elementary School and at William Walker Elementary School, and Bonnie Slope Elementary School is working to build an inclusive pre-k program in partnership with Northwest Regional ESD's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program. Additionally, BSD runs a migrant preschool program, has a teen parent child care program located at Merlo Station High School, and has two early childhood CTE program classrooms, one located at Westview High School and Aloha High School. These programs provide a foundation to begin to build a district wide school based prekindergarten program.

Building a district prekindergarten program that will last:

To build a BSD pre-k program that is consistent from school to school and can sustain over time the following foundational steps are necessary: (1) Develop district wide pre-k model and implement early learning professional development sequence, (2) Develop a plan/guidance for implementation of wrap around services; (3) Develop mixed delivery pre-k financing model, guidelines, and long term financing proposal; (4) Develop operations policies for district pre-k, (5) Develop long term plan for district CTE programs.

Work is underway in all five areas in preparation for the 2018-2019 school year. By summer 2018 we will finalize our pre-k instructional model and launch a summer pre-k through 3rd grade training institute to help our school leaders and teachers deepen their early learning knowledge and practice.

SUMMER TRANSITIONS: For children who haven't had access to pre-k, summer transition programs are a proven strategy to help prepare them for school and smooth the entry into kindergarten. As part of its early learning system, BSD will systematically implement summer transition programs with a proven track record of improving outcomes at school entry.

History and current state of kindergarten transition programs: Beaverton runs three kinds of summer school programs for rising kindergartners: (1) Camp Achieve; (2) Title I funded programs; (3) Migrant pre-k.

- **Camp Achieve:** Funded by the Beaverton Education Foundation, Camp Achieve provides two weeks of summer school for children from rising kindergartners through 3rd grade. Programming runs in three two week increments rotating between three schools. In 2017, the program reached 40 incoming kindergartners (11 at the Bethany site, 20 at Rock Creek, and 9 at Terra Linda.) Some student outcome data is tracked, but is not readily available. We do not know which schools the children in the program will attend in the fall.
- **Title I funded programs:** Some Title-I schools provide summer school for their incoming kindergartners. In summer 2017, the following schools offered this opportunity: William Walker, Chehalem, Vose, Aloha Huber Park, McKinley, and Kinnaman.
- **Migrant Pre-K:** In 2017, BSD offered migrant pre-k at Aloha Huber Park, Fir Grove, and Elmonica elementary schools, serving 45 migrant children.

The future of summer transitions/kindergarten academies: As BSD begins to build a cohesive early learning system, the district should focus summer transition programming on strategies and programs with clear track records of results, focused on children who did not have access to pre-k.

Beginning this summer, BSD will work to implement a more instructionally cohesive school transition program focused on two things: 1) social emotional skill building; 2) culturally specific programming provided by organizations best positioned to meet the unique needs of multilingual/multicultural families.

Our focus on social emotional learning is critical for addressing the challenges in behavior and self-regulation we currently see at the start of kindergarten. The specific areas of focus are: 1) focus and self-control; 2) perspective taking; 3) communication; 4) making connections; 5) critical thinking; 6) taking on challenges; 7) self-directed/engaged learning. This approach embeds academic content in a way that supports social emotional well-being, presenting content within the context of children's lives and connected to learning strong social skills.

PARENT EDUCATION, PARTNERSHIP, AND RESOURCE REFERRAL: We know that no one has a greater impact on children in the early years of life than their parents and caregivers, and we believe our schools have the potential to become hubs of support for families in our community who will one day send their children to BSD schools. Connecting parenting education to our schools during early childhood allows schools to build trust between school administrators/staff and parents, creating a smoother pathway into kindergarten and creates early opportunities to facilitate a strong home-to-school relationship.

History and current state: BSD has historically partnered with Lifeworks NW, Promotores, Youth Contact, the Beaverton City Library, Morrison Child and Family Center, and IRCO to provide parenting education in our schools, and with Adelante Mujeres to provide parenting education specifically to migrant families. Additionally, BSD's family resource managers,

members of our multilingual facilitation team, and one of our school social workers are trained in evidence based parenting education models.

Additionally, BSD has a strong foundation in this area thanks to the work of our family resource managers, migrant staff, and Title X liaisons. Annually we connect with ~150 incoming families, through at least one supportive interaction or referral to service via our family resource managers.

Building a systematic approach to parenting education and involvement. Our current family involvement work face two barriers: (1) programs can feel disconnected from the school - most of these classes are held in the evenings after parents get off work, and we need a more intentional strategy to use this time as a way for principals, kindergarten teachers, social workers, office staff, and counselors to build connections to families; (2) strategies for parent education, support, and involvement is driven by what we think parents need, not by what they have told us they need (because we haven't asked.)

As we become more systematic we will work directly with principals to pilot the following: 1) tying parenting education directly to specific needs of families at each school; 2) continue case management services to find and connect with families sooner/connect to resources; 3) become more systematic in connecting with families and developing systems to continue to communicate with them through use of Synergy and stronger use of existing data (Synergy tracking of younger siblings, Head Start waiting lists, ECSE client lists, etc.)

COMMUNITY BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Many districts around the state have increased the school readiness of their students by engaging child care providers in the area in shared professional development. No matter how strong our district run pre-k program is, the majority of BSD's future students will still be served and spend more time in child care programs. By developing and implementing professional development opportunities where child care providers have access to high quality training and the chance to get to know our elementary schools, the impact and reach of our pre-k program increases significantly.

History and current state: BSD currently offers professional development to community child care providers every spring via our Child Care Symposium. The Cedar Mills Library, and Child Care Resource and Referral of Washington County also offer in depth and high quality training to providers in our community. As of the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, we have also mapped all family child care providers in the district by school catchment zone, making it easier to connect them to their home school for shared professional development.

Aligning Prek through K professional development in our community: In the 2017-2018 school year, we are laying the foundation for early learning professional development through our work to define what pre-k will mean in our community. As we do that work, we can provide support and training to early learning providers through the child care consortium and through more formalized partnerships with the Cedar Mills Library and our Child Care Resource and Referral agency. The Beaverton District Wide Early Learning Team would like to re-shape this year's child care symposium, shifting it from a two-hour evening session to a one day weekend conference, potentially put on in partnership with TTSD and Hillsboro School District.

In the 2018-2019 school year, once we have a formal definition of pre-k for our district and a clear professional development series for school staff, we should implement the following strategies for partnership with the broader child care community: (1) Invite child care providers to summer professional development/pre-k training institute; (2) Sponsor a series of trainings/PD modeled after the PD sequence for PD in our district – partner with CCRR and Cedar Mills Library to deliver. Stipend interested kindergarten teachers to help provide training; (3) Make trainings and alignment with BSD a big deal for providers – create a designation of “Beaverton School District Pre-k Partner” for providers who complete the series; honor them at community partner breakfast, etc.