1

Utilizing Kindergarten Readiness Observation and Assessment

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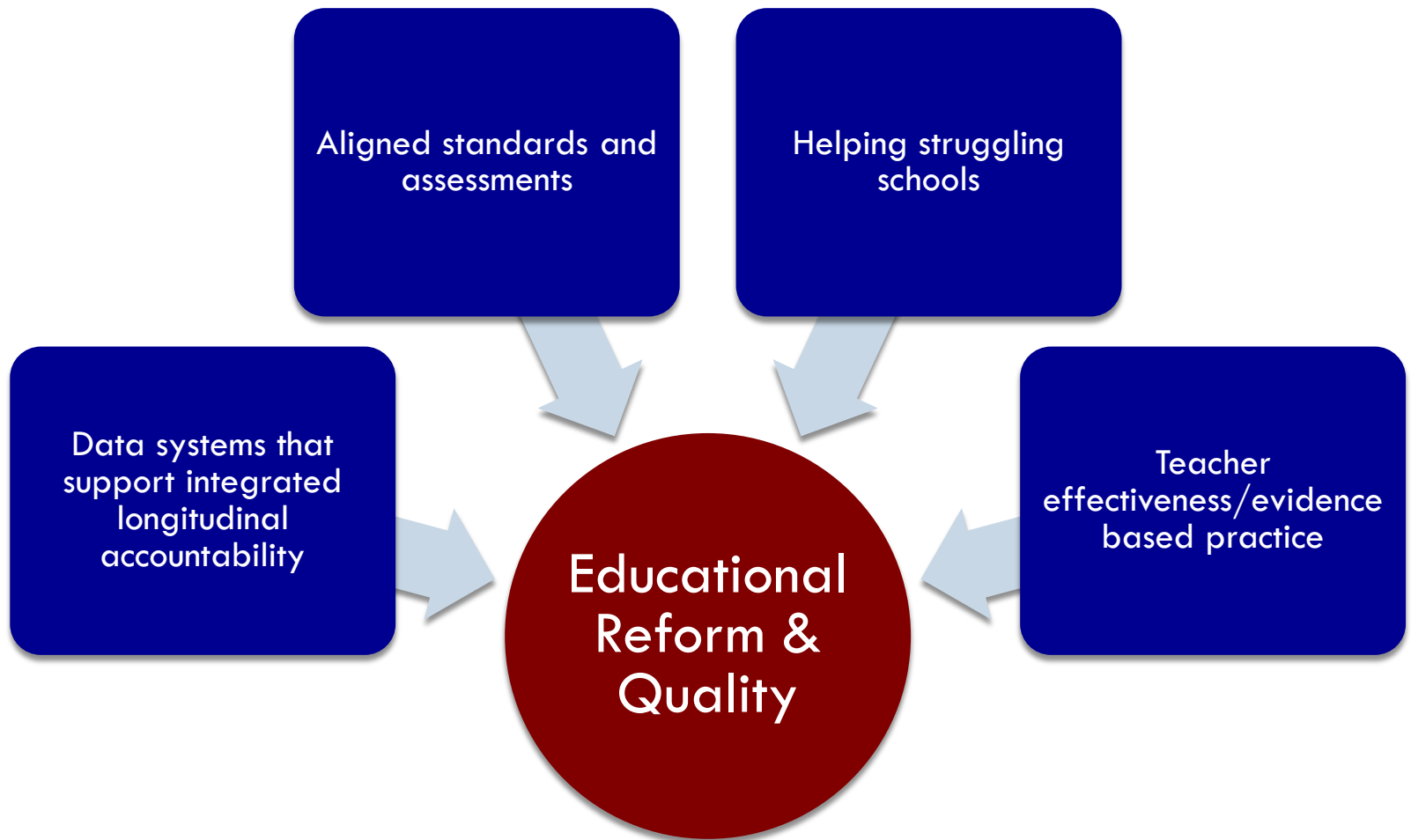
Brad Strong, Children Now

Agenda – Utilizing K Readiness Data

- Why do we want to measure school readiness?
  - Brad Strong, Children Now

- What can we measure – and how? What do the data tell us?
  - Lynne Mobilio, Applied Survey Research

- How do the data drive strategic quality improvements for PK-3?
  - Lisa Kaufman, Santa Clara County Office of Education

4 pillars of education policy

Aligned standards and assessments

Helping struggling schools

Data systems that support integrated longitudinal accountability

Teacher effectiveness/evidence based practice

Educational Reform & Quality

What can we measure? And how?

K readiness – PREVENT the achievement gap

☐ We've found great disparities in school readiness … and these gaps are connected to achievement

☐ A solid understanding of school readiness is a critical step in <u>preventing</u> the achievement gap

☐ Our guiding principle …

▪ It is much easier to change developmental and academic trajectories of children birth – age 8 if we track how they are developing and intervene early

Key messages

- Readiness is much more than abc's and 123's
  - Need practical tools to evaluate social-emotional development
- Measuring readiness is practical to do in real classrooms

It <u>is</u> feasible – and practical - to gather readiness information

- Features of the *Kindergarten Observation Form*
    - Whole-child approach including both academics as well as critical social-emotional skills
    - Aligned with National Educational Goals Panel thinking
    - Easy for teachers to administer
    - Observation-based
    - Repeatable
    - Reliable and valid
    - Predictive
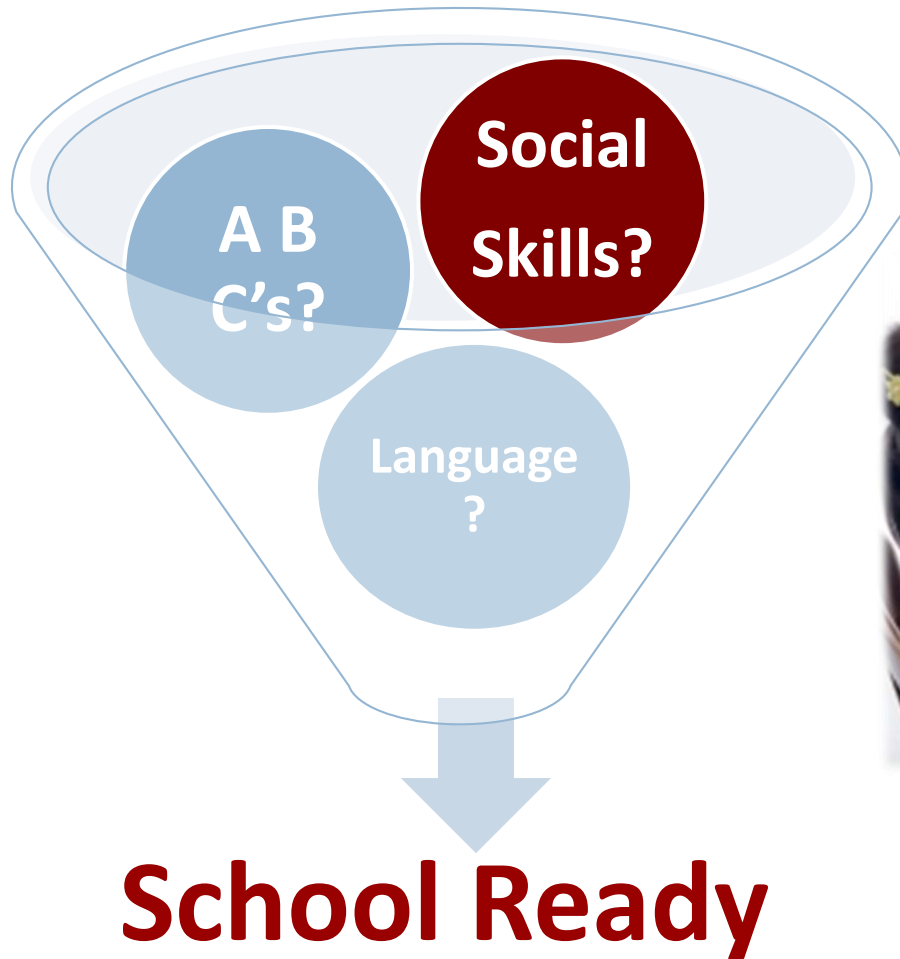   - **Designed to support children, not to label them**

What are appropriate (and not) things to do with these tools?

- Appropriate
  - Target early childhood investments
  - Screening of children to know how to best serve them
  - Customize professional development for PK-3rd grade teachers
  - Evaluate programs
  - Balance classrooms and resources to best support all kids
  - Learn more about strengths and needs in the parent community
  - Provide fodder for discussion between ECE providers and K teachers
- Inappropriate
  - Prevent K entry
  - High stakes labeling or tracking of children
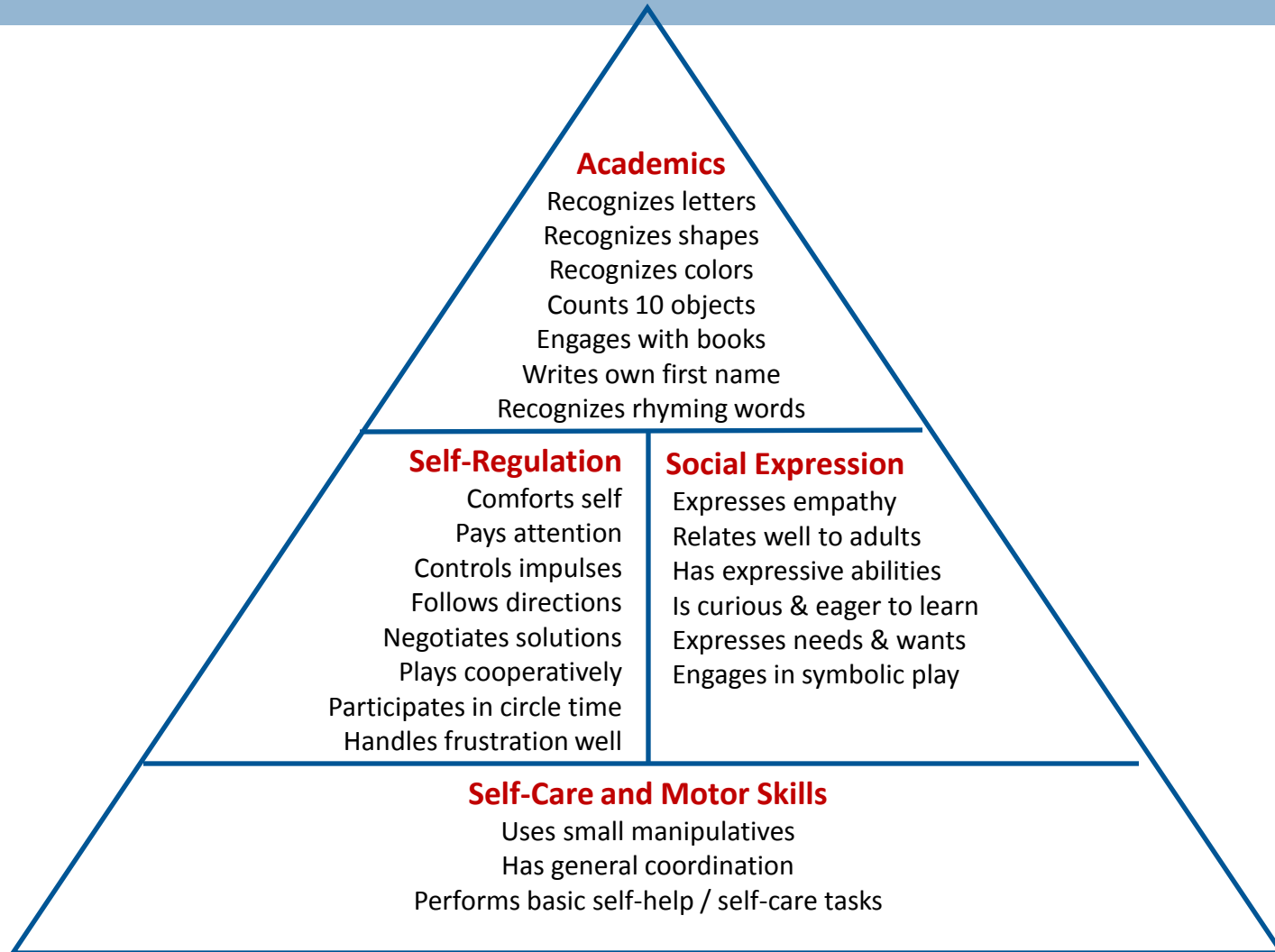 - Assuming that children who are not proficient in all areas are unable to succeed
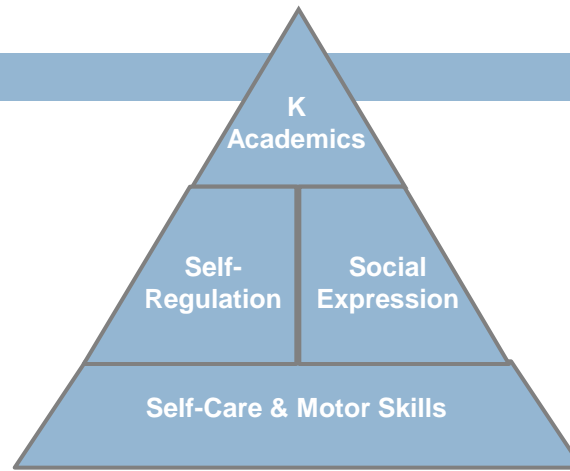
What are the critical ingredients?

Social Skills?

A B C's?

Language?

School Ready

Basic Building Blocks of Readiness

Academics
Recognizes letters
Recognizes shapes
Recognizes colors
Counts 10 objects
Engages with books
Writes own first name
Recognizes rhyming words

Self-Regulation
Comforts self
Pays attention
Controls impulses
Follows directions
Negotiates solutions
Plays cooperatively
Participates in circle time
Handles frustration well

Social Expression
Expresses empathy
Relates well to adults
Has expressive abilities
Is curious & eager to learn
Expresses needs & wants
Engages in symbolic play

Self-Care and Motor Skills
Uses small manipulatives
Has general coordination
Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks

Placing children's skills in context

2009
ECE & Elementary School Practices in Santa Clara County

K Academics

Self-Regulation

Social Expression

Self-Care & Motor Skills

- San Mateo – 2001,02, 03, 05, 08
- Santa Clara -2004, 05, 06, 08
- San Francisco- 2007, 09
- Alameda – 2008, 09
- Los Angeles – LAUP – 2009

Parent Survey
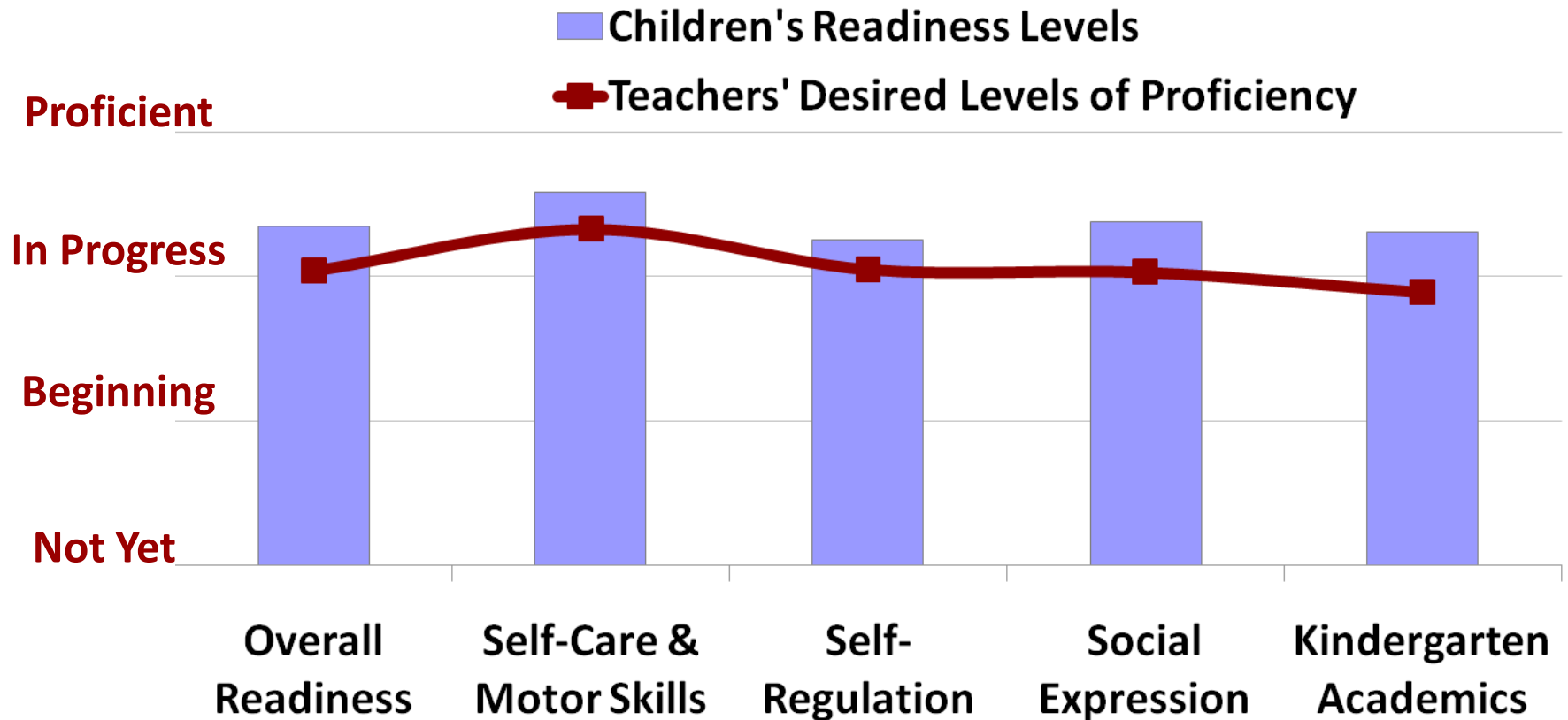
School Readiness

K Teacher Expectations

What do the data tell us?

What do principals and teachers know about entering kindergarteners?

- Few principals receive documentation about their students at K entry

- Principals don't know much about their ECE feeder schools ... and 87% feel increased collaboration would be helpful

- Principals aren't sure that ECE feeders know what children need to be successful in kindergarten

- ECE providers also don't get feedback about how their children actually do (anecdotally)

- Bottom line? Principals would like to know much more about students … sooner

Source: Applied Survey Research Examining Elementary School Practices in Santa Clara County , September 2009
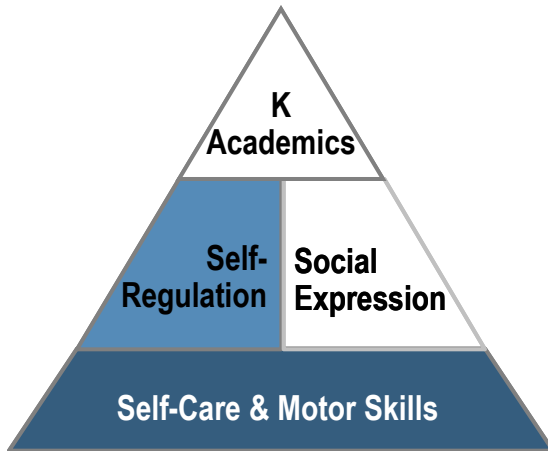
Skill levels by Basic Building Blocks

Source: San Mateo assessment data (2008). Santa Clara findings were similar.

K teacher priorities for readiness

Lowest ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Highest

Relative Importance of Each Building Block

Triangle 1:
- K Academics
- Self-Regulation
- Social Expression
- Self-Care & Motor Skills
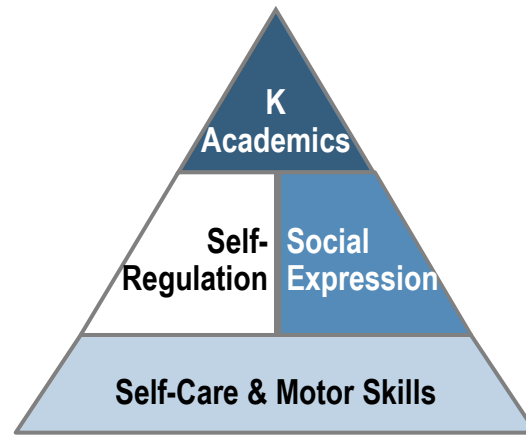
Relative Ease-of-Changing Each Building Block

Triangle 2:
- K Academics
- Self-Regulation
- Social Expression
- Self-Care & Motor Skills
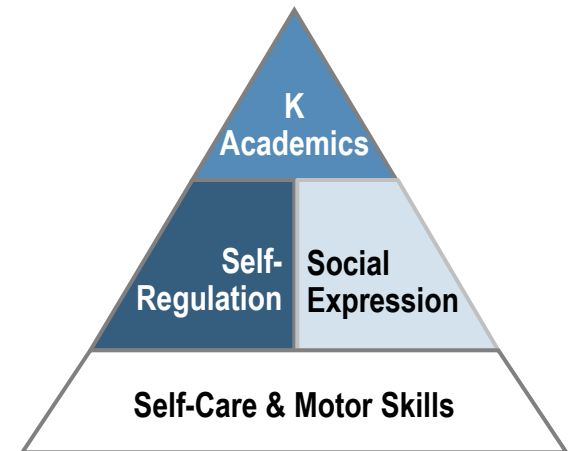
Relative Amount of Time Spent on Each Building Block

Triangle 3:
- K Academics
- Self-Regulation
- Social Expression
- Self-Care & Motor Skills

Data from 2008 SCC Teacher Expectation Survey (internal data)

How many children meet teachers' expectations?

Meets or Exceeds

Teachers' Desired Proficiency

Falls Below

Overall | Self-Care & Motor | Self-Regula-tion | Social Expres-sion | K Aca-demics
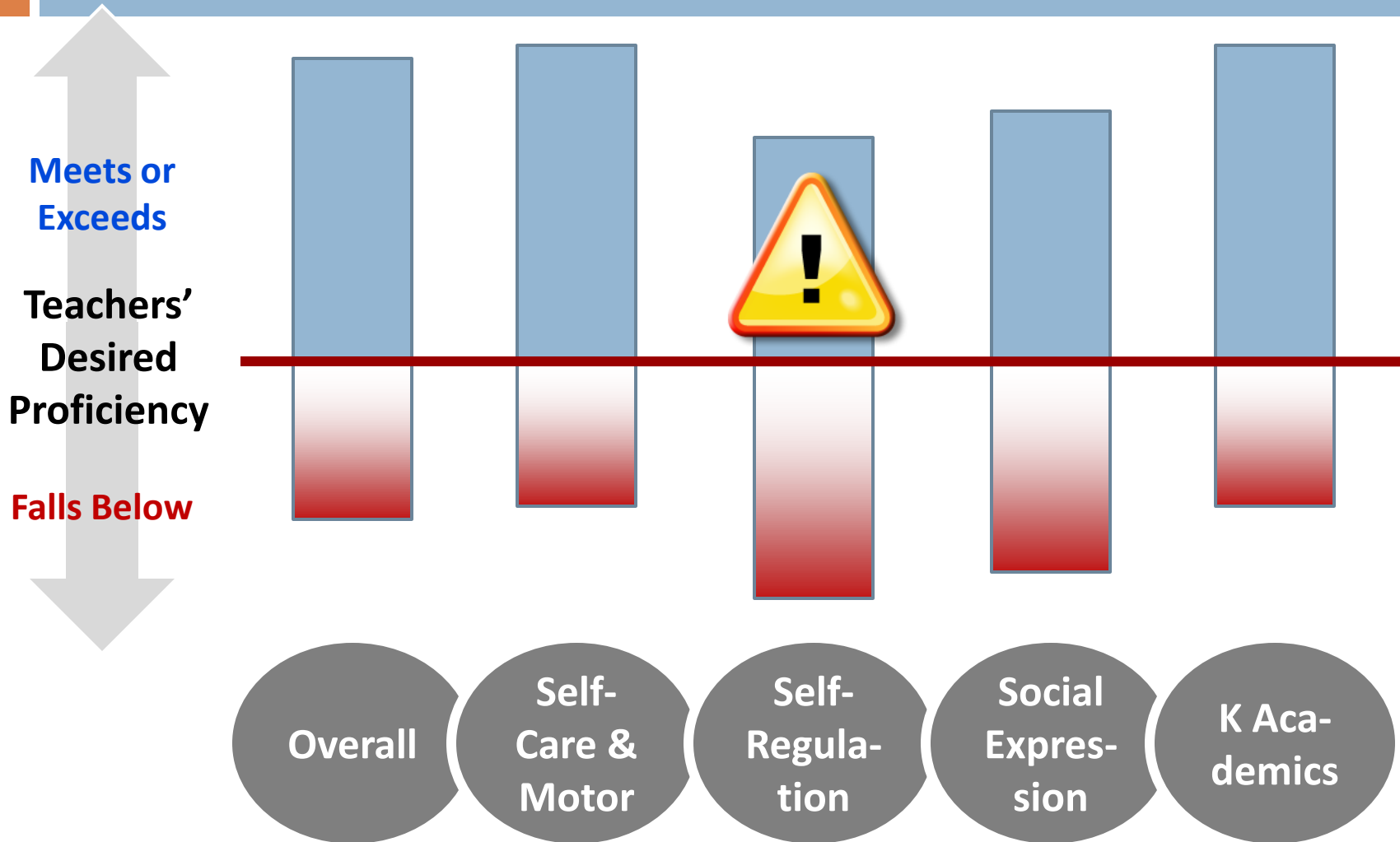
▶ Source: Data are reflective of San Mateo and Santa Clara assessment findings.

Children enter school with diverse skill sets

Proficient

~10-20%

50-55%

K Academics

Self-Regulation | Social Expression

Self-Care & Motor Skills

Not Yet

Kindergarten

Social / Emotional

Academics

Proficient
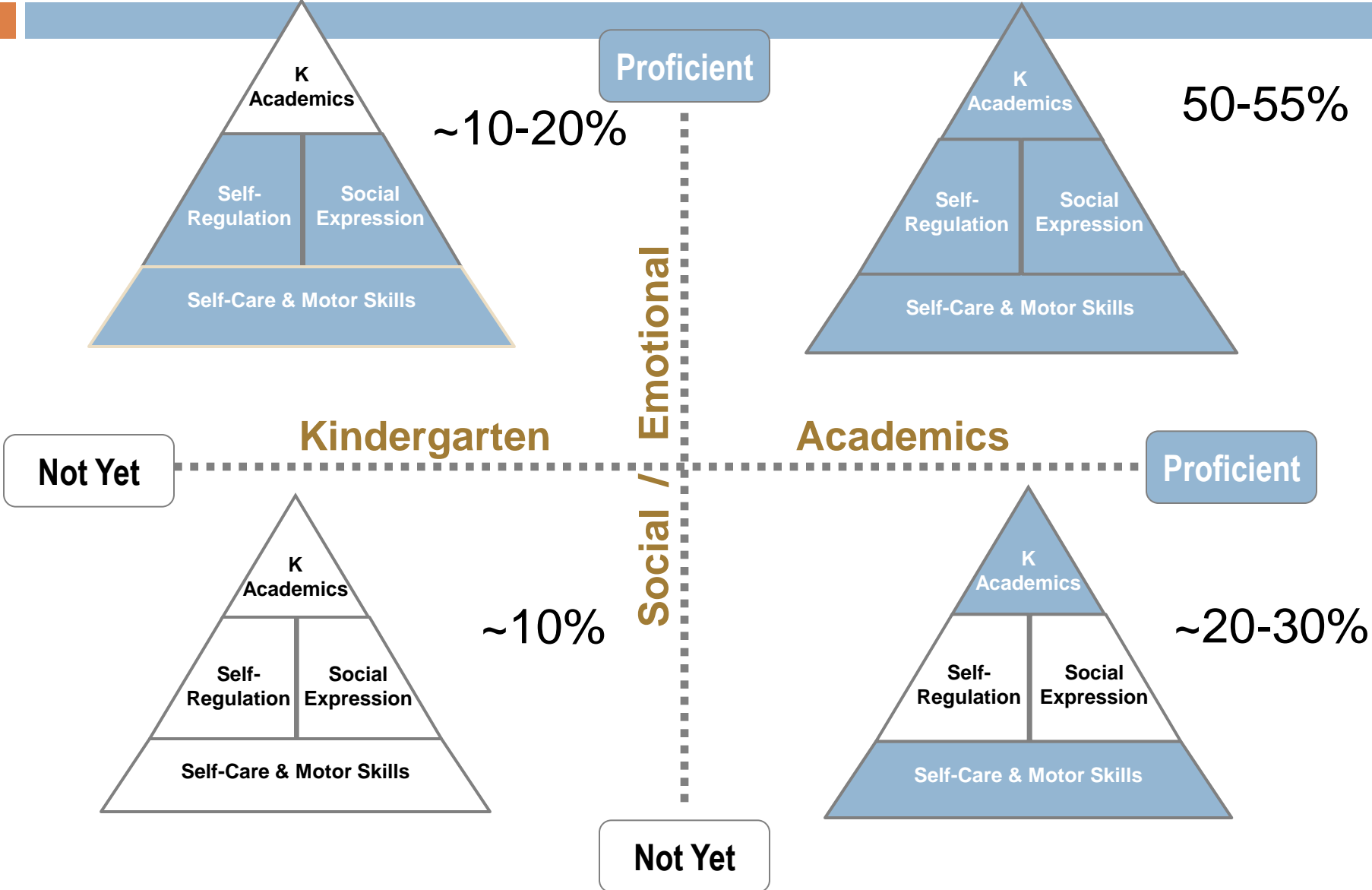
~10%

~20-30%

Not Yet

Readiness gaps persist ...

Kindergarten Readiness

3rd Grade Tests
Proficient + Advanced

(50-55%)

K Academics

Self-Regulation

Social Expression

Self-Care & Motor Skills

62%

K Academics

Self-Regulation

Social Expression

Self-Care & Motor Skills
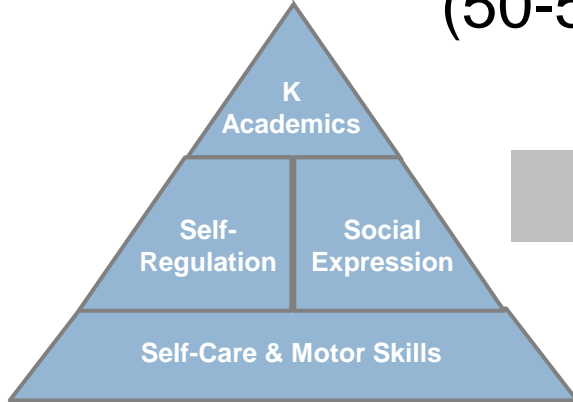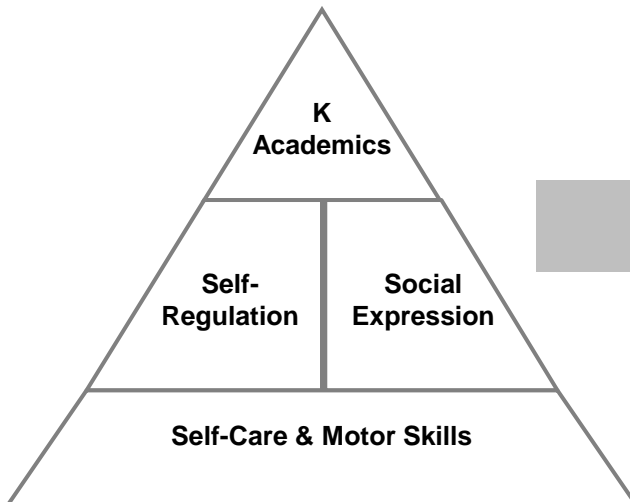
6%

Source: ASR. *Does Readiness Matter?* (2008).

Using readiness data to target interventions

Child does not have special needs

8-11% of children have special needs. Needs are being identified earlier. Almost all parents pursue referrals and state that services help.

Girls

Girls tend to be more ready for school than boys

Age

Older children are more ready . 16-23% are < 5 upon entry.

Healthy

Children who are healthy, well-fed and well-rested are more ready. Most children have this basic foundation, but some have need.

Pre-school

Children with preschool are much more ready, transition more easily, & have more advanced language skills.

Skill Info

Parents who received readiness info had children who were more ready.

Families at lower risk

Children of families with *fewer* risks like teen mom, single parent, lost job, frequent moves, & few supports are more ready.

School Readiness

This chart depicts the results of regression analyses to predict school readiness. The factors above "school readiness" were predictors in both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Additional predictors were significant in only one of the counties; these can be found in the reports. Both regression models were highly significant, although more variance was explained in San Mateo than in Santa Clara.
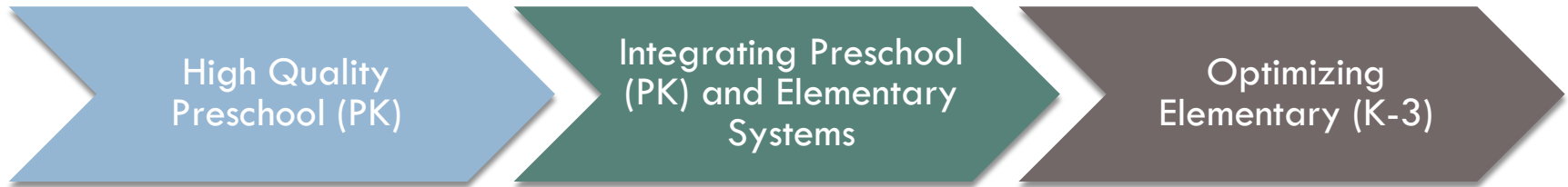
Preschool grads are clearly more ready

But preschool can't always overcome challenges from the first 3 years.
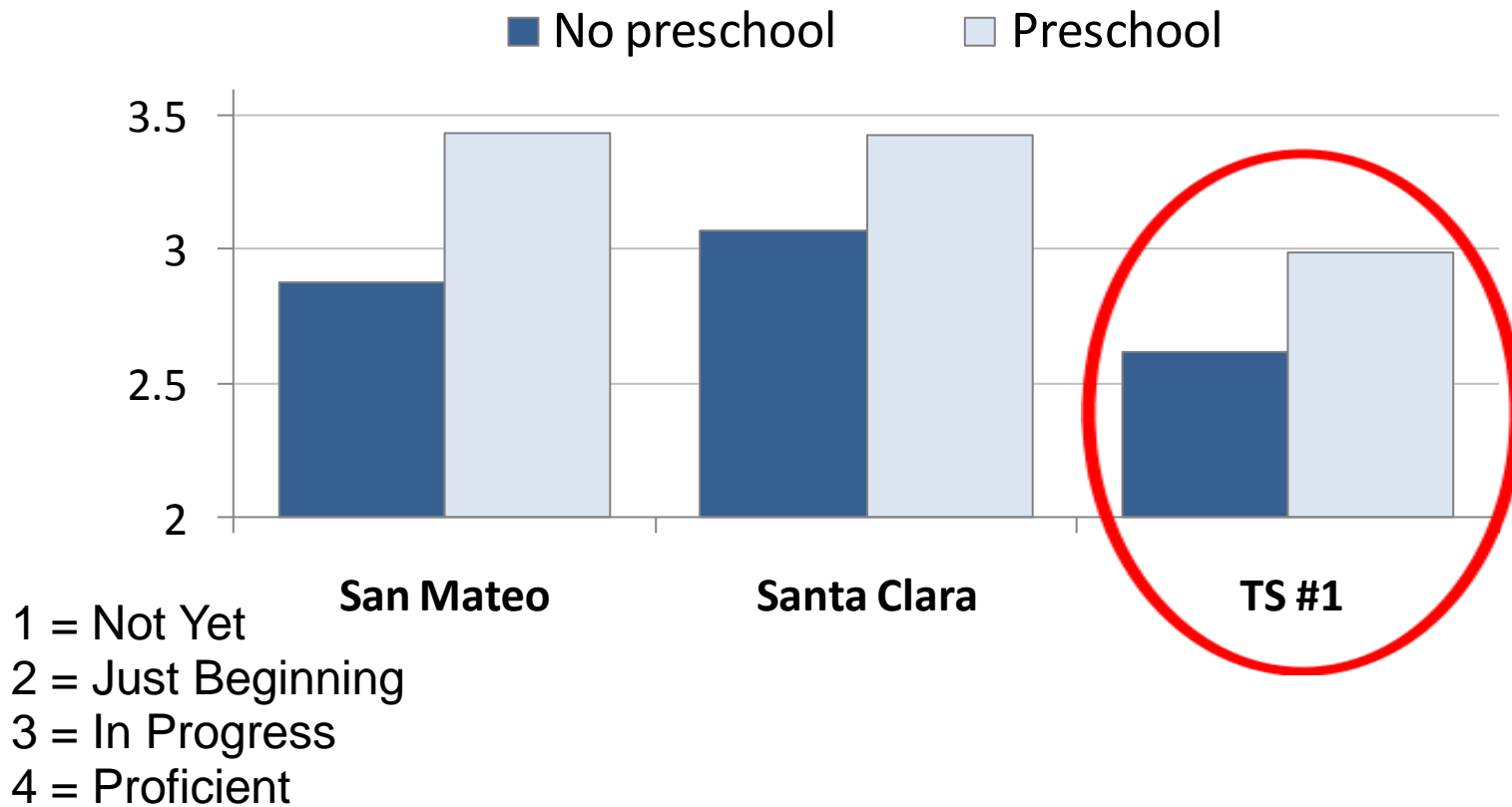
1 = Not Yet
2 = Just Beginning
3 = In Progress
4 = Proficient

The path to closing the achievement gap…

21

| High Quality Preschool (PK) | Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems | Optimizing Elementary (K-3) |

- 1/3 of our children are not meeting their K teacher expectations when they enter – almost ½ don't meet expectations for behavior
- Children who attend preschool are more ready for school
- But, preschool is not a panacea
- Half our preschools have a formal quality management system

ASR – Examining Elementary School Practices in Santa Clara County – September 2009

The path to closing the achievement gap…

High Quality Preschool (PK)	Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems	Optimizing Elementary (K-3)

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Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems

- Data do not flow with children into K
- 62% of principals know nothing or very little about their PK feeders
- 87% feel increased collaboration would be helpful

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The path to closing the achievement gap…

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Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems

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- 2/3 of principals see a big gap between their current K-3 programs and what they think is ideal

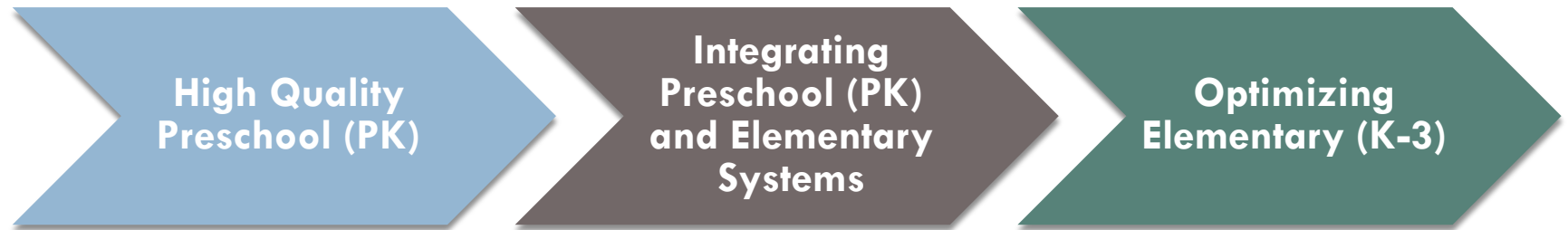ASR – Examining Elementary School Practices in Santa Clara County – September 2009

24

How do the data drive strategic quality improvements for PK-3?

Utilizing K readiness data to drive strategic quality improvements for PK-3

High Quality Preschool (PK) → **Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems** → **Optimizing Elementary (K-3)**

Utilizing K readiness data to drive strategic quality improvements for PK-3

High Quality Preschool (PK)

- Professional development in areas of socio-emotional and language development
- Staff can utilize formative assessment data and make continuous enhancements throughout year to support all children's development
- Adopted developmentally-appropriate curriculum that is aligned with state preschool standards
- Participation in local and state quality preschool initiatives (California Early Learning Quality Improvement System)
- High quality workforce: instructional leaders in every preschool classroom

Utilizing K readiness data to drive strategic quality improvements for PK- 3

High Quality Preschool (PK) → **Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems** → **Optimizing Elementary (K-3)**

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Utilizing K readiness data to drive strategic quality improvements for PK- 3

Optimizing Elementary (K-3)

- Professional development is designed based on readiness data
- Supports for socio-emotional development
- Seamless transition opportunities in K-3
  - Horizontal (within grade) and vertical (across grade) articulation
- Extended learning opportunities are maximized during early elementary years to reduce achievement gap
- High quality workforce in all classrooms
- Ongoing formative assessment utilized in a reflective, intentional manner to tailor supports to meet each child's needs

Utilizing K readiness data to drive strategic quality improvements for PK- 3

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Optimizing Elementary (K-3)
- Professional development is designed based on readiness data
- Seamless transitions between elementary grades
  - Horizontal (within grade) and vertical (across grade) articulation opportunities
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Utilizing K readiness data to drive strategic quality improvements for PK- 3

Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems

- Two-way cohesive, alignment between preschool and elementary schools
  - Curriculum and standards alignment
  - Family engagement
  - ELL/DLL programming
  - Professional development
- Kindergarten transition summer programs for children who have not attended preschool
- Integrated data system: feedback to and accountability of preschools; and timely data for districts to design effective programming for incoming students
- Articulation between preschool and kindergarten staff
- District Level Policies
- School district's vision is preschool through Grade 12
- Explicit strategic goals and initiatives embedded in district work
- Policies in place to support integration of preschool and elementary programming (e.g., kindergarten enrollment policy)

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Optimizing Elementary (K-3)

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- Ongoing formative assessment to tailor supports to each child's needs

WHY we measure readiness

- ☐ To target community investments in children ages preschool through Grade 3 and measure return on investment

- ☐ To design classroom strategies and professional development that will improve achievement

- ☐ To screen for children who need extra attention

- ☐ TO PREVENT THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP!

Contact information

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