



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**TO: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent**

FROM: Duane R. Meighan, Ed.D.

RE: Update on Early Childhood Education Achievement Task Force

DATE: June 14, 2011

This report highlights the progress of the Early Childhood Education Achievement Task Force for the 2010-11 academic school year. This report will also highlight the process for the recommendation of the new Kindergarten Readiness Test and the development of the new curriculum expectation's brochure/pamphlet that will be shared with parents and the public.

Attachments: Kindergarten Demographic Study for Oak Park District 97 and Future Study/Research Questions

OAK PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 97
Oak Park, Illinois

June 14, 2011

**Update on Full Day Early Childhood Achievement
Taskforce Update**

Background

In December of 2010, it was determined that the district would establish an Early Childhood Task-Force that would examine the kindergarten program holistically in an effort to enhance the learning experiences of all of our children. There are approximately 10 people that are currently serving on the Task-Force. The participants include: administration, teachers, parents, Early Childhood Researchers, and representatives from the Early Childhood Collaboration.

Goals of the Taskforce

To examine kindergarten /early childhood opportunities in District 97 and to determine if students are fully prepared to reach high levels of academic achievement.

To examine the development of the whole child—which includes: Academic Achievement, Social Emotional Development, and Cultural Awareness?

End Results/Outcome

Based on the information that is collected through research, inquiry and study of the program, the Task Force will determine the procedures and processes for incoming kindergarteners as well as how to effectively support kindergartner transition from Kindergarten to 1st Grade.

Early Childhood Achievement Task Force Subcommittees

The Early Childhood Achievement Task Force meets on a monthly basis to discuss research questions that were established. It was determined that the initial focus would be to conduct research on screening and identify a screening tool that could be implemented in district 97 for incoming kindergartners. It was also determined that there was a need to look at the Common Core Standards and develop a brochure/pamphlet that would be readily available for parents and the public. The purpose of developing this document was to enhance communication with parents and community and to inform them what kindergartners in District 97 are expected to know at the end of the academic school year.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Sub-Committee

Committee Charge:

Review and recommend a “Kindergarten Readiness” tool, comprehensive of all developmental domains, to assess incoming kindergarten children, in order to facilitate and support the ability of our teachers and classrooms to meet the individual or group needs and strengths of our incoming kindergarten children.

Variables considered:

- Comprehensiveness of tool
- Collection of interpretive data usable by kindergarten teachers
- Home grown vs. norm or standard referenced
- Cost of tool
- Training needs of staff (time and cost)
- Amount of time needed for implementation of tool
- Needs of implementation (space, materials, assessors, scorers)
- Time constraints

Outcome I:

Based on the committee's review and discussion of a variety of kindergarten assessments and screening tools (please see minutes and reviewed documents at the “Early Childhood Taskforce” Gmail account for specific tools reviewed) we are recommending the “Kindergarten Readiness Test” (KRT) to be adopted as the tool to assess a child’s abilities in the cognitive domain; as they enter kindergarten. The KRT represents a tool that would complement the assessment systems already in place at the district. The KRT, implemented in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), schools, was also chosen by Barbara Bowman, a well known prominent Early Childhood Specialist and cofounder of the Erikson Institute, who is currently chief early childhood education officer of CPS.

Rationale for our choice:

- Comprehensiveness of cognitive domain
 - Vocabulary
 - Identifying letters
 - Visual discrimination
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Comprehension & interpretation
 - Mathematical
- Three types of assessments are provided for the KRT
 - Standards-based assessments of the development level of the readiness skills associated with the separate tests of the KRT.
 - A standards-based assessment of the overall readiness for beginning instruction in kindergarten, based upon a pooling of assessments of the individual readiness skills.
 - Norm-referenced assessments of overall readiness, giving performance relative to that of students in a representative national sample of students.

- Class summary report is designed to support teacher in planning instruction and related remediation when necessary.
 - Summarizes assessments of individual readiness skills
 - Summarizes assessments of overall readiness
 - Summarizes national norm level of performance
- Training Needs
 - Administrator needs to become familiar with test materials and directions by reading through materials and practice run through the test
 - Existing spaces and staff could be used
- Cost
 - \$53.70 = starter set class of 20 (user's manual, answer key, 20 test booklets, class record sheet, class summary report)
 - All items in this starter set are available at additional costs
 - Available in English and Spanish
- Time Elements
 - Total testing time should not exceed 25-30 minutes if administered in one sitting
 - Recommended to be administered in two sittings on two mornings by the classroom teacher.
 - Test can be given in one sitting with at least one rest period after test 4.
 - Screening could be set up like "Child Find"; a rotation through the two parts of the KRT and social/emotional activity assessment.
 - Recommended to be administered individually or to small groups no larger than three students at a time.
 - Should be administered either at the end of preschool or **before** the third full week of kindergarten

Outcome II:

As we reviewed screening tools we looked for a tool comprehensive of all developmental domains. At this point in time we have been unable to find one comprehensive tool. Due to the fact that the KRT does not have a specific Social-Emotional component we feel that it is necessary to also adopt the assessment tool known as "Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional" (ASQ-SE).

ASQ-SE is a screening tool that identifies young children whose social and emotional development requires further evaluation to determine if referral for intervention services is necessary.

Rationale for our choice:

- Exclusively focuses on social and emotional behavior
 - Self-regulation
 - Compliance, communication
 - Adaptive behaviors

- Autonomy
 - Affect and interaction with people
- Age range of 3 months to 66 months
- Administering
 - Questionnaire is completed by parents/caregivers
- Scoring
 - Professionals
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Clerical staff
- Time
 - Questionnaire takes 10-15 minutes to complete
 - 1-3 minutes to score
- Validity and reliability
 - Reliability is 94%; validity is between 75% and 89%
 - Based on normative samples of more than 3,000 questionnaires
- Cost
 - \$194.95 Starter Kit: 8 reproducible print masters of the questionnaires and scoring sheets, a CD-ROM with printable PDF questionnaires, and the ASQ:SE User's Guide
 - With Starter Kit, no additional questionnaires and scoring sheets would need to be purchased; copies can be made by district
 - Available in English and Spanish

Sub-Committee for Pamphlet/Brochure Development

The Curriculum Expectations/Pamphlet Development Sub-Committee was comprised of approximately 10 district Kindergarten teachers that met on a bi-weekly basis to examine the kindergarten readiness brochure that has been utilized in the past. It was determined that there was a need to examine the common core standards for kindergarten and include them into the development of the new curriculum expectations brochure. The teachers dissected the different skill areas on the report card by trimester and this was used to guide the development of the brochure/pamphlet.

There was meaningful, exciting, and thought-provoking dialogue with the teachers surrounding the common core math and reading standards. The teachers examined the standards and deconstructed each standard. As the teachers engaged each other in dialogue regarding the standards, the team included the standards in the curriculum expectations brochure. The team also emphasized that there was a direct correlation with the report card and the Common Core Standards. The new Curriculum Expectations Brochure highlights the new balanced literacy philosophy, kindergarten readiness skills, and content standards and skills by trimester.

As a result of the development of the brochure, the district will enhance communication with parents and the public so that there is a clearer understanding of what kindergarten students are expected to know in District 97. This document will also serve as a powerful tool for kindergarten teachers across the district. It will assist teachers and grade-level teams in pacing instruction for their students. It will also serve as a guide/road map for kindergarten teachers to plan instruction for all students at every level. The document will bring uniformity to the district as it relates to kindergarten instructional focus and serve as a tool for ongoing collaboration and constructivist adult learning grounded in research, inquiry, and professional dialogue.

Transition from Task-Force to Committee for 2011-12 Academic School Year

It has been determined that the work of this committee will continue during the 2011-12 academic school year. The committee will also expand as many staff members have asked to participate on this committee next year. The Early Childhood Achievement Task Force identified critical research questions that will be discussed and examined next year.

District 97 Kindergarten Student: An Overview Student Demographics

There were 611 students enrolled in our kindergarten classes as of February 4, 2011 distributed across the schools as follows:

School	# students	% of students
Beye	74	12.1%
Hatch	53	8.7%
Holmes	65	10.6%
Irving	86	14.1%
Lincoln	99	16.2%
Longfellow	88	14.4%
Mann	86	14.1%
Whittier	60	9.8%

There are slightly more boys than girls overall and at most schools. The extremes are represented by Longfellow, whose kindergarteners are more than half girls, and Whittier, where six of ten students are boys.

Gender	Total K	Beye	Hatch	Holmes	Irving	Lincoln	Longfellow	Mann	Whittier	Dist
Female	47.6%	43.2%	49.1%	49.2%	46.5%	50.5%	53.4%	46.5%	40.0%	50.0%
Male	52.4%	56.8%	50.9%	50.8%	53.5%	49.5%	46.6%	53.5%	60.0%	50.5%

Nearly two-third of our kindergarten students are white, while almost 20% are African-American. Although only five percent of all kindergarteners are Asian, at Holmes that ethnicity represents 15% of the students. Lincoln's Asian population is also higher than average, while at Irving and Longfellow, Asian students are much less common. Hatch and Irving have the highest percentages of African-American students; Hatch, Irving, and Lincoln have the highest percentages of Hispanic students.

Ethnicity	Total	Beye	Hatch	Holmes	Irving	Lincoln	Longfellow	Mann	Whittier	Dist
American Indian	0.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Asian	5.2%	4.1%	5.7%	15.4%	1.2%	9.1%	0.0%	4.7%	3.3%	4.2%
African-American	18.8%	23.0%	30.2%	16.9%	26.7%	10.1%	20.5%	9.3%	20.0%	24.3%
Hispanic	5.2%	5.4%	7.5%	6.2%	7.0%	8.1%	2.3%	3.5%	1.7%	4.5%
Multiracial	6.7%	9.5%	1.9%	9.2%	1.2%	9.1%	10.2%	3.5%	8.3%	9.2%
White	63.7%	56.8%	54.7%	52.3%	64.0%	62.6%	67.0%	79.1%	66.7%	57.5%

Slightly fewer than one in six of our kindergarten students qualifies for free or reduced lunches, but the percent varies quite a bit across the schools. The lowest percentages occur at Holmes, Lincoln, and Mann, while the highest are at Beye, Hatch, Irving, and Whittier.

Lunch status	Total	Beye	Hatch	Holmes	Irving	Lincoln	Longfellow	Mann	Whittier	Dist
Free/reduced	15.5%	24.3%	20.8%	13.8%	20.9%	11.1%	15.9%	1.2%	21.7%	20.6%
Not eligible	84.5%	75.7%	79.2%	86.2%	79.1%	88.9%	84.1%	98.8%	78.3%	79.4%

Ten percent of all kindergarten students have an IEP. As expected, the schools at which instructional classrooms exist tend to have higher percentages. This is true of Beye, Holmes, Irving, and Whittier, but Longfellow's percentage of kindergarten students with IEPs is nearly the district's lowest. Hatch and Lincoln have a slightly higher percentage of these students than average, but accommodate them all in regular ed classrooms.

Special ed	Total	Beye	Hatch	Holmes	Irving	Lincoln	Longfellow	Mann	Whittier	Dist
Has an IEP	10.3%	12.2%	11.3%	12.3%	11.6%	11.1%	6.8%	5.8%	13.3%	14.7%
No IEP	89.7%	87.8%	88.7%	87.7%	88.4%	88.9%	93.2%	94.2%	86.7%	85.3%

Academic Achievement

There are not many measures of academic achievement available for kindergarten students but we can look at report card grades and mid-year DIBELS scores for each of the key subgroups. At the kindergarten level, teachers assign report card grades of S (for Successful) or NI (for needs improvement) on a number of indicators for Language Arts and Math. In an effort to summarize report card performance, the average number of grades of each type is reported.

	Language Arts S	Language Arts NI	Math S	Math NI
Female	9.4	0.8	7.9	0.7
Male	9.3	1.1	7.9	0.7
Asian (n=32)	9.5	0.9	8.7	0.4
African American (n=115)	8.1	1.7	6.9	1.3
Hispanic (n=32)	9.1	1.2	7.9	1.0
White (n=389)	9.4	1.0	8.4	0.5
Multiracial (n=41)	9.7	0.7	8.1	0.5
Eligible for f/r lunch (n=95)	8.3	1.8	7.2	1.4
Not eligible for f/r lunch (n=516)	9.5	0.8	8.0	0.6
Has an IEP (n=63)	6.6	2.2	6.1	1.3
Does not have an IEP (n=548)	9.6	0.8	8.1	0.6

DIBELS tests cover a range of skills associated with early literacy. At the kindergarten level, the skills assessed at midyear are:

- Initial Sound Fluency (ISF)
- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)
- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)

A student's score on each of these can be categorized at one of three levels, the lowest of which requires intensive intervention. Students scoring in the middle category would still benefit from some intervention activities, while students in the highest category are on track for grade-level success. Reported here is the distribution of students in each subgroup across these three levels. It is worth noting that 5% of the kindergarteners do not have any midyear DIBELS scores recorded and the scores from Irving are recorded in a separate system.

Initial Sound Fluency

	Deficit (ISF <10)	Emerging (10<= ISF < 25)	Established (ISF >=25)
Female	3.9%	24.6%	71.6%
Male	1.2%	36.2%	62.7%
Asian (n=29)	0.0%	34.5%	65.5%
African-American (n=86)	10.5%	46.5%	43.0%
Hispanic (n=21)	4.8%	28.6%	66.7%
White	0.3%	25.5%	74.2%
Multiracial (n=37)	2.7%	35.1%	62.2%
Eligible for f/r lunch (n=73)	12.3%	52.1%	35.6%
Not eligible for f/r lunch	0.7%	27.0%	72.3%
Has IEP (n=47)	6.4%	46.8%	46.8%
No IEP	2.0%	29.0%	69.0%

Letter Naming Fluency

	At Risk (LNF < 15)	Some Risk (15 ≤ LNF < 27)	Low Risk (LNF ≥ 27)
Female	2.2%	8.2%	89.7%
Male	4.2%	8.8%	86.9%
Asian	3.4%	3.4%	93.1%
African-American	9.3%	12.8%	77.9%
Hispanic	0.0%	9.5%	90.5%
White	1.3%	8.5%	90.3%
Multiracial	8.1%	2.7%	89.2%
Eligible for f/r lunch	12.3%	12.3%	75.3%
Not eligible for f/r lunch	1.7%	7.9%	90.5%
Has IEP	10.6%	25.5%	63.8%
No IEP	2.5%	6.7%	90.8%

Nonsense Word Fluency

	At Risk (NWF < 5)	Some Risk (5 ≤ NWF < 13)	Low Risk (NWF ≥ 13)
Female	0.9%	9.9%	89.2%
Male	5.0%	11.2%	83.8%
Asian	6.9%	3.4%	89.7%
African-American	7.0%	25.6%	67.4%
Hispanic	0.0%	4.8%	90.5%
White	1.3%	7.2%	91.5%
Multiracial	5.4%	13.5%	81.1%
Eligible for f/r lunch	9.6%	24.7%	65.8%
Not eligible for f/r lunch	1.9%	8.1%	90.0%
Has IEP	8.5%	27.7%	63.8%
No IEP	2.5%	8.8%	88.8%

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

	At Risk (PSF < 7)	Some Risk (7 ≤ PSF < 18)	Low Risk (PSF ≥ 18)
Female	5.2%	5.6%	89.2%
Male	4.2%	3.8%	91.9%
Asian	3.4%	3.4%	93.1%
African-American	15.1%	14.0%	70.9%
Hispanic	0.0%	4.8%	95.2%
White	1.9%	2.2%	95.9%
Multiracial	5.4%	5.4%	89.2%
Eligible for f/r lunch	19.2%	9.6%	71.2%
Not eligible for f/r lunch	2.1%	3.8%	94.0%
Has IEP	14.9%	14.9%	70.2%
No IEP	3.6%	3.6%	92.8%

Further Study Questions for the Early Childhood Achievement Committee to investigate during the 2011/12 academic school year.

How do we use/collect data to inform instructional practices and how is this information shared with parents and community members? What type of robust communication process can we employ to ensure that our parents and community members are receiving timely feedback/information based on data/results?

How are we measuring academic achievement for our kindergarten students and how do we report progress or the lack of thereof?

What type of information sharing do we currently have in place with pre-school groups that feed into Oak Park District 97?

What are the kindergarten readiness skills that children need when they begin kindergarten? Are there screenings that we can develop/adopt to determine the skill sets that our students have before beginning kindergarten?

Can we develop/adopt a quarterly/trimester rubric that can go home over the course of the academic school year? The rubric would be designed to give parents a preview of learning expectations and inform parents of what their students need to know.

What does literacy instruction look like? What does the literacy block look like? What content is taught in each block? How much time is devoted to the literacy block? What instructional materials are being used? How does math instruction look like? How do we supply our students with the skills that are needed for pre-loading math study?

What type of background experiences do our kindergarten students bring with them? How do we address any “background experience” gap? (Students who may fall into Critical AYP Subgroups)

- How do we identify students who are not projected to perform at grade level expectations?
- What type of early interventions/safety nets can we put in place for these students?
- How do we monitor the progress of these interventions?
- What types of learning environments are best for different types of learners? And are we creating these environments in our schools?
- What community groups/resources are available for us to connect with parents and students that fall into this group?
- How do we ensure that all parents are learning how to navigate school?
- What are we doing systemically to embrace all parents?
- As students exit kindergarten and transition to 1st grade, how do we pass information from Kindergarten to 1st Grade?
- What summer experiences would students benefit from so that they can continue to hone skills grasped and skills that remain deficient?