Utilizing Kindergarten Readiness Observation and Assessment

Loretta Burns, Santa Clara Partnership for School Readiness
Lisa Kaufman, Santa Clara County Office Of Ed
Lynne Mobilio, Applied Survey Research
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
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 preventing 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 is 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?

School Ready

A B C’s?

Social Skills?

Language?
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

Parent Survey

School Readiness

K Teacher Expectations

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

Academics
Self-Regulation
Social Expression
Self-Care & Motor Skills
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

Skill levels by Basic Building Blocks

Source: San Mateo assessment data (2008). Santa Clara findings were similar.
K teacher priorities for readiness

Relative Importance of Each Building Block

Relative Ease-of-Changing Each Building Block

Relative Amount of Time Spent on Each Building Block

Data from 2008 SCC Teacher Expectation Survey (internal data)
How many children meet teachers’ expectations?

Source: Data are reflective of San Mateo and Santa Clara assessment findings.
Children enter school with diverse skill sets.
Readiness gaps persist...

Kindergarten Readiness

- K Academics
- Self-Regulation
- Social Expression
- Self-Care & Motor Skills

(50-55%)

3rd Grade Tests Proficient + Advanced

62%

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

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form & Parent Information Form (2008).
• 1/3 of our children are not meeting their K teacher expectations when they enter — almost 1/2 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
The path to closing the achievement gap...

High Quality Preschool (PK)

- 1/3 of our children are not meeting their K teacher expectations when they enter – almost 1/2 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

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

Optimizing Elementary (K-3)

The path to closing the achievement gap...

High Quality Preschool (PK)

- 1/3 of our children are not meeting their K teacher expectations when they enter – almost 1/2 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

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

Optimizing Elementary (K-3)

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

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)
- 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 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

Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems

Optimizing Elementary (K-3)
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

**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 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

**Integrating Preschool (PK) and Elementary Systems**

**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
- Extended learning opportunities are maximized during early elementary years to reduce achievement gap
- High quality workforce in all classrooms
- Ongoing formative assessment to tailor supports to each child’s needs
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)
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 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

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)

Optimizing Elementary (K-3)
- Professional development is designed based on readiness data
- Programs to support socio-emotional development in place
- Seamless transitions between elementary grades
  - Horizontal (within grade) and vertical (across grade) articulation opportunities
- Extended learning opportunities are maximized during early elementary years to reduce achievement gap
- High quality workforce in all classrooms
- 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

- Brad Strong, Children Now
  - [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org)
  - bstrong@childrennow.org

- Lynne Mobilio, Applied Survey Research
  - [www.appliedsurveyresearch.org](http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org)
  - lynne@appliedsurveyresearch.org

- Lisa Kaufman, Santa Clara County Office of Education
  - [www.sccoe.org](http://www.sccoe.org)
  - Lisa_Kaufman@sccoe.org

- Loretta Burns, Santa Clara Partnership for School Readiness
  - [www.sccpsr.org](http://www.sccpsr.org)
  - burnslh@gmail.com