

Kristie Kauerz
University of Washington

Julia Coffman
Center for Evaluation Innovation

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Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches

Background:

The vision for PreK-3rd grade approaches is to improve the quality and coherence of children's learning opportunities, from the experiences children have before they enter the K-12 system and extending through elementary school. Ultimately, comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approaches hold the potential to improve child outcomes and to prevent or close achievement gaps.

Effective instruction, instructional coherence, and meaningful learning opportunities are central to comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approaches. PreK-3rd grade reforms are similar to systems change efforts in that they are complicated and complex. They cross the traditional boundaries of early learning (also known as birth-to-five or 0-5) and K-12 education. They cross multiple grades and have multiple elements. They aim for practice and policy changes in many areas (e.g., leadership, professional development, data) and at multiple levels (e.g., classrooms, schools, districts). They aim for multi-faceted changes in multiple groups (e.g., children, families, teachers, education leaders, community members).

How the Framework was developed:

The Framework is solidly grounded in research and evidence-based practice. Developed over the course of more than two years, it went through three key phases: [1] extensive review of multiple bodies of literature that describe the essential elements of teaching and learning that produce positive changes in children's outcomes, birth through age 8; [2] pilot-tested in more than 35 school districts and communities across the country; and [3] peer review by leading academic scholars and practitioner-experts.

To learn about technical assistance and other resources to support the use of this Framework in local school districts and communities, please contact Kristie Kauerz at the University of Washington College of Education (kauerzk@uw.edu).

Purpose of this Framework:

This Framework is intended to be referenced and used over an extended period of time for reflection, self-evaluation, and improvement of PreK-3rd grade efforts. This Framework helps to address key questions facing those who are developing PreK-3rd grade approaches in their school, districts, and communities:

- What does a comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approach include?
- The word ‘alignment’ is used often; but what needs to be aligned?
- What kinds of changes need to take hold in adults’ behaviors before we can expect to see improvements in child outcomes?
- What kinds of responsibilities need to be shared among 0-5 programs, grades K-3, families, and communities?

This Framework is intended to be used a tool to support the development of comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approaches. It can be used to establish:

- A foundation of content, process, and norms for professional collaboration within and across age and grade levels from PreK through elementary school;
- Shared visions of high-quality, developmentally based learning for young children in early learning and elementary school settings;
- Implementation plans that establish accountability for improving child outcomes and closing achievement gaps; and
- Evaluation strategies that help to ensure that the activities and structures put in place actually impact child outcomes.

From a planning and implementation perspective, the Framework helps users see the “big picture” of comprehensive and systemic PreK-3rd grade work and guides users in understanding how their own PreK-3rd strategies “fit” in the big picture, providing concrete examples of how to enrich and expand PreK-3rd grade approaches. From an evaluation perspective, the Framework helps users think about why evaluation needs to be infused into PreK-3rd grade approaches from the beginning. It also suggests strategies and methods for how to evaluate PreK-3rd grade implementation efforts.

Users:

The Framework is designed primarily for use by schools, school districts, early learning programs, and other community partners. It offers a flexible structure wherein small, large, urban, rural, suburban, and other communities can “find themselves.” The Framework is equally useful when PreK is offered on-site at elementary schools and/or when early learning partners are community-based. While the “PreK” definition will vary from site to site (see definitions on next page), the key factor is that the K-12 system is collaborating and aligning with services and programs that serve children younger than the traditional K-3 grade span.

Definitions of Key Terms Used in the Framework:

Administrator:	Those people who hold positions of authority (over personnel, strategic direction, and financial issues) in their respective systems. Administrators provide guidance and support that influences teachers, directly or indirectly. Administrators include superintendents and central office staff in school districts; school board members; principals; Head Start directors; child care directors; and early learning program managers.
Teacher:	Any adult who has primary responsibility for providing instructional and emotional support to children in any learning-based program, setting, or initiative. “Teacher” includes state-certified professionals in public schools; licensed teachers in Head Start, center-based child care, family child care, and other community-based preschool programs; and other adults.
PreK:	Used as a generic term to encompass all of the learning-based programs, settings, and initiatives that children may experience before (“pre-”) entering kindergarten. This includes school-based PreK, Head Start, center-based child care, family child care, and other community-based preschool programs. In many school districts and communities, PreK is used to describe services focused on 3- and 4-year old children. In other places, PreK includes infant/toddler programs, settings, and initiatives.

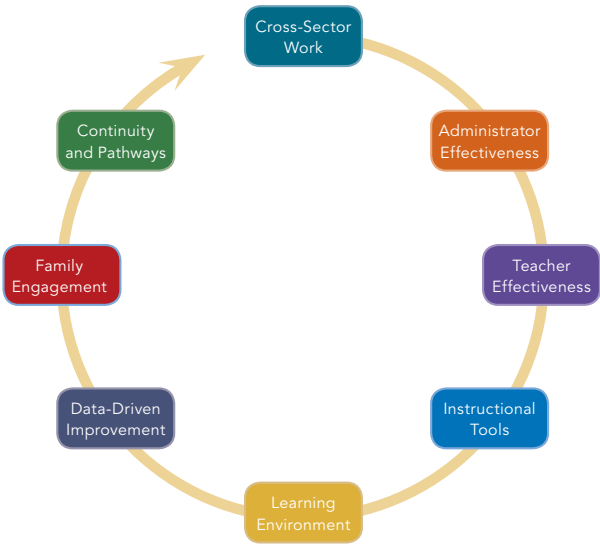
Guide to the Structure of the Framework:

The framework is divided into eight major “buckets” or categories of effort (see diagram) that have been identified as essential to high-quality and comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approaches. Evidence indicates that the more buckets that are implemented well, the more likely that benefits will occur (i.e., improved quality of learning experiences for young children and, in turn, improved child outcomes).

These eight buckets do not stand in isolation from one another. Indeed, there is substantial overlap and entwinement among them. For example, in practice, it is impossible to separate instructional tools from teacher effectiveness.

Despite the intrinsic overlap, the buckets are presented separately in order to:

- Emphasize the importance of being explicit and intentional about addressing each category of effort;
- Recognize that some districts and communities may not have the resource capacity to implement all eight buckets; and
- Highlight that different activities and strategies can create and reinforce meaningful changes in adult behaviors/skills and changes to the system itself.



This table describes the intention of each component of the Framework:

<div><div>Bucket The eight major categories of effort that structure a comprehensive approach to PreK-3rd grade reform.</div><div>.....></div><div>GOAL: Overarching Goal A broad statement of what each bucket/ category of effort aims to achieve.</div></div>			
PreK-3rd Strategies	Example Implementation Indicators	Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment	Example Evaluation Approach
Culled from research and evidence-based practices, these activities are essential to a comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approach.	<p>Effective PreK-3rd reforms require stakeholders across the system to act in different ways in order to change the overall system so that high-quality, developmentally based instruction is prioritized.</p> <p>This column highlights sample indicators, categorized by key stakeholder group, of changed actions at the system level.</p> <p>These indicators map directly back to the PreK-3rd activities in the prior column.</p>	<p>This column provides a means for self-assessing the robustness of PreK-3rd activities.</p> <p>To be doing the most comprehensive PreK-3rd work, all circles should be checked.</p> <p>If only one or two circles are checked, this can serve as a guide for how to strengthen or enhance a PreK-3rd grade strategy.</p> <p>These self-assessment checklists are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but provide quick examples of how to think about the depth of a PreK-3rd approach.</p>	<p>This column provides a definition of the purpose(s) for evaluating the activities within this bucket and example methods and tools for evaluating them.</p> <p>Most methods should be administered early in implementation to collect baseline data and then repeated later to allow for comparisons.</p> <p>Whenever possible, methods to assess activities should be triangulated (using two or more methods to assess the same activities).</p>

Why are child outcomes not included?

The ultimate goal of PreK-3rd grade approaches is to improve child outcomes and close achievement gaps. Child outcomes should always be kept front-and-center in planning, implementing, and evaluating PreK-3rd grade efforts. This Framework is based on the premise that there needs to be more intentional focus on the changes that need to occur in adult behaviors/skills, and to the system itself, before meaningful child outcomes will be realized.

Suggested Ways to Use the Framework

For Planning a PreK-3rd Grade Approach:

Focus on the first two columns (PreK-3rd Strategies, Example System-Level Indicators) as a way to strategically think about and plan for activities to implement as part of a school district's or community's PreK-3rd Grade approach.

Consider: Which buckets and activities are most important to tackle first in order to build momentum for longer-term change? Which activities are in line with existing capacities? What changes can be expected to be seen when the activities are implemented?

For Implementing a PreK-3rd Grade Approach:

Focus on the first three columns of the Framework (PreK-3rd Strategies, Example System-Level Indicators, and Depth of Implementation/Alignment) as a way to think about how to strengthen or deepen a school district's or community's implementation efforts.

Consider: Are you implementing all of the strategies listed in each bucket? Is implementation deep enough to make a difference for children? If not, why not, and what can be done to increase implementation comprehensiveness and effectiveness?

For Evaluating a PreK-3rd Grade Approach:

Focus on the last three columns (Example System-Level Indicators, Depth of Implementation/Alignment, and Example Evaluation Approaches) as a guide to tracking and measuring progress and results.

Consider: Where is implementation not meeting expectations and why? Where do you need more in-depth evaluation to either demonstrate the effectiveness of your PreK-3rd efforts or to diagnose potential problems and solutions?

Cross-Sector Work

GOAL:

Mechanisms, resources, and structures exist that reflect, support, and sustain shared vision, collaborative relationships, and mutual accountabilities between 0-5 and K-12.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Governance

Establish and support collaborative (cross-organizational and cross-sector) board or committee that formalizes decision-making roles and responsibilities among partners and prioritizes PreK-3rd efforts.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Establish board, committee, or other entity with explicit responsibility for guiding and making decisions about PreK-3rd efforts.
- Identify and engage both school- and community-based partners as key participants.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Identify and create formal linkages with the primary early learning programs that send children to particular elementary schools (feeder patterns).
- Establish a PreK-3rd leadership group that includes both school- and community-based teachers and is responsible for building teamwork across age/grade levels.

Teachers/Families

- Perceive the entities responsible for guiding PreK-3rd efforts to have credibility and influence.
- Demonstrate shared language and understanding of PreK-3rd.

Decision-making entities meet consistently and membership includes:

- K-12
- Head Start
- Community-based preschools/child care
- Family child care
- After-school and extended-learning programs
- Other community stakeholders

Strategic Plans

Develop, share, and regularly update a strategic plan for the PreK-3rd work that reflects shared commitment to improving outcomes for children.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Lead the development, and regular updating, of community-based needs assessments that identify child/family demographics and feeder/mobility patterns for public schools.
- Develop a shared vision and a strategic plan for PreK-3rd.
- Publicly release the PreK-3rd vision and plan.
- Incorporate shared PreK-3rd language, goals, and metrics into the district's or organization's own strategic plan and public statements.

Principals, Teacher

- Demonstrate support of the PreK-3rd vision and strategic plan and understand their role(s).
- Integrate PreK-3rd goals into school improvement plans.

Strategic plan includes:

- Explicit roles and responsibilities for each partner
- Benchmarks for progress
- Commitment to be updated annually
- Availability to the public

Funding

Generate, reallocate, leverage, connect, and/or blend public and private funds to ensure PreK-3rd efforts are adequately funded to ensure effective implementation.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Increase allocated funding for PreK-3rd.
- Identify the variety of federal, state, local, and private funding sources (e.g., Title I, Title II, Special Education, Head Start, Child Care Development Block Grant, philanthropic grants) that include services for children, PreK-3rd, and combine and blend resources to address PreK-3rd goals.
- Partner with private philanthropic partners to secure "glue funding" that supports collaborative, cross-sector work.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Use funding sources (e.g., combine and blend) to ensure that staff with instructional responsibilities in supplemental and intervention programs are full-time employees, consistently and meaningfully work with teacher teams, and engage with families.

Funding strategies for PreK-3rd include:

- "Glue money" to support a sustainable and on-going cross-sector leadership team
- Expansion of public investment in programs and services that directly serve/benefit children, PreK-3rd grade
- More than two sources of public funds
- At least one source of private funds

EVALUATION PURPOSE:

- Determine awareness of and support for the PreK-3rd vision/plan.
- Gauge credibility and influence of cross-sector decisionmaking entity.
- Ensure that cross-sector mechanisms are inclusive, comprehensive, and informed by population-specific information.

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Survey or interviews of school board members; superintendents; principals; teachers; parents; community-based partners.
- Document review of key district and organization documents (e.g., strategic plans, policy statements, external communications, meeting minutes, proposals/reports to foundations, websites).
- Budget tracking (on resources dedicated to PreK-3rd efforts).
- Champion tracking of targeted administrators and community leaders.
- Network analysis.

Administrator Effectiveness

GOAL:

Administrators (district superintendents, school principals, early childhood directors) actively create a culture and organizational structures that ensure the quality of PreK-3rd grade learning.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Visible Leadership

Administrators demonstrate that PreK-3rd is a priority to both internal and external stakeholders

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Increase the number of and strengthen partnerships between districts, Head Start grantees, child care organizations, municipalities with early learning initiatives, extended-learning programs, and other community-based programs.
- Develop clear and consistent communication about PreK-3rd as a priority in both internal (e.g., district strategic plans, teacher newsletters) and external (e.g., web sites, family newsletters) platforms.

- Establish expectations that principals and program administrators focus on core PreK-3rd goals and minimize the number/variety of initiatives that compete for teachers’ attention.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Increase the number of partnerships between elementary schools, the early learning programs that feed into them, and families.
- Strengthen the consistency and depth of partnerships between schools and local early learning programs so they are perceived to be meaningful and mutually beneficial.

Administrators are active leaders in partnerships that are demonstrated to be:

- ☐ Collaborative
- ☐ Inclusive of multiple partners
- ☐ Effective at creating change
- ☐ Visible to the public (e.g., families)
- ☐ Credible to policymakers

EVALUATION PURPOSES:

- Identify the depth of administrators’ involvement in PreK-3rd grade reforms and provide formative feedback to administrators (beginning of year and on-going).
- Understand how administrators’ support of and impact on instruction is perceived by teachers and families (end of year).
- Verify strength of partnerships across stakeholders and gather formative feedback on how to improve.

Foster Teamwork

Administrators foster teamwork among individuals, especially teachers, at all levels within the PreK-3rd work.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Establish and support teamwork among school principals and early learning directors/administrators.
- Establish a vision and expectations for principals/administrators to build and support constructive teamwork among teachers.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Support regular, inclusive, and shared professional development among teachers in both age/grade-level (horizontal) and cross-grade (vertical) teams, inclusive of both school- and community-based teachers.

- Engage and support teacher teamwork by involving teacher teams in setting professional development agendas and materials selection.
- Demonstrate innovative efforts to create and standardize time for school- and community-based teachers to work together across different daily, weekly, quarterly, and school year calendars.

Teachers

- Participate in regular professional learning communities with other teachers at their age/grade level (horizontal).
- Participate in regular professional learning communities with teachers in other age/grade levels (vertical).

Administrators support teamwork that includes teachers from:

- ☐ School-based PreK
- ☐ Community-based early learning programs
- ☐ Head Start
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ First Grade
- ☐ Second Grade
- ☐ Third Grade
- ☐ After-school and extended-learning programs
- ☐ Special programs’ staff (e.g., Special Education; Title I; occupational/physical therapists)

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Survey or interviews of superintendents; principals; other administrators; teachers.
- Case study of evolving relationships between administrators, teachers, and other key stakeholders.
- 360° surveys for principals, superintendents, and other administrators.
- Network/partnership mapping of relationships between schools, early learning, and community-based programs.
- Observations of administrator-convened and led meetings of teachers and other stakeholders.

Instructional Leadership

Administrators are effective instructional leaders, PreK-3rd.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Participate in annual professional development related to the learning and development of children, birth through age 8.
- Actively develop and cultivate their own and others’ leadership skills around improving learning opportunities for young children.
- Establish and implement effective induction programs and on-going supervision/evaluation of site administrators and teachers who work in PreK-3rd grade settings.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Participate in annual professional development related to the learning and development of children, birth to age 8.

- Use student outcome data to inform decisions about instructional strategies, learning environment, teacher assignment, professional development priorities,
- Conduct regular classroom observations for the purpose of providing constructive and supportive feedback to teachers.
- Assign strong teachers to PreK-3rd grade classrooms.

Teachers

- Perceive feedback received from principals and administrators to be constructive and supportive.
- Demonstrate common instructional practices across classrooms and differentiated instruction for all children.

Administrators are accountable for:

- ☐ Improving their own knowledge and skills related to supporting effective instruction for young learners
- ☐ Setting high expectations for both teacher and student learning
- ☐ Tracking student progress
- ☐ Using fair and valid tools to inform their conversations with teachers about effective instruction

Teacher Effectiveness

GOAL:

Teachers are actively dedicated to providing high-quality instruction and effective learning experiences for all children, PreK-3rd grade.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Focus on Instruction

Teachers’ professional education and development are focused on effectively supporting children’s language/reading, math, social, and emotional development; and on differentiating instruction for all young learners.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Invest in a systematic approach to teacher professional development that is grounded in child development and focused on effective instruction.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Enact and support cross-sector and cross-grade professional development opportunities for teachers that reflect best practices.
- Ensure that the majority of teachers’ annual professional development is informed by current research and student-based data, focused on effective instruction, and structured to build collaborative relationships among teachers.

Teachers

- Demonstrate effective support of children’s language/reading, math, and social and emotional development.
- Demonstrate increased effectiveness in responding to individual children’s development and learning needs.
- Demonstrate leadership in identifying, delivering, and evaluating timely content for their own professional development.

Common professional development is provided to:

- ☐ School-based PreK
- ☐ Community-based early learning programs
- ☐ Head Start
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ First Grade
- ☐ Second Grade
- ☐ Third Grade
- ☐ Classroom paraprofessionals, PreK-3rd
- ☐ Teachers in after-school and extended-learning programs

Visible Practice

Observations of classroom practices are regularly used to assess and improve teachers’ effectiveness in creating high-quality instructional, social, and emotional climates.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Use observational tools to assess teacher practices and effectiveness and provide constructive feedback to teachers on areas of strength and improvement.
- Support teachers in improving their practices.
- Provide release time and other supports for teachers to observe each others’ classrooms.

Teachers

- Use observational tools to observe each other’s classroom practices and effectiveness, to identify areas of disconnect, and to provide peer-to-peer feedback.
- Perceive feedback received (from principals and other teachers) on instructional effectiveness to be constructive and supportive.
- Use feedback received to improve their practice.

Classroom observations are:

- ☐ Conducted at least twice during each school year
- ☐ Conducted by administrators and teachers in same age/grade level
- ☐ Conducted by teachers one age/grade level above and one age/grade level below
- ☐ Linked to professional development

Work as Teams

Teachers work as teams, both horizontally and vertically, to improve instruction and effectiveness in the classroom.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Demonstrate innovative efforts to create and standardize time for school- and community-based teachers to work together across different daily, weekly, quarterly, and school year calendars.
- Have evidence that teacher instruction and effectiveness are improving over time.

Teachers

- Engage with their peers to assess, reflect on, and improve their own teaching practices.
- Have instructional coaches and mentors with whom they interact regularly.

- Demonstrate a shared language about student learning.
- Demonstrate common and cohesive instructional practices (across classrooms) that are developmentally appropriate and differentiated to meet the needs of all children.
- Demonstrate knowledge of instructional practices across the full PreK-3rd grade continuum, not just the age/grade-level for which they are responsible.

Teachers spend time:

- ☐ Observing each others’ classroom practices
- ☐ In grade-level teams discussing data (both child and classroom) and improvement strategies
- ☐ In cross-grade teams discussing data (child, classroom, and grade-level) and improvement strategies
- ☐ Sharing data and strategies with instructional coaches and others who provide supplemental services to children
- ☐ Identifying and sharing professional development content that meets their self-identified needs.

EVALUATION PURPOSES:

- Identify effectiveness of teachers’ professional development, as measured by improved classroom practices.
- Verify the effectiveness of teacher collaboration and teamwork to improve instruction and classroom practices.

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Surveys of teachers, principals, and/or instructional coaches before and after professional development and/or classroom observations with feedback occurs.
- Classroom observations (consistently through the year), based on an established tool with clear indicators.
- Document review (of professional development materials, observational tools).
- Budget tracking (on resources for professional development).
- Teacher logs of instructional practices.

Instructional Tools



Standards, curricula, and assessments focus on both academic and social-emotional skills, and are aligned to create instructional coherence, PreK-3rd grade.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Standards

Meaningful, rigorous, and aligned standards are used to articulate what children are expected to learn.

Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, Community-based Partners

- Demonstrate a developmentally informed understanding of what young children, PreK-3rd, need to know and be able to do.
- Use federal- and state-level (and other) alignment rubrics to inform their work.
- Develop learning progressions that support children’s continuous progress from year to year.
- Regularly use standards and learning progressions in professional development and family conferences.

Families

- Know that standards exist across PreK-3rd and understand how they are used in schools and early childhood programs.
- Demonstrate understanding of how standards support their children’s learning and educational success.

The standards:

- Include cognitive, literacy/language/ communication, math, social- emotional, and physical development
- Are aligned along a developmental continuum, birth through age 8 (grade 3)
- Are regularly discussed in professional development for teachers/administrators and with parents

Curricula

Curricula that are balanced, intentional, relevant, and developmental are selected and implemented.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Require and support the use of common curricula and assessments across PreK-3rd grade.
- Engage teachers in selecting common curricula and assessments and in developing a cohesive curricular framework.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Provide professional development for school- and community-based teachers around curricula, assessments, and their integration with classroom practices.

Teachers

- Participate in selecting common curricula and assessments that address both academic skills and social-emotional well-being.
- Engage in professional learning communities that address effective instruction and the linkages among curricular goals, content, and teaching strategies.
- Use consistent instructional strategies across classrooms.

Curricula are:

- Research-based
- Aligned with state standards
- Support foundational competencies
- Guide both the process and content of teaching
- Annually reviewed, then refined, replaced, or retired

Assessments

A comprehensive assessment system that includes diagnostic, formative, and summative tools is used to understand students’ progress.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Establish and regularly update district-level inventories of appropriate assessment tools and data markers.
- Implement a common data system that measures academic progress; social, emotional, and physical development; and other markers of child learning and development.
- Provide data to schools and early learning programs in a timely manner so that data can be used to inform instruction and make site-level decisions.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Use assessment data to monitor and improve individual student, school-wide learning, and teaching practices.
- Build assessment loops in which data are shared between early learning programs and schools.

Teachers

- Use common and consistent diagnostic and screening assessments, across age/grade levels, to identify children who need extra help and connect them with support services and supplemental instruction.
- Use common and consistent formative and summative child assessments to reflect on and improve their teaching practices.

Families

- Participate in assessment efforts by both providing and receiving honest, accurate, and regular information about their child’s progress across multiple domains of learning.

Assessment systems include:

- Diagnostic assessments
- Formative assessments/Progress monitoring
- Summative assessment

An aligned system of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments exists for all classrooms in:

- School-based PreK
- Community-based early learning programs
- Head Start
- Kindergarten
- Grades 1-3

EVALUATION PURPOSES:

- Determine if the content of standards, curriculum, and assessment are focused on PreK-3rd goals and principles.
- Determine the degree to which standards, curricula, and assessments are aligned with one another.
- Ensure that teachers, families, and administrators understand the value added by aligned instructional tools.
- Gauge the degree to which aligned instructional tools are being implemented within and across classrooms.

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Superintendent survey or interviews.
- Principal survey or interviews.
- Document review and alignment analysis (of PreK-3rd standards, common curricula, and/or assessments).
- Teacher (PreK-3rd) surveys.
- Parent survey or focus group, at least once during the school year.
- Classroom observations, using established tools.

Learning Environment



The physical space and emotional environment (campuses, buildings, schools, and classrooms) promote collaborative relationships, actively engage all children in a variety of learning experiences and settings, and support the health and wellness of children and adults.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Culturally Inclusive

Learning environments are welcoming and reflect the community of children and their families, home communities, cultures, and languages.

District-, Site-, and Community-Based Administrators

- Use nationally recognized tools and rubrics to evaluate and rate the quality of learning environments, PreK-3rd grade.
- Dedicate space and resources for families to meet with teachers and to access culturally inclusive resources that support their children's learning.
- Ensure that cultural and linguistic responsiveness is a priority for all school and program staff.

Teachers

- Demonstrate understanding of how to create and maintain cultural and linguistic responsiveness in their classrooms.
- Increase availability and use of a rich variety of objects and materials (e.g., books, math materials, technology, manipulatives) that reflect diverse language, cultures, and home communities.

Annual classroom-based assessments:

- Address structural variables (e.g., class size; student-teacher ratios; classroom arrangement)
- Address social-emotional climate and teacher-child interactions

Promote Relationships

Learning environments provide a climate that promotes positive interactions and supportive relationships for children and adults.

District-, Site-, and Community-Based Administrators

- Establish priorities and plans for every building to have dedicated resources that promote staff collaboration, adult learning, and joint-decision-making (e.g., time, opportunity, and space for adults to meet and work together comfortably).
- Support teachers' efforts to improve quality (e.g., professional development, resource allocation).

Teachers

- Demonstrate an understanding of creating and maintaining environments that are conducive to child learning (e.g., well-managed classrooms that promote young children's executive functioning, including self-regulation of emotions and behavior).
- Report satisfaction about the space, materials, and climate for their teamwork, on-going professional development, and partnerships with families.

Annual classroom-based assessments are used to:

- Inform professional development for teachers
- Inform professional development for administrators, facilities managers, instructional coaches, and other key stakeholders
- Support planning for resource allocation

Structured to Support Diverse Learners

Learning environments are organized and provided with resources to support a wide range of development, abilities, and interests.

District-, Site-, and Community-Based Administrators

- Ensure multiple indoor and outdoor spaces exist that support active project-based learning.
- Ensure learning environments support learning in multi-age/grade level groups.
- Ensure learning environments provide appropriate space for individualized instruction.
- Ensure learning environments provide access for children and adults with disabilities.

Teachers

- Establish environments that support individual, small-group, and whole-group learning.
- Organize classrooms and learning environments that exhibit order, safety, and clear routines so that children are not distracted or spend excessive time in transitions.
- Have well-organized classrooms that exhibit clear routines and access to high-quality materials that support diverse learning activities.
- Increase availability and use of a rich variety of objects and materials (e.g., books, math materials, technology, manipulatives) in classrooms, PreK-3rd.

Learning Environments are assessed annually in:

- School-based PreK
- Community-based early learning programs
- Head Start
- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- After-school and extended-learning programs

EVALUATION PURPOSES:

- Determine the degree to which physical learning spaces are organized, managed, and supported to provide positive environments for learning.

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.
- School/Classroom observations.
- Superintendent survey or interviews
- Principal survey or interviews.
- Teacher (PreK-3rd) surveys.
- Resource inventory (e.g., of classroom objects and materials).
- Inventory of facilities to identify their availability, accessibility, proximity to supplemental resources.

Data-driven Improvement



Current, relevant, and high-quality data from multiple sources are used to improve schools, programs, classrooms, instruction, professional development, and other systems.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Child-based Data

Data from child-based assessments are used to identify achievement gaps and to drive instructional improvement.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Demonstrate understanding of appropriate uses of data and support data systems that gather, store, and disseminate data.
- Establish and support common measurements and consistent data reporting mechanisms across schools and programs.
- Demonstrate commitment to using data to identify and address achievement gaps by providing data disaggregated by student sub-groups (e.g., dual language learners; race/ethnicity; socio-economic status).

Principals/Site Administrators

- Ensure aggregated data are available by classroom, age/grade level, and schoolwide.
- Use data to allocate resources to provide tiered levels of intervention.
- Use data to inform, establish, and deliver professional development priorities.
- Share data among early learning programs and schools (e.g., assessment loops).

Teachers

- Know what data are available on students, classrooms, and schools and demonstrate understanding of how to use data to improve the quality of classrooms and to differentiate instruction.
- Use progress monitoring tools to understand children's strengths and needs.

Families

- Have access to data about their own child, classrooms, and programs/schools.
- Understand the data available and how to use them to support their children's learning.

Data on children's learning and development are used to improve instruction, differentiate resources for children, and strengthen collaboration between teachers, families, and administrators in:

- ☐ School-based PreK
- ☐ Community-based early learning programs
- ☐ Head Start
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ First Grade
- ☐ Second Grade
- ☐ Third Grade
- ☐ After-school and extended-learning programs
- ☐ Special Education and other support programs

EVALUATION PURPOSES:

- Determine that the appropriate kind and amount of data are collected on a regular basis.
- Determine that data collected are being used in ways that drive and support instructional improvement.
- Evaluate the degree to which data are being used to differentiate supports to schools, teachers, and children.

School/Program-based Data

Other meaningful data markers (e.g., classroom observations; student attendance; family engagement) are used to identify areas for improvement and to realign resources to support PreK-3rd efforts.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Develop expectations and processes that ensure multiple data sources are used to understand student progress, instructional effectiveness, and overall program improvement.
- Ensure teachers receive professional development on data availability, accessibility, and use.
- Discuss data on instructional quality with teachers in joint PreK-3rd meetings.

Teachers

- Participate in training on data availability and use.
- Incorporate data into family conferences.
- Use data to understand and reduce achievement disparities.

Families

- Discuss data with their children's teachers.
- Understand what the data mean for their children, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Both child- and school/program-based data are used to:

- ☐ Identify patterns of achievement across sub-groups of children
- ☐ Identify target areas for improvement in school/program effectiveness
- ☐ Reallocate resources to address timely and critical needs
- ☐ Inform and engage families
- ☐ Inform both public and political constituencies

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Principal survey or interviews.
- Data system audit.
- Teacher (PreK-3rd) surveys.
- Parent survey or focus groups, at least once during the school year.

Engaged Families

GOAL:

Families are actively and systemically involved with PreK-3rd teachers and administrators as full partners in helping their children develop, learn, and achieve.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Core Priority

Teachers, administrators, and all staff in schools and programs understand the importance of, and employ strategies for, engaging families.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Incorporate family engagement into strategic plans.
- Incorporate family engagement into evaluations of principals and site administrators.
- Support the development and use of professional development, tool kits, materials, and other resources that reflect family engagement research and best practices, including differentiation for families’ diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Designate a senior-level officer responsible for family engagement.

Principals/Site Administrators

- Incorporate family engagement into evaluations of teachers and other staff.
- Provide ongoing professional development and technical assistance focused on family engagement to all school and program staff.
- Designate dedicated and welcoming space where families can gather and teachers and families can meet.
- Provide opportunity and time for teachers to engage with families.

Teachers

- Regard family engagement as an essential element of their job.

At the school or program level:

- ☐ Family engagement is an explicit goal or priority
- ☐ Is an intentional and stand-alone focus in annual professional development for administrators, teachers, and other “family-facing” staff
- ☐ Written documents (curriculum, toolkits, etc.) that focus on family engagement are available and regularly updated

Two-Way Communication

Schools and programs establish regular two-way communication approaches to share data with, and to learn from, families.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Link family engagement to district’s or community’s instructional goals.
- Establish expectations and processes that provide families with a rich array of data on their child (e.g., attendance; academic progress; social connections).

Principals/Site Administrators

- Link families to support resources (e.g., GED training, mental health services) through collaborations with community partners.

Teachers

- Provide regular, accessible, and multi-modal opportunities for engaging families in understanding and supporting their child’s progress (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, home visits, parent-to-parent events).
- Initiate opportunities to engage with families in order to develop deeper understanding of each child’s progress from home, community, and cultural perspectives.

Families

- Perceive there are adequate opportunities for engagement in their children’s education.
- Sustain their engagement over time from PreK-3rd grade.

At the school or program level:

- ☐ Multiple events occur to share children’s academic and social progress with families
- ☐ Families receive data in various forms (written, verbal, web-based, at home, at school)
- ☐ Family engagement itself is a data marker that is gathered and used to improve overall efforts

Shared Leadership/ Decision-making

Families, teachers, and administrators share decision-making for student success.

District Administrators/Community Leaders

- Designate teams of teachers, administrators, and families that build site-level capacity for family engagement.
- Host (with community partners) parent academies or family leadership institutes in which parents learn how to guide their children’s educational success.
- Support families to share their cultural wisdom to inform definitions of and strategies to achieve educational success.

Teachers

- Engage families in the setting of educational goals for their children.

Families

- Participate in setting goals for their child’s school/ program through leadership roles on site-based management teams.
- Perceive themselves to be partners with teachers and schools in setting goals for their own children.

Families are included in:

- ☐ School/program’s improvement planning processes
- ☐ Developing and updating family engagement policies/expectations at district, community, and site levels
- ☐ The governing board or committee that holds decision-making responsibility for PreK-3rd priorities

EVALUATION PURPOSES:

- Gauge the degree to which families perceive themselves to be active partners in their child’s learning.
- Ensure that family engagement is a clear priority.

EXAMPLE METHODS:

- Superintendent interviews.
- Principal surveys or interviews.
- Document review (of teacher reports to families, training materials).
- Teacher surveys or focus groups.
- Parent surveys or focus groups, at least once during the school year.

Continuity and Pathways

GOAL:

Every child, especially those most at risk for school failure, has access to a continuity of services and a clear pathway of high-quality education from PreK through 3rd grade.

PreK-3rd Strategies

Example Implementation Indicators

Self-Assess Depth of Implementation/Alignment

Example Evaluation Approach

Access and Continuity of Services

Children’s access to high quality learning opportunities is expanded and extended, especially for children most at risk.

- District Administrators/Community Leaders**
- Have a clear understanding of the demographic characteristics of children and the availability of high-quality programs/schools in the community.
 - Annually update a mapping of “feeder patterns” of children into public schools and of mobility patterns of children, PreK-3rd.
 - Increase the number of slots available for children to attend full-day PreK as 4-year olds.
 - Increase the number of slots available for children to attend full-day Kindergarten as 5-year olds.
 - Increase children’s access to after-school, extended learning opportunities, and community supports.

- Teachers**
- Have a clear understanding of the demographic characteristics of children in their classrooms.
 - Demonstrate an understanding of resources available to extend children’s learning time, in both school-based and community-based programs.
- Families**
- Have accessible information about early learning and after-school programs, extended learning opportunities, and community supports.

- PreK-3rd Grade governance entities include plans to expand access to:**
- Infant/toddler services (0-3)
 - PreK for 3-year olds
 - PreK for 4-year olds
 - Full-day, every-day Kindergarten
 - After-school programs and services
 - Extended learning opportunities (including summer programs)
 - Other community supports

- EVALUATION PURPOSES:**
- Ensure that children are actually experiencing a high-quality PreK-3rd pathway.

PreK-3rd Grade Pathways

Policies and practices are in place that focus on ensuring a stable pathway of high-quality learning opportunities for every child from PreK through 3rd grade.

- District Administrators/Community Leaders**
- Develop data-informed means to understand feeder patterns into elementary schools and student mobility across programs/schools.
 - Create new feeder patterns by aligning eligibility and enrollment policies and practices.
- Principals /Site Administrators**
- Expand and strengthen partnerships across early learning/school feeder patterns.
 - Establish common transition forms and processes across all classrooms, settings, and age/grade levels.
 - Establish policies and practices that match the most at-risk students with the teachers who can best support them, year after year (e.g., intentional classroom assignment; teacher looping; mixed-age classrooms).
 - Establish connections with after- and non-school supports and services (e.g., early intervention; child welfare; health).

- Teachers**
- Use common transition forms and processes.
 - Review incoming students’ files/portfolios prior to start of school year and provide similar information to their students’ next-year teachers.
 - Connect students with after-school and non-school supports and services.
- Families**
- Perceive their child is receiving a high-quality continuum of learning, PreK-3rd.
 - Know how and why to advocate for their child to have a clear, high-quality educational pathway from PreK-3rd grade.

- Policies and practices exist for children’s transition from:**
- PreK to K
 - K to 1st grade
 - 1st grade to 2nd grade
 - 2nd grade to 3rd grade
 - 3rd grade to 4th grade

- EXAMPLE METHODS:**
- Superintendent survey or interviews.
 - Principal survey or interviews.
 - Enrollment and attendance tracking.
 - Document review (of transition policies and forms).
 - Teacher surveys or focus groups, at least twice during the school year.
 - Parent survey or focus groups, at least once during the school year.



Kristie Kauerz (kauerzk@uw.edu) is a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Washington (UW) College of Education in Seattle, WA. She also played a lead role in the PreK-3rd Grade Initiative at Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) in connection with a series of professional education institutes co-chaired by HGSE faculty members Hiro Yoshikawa, Rick Weissbourd, Nonie Lesaux, and Stephanie Jones.

Julia Coffman (jcoffman@evaluationinnovation.org) is founder and director of the Center for Evaluation Innovation in Washington D.C.

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