Education Oversight Committee
August 11-12, 2014
Marriott Resort
Hilton Head Island, SC

AGENDA

Monday, August 11, 2014

1:00	Welcome and Introductions Approval of Minutes of June 9, 2014 Tentative Meeting Schedule for 2014-15	David Whittemore
1:15	Overview of EOC Responsibilities	Melanie Barton
1:30	**Accountability**	
	A. Update on Special Assessment Report	Dr. Danny Merck
1:45	B. Designing Accountability Systems Dr. Gene Wilhoit Executive Director National Center for Innovation in Education University of Kentucky	
3:30	C. Reviewing ELA and Math Standards	Dr. Rainey Knight
4:45	D. Reviewing Science Standards	Melanie Barton
5:00	Executive Session – Personnel Issue	
5:15	Adjourn	

Dinner	On-Your-Own If interested, Alexanders, which is within walking distance of the hotel, will accommodate any EOC members interested in dining there.

Tuesday, August 12, 2014

Breakfast on your own using vouchers

9:00 a.m. **Early Readiness**

A. Beaufort County School District – Early Childhood Initiative
Dr. Jeffrey C. Moss, Superintendent

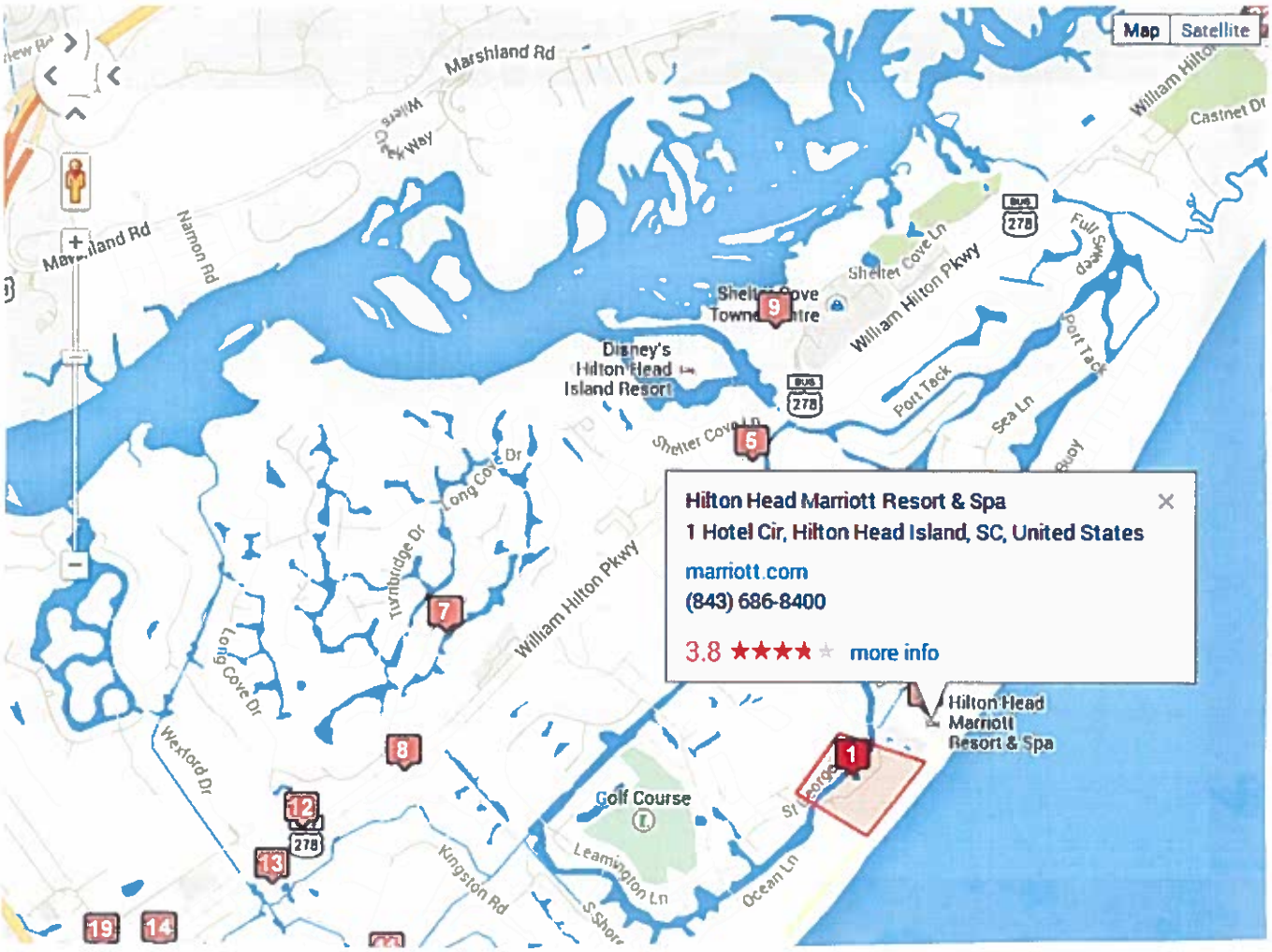
B. Overview of Early Readiness Assessments
Joe Waters
Vice President
Institute for Child Success

Katy Sides
Director of Research and Grants
Institute for Child Success

10:30 **Folk Legends and Facts: Using Data to Vanquish Myths about Education in South Carolina**
Dr. Mick Zais
State Superintendent of Education

Adjourn

Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa
1 Hotel Circle
Hilton Head Island, SC
(843) 686-8400



SCIWAY
South Carolina's Information Highway

Hilton Head, South Carolina - Printable Area Map

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
June 9, 2014

EOC Members Present: Mr. Phillip Bowers; Sen. Mike Fair; Mrs. Margaret Anne Gaffney; Ms. Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Wes Hayes; Mr. Alex Martin; Dr. Danny Merck; Mr. Neil Robinson; Rep. Andy Patrick; Ms. Patti Tate; Rep. Roland Smith; Mr. John Warner; Mr. David Whittemore; and Dr. Mick Zais

EOC Staff Present: Mrs. Melanie Barton; Ms. Paulette Geiger; Dr. Rainey Knight; and Mrs. Dana Yow

Mr. Whittemore called the meeting to order. He announced that the EOC's annual retreat would be on August 11-12 in Hilton Head Island. Mr. Whittemore also announced that the audio system related to the online streaming system was not working.

Then turning to the agenda, the members unanimously approved the minutes of the April 28, 2014 meeting of the EOC.

Subcommittee reports were then received.

Academic Standards and Assessments – Dr. Merck reported that the subcommittee did not meet in May. However, due to passage of H.3893 the General Assembly had created a special assessment panel that would be assisting the Executive Director of the Budget and Control Board in securing an assessment in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 through 8 and 9 and 10 if funds are available and a college and career readiness assessment for all students in grade 11. All students entering the 11th grade for the first time in school year 2014-15 will take both the WorkKeys assessment and the procured college and career readiness assessment. Dr. Merck announced that he was serving on the assessment panel. He notified the committee that on June 19 there would be a public hearing to get input on the characteristics of the assessments. He encouraged EOC members to notify staff their constituents and attend if they desired.

Ms. Hairifield asked about the cyclical review of the current standards. Mrs. Barton notified the EOC that the agency would be contracting with a vendor to provide an online survey that the public could access to comment on the strengths, weaknesses, etc., of the current standards. The survey will be online in July.

EIA and Improvement Mechanisms – Mr. Martin reported for the committee. The first item was the 2012-13 report on the Teacher Loan Program, as required by state law. Mr. Martin summarized the key components of the report noting that the number of applicants to the program has decreased over two years by 45 percent while the pipeline of teachers from the Teacher Cadet Program continues to be strong. The South Carolina Teacher Loan Advisory Committee has been formed and is working on the marking of the program, especially focusing on recruiting minorities and recruiting individuals from areas of the state that have traditionally had great difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers.

Mr. Robinson moved to approve the report while Rep. Patrick seconded the motion. The EOC unanimously approved the report.

Mr. Martin then discussed the report on online education in South Carolina. The report presented two conclusions: first, students in an online learning setting made academic gains that were the same as the gains made by students in a traditional learning environment.

Second, all constituents of the online learning setting (students, parents, and teachers) reported more favorable attitudes regarding the learning environment of their schools.

Mr. Martin then called upon Mrs. Barton to provide an update on the Fiscal Year 2014-15 General Appropriation Bill. Mrs. Barton focused on the funding of the Governor's education initiative and of the Read to Succeed legislation. She discussed the funding of technology, reading coaches, expansion of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP), increased funding of summer reading camps, and the early literacy assessment.

Public Awareness Subcommittee – Mrs. Hairfield noted that the subcommittee had not met but the staff continues to implement the Communications Plan for school year 2014-15.

Then Mr. Whittemore recognized Dr. Knight to provide an overview of the model district reading plan. The Read to Succeed legislation requires that the district reading plan that was piloted this year in districts must be used in school year 2014-15 while the Read to Succeed Office develops a state reading plan. Thirty-three educators met in August at the EOC and looked at reading plans of other states including Georgia, North Carolina, Mississippi and Florida. Then between November and December the group designed a South Carolina plan. In the spring semester twelve districts piloted the plan, providing input to the EOC. The EOC staff has met with over 400 individuals, including English language arts coordinators, superintendents and assistant superintendents, who have participated in designing and redesigning the plan.

Dr. Knight also discussed two initiatives that the EOC will undertake this summer as part of the P-20 reading initiative. The EOC will work with 20 districts to evaluate pre- and post-camp reading achievement levels and to document the best practices used in these summer reading camps. Then this fall Dr. Knight will report back to the EOC. In addition to a survey, Dr. Knight and EOC staff will visit each summer reading camp in these districts to document the programs. And, finally, the EOC and South Carolina ETV will work together to showcase two districts, Barnwell 45 and Darlington, who have designed innovative approaches to the summer reading camp. Barnwell 45 has focused on engaging the business and faith-based community while Darlington is expanding its summer reading camp to address the needs of younger children as well as rising fourth graders in addition to utilizing the camps as an opportunity for professional development for teachers.

Mr. Bowers commented that some schools and districts have too few students to provide a program. Dr. Zais commented that districts need flexibility in meeting the needs of its struggling readers.

Readiness Assessment of Early Literacy - The General Assembly approved a proviso in the budget that requires the EOC to recommend the characteristics of an early literacy readiness assessment to the State Board of Education by July 30, 2014. Mrs. Barton presented to the EOC a document proposing nine characteristics of such an assessment. The characteristics were developed from multiple sources including the January 2014 report on the CDEPP program and from individuals who participated in the P-20 reading initiative. Mr. Neal asked about the early literacy assessment and whether Head Start entities would be able to use the assessment. Sen. Fair and Mrs. Baton commented that the proviso allows does "publicly" funded four-year-old providers to use the assessment, and thus includes Head Start.

To meet the timeframe for procuring the assessment, Mr. Robinson moved to approve the characteristics of the early literacy assessment and then forward the recommendations to the Board of Trustees for the Office of First Steps to School Readiness for its consideration. If any changes are made, then the EOC staff would communicate those changes to EOC members who would then record their approval via online voting. Mr. Martin seconded the motion. The EOC approved the motion with Mr. Warner asking to be recorded as voting no.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned.

Note: On June 26, 2014, EOC members were forwarded an online survey to comment on suggested additions to the characteristics of the early literacy assessment RFP from the SC First Steps Board. Six responses were received: five were “yes” votes. Voting “no”, John Warner requested the following statement be reflected in the minutes:

“My objection remains from when the EOC originally voted on this initiative. More top down standards and high stakes testing will teach no child in South Carolina to read. We need to move in the opposite direction by treating teachers as professionals and giving them the flexibility to do their jobs. Collectively we don't trust teachers to do their jobs, which is why we insist on a top down approach, so we need to address that problem rather than piling on more mandates and testing. I would like this objection included in the minutes where this vote is recorded.”

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Tentative Meeting Schedule

Subcommittee	**Full Committee**
	August 11-12, 2014
September 22, 2014	October 13, 2014
November 10, 2014 * November 17, 2014 *	December 8 *or* 15, 2014
January 26, 2015 *****	February 9, 2015
March 23, 2015	April 13, 2015
May 18, 2015	June 8, 2015

* The EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee will likely meet twice in November to work on budget and proviso recommendations for FY2015-16.

****** January 19 is Martin Luther King Day; therefore, the subcommittee meetings are moved to the following Monday, January 26.

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

For questions or
additional information,
contact us at:
803.734.6148 or
www.eoc.sc.gov

2014 Legislative Summary

Investments in Education Accountability and Improvement

The following issues are the focus of the public education budget for Fiscal Year 2014-15: (1) amending the Education Finance Act with the EOC's funding model; (2) improving student reading proficiency; and (3) addressing technology needs.

Education Finance Act (EFA) – The EFA is funded with a base student cost of $2,120. The EFA now includes the following new weights as proposed by the EOC. Students may receive multiple weights for personalized instruction:

K-12 pupils or base students including homebound students at 1.00

Additional weights for personalized instruction:

Gifted and Talented	**.15**
Academic Assistance	**.15**
Limited English Proficiency	**.20**
Pupils in Poverty	**.20**

Reading – The legislature funded Summer Reading Camps at $6.0 million and reading coaches at $29.5 million.

Technology – In addition to the base EIA funding of $10.2 million for technology, the General Assembly appropriated $29.3 million in lottery funds for districts for technology upgrades to be allocated based on the poverty index and number of students in the district. In addition, $4.0 million was appropriated for professional development for teachers.

South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD) – The legislature appropriated $56.3 million, an increase of $13.8 million for students in the SCPCSD. In addition to existing state funds, pupils enrolled in virtual charter schools sponsored by the SCPCSD will receive $1,900 per weighted pupil unit up from $1,700 this school year and $3,600 per weighted pupil unit for students enrolled in brick and mortar charter schools, up from $3,250 this school year.

Teacher Salaries – The statewide minimum salary schedule used in Fiscal Year 2013-14 will continue to be used in Fiscal Year 2014-15. Teachers eligible for a step increase will receive a step increase.

Instructional Materials – The General Assembly appropriated a total of $29.5 million for instructional materials, plus unexpended EIA funds at the end of the current fiscal year and an additional $15.0 million for digital instructional materials, which is three times the funding in the prior fiscal year.

Lottery and unclaimed prize revenues – Funding for Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies Program is $27.9 million for grades K-5 and $2.0 million for grades 6-8.

Early Childhood Education – The General Assembly appropriated $80.2 million for early childhood education for four-year-olds: (1) $15.5 million in EIA funds for half-day programs; and (2) $64.7 million for the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program, formally, CDEPP, a $20 million increase. In school year 2014-15. At-risk four-year-olds residing in school districts with a poverty index of 70% percent or more are eligible to be served in full-day programs in public or private settings. "At-Risk" is defined as students eligible for the free or reduced-price federal lunch program and/or Medicaid. With the expansion, the number of school districts eligible to participate in the program increased from 51 to 61 with 75% of all school districts eligible to participate in the program. It is estimated that 43 percent of all at-risk four-year-olds are projected to be served in Head Start or the full-day program. The instructional reimbursement rate is $4,218 per child.

Child Early Reading Development and Education Program
At-Risk Four-Year-Olds Residing in following Districts Eligible to Participate

	Original Trial & Plaintiff Districts	**2013-14** Expansion Districts **75%** or Greater	**2014-15** Additional Eligible Districts **70%** or Greater
1	Abbeville	Anderson 3	Aiken
2	Allendale	Calhoun	Edgefield
3	Bamberg 1	Cherokee	Greenwood 50
4	Bamberg 2	Chester	Greenwood 52
5	Barnwell 19	Colleton	Horry
6	Barnwell 29	Darlington	Oconee
7	Barnwell 45	Dorchester 4	Spartanburg 3
8	Berkeley	Fairfield	Spartanburg 4
9	Chesterfield	Georgetown	Spartanburg 6
10	Clarendon 1	Greenwood 51	York 1
11	Clarendon 2	Lexington 2	
12	Clarendon 3	Lexington 3	
13	Dillon 3	Newberry	
14	Dillon 4	Richland 1	
15	Florence 1	Spartanburg 7	
16	Florence 2	Sumter	
17	Florence 3	Union	
18	Florence 4		
19	Florence 5		
20	Hampton 1		
21	Hampton 2		
22	Jasper		
23	Laurens 55		
24	Laurens 56		
25	Lee		
26	Lexington 4		
27	Marion		
28	Marlboro		
29	McCormick		
30	Orangeburg 3		
31	Orangeburg 4		
32	Orangeburg 5		
33	Saluda		
34	Williamsburg		

Note: Districts that are shaded have opted not to participate. Anderson 3 and Lexington 2 will participate in 2014-15 but not Barnwell 45 or Union.

At-Risk Four-Year-olds Served in 2013-14 and Estimated to be Served in 2014-15

	2013-14 Original Trial & Plaintiff Districts	**2013-14** Expansion Districts **75%** or Greater	**2014-15** Eligible Districts **70%** or Greater	**TOTAL**
Public Schools	**4,550**	**2,335**	**2,485**	**9,370**
Private Centers (estimate)	**727**	**524**	**1,338**	**2,589**
TOTAL:	**5,277**	**2,859**	**3,823**	**11,959**

Note: Figures above represent actual counts for SCDE for 2013-14. To date, OFS has not updated counts since January 2014. The estimates for 2014-15 assume 35% of students will be served in private centers.

EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT APPROPRIATIONS SINCE FY11*

EAA ITEM	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Technical Assistance	57,430,445	6,000,000	5,250,000	6,000,000	8,800,000
External Review Teams					
Assessment	*21,665,119*	21,665,119	24,761,400	24,761,400	27,261,400
Formative Assessment	3,096,281	3,096,281			
Professional Development	6,515,911	6,515,911	5,515,911	5,515,911	5,515,911
Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards **	2,230,061	2,230,061			
Report Card Printing & Development	722,385	722,385			
Data Collection	1,217,947				
Unique Student Identifier	987,203				
Power Schools/Data Collection		5,000,000	5,000,000	7,500,000	7,500,000
Education Oversight Committee	1,016,289	1,193,242	1,193,242	1,293,242	1,643,242
EOC Public Relations	168,438				
SCDE Personal Service	1,236,436	1,236,436	1,236,436	1,236,436	1,643,242
SCDE Other Operating	1,174,752	1,174,752	1,174,752	1,174,752	1,174,752
Students at Risk of School Failure ***	136,163,204	136,163,204	136,163,204	136,163,204	79,551,723
TOTAL EAA:	**$233,624,471**	**$184,997,391**	**$180,294,945**	**$183,644,945**	**$133,090,270**
OTHER SUPPORTING PROGRAMS:					
EOC Family involvement	33,781				
K-5 Reading, Math, Science & Social Studies	47,614,527	29,491,798	29,491,798	27,891,798	27,891,798
6-8 Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
High School Reading	729,340	729,340			
Young Adult Education (30% of Adult Education)	4,072,121	4,072,121	4,072,121	4,072,121	4,072,121
Reading	6,542,052	6,542,052	6,542,052	6,542,052	6,542,052
Summer Reading Camps				1,500,000	6,000,000
Aid to Districts		68,250,835	37,736,600	37,736,600	37,736,600
Reading Coaches					29,483,100
TOTAL OTHER:	**$60,991,821**	**$111,086,146**	**$79,842,571**	**$79,742,571**	**$113,725,671**
GRAND TOTAL:	**$294,616,292**	**$296,083,537**	**$260,137,516**	**$263,387,516**	**$246,815,941**

***** Includes all recurring and nonrecurring General Fund, EIA, and lottery revenues but excludes federal funds for testing. Line items in italics denote the suspension of the entire program or a portion of the program for other purposes (writing assessment suspended in grades 3, 4, 6 and 7; suspension of report card printing; etc.). All line item appropriations for the EOC were consolidated, and appropriations for data collection and unique student identifier were consolidated into PowerSchool.
** For FY11 and FY12, the funds appropriated for the program were either suspended or reallocated. *** For FY15, $59.6 million was reduced from the Students at Risk of School Failure appropriation because a poverty index was added to the EFA.

Other Legislation Impacting Public Education and Accountability

Bills or Resolutions Enacted:

Act 149 (R.158, H.3410) – EEDA Regional Education Centers
The act moves the powers and duties of the EEDA Coordinating Council to the Department of Commerce which will provide oversight and support to the 12 regional education centers in the state.

Act 155 (R.170, H.3919) – Elimination of HSAP
Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students are no longer required to meet the exit examination requirements to earn a high school diploma. Instead, of taking the High School Assessment Program, students in grade 11 must take WorkKeys and a college and career readiness assessment in school year 2014-15. The law requires that the assessments must assist students, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors in developing individual graduation plans, in promoting South Carolina's Work Ready Communities, and in meeting federal and state accountability requirements. The act further allows individuals who are no longer enrolled in a public school band who previously failed to receive a high school diploma for failing to meet the exit exam requirements to petition local school board for high school diploma. The petitions must be submitted by December 31, 2015.

Act 200 (R.252, H.3893) – Standards, Assessment and Accountability
The law amends the EAA accordingly by addressing standards, assessments and accountability.

Standards
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA) and Math will be implemented in school year 2014-15. There will be a cyclical review of Common Core on or before January 1, 2015 for purpose of adopting SC college and career readiness state standards in 2015-2016.

Assessments
The law removes SC from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and Smarter Balanced Assessment and prevents SC from administering Smarter Balanced Assessment. The law amends the administration of PASS in science and social studies so that all students in grades 4 through 8 will be assessed beginning 2014-15. Students in grade 3 will only be assessed in ELA and math beginning 2014-15.
The law establishes a process for moving forward with state assessment in ELA and math for all students in grades 3 through 8 and for students in grades 9 and 10, if funds are available:

- 2014-15 Paper and pencil format
- 2015-16 Paper and pencil or computer
- 2016-17 Computer for all students

The Executive Director of the Budget and Control Board will handle procurement of both tests. The procurements must be completed by September 30, 2014 for all assessments including the college and career readiness assessment. Neither the EOC nor State Board of Education will approve the assessment. Instead, a special panel composed of the following persons or their designee to provide input:

- Barry Bolen, chairman of the State Board of Education
- Dr. Danny Merck, Vice Chair of the EOC
- Pamela Lackey, chair of Board of Directors for the SC Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Richard Sutton, Executive Director of SC Commission on Higher Education
- Dr. Jimmie Williams, Executive Director of the SC Technical College System
- Scott English, Chief Operating Officer for SC Department of Education.

Accountability
New assessments will be implemented in 2014-15 and 2015-16, cannot be used to determine state report card ratings. Instead, the report cards issued for 2014-15 and 2015-16 will report on results only.
The EOC will also recommend one system for state and federal accountability by fall of 2016.

H.3905 (R.315) – Signed by the Governor, this legislation requires schools beginning in 2015-16 to provide instruction in cursive writing by the end of 5th grade and to require memorization of multiplication tables by the end of 5th grade.

S.516 (R.313) - Read to Succeed – Signed by the Governor, the legislation is a comprehensive, systemic approach to improving reading proficiency of students through early identification and intervention and improved teaching of reading.

- Establish Read to Succeed Office in Department of Education
- Read to Succeed Office to develop State Reading Plan by February 1, 2015
- District Reading Plans
  - 2014-15 Districts to use plan developed by EOC and piloted in districts 2013-14
  - 2015-16 Districts to submit district reading plans based on State Reading Plan
- Early intervention and assessments
  - 2014-15 students in 4K and 5K be administered a readiness assessment by the 45th day of school year that focuses on language and literacy development
  - 2016-17 assessment must assess child's early language and literacy development, mathematical thinking, physical well-being, and social-emotional development
  - Codifies CDEPP which will now be the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program
  - At any point prior to 3rd grade, child who is substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading should be provided intensive in-class and supplemental reading intervention immediately upon determination
- Retention – In 2017-18 students may be retained in 3rd grade if score comparable to Not Met 1 on the PASS unless exempted for good cause as defined as having:
  - limited English proficiency and less than 2 years of instruction in English as a Second Language;
  - disabilities whose IEP indicates use of alternative interventions;
  - demonstrated third-grade reading proficiency on alternative assessment or portfolio;
  - successfully participated in summer reading camp; and
  - having already been retained
- Summer Reading camps provided for students who are at risk of being retained in 3rd grade and other struggling readers. Camps must be at least six weeks in duration, four days per week and four hours per day or equivalent hours
- Improving Teaching of Reading
  Pre-Service – Teachers entering early childhood or elementary level in 2016-17 must complete 12 credit hours in literacy with teachers entering middle or secondary level to complete 6 credit hours in literacy which may include practicum.
  In-Service – Existing teachers in early childhood or elementary required to take six credit hours every five years or the equivalent professional development hours toward literacy add-on endorsement. Existing teachers in middle or secondary levels required to take one course or three hours of the equivalent professional development
- Engaging parents and community partners in improving reading

S.1194 (R.184) –- The joint resolution allows any school district not to operate a summer reading program in the summer of 2014 and instead partner with the Department of Education's Summer Reading Loss Prevention Project. School districts provide books students who would have otherwise been identified to be served in the program. The students must be allowed to select eight books based on their reading ability level and interest and a reading log to be completed by the student.

H.4061 – The Conference Report was adopted on June 5, 2014. According to the report, prior to September 1, 2015, the State Board of Education must select or develop instructional units in sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention for each age level beginning with four-year-olds through grade 12. With the 2016-17 school year, at least one time, between grades 9 and 12 each student must receive instruction in CPR which must include, hands-only CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator. Districts may request waivers for this requirement for students who were absent on the day of instruction or whose disability makes them unable to undertake the instruction.

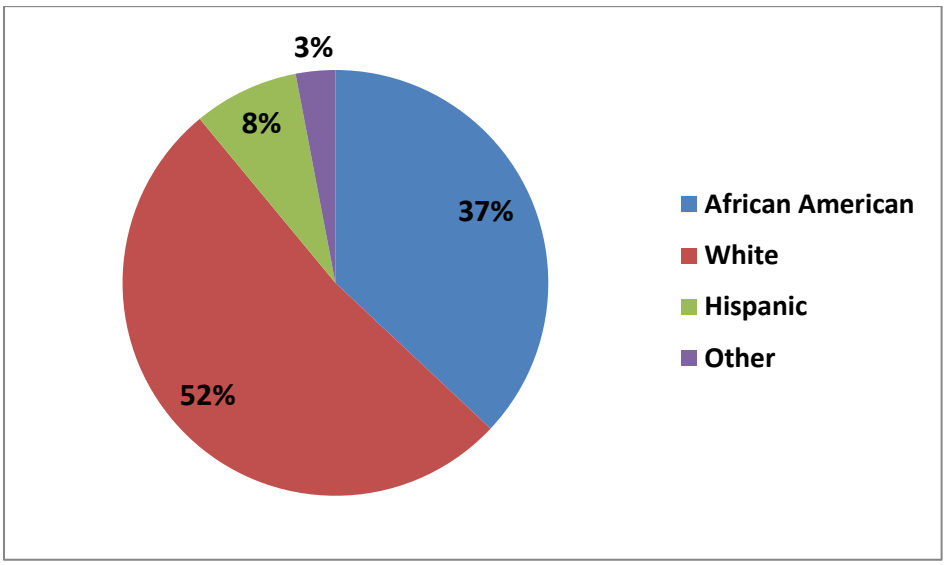
H.4840 (R.308) – The GED, the only test currently available to earn a high school equivalence diploma, will only be offered in a computer-based format in the future. To guarantee that individuals who lack access to computers or the technology to take the GED, the legislature passed the "High School Equivalency Diploma Accessibility Act." The Act requires the State Board of Education to select one or more tests or test batteries that an eligible candidate may complete to receive a high school equivalence diploma. At least one test must be available in

paper and pencil and be available to all eligible candidates in both paper and pencil and computer formats. The Governor signed the bill.

H.3853 (R.318) – Signed by the Governor, the legislation establishes "Alternative Education Campus" as a condition for becoming a charter school. The AEC may serve a student population with: (1) severe limitations that preclude appropriate administration of the assessments administered pursuant to federal and state requirements; (2) fifty percent or more of students having Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in accordance with federal regulations; or (3) eighty-five percent or more of enrolled students meeting the definition of a 'high-risk' student including students who are adjudicated juvenile delinquents; dropouts, homeless, abused, etc. The bill further allows charter schools that receive the lowest rate in the federal accountability system for three consecutive years to be permanently closed.

Key Facts About K-12 Public Education

In school year 2013-14, there were ***742,325*** students enrolled in ***82*** school districts and approximately 1,250 schools.



In FY2011-12 total expenditures for public schools was $8.4 billion from all revenue sources (state, local and federal). Of this amount, $6.6 billion was for ongoing operations and $1.8 billion for debt service and capital projects, which equates to ***$11,513*** per pupil:

Debt Service, Capital Projects	$ 2,503
Ongoing Operations	$ 9,010
Total:	$11,513

Per pupil expenditures for ongoing operations accounted for the following:

Instruction	**$5,099**
Instructional Support	**$1,217**
Operations	**$1,932**
Leadership	**$ 762**
Total:	**$9,010**

EOC WORK IN PROGRESS
Copies of previous work can be obtained from www.eoc.sc.gov

Standards and Accountability:

Cyclical Review of the State Accountability System — April 2014
Pursuant to Section 59-18-910, the EOC, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, issued results of the cyclical review of the state accountability system.

Family Friendly Standards — August 2014
The EOC in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education will update SC Family Friendly Standards in science. The two agencies last year launched a user friendly website for parents that contain state standards and helpful information for parents and families. The website is: http://scfriendlystandards.org/.

Cyclical Review of the ELA and Math Standards — July 2014 through February 2015
Per Act 200 EOC will begin a cyclical review of the Common Core State Standards in ELA and mathematics by first surveying educators, parents, business and community leaders.

Release of 2014 State District and School Report Cards — November 2014
EOC will publish summary documents related to the release of the 2014 school and district report cards.

Evaluation:

Online Education — June 2014
The EOC issued a report documenting student achievement on state assessments for students enrolled in virtual or online education and documenting parent, teacher and student satisfaction with online learning opportunities.

Summer Reading Camps — Summer 2014
Twenty school districts will participate in an *EOC pilot of summer reading camps*. Dr. Rainey Knight will work with the districts and visit each of the camps. Participating districts have agreed to provide information about student growth as well as information about the structure of their camps, curriculum used, personnel, etc.

Annual Review of EIA-Funded Programs and Initiatives — Fall 2014
EOC will make recommendations for Fiscal Year 2015-16 to Governor and General Assembly.

Child Development Education Pilot Program — January 2015
The EOC will conduct an annual evaluation of the Child Development Education Pilot Program.

Annual Evaluation of SC Teacher Loan Program and Parent Survey — June 2015
The EOC will report on the progress, challenges, and impact of the SC Teacher Loan Program on recruiting teachers into the teaching profession and the results of the annual parent survey.

TransformSC — June 2015
The EOC, in collaboration with the Riley Institute at Furman University, will evaluate three innovative education models being implemented and will provide research support for all TransformSC schools.

Public Reporting and Engagement:

Public Awareness Campaign — June 2015
The EOC will implement a public awareness and engagement plan focused on the EOC PK -20 Reading Initiative recommendations.

Where Are We Now Report — February 2015
In September 2009, the EOC adopted a 2020 Vision Statement for South Carolina. Annually, the EOC documents progress of the state toward obtaining the Vision.

Often, policymakers are asked about teacher salary and EFA funding. Below are some charts providing a historical perspective:

Actual Average Teacher Salary

Year	South Carolina	Southeastern	Difference
FY05	**$42,189**	**$41,464**	**$725**
FY06	**$43,011**	**$42,863**	**$148**
FY07	**$44,336**	**$44,544**	**($208)**
FY08	**$45,758**	**$46,393**	**($635)**
FY09	**$47,421**	**$47,445**	**($24)**
FY10	**$47,508**	**$47,553**	**($45)**
FY11	**$47,050**	**$47,506**	**($456)**
FY12	**$47,428**	**$47,846**	**($418)**
FY13	**$48,375**	**$47,970**	**$405**
FY14		**$48,471**	
FY15		**$48,892**	

Southeast includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.
Salaries in blue are estimates.

Education Finance Act
Expenditures and Base Student Cost (BSC)

Fiscal Year	Expenditures Or Appropriations	BSC Per Appropriation Act	Projected BSC
2004-05	**$1,078,998,156**	**$1,852**	**$2,234**
2005-06	**$1,367,973,500**	**$2,290**	**$2,290**
2006-07	**$1,426,544,209**	**$2,367**	**$2,367**
2007-08	**$1,506,691,472**	**$2,476**	**$2,476**
2008-09	**$1,339,202,159**	**$2,578**	**$2,578**
2009-10 *	**$1,088,894,001**	**$2,334**	**$2,687**
2010-11 *	**$1,004,394,001**	**$1,930**	**$2,720**
2011-12 **	**$1,165,812,946**	**$1,880**	**$2,790**
2012-13	**$1,262,729,814**	**$2,012**	**$2,790**
2013-14 ***	**$1,335,811,295**	**$2,101**	**$2,771**
2014-15 ***	**$1,470,506,649**	**$2,120**	**$2,742**

*Base Student Cost includes federal funds authorized through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Without ARRA funding, base student cost is $2,034 in FY2009-10 and $1,630 in 2010-11.

**Base Student Cost includes $56,174,107 in non-recurring funds. Total funding without non-recurring funds is $1,788.

*** Per appropriations act

Summary of 2013 Annual District and School Ratings

Districts: Since overall student performance on state assessments improved in 2012-13, results for school district ratings improved from 2012 to 2013:

Two (2) districts were rated At Risk in 2013 as compared to 8 in 2012 and 21 in 2009.
The number of districts rated Excellent or Good increased from 42 in 2012 to 50 in 2013.
Twenty-one (21) districts improved their Absolute rating while 6 declined.

ABSOLUTE Ratings for School Districts

(Accountability Rating	**2013**	2012	2011	2010	2009
Excellent	**30** *(36.6%)*	27 *(32.1%)*	11 *(12.8%)*	6 *(7.0%)*	1 *(1.2%)*
Good	**20** *(24.4%)*	15 *(17.9%)*	22 (25.6%)	12 *(14.0%)*	0
Average	**24** *(29.3%)*	30 *(35.7%)*	35 (40.7%)	48 *(55.8%)*	24 *(28.2%)*
Below Average	**6** *(7.3%)*	4 *(4.8%)*	9 (10.5%)	14 *(16.3%)*	39 *(45.9%)*
At Risk	**2** *(2.4%)*	8 *(9.5%)*	9 *(10.5%)*	6 *(7.0%)*	21 *(24.7%)*
Number of Districts	**82**	84	86	86	85

Note: The SC Public Charter School District started receiving ratings in 2010.

Schools: Approximately 240 school report cards (21%) improved their absolute ratings while 65 or 6% declined in their Absolute rating.

"Consistently Excellent" – 268 school report cards had an absolute rating of Excellent for the past three years.

"Consistently Improving" – 19 school report cards improved the absolute rating from 2011 to 2012 and from 2012 to 2013

"Persistently Underperforming" – 25 school report cards had an absolute rating of At-Risk all three years.

ABSOLUTE Ratings for Schools, 2013

Accountability Rating	Schools (% of All Schools)		Students (% Enrolled in Schools by Rating)	Average Poverty Index
Excellent	**397**	*33%*	40%	57%
Good	**233**	*19%*	19%	73%
Average	**422**	*35%*	32%	85%
Below Average	**97**	*8%*	6%	94%
At-Risk	**46**	*4%*	3%	93%

This table does not include ratings for career and technology centers.

Graduation Rates

South Carolina On-Time Graduation Rate

2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
77.5%	**74.9%**	**73.6%**	**72.1%**	**73.7%**

Sources

2013 District Fact File. SC Department of Education. Accessed on May 12, 2014. <http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/2013/index.cfm>.

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SREB

South Carolina

Taking Stock and Pushing Forward

2014 State Progress Report

Challenge to Lead 2020
Goals for Education

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

SREB.org

SREB's
Challenge to Lead 2020

Goals for Education

All children **entering school** will exhibit the knowledge and the social and developmental skills needed for success in first grade.

Student achievement for all groups in the **early grades** will exceed state standards and national averages — at rates that close achievement gaps between groups.

Student achievement for all groups in the **middle grades** will exceed state standards and national averages — at rates that close achievement gaps between groups.

Eighty percent of all groups of ninth-graders will graduate from **high school** ready for college and career training. (This likely means more than 90 percent will need to graduate from high school and more than 80 percent will need to meet readiness standards for college and career training.)

Sixty percent of working-age adults will have a **postsecondary** credential: an associate or bachelor's degree, or a career certificate. Public postsecondary institutions will make it a top priority to help states meet state needs by increasing graduates, public service and research.

Increasing percentages of **adults** without high school or postsecondary credentials will pursue opportunities to earn high school alternative certificates, college degrees or career certificates.

South Carolina

Taking Stock and Pushing Forward

2014 State Progress Report on the Challenge to Lead 2020 Goals for Education

Southern Regional Education Board

This report was developed by a team of SREB staff members led by Jeff Gagne, director, Education Policies. Key team members included Michaela de Groot, policy analyst; Matthew Smith, policy analyst; Jenny Hite, research associate; Alex Camardelle, intern and Joan Lord, vice president. The team is grateful to many others who contributed.

It was edited by Matia Edwards, chief editor, Communications; and designed by Lety Jones, senior designer and production manager.

It is part of the Challenge to Lead education goals series, directed by Jeff Gagne. A full listing of the goals is printed on the inside front cover. For more information, email jeff.gagne@sreb.org or call (404) 875-9211. *Challenge to Lead 2020 Goals for Education* is available at www.sreb.org.

A Message from the President of SREB

Dave Spence, SREB President

SREB's ***Challenge to Lead*** goals for education have provided benchmarks for measuring educational improvements in our states for more than a decade. During this time, SREB has helped states track progress on a variety of key indicators, and we have watched as greater percentages of students hit key benchmarks on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), graduated from high school and earned college degrees. But, we have a ways to go to ensure that the residents of SREB states have the postsecondary credentials they need to meet and exceed education levels needed for success in the work force and as citizens.

In 2012, we took stock of where we were and refreshed SREB's goals. We knew that we needed to keep measuring outcomes, but we needed to do more. Over the previous five years, SREB state leaders have engaged in deep study of literacy, the middle grades, high school accountability and college completion — and they set a policy agenda for each. These leaders believed if the right policies are linked to goals, states could expect greater progress. ***Challenge to Lead 2020*** made these connections.

SREB's *Challenge to Lead* goals for education have provided benchmarks for measuring educational improvements in our states for more than a decade.

Taking Stock and Pushing Forward reports recent growth on outcomes and activity in policy development in SREB states in several key areas:

- **Improving achievement on NAEP at the Basic level** — although the emphasis on achievement at fourth and eighth grades in *Challenge to Lead 2020* has shifted to the NAEP Proficient level, which aligns with college and career readiness.
- **Improving high school graduation rates** — now based on a federal calculation that accounts for all students from ninth grade and replaces a previous calculation that was an estimate. Based on 14 SREB states using the new rate, the median SREB state average rate of 80 percent equaled the national average. (Two states received a waiver to use the previous rate for another year.)
- **Improving access to postsecondary education for black and Hispanic students** — SREB regional postsecondary enrollment gains for black and Hispanic students outpaced the region's overall enrollment gain, thereby narrowing the access gap to higher education.

This report details where **South Carolina** stands in education. You and your state can take pride in these highlights on key outcome measures and policy implementation.

Notable Outcomes in South Carolina

- South Carolina's eighth-graders outpaced the nation in reading achievement on NAEP at the Basic and Proficient levels.
- South Carolina's black eighth-graders narrowed achievement gaps in reading on NAEP at the Basic level and in math at the Proficient level. Hispanic eighth-graders narrowed the gap in math at the Basic and

Proficient levels. Black fourth-graders narrowed the gap in reading at the Proficient level — and in math at the Basic level. Hispanic fourth-graders narrowed the gap in reading at the Basic and Proficient levels.

- South Carolina's high school graduation rate rose. This increase in graduation rate extended to black and white high school seniors.
- For graduating seniors who took the ACT, South Carolina topped the region in percentages of students who met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.
- South Carolina's college enrollment rate for recent high school graduates exceeded the nation and region.
- South Carolina's six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen who entered public, four-year colleges and universities topped the national and regional rates.
- Pass rates among South Carolina's adults taking the GED test exceeded the nation and SREB region.

Policy Highlights in South Carolina

- South Carolina requires all students in the middle grades to develop high school graduation plans and to explore career options.
- South Carolina provides for guarantee of full transfer of general education credits and full transfer of associate degree credits.

I am encouraged by the progress reflected in all the state reports. SREB is committed to working with states to ensure this progress continues. We look to state leaders to press for strong and effective education policy in their states. Together, we can ensure that student achievement reaches high levels, and SREB states achieve their education, economic and work force goals.

Dave Spence

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Foreword

Taking Stock and Pushing Forward is the sixth biennial report to SREB states on their progress in meeting **SREB's *Challenge to Lead*** goals for education. It is a set of 16 customized state progress reports — one for each SREB state. For the first time, these state reports document both measurable outcomes and state policies. Through effective policy implementation, the goals can drive improvements in student achievement, high school graduation, college completion and work force readiness.

In 2002, the ***Challenge to Lead*** goals boldly declared that SREB states could lead the nation in education progress. Between 2008 and 2012, SREB hosted four policy commissions, along with other SREB regional study convenings. Each made recommendations on essential policies to help states reach their goals. By 2012, SREB's leaders could see their states had made measurable progress, but they knew their task was unfinished.

For the first time, SREB's biennial state progress reports document both measurable outcomes and state policies.

In 2012, SREB reframed the 2002 goals and reduced the number from 12 to six. SREB state leaders believed the new ***Challenge to Lead 2020*** goals, with outcome measures linked to policies, could drive student achievement. As states adopt and implement the recommended policies, they cannot guarantee that student results will necessarily follow. Yet, the six goals set the stage for success.

SREB promised to help states achieve the goals by monitoring, measuring and reporting on outcomes for each state — and by benchmarking implementation of specific policies related to the goals.

Challenge 2020's six goals focus on the student — from prekindergarten through postsecondary education and into the adult years. The biennial reports showcase progress on the educational milestones students must reach at each stage. They also will pay attention to the transitions between stages. Research shows that many students drop out of school during these transitions, because they are not fully prepared for success at the next educational level.

What to expect in this report: The progress reports begin with demographic and economic perspectives to situate SREB states in their regional and national contexts. The South's overall population growth, and school enrollment growth in particular, has outpaced the rest of the nation in the last decade. The region has become more racially and ethnically diverse during the same period. And, it has been hit hard by the recent economic recession. These perspectives provide a critical backdrop for the remainder of the report, underscoring the importance — and the difficulty — of making educational gains in SREB states.

Reporting on the **outcome measures continues in this report, much as in the past**. Policy-makers have come to expect SREB to report on such key measures as results on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), ninth-grade enrollment bulge, high school graduation rates and college-enrollment rates of recent high school graduates. These particular measures give a picture of progress on how well current students

are thriving as they move through school and what challenges SREB states face. And when outcome measures are reported in national and regional contexts, policy-makers can determine how students in their states stack up with other students.

Policy-makers will also find information about important policies. In several instances the elements of these policies — all related to the goals — are laid out in clear tables that indicate where a state stands. In other cases, color-coded maps of the region allow policy-makers to compare states on these policies. SREB's website displays full state spreads of the tables showing the policy elements. Check sreb.org and click on the Education Policies Web pages.

The tension at the heart of tackling these goals is **taking stock** to know how well states are doing on what matters — and then knowing what states need to do to **push forward**. Tackling goals means answering the questions, "where do we stand?" and "how can we get better?" It is the interplay between today's results and tomorrow's strategies for improvement.

The tension at the heart of tackling these goals is taking stock to know how well states are doing on what matters and then knowing what states need to do to push forward.

SREB states pushed forward in the last 10 years and made gains in pre-K access, NAEP achievement gains in reading and math, and high school graduation rates. For the most part, these gains resulted from the efforts of inspired SREB state leaders, who championed research and policy. They implemented important policies with good planning that called for state and local support — and they were committed to putting their plans in place and achieving their goals over the long haul. Some of their best efforts are documented in SREB's 2013 report, *A Decade of Progress: How SREB States Achieved Exceptional Gains*.

SREB will continue to help states, especially as they implement the ***Challenge 2020*** goals — by keeping its commitment to measure outcomes and benchmark progress on policy.

Education Policies Team

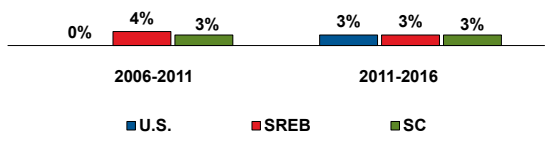
Joan Lord Vice President	Michaela de Groot Policy Analyst	Jenny Hite Research Associate
Jeff Gagne Director	Matthew Smith Policy Analyst	Alex Camardelle Intern

Demographics

Challenge to Lead 2020 goals called for *all* groups of students to achieve at high levels. They also emphasize the need for states to close achievement gaps for minority students and students from poor and low-income families. Rising enrollment and changing demography across SREB states affected these student groups in dynamic ways — and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

The overall population in SREB states grew 6 percent from 2006 to 2011, so it is no surprise that **public elementary and secondary school enrollment** also grew. Over the same period, fall enrollment increased 4 percent in SREB states — slower than population growth but faster than the enrollment nationally, which remained relatively stable.

Actual and Projected Changes in Fall Enrollment
Public Elementary and Secondary in South Carolina



Source: SREB, based on data from National Center for Education Statistics

Ten SREB states had higher enrollment in 2011 than in 2006, five SREB states had fairly constant enrollment over the period, and one SREB state had a decline. The changes ranged from an increase of 9 percent to a decrease of 1 percent.

Looking ahead, national public school enrollment is projected to increase at a faster rate from 2011 to 2016 than it did from 2006 to 2011. The enrollment rate across the region is projected to increase by 3 percent over the same time period. However, three SREB states could see declines in enrollment through 2016.

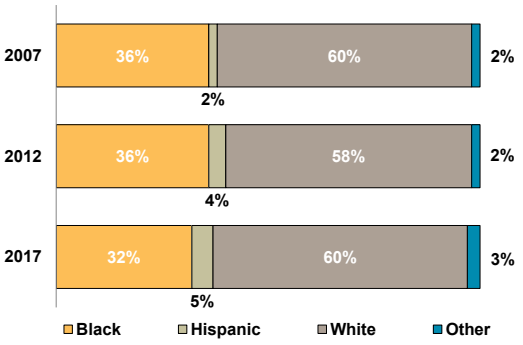
In South Carolina:

- The public school enrollment rate did not keep pace with the SREB region from 2006 to 2011, but it is expected to keep pace with the region from 2011 to 2016. About 727,000 students were enrolled in fall 2011.
- From 2007 to 2017, the proportion of black students in the high school graduating class is expected to decline, the proportion of white students is expected to remain the same, and the proportion of Hispanic students is expected to grow.
- The percentage of children living in poverty increased 6 percentage points since 2007.

One fact is clear. Public school enrollment has grown more diverse. This change was evident in public high school graduating classes. In spring 2012, 60 percent of graduating seniors in the United States were white, down 5 percentage points from 2007. According to projections, that proportion is expected to continue to decline to 57 percent by 2017.

Likewise, the proportion of black graduating seniors is projected to decline 1 percentage point from 2012 to 2017. The proportion of Hispanic seniors in the United States is expected to grow from 14 percent of the graduating class to 21 percent from 2007 to 2017.

Racial/Ethnic Proportions
Public High School Graduates in South Carolina

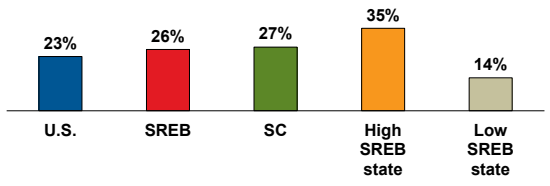


Source: SREB, based on data from Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

All SREB states except one are expected to mirror the nation in growing **more diverse** from 2007 to 2017. The fastest-growing student group — Hispanic students — is projected to increase 9 percentage points in the region during this time. These students — many from low-income households and with limited English proficiency — will need extra support to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

The nation's most recent recession, which began in 2008, hit SREB states hard. By 2012, most SREB states were still struggling with lagging state revenues, high unemployment and weak housing markets. The impact of all these factors on school-aged children is undeniable, as SREB states saw poverty rates rise.

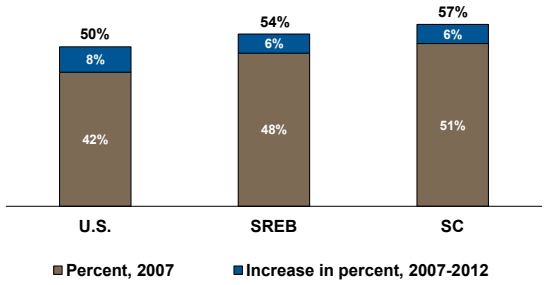
Children Under 18 Years Old Living in Poverty in South Carolina, 2012



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation

In 2012, about 16 million children under 18 years old in the United States lived in **poverty** — about 23 percent of the nation's children. Nearly 42 percent of the nation's children living in poverty resided in SREB states. The percentages in the nation and in the region increased from 2007 to 2012; the percentage also rose in all 16 SREB states. The U.S. Census Bureau measures poverty by income and household size. Poverty in 2012 was equivalent to $23,492 in annual income for a household of four.

Percentage of Students Approved for Free or Reduced-Price Meals in South Carolina, 2012



Source: SREB, based on data from National Center for Education Statistics

Thirteen SREB states had higher poverty rates than the nation in 2012. Across the region, these percentages ranged from 14 to 35 percent of all children.

The percentage of students in low-income households in the nation rose from 42 percent in 2007 to 50 percent in 2012. In the region, the percentage grew from 48 percent to 54 percent. The percentage rose in every SREB state. Federal law defines low income by eligibility for free or reduced-price meals in the National School Lunch Program — available to students from households of four with incomes up to 185 percent of the annual poverty level (up to $41,348 in 2012).

The growth in students from **low-income** households is important to policy-makers. Research indicates that low income can cause frequent family relocation as parents seek work and new housing. This instability creates disruptions in learning for children and higher absenteeism. It can also be an underlying cause of poor nutrition, inadequate health care and weak student and parent engagement with their schools — all factors that affect student achievement.

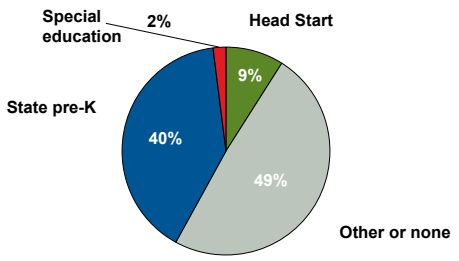
Early Learning

The *Challenge to Lead 2020* goals call for SREB states to increase the percentages of all groups of 3- and 4-year olds who enroll in public prekindergarten to above national averages and for states to increase the percentage of students who meet targets for school readiness. The goals stress the importance of both access and quality as states take steps to ensure that their pre-K programs are integrated and aligned with kindergarten and the early grades.

Research is clear that if young children enter first grade ready to learn, their chances for success throughout school are greatly improved. SREB states make a well-placed investment when they ensure that all children are ready for school — and when all children have a firm foundation for reading and math skills as early as pre-K.

The challenge for all SREB states is to provide adequate **access** to pre-K to serve all 4-year-olds — and the 3-year-olds at risk of not being ready for school — while maintaining high standards for programs even if they have limited financial resources.

Four-Year-Old Enrollment in Pre-K in South Carolina By Program Type, 2013



Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

Some SREB states have stretched public dollars by engaging in partnerships between public school districts, federally funded Head Start, and parochial or private schools to deliver pre-K to as many children as possible in various types of settings. Regardless of the provider, states should maintain high standards and incentives for programs to reach a common goal — first-grade readiness.

In South Carolina:

- In 2013, an estimated 40 percent of 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-funded prekindergarten programs.
- NIEER reported that South Carolina met six of the 10 standards of quality for pre-K in 2013, including three of the four teaching standards.
- The state does not require a school-readiness assessment in kindergarten.

From 2010 to 2013, enrollment in state-funded pre-K increased in seven SREB states, remained flat in five states and decreased in four. Of the eight states in the nation that enrolled half or more of 4-year-olds in pre-K, five were SREB states. Seven SREB states enrolled 3-year-olds in state pre-K programs, and six of these enrolled them at rates at or above the national average of 4 percent. The range in rates in SREB states was 1 percent to 14 percent.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has identified **10 standards of quality** that are widely accepted for pre-K programs. Among the criteria are curriculum, class-size limits, child-to-staff ratios and staff qualifications. SREB states are national leaders in implementing these standards. Four states in the nation met all 10 standards in 2013, two of which are SREB states. Four SREB states are among seven states nationwide that met nine of the 10 standards.

Most SREB states administer **readiness assessments** in kindergarten to evaluate students' development and ensure readiness for first grade. Multiple, ongoing measures and observations are regarded as more developmentally appropriate for this age than single snapshot assessments, and they provide more timely feedback for educators. In addition, the earlier the first of these assessments are administered, the sooner program providers can use feedback to help meet children's needs.

In 2014, 13 SREB states require student assessments in kindergarten, and five of these states use multiple, ongoing measures and observations to assess students' early academic skills and social and emotional development. Four SREB states require assessments for children in pre-K. These early assessments give teachers the information they need to help students build strong skills early.

The *Challenge 2020* goals emphasize strong **teacher qualifications** and continuing professional development for kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers. National standards spell out the specialized training and professional development requirements needed for lead and assistant teachers to ensure they are prepared for their roles. Four of the 10 NIEER standards relate to these types of staff qualifications. Six states in the nation met all four teacher qualification standards in 2013 — three of which are SREB states.

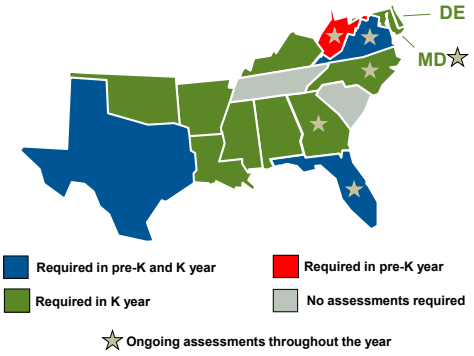
Research demonstrates a positive relationship between pre-K teachers who hold a bachelor's degree and their students' academic outcomes. It also shows a positive relationship if pre-K teachers have specialized training in early childhood education. Despite this, few pre-K teachers have such degrees and training. Assistant pre-K teachers need the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. Professional development is important for both the lead teachers and the assistants.

Teaching Quality Standards for State Pre-K In South Carolina, 2013

Teaching Quality Checklist	
Standard	**Met**
Lead teacher has bachelor's degree	✓
Lead teacher has specialized pre-K training	✓
Assistant teacher has the CDA Credential or equivalent	
Teachers earn at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development	✓

Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

School-Readiness Assessment Requirements In Kindergarten (K) and Pre-K, 2014



Sources: SREB analysis of state documents

In most states, pre-K teachers and their assistants earn significantly less than their K-12 counterparts, even when they possess the same or similar credentials and work in the public school system. This gap in pay presents a significant challenge in the recruitment and retention of highly trained early childhood educators.

From 2012 to 2014, SREB states made strides in overall pre-K program improvement. During this period, 11 SREB states enacted legislation aimed at:

- expanding pre-K access
- developing or improving early assessments
- aligning pre-K and K-12 curricula, and
- improving the governance structures of state-funded pre-K programs.

By 2013, all SREB states had adopted state-funded prekindergarten programs. Even so, too few SREB states serve 3-year-olds in their state-funded pre-K programs as called for in *Challenge 2020*. Of seven SREB states that serve 3-year-olds, only one serves more than 10 percent of them in its program. All SREB states have a challenge to provide adequate access and high quality pre-K programs to their 3-year-olds at-risk of not being ready for school and to all their 4-year-olds.

Early Grades

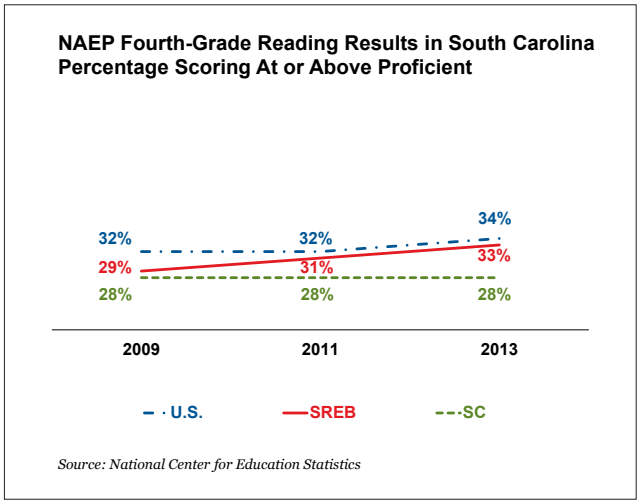
Challenge to Lead 2020 goals call for 90 percent of fourth-graders to score at or above the Basic level in reading and math on NAEP and for percentages of fourth-graders scoring at or above the NAEP Proficient level in these subject areas to increase regularly — to above national averages. The Proficient level is most closely associated with college and career readiness.

Known as the Nation's Report Card, NAEP's series of exams measure student achievement in specific subjects and grades. It is given every two years, most recently in 2013.

In **reading**, the percentages of fourth-graders in the nation and region scoring at or above the NAEP Basic and Proficient levels improved since 2009. Gains in SREB states in the percentages of these students scoring at or above the Basic level outpaced those of the nation from 2009 to 2013, and half of the SREB states made gains over this period. No SREB state reached the 90 percent goal at Basic in reading.

From 2009 to 2013, percentages of students in SREB states scoring at or above the Proficient level increased at twice the rate of their national peers. Twelve SREB states increased the percentage of students scoring at or above the Proficient level. Five SREB states had a larger percentage at or above this level than the nation.

In **math**, the percentages of fourth-graders in the nation and region scoring at or above the Basic and Proficient levels improved since 2009. At both levels, the region outpaced the nation in gains. The percentage of students in SREB states achieving at or above the Basic level exceeded their national peers for the first time. No SREB state reached the 90 percent goal at the Basic level in math.



In South Carolina:

- The gap between black and white students scoring at or above Proficient on NAEP in math widened by 2 percentage points since 2009 — to 34 points. The gap for Hispanic students widened by 6 points over the same period — to 24 points.
- The gap between black and white students scoring at or above Proficient in reading narrowed by 1 point since 2009 — to 26 points in 2013. The gap for Hispanic students narrowed by 3 points over the same period — to 18 points.

All 16 SREB states increased the percentage scoring at or above the Proficient level from 2009 to 2013, and seven SREB states had a greater percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient than the nation.

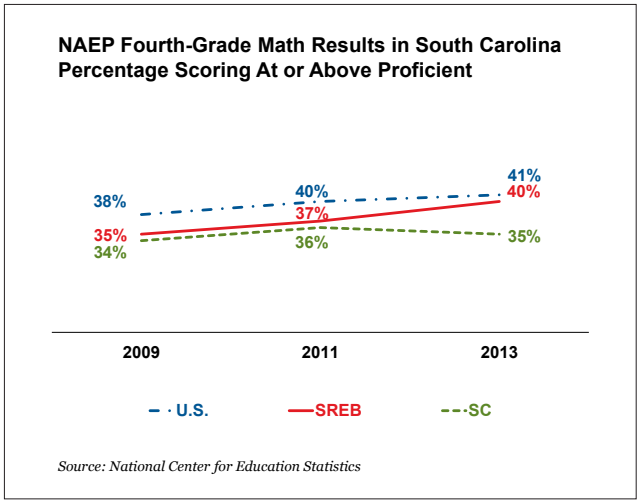
The early grades goal emphasizes the need for SREB states to **close achievement gaps** for students from various racial and ethnic groups and for those from low-income families.

In **reading** at the Proficient level, white students continued to outperform their black and Hispanic peers in the SREB states in 2013, yet black and Hispanic students narrowed their respective gaps with white students since 2009.

In **math** at the Proficient level, black students narrowed the gap with their white peers in the SREB states since 2009. Achievement gains by Hispanic students did not keep pace with those of their white peers, so the gap between these groups widened.

Fourth-graders from low-income families in the region generally outpaced their national peers in reading and math achievement. Yet, gaps between students from low-income families and all others widened.

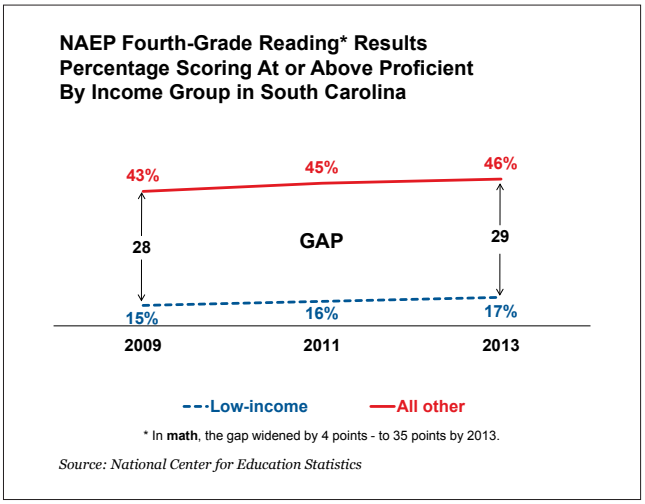
Despite growing enrollments, demographic changes and the persistence of achievement gaps, SREB states made promising gains in reading and math achievement. Even so, many SREB states still have a high proportion of school-aged children considered at risk of falling behind and dropping out of school — that is, unless states intervene to help them meet standards.



The *Challenge 2020* early grades goal focuses on several **policies that support early grades learning**. Among these is a call for states to place students who are behind in reading in programs to help them catch up to their grade-level peers, not later than the end of third grade. Research shows that for these students, monitoring academic progress as early as pre-K and intervening frequently can help ensure students are reading on grade level by third grade.

In most SREB states, third-graders who fail to achieve a state-determined literacy benchmark can be retained. Research shows that for these students, repeating the same third-grade curriculum they have already received is not enough to catch them up to the benchmark.

SREB states have addressed early grades reading support — both before and after retention — by implementing a variety of policy elements as diverse as the students they serve. Some states require intensive academic interventions, including tutoring or additional instruction time. Some states have adopted the use of literacy coaches, computerized reading programs, or home reading programs to help struggling readers catch up. A few SREB states have adopted a comprehensive approach that ensures the reading interventions after retention are tailored to meet each student's needs.



Early Grades Reading and Literacy in South Carolina

Policy Element	State Required	Frequency
Administers reading assessments or diagnostics to students	Yes	Annually, grades 1-3
Requires academic interventions to support struggling readers	No	Not Applicable
Requires parent/guardian notification of intervention plan	No	
Requires retention of third-graders who do not meet a state-defined literacy benchmark in reading on a statewide assessment	No	
Requires tailored instruction for retained students	No	
Allows exemptions for students who demonstrate proficiency by other means, by appeal or district approval	Not Applicable	
Allows exemptions for specific groups of students	Not Applicable	

Sources: Education Commission of the States and SREB state documents

Middle Grades

Challenge to Lead 2020 goals call for 90 percent of eighth-graders to score at or above the NAEP Basic level in reading and math and for percentages of eighth-graders scoring at or above the NAEP Proficient level in these subjects to increase regularly — to above national averages. The Proficient level is most closely associated with college and career readiness.

In **reading**, the percentages of eighth-graders in the nation and SREB region scoring at or above the NAEP Basic and Proficient levels improved since 2009. Gains in SREB states in the percentages of these students scoring at or above the Basic level equaled gains made by their national peers from 2009 to 2013, and 14 SREB states made gains over this period. No SREB state reached the 90 percent target of eighth-graders scoring at the Basic level in reading.

From 2009 to 2013, every SREB state increased the percentage of students scoring at or above the Proficient level, with the region outpacing the nation in gains at the Proficient level. In three SREB states, a greater percentage of students scored at or above the Proficient level in 2013 than their peers in the nation, and in five SREB states, students made greater gains than their peers in the nation from 2009 to 2013.

In **math**, the percentages of eighth-graders in the nation and region scoring at or above the Basic and Proficient levels improved modestly since 2009, with the region outpacing the nation in gains at the Proficient level. Eleven SREB states increased the percentage of students scoring at or above the Basic level, although no SREB states reached the 90 percent target of eighth-graders scoring at the Basic level in math.

Thirteen SREB states increased the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient from 2009 to 2013, with the region outpacing the nation in gains over the period. Four SREB states had a greater percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient than the nation.

The middle grades goal emphasizes the need for SREB states to **close achievement gaps** of students from various racial and ethnic groups and students from low-income families.

In **reading** at the Proficient level, white students continued to outperform their black and Hispanic peers in SREB states. The gap in achievement between black and white students widened from 2009 and 2013. The gap remained the same for Hispanic students in 2013 as in 2009.

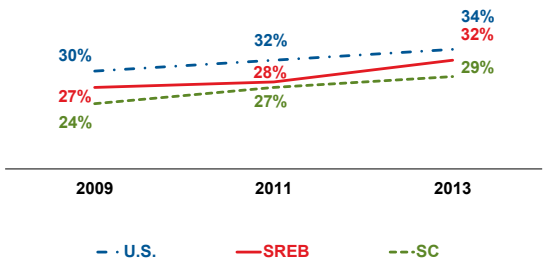
In **math** at the Proficient level, white students continued to outperform their black and Hispanic peers in 2013. But in math, both black and Hispanic students narrowed gaps with their white peers in SREB states since 2009.

Eighth-graders from low-income families in the region improved in reading and math achievement from 2009 to 2013, keeping pace with their national peers. Yet, gaps between students from low-income families and all others in SREB states continued to widen.

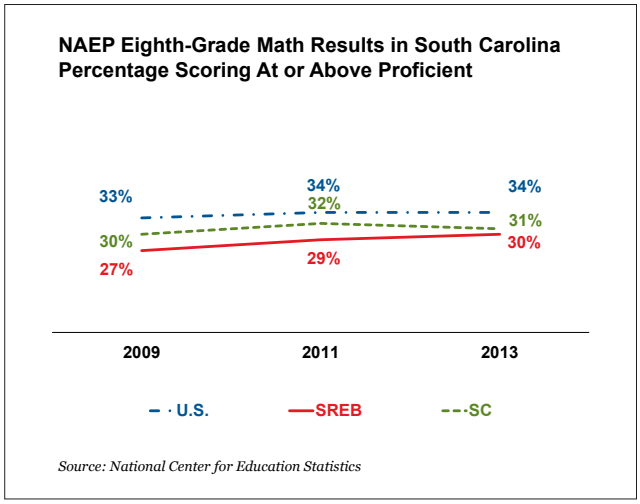
In South Carolina:

- The gap between black and white students scoring at or above Proficient on NAEP in reading widened by 1 percentage point since 2009 — to 25 points in 2013. The gap for Hispanic students widened by 11 points over the same period — to 15 points.
- The gap between students from low-income families and all other students scoring at or above Proficient in math widened by 1 point since 2009 — to 30 points in 2013. In reading, the gap in reading widened by 4 points over the same period — to 27 points.

NAEP Eighth-Grade Reading Results in South Carolina
Percentage Scoring At or Above Proficient



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

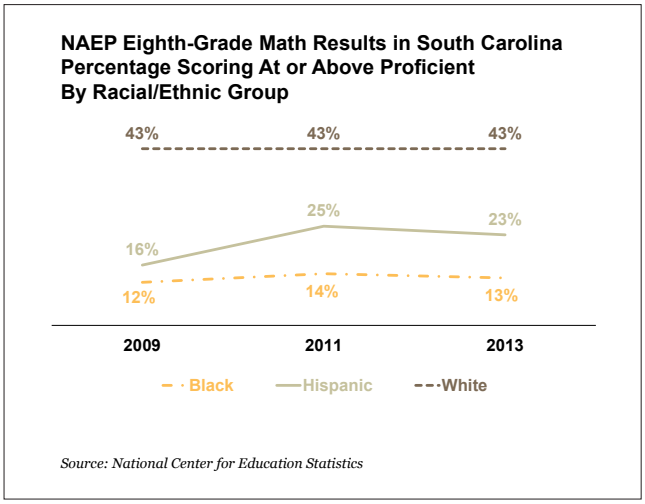


Despite growing enrollments, demographic changes in public schools and the persistence of achievement gaps, SREB states made promising gains in reading and math achievement at the Proficient level on NAEP. Even so, many SREB states have a high proportion of middle grades children considered at risk of falling behind or dropping out of high school — that is, unless states have policies that can effectively engage students and their parents in understanding the value of education and planning for their futures — beginning in the middle grades.

The 2011 SREB Commission on the Middle Grades developed a framework for advancing the middle grades: clarify the mission of the middle grades and hold districts and schools accountable for meeting it; focus the curriculum on literacy and STEM disciplines; intervene to help students likely to drop out of school; require individualized academic and career plans; and refocus professional development. This framework remains important and is captured in *Challenge 2020.*

Challenge 2020 specifically calls for states to ensure that all students create an academic plan for success in high school and to identify and explore potential careers beyond high school. Developing such a plan helps students develop the commitment needed to achieve their goals. Students may change the plan while in high school, but having a plan helps them stay focused on an educational pathway that leads to postsecondary education or training.

Currently, 13 SREB states require middle grades students to develop individualized academic and career plans. Of these states, 12 also require students to participate in specific academic and career planning activities such as counseling or direct exposure to careers.



Middle Grades Career and Academic Planning in South Carolina

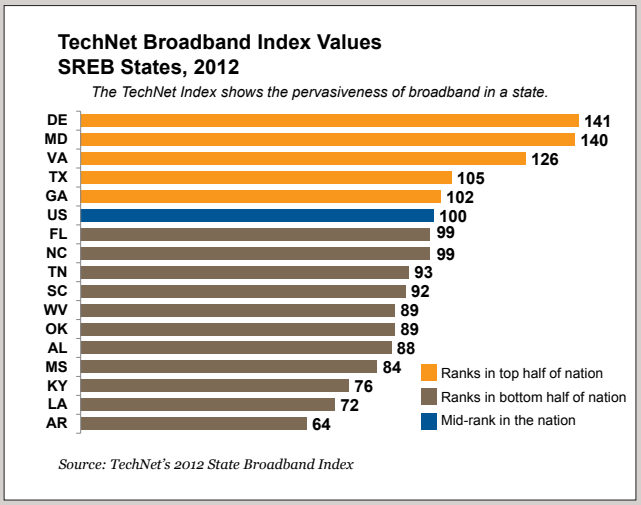
Policy Element	State Required	Policy Type
Students develop high school graduation plans	Yes	State statute
Students explore careers	Yes	
Students learn about postsecondary education options	No	N/A
Summary of eighth-grade requirements	Students develop individual graduation plans, participate in a career interest assessment and research career opportunities. In creating the plan, students choose one of 16 career clusters as a focus.	

Sources: SREB analysis of state documents

Issues Affecting All Goals: Technology, Data and Teachers

Educational Technology: Broadband

All the *Challenge to Lead 2020* goals recognize effective uses of educational technology as a critical element for success. While various emerging technologies raise critical issues for today's schools and colleges, ensuring all of them have accessible and affordable Internet connectivity is a priority. Students and faculty need high-speed broadband both inside and outside the classroom to support instruction and research. As students and teachers bring more personal electronic devices to class and labs— often three per person — the demand for connectivity climbs. As schools turn to online assessments, they stretch the limits of their capability.



Colleges and universities in most SREB states get broadband through Research and Education (R&E) networks, which are supported with federal and state funds. These networks purchase bandwidth directly from wholesalers. While some SREB states with R&E networks allow their K-12 schools to connect to these networks, most K-12 schools purchase bandwidth from commercial providers. The cost per unit of bandwidth is cheaper from R&E networks, even though schools can receive discounts from commercial providers through the federal E-rate program. Even so, schools generally do not have the resources to purchase all they need. In 2011, a Federal Communications Commission study found that 80 percent of E-rate funded schools nationwide lacked adequate bandwidth for current needs.

The State Education Technology Directors Association established a bandwidth standard for K-12 schools of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) per 1,000 students/staff members by 2014-15, with an increase to 1,000 Mbps in 2018. Most schools in SREB states do not meet the 2014-15 standard.

Funding for bandwidth in the future depends on schools' ability to track current usage and to document needs. States need these data from schools to set priorities for their expenditures and to secure federal funding. These data are not generally available nationwide for all schools.

TechNet, a public policy group in the technology industry, analyzes the pervasiveness of broadband in states based on an index that weighs access in each state, network speeds statewide and the number of employees in technology fields. It gives states an index value and ranks states on the index. In 2012, 11 SREB states ranked below the national average on TechNet's Broadband Index. The pervasiveness of bandwidth in a state is important for education — uses of bandwidth in business, residences and educational institutions are intertwined. Many states are beginning to map their overall bandwidth resources so they can set priorities for expanding availability. Developing such maps should be a high priority for all SREB states.

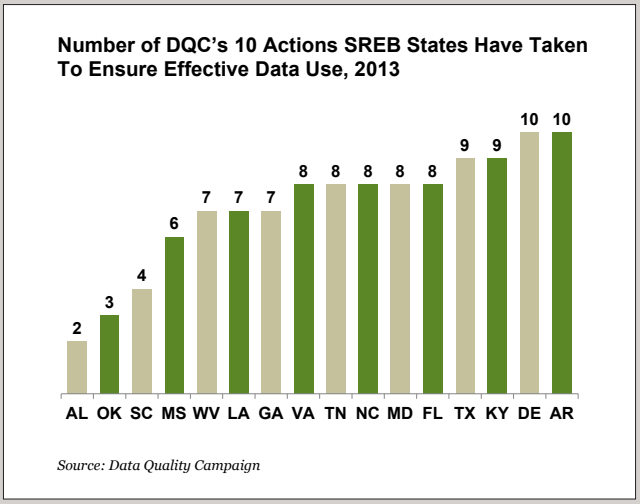
Education Data: Data Quality

A hallmark of *Challenge 2020* is monitoring progress on all the goals from pre-K through higher education and into the work force — over a long period of time. States need good data systems and a commitment to use data in making decisions if they expect to make continuous improvements.

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC), established in 2005, supports the development of comprehensive state data systems that can link information from multiple years and sources.

DQC's current focus is on helping states make effective uses of their education data. It identified 10 action steps for states to ensure policy-makers and education leaders can use data in making decisions. By 2013, two SREB states had taken all 10 actions steps, and all SREB states had made progress in implementing the following 10 action steps:

1. link data systems from pre-K to work force
2. create stable support for data systems
3. develop data governance structures
4. build state data warehouses
5. provide for timely access to the data
6. create individual student progress reports
7. create reports using longitudinal statistics
8. develop pre-K to work force research agendas
9. promote professional development
10. promote strategies to raise data awareness.



Even so, only four SREB states met the criteria for action step five, which requires states to implement systems to provide all stakeholders with timely access to the information they need while protecting student privacy. DQC reports that many states seem unclear about their role in providing local stakeholders — like parents, teachers and school counselors — with access to student longitudinal data.

Teacher Quality: Evaluation Models

One key to success with all *Challenge 2020* goals is teacher effectiveness. All SREB states are currently revamping their teacher evaluation systems, with an emphasis on feedback and improvement. These efforts are in step with federal Race to the Top grant requirements in some SREB states and federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act accountability waivers in all SREB states.

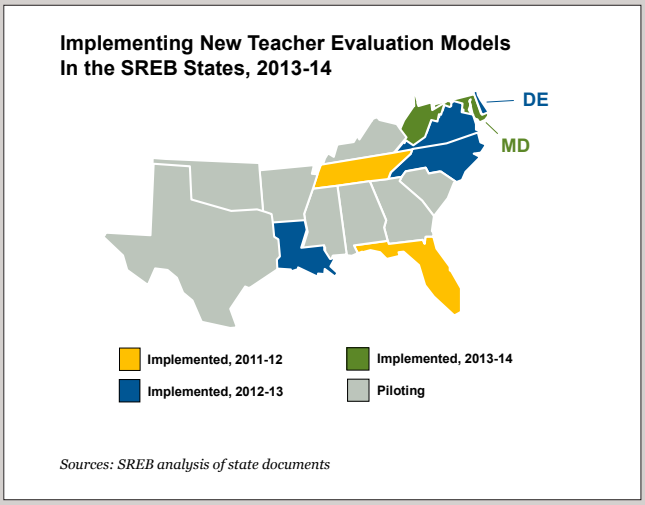
New teacher evaluation systems are quite similar state to state. Each state's model depends on observations of each teacher's classroom practice as a primary source of feedback about the teacher's effectiveness. Each model incorporates one or more measures of a teacher's impact on student achievement results. Each requires the evaluation system to be aligned with the state's academic standards (which, for the most part, are being reformed at the same time as the evaluation systems).

The differences among the teacher evaluation systems stem largely from three factors: (1) state timelines for implementation; (2) state resources available to support the effort; (3) the degree of local control in the implementation. One drawback to nearly all the models is that standard measures of student achievement are not available in every subject, like the arts and music, so some teachers do not have these measures available for their students.

How will policy-makers know when these new evaluation models are working? Certainly it will be when large numbers of teachers report that the new evaluation systems provide them with feedback that facilitates meaningful improvement in their work — and outcomes for students also rise. No state in the nation can report these kinds of results yet. For now, states face several challenges that require their attention before these systems can be successful:

- creating measures of teacher impact on students in subjects for which there are no state assessments, like arts and music
- keeping the focus on instructional improvement rather than personnel decisions
- ensuring observers and evaluators are well trained to use the evaluation system and to provide feedback to teachers
- providing professional development following evaluation that is related to feedback and that demonstrably improves teacher effectiveness.

These new systems will be successful only when teachers see their own progress resulting from meaningful feedback and professional development — and seeing their students thrive as an result. To get to this point, states need to learn from their early trials and improve their systems with every administration.



High School

SREB's *Challenge to Lead 2020* sets a high bar for high school completion: by 2020, 90 percent of ninth-graders will graduate from high school.

To meet such a goal, states need to pay attention to the transition from middle grades to high school. SREB states have struggled to improve this transition. Yet, more ninth-graders than students in other grades continue to fail key subjects in SREB states and in the nation, thereby creating a **ninth-grade enrollment bulge**. Researchers often trace the underlying causes to weak foundations in reading and math in the early grades. In fact, two SREB commissions called for adolescent reading programs in the middle grades to catch up weak readers for greater success in high school.

Ninth-Grade Enrollment Bulge

For every 100 eighth-graders in South Carolina in 2010,

there were 18 MORE ninth-graders in 2011.

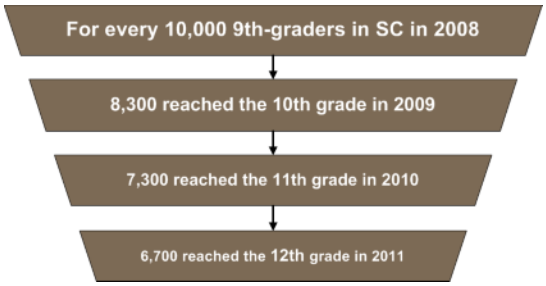
100 + **= 118**

Source: SREB, based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics

From 2010 to 2011, the enrollment bulge decreased in the nation by 2 percentage points and in SREB states by 1 point. Even so, the bulge remained large: schools nationwide enrolled 9 percent more ninth-graders in 2011 than eighth-graders in 2010. In the SREB states, 11 percent more ninth-graders enrolled in 2011 than eighth-graders in 2010. The 2011 ninth-grade enrollment bulge in SREB states ranged from 6 points to 20 points. This bulge is calculated by comparing the enrollment of ninth-graders to that of eighth-graders the previous year.

While failure in ninth grade is a key concern, it is not the only one states should watch. They also need to monitor **grade-level progression** from 10th to 11th grade and 11th to 12th grade. In doing so, education leaders can identify problems and then develop policies and practices that can help more students succeed year to year. Any year in high school can become a point at which students drop out, and states need to monitor progress routinely.

Grade-Level Progression in South Carolina



Source: SREB, based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics

In the last decade, most SREB states phased out comprehensive high school graduation tests in favor of end-of-course exams (EOCs). They believe EOCs can be tied more closely to their state's academic standards, because these tests assess the standards-based knowledge and skills for related courses. Because EOCs are linked to courses, they allow schools to identify student needs sooner than with comprehensive tests. Schools can then provide just-in-

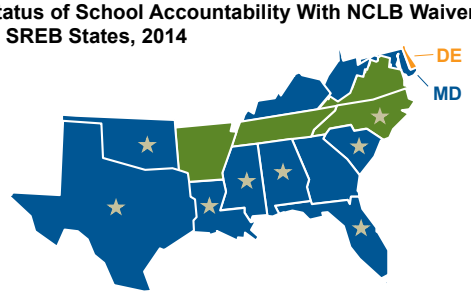
In South Carolina:

- The ninth-grade enrollment bulge was unchanged from 2010 to 2011 at 118 percent.
- The percentage of ninth-graders progressing to 12th grade in four years increased from 66 percent in 2010 to 67 percent in 2011.
- The graduation rate increased by 1 percentage point from 2011 to 2012.

time support to give students a better chance to stay caught up with peers throughout high school.

By 2014, 13 SREB states require students to pass specific EOCs in order to earn a regular diploma. Several states require that the EOC results count for between 10 and 20 percent of students' course grade for related courses.

Status of School Accountability With NCLB Waivers In SREB States, 2014



NCLB's AYP with modifications | Performance index | Percentage of students meeting annual state targets

★ Assigns letter grades to schools based on accountability system

Source: SREB analysis of state and federal documents

Challenge 2020 goals recognize school **accountability** as a key policy lever for ensuring improved student achievement for all students. In 2013, all 16 SREB states began redesigning their school accountability systems — each with its federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver in hand. To earn the waiver, states proposed ways to reform their school performance measures to promote higher achievement for all students and increase the number of students from all groups who would be ready for college and careers.

Eleven SREB states broadened their measure of school performance — moving from NCLB's adequate yearly progress (AYP) indicator to several indicators. They developed performance indexes that weigh these new indicators, including results on state assessments, graduation rates, school-readiness assessments and achievement gap reductions. These states believe their indexes will lead to more balanced judgments on school performance and progress. For four states, performance and progress will be defined by the percentage of students who meet annual targets, but school status will not be determined by the separate performance of each group of students. One state kept NCLB's accountability system but modified AYP by dropping school labels associated with failing to make annual targets. Some states will use their new system to assign A-to-F performance grades to their schools.

In 2011, 14 SREB states began reporting high school **graduation rates** publicly using the federally required Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) — considered the gold standard for calculating these rates. Two SREB states received federally approved time extensions on using the new calculation.

Unlike rates used in the past, ACGR is not an estimate. ACGR requires that schools identify all first-time ninth-graders each fall and track this freshmen cohort over the next four years. Students who transfer into a school are added to their respective cohort; students who transfer out of a school are removed from their respective cohort. Only the students who graduate in four years with a standard diploma are counted as four-year graduates. From 2011 to 2012, 13 SREB states saw their four-year ACGR rates increase from 1 to 4 percentage points; one SREB state remained flat.

Adjusted Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

Out of 100 ninth-graders in South Carolina in 2008,

75 graduated in 2012.

In the U.S., 80 graduated that year.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Ed Data Express

High School

SREB states made substantial progress in raising high school graduation rates over the last decade. Yet, existing **college- and career-readiness** measures showed that too many students were not ready for college and careers.

SREB's *Challenge 2020* set a goal to help states close this substantial gap between high school graduation and postsecondary readiness: 80 percent of ninth-graders should be ready for college and careers when they complete high school.

In South Carolina:

- In 2013, 29 percent of graduates had taken at least one AP exam while in high school, compared with 33 percent in the nation.
- The state average composite SAT score for the graduating class of 2013 was 1436, compared with the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark score of 1550 set by the College Board.
- From 2008 to 2013, SAT participation rose 4 percentage points, from 60 percent to 64 percent of graduating seniors.

By 2013, 26 percent of the nation's high school graduates who had taken the ACT while in high school met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in English, math, reading and science. Also, 43 percent of graduates who had taken the SAT met the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark, a 1550 composite score out of a possible 2400.

SREB states have adopted college- and career-readiness standards, developed better aligned assessments, refined high school diploma requirements and increased access to accelerated learning opportunities such as Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment, in response to the need for better-educated, skilled workers.

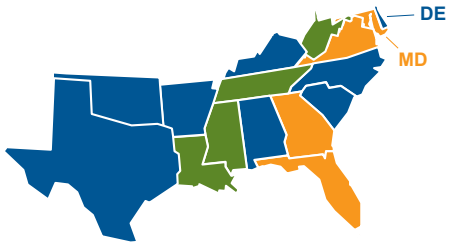
Over the last decade, states have developed partnerships with the private sector to decrease the mismatch between student preparation and employer needs. While state-level economic development efforts have made career readiness a priority, education leaders and policy-makers realized that gains on this issue begin early in high school and carry through to postsecondary education.

The *Challenge 2020* goals recognized that student performance on existing state and national tests could provide states with important information about the rigor of state curricula and the college and career readiness of students. Currently, SREB states depend on the **ACT, SAT, AP** exams and end-of-course exams as measures of these factors until new state assessments become available later this decade.

AP is one of several accelerated learning options SREB states use to promote college and career readiness. The goals call for graduating seniors in SREB states to take AP exams while in high school at rates higher than the national average. Research shows that students who take AP courses in high school and attempt the exams are more successful academically as college freshmen — even if they do not earn a score of 3 or better — considered passing and generally high enough to earn college credit. In 2013, six SREB states exceeded the national average in AP participation. Four of those states also outpaced the national average in the number of graduates who earned scores of 3 or higher on at least one AP exam.

In 2013, the SREB average ACT composite score was 20.0, compared to 20.9 nationally. In the region, the percentage of students taking the test grew by 18 percent from 2008 to 2013. Six states had participation rates over 90 percent in 2013.

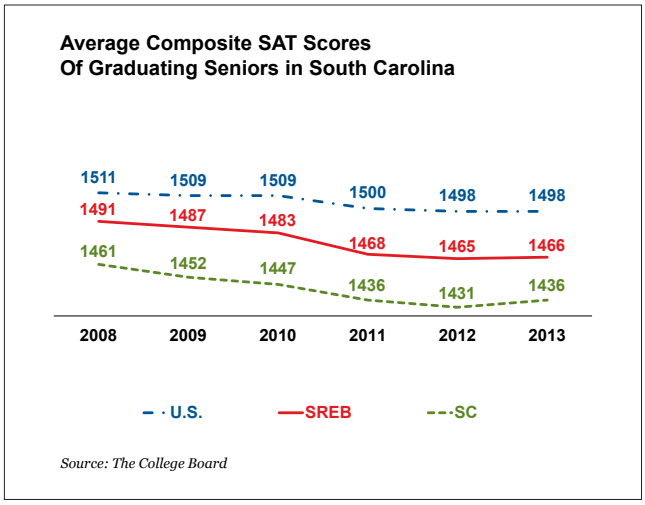
Percentage of Graduating Seniors Scoring 3 or Higher On One or More AP Exams, 2013



21% or more | 11% to 20% | 10% or fewer

U.S. 20% | SREB 19%

Source: The College Board



The median SAT score in the SREB region was 1466 points, compared to 1498 nationally. The regional median score dropped 25 points in the last five years; the drop is likely related to the increase in the percentage of seniors taking the test while in high school. From 2008 to 2013, the percentage grew by 4 percent in SREB states.

To help states meet the goal of graduating 80 percent of ninth-graders ready for college and careers, SREB states developed **the College and Career Readiness Action Agenda**. It calls for the adoption of five policies statewide:

- adopt postsecondary readiness standards for math and literacy
- assess student progress on postsecondary readiness standards in 11th grade
- offer transitional readiness courses to 11th and 12th grade students who do not meet the readiness standards
- align college admissions and placement policies to state readiness standards, and
- make postsecondary readiness a high school accountability measure.

By late 2013, all 16 SREB states had adopted **college- and career-readiness standards**. Nine SREB states currently use ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). The ACT system assesses students' progress for college- and career-readiness at three critical transition points—eighth, 10th and 11th grades.

Thirteen SREB states are working to help high school students who have not met college-readiness benchmarks to make a smoother transition to college. These states are working toward offering **college-readiness courses** for high school seniors who do not meet their state's readiness standards in 11th grade to ensure they are college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school. The courses target literacy and math.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) in South Carolina

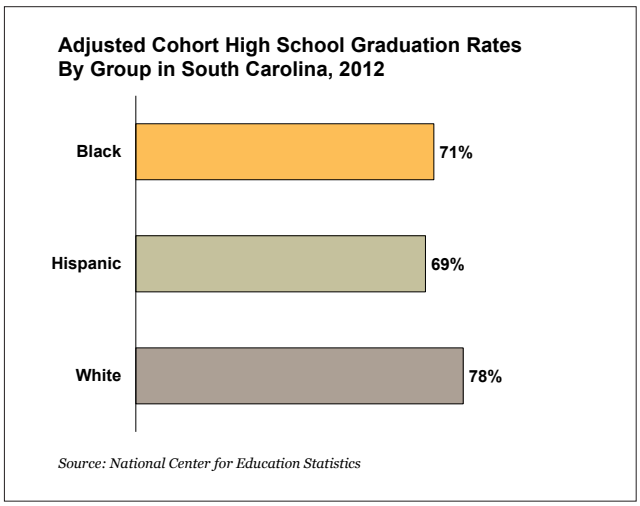
Policy Element	Status	Details
Adopted statewide readiness standards	Yes	Common Core State Standards
Assesses high school juniors with CCR test	Yes	Current: High School Assessment Program Future: To be determined
Readiness courses offered to juniors or seniors not ready for colleges and careers	No	
Requires postsecondary institutions to use grade 11 results for college placement	No	
Exempts "ready" students from placement testing	No	
Incorporates college and career measures into state's accountability system	Yes	End-of-course exams: biology and U.S. history

Sources: SREB analysis of state documents

High School

Not only are SREB states faced with helping more students meet rigorous college- and career-readiness standards, they are also challenged with closing persistent, sizable gaps in graduation rates for student groups based on race, ethnicity, gender and income.

Based on 2012 ACGR data, 72 percent of students from low-income families across the SREB region graduated from high school — the same rate as their respective peers across the nation. Across SREB states, the graduation rates for students from low-income families ranged from 61 to 85 percent for the 14 states that reported ACGR data. Six SREB states had individual rates that trailed the nation and the SREB region. While three states each matched the nation and SREB region, five SREB states exceeded.



Among SREB states, **graduation-rate gaps** narrowed from 2011 to 2012 but persisted between black and white students and between Hispanic and white students. Sixty-nine percent of black students, 78 percent of Hispanic students and 80 percent of white students in the SREB region graduated from high school on time in 2012. Black and Hispanic students in SREB states graduated at rates higher than their peers nationwide in 2012, while white students graduated at rates lower than their peers nationwide.

As a result of federal accountability waivers that set aside many provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, all SREB states now place greater emphasis on high school graduation rates in their state K-12 accountability systems.

In South Carolina:

- Over 2,300 high school students earned dual credit in a career pathway in the 2012-13 school year.
- In 2012, 67 percent of male students graduated from high school, compared with 78 percent of female students.

Federal regulations now require states to report racial and ethnic group graduation rates. In order for states to close persistently large graduation-rate gaps, the waiver provisions urge states to set targets that ensure students from all groups graduate at increasingly higher rates year after year.

The newest high school graduation data from the National Center for Education Statistics highlight a sizable **gender gap**: girls are graduating from high school at higher rates than boys. In 2012, male students trailed female students 78 percent to 85 percent nationwide. Male students trailed female students by 6 percentage points among SREB states — 76 percent and 82 percent, respectively. The gap between female and male students among SREB states ranged from 4 to 13 percentage points. Four SREB states had double-digit gaps in 2012.

While no one factor can explain why male students complete high school at lower rates than their female peers, research has shown that female students have a lower incidence of some behaviors associated with dropping out or failure to graduate on time. These behaviors include excessive absenteeism, failure to be promoted to the next grade, poor academic performance and disciplinary problems.

Research also shows that students who receive special education services graduate at lower rates than the rest of the school population. Males are twice as likely to be identified for special education services in the early and middle grades. In the SREB region, 56 percent of students receiving these services graduated from high school in 2012.

Federal school discipline data shows that males are suspended and expelled from school at much higher rates than female students. Male students account for a larger share of reported school-crime incidents. State leaders should examine trends in male student achievement, attendance, discipline and crime to identify strategies to help males keep pace and stay engaged in school.

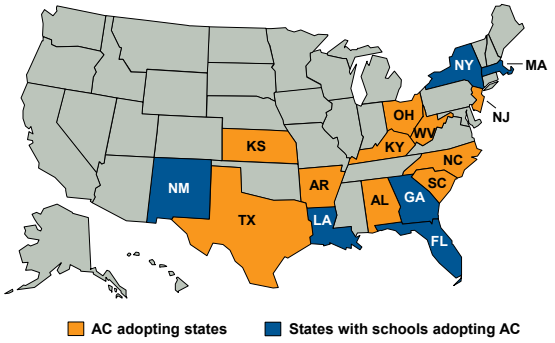
Challenge to Lead 2020 recognizes that states should offer more than one path to high school graduation — with at least one path built on high academic rigor and career technical programs of study. SREB states have led the way in developing **Advanced Career** (AC) courses that accomplish this goal. AC courses combine college-ready core academic content with hands-on, project-based assignments — centered on a defined career focus. The AC turnkey curriculum has everything a school needs to ensure success for teachers and students. It includes teaching materials, directions for lab kits, assessments and extensive training and support for teachers. Students who enroll in the AC program graduate from high school better prepared to start a high-value job or go to a college, community college or technical school.

The AC program is offered through yearlong or semester classes, which explore different facets of high-skill industries. Students become immersed in a variety of career areas depending on the AC career pathway options that a district, school or career tech center chooses to develop. For 2014, six AC courses will be available: aerospace engineering, clean energy technology, energy and power, health informatics, informatics, innovations in science and integrated production technologies. Ten states have adopted the AC curriculum and courses for the 2014-15 school year.

SREB states have made steady progress in several key **career and technical education (CTE) policy** areas. Almost every SREB state has already established college- and career-readiness standards, and approved industry exams for credentialing purposes. Almost all states require new alternatively certified CTE teachers to have an industry credential in selected fields and pass a core content academic test. In 70 percent of states nationwide, postsecondary credits are awarded to students who have an industry credential. In these states, the number of credits awarded is often dependent on the individual university or community college awarding the credit.

CTE areas needing additional attention in SREB states include intensive professional development for prospective CTE teachers before they begin teaching, and increasing the number of and monitoring of CTE students who continue in a career pathway from high school to postsecondary programs.

States and Schools Adopting SREB's Advanced Career (AC) High School Curricula



Source: SREB's High Schools That Work, May 2014

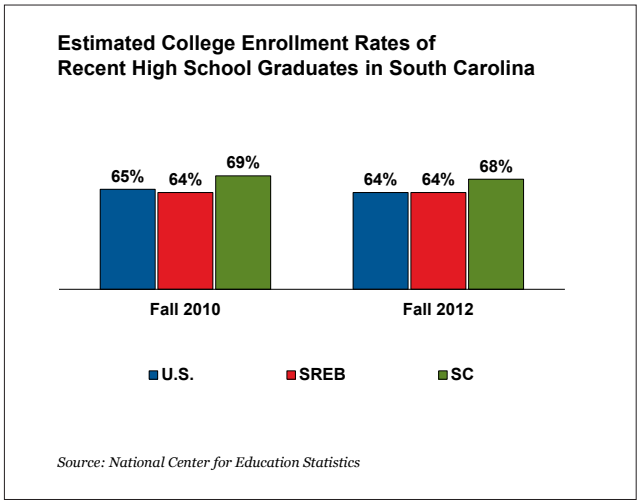
High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) in South Carolina

Policy Element	State Required
State has academic and technical readiness standards for CTE completers	Yes
State has approved industry recognized exams for specific CTE courses	Yes
Students who pass industry recognized exams earn postsecondary credit	No
State monitors student progress in career pathways beyond high school	No
New alternatively certified CTE teachers are required to:	
Hold an appropriate industry certification in field taught	Yes
Pass a core academic test	Yes
Participate in intensive training prior to teaching	No

Sources: SREB interviews with state CTE directors, May 2014

Postsecondary

The *Challenge to Lead 2020* goals call for 60 percent of working-aged adults to earn associate or bachelor's degrees, or career certificates. To achieve this percentage, states need to increase postsecondary enrollment rates for recent high school graduates. They also need to ensure that enrollment in public colleges and universities represent the diversity of states' recent high school graduating classes.



In recent years, SREB states have made progress toward this goal, despite the rise in college costs. **College enrollment** rates for recent high school graduates increased in eight of 16 SREB states between 2010 and 2012. Even so, college enrollment gaps between white and non-white students still persist. Continuing increases in enrollment rates for black and Hispanic students remain a critical first step in closing college completion gaps and raising overall state postsecondary attainment rates. Postsecondary enrollment gains for black and Hispanic students in the SREB region—26 percent and 52 percent, respectively — outstripped the overall enrollment growth rate of 18 percent from 2007 to 2012.

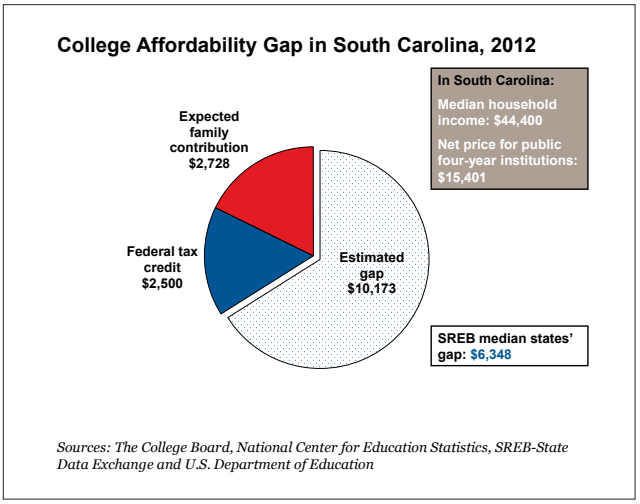
Providing sufficient student financial aid is an important policy tool for state leaders in improving student access to postsecondary institutions. All SREB states provide some combination of need-based and merit aid. While state aid programs vary considerably in SREB states, financial aid of both types remains an important tool in closing the **affordability gap** for students. Several SREB states have designed their financial aid policies to focus on promoting college completion as well as ensuring access — by designing them to decrease the time it takes students to graduate. One SREB state increases aid to students for each year they stay in school.

Students often experience "sticker shock" when they see tuition rates at colleges they wish to attend. Financial aid advisors now suggest that students consider **net price** as a more accurate cost indicator. IPEDS defines net price as the total cost of attendance minus the average state, federal, institutional scholarship and grant aid received. It factors in what students can expect, on average, to receive in all types of financial aid, including state aid programs.

Federal Pell Grants assist students from low-income families. However, the proportion of college costs Pell Grants cover has declined steadily over the last decade. In 2012, the median Pell awards by state across the SREB region ranged from $1,000 to $4,200.

The total cost of attendance is the sum of tuition and required fees, books and supplies, and the weighted average room, board and other expenses related to living arrangements for on-campus, off-campus-with-family, and off-campus-not-with-family students. The net price for one year for undergraduate students to attend a public four-year institution in SREB states ranged from $9,030 to $15,401 in 2012.

Families are expected to pay a share of these costs, and they receive notice of how much their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is, based on tax and financial aid information.



In South Carolina:

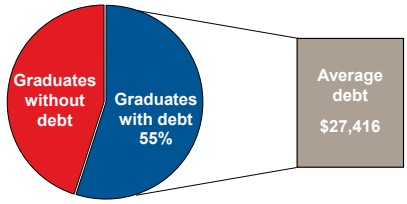
- In 2011-12, the average Pell Grant award per recipient attending public colleges across the nation was $3,445, compared with SREB's median of $3,451.
- From 2008 to 2012, the number of Pell Grant recipients increased by 44,996 or 73 percent.
- From 2008 to 2012, the average student loan debt for graduates of four-year public and private colleges increased by $6,259 or 30 percent.

Tax credits and loans can help reduce the remaining cost. All students whose families pay taxes are eligible for the federal American Opportunity Tax Credit, up to $2,500. The full credit is available to individual taxpayers whose modified adjusted gross income is $80,000 or less — or $160,000 or less for married taxpayers filing a joint return.

The EFC and the tax credit in 2012, taken together, did not cover the net price at public four-year colleges for students from median-income families for any SREB state. State, institutional and private scholarships can offset a portion of this affordability gap. **Student loans** can also help cover this gap, but loans stretch out the cost with interest attached — requiring students to make payments that can span a decade or more beyond graduation.

Approximately 71 percent of U.S. college seniors graduated with **debt** in 2012. Of these, the average debt was $25,550. Most of this debt resulted from federal loans with interest at 3.4 percent at graduation for the class of 2012. Interest rates on student loans have since doubled to 6.8 percent for the class of 2014. In addition, the current economic climate has made it quite difficult for recent college graduates to get jobs and begin repaying their college loans. If employment prospects for these graduates continue to decline, while student debt and interest rates continue to climb, more students may choose to enroll part time, delay attending or decide not to go to college at all.

Debt Status for 2012 Graduates of Public and Private Nonprofit Colleges and Universities* in South Carolina



U.S. graduates with debt - 71%
Average debt of U.S. graduates- $25,500

* Four-year institutions only

Source: Projectonstudentdebt.org

States can also promote persistence toward graduation with reliable, robust **transfer of credit** systems. If state high education systems do not have statewide transfer guarantees, many students will accumulate credits that will not apply to degree programs. In too many cases, transferring students must retake courses unnecessarily.

Affordability and Transferability in South Carolina

Policy Questions	Status	Notes and References
Which group sets tuition?	I*	Board for Technical Education sets tuition at tech. colleges
Provides financial aid (merit, need, both)?	Merit	92 percent of aid is merit-based
Guarantees full transfer of general education credits?	Yes	Six general education blocks
Guarantees full transfer of associate degree credits?	Yes	If degree contains transfer block

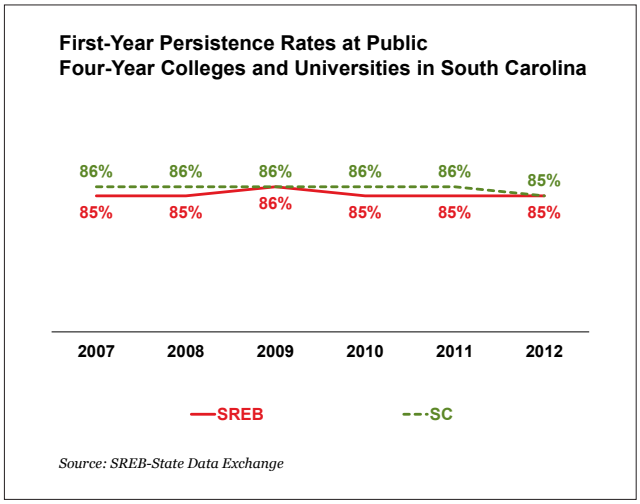
* I = institutions

Sources: South Carolina Code of Laws; NASSGAP Survey 2011-12

Postsecondary

While the college enrollment rates of recent high school graduates in SREB states increased over the last decade, college completion rates for students attending four-year institutions remained relatively flat over the same period in these states.

To achieve the *Challenge to Lead 2020* goal of 60 percent of adults with degrees and certificates by 2020, SREB states need to continue to increase college enrollment rates. A clear target is to increase the numbers of recent high school graduates and working-aged adults who would be first in their families to attend college. These students and adults will need support services so they will be able to complete postsecondary credentials. Strong state policies can ensure these services are available.



Colleges need to monitor student progress early to identify students who need extra help, so they can make steady progress through college — and not drop out. They should track the **freshman persistence rate** as a key performance indicator. This rate typically measures the percentage of first-year students who return to their college for a second year of college study. Colleges and universities in SREB states keep these data and report them to SREB as part of the SREB-State Data Exchange. The SREB freshman persistence rate also includes students who transfer to other colleges their second year. The 2012 median SREB persistence rate for students attending public, four-year institutions was 85 percent. Seven SREB states increased their SREB persistence rates from 2007 to 2012.

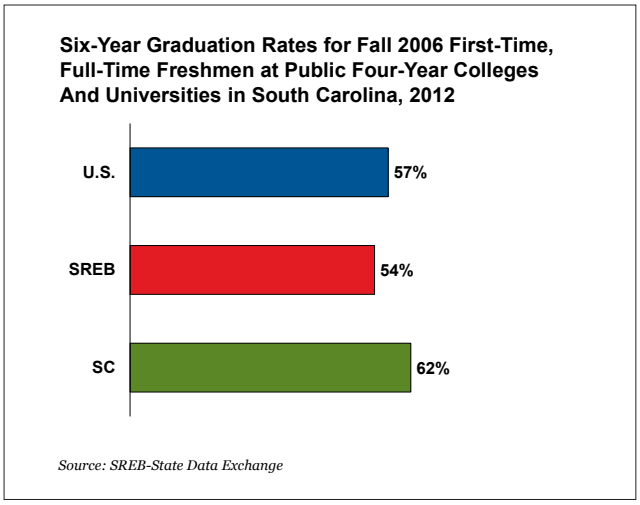
In South Carolina:

- In 2012, 25 percent of adults, ages 25 to 64, held a bachelor's degree or higher, a lower percentage than in the nation and the SREB region.
- The percentage of black adults with bachelor's degrees trailed the rates for black adults in the nation and region.
- By 2012, 43 percent of adults who enrolled in two-year colleges in 2009 were still enrolled, had transferred or completed a credential — compared to 51 percent in the region.

A second key performance indicator for four-year colleges and universities is the **six-year college graduation rate**. Colleges and universities are required to report this rate to the U.S. Department of Education, but they can only count students in this graduation rate if the students enter the college as a freshman and remain at the same institution through graduation. They exclude part-time and transferring students from the calculation. In 2012, the SREB region trailed the nation in the percentage of freshmen who graduated from four-year colleges and universities within six years of enrolling by 3 percentage points — 54 percent and 57 percent, respectively. Even so, six SREB states had six-year completion rates that exceeded the nation, based on students who entered in 2006 and graduated by 2012.

While many students do not graduate within six years, a larger percentage shows significant progress toward graduation within that time. The **student progression rate** is the percentage of first-time freshmen students who complete a bachelor's degree, remain enrolled or transfer to another institution in six years after initial enrollment. In 2012, the SREB progression rate at public four-year colleges and universities was 76 percent. This percentage includes the 54 percent who graduated plus 22 percent who remained enrolled or transferred to other institutions.

The *Challenge 2020* goal focuses on adults who earned degrees. While it is important for students to complete degrees on time — to reduce educational costs and to enter the work force as productive employees quickly — it is important for colleges to ensure that students engaged in



their degree programs after six years earn postsecondary credentials. Colleges would be wise to consider completion programs for the 22 percent of students who persist after six years.

SREB states have considered three types of policies to address college completion:

- greater access to a variety of postsecondary programs
- rewards for postsecondary institutions that meet or exceed completion-related performance targets
- alignment between the needs of postsecondary education and the work force.

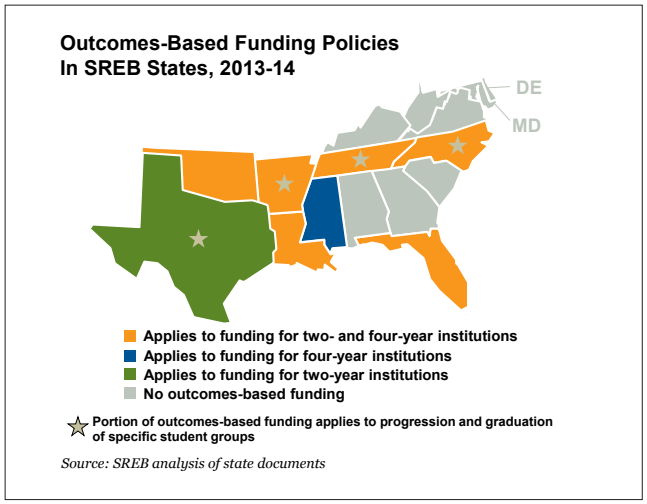
Opening more **pathways to postsecondary certificates and degrees** is important for several groups: (1) recent high school graduates who want to enter the work force; (2) working adults who need to retool their skills; and (3) adults with some college but no credential who want better paying jobs. Strategies vary for increasing the numbers of students in certificate and degree programs from each group.

Policy-makers have long turned to increased financial aid and smoother transfer of credit policies to help students attain degrees and shorten the time it takes to earn them. Some have recently turned to reforming their method of allocating state appropriations to higher education institutions as a lever to promote college completion. Legislatures in eight SREB states have developed **outcomes-based funding systems** to replace longstanding enrollment-based funding systems. The new allocation systems provide incentives for education institutions to meet outcomes, including increased graduation numbers and rates. It can also provide incentives for institutions to produce more graduates in fields such as science, technology, engineering, math, nursing and advanced manufacturing. While all college credentials matter, some states use outcomes-based funding to place higher value on specific certificates and degrees.

Targeting state appropriations on outcomes can also improve alignment between postsecondary programs and the work force. Many states use labor market and sector analysis data to help postsecondary institutions determine which types of programs need to be created, expanded or eliminated.

In the last two years, several SREB states have enacted legislation to decrease the time it takes students to earn degrees and to strengthen work force alignment. The legislation addresses:

- credit for prior learning
- advising support for veterans
- remediation embedded within college courses
- e-career pathways for adult learners, and
- access and aid to high-demand, high-wage career programs.

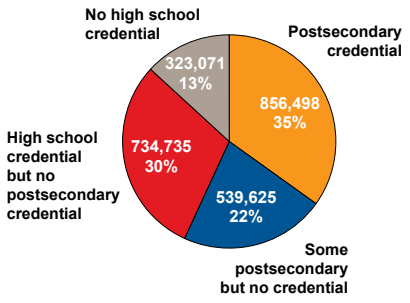


Lifelong Learning

The *Challenge to Lead 2020* goals call on SREB states to increase the percentage of working-age adults who hold high school and postsecondary credentials. On average, adults with higher educational attainment have **higher paying jobs**, better health and an improved quality of life. They are also generally less dependent on state and federal services and contribute more in tax revenues.

Adults, ages 25 and older, who graduated from high school earned on average $7,600 more in 2012 than adults who did not graduate from high school. Those with bachelor's degrees earned on average $22,100 more than those with high school diplomas.

Numbers and Percentages of Adults, Ages 25 to 64, By Educational Attainment in South Carolina, 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Before the last economic recession, adults in the work force — ages 18 and older, found it much easier to find or keep livable wage jobs. During the economic downturn, however, the job market lost 7.2 million jobs. The recession and the recovery that followed hit adults the hardest who had a high school diploma or less. These adults found themselves competing for available openings with adults who had some postsecondary education or postsecondary credentials. Job losses exceeded 5 million among those with high school credentials or less. Those with bachelor's degrees gained 187,000 jobs during the recession; they gained over 2 million more jobs during the recovery. Job market projections indicate that almost two-thirds of the **employment opportunities** by 2020 will require some type of postsecondary credential.

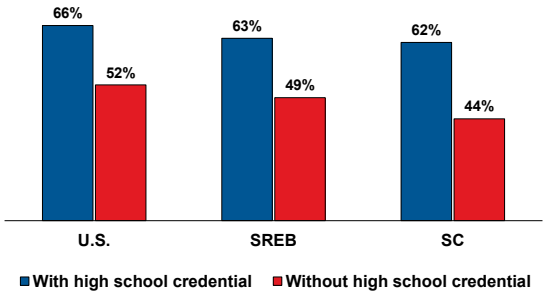
In South Carolina:

- In 2012, the earnings gap between residents with bachelor's degrees and those with only a high school credential was $17,794.
- The percentages of black and Hispanic adults, ages 25 to 64, with an associate degree or higher are below the SREB regional and national percentages for their respective peers.

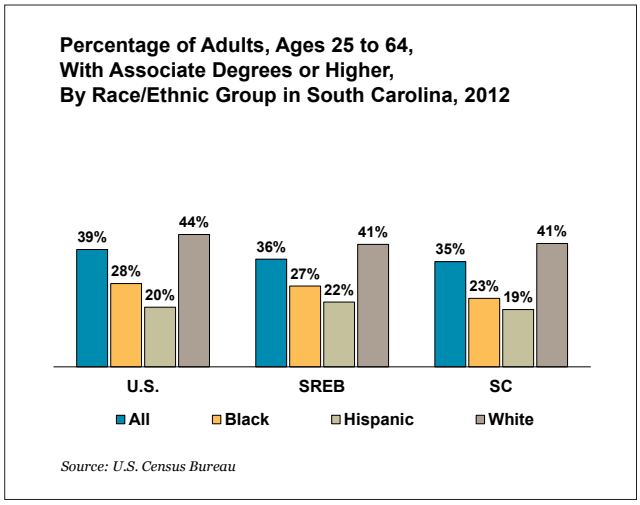
About one in five adults in the SREB region and in the nation have earned some college credits but no postsecondary credential. Currently, states could improve their adult **educational attainment** rates if they could attract more of these adults back to college and help them complete postsecondary credentials.

Colleges also need to ensure that more of their students move progressively toward graduation — and earn degrees. Researchers at the Institute for Higher Education Policy studied adults who had accumulated substantial credits but had not earned degrees. They identified more than 40,000 former students from 62 postsecondary institutions that offer associate degrees — including colleges in SREB states. The former students each had accumulated 60 credit hours but left school without the degree. The researchers found

Employment Rates for Adults, Ages 25 to 64, Without a Postsecondary Credential In South Carolina, 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau



that more than 16 percent of these identified adults were eligible for degrees without additional courses.

State programs can help three groups of adults improve their levels of education:

- adults without a high school credential
- adults with a high school credential but no post-secondary education
- adults with some postsecondary education but no degree or certificate.

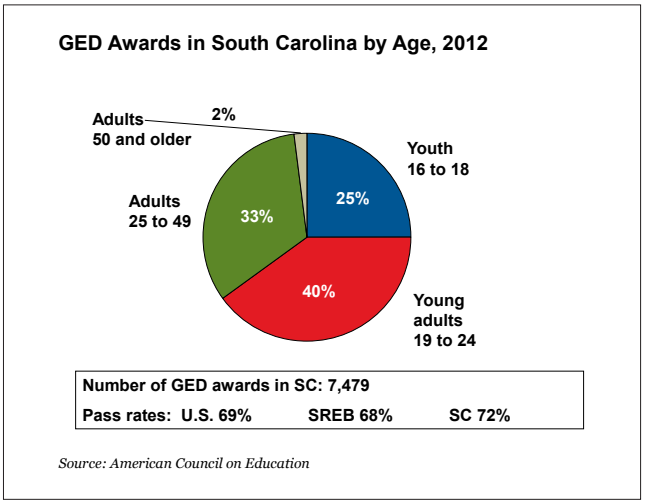
These groups comprise between 55 and 73 percent of the adult population in SREB states.

All SREB states provide **adult education programs** for the first group, generally through their K-12 or community college agencies. They provide basic literacy and math skills through Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, English instruction through English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs, and preparation for high school equivalency credentialing through Adult Secondary Education programs, also known as GED (or General Education Development) preparation programs.

Two of five adults, ages 25 and older, nationwide who did not finish high school in 2012 did not complete ninth grade. These adults likely need ABE or ESL programs. The GED-preparation programs in SREB states serve mostly younger adults who recently dropped out of high school. In 2012, almost two-thirds of GED recipients in SREB states were 16 to 24 years old. These numbers suggest that too few adults, ages 25 and older, who need high school equivalency credentials are taking advantage of GED-preparation programs.

The U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education provides states with grant funding for adult education programs. Congress appropriated $575 million for adult education in 2013. SREB states received approximately $216 million or 39 percent of the total funds allocated to states.

The federal formula grant for adult education distributes funds to states based on the number of adults in each state over age 16 not enrolled in school and who have not completed high school. In turn, states must provide a 25 percent match for the federal funding they receive and satisfy a "maintenance of effort" provision requiring that they spend at least 90 percent of what they spent in the prior year on adult education programs.



SREB's 2010 report, *A Smart Move in Tough Times: How SREB States Can Strengthen Adult Learning and the Work Force*, advises states to invest more state dollars in adult education than required by the grant to promote greater adult educational attainment. At the time of the report, SREB states with the highest proportion of adults without high school credentials in adult education programs provided more funding to their state programs than the match required in the federal grant.

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SREB.org

June 2014 (14E01) SC

NAEP Average Scores

	Year(s)	**SC**	Point(s) Gained	**Florida**	Point(s) Gained 2002-2013	**Alabama**	Point(s) Gained	**US**	Point(s) Gained
Reading, 4th Grade	2013	214		227		219		221	
	2002	214	0	214	13	207	12	217	4
Reading, 8th Grade	2013	261		266		257		266	
	2002	258	3	257	9	253	4	261	5
Mathematics, 4th Grade	2013	237		242		233		241	
	2003	236	1	234	8	223	1	234	1
Mathematics, 8th Grade	2013	280		281		269		284	
	2003	277	3	271	10	262	7	276	8

	Reading, 4th Grade, 2013			Reading, 8th Grade, 2013			% Population				
	Total	White	African-American	Total	White	African-American	White	African-American	Hispanic	Other	Free/Reduced Lunch
SC	214	224	197	261	271	247	53	36	7	2	57
Florida	**227**	**236**	**212**	**266**	274	**254**	42	23	29	3	58
Alabama	219	227	202	257	266	241	58	34	5	2	57
US	221	231	205	266	275	250					

Note: Florida meets or exceeds US average NAEP score accordingly.

		2010	
	State	**ELA**	**Math**
1	California	A	A
2	District of Columbia	A	A
3	Indiana	A	A
4	Massachusetts	A-	B+
5	Tennessee	A-	C
6	**Texas**	**A-**	**C**
7	Arizona	B	B
8	Alabama	B	B+
9	Florida	B	A
10	Georgia	B+	A-
11	Oklahoma	B+	B+
12	Colorado	B+	C
13	Louisiana	B+	C
14	**Virginia**	**B+**	**C**
15	Washington	C	A
16	Utah	C	A-
17	**Minnesota**	**C**	**B**
18	Idaho	C	B
19	New York	C	B
20	Oregon	C	B+
21	Hawaii	C	C
22	Maine	C	C
23	Nevada	C	C
24	New Jersey	C	C
25	New Mexico	C	C
26	Ohio	C	C
27	South Dakota	C	C
28	Maryland	C	D
29	New Hampshire	C	D
30	Kansas	C	F
31	Michigan	D	A-
32	West Virginia	D	B
33	Arkansas	D	C
34	Mississippi	D	C
35	North Dakota	D	C
36	**South Carolina**	**D**	**C**
37	Connecticut	D	D
38	Illinois	D	D
39	Kentucky	D	D
40	Missouri	D	D
41	North Carolina	D	D
42	Rhode Island	D	D
43	Pennsylvania	D	F
44	Vermont	D	F
45	Wisconsin	D	F
46	Wyoming	D	F
47	Delaware	F	B
48	Iowa	F	C
49	**Nebraska**	**F**	**C**
50	**Alaska**	**F**	**D**
51	Montana	F	F

States ranked in order by rating of ELA standards and then by rating of math standards.

	ELA	Math
COMMON CORE	*B+*	*A-*

State in blue adopted ELA Common Core State Standards

States in red never adopted Common Core

SOURCE: *The State of State Standards and the Common Core in 2010*. Tables 2 and 3. Thomas B. Fordham Institute. July 2010.

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State Accountability in the Transition to Common Core

by Victoria Sears

(Updated: May 2014) December 2013

Many states across the nation are well underway with the challenging work of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). But what does a thoughtful transition from existing to new standards look like? And what are the implications for accountability systems in the interim? After all, high-quality accountability policies must be linked to reliable measures of outcomes, such as student growth and proficiency rates and results from principal and teacher evaluations—all of which are contentious and difficult to develop and put in place but even more so when state educational standards are in flux.

The purpose of this brief is to provide Common Core "insiders" with some cautionary advice about what key policymakers and influentials in a handful of states now see as transition challenges. In August and September 2013, the research team at Fordham interviewed officials and policy advocates in five states—Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, and New York—to glean how they are approaching accountability in the transition to the Common Core. We asked leaders about their plans for using student data during this transition period, and in particular what the "stakes" would be for schools, educators, and students. While we found nuances in each state, four trends emerged across our small sample.[1]

1 The accountability moratorium is here. Punitive consequences associated with accountability are largely being put on hold during the transition to Common Core.

In many states, Common Core implementation has unfolded gradually. The standards were initially piloted in select grades, schools, and districts, with new content added to student assessments incrementally. While implementation is now ramping up across the nation, many critical components of existing accountability systems (such as how to calculate growth as students transition to new exams and what to do about growth-based accountability and evaluation systems for teachers, schools, and/or districts) remain to be determined. For example, an official in Colorado stated that many accountability decisions that require student data will remain unresolved until they have hard data and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test fully in place. Policymakers and educators alike are grappling with the reality that the inputs (such as state tests) used in accountability measures are changing—and they are often resistant to using student test data to trigger negative consequences usually associated with poor performance. Of particular concern is how to calculate growth as students transition from one exam to another and what to do about growth-based accountability and evaluation systems in the interim. Our conversations indicate that in light of these challenges, policymakers are, by and large, planning to pause the consequences associated with these systems.

Proponents of this tempered approach stress that it is simply smart implementation. (Of course, it's also smart politics.) They emphasize the difficulty of gauging student learning and calculating learning gains as assessments change from one year to the next, and they contend that until the new assessments can be validated, it's unfair to base teacher and school evaluations on state standardized-test data. To wit, several states have formally adopted a "hold-harmless" approach to accountability in the transition, prohibiting high-stakes consequences until the standards have been fully implemented. Others are taking a similar approach to accountability.

Though New York's new teacher-evaluation system, passed in 2011, includes a measure of student performance on state assessments (comprising 20 percent of a teacher's overall rating), the state's department of education encouraged "thoughtful usage" of student test data as opposed to using test scores as the sole basis for high-stakes decision making. Yet many educators felt these efforts did not go far enough, and in April 2013, state union leaders and American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten issued a call for a multiyear moratorium on high-stakes consequences for both students and teachers during the current transition phase. Just last month, Governor Andrew Cuomo acknowledged the need for a pause on accountability for both students and teachers; while exams are still being given, student results on new Common Core tests will not be listed on student transcripts or used in grade-promotion decisions. The state is now considering a delay in the use of student test scores in teacher evaluations and has "frozen" the status of focus schools (Title I schools that have the lowest achievement and graduation rates for accountability subgroups) and priority schools (schools among the lowest 5 percent in the state, based on student performance), meaning that schools will not be added to either category until the 2015–16 school year.

Colorado has taken a similar hold-harmless approach to accountability during the current school year. In previous years, teachers who received two sequential ineffective ratings were placed on probationary status. This school year (2013–14), student state test scores will still be included in teacher evaluations. However, ineffective ratings will not count towards teachers' probationary status until the 2014–15 school year, and teachers will not be put on probation until 2016–17. The state has also taken a gradual approach to transitioning its assessments. It began testing all students on standards common to both the old Colorado standards and the Common Core in Spring 2012, and it plans to transition to PARCC assessments in 2014–15. Despite this gradual conversion, however, Colorado remains cautious about how assessment results will be used. Officials made it clear that a deeper understanding of the test is needed, as well as time for the assessments to stabilize, before high-stakes decisions are made. One official noted this was to "ensure no one gets harmed during the transition."

Florida, too, is taking steps to pause new sanctions during the transition to the Common Core. Lawmakers in the Sunshine State recently submitted a bill to Governor Rick Scott calling for a one-year pause on the advancement of school sanctions (SB 1642), and the bill was approved this month. Citing the transition to a new state assessment next school year (more on Florida's assessment plans to follow), the bill provides schools with a one-year reprieve from sanctions based on Florida's "A–F" school grading system (based largely on factors such as student performance on state tests and graduation rates). While student performance data will still be collected and schools will still be graded, no negative consequences will trigger as a result of poor school grades or school improvement ratings during the 2014–15 school year; the state plans to use this first year of data as a baseline to measure schools. As before the bill, the state has not yet set benchmarks for teacher evaluation and effectiveness, but confirmed teachers will be judged by their contribution to student growth (using value-added data) rather than by absolute proficiency. State officials also stressed that teacher evaluations will take up to three years of test scores into account, with the intent of smoothing out possible anomalies that result from transitioning to a new assessment next school year. A state representative also confirmed that students will not need to pass the new American Institutes for Research (AIR) assessment in order to graduate, but will still be required to pass existing state tests in order to meet graduation requirements.

Officials made it clear that a deeper understanding of the test is needed, as well as time for the assessments to stabilize, before high-stakes decisions are made.

Many critics of the Common Core, especially those on the left, worry that the new, higher standards will be used to attack educators or schools. Yet taken as a whole, our interviews with officials in five states indicate that concerns about educators, schools, and districts being unfairly penalized are unfounded, at least in these jurisdictions. Accountability systems remain in place, but

the high-stakes aspects have been removed or muted, at least temporarily. Yet it is clear that misconceptions about accountability in the transition phase persist. State leaders should make a concerted effort to communicate this "accountability intermission" to all students, educators, and the public but should also take steps to make sure that high-stakes accountability returns in full as soon as is appropriate.

2 Overall, states are treading carefully and strategically with assessments, since the quality of the forthcoming tests is still unknown.

One reason that state education officials are hitting the pause button on accountability is that the tests used to assess student achievement are very much still in flux. State consortia-designed tests will not be operational until the 2014–15 school year. In the meantime, how are states approaching assessment during the transition?

We observed four approaches. The first strategy is to modify existing state exams to cover the content of both the old state standards and the Common Core. For example, in Massachusetts, the state's new MA 2011 standards are actually a combination of the preexisting state standards and CCSS; each year, additional Common Core content is being integrated into the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). In Colorado, the state is using the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP), an interim exam bridging its old standards and the Common Core standards. Officials explain that this paced approach is intended to ease students in to the new, more rigorous content, rather than making an abrupt, disruptive switch.

A second strategy, used in Massachusetts, Colorado, and Arkansas, is piloting Common Core–aligned exams by introducing them to select students or districts first before administering them statewide. For example, in Massachusetts, the state is currently field testing PARCC this school year (2013–14) to establish the validity and reliability of the tests, then combining that administration with continued use of the MCAS. For the 2014–15 school year, officials explained that K–8 schools can choose which test to use (PARCC or MCAS) and all high schools will continue using MCAS. Not until the 2015–16 school year will students begin to take PARCC assessments, and only then if officials determine that the exam is superior to what the state developed itself (more on this below). The board will not make a final vote on PARCC until Fall 2015, when the first PARCC results are available.

New York, on the other hand, has taken a third approach, creating completely new Common Core–aligned assessments from scratch rather than modifying existing tests. The new assessments were administered to students in ELA and math in grades 3–8 in 2012–13. Student scores dropped noticeably, and while officials were quick to stress that the drop was likely the result of a rise in standards rather than a decline in student performance, public confidence in the new standards and assessments was deeply shaken. One stakeholder referred to the drastic drop in test results as "alarming" and "confusing" to teachers. In addition to administering its new, "homegrown" state assessment, New York is also currently participating in PARCC field testing. A PARCC representative reports that several hundred schools participated in both sessions of the field test, but the state is still considering whether it will administer the PARCC assessment once it becomes fully operational down the line. Like Massachusetts, New York is taking a wait-and-see approach.

> State leaders should make a concerted effort to communicate this "accountability intermission" [...] but should also take steps to make sure that high-stakes accountability returns in full as soon as is appropriate.

Florida has taken yet another tack. While Common Core implementation continues, debate over the standards in the state has been particularly heated. Tellingly, during our interviews last summer, a stakeholder from the Department of Education stated that one of the most difficult aspects of implementing the Common Core standards has been addressing the misconceptions and the politicization of the issue in the state. Since then, Florida has stepped down as PARCC's fiscal agent, withdrawn from

the testing consortia entirely, and issued an "invitation to negotiate" (ITN) to assessment vendors to develop its own, Florida-specific standardized tests. In March, Florida announced that it was contracting with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop new assessments for the upcoming school year (2014–15). It also recently rebranded the Common Core as Florida's "Next Generation Sunshine State Standards," supplementing the original Common Core standards with additional benchmarks and skills, such as handwriting and cursive.

Several states we spoke with revealed that they are reserving the option to revert to their individual state assessments, should consortia-designed CCSS assessments ultimately fall short.

Unsurprisingly, as implementation accelerates and states near the transition to Common Core–aligned assessments, pushback on these new tests and standards themselves is growing. In New York, for example, Common Core opponents contend that the state rushed the transition to new exams and that the lower student test scores will unfairly penalize teachers (which led the state to require that test scores not trigger negative consequences for teachers, schools, or districts).

State officials shared with us a different fear: that the new consortia-developed exams will not be rigorous enough or valid enough for use in the state's existing accountability measures. Several states we spoke with revealed that they are reserving the option to revert to their individual state assessments, should consortia-designed CCSS assessments ultimately fall short. As noted earlier, New York has yet to decide if it will transition to PARCC in the coming years. Massachusetts has also been notably candid about its plans to evaluate the rigor and validity of future Common Core assessments, particularly given the state's historically high student-achievement levels and highly regarded state standards and assessment system. The stakeholders we interviewed in the Bay State were quite clear that the state will go with whichever assessment system is most effective and valid, whether that means using common consortia assessments or returning to its own state assessment. Colorado is also taking a wait-and-see approach. The state is preparing to administer the PARCC test to all students in 2014–15, but it is also weighing its options if issues arise with the PARCC assessments.

Arkansas too is cautious about its transition to Common Core–aligned assessments. While the Natural State introduced the Common Core State Standards in 2011, its state assessment (Arkansas Benchmark Exams) remains the same. Arkansas is currently field testing the PARCC assessment and plans to administer the PARCC exam in the 2014–15 school year. Unlike New York, Massachusetts, and Colorado, the state has not developed any sort of transitional assessment for the interim.

On the whole, these five states are approaching assessments cautiously. While there are wise and well-justified concerns about whether assessments will be ready on time, high quality, reliable, and valid, state officials should be careful that their testing doubts do not project skepticism about their commitment to the standards themselves. If states appear to have "one foot in and one foot out" of Common Core implementation, stakeholders (including teachers) are likely to lose confidence.

3 While state education agencies express conviction that teachers are being adequately prepared to teach the new standards, the quality and effectiveness of Common Core trainings and professional development is unclear.

While states opted in to Common Core, true implementation occurs at the school and classroom levels. Therefore, it is vital that educators have the necessary resources and support to successfully teach to the new standards and that Common Core professional development and trainings for educators are of high quality. In our interviews, stakeholders frequently referenced state-sponsored and state-recommended professional-development opportunities, trainings, and resources for teachers. They expressed confidence that teachers were being prepared adequately through these offerings. Yet missing was any discussion of whether and how states are assessing the effectiveness of these offerings. And if the quality of these supports is unclear, so is overall educator readiness.

In Massachusetts, for instance, officials stressed that educators were heavily involved in efforts to revise the state's standards, curriculum, and assessments, all of which meld the Common Core and the state's prior content standards. As was the case in other states, officials pointed to the copious support and training sessions made available to teachers and instructional leaders. They reported favorable responses from educators but nothing about the quality of the trainings and resources. Fortunately, since Massachusetts's prior standards are comparable in rigor to the Common Core standards, educators in the Bay State may be better positioned going into the transition than others. Similarly, the state does not expect the drop in student performance that other states will witness (or have already) post–Common Core transition.

State stakeholders acknowledge that professional development has been a major challenge and learning curve and are working to improve offerings based on participant feedback.

New York is unique in that it is building a full state-developed, Common Core–aligned, voluntary K–12 curriculum for both math and ELA. When asked about professional development and support for educators during the CCSS transition, stakeholders highlighted the availability of these comprehensive curricular resources, as well as recurring statewide trainings on the Common Core, which are held several times a year. However, while New York forged ahead with a new Common Core assessment last school year, the state's curricular materials are not slated to be fully complete and available online until July 2014. As a result, many educators feel they were not given adequate time to prepare their students prior to the assessment transition and now remain apprehensive about the potential arrival of PARCC next year. Though New York has made impressive strides on the curriculum front, it's unclear whether teachers are actually prepared to teach to the new, more rigorous standards. State stakeholders acknowledge that professional development has been a major challenge and learning curve and are working to improve offerings based on participant feedback.

Similarly, education officials we spoke to in Florida last summer emphasized that professional development is and will continue to be a focus during the transition to the Common Core. While it is doubtless that trainings will shift with the arrival of the new AIR assessment next school year, stakeholders stress that, to date, Common Core–related trainings have elicited positive responses from teachers as well as high attendance, seemingly the primary indicators of quality.

By and large, state education agencies (SEAs) appear to be positioning themselves as large-scale leaders of Common Core implementation by providing general direction, guidance, and troubleshooting (for example, how to include results from new assessments in existing accountability systems). While we are reluctant to advocate for any single form of professional development and training (some states choose to handle it themselves, while others leave it to districts), we encourage SEAs not to be naïve about whether educators are truly prepared, especially when it comes to content and curriculum. SEAs need to be aware that despite their best efforts, student test scores might drop, and they must be prepared for pushback if new assessments reveal that teachers, schools, and districts are not doing well. The stakes are great; if educators are not fully trained to teach to the new standards, the Common Core will not succeed in its ultimate goal: improving students' college and career readiness.

4 Though ESEA waivers were granted to give states additional flexibility, states are now finding themselves locked into a set of new, yet still restrictive federal policies.

As Rick Hess and Michael McShane stress in Common Core Meets Education Reform,[2] it is foolhardy not to consider how the Common Core standards fit into the broader education-reform agenda. How competing reforms and policies, such as the Common Core and teacher evaluations, will impact one another remains to be seen.

To date, the vast majority of states have received permission to adjust their accountability systems and gain flexibility from NCLB's stringent "adequate yearly progress" requirements. But how do existing accountability provisions affect Common Core implementation across our small sample of states?

Unfortunately, in many cases, states that adopted the Common Core and applied for ESEA waivers are now finding themselves in a difficult place. While most states have embraced more rigorous academic standards by adopting Common Core, they remain accountable to prior waiver commitments to improve student achievement and instructional quality that were based on the old, lower standards and easier tests. The U.S. Department of Education has permitted waiver states to postpone using student achievement to evaluate educators and make high-stakes personnel decisions, but whether the Department will be as flexible with other aspects of accountability remains unclear.

One example of the tension created by changing accountability inputs is that most states use student learning as one gauge of teacher performance. However, as states begin to implement CCSS, many are unsure of how to calculate proficiency and growth thresholds, particularly as assessments are changing. Another complication is the tiered accountability systems in place for schools and/or districts in many states. States that have adopted these tiered accountability systems, with increasing sanctions for schools and districts for greater years of demonstrated poor performance, must now figure out what to do when low test scores on new assessments push previously underperforming schools and districts into the highest level of remediation. Will states reset improvement windows or simply pick back up where they left off? The implications of these decisions and where cut points are drawn are sizeable.

This is certainly the case in Massachusetts, where the state revised its accountability system as part of its ESEA waiver but also has a preexisting tiered accountability system in place. Under Massachusetts's tiered system, schools and districts are ranked into five levels based on four years of student performance on state assessments. The highest-scoring schools and districts are given greater degrees of autonomy and flexibility, while chronically underperforming schools face state takeovers or oversight. While Massachusetts does not anticipate a huge drop in student scores after fully transitioning to the Common Core standards and assessments, it is unclear how the state's accountability provisions may be affected by the changing inputs to these measures.

Arkansas also revised its accountability provisions under its ESEA waiver and is now rolling out the new system while also implementing the Common Core. Similar to Massachusetts, Arkansas delivers targeted interventions to the lowest-performing schools, while giving more autonomy to higher-performing schools. However, per its ESEA-waiver conditions, even after the state transitions to the Common Core standards and Common Core–aligned tests, the state will remain committed to reducing proficiency gaps by 50 percent by 2017.

In Colorado, the Education Accountability Act (Senate Bill 163) outlines accountability measures for states, districts, and schools. Under this system, districts placed into the lowest-ranking category are given five years to improve, and starting in the 2015–16 school year, districts can potentially lose their accreditation. However, as schools and districts in the state begin to implement Common Core–aligned standards and assessments, cut scores and performance expectations will likely change. Similar to the issues other states are facing, educators and policymakers in Colorado will need to decide whether to reset the five-year improvement window or simply pick back up where they left off under the old system. As it is likely that the lowest-ranking category will shift, where does that leave schools that previously received supports and are no longer? What will happen if a much greater number of schools are identified as eligible for support?

> Clearly, policymakers must put serious thought into how previously negotiated accountability systems will mesh with new standards and assessments.

State education leaders are facing no easy task as they implement the Common Core, all while ensuring that their

efforts are not undercut by anxious teachers or politically motivated lawmakers. In a perfect world, implementation would be linear: first come the standards, then curriculum development, then the tests, and then smart accountability systems. Of course, SEAs are not starting from scratch and don't have time to waste. Teachers are being trained on the content and curriculum, while at the same time states are preparing students to take Common Core–aligned tests, all while operating under preexisting systems of high-stakes accountability for educators, schools, and districts. It's no easy feat. However, the successes and challenges we see across the nation indicate that there are actions state leaders can take to ensure that the transition, while difficult, is as smooth as possible for stakeholders across the board.

Clearly, policymakers must put serious thought into how previously negotiated accountability systems will mesh with new standards and assessments. If states require additional flexibility, will the federal government allow states to revise their accountability systems accordingly?

• • • • •

The Common Core is at a critical juncture. While many recent surveys show that support for the standards themselves remains strong, implementation in the five states we studied has not been without major challenges. The new standards are more rigorous and challenging than most states' prior standards, presenting a steep learning curve for students and teachers alike. Overall, it's unclear whether existing professional development has sufficiently prepared teachers for this shift. Additionally, the field still lacks a comprehensive, high-quality Common Core–aligned curriculum, and the as-yet-unreleased Common Core assessments are another unknown. Until some of these questions are resolved, the high-stakes aspects of accountability in these five states have been shelved—which is appropriate and probably inevitable. How soon the country can return to a high-quality system depends on how quickly we can move through the current, somewhat awkward phase of early Common Core implementation.

Victoria Sears is a research and policy associate at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, where she helps manage Fordham's work on Common Core implementation.

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ENDNOTES

1. These findings were initially published in December 2013 via four installments on Fordham's *Common Core Watch* blog. See http://edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-core-watch/the-accountability-moratorium-is-here.

2. See: http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-core-meets-education-reform-what-it-all-means-for-politics.

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Common Core for Young Learners

Educators tackle challenges in the early grades

BY MAUREEN KELLEHER

At Cesar E. Chávez Multicultural Academic Center on Chicago's Southwest Side, teachers are in the thick of implementing the Common Core State Standards. While it's a tough task for everyone, the teachers of the youngest students face special challenges.

Kindergarten teacher Samantha Roeth is lucky this year; she has 28 children instead of the usual 30. Many are English-language learners. It is the first year Chávez and many other Chicago schools have offered full-day kindergarten. Chicago is also in its first year of full Common Core implementation, and Chávez is especially committed to raising the bar on literacy. While the school's overall performance and outstanding math scores put it in the top level of district accountability rankings, getting students up to speed as readers and writers remains a challenge.

Questions are emerging about some specific standards.

As a former fourth-grade teacher, Roeth embraces Common Core's call for more nonfiction text. She reads her students interesting, complex nonfiction, lets them practice reading with simpler text, and couples their reading with related daily writing prompts. She also wrestles with questions about her pupils' developmental readiness for the work before them. This year she has two students who might benefit from more time before tackling first grade, but district policy forbids delayed entry. At the same time, she feels pressure to ensure that her charges are ready for the rigors that lie ahead. "I think I'm pushing my kids too hard, but then I go to second grade and I'm amazed at what they're doing," she says.

As Common Core standards reach into early elementary classrooms, early childhood teachers and experts are weighing their benefits—clearer, higher expectations for young learners—against the challenges of ensuring they are implemented with respect for natural variation among children and attention to their broader needs. The uneven playing field of kindergarten and the problems with Common Core implementation—a too-quick start and lack of training and curriculum—exacerbate the difficulty.

At the same time, questions are emerging about whether some specific standards—a focus on early decoding in reading and a "spike" in learning demands in third-grade math—will lead to developmentally inappropriate practices.

Bringing the Core to Kindergarten

Bringing Common Core to kindergarten presents a unique set of problems. Academic demands in kindergarten have risen sharply since the late 1990s, and yet only 10 states and the District of Columbia offer and fund full-day kindergarten, which some experts think is needed to attend to children's development while helping them meet the new standards.

State policies around kindergarten's length of day, children's age of entry, and standards for teacher preparation also vary widely. The National Association for the Education of Young Children predicted in a 2012 report that this variability will likely affect states' and districts' success in meeting Common Core standards for kindergarten and beyond. "While a common set of achievable, challenging standards is an important component of education, expecting a common set of standards to be reached in the absence of common delivery systems is potentially challenging, and may have unintended, negative effects," the report says.

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Complicating matters, teacher training on Common Core for all grade levels has been spotty. According to a 2013 survey of 40 state deputy superintendents of education or related staff by the Center on Education Policy, most had trained at least half their teachers and principals, but a majority also called the task of providing sufficient high-quality professional development on the Common Core a "major challenge."

Yet, when primary teachers have had the opportunity to prepare, they are enthusiastic about the results. Three years ago, Florida's West DeFuniak Elementary began implementing Common Core in kindergarten classrooms while preparing teachers in the next grade up. They did it again when the kindergartners went to first grade, and the second-grade teachers had a year to prepare.

"I feel like we were prepared," says second-grade teacher Laurie Langford, who has benefited from coaching, model lessons, and working with colleagues to apply the standards to their students. Now, she's amazed by what her students can do. "Their writing is incredible. If you had told me they could do this before we started, I don't know if I would have believed you." For example, her students don't just tell her the main idea of a passage they read; they explain their understanding using evidence from the text.

Finding aligned curricula is another big headache. A February report from the Fordham Institute looked closely at four early-implementing districts and found that all have delayed at least some purchases until publishers more significantly revise their offerings to align with the new standards.

Without time to assimilate new standards, training in unfamiliar instructional strategies, or materials that build vocabulary and deep content knowledge, teachers are left stranded, argues Susan Neuman, professor of early childhood and literacy education at New York University. "We're telling teachers to do things they don't know how to do," Neuman says. "They're working literally night and day without guidance."

An Overemphasis on Text?

As implementation proceeds, some educators are also zeroing in on a few specific standards as causes for concern. In literacy, the Common Core's expectation that students will begin reading in kindergarten has stirred controversy and fears of inappropriate practice. Although kindergartners can meet most of the Common Core literacy standards by listening to text read aloud, they are expected to recognize "high-frequency sight words" and read the simplest "emergent-reader" texts. For first-graders, the standards expect children to read grade-level text fluently "on successive readings."

Historically, U.S. schools have formally taught reading in first grade, when a typical student enters at age 6 and leaves at age 7. However, "children can start reading anywhere between age 4 and 8," says Michelle Gunderson, chair of the Chicago Teachers Union's early childhood committee and an architect of the union's recent resolution against the Common Core. "The push to read early makes no sense in terms of research."

Teachers worry that some children who cannot read independently by the end of first grade will suffer unfair consequences in school when their developmental timeline doesn't meet the new standards' expectations. "The pressure in kindergarten and first grade to become a reader early on—I feel like some kids are just not there," says Susan Chua, a first-grade teacher at Seattle's Stevens Elementary, a diverse K–5 school where 38 percent of the students are low income. "We're giving kids grades and saying they don't meet standards when maybe they just need more time."

"There are definitely kids who, given a few more months, will figure it out," says Catherine Snow, a professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education and an expert in children's language and literacy development. "There are other kids who need to be exposed to excellent instruction." Snow says the challenge is to find "the middle route—pushing kids more but not identifying them as failures prematurely."

Other knotty problems with the early literacy standards focus on striking the right balance between new demands to read text independently and long-standing practices known to support young learners, like read-alouds and providing background knowledge before reading new text. Snow sees the push to have students read text closely without providing background knowledge as problematic, "especially for young children whose oral language skills are much stronger than their reading skills. This could be withdrawing resources they need."

In general, Snow worries that Common Core's heavy emphasis on decoding and analyzing text narrows the field too soon for young learners. "I think reading is important, but learning and language are important too, so this is potentially dangerous."

While American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten continues to support the Common Core, concerns from parents and teachers about a too-early focus on written language have caught her attention. She shares Snow's concern about the potential to overemphasize formal reading at the expense of oral language development. "This is a place where we need a course correction, and the expertise of early childhood educators should be taken seriously," Weingarten says.

Such a course correction "is more about the implementation than the standards," says William Teale, director of the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a recent International Reading Association board member. Creating more time and space for thoughtfully designed instructional play experiences for young children would help, he adds. "There's a dichotomy of play versus instruction prevailing in policy, in teacher education, in the general

Preparing Students for Third-Grade Math

Since 1995, early mathematics researchers have been developing learning trajectories: goals and activities that enhance children's natural developmental progressions as mathematical thinkers. Curricula based on these progressions can help prepare students for Common Core math, educators say. One such curriculum, Building Blocks, was developed by Douglas Clements and Julie Sarama of the University of Denver. The Boston Public Schools uses Building Blocks in preK, and research shows that it has increased young children's mathematical skills.

In Boston, Building Blocks couples with Common Core to help young children gradually increase their understanding of numbers and operations through counting, as follows:

- **PreK.** Count to 10, then 20 and beyond.
- **Kindergarten.** Count to 100, skip count by tens, and count forward from any given starting number.
- **First Grade.** Count to 120 and understand 10 as a unit.
- **Second Grade.** Count within 1,000. Understand place value: hundreds, tens, and ones.

Source: Connie Henry, Boston Public Schools.

public. That's what we have to get rid of."

Back at Chávez, Roeth's strategy of reading complex text aloud with her kindergartners while having them attempt simple text on their own strikes the right balance, experts say, since it gives young children exposure to complex text while ensuring they practice enough with simple text to develop fluency. Primary students need to engage with complex text, but not by reading it independently, says Teale. "Make the complex text equally important through read-alouds."

Third-Grade Math

The Common Core math standards for children in kindergarten through grade 2 center on understanding numbers, especially by breaking apart numbers 1–10 and putting them back together. Though children engage with other topics—fractions, time, the idea of multiplication, measurement, and use of data—Common Core promotes a deep focus on numbers, addition, and subtraction. "It's a welcome change from what we had before," says Jeanine Brownell, assistant director of programming for the Early Math Collaborative at Erikson Institute, a Chicago-based graduate school of child development. Previously, "the curriculum got bloated—anything that would sell to a national market had to meet every state's requirement. This represents a tamping down of some of those widely varying state standards."

But Common Core's demands jump steeply in third grade. While continuing to build fluent addition and subtraction skills with numbers up to four digits, students must also master the times tables through nine, learn to divide, and delve more deeply into fractions. They learn to measure mass, volume, and perimeter and to apply their new knowledge of multiplication to measure area. "There's a huge increase in conceptual expectations," says Lisa Ginet, assistant director of instruction for the Erikson Institute's Early Math Collaborative, who fears that some of the third-grade curriculum will be pushed down to lower grades prematurely in order to prepare students for high-stakes tests.

"I think that's a valid concern," concurs Douglas Clements, executive director of the Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy at the University of Denver. An early mathematics expert, Clements served on the Common Core mathematics work team that wrote the standards and is now involved in updating the "progressions documents" that explain the how and why of the standards' sequence. He argues that a strong sequence of instruction from preschool through the early elementary grades would solve the problem. "If you start it appropriately with parents and child care workers in preK and develop those ideas really well up to grade 2, they can be prepared for the grade 3 stuff" (see "Preparing Students for Third-Grade Math").

Without pushing down third-grade standards, Chávez second-grade teacher Lindsey Dickerson does push the idea of getting ready for third grade with her students. In one lesson, her students had to determine which operation to use—addition, subtraction, or multiplication—in order to match story problems with the right equations. Most, but not all, students appeared to grasp that multiplication requires adding equal groups. That's pretty good for the spring of second grade, even by Common Core standards.

Once the teams matched up their equations, each student chose one and wrote a new story problem for it. Then everyone gathered on the rug in the back of the room to share their stories. "I have three boxes. In each of them I have 12 candies. How many do I have altogether?" a girl offered as her story for 3 x 12 = 36.

"Thumbs up or down?" called Dickerson, asking students to show whether they agreed that this was a good story to illustrate the equation. Most, but not all, of the students gave a thumbs-up. To reinforce student understanding, Dickerson asked for a volunteer to draw a picture of the problem. A boy stepped up and drew three groups of 12, separating each with a circle.

"We've underestimated what kids can learn," Clements says. "They can learn far more about mathematics than we've given them credit for in the past." ■

Maureen Kelleher is a Chicago-based freelance education writer.

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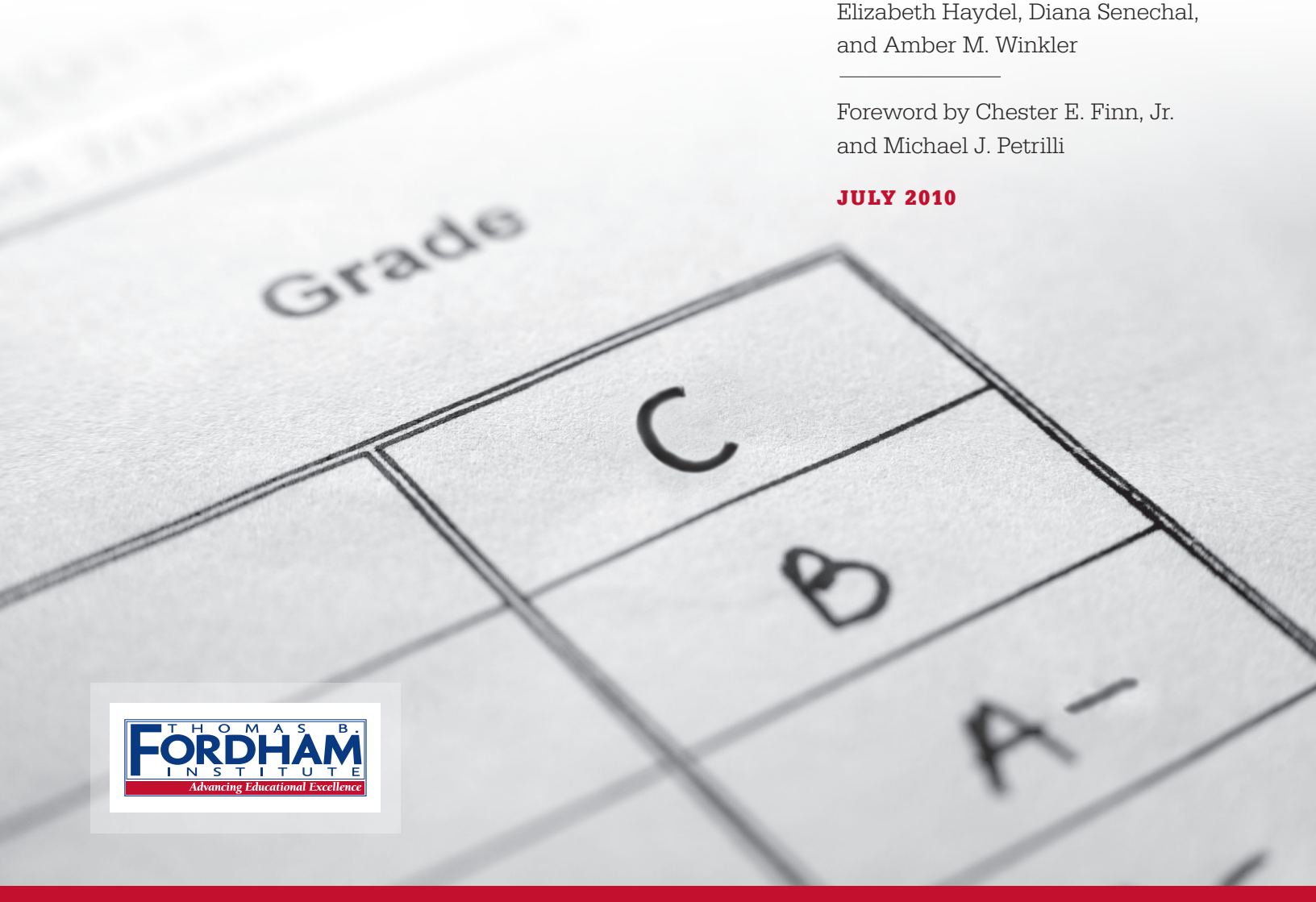
The State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010

By Sheila Byrd Carmichael, Gabrielle Martino, Kathleen Porter-Magee, and W. Stephen Wilson

With Daniela Fairchild, Elizabeth Haydel, Diana Senechal, and Amber M. Winkler

Foreword by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Michael J. Petrilli

JULY 2010



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Foreword

Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Michael J. Petrilli

Fordham's very first publication, released in July 1997, was Sandra Stotsky's *State English Standards*.[1] One of us wrote at the time:

> Unlike earlier (and often controversial) efforts to set "national standards" for education, the discussion about standards that matters most—and that this report focuses on—is the discussion taking place at the state level. Constitutional responsibility for providing education rests with the states, and it is the states that (in most, though not all, cases) have finally begun to accept the obligation to set academic standards and develop tests and other assessments keyed to those standards.

In the thirteen years since, we returned several times to examine state standards—both in English language arts (ELA) and in math, science, U.S. history, world history, and geography. Mostly, these were exercises in disappointment, as we repeatedly found few states willing and able to set clear, rigorous, content-rich expectations for their students. By 2006, we were nearly ready to give up on the states[2]:

> We're left with a dilemma: the few jurisdictions that implement standards-based reform will see great results. Yet most states muck it up—and the situation hasn't improved in at least six years. Pushing and prodding states to get their act together hasn't worked...So what else? The only way to fundamentally solve this problem, as we see it, is to build on the success of states like Massachusetts and move to a system of national standards and tests.
>
> We understand that national standards would face the same perils as state standards. If written by committee, or turned over to K-12 interest groups, they could turn out to be vague, politically correct, encyclopedic, and/or fuzzy. If linked with real consequences for schools, they could be pressured downward. They could even wind up doing more harm than good.
>
> But if done right, they could finally put the entire country on the sturdy path of standards-based reform. And if great standards can be written in Sacramento or Indianapolis or Boston, perhaps they could be created in Washington, D.C.

Mirabile dictu, sometimes things *do* change in education—and not always at glacial speed. By the end of this summer, dozens of states are expected to replace their own standards with those promulgated by the Common Core State Standards Initiative. As longtime supporters of national standards and tests, we're excited by the possibilities that this creates. But we're wary, too, because, as we wrote four years ago, national standards could turn out to be just as bad as state standards. (In a few much-discussed episodes in the early 1990s, what passed for national standards turned out to be appalling.)

Now, however, we can replace such speculation with analysis. A live set of "common" standards is upon us for review, inspection, and possible adoption. And we can now compare those standards with the versions in place in the fifty states (and the District of Columbia). We can thereby assist state officials to determine whether their students might be better off under a K-12 education regime aligned with the common standards, or whether they may be wise to keep those they've already got—which is exactly what we do in these pages.

The centrality of standards...and their limitations

As we've argued for a dozen-plus years now, standards are the foundation upon which almost everything else rests—or should rest. They should guide state assessments and accountability systems; inform teacher preparation, licensure, and professional development; and give shape to curricula, textbooks, software programs, and more. Choose your metaphor: Standards are targets, or blueprints, or roadmaps. They set the destination: what we want our students to know and be able to do by the end of their K-12 experience, and the benchmarks they should reach along the way. If the standards are

vague, watered-down, or misguided, they can point our schools down perilous paths. If there are no standards worth following, there is no education destination worth reaching.

Yet everyone also knows that standards often end up like wallpaper. They sit there on a state website, available for download, but mostly they're ignored. Educators instead obsess about what's on the high-stakes test—and how much students actually have to know in order to pass—which becomes the *real* standard. After making the most superficial adjustments, textbook publishers assert that their wares are "aligned" with the standards. Ed schools simply ignore them.

So it's no great surprise that serious analysts, recently including the Brookings Institution's Russ Whitehurst, have found no link between the quality of state standards and actual student performance.[3] That's because standards seldom get real traction on the ground. Adopting good standards is like having a goal for your cholesterol; it doesn't mean you will actually eat a healthy diet. Or like purchasing a treadmill; owning that machine only makes a difference if you tie on your sneakers and run.

But when great standards are combined with smart implementation, policy makers can move mountains. That's the lesson we take from Massachusetts, with its commendable expectations, well-designed assessments, tough-minded (yet humane) accountability system, rigorous entrance requirements for teachers, and "high-stakes" graduation requirements for students.[4] It should surprise no one that the Bay State now tops the charts of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and math in both fourth and eighth grades, or that it's posted solid gains for its neediest students. Furthermore, when Massachusetts students took the international TIMSS exam in 2007, Bay State fourth graders scored among the world's elite in mathematics, behind only Singapore and Hong Kong and tied with Taiwan and Japan. So standards do matter—but only when implemented aggressively.

Yet the vast majority of states have failed even to adopt rigorous standards in the first place, much less take the actions that give them traction in thousands of classrooms. It's not just the "content standards" that our previous reports have found to be lacking, but also the "performance standards": how much kids have to know and demonstrate in order to pass the test. In 2007, we published a groundbreaking study with the Northwest Evaluation Association, *The Proficiency Illusion*, which used a common metric to compare states' "proficiency" standards to one another.[5]

The results were more than disturbing: In some states, students could score below the tenth percentile nationally and still be considered "proficient." In other states, meanwhile, they had to reach the seventy-seventh percentile to wear the same label. And this was just the tip of the iceberg; quoting ourselves again:

> Those who care about strengthening U.S. K-12 education should be furious. There's all this testing—too much, surely—yet the testing enterprise is unbelievably slipshod. It's not just that results vary, but that they vary almost randomly, erratically, from place to place and grade to grade and year to year in ways that have little or nothing to do with true differences in pupil achievement. America is awash in achievement "data," yet the truth about our educational performance is far from transparent and trustworthy. It may be smoke and mirrors. Gains (and slippages) may be illusory. Comparisons may be misleading. Apparent problems may be nonexistent or, at least, misstated. The testing infrastructure on which so many school reform efforts rest, and in which so much confidence has been vested, is unreliable—at best.

Moving toward national standards and tests entails risks, no doubt about it. But so does standing still.

Fordham's reviews: What's new in this report

Even though we took a five-year break from appraising state ELA and math standards, we haven't been idle. In 2007, we examined the curricular content of the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs to determine whether they deserve their "gold star" status. (For the most part, they do.) For that project, we revised the criteria we previously used to judge state standards. We revised them again last year for our landmark study, *Stars by Which to Navigate? Scanning National and International Education Standards in 2009*, in which we judged the content tested on the NAEP, TIMSS, and PISA exams.[6] For that exercise, we wanted to be able to make comparisons across subject areas, as well as between test frameworks and standards documents. So we simplified, standardized, and strengthened our criteria. And those are the criteria, with a few more small tweaks, that we used for the present report. (They are available for your review in Appendix A.) They are—let's be clear about this—*not* the same as we used in examining state standards five years ago. But they're better. (See Appendix C for a brief summary of the 2005 criteria.)

For example, we can now make fairer and more precise comparisons between ELA and math. We can more easily compare state standards with the Common Core and with NAEP, PISA, and other test frameworks. The correspond-

ing downside is that comparisons over time become trickier. While the spirit and orientation of our criteria haven't changed, the details have. Readers should keep that in mind when presented with longitudinal data about the quality of state standards. (It also means that a handful of states received slightly different grades this year for standards that didn't actually change since 2005.)

Also new since 2005 are our reviewers. For ELA, Sheila Byrd Carmichael is this year's primary examiner. She has been a leading figure in the standards movement for almost two decades. She served as the deputy executive director of the California Academic Standards Commission and as founding director of the American Diploma Project. But she's hardly new to Fordham's efforts in this area, as she also penned the ELA reviews for our AP/IB report, and last year's *Stars by Which to Navigate* study.

Assisting Byrd were Elizabeth Haydel and Diana Senechal. Haydel has worked for numerous education organizations, including Achieve and the American Institutes for Research. No stranger to the standards movement, she assisted in drafting the *Ohio Academic Content Standards* in ELA and served as the project manager for Indiana University's Center for Innovation in Assessment. Senechal served on the English Language Arts Work Team for the Common Core State Standards Initiative after having taught English and theatre in New York City Public Schools. She holds a Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Yale and has written extensively for *Education Week, American Educator*, and various education blogs.

Our math reviews this year were led by W. Stephen Wilson, professor of mathematics at Johns Hopkins University. He, too, is a Fordham veteran, having been part of our six-member math review team in 2005 as well as the math analyst for our *Stars* report. He has participated in numerous projects on standards, curricula, and textbooks. He received his Ph.D. in mathematics from M.I.T. and has published over sixty mathematics research papers in the field of algebraic topology. Wilson was joined by Gabrielle Martino, who has worked as an adjunct mathematics instructor, writer, and consultant. In 2009, she coauthored *Doing the Math*, a report comparing high school mathematics curricula and college expectations in Maryland. She received her Ph.D. in mathematics from Johns Hopkins University.

Shepherding this massive undertaking was Fordham's own Kathleen Porter-Magee, who had overseen our last standards reviews before heading off to serve as director of professional development and recruitment for the District of Columbia Catholic Schools. She went on to Achievement First, where she oversaw development of AF's nationally recognized system of interim assessments and managed professional development for the network's more than 500 teachers. Also providing much editorial assistance and methodological oversight was Amber Winkler, Fordham's research director, who holds a Ph.D. in education policy and evaluation from the University of Virginia and previously served as senior study director at Westat. She has published widely on education accountability, teacher quality, and technology, among other topics, and began her career as a high school English teacher.

The main takeaways

What's the state of state standards in 2010? And how does the Common Core compare?

The Common Core math standards earn a grade of A-minus while the Common Core ELA standards earn a B-plus, both solidly in the honors range. Neither is perfect. Both are very, very strong.

Indeed, the Common Core standards are clearer and more rigorous than the ELA and math standards presently used by the vast majority of states. Out of 102 comparisons—fifty-one jurisdictions times two subjects—we found the Common Core clearly superior seventy-six times.

But the story gets more complicated, because we also discovered that the present ELA standards of three jurisdictions—California, the District of Columbia, and Indiana—are clearly better than the Common Core. (To be precise, these ELA standards earned straight As, compared to the Common Core's B-plus.) Furthermore, the ELA standards of eleven other states are roughly equivalent in quality to the Common Core, or "too close to call." That means they earned grades of B, B-plus, or A-minus, in the same range as Common Core's B-plus. As for math, the current standards of eleven states plus the District of Columbia are roughly equivalent in quality to the Common Core, also "too close to call." That's because these state math standards earned grades of B-plus, A-minus, or A, in the same range as Common Core's A-minus.

Frankly this is more states in pretty good shape on the standards front than we expected.

What does this mean for the adoption decisions currently facing many states? In this report, we do not make recommendations. Much as we would love to see every state with high standards—as good as or better than the Common Core—and as many advantages as we see in America having a uniform set of core academic expectations for its students,

we're also aware that the quality of the standards—and the uniformity of the standards—is not the only factor that state educators and officials must ponder.

The several states with "clearly superior" ELA standards, plus the larger number of "too close to call" states in both ELA and math, face a bona fide quandary. There are plenty of benefits to signing on with Common Core, including potential savings from scale, the advantages of comparability, the expectation that forthcoming Common Core assessments will also be good, and the national resources that will be made available to teachers. (Of course, there's also the Race to the Top (RTT) money....) On the other hand, states with good standards of their own that have recently invested *beaucoup* bucks in teacher training and diagnostic assessments tied to those standards might have reason to pause, and wait and see how the Common Core effort plays out over the next few years.

But that's not all, at least not if the present move toward common standards is to be more than lip-service—a façade of "adoption" that conceals the same old teachers teaching the same old stuff and assessing it via the same old tests. Policy makers should also ask themselves:

» Does the state (and its districts) have the political, organizational, and financial capacity to infuse new and different standards throughout its K-12 system—and all the other systems that connect to it?

» If the new standards are indeed more demanding than the old, and assuming that these loftier expectations are mirrored by new assessments and definitions of "proficiency," do state (and local) leaders have the intestinal fortitude to deal with the likeliest short-term consequence, namely a lot more kids *not* being promoted or graduated?

» Does the state have the resolve—and the means—to do all this in ELAand math without short-changing the rest of what educated people must learn in school: science and history, obviously, but also the arts, civics, health, languages, and more?

» How, if at all, will the state augment the Common Core with additional standards (or examples, reading lists, etc.) that it deems especially valuable? (CCSSI says that states may add up to 15 percent—a limit that we doubt anybody will actually enforce.)

States will do their kids no favor if they mess up this decision or just go through the motions of embracing new standards, maybe only long enough to qualify for RTT funding. In short order, everyone in those jurisdictions will recognize that this was a false messiah—and educators and voters alike will grow even more cynical about standards-based education reform.

And then there's Massachusetts

As for the singular case of Massachusetts, there we find the state that has led the nation in achievement gains over the past decade, thanks in large part to its excellent standards—and their serious implementation. (A similar case cannot be made for California or Indiana, where lackluster follow-through has left excellent standards without traction. And it's too early to know what impact D.C.'s standards, adopted just a few years ago, might be having in the nation's capital, though encouraging hints can be found in the latest NAEP results.)

We understand the position of the "MCAS stalwarts" in the Bay State: Why fix something that isn't broken? On the other hand, Massachusetts has a chance to play a key role in developing a new assessment pegged to the Common Core, which could result in even stronger achievement in the Bay State and better implementation of standards nationwide. We can't resolve this tension on Beacon Hill. But we can declare that the Common Core standards are in the same ballpark as those already on the books in Massachusetts. In some ways, they are stronger; in other ways they don't quite measure up. We note, too, that the recently drafted revisions of Massachusetts's decade-old state standards are, for the most part, even stronger than the version in use today.

What lies ahead?

Is this the end of the road for Fordham's work on state standards, considering that, within a few months, perhaps only a handful of states will have retained their own distinctive standards? Hardly. In the fall, we'll update and amplify our *Stars by Which to Navigate* report to include appraisals of *all* of the major national and international standards and testing frameworks across *all* major subjects. Early in 2011, we'll release an updated review of state standards in science and U.S. history. After all, the Common Core is currently only focused on ELA and math. And while these subjects are critical and foundational, they hardly embody all we want students to know and be able to do. (We're mindful of stirrings already underway with respect to "common" science standards.)

We're also busy on the "governance" front, contemplating the thorny issues that will determine the *long-term* viability of the Common Core endeavor. Simply stated: In 2020, who will be in charge of the multi-state standards-and-testing effort? What will they do? Who will pay for it?

These aren't just mundane questions of organizational ownership and budget. States considering the Common Core are legitimately concerned about how it will work tomorrow. Will those standards get dumbed down? Ratcheted up? Joined by curriculum? Will they reach from ELA and math into other subjects? Will universities take them seriously? Employers?

Critics and doubters are also eyeing governance, asking what will keep the Common Core from slipping under Uncle Sam's control, and fretful, too, that the loopiest of educationists will infiltrate until they are in control of academic expectations that will then drown in dubious fads like whole-language reading and "rain forest" math.

How this venture is governed (or misgoverned) in the future will do more than anything else to deter—or invite—such a fate. We've already published some excellent background papers to stir discussion about this critical topic.[7] We've been querying experts for their wise counsel in this regard. And we'll be back with some of our own ideas in the fall. Stay tuned.

Acknowledgments

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We are grateful as well to Diana Senechal, Elizabeth Haydel, and Douglas Lasken (for ELA) and to Bastiaan J. Braams (for math), who served as independent reviewers of many of our analyses, for their excellent counsel and guidance.

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Executive Summary

This review of state English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards is the latest in a series of Fordham evaluations dating back to 1997. It comes at a critical juncture, as states across the land consider adoption of the Common Core State Standards. (At press time, roughly half of states had already done so.)

Here are our major findings:

» Based on our criteria, the Common Core standards are clearly superior to those currently in use in thirty-nine states in math and thirty-seven states in English. For thirty-three states, the Common Core is superior in *both* math and reading.

» However, three jurisdictions boast ELA standards that are clearly superior to the Common Core: California, the District of Columbia, and Indiana. Another eleven states have ELA standards that are in the same league as the Common Core (or "too close to call").

» Eleven states plus the District of Columbia have math standards in the "too close to call" category, meaning that, overall, they are at least as clear and rigorous as the Common Core standards.

Figure 1: State English Language Arts Standards Compared to the Common Core

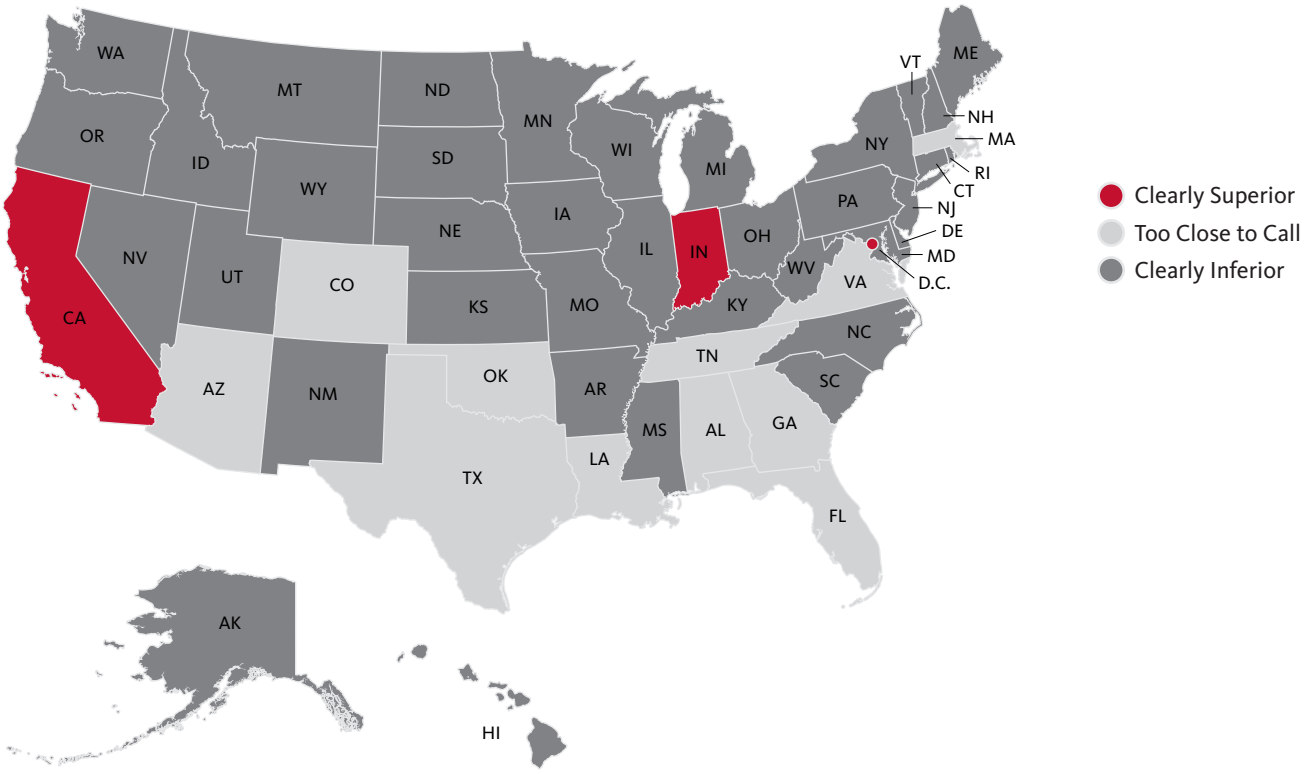

Figure 2: State Mathematics Standards Compared to the Common Core

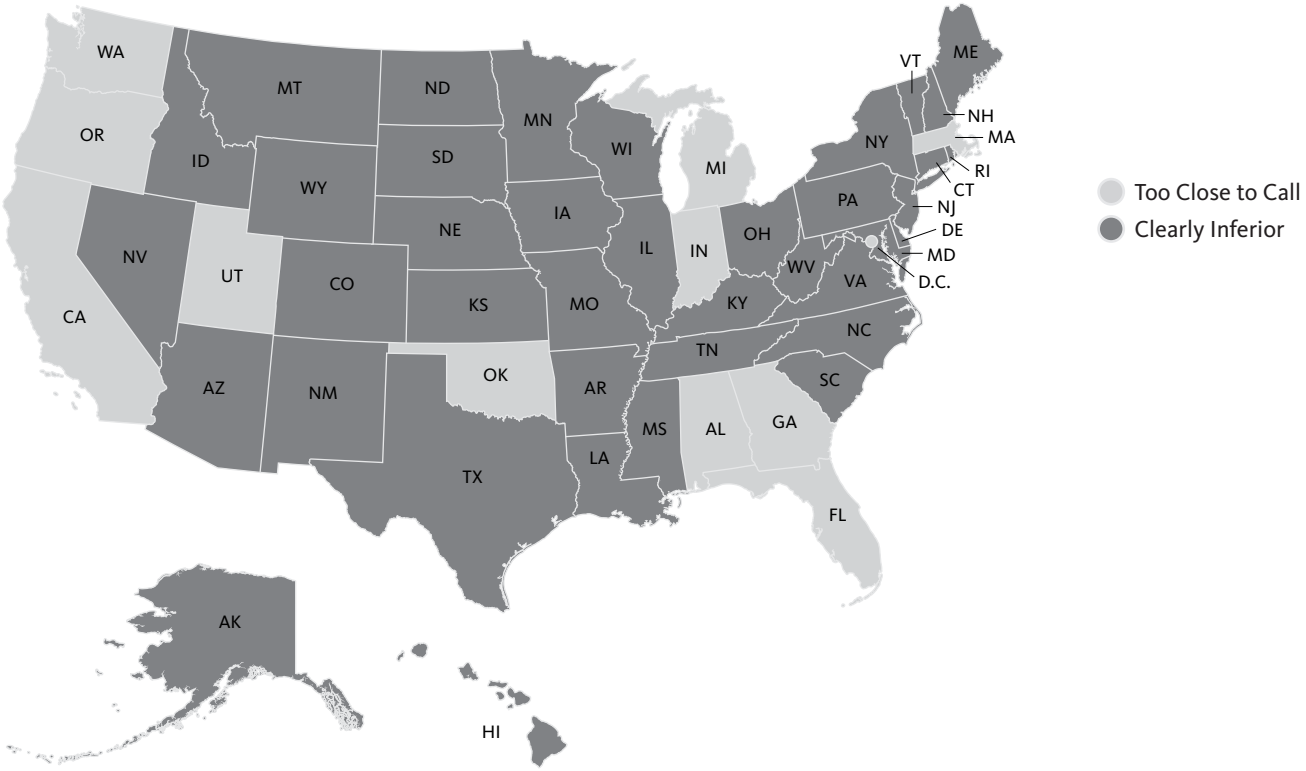

Table 1: State English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards Compared to the Common Core

Jurisdiction	English Language Arts	Math
Alabama	Too Close to Call	Too Close to Call
Alaska	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Arizona	Too Close to Call	Clearly Inferior
Arkansas	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
California	Clearly Superior	Too Close to Call
Colorado	Too Close to Call	Clearly Inferior
Connecticut	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Delaware	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
District of Columbia	Clearly Superior	Too Close to Call
Florida	Too Close to Call	Too Close to Call
Georgia	Too Close to Call	Too Close to Call
Hawaii	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Idaho	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Illinois	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Indiana	Clearly Superior	Too Close to Call
Iowa	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Kansas	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Kentucky	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Louisiana	Too Close to Call	Clearly Inferior

Jurisdiction	English Language Arts	Math
Maine	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Maryland	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Massachusetts	Too Close to Call	Too Close to Call
Michigan	Clearly Inferior	Too Close to Call
Minnesota	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Mississippi	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Missouri	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Montana	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Nebraska	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Nevada	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
New Hampshire	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
New Jersey	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
New Mexico	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
New York	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
North Carolina	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
North Dakota	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Ohio	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Oklahoma	Too Close to Call	Too Close to Call
Oregon	Clearly Inferior	Too Close to Call
Pennsylvania	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Rhode Island	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
South Carolina	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
South Dakota	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Tennessee	Too Close to Call	Clearly Inferior
Texas	Too Close to Call	Clearly Inferior
Utah	Clearly Inferior	Too Close to Call
Vermont	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Virginia	Too Close to Call	Clearly Inferior
Washington	Clearly Inferior	Too Close to Call
West Virginia	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Wisconsin	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior
Wyoming	Clearly Inferior	Clearly Inferior

» The Common Core ELA standards, which earned a B-plus in our review, are particularly strong when it comes to providing useful and explicit guidance about the quality and complexity of reading and writing that should be expected of students each year, including providing annotated samples of student writing. On the other hand, those states with "clearly superior" standards tend to treat both literary and non-literary texts with more systematic detail, addressing the specific genres, sub-genres, and characteristics of both text types.

» The Common Core mathematics standards, which received an A-minus from our reviewers, set arithmetic as a clear priority in the elementary grades and develop the often-difficult subject of fractions with clear and careful guidance. On the other hand, compared to many of the "close call" states, the presentation of high school content is disjointed and mathematical coherence suffers.

» Several states made great improvements to their math standards since we last reviewed them in 2005. However, similar progress was generally not visible for ELA. (In 2005, we reported the opposite: States had made greater improvements to their ELA standards, but not their math standards, since 2000.)

Table 2: Grades for State English Language Arts Standards, 2005 and 2010[A]

Jurisdiction	2010	2005
Alabama	B	A
Alaska	F	D
Arizona	B	B
Arkansas	D	C
California	A	A
Colorado	B+	C
Connecticut	D	F
Delaware	F	C
District of Columbia	A	C
Florida	B	C
Georgia	B+	B
Hawaii	C	C
Idaho	C	B
Illinois	D	B
Indiana	A	A
Iowa	F	N/A[B]
Kansas	C	C
Kentucky	D	C
Louisiana	B+	A
Maine	C	C
Maryland	C	C
Massachusetts	A-	A
Michigan	D	D
Minnesota	C	B
Mississippi	D	B
Missouri	D	C
Montana	F	F
Nebraska	F	C
Nevada	C	B
New Hampshire	C	B
New Jersey	C	C
New Mexico	C	D
New York	C	B
North Carolina	D	B
North Dakota	D	C
Ohio	C	C
Oklahoma	B+	C
Oregon	C	B
Pennsylvania	D	C
Rhode Island	D	C
South Carolina	D	B
South Dakota	C	B
Tennessee	A-	D
Texas	A-	B

Jurisdiction	2010	2005
Utah	C	C
Vermont	D	C
Virginia	B+	B
Washington	C	F
West Virginia	D	C
Wisconsin	D	C
Wyoming	D	F

[A] Please see the *Foreword* and *Appendix C* for a discussion of how our criteria changed from 2005 to 2010. This complicates any comparison over time.
[B] Iowa adopted its first set of state standards in ELA and math in 2007.

Table 3: Grades for State Mathematics Standards, 2005 and 2010[A]

Jurisdiction	2010 Grade	2005 Grade
Alabama	B+	B
Alaska	D	D
Arizona	B	C
Arkansas	C	F
California	A	A
Colorado	C	D
Connecticut	D	F
Delaware	B	F
District of Columbia	A	D
Florida	A	F
Georgia	A-	B
Hawaii	C	F
Idaho	B	D
Illinois	D	C
Indiana	A	A
Iowa	C	N/A[B]
Kansas	F	F
Kentucky	D	C
Louisiana	C	C
Maine	C	D
Maryland	D	C
Massachusetts	B+	A
Michigan	A-	C
Minnesota	B	D
Mississippi	C	D
Missouri	D	F
Montana	F	D
Nebraska	C	D
Nevada	C	C
New Hampshire	D	F
New Jersey	C	D
New Mexico	C	B

Jurisdiction	2010 Grade	2005 Grade
New York	B	C
North Carolina	D	C
North Dakota	C	C
Ohio	C	D
Oklahoma	B+	C
Oregon	B+	D
Pennsylvania	F	D
Rhode Island	D	F
South Carolina	C	D
South Dakota	C	C
Tennessee	C	D
Texas	C	C
Utah	A-	D
Vermont	F	D
Virginia	C	C
Washington	A	F
West Virginia	B	C
Wisconsin	F	D
Wyoming	F	F

[A] Please see the *Foreword* and *Appendix C* for a discussion of how our criteria changed from 2005 to 2010. This complicates any comparison over time.
[B] Iowa adopted its first set of state standards in ELA and math in 2007.

AS OF JUNE 20, 2010, THIS STATE HAD ADOPTED THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS.

South Carolina • English Language Arts

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

South Carolina Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts. 2008.
Accessed from: http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Academic-Standards/old/cso/index.html

Overview

The South Carolina standards are woefully vague and repetitive, despite some good content, such as the treatment of early reading, and some aspects of literary and informational texts.

GRADE **D**

Clarity and Specificity:	1/3
Content and Rigor:	3/7
Total State Score:	**4/10**

(*Common Core Grade: B+*)

General Organization

The South Carolina standards are divided into three strands: Reading, Writing, and Researching.

Each grade level contains six "standards" (three for Reading, two for Writing, and one for Researching), and a number of "indicators" are listed for each standard. Introductory material states that "all of the six standards and their indicators carry equal weight and should be taught in an integrated manner." Standards for high school are divided into courses, English 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Clarity and Specificity

South Carolina's essential problem is that far too many of its indicators are repeated across grades, even though some of them are rigorous. Overall, the indicators are far too repetitive to be helpful for grade-level curriculum planning, instruction, or assessment.

Consider the following indicator for literary text response, repeated in grades 6-12:

> Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods (for example, written works, oral and auditory presentations, discussions, media productions, and the visual and performing arts) (grades 6-12)

In some cases, the indicators are both unmeasurable and repetitive, as in this example, repeated in grades 1-12:

> Read independently for extended periods of time for pleasure (grades 1-12)

Excessive repetition of vague indicators casts a pall over the document and earns South Carolina one point out of three for Clarity and Specificity. (See *Common Grading Metric*, Appendix A.)

Content and Rigor

Content Strengths

South Carolina's indicators for early reading are systematic and thorough, as in the following first-grade phonics set:

> Use onsets and rimes to decode and generate words
>
> Use knowledge of letter names and their corresponding sounds to spell words independently
>
> Organize a series of words by alphabetizing to the first letter

> Identify beginning, middle, and ending sounds in single-syllable words
>
> Classify words by categories (for example, beginning and ending sounds)
>
> Use blending to read
>
> Spell three- and four-letter short-vowel words and high-frequency words correctly (See Instructional Appendix: High-Frequency Words.)
>
> Use known words to spell new words (grade 1)

All of the early reading criteria are addressed (see *ELA Content Specific Criteria*, Appendix A) and often with examples. Appendices list the high-frequency words that students are to learn, as well as the roots, prefixes, and suffixes that they should know at each grade level. Vocabulary is addressed at every grade level, with a focus on word analysis. Spelling is also addressed within vocabulary.

From Kindergarten onward, literary and informational text are treated separately, with specific indicators outlined in each area, progressing in rigor across the grades, despite repetition in a number of places. Consider the following progression—on "point of view"—in grades 2-7:

> - Analyze the text to determine the narrator (grade 2)
> - Analyze the text to determine first-person point of view (grade 3)
> - Distinguish between first-person and third-person points of view (grade 4)
> - Differentiate among the first-person, limited-omniscient (third person), and omniscient (third person) points of view (grade 5)
> - Differentiate among the first-person, limited-omniscient (third person), and omniscient (third person) points of view (grade 6)
> - Explain the effect of point of view on a given narrative text (grade 7)

With respect to informational text, some repetition also exists, but rigorous progression is evident in a number of places, as in this grade 5-8 sequence dealing with bias and propaganda:

> - Analyze a given text to detect author bias (for example, unsupported opinions) (grade 5)
> - Summarize author bias based on the omission of relevant facts and statements of unsupported opinions (grade 6)
> - Identify propaganda techniques (including testimonials and bandwagon) in informational texts (grade 6)
> - Identify author bias (for example, word choice and the exclusion and inclusion of particular information) (grade 7)
> - Identify the use of propaganda techniques (including glittering generalities and name calling) in informational texts (grade 7)
> - Analyze informational texts for author bias (for example, word choice and the exclusion and inclusion of particular information) (grade 8)
> - Identify the use of propaganda techniques (including card stacking, plain folks, and transfer) in informational texts (grade 8)

To illustrate the quality and complexity of reading that students should master, South Carolina appends a suggested reading list organized by grade spans and genres. The titles represent a thoughtful selection of literary and informational texts. Although American literature is not required for study, a number of important works from American literature are included on the list.

The indicators for oral and written conventions are fairly well delineated across grades 1-6. They are somewhat repetitive in grades 7-12, but generally go farther than many state standards in defining specific objectives for grammar and usage.

Content Weaknesses

The South Carolina indicators for writing are woefully repetitive, with many repeated verbatim across multiple grades in multiple instances. They focus mostly on process and do not describe specific expectations for products by genre in a way

that is helpful to teachers. For example, in "informational writing," some version of the following indicator is repeated across grades 4-10:

> Create informational pieces (for example, reports and letters of request, inquiry, or complaint) that use language appropriate for the specific audience (grades 4-10)

Even indicators for persuasive writing in high school mention only that essays should have a thesis statement and "use support." It would be more helpful to describe key aspects of persuasive writing such as anticipating and addressing potential counterclaims and the use of rhetorical strategies.

South Carolina's indicators include none that address listening and speaking. Some "Oral Communication and Vocabulary" indicators are included, such as this high school indicator, but it is repeated verbatim in all four years:

> Create written works, oral and auditory presentations, and visual presentations that are designed for a specific audience and purpose (grades 9-12)

Although it includes a Research strand, South Carolina's indicators in this domain are thin. For example, "clarify and refine a research topic" is an indicator in all grades 4-12. The equally thin "use a variety of print and electronic reference materials" appears in grades 6-12. Paraphrasing and summarizing information is addressed, as is documenting sources, but these indicators are perfunctory and repetitive, as in this grade 6-12 indicator:

> Use a standardized system of documentation (for example, a list of sources with full publication information and the use of in-text citations) to properly credit the work of others (grades 6-12)

Nowhere are specific characteristics for research products fully defined, such as essays that reflect the evaluation of primary and secondary sources or the synthesis of information.

Multimedia indicators are addressed only occasionally. For example, consider this indicator, which appears under "Visual Aids in Presentations." It repeats almost unchanged in grades 4-12:

> Select appropriate graphics, in print or electronic form, to support written works and oral and visual presentations (grades 4-12)

Students should be expected not only to select graphics, but to analyze and produce multimedia products in order to be college- and career-ready.

Despite notable areas of rigorous content, such as early reading, South Carolina fails to define a systematically rigorous set of student expectations. Weaknesses in the areas of writing, listening and speaking, research, and media mean that South Carolina is missing close to 50 percent of necessary content and earns three points out of seven for Content and Rigor. (See *Common Grading Metric*, Appendix A.)

The Bottom Line

With their grade of D, South Carolina's ELA standards are among the worst in the country, while those developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative earn a solid B-plus. The CCSS ELA standards are significantly superior to what the Palmetto State has in place today.

AS OF JUNE 20, 2010, THIS STATE HAD ADOPTED THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS.

South Carolina • Mathematics

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

South Carolina Academic Standards for Mathematics. June 12, 2007.
Accessed from: http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Academic-Standards/old/cso/standards/math/documents/2007MathematicsStandards.doc

Overview

South Carolina's standards are often strong. Many are clear and easy to read, and the high school content contains some mathematically rich material. Unfortunately, the standards neither prioritize nor support the arithmetic skills that students need and therefore fail to provide the kind of guidance K-12 teachers need to truly prepare students for college mathematics.

GRADE C

Clarity and Specificity:	2/3
Content and Rigor:	3/7
Total State Score:	**5/10**

(*Common Core Grade: A-*)

General Organization

South Carolina's K-8 standards are organized by strands including Measurement, Number and Operations, and Algebra. These are subdivided by topic and then into grade-specific "indicators." It is these indicators that are referred to as "standards" and examined below. The high school standards are organized by course rather than grade, but otherwise follow the same structure.

Clarity and Specificity

In general, South Carolina's standards are well organized and not difficult to read. There are a reasonable number of standards in each grade; they are easy to find and stated succinctly. Some are simple and easily understood, such as the following standards:

> Classify angles as right, acute, or obtuse (grade 3)
>
> Represent with ordered pairs of integers the location of points in a coordinate grid (grade 6)

Some standards, however, are subject to wide interpretation in terms of the mathematical skill that students are expected to master. For example:

> Represent numeric, algebraic, and geometric patterns in words, symbols, algebraic expressions, and algebraic equations (grade 5)

Without further clarification, it is not clear from this statement what students are expected to be able to do.

In the elementary grades, the standards contain many statements that include the phrase "generate strategies to..." such as:

> Generate strategies to add and subtract without regrouping through two-digit numbers (grade 1)

There is an attempt in the introduction to explain the phrase, but it is not specific enough to make these standards clear or measurable:

> An indicator beginning with the phrase "Generate strategies" addresses a concept that is being formally introduced for the first time, and students must therefore be given experiences that foster conceptual understanding.

Other standards begin with equally vague phrases, including "apply an algorithm" and "apply strategies and procedures." Unfortunately, the accompanying clarification statements provided in the introduction are similarly ambiguous.

Most of the standards are explicit and clear. But enough of them suffer from such vague language that, taken together, the standards do not quite provide a complete guide to users. This results in a Clarity and Specificity score of two points out of three. (See *Common Grading Metric*, Appendix A.)

Content and Rigor

Content Priorities

Aside from the number of standards devoted to each content area, South Carolina does not offer explicit guidance as to which content is most important. In the elementary grades, the arithmetic standards comprise only about one-third of the standards—an insufficient proportion that does not properly prioritize the role of arithmetic in the early grades.

Content Strengths

The high school standards are generally good and cover the advanced material needed for STEM-ready students.

Content Weaknesses

The primary weakness of South Carolina's standards is with the development of arithmetic. While fluency is stated as a goal, the development of the standards does not support true mastery of arithmetic skills that students need to continue to more advanced topics. For example, the arithmetic standards on whole-number addition and subtraction are the following:

> Recall basic addition facts through 9 + 9 and corresponding subtraction facts (grade 1)
>
> Generate strategies to add and subtract pairs of two-digit whole numbers with regrouping (grade 2)
>
> Apply an algorithm to add and subtract whole numbers fluently (grade 3)

Note that the last standard does not specify that the standard algorithms are the ones to be applied in solving addition and subtraction problems. The guidance in the introduction for the phrase "apply an algorithm" states that standards beginning with this phrase address "a concept that has been introduced in a previous grade." In the above, various strategies may have been generated to add and subtract, and the "algorithm" chosen to apply to achieve the desired fluency may be one that is inefficient or otherwise inadequate.

The development of whole-number multiplication and division and of fraction and decimal arithmetic follows a similar pattern. Students first "generate strategies" and then "apply an algorithm" to achieve arithmetic fluency. The failure to specify the use of standard algorithms and other standard arithmetic procedures has the potential to undermine students' mastery of arithmetic.

Further, the important topics of common denominators and negative numbers are not mentioned in the elementary standards. While negative numbers are never mentioned explicitly, in sixth grade, integers suddenly appear in a standard, which states simply:

> Understand Integers (grade 6)

While this is a laudable goal, it is unmeasurable and fails to provide sufficient guidance about what students are expected to know and be able to do.

As stated above, the high school standards are generally strong, but they, too, reveal a few weaknesses. Many begin with "apply a procedure to...," without specifying what procedure ought to be applied. Since graphing calculators are required for all courses, this could result in students relying on them to perform procedures that should be mastered without the use of a calculator.

A few details are also missing in the standards for lines and quadratics. The geometry course is not rigorous. The standards use all of the important theorems to solve problems, but there is no indication that the important theorems themselves should be proven.

In sum, much of the high school content is covered clearly and well in these standards. They fall short, though, on the topic of arithmetic. Arithmetic is the fundamental prerequisite for advanced mathematics, but its importance is insufficiently supported in South Carolina's standards. This is no less than a "crucial shortcoming" that leads to a Content and Rigor score of three points out of seven. (See *Common Grading Metric*, Appendix A.)

The Bottom Line

With their grade of C, South Carolina's mathematics standards are mediocre, while those developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative earn an impressive A-minus. The CCSS math standards are significantly superior to what the Palmetto State has in place today.

South Carolina General Assembly
120th Session, 2013-2014

A289, R323, S825

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill
Sponsors: Senators Alexander and Davis
Document Path: l:\council\bills\bh\26028dg14.docx
Companion/Similar bill(s): 4859

Introduced in the Senate on January 14, 2014
Introduced in the House on February 26, 2014
Last Amended on June 19, 2014
Passed by the General Assembly on June 19, 2014
Governor's Action: June 23, 2014, Signed

Summary: Ad Valorem Taxation

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
12/10/2013	Senate	Prefiled
12/10/2013	Senate	Referred to Committee on **Finance**
1/14/2014	Senate	Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal-page 36)
1/14/2014	Senate	Referred to Committee on **Finance** (Senate Journal-page 36)
2/19/2014	Senate	Committee report: Favorable **Finance** (Senate Journal-page 18)
2/20/2014	Senate	Read second time (Senate Journal-page 13)
2/20/2014	Senate	Roll call Ayes-39 Nays-0 (Senate Journal-page 13)
2/25/2014	Senate	Read third time and sent to House (Senate Journal-page 16)
2/26/2014	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 10)
2/26/2014	House	Referred to Committee on **Ways and Means** (House Journal-page 10)
5/15/2014	House	Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Ways and Means** (House Journal-page 45)
5/22/2014	House	Debate adjourned until Tues., 5-27-14 (House Journal-page 54)
5/27/2014	House	Amended (House Journal-page 97)
5/27/2014	House	Read second time (House Journal-page 97)
5/27/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-99 Nays-0 (House Journal-page 98)
5/28/2014	House	Read third time and returned to Senate with amendments (House Journal-page 12)
5/29/2014	Senate	House amendment amended (Senate Journal-page 108)
5/29/2014	Senate	Returned to House with amendments (Senate Journal-page 108)
5/30/2014		Scrivener's error corrected
6/3/2014	House	Non-concurrence in Senate amendment (House Journal-page 74)
6/3/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-0 Nays-102 (House Journal-page 75)
6/4/2014	Senate	Senate insists upon amendment and conference committee appointed Alexander, Malloy, Davis
6/4/2014	House	Conference committee appointed GM Smith, Limehouse, JE Smith
6/17/2014	House	Conference report received and adopted
6/17/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-114 Nays-0
6/19/2014	Senate	Conference report adopted (Senate Journal-page 2)
6/19/2014	Senate	Roll call Ayes-34 Nays-0 (Senate Journal-page 2)
6/19/2014	House	Ordered enrolled for ratification

6/20/2014	Ratified R 323
6/23/2014	Signed By Governor
7/8/2014	Effective date See Act for Effective Date
7/9/2014	Act No. 289

View the latest legislative information at the website

VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

12/10/2013
2/19/2014
5/15/2014
5/27/2014
5/29/2014
5/30/2014
6/19/2014

NOTE: THIS COPY IS A TEMPORARY VERSION. THIS DOCUMENT WILL REMAIN IN THIS VERSION UNTIL PUBLISHED IN THE ADVANCE SHEETS TO THE ACTS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS. WHEN THIS DOCUMENT IS PUBLISHED IN THE ADVANCE SHEET, THIS NOTE WILL BE REMOVED.

(A289, R323, S825)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, SO AS TO ENACT THE "MILITARY FAMILY QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2014" BY ADDING SECTION 3-1-40 SO AS TO EXEMPT FROM AD VALOREM TAXATION ANY REAL PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN A MILITARY BASE OR INSTALLATION THAT IS USED OR OWNED BY THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND IS USED AS MILITARY HOUSING FOR MILITARY-AFFILIATED PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES EVEN IF THE REAL PROPERTY IS IMPROVED, MAINTAINED, OR LEASED TO A PARTY THAT WOULD OTHERWISE SUBJECT THE REAL PROPERTY TO TAX, SO LONG AS THERE IS A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT REQUIRING THE LESSEE TO USE THE PROPERTY FOR MILITARY HOUSING; BY ADDING SECTION 44-6-35 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT MILITARY FAMILIES MAY ENROLL IN A MEDICAID HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED WAIVER PROGRAM IN THIS STATE IF SOUTH CAROLINA IS THEIR STATE OF LEGAL RESIDENCE, AND TO ALLOW THEM TO MAINTAIN ENROLLMENT IF THE FAMILY IS STATIONED OUTSIDE OF SOUTH CAROLINA; BY ADDING ARTICLE 21 TO CHAPTER 11, TITLE 63 SO AS TO CREATE THE "MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN'S WELFARE TASK FORCE" TO IDENTIFY ISSUES RELATED TO MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN AND OPEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES OF THIS STATE AND LOCAL MILITARY INSTALLATIONS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-18-900, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL REPORT CARDS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE RATINGS, SO AS TO DIRECT THE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, WORKING WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL REPORT CONCERNING THE

PERFORMANCE OF MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN WHO ATTEND PRIMARY, ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOLS IN THIS STATE; TO AMEND SECTION 7-15-320, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO PERSONS QUALIFIED TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT MEMBERS OF THE ARMED SERVICES, THEIR SPOUSES, AND THEIR DEPENDENTS MUST BE PERMITTED TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT IN ALL ELECTIONS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY ARE ABSENT FROM THEIR COUNTY OF RESIDENCE ON ELECTION DAY; TO AMEND SECTION 25-1-350, RELATING TO THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE ADJUTANT GENERAL MAY AUTHORIZE NATIONAL GUARD PERSONNEL TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD FOUNDATION IN CERTAIN MISSIONS; AND BY ADDING SECTION 51-13-880 SO AS TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE USS LAFFEY ASSOCIATION WHO ARE TEMPORARILY PRESENT AT PATRIOT'S POINT TO PERFORM VOLUNTARY MAINTENANCE ON THE USS LAFFEY TO REMAIN ONBOARD THE VESSEL OVERNIGHT IF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PATRIOT'S POINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY APPROVES AND HAS DEEMED IT SAFE.

Whereas, the General Assembly finds that the sacrifices of those who serve in the armed services of this great nation deserve our greatest respect, and that we have an obligation to demonstrate our appreciation to these service members and their families in tangible ways; and

Whereas, the General Assembly takes great pride in being home to many military installations, and is greatly appreciative of the tremendously positive impact of these installations and the service members and their families on the economy of the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that comprehensive legislation to enhance many quality of life issues for members of the armed forces and their families is very appropriate to demonstrate its appreciation for the sacrifices of members of the armed forces and their families and to demonstrate its appreciation for the enormously positive impact of military installations on the Palmetto State. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

PART I

Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act of 2014

Citation

SECTION 1. This act may be known and must be cited as the "Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act of 2014".

PART II

Property Taxes

Property on military base used for military housing exempt from property tax

SECTION 2. A. Article 1, Chapter 1, Title 3 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 3-1-40. There is exempt from ad valorem taxation any real property, and improvements thereon, located within a military base or installation that is used or owned by the United States Armed Forces and is used as military housing for military-affiliated personnel and their families. Military housing includes ancillary facilities that support the military housing. This exemption continues to apply if the real property is improved, maintained, or leased to a party that would otherwise subject the real property to tax, so long as there is a contractual agreement by and between a branch of the United States Armed Forces and the lessee which requires the lessee to use the property for military housing."

B. This SECTION takes effect upon approval by the Governor and applies for property tax years beginning after 2013.

PART III

Medicaid Waiver Protections

Medicaid waiver protections

SECTION 3. Article 1, Chapter 6, Title 44 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 44-6-35. In administering home- and community-based waiver programs, the department shall, to the extent possible, maintain the waiver status of an eligible family member of a member of the armed services who maintains his South Carolina state residence, regardless of where the service member is stationed. Consequently, a person on a waiver waiting list would return to the same place on the waiting list when the family returns to South Carolina. Furthermore, the eligible family member previously enrolled in a waiver program and who received active services would be reinstated into the waiver program once Medicaid eligibility is established, upon their return to South Carolina. It is not the intent of this section to authorize services provided outside the South Carolina Medicaid Service Area. These provisions are contingent upon the department receiving federal approval."

PART IV

Military-Connected Children's Welfare Task Force

Military-Connected Children's Welfare Task Force

SECTION 4. Chapter 11, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Article 21

Military-Connected Children's Welfare Task Force

Section 63-11-2110. (A) There is created the 'Military-Connected Children's Welfare Task Force' for the purpose of identifying issues related to military-connected children and opening communication between child welfare agencies of this State and local military installations. The task force shall study issues relating to military-connected children as the task force may undertake or as may be requested by the General Assembly.

(B) The task force is to be comprised of the following members:

(1) the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, or his designee;

(2) the Governor, or his designee;

(3) the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his designee;

(4) the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, or his designee; and
(5) a representative of the Children's Trust Fund.

(C) The task force shall meet as soon as practicable after the effective date of this act for organizational purposes.

(D) The task force shall submit an annual written report to the General Assembly including recommendations to facilitate and open communication between child welfare agencies of this State and local military installations. The findings and recommendations of the task force shall be posted on the Department of Health and Human Services' website.

(E) The members of the task force shall serve without compensation and may not receive mileage or per diem."

PART V

Education

Annual report on educational performance of military-connected children

SECTION 5. Section 59-18-900 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 282 of 2008, is further amended by adding an appropriately lettered subsection at the end to read:

"( ) The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education, is directed to establish a comprehensive annual report concerning the performance of military-connected children who attend primary, elementary, middle, and high schools in this State. The comprehensive annual report must be in a reader-friendly format, using graphics whenever possible, published on the state, district, and school websites, and, upon request, printed by the school districts. The annual comprehensive report must address at least attendance, academic performance in reading, math, and science, and graduation rates of military-connected children."

Absentee ballot permitted for all members of the armed forces and certain family members

SECTION 6. Section 7-15-320 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 43 of 2011, is further amended to read:

"Section 7-15-320. (A) Qualified electors in any of the following categories must be permitted to vote by absentee ballot in all elections

when they are absent from their county of residence on election day during the hours the polls are open, to an extent that it prevents them from voting in person:

(1) students, their spouses, and dependents residing with them;

(2) persons serving with the American Red Cross or with the United Service Organizations (USO) who are attached to and serving with the Armed Forces of the United States, their spouses, and dependents residing with them;

(3) governmental employees, their spouses, and dependents residing with them;

(4) persons on vacation (who by virtue of vacation plans will be absent from their county of residence on election day); or

(5) overseas citizens.

(B) Qualified electors in any of the following categories must be permitted to vote by absentee ballot in all elections, whether or not they are absent from their county of residence on election day:

(1) physically disabled persons;

(2) persons whose employment obligations require that they be at their place of employment during the hours that the polls are open and present written certification of that obligation to the county registration board;

(3) certified poll watchers, poll managers, county voter registration board members and staff, county and state election commission members and staff working on election day;

(4) persons attending sick or physically disabled persons;

(5) persons admitted to hospitals as emergency patients on the day of an election or within a four-day period before the election;

(6) persons with a death or funeral in the family within a three-day period before the election;

(7) persons who will be serving as jurors in a state or federal court on election day;

(8) persons sixty-five years of age or older;

(9) persons confined to a jail or pretrial facility pending disposition of arrest or trial; or

(10) members of the Armed Forces and Merchant Marines of the United States, their spouses, and dependents residing with them."

PART VI

Severability and Effective Date

Severability

SECTION 7. If any section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this act is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such holding shall not affect the constitutionality or validity of the remaining portions of this act, the General Assembly hereby declaring that it would have passed this act, and each and every section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, and word thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections, paragraphs, subparagraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words hereof may be declared to be unconstitutional, invalid, or otherwise ineffective.

Powers and duties of Adjutant General

SECTION 8. Section 25-1-350 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately numbered item at the end to read:

"( ) in his discretion, authorize National Guard personnel to support and assist the National Guard Association of South Carolina and the South Carolina National Guard Foundation in their missions to promote the health, safety, education, and welfare of South Carolina National Guard personnel and their families."

USS Laffey

SECTION 9. Article 11, Chapter 13, Title 51 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 51-13-880. Members of the USS Laffey Association who are temporarily present at Patriot's Point to perform voluntary maintenance on the USS Laffey may remain onboard the vessel overnight if the executive director approves and has deemed it safe to do so."

Time effective

SECTION 10. Unless specified otherwise, this act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 20th day of June, 2014.

Approved the 23rd day of June, 2014.

South Carolina General Assembly
120th Session, 2013-2014

A200, R252, H3893

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill
Sponsors: Reps. Bedingfield, G.R. Smith, Loftis, Stringer, Burns, Hamilton, Erickson, Taylor, Clemmons, Delleney, Pitts, Willis, Chumley, Henderson, Rivers, Crosby, McCoy and Wood
Document Path: l:\council\bills\agm\19946ab13.docx

Introduced in the House on April 9, 2013
Introduced in the Senate on April 15, 2014
Last Amended on May 6, 2014
Passed by the General Assembly on May 20, 2014
Governor's Action: May 30, 2014, Signed

Summary: Statewide education standards and assessments

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
4/9/2013	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 21)
4/9/2013	House	Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 21)
4/24/2013	House	Committee report: Favorable **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 2)
4/25/2013		Scrivener's error corrected
4/30/2013	House	Requests for debate-Rep(s). Hayes, George, Hart, Ott, Williams, Jefferson, Willis, Munnerlyn, Sabb, Anthony, Ridgeway, Weeks, King, Cobb-Hunter, Howard, Neal, Patrick, McEachern, Douglas, Bales, Bedingfield, Hiott, Owens, Hosey, Clyburn, GA Brown, Anderson, Branham, Wood, Brannon, Ryhal, Taylor, Wells, Hixon, Toole, GR Smith, JR Smith (House Journal-page 40)
5/15/2013	House	Debate adjourned until Thur., 5-16-13 (House Journal-page 28)
1/15/2014	House	Recommitted to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 46)
2/20/2014	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Chumley
4/1/2014	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Henderson
4/9/2014	House	Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 127)
4/10/2014	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Rivers, Crosby, McCoy, Wood
4/10/2014	House	Amended (House Journal-page 147)
4/10/2014	House	Read second time (House Journal-page 147)
4/10/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-89 Nays-9 (House Journal-page 155)
4/10/2014	House	Unanimous consent for third reading on next legislative day (House Journal-page 156)
4/11/2014	House	Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal-page 7)
4/15/2014	Senate	Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal-page 10)
4/15/2014	Senate	Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal-page 10)
4/30/2014	Senate	Recalled from Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal-page 77)
4/30/2014	Senate	Special order, set for April 30, 2014 (Senate Journal-page 77)
4/30/2014	Senate	Amended (Senate Journal-page 77)
5/1/2014		Scrivener's error corrected
5/1/2014	Senate	Amended (Senate Journal-page 62)

5/12/2014	Senate	Read second time (Senate Journal-page 62)
5/1/2014	Senate	Roll call Ayes-42 Nays-0 (Senate Journal-page 62)
5/2/2014		Scrivener's error corrected
5/6/2014	Senate	Amended (Senate Journal-page 50)
5/6/2014	Senate	Read third time and returned to House with amendments (Senate Journal-page 50)
5/13/2014	House	Debate adjourned until Thur., 5-15-14 (House Journal-page 11)
5/15/2014	House	Debate adjourned until Tues., 5-20-14 (House Journal-page 33)
5/20/2014	House	Concurred in Senate amendment and enrolled (House Journal-page 70)
5/20/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-80 Nays-26 (House Journal-page 70)
5/29/2014		Ratified R 252
5/30/2014		Signed By Governor
6/6/2014		Effective date See Act for Effective Date
6/10/2014		Act No. 200

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

4/9/2013
4/24/2013
4/25/2013
4/9/2014
4/10/2014
4/30/2014
5/1/2014
5/1/2014-A
5/2/2014
5/6/2014
5/7/2014

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(A200, R252, H3893)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59-1-490 SO AS TO CREATE THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION USE AND GOVERNANCE POLICY; BY ADDING SECTION 59-18-355 SO AS TO PROVIDE STATE CONTENT STANDARDS MAY NOT BE REVISED, ADOPTED, OR IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT APPROVAL BY THE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONS AND REQUIRE NOTIFICATION BE GIVEN TO THE GOVERNOR; TO AMEND SECTION 59-18-325, RELATING TO ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, SO AS TO REQUIRE PROCUREMENT OF A SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT, TO REQUIRE THE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF CERTAIN GRADE LEVELS, TO SPECIFY CONTENT AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS, TO REQUIRE PROCUREMENT OF A COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ASSESSMENT, TO REQUIRE THE ASSESSMENT OF CERTAIN STUDENTS, TO PROVIDE FOR A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PANEL AND FOR ITS COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-18-350, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO CYCLICAL REVIEW BY ACADEMIC AREAS OF STATE STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE AND MANDATE A SPECIFIC REVIEW; AND TO PROVIDE THAT ON THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT, SOUTH CAROLINA WILL NO LONGER BE A GOVERNING OR ADVISORY STATE IN THE SMARTER BALANCE CONSORTIUM AND MAY NOT ADOPT OR ADMINISTER THE SMARTER BALANCE ASSESSMENT.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

Data Use and Governance Policy

SECTION 1. Article 5, Chapter 1, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-1-490. (A) The provisions of this section must be known and may be cited as the 'South Carolina Department of Education Data Use and Governance Policy'.

(B) The policy of the State Department of Education with respect to use and governance of student data is to ensure that all data collected, managed, stored, transmitted, used, reported, and destroyed by the department is done so in a way to preserve and protect individual and collective privacy rights and ensure confidentiality and security of collected data. In developing this policy, the State strives to:

(1) maintain compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g, at a minimum; and

(2) be mindful that the appropriate use of data is essential to accelerating student learning, program and financial effectiveness and efficiency, and policy development.

(C) The State Department of Education shall not collect individual student data directly from students or families, except as required to meet its obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Each student is assigned a unique student identifier upon enrollment into the student management system to ensure compliance with the privacy rights of the student and his parents or guardians. No personally identifiable individual student data may be shared in federally required reporting.

(D) All data elements collected and transferred from the South Carolina State Department of Education to the United States Department of Education must be based on the reporting requirements contained in EDFacts as provided by the United States Department of Education, or other federal laws and regulations, and only may include aggregated data with no personally identifiable data.

(E) Data collected by the State Department of Education must be maintained within a secure infrastructure environment. Access to this data must be limited to preidentified staff who are granted clearance related to their job responsibilities of federal reporting, state financial management, program assessment, and policy development. Training in data security and student privacy laws must be provided to these specific individuals on a regular basis in order to maintain their data use clearance along with a signed Data Use Policy assurance of confidentiality and privacy.

(F) The State Department of Education shall maintain a managed external data request procedure managed through a Data Governance

Committee. Each external data request is measured against a predetermined set of qualifiers that includes, but must not be limited to, applicability to the goals of the State Board of Education, data availability, report format ability, cost of report development, and adherence to FERPA requirements.

(G) Each school district in this State shall adopt, maintain, and comply with a locally adopted student records governance and use policy. These policies and their implementation shall be monitored by the State Department of Education in a manner prescribed by the department through policy."

Content standards revisions, approval by Education Oversight Committee and General Assembly required

SECTION 2. Article 3, Chapter 18, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-18-355. (A)(1) A revision to a state content standard recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), as well as a new standard or a change in a current standard that the State Board of Education otherwise considers for approval as an accountability measure, may not be adopted and implemented without the:

(a) advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee; and

(b) approval by a Joint Resolution of the General Assembly.

(2) General Assembly approval required by item (1)(b) does not apply to a revision recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), other approval of a new standard, and other changes to an old standard if the revision, new standard, or changed standard is developed by the State Department of Education.

(B) A revision to an assessment recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), as well as a new assessment or a change in a current assessment that the State Board of Education otherwise considers for approval as an accountability measure, may not be adopted and implemented without the advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee.

(C) Upon initiating a change to an existing standard, including a cyclical review, the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education shall provide notice of their plans and intent to the General Assembly and the Governor.

(D) Nothing in this section may be interpreted to prevent the Department of Education, Board of Education, and Education Oversight Committee from considering best practices in education

standards and assessments while developing its own standards and assessments."

Readiness assessments, conforming changes

SECTION 3. Section 59-18-325 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 155 of 2014, is amended by adding an appropriately lettered subsection at the end to read:

"(C)(1) To maintain a comprehensive and cohesive assessment system that signals a student's preparedness for the next educational level and ultimately culminates in a clear indication of a student's preparedness for postsecondary success in a college or career and to satisfy federal and state accountability purposes, the Executive Director of the State Budget and Control Board, with the advice and consent of the special assessment panel, shall direct the procurement of a summative assessment system for the 2014-2015 school year, and subsequent years as provided in item (3). The procurement must be completed before September 30, 2014. The summative assessment must be administered to all students in grades three through eight, and if funds are available, administered to students in grades nine and ten. The summative assessment must assess students in English/language arts and mathematics, including those students as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. For purposes of this subsection, 'English/language arts' includes English, reading, and writing skills as required by existing state standards. The assessment must be a rigorous, achievement assessment that measures student mastery of the state standards, that provides timely reporting of results to educators, parents, and students, and that measures each student's progress toward college and career readiness. Therefore, the assessment or assessments must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

(a) compares performance of students in South Carolina to other students' performance on comparable standards in other states with the ability to link the scales of the South Carolina assessment to the scales from other assessments measuring those comparable standards;

(b) be a vertically scaled, benchmarked, standards-based system of summative assessments;

(c) measures a student's preparedness for the next level of their educational matriculation and individual student performance against the state standards in English/language arts, reading, writing, and mathematics and student growth;

(d) documents student progress toward national college and career readiness benchmarks derived from empirical research and state standards;

(e) establishes at least four student achievement levels;

(f) includes various test questions including, but not limited to, multiple choice, constructed response, and selected response, that require students to demonstrate their understanding of the content;

(g) be administered to students in a paper-based format in 2014-2015, in either a paper-based form or computer-based format in 2015-2016, and to all students in a computer-based format by school year 2016-2017; and

(h) assists school districts and schools in aligning assessment, curriculum, and instruction.

(2) Additionally, the Executive Director of the State Budget and Control Board, with the advice and consent of the special assessment panel, also must direct the procurement of a college and career readiness assessment that meets the requirements of subsection (A). The procurement must be completed before September 30, 2014. In addition to WorkKeys, the assessment must be administered to all students entering the eleventh grade for the first time in the 2014-2015 school year.

(3) In school years 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017, the department must administer the assessments procured by the State Budget and Control Board in English/language arts and mathematics in grades three through eight, and if funds are available, in grades nine and ten. The department also must administer the state-developed and adopted assessments in science and social studies to all students in grades four through eight, and the college readiness assessment and WorkKeys assessment to all students in grade eleven. If the Education Oversight Committee approves of the assessments pursuant to Section 59-18-320 after the 2016-2017 assessment, the assessments also may be administered in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. Formative assessments must continue to be adopted, selected, and administered pursuant to Section 59-18-310.

(4)(a) The special assessment panel must be composed of the following individuals or their designee:

(i) the Chairman of the State Board of Education;

(ii) the Chairman of the Education Oversight Committee;

(iii) the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce;

(iv) the Chairman of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education;

(v) the Chairman of the South Carolina Technical College System Board; and

(vi) the State Superintendent of Education.

(b) A panel member who is authorized to designate a person to serve on the board in his stead only may make the designation if he intends for the designee to serve continuously instead of intermittently with himself or another designee.

(c) The assessment panel must receive input from educators, parents, higher education officials, and business and community leaders on the components of a comprehensive and cohesive assessment system. The assessment panel must convene within two weeks of the effective date of this act, at the request of the Executive Director of the State Budget and Control Board. The panel must complete its duties in a timely manner which enables the Executive Director of the State Budget and Control Board to procure the assessments by September 30, 2014. Upon the procurement of a summative assessment system, the special assessment panel is dissolved.

(5)(a) The cost of procuring the assessments pursuant to items (1) and (2), and any costs associated with the performance of the special assessment panel's duties must be borne by the Department of Education.

(b) Staff support to the Executive Director of the State Budget and Control Board and the special assessment panel must be provided by the Department of Education, Division of Accountability, Office of Assessment. In addition, if requested by the Executive Director of the State Budget and Control Board or the special assessment panel, the Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, and the Commission on Higher Education, must provide assistance to implement the provisions of this subsection.

(6) Within thirty days after providing student performance data to the school districts as required by law, the department must provide to the Education Oversight Committee student performance results on assessments authorized in this subsection and end-of-course assessments in a format agreed upon by the department and the Oversight Committee. The Education Oversight Committee must use the results of these assessments in school years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 to report on student academic performance in each school and district pursuant to Section 59-18-900. The committee may not determine state ratings for schools or districts, pursuant to Section 59-18-900, using the results of the assessments required by this subsection until after the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year; provided, however, state ratings must be determined by the results of

these assessments beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. The Oversight Committee also must develop and recommend a single accountability system that meets federal and state accountability requirements by the Fall of 2016.

(7) The Department of Education must submit a plan for approval and implementation to the Board of Education to mitigate the impact that changes in assessments are projected to have on teacher evaluation systems. If such an impact can be reasonably mitigated by delaying evaluations, the department shall seek a waiver if necessary for federal approval.

(8) When standards are subsequently revised, the Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Education Oversight Committee shall approve assessments pursuant to Section 59-18-320."

Cyclical review of standards and assessments

SECTION 4. Section 59-18-350 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 282 of 2008, is further amended to read:

"Section 59-18-350. (A) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Education Oversight Committee, shall provide for a cyclical review by academic area of the state standards and assessments to ensure that the standards and assessments are maintaining high expectations for learning and teaching. At a minimum, each academic area should be reviewed and updated every seven years. After each academic area is reviewed, a report on the recommended revisions must be presented to the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education for consideration. The previous content standards shall remain in effect until the recommended revisions are adopted pursuant to Section 59-18-355. As a part of the review, a task force of parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators, to include special education teachers, shall examine the standards and assessment system to determine rigor and relevancy.

(B) For the purpose of developing new college and career readiness English/language arts and mathematics state content standards, a cyclical review must be performed pursuant to subsection (A) for English/language arts and mathematics state content standards not developed by the South Carolina Department of Education. The review must begin on or before January 1, 2015, and the new college and career readiness state content standards must be implemented for the 2015-2016 school year.

(C) The State Department of Education annually shall convene a team of curriculum experts to analyze the results of the assessments, including performance item by item. This analysis must yield a plan for disseminating additional information about the assessment results and instruction and the information must be disseminated to districts not later than January fifteenth of the subsequent year."

Smarter Balance, withdrawal from consortium, prohibition of assessment

SECTION 5. On the effective date of this act, South Carolina will no longer be a governing or advisory state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Furthermore, South Carolina may not adopt or administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Ratified the 29th day of May, 2014.

Approved the 30th day of May, 2014.

South Carolina General Assembly
120th Session, 2013-2014

A155, R170, H3919

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill
Sponsors: Reps. Owens, Bowen, Patrick, Taylor, Anderson, Allison, Brannon, Loftis, Ballentine, Rivers, Huggins, Knight, Simrill, King, Willis, Whitmire, McCoy, Anthony, Crosby, Neal, Clyburn, Barfield, Bedingfield, R.L. Brown, Cobb-Hunter, George, Hayes, Hiott, Hixon, Hosey, Lucas, Pope, Putnam, G.R. Smith, Wells, Wood, Whipper, Mitchell, Robinson-Simpson and Dillard
Document Path: l:\council\bills\agm\19954ab13.docx
Companion/Similar bill(s): 1145

Introduced in the House on April 10, 2013
Introduced in the Senate on May 1, 2013
Last Amended on April 1, 2014
Passed by the General Assembly on April 9, 2014
Governor's Action: April 14, 2014, Signed

Summary: Exit exam requirement to graduate high school

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
4/10/2013	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 5)
4/10/2013	House	Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 5)
4/17/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Whipper
4/24/2013	House	Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 127)
4/30/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Mitchell, Robinson-Simpson, Dillard
4/30/2013	House	Amended (House Journal-page 94)
4/30/2013	House	Read second time (House Journal-page 94)
4/30/2013	House	Roll call Yeas-100 Nays-10 (House Journal-page 96)
5/1/2013	House	Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal-page 8)
5/1/2013	Senate	Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal-page 5)
5/1/2013	Senate	Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal-page 5)
5/1/2013		Scrivener's error corrected
3/18/2014	Senate	Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education** (Senate Journal-page 7)
3/26/2014	Senate	Committee Amendment Amended and Adopted (Senate Journal-page 58)
3/27/2014		Scrivener's error corrected
3/27/2014	Senate	Read second time (Senate Journal-page 23)
3/27/2014	Senate	Roll call Ayes-45 Nays-0 (Senate Journal-page 23)
4/1/2014	Senate	Amended (Senate Journal-page 16)
4/2/2014		Scrivener's error corrected
4/2/2014	Senate	Read third time and returned to House with amendments (Senate Journal-page 15)
4/9/2014	House	Concurred in Senate amendment and enrolled (House Journal-page 55)
4/9/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-102 Nays-0 (House Journal-page 56)
4/10/2014		Ratified R 170
4/14/2014		Signed By Governor
4/21/2014		Effective date See Act for Effective Date
4/23/2014		Act No. 155

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

4/10/2013
4/24/2013
4/30/2013
5/1/2013
3/18/2014
3/26/2014
3/27/2014
4/1/2014
4/2/2014

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(A155, R170, H3919)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59-18-325 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT ALL STUDENTS ENTERING THE ELEVENTH GRADE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS MUST BE ADMINISTERED A COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ASSESSMENT AND A WORKKEYS ASSESSMENT, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ACCEPTABLE USES OF THESE ASSESSMENT RESULTS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-18-310, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE EXIT EXAM REQUIRED FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, SO AS TO ELIMINATE THIS REQUIREMENT FOR STUDENTS BEGINNING WITH THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2015, TO PROVIDE PROCEDURES THAT FORMER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO DID NOT GRADUATE OR RECEIVE A DIPLOMA SOLELY FOR FAILING THIS EXIT EXAM MAY PETITION BY JANUARY 31, 2015 TO OBTAIN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ADVERTISE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PETITION PROCESS TO THE PUBLIC IN A CERTAIN MANNER, TO PROVIDE RELATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE DEPARTMENT, AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO REMOVE ANY CONFLICTING REQUIREMENTS AND PROMULGATE REGULATIONS WITH CONFORMING CHANGES; TO AMEND SECTION 59-18-950, RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL AND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT CARDS, SECTION 59-48-35, RELATING TO THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS, AND SECTION 59-139-60, RELATING TO ASSESSMENTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE, ALL SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

High school exit exam eliminated

SECTION 1. Section 59-18-310(B) of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 282 of 2008, is further amended to read:

"(B)(1) The statewide assessment program must include the subjects of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in grades three through eight, as delineated in Section 59-18-320(B), to be first administered in 2009, and end-of-course tests for gateway courses awarded units of credit in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Student performance targets must be established following the 2009 administration. The assessment program must be used for school and school district accountability purposes beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. The publication of the annual school and school district report card may be delayed for the 2008-2009 school year until no later than February 15, 2010. A student's score on an end-of-year assessment may not be the sole criterion for placing the student on academic probation, retaining the student in his current grade, or requiring the student to attend summer school. Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students are required to pass a high school credit course in science and a course in United States history in which end-of-course examinations are administered to receive the state high school diploma. Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students are no longer required to meet the exit examination requirements set forth in this section and State Regulation to earn a South Carolina high school diploma.

(2) A person who is no longer enrolled in a public school and who previously failed to receive a high school diploma or was denied graduation solely for failing to meet the exit exam requirements pursuant to this section and State Regulation may petition the local school board to determine the student's eligibility to receive a high school diploma pursuant to this chapter. The local school board will transmit diploma requests to the South Carolina Department of Education in accordance with department procedures. Petitions under this section must be submitted to the local school district by December 31, 2015. Students receiving diplomas in accordance with this section shall not be counted as graduates in the graduation rate calculations for affected schools and districts, either retroactively or in current or future calculations. On or before January 31, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education shall report to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly the number of diplomas granted, by school

district, under the provision. The State Board of Education shall remove any conflicting requirement and promulgate conforming changes in its applicable regulations. The department shall advertise the provisions of this item in at least one daily newspaper of general circulation in the area of each school district within forty-five days after this enactment. At a minimum, this notice must consist of two columns measuring at least ten inches in length and measuring at least four and one-half inches in combined width, and include:

(a) a headline printed in at least a twenty-four point font that is boldfaced;

(b) an explanation of who qualifies for the petitioning option;

(c) an explanation of the petition process;

(d) a contact name and phone number; and

(e) the deadline for submitting a petition."

Governor's School for Science and Math, conforming change

SECTION 2. Section 59-48-35 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-48-35. The students enrolled in the Special School of Science and Mathematics who earn a total of twenty units of credit distributed as specified in the Defined Minimum Program for South Carolina school districts and who meet the school's requirements for graduation are eligible to receive a state high school diploma. The board of the special school, in its discretion, may issue its own high school diploma."

Early childhood academic assistance assessment, conforming change

SECTION 3. Section 59-139-60 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-139-60. The State Board of Education, through the State Department of Education and in consultation with the Education Oversight Committee, shall establish an assessment system to evaluate the degree to which the purposes of this chapter are met. To that end, the State Board of Education, through the Department of Education shall:

(1) develop or adapt a developmentally appropriate assessment program to be administered to all public school students by the end of grade three that is designed to measure a student's strengths and weaknesses in skills required to perform academic work considered to be at the fourth grade level. Information on each student's progress and

on areas in need of improvement must be provided to the student's parent and fourth grade teacher. Aggregated information on student progress must be given to the students' kindergarten through third grade schools so that deficiencies in the schools' academic programs can be addressed;

(2) review the performance of students on the eighth grade basic skills assessment test pursuant to Section 59-30-10, or its equivalent, for progress in meeting the skill levels required by these examinations. Student data must be aggregated by the schools the students attended so that programs' deficiencies can be addressed;

(3) review the data on students overage for grade in each school at grades four and nine;

(4) monitor the performance of schools and districts so that continuing weaknesses in the programs preparing students for the fourth grade and ninth grade shall receive special assistance from the Department of Education; and

(5) propose other methods or measures for assessing how well the purposes of this chapter are met."

College and career readiness assessment created

SECTION 4. Article 3, Chapter 18, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-18-325. (A) All students entering the eleventh grade for the first time in school year 2014-2015 and subsequent years must be administered a college and career readiness assessment as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and that is from a provider secured by the department. In addition, all students entering the eleventh grade for the first time in school year 2014-2015 and subsequent years must be administered a WorkKeys assessment. The results of the assessments must be provided to each student, their respective schools, and to the State to:

(1) assist students, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors in developing individual graduation plans and in selecting courses aligned with each student's future ambitions;

(2) promote South Carolina's Work Ready Communities initiative; and

(3) meet federal and state accountability requirements.

(B) Students subsequently may use the results of these assessments to apply to college or to enter careers. The results must be added as part of each student's permanent record and maintained at the department

for at least ten years. The purpose of the results is to provide instructional information to assist students, parents, and teachers to plan for each student's course selection. This course selection might include remediation courses, dual-enrollment courses, advanced placement courses, internships, or other options during the remaining semesters in high school."

School and school district report cards, conforming change

SECTION 5. Section 59-18-950 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-18-950. Notwithstanding another provision of law to the contrary, the Education Oversight Committee may base ratings for school districts and high schools on criteria that include graduation rates and other criteria identified by technical experts and appropriate groups of educators and workforce advocates."

Time effective

SECTION 6. This act takes effect upon approval of the Governor except as otherwise provided.

Ratified the 10th day of April, 2014.

Approved the 14th day of April, 2014.

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South Carolina General Assembly
120th Session, 2013-2014

A287, R295, H3428

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill
Sponsors: Reps. Allison, Erickson, M.S. McLeod, J.E. Smith, Spires, Hiott, Owens, Whitmire, Douglas, Hamilton, Bannister, Neal, Alexander, Weeks, Powers Norrell, Bales, Anderson, Robinson-Simpson, Williams, Henderson, Sottile, Munnerlyn, Rutherford, Vick, R.L. Brown, Whipper, Branham, Govan, J.R. Smith, Hayes, George, Funderburk, W.J. McLeod, Bernstein, Felder, Wood, Patrick and Jefferson
Document Path: l:\council\bills\agm\19837ab13.docx

Introduced in the House on January 24, 2013
Introduced in the Senate on March 5, 2014
Last Amended on June 4, 2014
Passed by the General Assembly on June 5, 2014
Governor's Action: June 11, 2014, Vetoed
Legislative veto action(s): Veto overridden

Summary: First Steps to School Readiness Initiative

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
1/24/2013	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 30)
1/24/2013	House	Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 30)
1/29/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Douglas, Hamilton, Bannister, Neal, Alexander, Weeks, Powers Norrell, Bales, Anderson, Robinson-Simpson, Williams
1/30/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Henderson, Sottile, Munnerlyn, Rutherford, Vick, R.L.Brown, Whipper, Branham, Govan, J.R.Smith, Hayes, George
2/6/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Funderburk
2/7/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: W.J.McLeod
2/20/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Bernstein
2/27/2013	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Felder
2/20/2014	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Wood
2/26/2014	House	Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works** (House Journal-page 51)
3/4/2014	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Patrick, Jefferson
3/4/2014	House	Amended (House Journal-page 42)
3/4/2014	House	Read second time (House Journal-page 42)
3/4/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-113 Nays-0 (House Journal-page 69)
3/5/2014	House	Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal-page 13)
3/5/2014	Senate	Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal-page 5)
3/5/2014	Senate	Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal-page 5)
5/6/2014	Senate	Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education** (Senate Journal-page 8)
6/4/2014	Senate	Committee Amendment Amended and Adopted (Senate Journal-page 35)
6/4/2014	Senate	Read second time (Senate Journal-page 35)
6/4/2014	Senate	Roll call Ayes-40 Nays-3 (Senate Journal-page 35)
6/4/2014	Senate	Unanimous consent for third reading on next legislative day (Senate

		Journal-page 35)
6/5/2014	Senate	Read third time and returned to House with amendments (Senate Journal-page 20)
6/5/2014	House	Concurred in Senate amendment and enrolled (House Journal-page 27)
6/5/2014	House	Roll call Yeas-105 Nays-0 (House Journal-page 29)
6/5/2014		Ratified R 295
6/11/2014		Vetoed by Governor
6/17/2014	House	Veto overridden by originating body Yeas-106 Nays-0
6/18/2014	Senate	Veto overridden Ayes-38 Nays-2
7/2/2014		Effective date 06/18/14
7/9/2014		Act No. 287

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

1/24/2013
2/26/2014
3/4/2014
5/6/2014
6/4/2014

NOTE: THIS COPY IS A TEMPORARY VERSION. THIS DOCUMENT WILL REMAIN IN THIS VERSION UNTIL PUBLISHED IN THE ADVANCE SHEETS TO THE ACTS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS. WHEN THIS DOCUMENT IS PUBLISHED IN THE ADVANCE SHEET, THIS NOTE WILL BE REMOVED.

(A287, R295, H3428)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59-152-25 SO AS TO DEFINE TERMS CONCERNING THE FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE; BY ADDING SECTION 59-152-32 SO AS TO PROVIDE THE FIRST STEPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES SHALL DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-RANGE INITIATIVE FOR SCHOOL READINESS AND A STRATEGY FOR FULFILLING THIS INITIATIVE; BY ADDING SECTION 59-152-33 SO AS TO PROVIDE A STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SCHOOL READINESS; BY ADDING SECTION 63-11-1725 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION, FUNCTION, AND DUTIES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL; BY ADDING SECTION 63-11-1735 SO AS TO PROVIDE FIRST STEPS SHALL ENSURE THE COMPLIANCE OF BABYNET WITH FEDERAL MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT REQUIREMENTS, AND TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-10, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRST STEPS, SO AS TO REDESIGNATE COUNTY FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIPS AS LOCAL FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIPS AND PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF CERTAIN COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-20, RELATING TO THE PURPOSE OF FIRST STEPS, SO AS TO REDESIGNATE COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS AS LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-30, RELATING TO THE GOALS OF FIRST STEPS, SO AS TO RESTATE CERTAIN GOALS OF STUDENT READINESS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-40, RELATING TO OVERSIGHT OF THE INITIATIVE BY THE FIRST STEPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE BOARD ALSO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE INITIATIVE; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-50, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS,

SO AS TO REVISE THE TIME AND MANNER FOR REQUIRED PERFORMANCE AUDITS, REVISE ONGOING DATA COLLECTION PROVISIONS, AND TO CORRECT AN OBSOLETE REFERENCE; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-60, RELATING TO FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIPS, SO AS TO PROVIDE EACH COUNTY MUST BE REPRESENTED AND SERVED BY A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD, TO PROVIDE THAT MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARDS ARE SUBJECT TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AND TO IMPOSE CERTAIN DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS, TO SPECIFY AND REVISE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION OF A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD, TO PROVIDE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SHALL CONDUCT A FORMAL REVIEW OF THE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES OF FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIP BOARD COMPOSITION, MAKE RELATED FINDINGS CONCERNING THE CONTINUED APPLICABILITY AND APPROPRIATENESS OF THESE CATEGORIES, TO REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES, TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-70, RELATING TO THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD, SO AS TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF EACH LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD, TO REVISE THE REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING COUNTY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS, RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING, TO PROVIDE STAFFING PURSUANT TO LOCAL BYLAWS, AND TO PROVIDE MULTIPLE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS MAY COLLABORATE TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND THE EXECUTION OF THEIR DUTIES AND POWERS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-90, RELATING TO FIRST STEPS GRANTS, SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE GRANTS AS LOCAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS, AND TO REVISE THE PROCESS FOR OBTAINING A GRANT AND THE METHOD OF ALLOCATING GRANT FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-100, RELATING TO USE OF FIRST STEPS GRANT FUNDS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE SECTION APPLIES TO GRANTS EXPENDED BY A FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIP, AND TO REVISE THE PERMISSIBLE USES OF GRANT FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-120, RELATING TO THE USE OF GRANT FUNDS FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, SO AS TO REVISE THE PURPOSE FOR

WHICH FUNDS MAY BE USED AND TO REQUIRE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-130, RELATING TO A MANDATORY MATCHING OF FUNDS BY LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, SO AS TO REVISE THE MANDATORY AMOUNT, TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO HELP LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS MEET THEIR MANDATORY MATCHING REQUIREMENT, AND TO DELETE A PROVISION ALLOWING CERTAIN EXPENSES TO BE INCLUDED IN DETERMINING MATCHING FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-140, RELATING TO THE PERMISSIBILITY OF CARRY FORWARD FUNDS BY A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-150, RELATING TO ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF ALL PRIVATE AND NONSTATE FUNDS SOUGHT BY LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-160, RELATING TO PROGRESS EVALUATIONS, SO AS TO REVISE RELATED REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF EACH PREVALENT PROGRAM INVESTMENT IN A CERTAIN MANNER AND TO IMPOSE RELATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; TO AMEND SECTION 63-11-1720, RELATING TO THE FIRST STEPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SO AS TO REVISE THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD, TO CREATE THE OFFICE OF FIRST STEPS STUDY COMMITTEE AND PROVIDE FOR ITS FUNCTIONS AND COMPOSITION, AND TO REAUTHORIZE THE PROVISIONS OF ACT 99 OF 1999 UNTIL JULY 1, 2016; TO AMEND SECTION 63-11-1730, RELATING TO POWERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES, DELETE OBSOLETE LANGUAGE, AND ADD MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS; TO AMEND SECTION 1-5-40, RELATING TO DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO MONITOR STATE BOARD AND COMMISSIONS, SO AS TO INCLUDE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES; AND TO REPEAL SECTION 59-152-80 RELATING TO FIRST STEPS GRANTS AND SECTION 59-152-110 RELATING TO THE USE OF FIRST STEPS LOCAL PARTNERSHIP GRANT FUNDS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

Definitions

SECTION 1. Chapter 152, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-152-25. For the purposes of this title:

(A) 'Evidence-based program' means a program based on a clear and consistent program model that is designated as such by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees because the program:

(1)(a) is grounded in published, peer-reviewed research that is linked to determined outcomes;

(b) employs well-trained and competent staff to whom the program provides continual professional development that is relevant to the specific model being delivered;

(c) demonstrates strong linkages to other community-based services; and

(d) is operated to ensure program fidelity; or

(2) is commonly recognized by experts in the field as such a program.

(B) 'Board of trustees' or 'board' means the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees pursuant to Article 17, Title 63.

(C) 'Evidence-informed program' means a program that does not satisfy the criteria of an evidenced-based program model but that the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees determines is supported by research indicating its potential effectiveness.

(D) 'Partnership' refers to a local First Steps organization designated as such by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a nonprofit corporation, and formed to further, within the coverage area, the purpose and goals of the First Steps initiative as stated in Sections 59-152-20 and 59-152-30.

(E) 'Preschool child' means a child from the prenatal stage to entry into five-year-old kindergarten.

(F) 'Prevalent program investment' means a program administered by a partnership and funded with state grant money, which accounts for at least ten percent of total programmatic spending in First Steps.

(G) 'School readiness' means the level of child development necessary to ensure early school success as measured in the following domains: physical health and motor skills; emotional and social competence; language and literacy development; and mathematical thinking and cognitive skills. School readiness is supported by the

knowledge and practices of families, caregivers, healthcare providers, educators, and communities."

Comprehensive long-range initiative

SECTION 2. Chapter 152, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-152-32. (A) In Section 63-11-1720, the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees may carry out its assigned functions by developing a comprehensive long-range initiative for improving early childhood development, increasing school readiness and literacy, establishing results-oriented measures and objectives, and assessing whether services provided by First Steps Partnerships to children and families are meeting the goals and achieving the results established in this chapter. The board shall do the following to fulfill these duties before July 1, 2015:

(1) in consultation with the State Board of Education, and with the advice and consent of that board, adopt a description of school readiness that includes specific:

(a) characteristics and development levels of a ready child that must include, but are not limited to, emerging literacy, numeracy, and physical, social, and emotional competencies;

(b) characteristics of school, educators, and caregivers that the board considers necessary to create an optimal learning environment for the early years of students' lives; and

(c) characteristics of the optimal environment which would lead to the readiness of students and their continued success;

(2) establish specific benchmarks and objectives for use by the board of trustees, local partnership boards, and any agency that administers a program to benefit preschool children;

(3) determine whether state and local programs and activities are effective and contribute to achieving the goals established in Section 59-152-30; and

(4) publish and distribute a list of approved evidence-based and evidence-informed programs.

(B) The board of trustees shall review the school readiness description, benchmarks, and objectives and adopt any revisions it considers appropriate before December 31, 2014, again before December 31, 2019, and every five years afterward."

School readiness assessment

SECTION 3. Chapter 152, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-152-33. (A) Before July 1, 2015, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee shall recommend an assessment to evaluate and measure the school readiness of students prior to their entrance into a prekindergarten or kindergarten program per the goals pursuant to Section 59-152-30 to the State Board of Education. Prior to submitting the recommendation to the State Board, the Education Oversight Committee shall seek input from the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees and other early childhood advocates. In making the recommendation, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee shall consider assessments that are research-based, reliable, and appropriate for measuring readiness. The assessment chosen must evaluate each child's early language and literacy development, numeracy skills, physical well-being, social and emotional development, and approaches to learning. The assessment of academic readiness must be aligned with first and second grade standards for English language arts and mathematics. The purpose of the assessment is to provide teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians with information to address the readiness needs of each student, especially by identifying language, cognitive, social, emotional, and health needs, and providing appropriate instruction and support for each child. The results of the screenings and the developmental intervention strategies recommended to address the child's identified needs must be provided, in writing, to the parent or guardian. Reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language and emergent literacy skills are assessed to be below the national standards must be aligned with the district's reading proficiency plan for addressing the readiness needs of each student. The school readiness assessment adopted by the State Board of Education may not be used to deny a student admission or progress to kindergarten or first grade. Every student entering the public schools for the first time in prekindergarten and kindergarten must be administered a readiness screening by the forty-fifth day of the school year.

(B) The results of individual students in a school readiness assessment may not be publicly reported.

(C) Following adoption of a school readiness assessment, the State Board of Education shall adopt a system for reporting population-level results that provides baseline data for measuring overall change and improvement in the skills and knowledge of students over time. The Department of Education shall house and monitor the system.

(D) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall support the implementation of the school readiness assessment and must provide professional development to support the readiness assessment for teachers and parents of programs supported with First Steps funds. The board shall utilize the annual aggregate literacy and other readiness assessment information in establishing standards and practices to support all early childhood providers served by First Steps."

Advisory council

SECTION 4. Article 17, Chapter 11, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 63-11-1725. (A) For the purposes of this article, 'advisory council' means the South Carolina Advisory Council established by Executive Order Number 2010-06 in compliance with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b, et seq.

(B) The membership of the advisory council is exclusively composed of the membership of the Board of Trustees of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative. Each voting and nonvoting member shall serve as a voting member of the South Carolina Advisory Council, concurrent with his service on the board.

(C) The advisory council is an entity distinct from the Board of Trustees and must act accordingly to fulfill its responsibilities under 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b(b)(1)(D)(i) of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The advisory council shall keep separate minutes that explicitly distinguish its actions and votes from those made when acting in the capacity of the board of trustees. The advisory council must officially adjourn before acting as the board of trustees, and the board of trustees shall adjourn before acting as the advisory council.

(D) The State Director of First Steps shall coordinate the activities of the advisory council. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b(b)(1)(D)(i), the advisory council shall:

(1) conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to the age of school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low income children in the State;

(2) identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child

development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering these programs;

(3) develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;

(4) develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;

(5) develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;

(6) assess the capacity and effectiveness of two-year and four-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State for supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which these institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program;

(7) make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate;

(8) develop and publish, using available demographic data, an indicators-based measure of school readiness at the state and community level;

(9) incorporate, within the periodic statewide needs assessments required in 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b, any data related to the capacity and efforts of private sector providers, Head Start providers, and local school districts to serve children from birth to age five, including fiscal, enrollment, and capacity data; and

(10) perform all other functions, as permitted under federal and state law, to improve coordination and delivery of early childhood education and development to children in this State.

(E) The advisory council shall designate a meeting as its annual meeting. All of the chief executive officers of the state agencies represented on the Early Childhood Advisory Council must attend the annual meeting in person.

(F) The advisory council shall prepare an annual report of its activities for presentation to the Governor and General Assembly."

BabyNet, definitions, compliance with federal law

SECTION 5. Article 17, Chapter 11, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 63-11-1735. (A) For the purposes of this article:

(1) 'BabyNet' is the interagency early intervention system that is the Part C program in South Carolina.

(2) 'I.D.E.A.' means the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400, et seq.

(3) 'Maintenance of effort' means the requirement of Part C that relevant state and local agencies maintain a specified level of financial support for early intervention services in compliance with 34 C.F.R. 303.124.

(4) 'Part C program' means a program of early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities required in each state by I.D.E.A. and for which South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is designated as the lead agency to administer the Part C program in South Carolina by Executive Order Number 2009-12 in compliance with Subchapter VIII, Chapter 33, Title 20, U.S. Code Annotated relating to Head Start programs, and as provided in Section 44-7-2520(A), which relates to definitions concerning the South Carolina Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Act.

(B) First Steps shall ensure that BabyNet complies with the maintenance of effort requirement by coordinating with all agencies that provide early intervention services in this State to ensure they each properly document all Part C expenditures annually."

Establishment provision, conforming changes

SECTION 6. Section 59-152-10 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-10. There is established the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing, through local partnerships, public and private funds, and support for high-quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families' efforts toward enabling their children to reach school ready to succeed."

Purposes revised

SECTION 7. Section 59-152-20 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-20. The purpose of the First Steps initiative is to develop, promote, and assist efforts of agencies, private providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient use of all available resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts to serve the needs of young children and their families. First Steps funds must not be used to supplant or replace any other funds being spent on services but must be used to expand, extend, improve, or increase access to services or to enable a community to begin to offer new or previously unavailable services in their community. The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, Office of First Steps to School Readiness, and the local First Steps Partnerships shall ensure that collaborations, the existence and continued development of partnerships, and the sharing and maximizing of resources occur so that the funding of grants and services, as provided in this chapter, may continue."

Goals, conforming changes

SECTION 8. Section 59-152-30 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-30. The goals for South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness are to:

(1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;

(2) increase comprehensive services so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;

(3) promote high-quality preschool programs that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;

(4) provide services so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and

(5) mobilize communities to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed."

Board of trustees' obligations, accountability for initiative added

SECTION 9. Section 59-152-40 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-40. The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees established in Section 63-11-1720 shall

oversee and be accountable for the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness initiative."

First Steps office, supervision, program evaluations, risk factors, data collection

SECTION 10. Section 59-152-50 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-50. Under supervision of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, there is created an Office of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness. The office shall:

(1) provide to the board information on best practice, successful strategies, model programs, and financing mechanisms;

(2) review the local partnerships' plans and budgets in order to provide technical assistance and recommendations regarding local grant proposals and improvement in meeting statewide and local goals;

(3) provide technical assistance, consultation, and support to local partnerships to facilitate their success including, but not limited to, model programs, strategic planning, leadership development, best practice, successful strategies, collaboration, financing, and evaluation;

(4) evaluate each program funded by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees on a regular cycle to determine its effectiveness and whether it should continue to receive funding;

(5) recommend to the board the applicants meeting the criteria for First Steps partnerships and the grants to be awarded;

(6) submit an annual report to the board by December first which includes, but is not limited to, the statewide needs and resources available to meet the goals and purposes of the First Steps to School Readiness initiative, a list of risk factors the office considers to affect school readiness, identification of areas where client-level data is not available, an explanation of how First Steps programs reach the most at-risk children, the ongoing progress and results of the First Steps to School Readiness initiative statewide and locally, fiscal information on the expenditure of funds, and recommendations and legislative proposals to further implement the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness initiative statewide;

(7) provide for ongoing data collection. Before June 30, 2015, the board shall develop a response to the November 2014 external evaluation of each prevalent program and the overall goals of the initiative, as provided in Section 59-125-160. The office shall contract with an external evaluator to develop a schedule for an in-depth and independent performance audit designed to measure the success of each

prevalent program in regard to its success in supporting the goals of the State Board and those set forth in Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-152-30. Results of all external performance audits must be published in the First Steps annual report; and

(8) coordinate the First Steps to School Readiness initiative with all other state, federal, and local public and private efforts to promote good health and school readiness of young children and support for their families."

Local partnership boards, obligations, bylaws, membership

SECTION 11. Section 59-152-60 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-60. (A) Each county must be represented by a Local First Steps Partnership Board and each local board must provide services within every county it represents. A local partnership board must be comprised of individuals with resources, skills, knowledge, and interest in improving the readiness of young children for school. A list of all local partnership board members must be published in the partnership's annual report, be reported annually to the local legislative delegation, and be on file with the Office of First Steps.

(B) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees must establish bylaws for use by each local partnership board. These bylaws must, in addition to other requirements provided in this section, require that a meeting or election of a local partnership board comply with all Freedom of Information Act and IRS disclosure requirements.

(C) In accordance with the bylaws established by the board of trustees, each local partnership board shall maintain a total minimum membership of twelve and a maximum membership of thirty elected, appointed, and designated individuals. Elected and appointed members shall comprise a voting majority of the board.

(1) No more than four from any of the following categories may be elected to sit on a First Steps Partnership Board:

(a) prekindergarten through primary educator;

(b) family education, training, and support provider;

(c) childcare or early childhood development/education provider;

(d) healthcare provider;

(e) local government;

(f) nonprofit organization that provides services to families and children;

(g) faith community;
(h) business community;
(i) philanthropic community; and
(j) parents of preschool children.

(2) To assure that all areas of the county or multicounty region are adequately represented and reflect the diversity of the coverage area, each county legislative delegation may appoint up to four members to a local partnership board. Of these members, two are appointed by the Senate members and two by the House of Representative members of the delegation from persons with resources, skills, or knowledge that have specific interests in improving the readiness of young children for school.

(3) Each of the following entities located within a particular First Steps Partnership coverage area shall designate one member to serve as a member of the local First Steps Partnership Board:

(a) county department of social services;
(b) county department of health and environmental control;
(c) Head Start or early Head Start;
(d) county library; and
(e) each of the school districts in the county.

(D) In conjunction with the independent external program evaluation established in Section 59-152-160, the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall conduct a formal review of the membership categories for First Steps Partnership Board composition. Upon completion of the review, the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall submit to the General Assembly a statement either verifying the continued applicability and appropriateness of the composition categories for First Steps Partnership Boards in place at that time, or recommending any appropriate and necessary changes.

(E) Members who miss more than three consecutive meetings without excuse or members who resign must be replaced from the same categories as their predecessor. The terms of the members of a local First Steps Partnership Board are for four years; however, membership on the board may not exceed eight consecutive years.

(F) The chairman of a local partnership board must be elected by majority vote of the board. The chairman shall serve a one-year term; however, the chairman may be elected to subsequent terms not to exceed a total of four consecutive years.

(G) A local First Steps Partnership board must have policies and procedures for conducting meetings and disclosing records comparable to those provided for in the Freedom of Information Act. Prior to every vote taken by the board, members must abstain from voting if the issue

being considered would result in a conflict of interest. The abstention must be noted in the minutes of the meeting."

Local partnership boards, comprehensive plans, staff costs, efficiency collaborations, performance reviews

SECTION 12. Section 59-152-70 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-70. (A) A First Steps Partnership Board shall, among its other powers and duties:

(1) adopt bylaws as established by the First Steps to School Readiness Board to effectuate the provisions of this chapter which must include the creation of a periodic meeting schedule;

(2) coordinate a collaborative effort at the county or multicounty level which will bring the community together to identify the area needs related to the goals of First Steps to School Readiness; develop a strategic long-term plan for meeting those needs; develop specific initiatives to implement the elements of the plan; and integrate service delivery where possible;

(3) coordinate and oversee the implementation of the comprehensive strategic plan including, but not limited to, direct service provision, contracting for service provision, and organization and management of volunteer programs;

(4) effective July 1, 2016, each partnership's comprehensive plan shall include the following core functions:

(a) service as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children;

(b) service as a community convener around the needs of preschool children and their families; and

(c) support of state-level school readiness priorities as determined by the State Board;

(5) update a needs assessment every three years;

(6) implement fiscal policies and procedures as required by the First Steps office and as needed to ensure fiscal accountability of all funds appropriated to the partnership;

(7) keep accurate records of the partnership's board meetings, board member's attendance, programs, and activities for annual submission to the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees;

(8) collect information and submit an annual report by October first to the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, and otherwise participate in the annual review and the three-year evaluation

of operations and programs. Reports must include, but not be limited to:

(a) determination of the current level and data pertaining to the delivery and effectiveness of services for young children and their families, including the numbers of preschool children and their families served;

(b) strategic goals for increased availability, accessibility, quality, and efficiency of activities and services for young children and their families which will enable children to reach school ready to succeed;

(c) monitoring of progress toward strategic goals;

(d) report on implementation activities;

(e) recommendations for changes to the strategic plan which may include new areas of implementation;

(f) evaluation and report of program effectiveness and client satisfaction before, during, and after the implementation of the strategic plan, where available; and

(g) estimation of cost savings attributable to increased efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of services to young children and their families, where available.

(B) Each local partnership may, in the performance of its duties, employ or acquire staff pursuant to the local partnership bylaws established by the South Carolina First Steps School to Readiness Board of Trustees. Overhead costs of a First Step partnership's operations may not exceed eight percent of the total state funds appropriated for partnership grants. The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall contract with an independent cost accountant to provide recommendations as to an adequate, and not excessive, overhead cost rate for individual partnerships no later than July 1, 2017. Once these recommendations are received, the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees may adjust the overhead percentage for the local partnership.

(C) Each First Steps partnership may apply for, receive, and expend federal, state, and local funds, grants, and other funding in order to improve programs as provided in Section 59-152-25(A).

(D) To be designated a First Steps partnership, the local partnership must be a private nonprofit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(E) Multiple First Steps local partnerships may collaborate in a manner they determine will maximize the efficient and effective provision of First Steps services and programs to children and their families and best enable the partnerships to execute their duties and powers established in this chapter. In such a collaboration, partnerships

may merge or work in concert with one or more of their program, administrative, or development functions or establish multicounty partnerships. The decision to collaborate in the manner permitted in this subsection rests entirely with the local partnership boards of directors involved.

(F) As a condition of receiving state funds, each local partnership must be subject to performance reviews by South Carolina First Steps, including, but not limited to, local board functioning and collaboration and compliance with state standards and fiscal accountability. If any significant operational deficiencies or misconduct is identified within the partnership, the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees must identify a remedy with input from the local legislative delegation."

Local partnership boards, grant funding

SECTION 13. Section 59-152-90 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-90. (A) A local partnership's grant may be funded annually by the First Steps School to Readiness Board of Trustees and must be contingent on the General Assembly's appropriation of funds to use for offering grants.

(B) To obtain a grant, a First Steps partnership must qualify by meeting the grant requirements established pursuant to subsection (C). A First Steps Partnership shall submit an application to the Office of First Steps in a format specified by the First Steps to School Readiness Board. The application shall include the level of funding requested, a description of needs of children and families; assets and resources available; and the proposed strategies to address needs as they relate to the goals of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness.

(C)(1) Pursuant to Section 63-11-1730, the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall establish the grant qualification requirements. The board shall develop and promulgate grant qualification requirements in regulation pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act. These requirements must include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) adoption and adherence to bylaws promulgated by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, which includes, but is not limited to, compliance with the board composition, attendance, voting, and disclosure requirements;

(b) utilization of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness benchmarks and objectives;

(c) implementation of programs and activities, which are effective and contributing to state goals, and otherwise acceptable pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 152, Title 59; and

(d) fulfillment of all the duties in Section 59-152-70.

(2) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall establish a formula, which includes the identification of the most relevant and effective factors, by which the allocations for qualifying partnership grants are calculated. The board shall identify the factors, develop the funding formula, and promulgate both in regulation pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act. The factors utilized in the funding formula, and the weight given to each factor by the formula, must reflect that the intent of the General Assembly is to ensure that the money allocated to each local partnership is in proportion to the following:

(a) population of eligible children;

(b) population of at-risk children; and

(c) population with below average income.

(3) First Steps shall include the grant qualification requirements and funding formula on its website. The website information shall include formula details, announcements regarding proposed changes to the formula, and directions for public input.

(E) In conjunction with the independent external program evaluation established pursuant to Section 59-152-160, the board of trustees shall conduct a formal review of the grant qualification requirements and funding process adopted pursuant to subsections (C) and (D) and, upon completion of the review, shall submit to the General Assembly a statement either verifying the continued applicability and appropriateness of the grant qualification requirements and funding process in use at that time or recommending any appropriate and necessary changes.

(F) Funding must reflect the combined total allocations of the coverage area of a multicounty partnership."

Local partnership boards, grant funding

SECTION 14. Section 59-152-100 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-100. (A) Grant funds expended by First Steps partnerships must be used to address the needs of young children and their families as identified in the partnerships' comprehensive plans. The funds must be used to expand, extend, or improve the quality of provided services if there is evidence as to existing programs'

effectiveness; offer new or previously unavailable services in the area; or increase access to services. Partnership grant funds may not supplant comparable current expenditures by counties or state agencies on behalf of young children and their families, and may not be used where other state or federal funding sources are available. Partnerships are expected to collaborate with other community organizations or entities expending funds on early childhood services designed to impact school readiness in order to maximize impact and minimize duplication of efforts.

(B) At least seventy-five percent of state funds appropriated for programs must be used by the local partnership for evidence-based programs. Not more than twenty-five percent of state funds appropriated for programs to a local partnership may be used for evidence-informed programs.

(C) All activities and services provided by a local partnership must be made available to young children and families on a voluntary basis and must focus solely on 'school readiness' as defined in Section 59-152-25 by implementing programs geared specifically toward the achievement of First Steps goals pursuant to Section 59-152-30.

(D) Any part of the initiative within the county strategic plan using local district resources within a school district must be conducted only with approval of the district's board of trustees."

Local partnerships, funding use restrictions

SECTION 15. Section 59-152-120 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-120. Funds received by a local partnership may not be used for capital expenses, new construction, or to renovate, refurbish, or upgrade existing facilities without prior approval by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees."

Matching funds

SECTION 16. Section 59-152-130 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-130. (A) Local partnerships shall provide an annual match of at least fifteen percent, to include private donations, grant funds, and in-kind donated resources, or any combination of them. The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees may decrease this percentage requirement for a partnership

based on their capacity to provide that match. The First Step partnership shall encourage private individuals and groups to contribute to a partnership's efforts to meet its match. The match required of individual partnerships by the First Steps board should take into consideration such factors as:

(1) local wealth, using such indicators as the number and percentage of children eligible for free and reduced lunches in grades 1-3; and

(2) in-kind donated resources.

Only in-kind donations, as defined by the standard fiscal accountability system provided for in Section 59-152-150, which meet the criteria established by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees and that are quantifiable may be applied to the in-kind match requirement.

(B) The Office of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness shall establish guidelines and reporting formats for partnerships to document expenses to ensure they meet matching fund requirements. The office shall compile a report annually on the private cash and in-kind contributions received by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees and First Steps partnerships."

Carry forward funds, conforming change

SECTION 17. Section 59-152-140 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-140. To ensure effective use of funds, awards under contract for First Steps Partnerships, with the approval of the Office of First Steps to School Readiness, may be carried forward and used in the following fiscal year. Funds appropriated to South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness may also be carried forward into subsequent years."

Private and nonstate funds

SECTION 18. Section 59-152-150 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-152-150. (A) The Office of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness shall develop and require local partnerships to adopt and implement a standard fiscal accountability system including, but not limited to, a uniform, standardized system of accounting, internal controls, payroll, fidelity bonding, chart of accounts, and

contract management and monitoring. Additionally, the accountability system shall require competitive bids for the purchase or procurement of goods and services of ten thousand dollars or more. A bid other than the lowest bid may be accepted by a majority vote of the partnership board if other considerations outweigh the cost factor; however, written justification must be filed with the Office of First Steps. The Office of First Steps may contract with outside firms to develop and ensure implementation of this standard fiscal accountability system, and the Office of First Steps may inspect fiscal and program records of partnerships and developing partnerships to ensure their compliance with the required system. The Office of First Steps may contract with a state entity with existing means for developing contracts and disbursing funds in order to make use of the existing infrastructure, if it is efficient and not administratively burdensome to partnerships.

(B) Each local First Steps partnership shall expend funds through the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees or its fiscal designees until the capacity of the local partnership to manage its fiscal and administrative responsibilities in compliance with the standard accountability system has been reviewed and certified by the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees or its designee.

(C) All private and nonstate funds sought by local partnerships must be used exclusively for meeting the goals and purpose of First Steps as specified in Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-152-30. Private funds received by a First Steps partnership must be deposited in a separate fund subject to review by the Office of First Steps and the State Board.

(D) Disbursements may be made only on the written authorization of the individual designated by the partnership board and only for the purposes specified. A person violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined five thousand dollars or imprisoned for six months, or both.

(E) The offenses of misuse, misappropriation, and embezzlement of public funds apply to this chapter."

Progress evaluations, revisions

SECTION 19. Section 59-125-160 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 59-125-160. (A) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall establish internal evaluation policies and procedures for local partnerships for an annual review of the functioning of the partnership, implementation of strategies, and

progress toward the interim goals and benchmarks. In instances where no progress has been made, the Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall provide targeted assistance and/or the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees may terminate the grant. An independent evaluation of each prevalent program investment using valid and reliable measures must be completed and published by the First Steps Board of Trustees no less than every five years. The First Steps board shall adopt a cyclical evaluation calendar including each major program investment no later than June 30, 2015. After publication of a baseline report for each major program investment as defined in Section 59-152-25, subsequent reports will be published no later than five calendar years from the date of each prior publication. In addition to the independent evaluation of each prevalent program, an evaluation of the progress on the initiative's goals and purpose must be completed by November 1, 2014, and every five years thereafter by an independent, external evaluator under contract with the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees. The purpose of this evaluation will be to gauge First Steps' progress in meeting the goals established in Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-52-30.

(B) Local partnerships must agree to participate in such an evaluation in order to receive a First Steps grant. Subsequent grant approval and grant allocations must be dependent, in part, on the results of the evaluations. If an evaluation finds no progress has been made in meeting local goals or implementing strategies as agreed to in the First Steps grant, the grant may be terminated.

(C) The purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress toward achieving the First Steps goals and to determine the impact of each strategy in supporting improved school readiness as defined in Section 52-152-15. The impact assessment shall include, but is not limited to, school readiness measures; benefits from child development services; immunization status; low birth-weight rates; parent literacy; parenting skills; parental involvement; transportation; and developmental screening results. During the course of the evaluation, if an evaluator determines that any state agency has failed to comply with the coordination and collaboration provisions as required in this chapter, the final report must reflect that information. Each program evaluation report must be reported to the General Assembly no later than three months after conclusion of the evaluation. Local partnerships shall cooperate fully in collecting and providing data and information for the evaluation of their funded strategies."

Board of trustees, composition revisited, study committee, act reauthorization

SECTION 20. A. Section 63-11-1720 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 63-11-1720. (A) There is created the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees which must be chaired by the Governor, or his designee, and must include the State Superintendent of Education, or his designee, who shall serve as ex officio voting members of the board.

(B) In making the appointments specified in subsection (C)(1), (2), and (3) of this section, the Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall seek to ensure diverse geographical representation on the board by appointing individuals from each congressional district as possible.

(C) The board shall include members appointed in the following manner:

(1) the Governor shall appoint one member from each of the following sectors:

(a) parents of young children;

(b) business community;

(c) early childhood educators;

(d) medical providers;

(e) child care and development providers; and

(f) the General Assembly, one member from the Senate and one member from the House of Representatives;

(2) the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint one member from each of the following sectors:

(a) parents of young children;

(b) business community;

(c) early childhood educators; and

(d) medical or child care and development providers;

(3) the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one member from each of the following sectors:

(a) parents of young children;

(b) business community;

(c) early childhood educators; and

(d) medical or child care and development;

(4) the chairman of the Senate Education Committee or his designee;

(5) the chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee or his designee; and

(6) the chief executive officer of each of the following shall serve as an ex officio voting member:

(a) Department of Social Services;
(b) Department of Health and Environmental Control;
(c) Department of Health and Human Services;
(d) Department of Disabilities and Special Needs;
(e) State Head Start Collaboration Officer; and
(f) Children's Trust of South Carolina.

(D) The terms of the members are for four years and until their successors are appointed and qualify. The appointments of the members from the General Assembly shall be coterminous with their terms of office.

(E) Vacancies for any reason must be filled in the manner of the original appointment for the unexpired term. A member may not serve more than two terms or eight years, whichever is longer. A member who misses more than three consecutive meetings without excuse or a member who resigns must be replaced in the same manner as his predecessor. Members may be paid per diem, mileage, and subsistence as established by the board not to exceed standards provided by law for boards, committees, and commissions. A complete report of the activities of the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees must be made annually to the General Assembly.

(F)(1) There is created the Office of First Steps Study Committee to review the structure, responsibilities, governance by an organization exempt from federal income tax pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and administration of the Office of First Steps. The goal of the study committee is to guarantee that children from birth to school-age receive needed services from the Office of First Steps in the most effective way through coordination with other agencies that serve the same population. Also, the study committee shall determine whether the services provided by the Office of First Steps are provided in the most cost-effective and direct manner to entities served by the Office of First Steps, including County First Steps Partnerships Boards. The study committee shall evaluate the structure and costs of the Office of First Steps becoming an independent agency and make a recommendation as to whether the Office of First Steps should become an agency, remain as a program at the Department of Education, be relocated within a state agency other than the Department of Education, or any other alternative structure the study committee deems fit. The study committee shall also address the issues concerning the governance of an organization exempt from federal income tax pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 relative to the structure recommended by the

study committee. When making its recommendation as to the structure, the study committee must include an analysis of the costs associated with a change in structure. Such costs include, but are not limited to, personnel, data security, data management, and fiscal services.

(2) The study committee shall be composed of:

(a) four members of the Senate appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee. Of these members, one must be appointed upon the recommendation of the Senate Majority Leader, one must be appointed upon the recommendation of the Senate Minority Leader, and one must be a member of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees;

(b) four members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee. Of these members, one must be appointed upon the recommendation of the House Majority Leader, one must be appointed upon the recommendation of the House Minority Leader, and one must be a member of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees;

(c) one member appointed by the Governor, who shall serve as chairman;

(d) the President of the Institute for Child Success, or his designee;

(e) the Chairman of the Education Oversight Committee, or his designee; and

(f) the Chairman of the Joint Citizens Legislative Committee on Children, or his designee.

Except for the two members of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees appointed pursuant to subitems (a) and (b), no member of the study committee may be a member of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees or a member of a County First Steps Partnership Board.

(3) The study committee must be staffed by the staff of the Senate Education Committee and the House Education and Public Works Committee.

(4) The study committee shall complete its review and submit its recommendation to the General Assembly no later than March 15, 2015. Upon submission of its recommendation, the study committee is dissolved."

B. Act 99 of 1999, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Act, is reauthorized until July 1, 2016.

Board of trustees, promulgation of comprehensive long-term initiative, regulations, and policies

SECTION 21. Section 63-11-1730 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"Section 63-11-1730. To oversee and be accountable for the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative, in accordance with the APA, the board shall:

(1) develop and promulgate a comprehensive long-range initiative for improving early childhood development and increasing school readiness and literacy, which shall include the specific requirements of Chapter 152, Title 59;

(2) in accordance with the APA, promulgate regulations and establish guidelines, policies, and procedures for the continued implementation of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness initiative;

(3) provide oversight on the continued implementation and evaluation of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness initiative at the state and local levels;

(4) establish and promulgate grant qualification requirements and a formula by which allocations for qualifying partnership grants shall be calculated;

(5) ensure the provision of technical assistance, consultation services and support to First Steps Partnerships including: the creation and annual revision of county needs assessments; the prioritization, implementation, and evaluation of each First Steps Partnership's strategic plans based on needs assessments; and the identification of assets from other funding sources;

(6) assess and develop recommendations: for ensuring coordination and collaboration among service providers at both the state and county level, for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of state programs and funding and other programs and funding sources, as allowable, as necessary to carry out the First Steps to School Readiness initiative, including additional fiscal strategies, redeployment of state resources, and development of new programs;

(7) establish and promulgate results-oriented measures and objectives and assess whether services provided by First Steps Partnerships to children and families are meeting the goals and achieving the results established for the First Steps initiative pursuant to Chapter 152, Title 59;

(8) receive gifts, bequests, and devises for deposit for awarding grants to First Steps Partnerships;

(9) report annually to the General Assembly by January first on activities and progress to include recommendations for changes and legislative initiatives and results of program evaluations;

(10) establish and promulgate internal policies and procedures to allow the board to operate optimally, which shall include, but not be limited to, an established and consistent process for decision making;

(11) develop, implement, and document an annual performance process for the Director of the Office of South Carolina First Steps;

(12) establish and promulgate bylaws for adoption by local First Steps Partnerships;

(13) establish and promulgate internal evaluation policies and procedures for local partnerships for annual review pursuant to Chapter 152, Title 59; and

(14) arrange for the conduction of an independent external program evaluation pursuant to Chapter 152, Title 59."

Secretary of State monitoring of boards and commissions, First Steps board added

SECTION 22. Section 1-5-40(A) of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an item at the end to read:

"(107) South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees."

Repeal

SECTION 23. Sections 59-152-80 and 59-152-110 of the 1976 Code are repealed.

Time effective

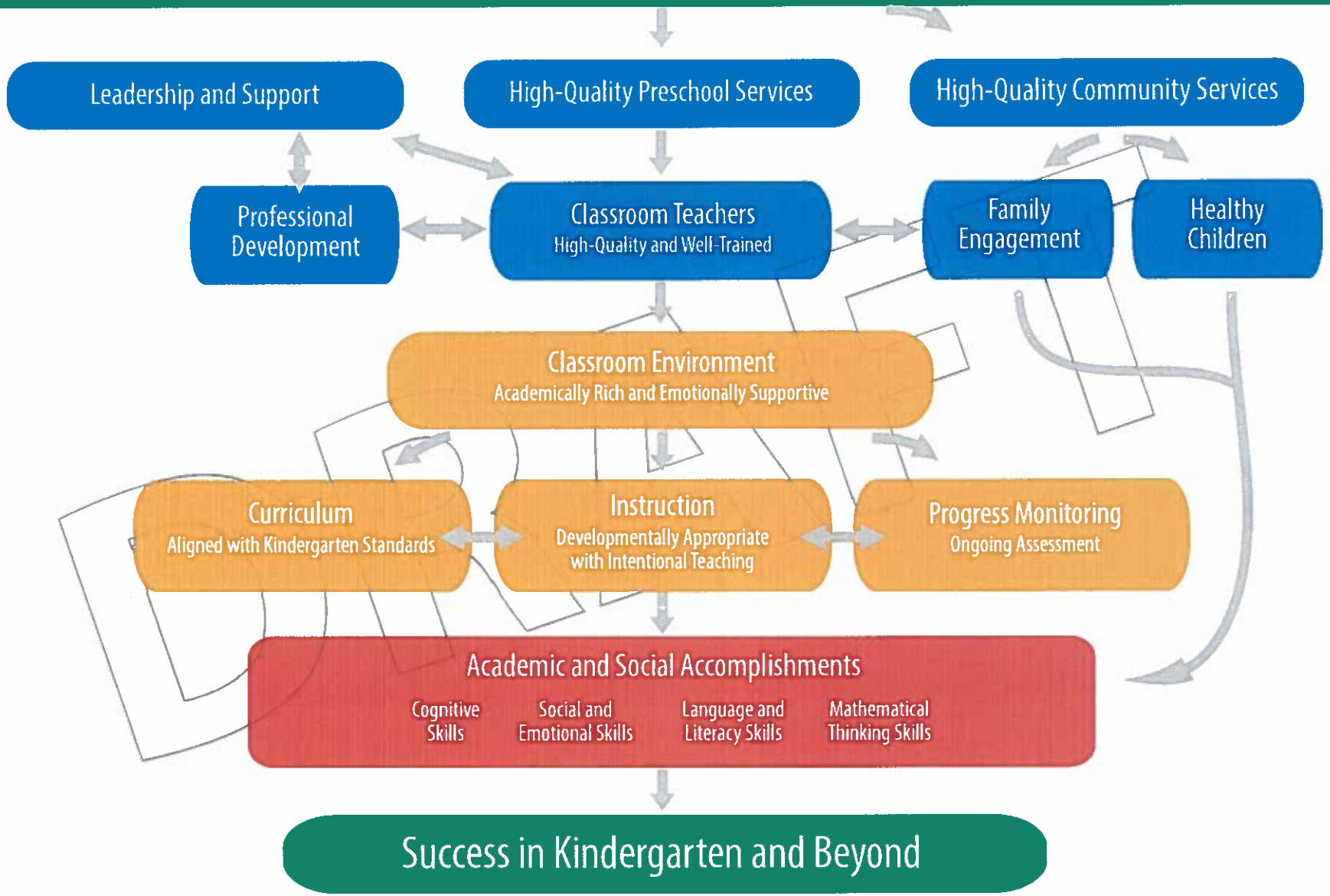
SECTION 24. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 5th day of June, 2014.

Vetoed by the Governor -- 6/11/14.
Veto overridden by House -- 6/17/14.
Veto overridden by Senate -- 6/18/14.

South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program

Publicly Funded 4-Year-Old Pre-Kindergarten



11/22/13; 1/6/14 rev. Prepared by Bill Brown PhD, Leigh D'Amico EdD, Kassie Mae Miller MPH, Lorin Anderson PhD, & Community Early Childhood Partners

South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)
Conceptual Framework Definitions[1]

Academic and Social Accomplishments—The *American Heritage Dictionary* (Second College Edition) defines accomplishment as "something completed successfully; achievement." Academic and social accomplishments The *American Heritage Dictionary* (Second College Edition) defines: (a) cognitive skills; (b) social emotional skills; (c) language and literacy skills; and (d) mathematical thinking skills. Critical cognitive skills include but are not necessarily limited to: memory, attention, ability to connect experiences, classification, use of symbols, curiosity and motivation, and meaningful engagement and persistence. Critical social and emotional skills include but are not necessarily limited to the ability to delay gratification, positive interactions and relationships with adults and peers, self-regulation of emotions and behavior, and the ability to follow reasonable and age appropriate limits and adult requests. Critical language and literacy skills include but are not necessarily limited to communication of needs and preferences, listening, receptive and expressive vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabetic principle and knowledge, print and book knowledge, prewriting and writing skills, and reading comprehension. Critical mathematical thinking skills include but are not necessarily limited to: knowledge of patterns, ability to compare and measure, recognition and use of numbers and number concepts, and basic mathematical operations.

Classroom Environments—Classrooms consist of materials and arrangements to support and promote teaching and learning opportunities for young children. Critical aspects include but are not necessarily limited to: (a) space and furnishings (e.g., learning centers, chairs, tables, open areas); (b) materials and equipment to promote children's meaningful engagement (e.g., writing and art materials, books, blocks, puzzles, electronic tablets, smart boards); and (c) schedules of individual, small group, and whole group learning activities to promote children's meaningful engagement. In addition, intentional teaching to promote positive and educative interactions with and among children and teachers is a critical part of classroom environments (see Instruction and Intentional Teaching).

Classroom Teachers—Typically, early childhood classrooms have a "lead" teacher who is responsible for establishing and maintaining classrooms environments, implementing curriculum, and organizing and supervising other adults who are teaching in classrooms. Nevertheless, the designation of teachers as a generic term refers to any adult who participates in classroom activities and who provides teaching and learning opportunities to children (e.g., assistant teachers, parent and community volunteers, speech and language therapists).

Curriculum—Curriculum may be defined ". . . as an organized and sequenced set of content to be taught: It is the 'what to teach' . . ." Noonan & McCormick, 2014). In addition, it may be defined as a process to determine what should be taught to whom and when. Some educators also define teaching strategies and tactics or the "how to teach" as part of curriculum (see Instruction). Hence, curriculum may be defined as the content and teaching techniques used to promote high-quality teaching and learning opportunities to enhance young children's development and learning. Preschool curriculum

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[1] **Our intent with the glossary is to promote common definitions and shared understandings that might support early childhood practitioners, administrators, and advocates communications in pursuit of high-quality learning experiences for young children and their families. Many of the definitions employed are from well-know scholars in the field or by example and are not intended to be exhaustive.**

should be aligned with kindergarten and early elementary standards to enhance transition from preschool to kindergarten and future school success.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice—The National Association for the Education of Children (NAEYC) has propagated developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) for early childhood educators for over 25 years (Copple, & Bredekamp, 2009). In the last revision of DAP the basic principles increased from two to three. The three interrelated cardinal principles of DAP are: (a) age appropriateness (i.e., for almost all children in most circumstances child development is *an age-related sequence of acquisition and maintenance of skills, abilities, and dispositions*); (b) individual appropriateness (i.e., despite age-related normative developmental sequences *differences among children in their development and learning result in varying rates of acquisition of skills, abilities, and dispositions, which is also known as individual differences*); and (c) cultural appropriateness (i.e., within American culture, we have *many cultures in our nation that might affect the delivery, use, and quality of early childhood and community services*). Moreover, researchers have demonstrated that culture influences children's development and learning and should be addressed as needed when providing high-quality early childhood services (Tharp & Dalton, 2007).

Family Engagement—Supporting and working with families has been a long-standing tradition with early childhood professionals (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Sandall, McLean, & Smith, 2000). Activities to promote *families engagement and meaningful participation in early childhood education and services* include but are not necessarily limited to: (a) dissemination of relevant information; (b) linkage of families to needed medical, social, and community services; (c) parent education about strategies and tactics to promote and support children's development and learning; (d) ongoing assessment information related to children's progress while receiving early childhood services; and (e) formal and informal meetings and events that highlight participation of families in early childhood services. Family engagement activities may range from relatively passive ones such as sending relevant information home from school to proactive strategies such as coaching of critical parental skills that are related to better development and learning. For example, some parents may benefit greatly from learning basic behavioral guidance strategies to enhance parent child interactions (e.g., ignoring minor misbehavior, "catching a child being good," teaching self regulation to their children). School personnel have a responsibility to promote and support families' meaningful engagement in community schools.

Healthy Children—Promoting children's health is fundamental to their development and learning. Critical elements that promote and support young children's health during early childhood include but are not necessarily limited to: (a) prenatal and perinatal care; (b) access to and regular use of pediatric care (i.e., "medical home"); (c) immunizations; (d) screenings for medical and developmental problems (e.g., hearing and vision screenings, dental screenings, developmental screenings); and (e) access to nutritious food and physical activity.

High-Quality Community Services—Families access and use of high-quality community services can contribute greatly to high-quality preschool services and future child outcomes, especially for high-needs families (e.g., living in poverty, dual language learners, children with medical and developmental difficulties). Unfortunately, often medical, social, and community services, are not co-

located in or well linked with preschool programs. For many high needs families the fact that services are dispersed across communities creates challenges of access and timely use of needed community services. Critical community services include but are not necessarily limited to: (a) prenatal and pediatric care; (b) enrollment in social service programs such as TANF, MEDICAID, and SNAP; (c) mental health services; (d) responsive services for children and families who experience child and spousal maltreatment; (e) drug and alcohol treatment; (f) parent education such as how to nurture and better care for their children; and (g) before and after school child care. Given the lack of connection between school and many other community services, school personnel should promote and support families' linkage to and use of needed community services.

High-Quality Preschool Services—High-quality preschool services include but are not necessarily limited to: (a) well-trained teachers supported by effective professional development; (b) engagement and participation of families in schools; (c) academically rich and emotionally supportive classrooms; (c) curricula that are well-aligned with kindergarten and early elementary standards and learning progressions; (d) developmentally appropriate instruction with intentional teaching of critical skills; (e) ongoing assessment that is formative for instruction and monitoring children's progress; and (f) critical academic and social accomplishments that promote and support success in kindergarten and beyond.

Instruction—Instruction consists of the strategies, tactics, and methods teachers' employ to actively engage children in the process of learning. Hence, instructional procedures are the "*how to teach*" component of curricula. Metaphorically, teachers are similar to movie directors with responsibilities that include (a) arranging classroom environments ("arranging sets and scenes"); (b) implementing instructional activities with intentional teaching ("using a movie script and planning and implementing film scenes"); and (c) providing positive and supportive feedback and monitoring progress to promote children's learning ("collaborating with actors and film technicians to achieve successful scenes and a great movie"). Instruction may be performed with individuals, small groups, and in whole groups of children and in different circumstances (e.g., center time, outside play, snack time, transition to bus, table top activities, large group). Instruction may range from relatively simple embedded questions about personal information (e.g., "How old are you?," "When is your birthday?") to systematic presentation of critical information to be learned (e.g., games focused on rhyming and alliteration, dialogic and shared reading, counting and measuring activities). Instruction is both incidental at "teachable moments" (e.g., pointing out a distinctive feature of a square, teacher naming an unknown object and then asking a child to expressively label the object) and teacher planned with high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for children (e.g., dialogic reading of stories focused on "Wh" questions, counting the number of days in a month).

Intentional Teaching—To promote teachers employment of efficient and effective teaching and learning strategies and tactics, Ann Epstein (2006) introduced the term and concept of intentional teaching with a monograph published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Whereas Epstein recognized young children learn in varied contexts and circumstances with and without teachers, she strongly recommended that effective teachers be proactive in thoughtful planning and implementation of high-quality teaching and learning activities and experiences throughout the preschool day. She defined intentional teaching as "Teachers act with

specific outcomes or goals in mind for children's development and learning." (p. 1) and further noted that an intentional teacher " . . . acts with knowledge and purpose to ensure that young children acquire the knowledge and skills (content) they need to succeed in school and in life." (p. 1). To promote efficient and effective learning with young children, especially children living in poverty, dual language learners, and with medical and developmental difficulties, intentional teaching ought to be implemented regularly with children.

Leadership—The *American Heritage Dictionary* (Second College Edition) defines leadership as "The capacity or ability to lead." In the field of early care and education, leadership may be exhibited by various individuals including but not necessarily limited to elected officials, agency administrators, principals, coordinators, teachers, parents, faculty at 2- and 4-year Institutions of Higher Education, advocates, and interested laypersons. Historically, many educators have considered leaders to be elected officials, key administrative personnel in local and state agencies, and site-level administrators such as principals and coordinators. Whereas these individuals can and do have essential leadership roles, other models of leadership often stress collaborative leadership among members of teams within organizations (cf. Metz, Halle, Bartley, & Blasberg, 2013). For example, clearly elected officials, critical agency personnel, and well-informed advocates provide leadership in establishing legislation and regulations to support policies and practices in our communities. And site-level administrators also have a critical role in implementing and supporting policies and practices at the local level. Nevertheless, the best-written legislation with clear regulations and high-quality site-level supervision does not necessarily change day-to-day practices for children and families. Contemporary conceptual frameworks such as a bioecological model (cf. Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and implementation science (cf. Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005) are systems approaches that emphasize collaboration among professionals and consumers to establish and maintain services that can be evaluated, and when indicated, changed to support continued improvement in services. Hence, an effective site-based implementation team at a child development program might include but not be limited to an administrator, teacher representatives, parents, and related service personnel who plan, implement, and evaluate services with the goal of promoting effective child and family outcomes. Leadership "ought" be shared among members of an implementation team, especially when their roles and responsibilities are explicitly defined and publicly reviewed. When clear responsibilities are not delineated one is at risk for the following scenario, "When everyone is responsible, no one is responsible" (anonymous). As an example of a team at a child development program, a local administrator might convene the team and make known what resources are available for professional development (e.g., inservice schedules, funding for trainings, accessible expertise). Teachers and parents on the team might develop a survey to determine practitioners and parents' needs for knowledge and skills in language development and early literacy. Once teachers and parents needs have been decided, the team can identify who will provide the professional development (e.g., accomplished teachers or language specialists, outside consultants), content (e.g., vocabulary development, alphabetic principle and knowledge), and methods of delivery (e.g., webinars, onsite consultation with constructive feedback on performance), and evaluation (e.g., review of teachers and parents' implementation of teaching skills; consumer satisfaction ratings from administrators, teachers, and parents). Models of shared leadership promote and support collaboration, which include various individuals on teams and not merely "top down leadership" from key agency administrators or supervisors (cf. Metz et al., 2013). Moreover,

implementation teams can share explicit roles and responsibilities based on their interests and skills, and whenever possible, develop and nurture their capacity to lead (cf. Wesley & Buysse, 2006).

Professional Development—The field of early childhood is characterized by multiple service sectors with different funding streams allocated for well-defined services. Common sectors serving many preschool children are: (a) state-funded pre-kindergarten services; (b) federally funded Head Start Programs; (c) federally and state-funded childcare; (d) federally and state-funded BabyNET Early Intervention Services; (e) for-profit childcare; and (f) private and faith-based preschools. In recent years, given that each sector has different standards and regulations for teachers, the term professional development (PD) has been confusing for many practitioners and has become a generic term that includes both professionals (i.e., academic qualifications and other criteria from a licensing body) and non-professionals (i.e., training related to and required by the sector employers). Other terms that are used commonly along with professional development have been: (a) workforce development; (b) teacher education; (c) preservice and inservice preparation; and (d) continuing education. We adopted the broad definition proposed by Buysse, Winton, and Rous (2009) that defined PD as "facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skill, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice." Winton (2010) further delineated three fundamental components of the professional development: "1) characteristics and contexts of learners and the children they serve and the PD providers (the *who*); 2) the content focus of professional development (*what* professionals should know and be able to do); and 3) the organization and facilitation of learning experiences (the *how*, or the methods and approaches used to implement PD.' (p. 115). Historically, most professional development has been workshops and presentations in which participants listen to information ("sit and get"). Two contemporary forms of professional development, especially for promoting effective practices include (a) on-site collaborative consultation with coaching to support teachers practices (Dunst & Trivette, 2009); and (b) establishment of communities of practice focused on evidence-based approaches to early childhood services (Wesley & Buysse, 2006). Regardless of the methods of delivery, we believe that efficient and effective professional development should be based on teachers' needs for evidence-based practices to enhance preschool services, especially those teaching practices related to acquisition of critical skills, abilities, and dispositions.

Progress Monitoring— McLean (2004) defined assessment as " . . . a generic term that refers to the process of gathering information for the purpose of makings decisions" (p. 13). Assessment in the broadest sense has several purposes including (a) identification and screening; (b) eligibility and diagnosis; (c) child program planning; (d) child progress monitoring; and (e) accountability and program evaluation (Brown & D'Amico, 2012; Snow & Van Hemel, 2008). Assessment methods can be as simple as observing children or asking a single discrete question or as complex as assigning a standardized series of complicated tasks to observe and record children's performance to compare with same-aged peers (i.e., standardized norm referenced protocols). One type of assessment, ***progress monitoring*** is an assessment of children's learning across time. Wolery (2004) delineated three essential purposes for progress monitoring: (a) to validate conclusions from initial assessments; (b) to record and evaluate child progress across time; and (c) to determine whether instruction should be continued or revised. Progress monitoring for instruction is typically performed by classroom

teachers and should be feasible for planning and, when indicated, adjusting instruction with young children.

Publically funded 4-year-old Prekindergarten—Across the United States during the last three decades, the majority of states have expanded the quantity and quality of prekindergarten services, especially for 4- and 5-year-old children not yet in kindergarten and high needs children and families (e.g., living in poverty, dual language learners, medical and developmental difficulties) (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2012). Publically funded preschool services in South Carolina include but are not necessarily limited to: (a) state-funded Education Improvement Act (EIA), federally funded Title I, and district funded prekindergartens; (b) state-funded CDEPP prekindergartens; (c) federally funded Head Start Programs; and (d) state and federally funded Department of Social Services (SC DSS) Division of Early Care and Education for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. ***Although we believe that the conceptual framework applies to early childhood programs in general, for the purposes of Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) evaluation the phrase "publically funded prekindergarten" refers to those 4-year-old prekindergarten services funded through the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program that are located in public schools, private preschools and childcare centers, and Head Start Programs.*** Although focused on CDEPP, the CDEPP Evaluation and evaluators will, to the greatest extent possible, collaborate with and be informed by services and evaluations of other relevant publically and privately funded prekindergarten programs in South Carolina.

Success in Kindergarten and Early Elementary—We differentiate *success* in kindergarten and early elementary from kindergarten and school *readiness*. Kindergarten and school readiness consist of a one time "snapshot" of a child's current skills, abilities, and dispositions. Prekindergarten and kindergarten entry assessment is helpful in determining which children need individualized and well-targeted educational services. Nevertheless, a one time "snapshot" is too circumscribed for children's learning that occurs across time. Success is a more dynamic concept that focuses on ongoing teaching and learning opportunities that move children along a continuum of critical skills, abilities, and dispositions needed for school and life preparation. Success in kindergarten and beyond ought to include engaged teachers, children, and families with high-quality instruction and progress monitoring across time.

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Defining, Understanding, Assessing, and Evaluating School Readiness in South Carolina

Commissioned by

South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness

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Defining, Understanding, Assessing, and Evaluating School Readiness in South Carolina

January 2013

Introduction

According to recent estimates, one in seven children is not prepared for kindergarten entry in South Carolina (South Carolina First Steps, 2006). Children who enter kindergarten behind their peers often struggle in kindergarten and later grades. In an extensive review of 17 meta-analyses, which included 3,607 studies, John Hattie (2009) explored the impact of prior achievement on academic success. The results demonstrate that children's prior achievement, even in preschool or early childhood education settings, is significantly related to their achievement in early elementary school and beyond.

To better understand and assess the school readiness of young children in South Carolina, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (hereafter referred to as First Steps) and the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (hereafter referred to as ECAC) contracted with the University of South Carolina and Clemson University to systematically explore: 1) the landscape of early childhood education professional development. and 2) current practices to define and encourage school readiness. Within this project, Clemson University's faculty and staff focused on understanding professional development and training needs within early childhood education. The University of South Carolina's (USC) faculty and staff concentrated on understanding: stakeholders' perceptions of school readiness; how other states address school readiness issues; and potential methods to measure school readiness.

School readiness is best understood by examining environmental factors in children's lives, while also assessing specific skills, abilities, and dispositions at school entry. Policy makers, researchers, evaluators, and practitioners use data related to these sources to identify factors that may be modified or enhanced prior to school entry and to plan effective instruction. Data related to environmental influences are often collected through a variety of entities and organizations. These data are catalogued into a central data repository, so future analyses can provide evidence to guide policy decisions.

In the 1970s, South Carolina began formally assessing the school readiness of students in kindergarten and first grade. From 1979 until 2001, the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB) was administered to first graders across the state. The CSAB was an untimed

assessment used to measure skill levels in several key areas linked to school readiness. In 2001, the South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA) replaced the CSAB. The SCRA was a performance assessment for kindergarten and first grade students that included 14 indicators in three critical areas: 1) English/language arts, 2) mathematics, and 3) personal and social development. Teachers rated student progress at least twice per year through the SCRA. Both assessments provided schools, school districts, and state policy makers with information about the percentage of students deemed "ready" or "not ready" for school (SC Department of Education, 2002; SC Department of Education, 2003). Recently, the SCRA was discontinued; therefore, a state-level school readiness assessment is not required at this time.

In 2006, a workgroup commissioned by First Steps explored the development of a School Readiness Index. The proposed index concept reflected the multiple child, school, and community influences that are often associated with children's school readiness. While this work provided important information for the state about factors that influence school readiness, an index was not established to inform school readiness efforts or monitor progress of children.

The current work, which began in November of 2011, builds on previous work whenever possible. We used a collaborative consultation process to seek information from multiple stakeholders at the state and community levels. This included work in two geographic areas of South Carolina, Greenville County and Barnwell County (e.g., meetings, discussions, focus groups), and surveys of district-level early childhood coordinators across the state. In addition, we collected information from key personnel in several other states about their school readiness practices. We also performed substantial literature reviews to gather information about research-informed strategies related to school readiness. Four predominant themes emerged from this process, and these themes provide the organizational structure for this report and its recommendations. The four themes are:

1) defining school readiness,
2) understanding influences on school readiness,
3) assessing child-level school readiness, and
4) evaluating South Carolina school readiness.

In each section, recommendations and key strategies are highlighted.

Methods

At the onset of the project, USC faculty and staff conducted an extensive literature review to understand common definitions of school readiness and factors that influence school readiness. Information was gathered from journals and other reputable publications, as well as, previous work conducted by First Steps and community stakeholders.

To further expand the knowledge base, we researched relevant school readiness assessments used across the country. In this process, we interviewed school readiness experts in other states, including California, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Washington, to learn about assessments they use to measure school readiness. Several of these states received Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funds and are in the process of selecting or refining methods to assess school readiness at kindergarten entry.

Next, in collaboration with First Steps and the South Carolina Department of Education, we developed and implemented a survey for early childhood coordinators in each district within South Carolina. We used this survey to identify common assessment practices for each grade level from pre-kindergarten through second grade. We also requested information about the process of administering the assessments and the overall purpose of the assessments. Many districts assess children in pre-kindergarten through Grade 3 and there are some commonly used assessments; however, there are differences in the purposes and administration of these assessments.

Information garnered from the early childhood coordinator survey, as well as from other states, was used to explore high-quality assessments that could be recommended for statewide use. We concentrated on assessments that are used often in South Carolina or other states: 1) AIMSweb, 2) BRIGANCE Early Childhood, 3) Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, 4) Early Development Instrument, 5) Measures of Academic Progress, and 6) Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Throughout the process, University of South Carolina project personnel included multiple stakeholders in early childhood education from across the state. We collaborated with individuals from Clemson University, South Carolina First Steps, Greenville First Steps, Greenville United Way, Institute for Child Success, Barnwell First Steps, South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Early

Childhood Advisory Council, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and other school district and community representatives. Over the past year, these stakeholders attended meetings and presentations with the project personnel and participated in the process exploring South Carolina school readiness practices. We also conducted focus groups with community leaders in Greenville and Barnwell Counties during the summer of 2012 to gather their feedback about community perspectives of school readiness, facilitators and barriers to school readiness, and current practices related to school readiness. In addition, we engaged in school visits and observations at Greenville and Barnwell elementary schools.

Defining School Readiness

Currently, South Carolina does not have a standard definition of school readiness to guide the efforts of early childhood leaders in communities, school districts, and counties across the state; however, some organizations or initiatives in South Carolina have developed definitions or mission statements to guide their work. For example, leaders of the Greenville Readiness Initiative have defined school readiness as:

> "the state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and fully benefit from kindergarten learning experiences, which provide the foundation for sustained school success. To achieve school readiness, three elements provide a necessary interplay in the positive trajectory of supporting and nurturing a child's development—Ready Families, Ready Early Care and Education, and Ready Communities."

Similarly, personnel in the Virginia Department of Education have also defined school readiness in relation to a systems model, acknowledging the relationship between the children and their families, schools, and communities. Another common framework involves using domains or indicators to measure school readiness. For example, the definition from the personnel in the Minnesota Department of Education noted:

> "'School readiness' is defined as the skills, knowledge, behaviors and accomplishments that children know and can do as they enter kindergarten in the following areas of child development: social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language and literacy development; creativity and the arts; cognition and general knowledge; and physical well-being and motor development."

This definition outlines school readiness in terms of the domains used to measure it. Many others, such as the Maryland State Department of Education and the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, frame the definition according to the developmental domains they measure.

Recommendation 1

Develop a measurable definition of school readiness that includes specific domains of development to be used to guide early childhood assessment and instruction.

Developing a definition of school readiness is a challenging task for stakeholders in South Carolina because there are differing perspectives about the concept. Nevertheless, without a clear and concise statewide definition, individuals who are involved in initiatives, programs, and services often develop their own definitions, which may or may not be aligned with research, recommended practices, and statewide efforts to implement effective early childhood education services. Hence, confusion and divergent understandings related to the definition of school readiness often undermine efforts to enhance school readiness.

Strategy 1.1

Convene a Task Force of key stakeholders to inform the school readiness definition. Stakeholders should include well-informed representatives from a variety of early childhood agencies and organizations.

Identifying Domains of School Readiness

The domains of school readiness typically identified within the field of early childhood (e.g., pre-kindergarten programs, Head Start programs, early intervention services, childcare programs), often include as many as 5 to 10 developmental areas. Although some states have additional domains, the most widely recognized domains include: physical development, social-emotional development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, and cognitive development. For example, Maryland's State Department of Education measures personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, arts, and physical development. Many states and early childhood education organizations focus on five or more domains of child development; however, research that validates additional

domains beyond mathematical thinking, pre-literacy/literacy, and social-emotional development is limited.

Strategy 1.2

Identify key domains related to school readiness and later school success. Limit initial focus to those domains most associated with school readiness by researchers and practitioners.

Using a focused number of critical domains has been a strategy used by other national initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards Initiative. This type of concentration may allow for the most effective use of curricular assessments and professional development resources related to essential domains for school readiness and achievement. Focusing on key domains is not meant to diminish the importance of other domains, but to promote stakeholders' efforts on manageable and meaningful goals and expectations.

Domains cited through literature and focus groups with key stakeholders as most significantly related to school readiness and later school achievement are: 1) literacy development, 2) mathematical thinking, 3) social-emotional development, and 4) health and physical development. La Paro and Pianta (2000) conducted a review of 70 published studies, and they determined that academic and cognitive outcomes, such as language development and related skills, literacy, numeracy, and perceptual-motor skills, were stronger predictors of future school success ($r = 0.49$) than social or behavioral measures ($r = 0.27$). Another review by Duncan et al. (2007) using six longitudinal data sets linked mathematical skills most highly with future school success ($r = 0.33$). In focus groups, community leaders frequently cited social-emotional and health domains of school readiness as highly important. They believed that children need to be in good health and have established social-emotional skills as the foundation to begin to learn other important skills.

Strategy 1.3

Disseminate definition of school readiness widely and promote shared understanding and use of the definition.

Once developed, it is important that the definition of school readiness be widely disseminated across the state to ensure common interpretation of the definition and encourage clear communication across disciplines and service sectors (e.g., childcare services, 4-year-old pre-kindergartens, Head Start programs, faith-based preschools). Moreover, development of effective policies and practices related to defining and assessing school readiness among young children with subsequent feasible evaluation is sorely needed.

Understanding Influences on School Readiness

Many factors shape children's school readiness and later school success. The presence or absence of these influences during children's early years can greatly affect their school readiness. While these factors do not guarantee or preclude school readiness, they have been linked to academic achievement; therefore, it is important to define and discuss these elements within the context of school readiness.

Environmental Influences on School Readiness

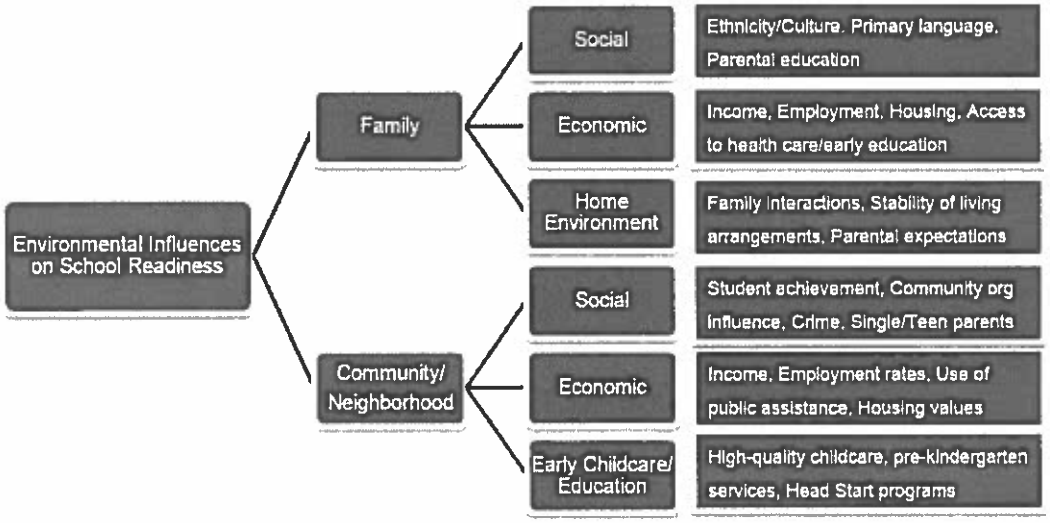
Environmental influences are the circumstances in children's lives that may affect their readiness for school both positively and negatively (e.g., income, health services, schools, childcare services). Through a literature review, work with the ECAC Data Leaders Consortium, and discussion with school readiness leaders, we broadly identified the most influential environmental factors as: 1) the family, and 2) the community or neighborhood.

Within the family domain, several additional aspects that influence school readiness are: 1) social elements such as family's ethnicity or culture, primary language, and parental education level; 2) economic factors including income, employment, housing, and access and use of health care and early childhood education; and 3) home environments such as family interactions, stability of living arrangements, and parental expectations for and involvement in the children's development and education (Duncan et al., 2007; Hattie, 2009; La Paro & Pianta, 2000; Linder, 2011).

Within the community and neighborhood realm, the three organizing aspects that influence school readiness are: 1) social factors such as student achievement early in their education, presence and influence of religious and other community organizations, presence of single or teen parents, and property and violent crime rates; 2) economic elements including income, use

of public assistance, employment rates, and housing values; and 3) access and use of high-quality childcare and early education.

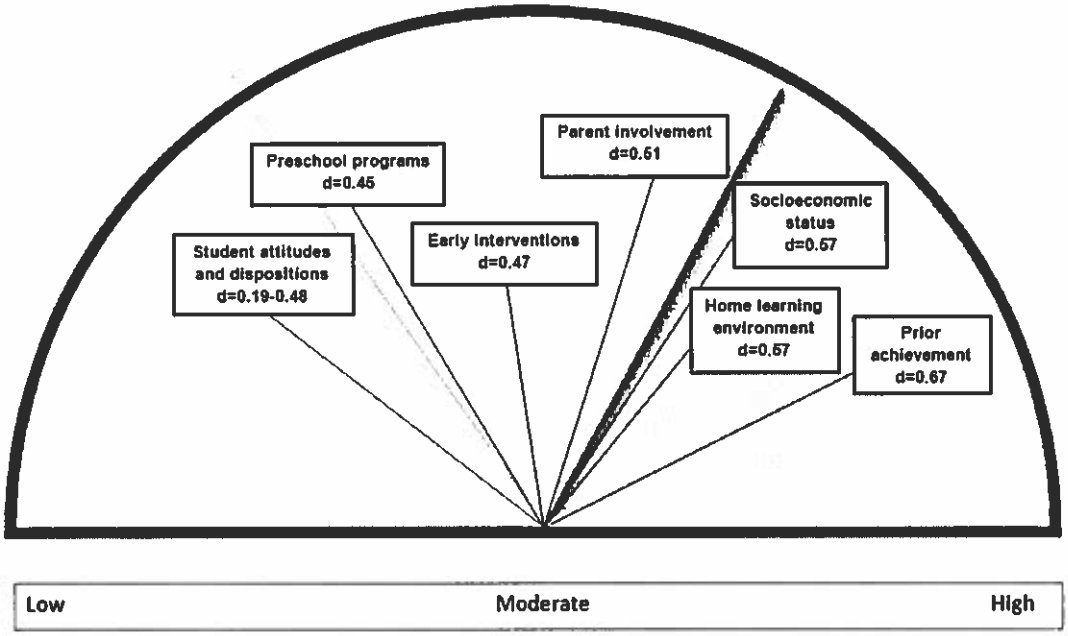
Figure 1. Environmental Influences on School Readiness



According to John Hattie, author of *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (2009), and a review of other well-known meta-analyses, the most powerful influences on school readiness are socioeconomic status, home learning environment, and parental involvement (for other reviews see Duncan et al., 2007; La Paro & Pianta, 2000; Linder, 2011). Prior achievement and attendance in high-quality preschool programs are also closely linked with student learning outcomes in kindergarten. Individual child factors, such as gender, ethnicity, and social-emotional dispositions, can influence their capacity for school readiness, but the associations are not as strong as prior achievement and high-quality preschool services (Duncan et al., 2007; Hattie, 2009; La Paro & Pianta, 2000; Linder, 2011).

These findings were formatted into the barometer image shown in Figure 2. The barometer is a visual representation of how strongly the factors are related to school readiness and is based on Hattie's reviews of meta-analyses (2009) that relate most to school readiness and early school success. The individual influences are shown by the relative magnitude of influence (i.e., effect sizes), and are categorized into low (d = 0 - 0.3), moderate (d = 0.4 - 0.6), and high (d = 0.7 - 1.0) effects categories. As noted earlier, children's prior achievement, which may be affected by high-quality early childhood services and supports, has the strongest relationship to school readiness.

Figure 2. Barometer of Factors that Influence School Readiness



* Barometer concept adapted from Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* New York: Routledge.

The focus groups conducted with school readiness leaders reaffirmed the findings from our literature review. When asked about the factors they believe facilitate school readiness, community leaders most frequently cited parental involvement and the importance of a positive home learning environment. Other factors related to the home environment, such as feeling safe, having basic needs met, and maintaining access to healthcare, were also mentioned. A third prominent influence noted was availability and access to high-quality childcare.

Measuring Environmental Influences on School Readiness

In addition to exploring child-level assessments, we also investigated methods to assess environmental influences on school readiness. Currently, some sources of state- and county-level school readiness data are available through the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics (ORS) and other agencies. Most notably, ORS provides data for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual report through the Kids Count Data Center, by state, county, and congressional district. Data provided through this resource are extensive and the information includes demographic characteristics as well as other measures such as education, economic well-being, family and community, health and safety and risky behaviors (Annie E. Casey

Foundation, 2012). This is one of the largest and most extensive repositories of educational, social, medical, and child well-being data. Nevertheless, the use of data available through ORS requires developing interagency agreements, sharing non-identifiable information, and negotiating costs associated with obtaining and analyzing data.

Additionally, several programs and studies have been established recently that may serve as models for measuring and assessing school readiness at the community level. The Greenville Readiness Initiative, which includes partners from the United Way of Greenville County, Greenville County First Steps, and the Institute for Child Success (ICS), developed the Readiness Roadmap. This program outlines objectives, strategies, and targets for developing Ready Families, Ready Early Care and Education, and Ready Communities. The goals in this initiative are designed to support parents in their role as their children's teachers, to have the highest quality early care and education system in the Southeast, and to include many high-needs communities in supporting school readiness. Each goal has a set of outcomes that allow for progress toward these goals to be tracked. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is also working with the ICS and stakeholders in Greenville County on community-level measures of school readiness that can be used to better understand school readiness in Greenville; those measures may be especially relevant to other communities and counties in South Carolina.

The Neighborhood Quality of Life Study, conducted by research faculty at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, is another current regional study that measures 20 variables related to the health and well-being of citizens in 173 areas of Charlotte. These variables measure the social, criminal, physical, and economic conditions of each area. Examples of variables are: average kindergarten scores, percent of children achieving at or above grade level, percent of births to adolescents, youth opportunity index, appearance index, and juvenile crime rate. The researchers implementing the study captured a comprehensive picture of Charlotte's well-being, and its methods could be applied to measuring community or environmental influences on school readiness in South Carolina.

Another contemporary program based on community-level data, the Promise Neighborhood Initiative, modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, aims to improve the health, social, community, and educational support for children in communities with extremely limited resources and significant barriers to education attainment. Resources are available through the Promise Neighborhood Research Consortium to gauge neighborhood well-being and

functioning. The "Neighborhood Checkup" involves conducting surveys of residents and organizations to better understand strengths and areas of improvement within designated areas.

Recommendation 2

Explore availability of and common format for community level data to be used by stakeholders in planning, developing, enhancing, and evaluating school readiness efforts.

Assessing School Readiness

Assessing school readiness can occur at different points in children's lives. Some screenings and assessments are designed for use in the earliest years of life; whereas, others specifically measure knowledge, skills, and abilities of preschool and kindergarten children. Other assessments were created primarily for identifying potential developmental delays, and others are used to plan and deliver instruction. The purposes and timeframes of screenings and assessments are important to obtain an accurate measure of school readiness for young children across time. Generally, young children are the most difficult population to assess because researchers encounter measurement problems related to reliability and validity. In addition, because children are served in multiple sectors of childcare and early childhood education, (e.g., childcare services, 4-year-old pre-kindergartens, Head Start programs, faith-based preschools) assessment practices vary widely and are often very limited or nonexistent. Nevertheless, authentic assessments have been developed and can be used with younger children for different purposes (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2010).

Purposes of Assessment

Assessing children's knowledge, skills, and abilities is critical because it informs instruction and establishes a framework for intentional teaching (cf. Epstein, 2007) with regard to essential child dispositions and skills. In addition, assessments can be used to better understand influences of prior experiences and educational services in an effort to promote effective strategies sooner rather than later (e.g., preschool screening and assessment, kindergarten screening and assessment). While assessments are often used for multiple purposes, it is important to highlight the four major functions of assessments to ensure that they are used in an effective and appropriate manner. These four functions are: 1) screening, 2) program planning, 3) progress monitoring, and 4) program evaluation (cf. Bagnato et al., 2010).

- Screening tools may be used to identify children who need further evaluation or to determine the proportion of children within a given population who meet well-specified developmental or health benchmarks (e.g., school readiness, presence of a developmental delay, dental problems).
- Program planning assessments are based on systematic gathering of information to better arrange and implement effective educational services; these assessments are especially important for many young children who live in poverty or for those who have developmental delays.
- Progress monitoring is related to children's acquisition and fluent use of newly acquired skills and dispositions in common real world contexts; teachers should monitor children's progress toward team developed objectives, benchmarks, goals, or standards at several strategic points throughout the year (e.g., fall, mid-year, spring) and across years (e.g., Pre-K->kindergarten->1st grade).
- Program evaluation measures provide teachers and administrators with information to assess programmatic goals or identify the need to implement additional teaching strategies and other services to continually improve their early childhood education programs for children and their families.

As stakeholders in South Carolina consider various measures to assess school readiness, the purposes of the assessments must be clearly established to select suitable measures and gather the appropriate information for evidence-based decisions.

Child-Level School Readiness Assessments

High-quality child-level school readiness assessments generally include the following characteristics: 1) aligned to school readiness domains (valid), 2) reliable when re-administered to children, 3) age appropriate for the children assessed, and 4) feasible for practitioners to implement and analyze. Based on the results from the early childhood coordinators survey, discussions with other states, and literature reviews, we explored several standardized child-level school readiness measures that meet these characteristics: 1) AIMSweb, 2) BRIGANCE Early Childhood assessments, 3) Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, 4) Early Development Instrument, 5) Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades, and 6) Teaching Strategies GOLD. For each, we interviewed the distributors and reviewed the assessments' existing psychometric information. Basic information about each is delineated below.

AIMSweb can be used for screening, progress monitoring, and program evaluation in kindergarten through eighth grade. This assessment includes a battery of short paper-pencil or oral measures for reading, language arts, and math that are administered to the students and scored by the teacher. The instructor then enters the scores into an online database that generates reports about student needs. There is an additional behavior monitoring system that can be used separately. AIMSweb reports that its assessments are aligned with the Common Core Standards. AIMSweb has been adopted and used extensively in Greenville County Schools to both identify and serve kindergarten-age children who need small group instruction in literacy skills. It is also used as their progress monitoring measure to inform small group instruction.

The BRIGANCE Early Childhood Complete Assessment and BRIGANCE Early Childhood Developmental Inventory are used to assess 1) language development, 2) literacy, 3) math and science, 4) social and emotional development, 5) physical health and development, and 6) approaches to learning in children from birth to 5 and birth to 7, respectively. The BRIGANCE measures are administered individually in a direct assessment format by teachers to children individually as an initial assessment and for progress monitoring.

The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL) is a screener used to assess motor skills, concepts, language, self-help, and social development of 3- to 6-year-olds. Teachers, or other familiar adults, complete the DIAL with children individually in a direct assessment format. The DIAL is useful for providing information about children's developmental level compared to other children in the same age range. Since the DIAL is designed as a screener, it should be used to identify children in need of further assessment or preschool services. Presently, the DIAL is the most common measure used by school district personnel in South Carolina in 4-year-old pre-kindergarten programs.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a population-based screener used to measure five broad domains in 4- to 5-year-olds: 1) physical health and well-being, 2) social competence, 3) emotional maturity, 4) language and cognitive development, and 5) communication skills and general knowledge. The EDI is a checklist of skills and abilities related to school success, which can be administered using paper or online versions. Teachers complete this information by rating all children in their classroom individually. The EDI is designed to provide information

about strengths and areas for improvement for groups of young children (e.g., school level, neighborhood level, county level). Although it is beginning to be used in California and other locales and states, to our knowledge, the EDI is not being used in South Carolina at this time.

Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades (MAP) is a computer-adaptive assessment that is usually administered at least two times each year to assess and measure children's progress. There are three components to MAP including the 1) Skills Checklist Tests, 2) Survey with Goals Tests, and 3) Early Literacy/Numeracy Tests. Collectively, these subtests assess kindergartener through second graders' skills in mathematics, reading, language usage, and science. MAP is commonly used by South Carolina school districts in Grade 1 and 2. MAP is linked with standards in numerous states, including South Carolina's PASS and HSAP.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an online, observational system that has characteristics similar to Pearson's Work Sampling System. This instrument can be used for progress monitoring from birth to kindergarten. It should be noted that GOLD is planning to expand through third grade to allow for longitudinal analysis. GOLD offers the capacity to measure 10 domains including: 1) social-emotional, 2) physical development, 3) language, 4) cognitive, 5) literacy, 6) mathematics, 7) science and technology, 8) social studies, 9) arts, and 10) English language acquisition. GOLD reports alignment with the Common Core Standards Initiative and can be linked with state standards (e.g., Delaware, New Jersey). It has been adopted by several states as a statewide assessment and is beginning to be used by several Head Start Programs in parts of South Carolina and the nation. Further information about each of these assessments is explained in Table 1 in Appendix A.

School Readiness in Other States

We contacted early childhood personnel in several states across the country, including California, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, and Minnesota to learn about the various assessments that are currently being used or considered to measure school readiness. All of the states have identified a definition to guide their assessment practices and have mandated statewide school readiness measures for all kindergarteners. Of this group, Minnesota was the exception to this pattern because they assessed school readiness by taking a random sample of 10 percent of students within the state. Four of the states developed a new assessment or adapted a current assessment to fit their needs: Maryland and Minnesota adapted Pearson's Work Sampling System to align with their current standards; Florida's Department of Education created the

Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) from the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR); and Delaware adopted the existing Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. All of these assessments measure between five and seven domains including physical development, the arts, social-emotional development, mathematical thinking, and language and literacy. Table 2 in Appendix B shows further details of how school readiness is measured in these states.

Early Childhood Assessments Used in South Carolina

To better understand how school readiness and early school achievement are currently assessed in South Carolina, we developed and administered a survey in collaboration with Pam Wills and Penny Danielson at the South Carolina Department of Education and Dan Wuori with First Steps. This survey was completed by early childhood coordinators or their designees within school districts. We received surveys from approximately 75% of school districts in South Carolina.

The survey results demonstrate that there are some common assessments used in pre-kindergarten (DIAL) and early elementary grades (MAP). The survey also indicated that no single measure is used consistently across the state. Even when the same measure is used in many districts, it may be administered differently, used for different purposes, and the information is retained in local districts.

The most commonly used assessment in 4-year-old pre-kindergartens across South Carolina is the DIAL. Approximately 89% of responding school districts in the state use this assessment in some fashion in pre-kindergarten classes. About half of the responding school districts reported administering this assessment once per year and the remaining half reported performing the DIAL twice per year, usually at the point of entry in pre-kindergarten (fall) and at the end of the academic year (spring).

In kindergarten through second grade, MAP is the most commonly used assessment to determine student achievement and progress. Approximately 40% of districts use MAP in kindergarten, 60% use MAP by first grade, and 68% use MAP in second grade. Other assessments used in the early elementary grades are the Dominie Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolio, the Developmental Reading Assessment, and district-developed

assessments, which are employed to assess pre-literacy and literacy and other areas such as pre-numeracy and numeracy.

Recommendation 3

Select a standardized assessment(s) to measure school readiness at kindergarten entry that meets the following characteristics: 1) aligned to school readiness domains (valid), 2) reliable, 3) age appropriate, and 4) feasible to implement and analyze.

Strategy 3.1

Carefully review and pilot test one or more standardized assessments to determine feasibility of implementation and usefulness of results for selected purposes.

Assessments are designed to be administered, reported, analyzed, and used for specific purposes. Deviations in the administration and use of an assessment can compromise and severely limit the validity and reliability of the assessment process. Because of these issues, the assessment administration process must follow a uniform and precise process, so the results are effective for prospective planning, backward mapping, intervention, comparisons, or other policy purposes. We recommend the creation and dissemination of effective professional development programs that address the purposes and practices of assessments. The trainings must include practitioners, administrators, and parents across the state of South Carolina. Questions, concerns, and difficulties must be addressed to ensure that early childhood assessment results can be interpreted and used effectively to make meaningful evidence-informed decisions about early childhood education and children's school readiness.

Strategy 3.2

Provide professional development to practitioners, administrators, and other early childhood stakeholders related to the purposes and appropriate administration and interpretation of selected assessments to promote the effective use of assessment results.

Evaluating School Readiness in South Carolina

The purpose of evaluating school readiness in South Carolina should not be to merely label children as "ready" or "not ready" or to identify particular schools and districts by their levels of readiness. Rather, the evaluation of school readiness across time should allow for more effective statewide evidence-informed decisions about early childhood services. In addition, evaluation should be based on data-identified local and state needs to encourage focused school readiness efforts and promote children's early elementary school success. Understanding and assessing the background knowledge and skills of children when they enter pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is critical for planning appropriate and effective instruction to ensure they make progress during the early elementary years. Personnel in schools and school districts can use overall school readiness information to target specific curricular and professional development areas to be addressed with their overall kindergarten populations.

More importantly, strengths and areas of concerns can be used to inform communities and early childhood educators' efforts among the birth to 5-year-old preschool populations. The goal is to reduce or eliminate "starting gate inequities" that often linger well into kindergarten and much beyond if not addressed early and adequately. These well-known "inequities" have the potential to reduce both academic and career successes of many South Carolinians. In addition, exploring school readiness assessment results in connection with later state-mandated achievement results (PASS) has the potential to identify influences of environmental and child-level factors on academic achievement so they can be addressed whenever feasible.

Recommendation 4

Establish an on-going mechanism to evaluate school readiness in South Carolina to inform early childhood decision-making and resource planning.

To better understand, evaluate, and disseminate information about school readiness, an entity, with limited incentives or repercussions attached to results, is needed to fully explore and report on state, county, and community level findings. The entity, potentially a Center of Excellence for School Readiness, could work to provide on-going and contemporary information about research and recommended practices to stakeholders who are responsible for the early childhood education services in our communities including First Steps, the South Carolina Department of Education, the Center for Child Care Career Development, teacher preparation

programs at South Carolina colleges and universities, and other organizations and entities that are stakeholders in early childhood education as needed.

As a school readiness definition is developed, domains are established, community-level data are gathered and organized, child-level assessments are identified and administered, and professional development is implemented, this entity could carefully analyze the information, provide overall recommendations to essential stakeholders to improve policies and practices, and provide detailed descriptions to state- and county-level stakeholders related to school readiness in South Carolina.

Conclusions

School readiness has moved to the forefront of early childhood education conversations and services across the nation. Nevertheless, easy answers and "magic bullets" about how to proceed do not exist and continued work is greatly needed both locally and statewide. Based on school readiness work since November 2011 (e.g., review of literature, school district survey, discussions with essential stakeholders), we believe that our recommendations provide a reasonable and effective approach to promote continued progress toward improved school readiness in South Carolina. Defining, understanding, assessing, evaluating, and providing targeted and responsive professional development are necessary steps in promoting effective early education services to young South Carolinians and their families.

Each of the four areas described within the system, 1) defining, 2) understanding, 3) assessing, and 4) evaluating school readiness, are essential elements and operate best together in a feedback system that informs and continually enhances evidence-informed decision-making regarding school readiness efforts. Personnel and stakeholders in many other states and communities have defined school readiness; however, without defining well-targeted and critical domains and then promoting a common understanding of the adopted definition with accompanying appropriate assessments to measure progress toward that definition, early childhood stakeholders' efforts may not be effectively used to inform day-to-day policies and practices.

Other groups have adopted school readiness assessments without a clear and concise definition or identifiable domains, which may cause the assessment to become the de facto definition. In addition, assessments that are not understood well or effectively analyzed to

promote attention toward strengths and areas of concern may become mechanical measures performed but not well used. Finally, evaluators' efforts are only as good as information in which they base their findings; therefore, without a clear and concise definition, well-targeted domains, community-level data, assessment results, and other information about children and families, future evaluation efforts cannot provide meaningful information and conclusions on which to base evidence-informed policies and practices decisions.

At this point, we are not recommending a school readiness index. We believe the systems-based approach set forth in this report offers the most effective framework to guide South Carolina in its efforts to better prepare children for kindergarten and later school success. The systems approach that we have recommended integrates the lessons learned, experiences, and best practices to better understand and improve young children's school readiness. We believe implementing this type of approach promotes clear focus on the school readiness of South Carolina children and provides a framework for stakeholders in early childhood education to employ effective strategies, policies, and practices. Having a shared understanding of school readiness promotes more productive collaboration among all community stakeholders including families. Selecting standardized assessments aligned with the definition and domains of school readiness allows stakeholders to determine areas of strengths and concerns in populations of children. This encourages more effective, targeted services prior to school entry as well as appropriate educational strategies and practices to be used in Pre-K-12 settings. Finally, evaluation of school readiness promotes the use of data from multiple sources to enhance our understanding of children's needs across the state of South Carolina. The evaluation indudes sharing data in an easy to interpret format to assist state- and county-level groups in planning and implementing strategies and services.

The South Carolina Challenge

As mentioned earlier, school readiness in early childhood education is in the forefront of contemporary educational issues in the United States. Nevertheless, merely expanding early childhood services without thoughtful development of a comprehensive system to assess and evaluate young children's school readiness is probably not the best solution. Convergent evidence across several decades indicates that early childhood education services in kindergarten and before have meaningful positive effects on young children but only when those services are of ***high-quality and sustained over time*** (i.e., alignment of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten and early elementary educational services and goals; cf. Barnett, 2013). The type of comprehensive systems model that focuses on language and literacy, mathematical thinking,

and social emotional development that we recommend will support a renewed focus on a continuous improvement model of early childhood education services for young children and their families in South Carolina.

Appendix A: Selected Assessments

Table 1. Selected Assessments

Assessment	Age/ Grade	Purposes	Format	Psychometric Information	Measures
AIMSweb	K-8	Screening, progress monitoring, program evaluation	Teacher rating of individual student skills completed up to three times per year	Yes	1. Reading 2. Language arts 3. Math 4. Behavior
BRIGANCE Early Childhood Complete Assessment/ Early Childhood Developmental Inventory	0-5 year/ 0-7 year olds	Screening and progress monitoring	Teacher-administered assessment of individual students	Yes	1. Language development 2. Literacy 3. Math and science 4. Social-emotional development 5. Physical health and development 6. Approaches to learning
Developmental Indicators for the Assessments of Learning (DIAL)	3-6 years olds	Screening	Teacher-administered assessment of individual students	Yes	1. Motor 2. Language 3. Self-help 4. Social development
Early Development Instrument (EDI)	4-5 year olds	Population based screening	Teacher rating of individual student skills	Yes	1. Physical health and well-being 2. Social competence 3. Emotional maturity 4. Language and cognitive development 5. Communication skills and general knowledge
Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades (MAP)	K-2	Screening and progress monitoring	Computer-adaptive assessment to be completed by children up to three times per year	Yes	1. Mathematics 2. Reading 3. Language usage 4. Science

Teaching Strategies GOLD	0-K, planned expansion to Grade 3	Progress monitoring	Teacher rating of individual student skills with capability to catalog children's performance (work sampling)	Yes	1. Social-emotional 2. Physical 3. Language 4. Cognitive 5. Literacy 6. Mathematics 7. Science and technology 8. Social studies 9. Art 10. English language acquisition

*References for detailed psychometric information are available at the end of this report.

Appendix B: School Readiness Assessments in Other States

Table 2. School Readiness Assessments Used in other States

State	Definition	Legislation	Assessment	Measures	Domains
Delaware	Yes	Mandated, all children	Delaware Early Learner Survey (DE-ELS)	Teaching Strategies GOLD	1. Cognitive 2. English language acquisition 3. Language 4. Literacy 5. Math 6. Physical development 7. Social-emotional
Florida	Yes	Mandated, all children	Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)	Developed by the Florida Department of Education, based on the Early Childhood Observation System(ECHOS) and the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR)	1. Language and literacy 2. Mathematics 3. Social and personal skills 4. Science 5. Social studies 6. Physical development 7. Creative arts
Maryland	Yes	Mandated, all children	Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)	Developed by the Maryland State Department of Education, based on Pearson's Work Sampling System	1. Personal and social development 2. Language and literacy 3. Mathematical thinking 4. Scientific thinking 5. Social studies 6. Art 7. Physical development
Minnesota	Yes	Mandated, 10% random sample	Minnesota Work Sampling System	Developed by the Minnesota State Department of Education, based on Pearson's Work Sampling System	1. Physical development 2. Art 3. Personal and social development 4. Mathematical thinking 5. Language and literacy

Appendix C: Psychometric References by Selected Assessment

AIMSweb

National Center on Intensive Intervention, American Institutes for Research. (n.d.). *Academic Progress Monitoring GOM*. Retrieved from http://www.intensiveintervention.org/chart/progress-monitoring

Pearson, Inc. (2012). *AIMSweb: Technical Manual*. Bloomington, MN: Pearson, Inc.

Brigance Early Childhood Development System/Early Childhood Screen 3-6 Years

Brigance Early Childhood Research, Curriculum Associates LLC. (n.d.). *BRIGANCE® Early Childhood Screens: Standardization and Validation Research Highlights*. Retrieved from http://www.casamples.com/downloads/Brig-EC-research.pdf

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Developmental Indicators for the Assessments of Learning

Halle, T., Zaslow, M., Wessel, J., Moodie, S., & Darling-Churchill, K. (2011). *Understanding and Choosing Assessments and Developmental Screeners for Young Children: Profiles of Selected Measures*. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Early Development Instrument

Janus, M., Brinkman, S., Duku, E., Hertzman, C., Santos, R., Sayers, M., & Schroeder, J. (2007). *The Early Development Instrument: A population-based measure for communities, A handbook on development, properties, and use*. Hamilton, ON: Offord Centre for Child Studies.

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Early childhood education in South Carolina includes a diverse collection of families, early care and education programs, and schools where children have the opportunity to begin a lifelong love of learning. The quality of early care, development, and learning impacts both individual child success and the state's workforce as a whole. High quality early education is beneficial for all children, but research shows that it is especially beneficial for children at high risk for academic failure.[1] South Carolina invests in services to improve the quality of early childhood education with the short-term goal of increasing school readiness and the longer-term goals of enabling later academic achievement and creating a competitive workforce.[2]

Families, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs, pre-kindergartens, and early intervention programs each offer children opportunities to become curious about their world. While approximately 80% of children ages birth through four are at home with a family caregiver[3], children may attend early care programs out of the home as young as six weeks old for forty or more hours per week.[4] Whether our state intentionally creates rich early care and learning opportunities depends largely on a shared understanding of what matters in early childhood education, why it matters, and what factors leaders should consider in making early care and learning policy decisions.

Because educational policy decisions can often be highly politicized, it is essential that policymakers, educational leaders, and community members have independent research-based information upon which to ground their decisions. This brief helps prepare decision-makers to understand the early care and learning environment, how other states are addressing early care and learning, and it lays out several key considerations in developing a statewide kindergarten entry assessment.

(fragmented early care and learning)

Early learning experiences impact later academic success. Academic achievement in prior grades is one of the best individual predictors of academic success.[5] Mastering a range of cognitive, social, emotional, language and literacy skills also makes learning at later ages more efficient. This, in turn, makes learning easier and more likely to continue.[6]

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(by)

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Before they enter school, many young children are exposed to a variety of environments. For example, a child may be at home with a parent for a few years, in a child care center when the parent is at work, or in pre-kindergarten before entering five-year-old kindergarten. Typically, the personnel working in early care and learning environments do not communicate with each other on an ongoing basis. In particular, vulnerable children tend to shift among family, center-based, and publicly funded settings over time.[7] In many instances across the state, each setting provides children with different, and sometime conflicting, early learning skills. If each of these environments were aligned on how to help children achieve the specific skills needed for academic and lifelong success, then countless resources spent on teaching the most basic early literacy and numeracy skills—or worse yet, undoing poor habits—could be used to prepare children for future success.

Part of the reason early care and learning settings are fragmented is because child care centers, Head Start programs, pre-kindergartens, and early childhood intervention programs each have their own funding streams, mandates, and standards by which they are measured. Within a single state such as South Carolina, as many as thirty federal funding streams may support programs that impact young children and their families.[8] With the exception of Head Start and Early Head Start, home visiting programs supported by the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, virtually all program and early learning content standards are designed and implemented by states.[9]

There are also numerous state agencies, private nonprofits, and faith-based organizations that fund or operate early learning programs in South Carolina. If a funder requires it, each program may have its own data collection and reporting requirements. Within the current early care and learning landscape, coordinated accountability measures, shared definitions, or procedures for maintaining reliable, valid data across early childhood programs are few and far between, and often non-existent.

> “The level of child development necessary to ensure early school success is measured in the following domains: physical health and motor skills; emotional and social competence; language and literacy development; and mathematical thinking and cognitive skills.”

Compounding this complexity is the fact that families, and in particular parents at home with children, have very limited guidance on how to prepare their children for success in school. When South Carolina has a clear, shared understanding of what it means to be ready for kindergarten, we can consistently communicate that understanding in every early care and learning environment for children.

(defining and measuring school readiness)

A threshold step in unifying South Carolina’s diverse early care and learning system is to begin to speak a common language. A statewide definition of school readiness that early care and learning stakeholders agree upon is essential. Although there has been significant work across the nation, many states grapple with how to define school readiness. There is no common, nationally agreed upon definition of kindergarten readiness.[10]

Despite the work that still remains to be done, important groundwork has begun in South Carolina on this initial step. Legislation introduced in the 2013-2014 Session of the General Assembly defines school readiness as, “the level of child development necessary to ensure early school success as measured in the following domains: physical health and motor skills; emotional and social competence; language and literacy development; and mathematical thinking and cognitive skills.”[11]

> “When South Carolina measures school readiness statewide and uses that data to continually improve early care and learning experiences for young children, we will systematically get children ready for school and ensure that they succeed once they get there.”

The bill also requires the state to adopt a description of school readiness that includes, among other things, specific characteristics of a child ready for school, requirements for schools, educators, and caregivers, and characteristics of the optimal learning environment. The bill also establishes benchmarks to be used by the First Steps Board, local First Step partnership boards, and agencies that administer programs to benefit preschool children.

To begin to put this conceptual definition and common language into action, several states are working on a specific type of school readiness measure, the kindergarten entry assessment. Kindergarten entry assessments are used to look backward—as a tool to improve programs to promote school readiness and to look forward—to ensure that children continue to grow and learn once they enter school.[12] When South Carolina measures school readiness statewide and uses that data to continually improve early care and learning experiences for young children, we will systematically get children ready for school and ensure that they succeed once they get there.

(kindergarten entry assessments)

A kindergarten entry assessment is an important tool in helping to better understand and address achievement gaps earlier in children’s development.[13] Across the state, most school districts assess students at some point in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade.[14] Why, then, does South Carolina need a statewide kindergarten entry assessment? Simply, kindergarten is the first point in which virtually all children in South Carolina are located in a single setting. Since public school serves the vast majority of students in the state, kindergarten is the first opportunity to obtain a comprehensive statewide snapshot of students’ skills, thinking, and developmental status.

Measuring school readiness at the beginning of kindergarten also provides valuable information about the experiences children had prior to entering school—be they experiences in the home, in child care, or in pre-kindergarten. Also depending on the type of assessment instrument chosen, measuring school readiness at the beginning of children’s entry into the K-12 system can serve as a baseline for kindergarten instruction and for measuring future progress.[15] Finally, a uniform statewide kindergarten entry assessment can help provide information about young children who move among schools or from one district to another.[16]

South Carolinians have long understood the importance of a statewide school readiness assessment. Over three decades ago, South Carolina was one of the first states in the nation to develop a statewide school readiness assessment. In 1979 the Basic Skills Assessment Program required statewide testing and reporting for children in public schools. Part of this program was a readiness assessment administered at the beginning of first grade called the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB), which was administered between 1979 and 2001.[17] The results were used to guide teacher instruction and meet children’s individual learning needs.[18]

In 2001, the state replaced the CSAB with a new assessment tool, the South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA). Unlike the CSAB, the SCRA was not a test given at a point in time, but instead was a year-long assessment during the kindergarten and first grade years of school.[19] The SCRA involved teacher observation and sampling of student work to measure an individual child’s performance. The SCRA measured three domains: English/language arts,

math, and personal and social development. It was administered for the last time in the 2008 school year as a statewide requirement.[20] Since that time, school districts across the state have used a variety of assessments at various points in the elementary years. Currently, there is no common, statewide measure and what data is collected is retained at the district level.

The reasons for developing a statewide kindergarten entry assessment tool are many. An ideal kindergarten entry assessment tool would provide this information on two different levels—the individual level and the aggregate level. It is important to keep both functions in mind while developing the assessment tool.

At the individual level, information about students' strengths and weaknesses can enhance learning in kindergarten. An assessment that provides information on an individual level can also be valuable for teachers and parents. For teachers, the results can guide work with students to develop and learn during the coming school year. For parents, the results can provide key information to engage parents in an active role to help their children learn at home.[21]

> "Statewide kindergarten entry assessments alone do not provide a complete picture of how to continually improve early care and learning opportunities for young children."

At the aggregate level, a statewide kindergarten entry assessment can determine the extent to which children are ready for school and identify populations that need additional intervention.[22] This information can be used to determine overarching needs for specific populations.

This type of information can also be used to design professional training for early childhood program providers and elementary teachers about the unique needs of specific groups. Looking at kindergarten entry assessments over time can also help communities determine what policies and practices are impacting school readiness. Kindergarten entry assessment data can assist in understanding patterns, and in a broader sense, whether specific early childhood community interventions are successful.

Ongoing training, quality assurance mechanisms, and continual evaluation are essential to implement and sustain a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. Without these assurances, there is no way to ensure kindergarten entry assessments are implemented properly and that data are used consistently, accurately, and appropriately.[23] Lessons learned from the South Carolina Readiness Assessment highlight the importance of supporting and monitoring kindergarten teachers as they administer the assessment. Using the data to improve instruction through coaches, online platforms, and higher education teacher training is of the utmost importance.[24] Periodic refresher training, oversight, spot-checking, and ongoing reliability studies are also key components of successful kindergarten entry assessment programs.[25]

The importance of ongoing evaluation and feedback loop for any kindergarten entry assessment cannot be overstated. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) specifically address the importance of evaluation. The Associations' position paper emphasizes that a goal of evaluation is to determine intended as well as unintended results.[26] Ongoing evaluation ensures that the assessment is being administered properly, that the assessment is providing accurate data, and that the data are being used properly to inform services, especially instruction. Evaluation is a crucial step in ensuring usability and continually improving the information obtained from a kindergarten entry assessment.

Despite the important information that a statewide kindergarten entry assessment can provide, it is crucial to understand the limits of that information. There is national consensus in early education that assessments should not be used to determine whether children should be held back from kindergarten.[27] Furthermore, kindergarten entry assessments should also not be used as the sole indicator of early childhood program performance. The reason is simple--the myriad of factors that influence a child's academic success are nearly impossible to quantify and untangle. Factors may include traits intrinsic to the child, such as a natural curiosity or persistence. Academic success may also be influenced by family conditions such as significant economic hardship, limited parental education, and the presence of toxic stress in the home.[28] Using a kindergarten entry assessment as the sole high stakes tool to determine which early childhood care and learning programs are effective would do more harm than good.

A statewide kindergarten entry assessment is a necessary but not sufficient piece of information that can be used in combination with other data to explore which early childhood programs, kindergarten teachers, or curricula are effective.[29] However, statewide kindergarten entry assessments alone do not provide a complete picture of how to continually improve early care and learning opportunities for children.

(national kindergarten entry assessment movement)

Nationally, there continues to be significant progress in developing and improving statewide kindergarten entry assessments. As of 2010, when the National Conference of State Legislatures published a state survey, 25 states had a kindergarten entry assessment system.[30] An additional four states were in the process of developing or implementing a kindergarten entry assessment system.[31] In 2012, just two years later, combined information from the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge[32] funding competition indicated that 42 states had developed or were in the process of developing a kindergarten entry assessment.[33] In short, the development of kindergarten entry assessments is a dynamic and rapidly evolving field.

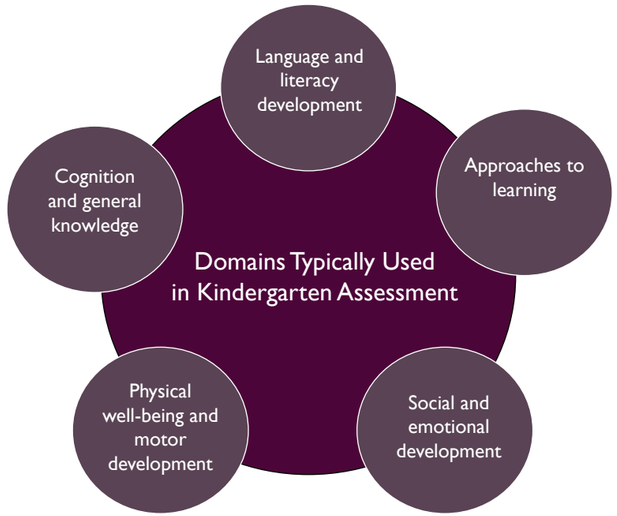
> "Developing and continuously using a statewide kindergarten entry assessment tool will significantly impact and focus the state's attention on what matters for children."

Several states have joined forces to work on kindergarten entry assessments in formal and informal consortiums. South Carolina, eight other states and the District of Columbia, are a part of a US Department of Education grant that is exploring a kindergarten through third grade assessment system.[34] This North Carolina-led consortium is designed to develop kindergarten entry through third grade assessment recommendations, informed by the practices and needs of each state and also by national researchers who are part of the consortium. Meanwhile, participants continue to determine the appropriate direction for their state. While other states are receiving funding for their participation, South Carolina is not. South Carolina's involvement in this consortium is an important first step in learning from other states, however significant work across time will be required to actually implement an assessment system.

Because most states across the nation have either developed, procured, or are in the process of developing statewide kindergarten entry assessments, there is a wealth of information available about other states' experiences and plans.[35] Readiness assessments have varied across the nation regarding the number of children in the state who are assessed, the areas of child development that are assessed, and how the information from the assessments is used.[36]

(domains)

In 2010 there was no consensus among states on what areas of child development a kindergarten assessment should measure. Of the 20 states that required a particular statewide instrument, 11 states assessed between five and nine domains of kindergarten readiness. The remaining nine states only evaluated literacy readiness.[37]



By January 2012, however, consensus around five key domains emerged among many states.[38] Thirty-five of 37 states that applied for Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge proposed how they would revise or develop a statewide kindergarten entry assessment that covered five domains. The five domains include: 1) language and literacy development; 2) cognition and general knowledge, including early mathematics and early scientific development; 3) approaches to learning; 4) physical well-being and motor development, including adaptive skills; and 5) social and emotional development.

The South Carolina Readiness Assessment instrument measured over 40 indicators in three domains: English/language arts, math, and personal and social development.[39]

Legislation introduced in the 2013-2014 Session of the General Assembly outlines five kindergarten readiness domains: 1)Physical health and motor skills; 2)Emotional and social competence; 3)Language and literacy development; 4)Mathematical thinking and cognitive skills; and 5)Approaches to learning.[40]

Adding more domains to a kindergarten entry assessment requires a tradeoff. The more domains that are measured, the more expensive and time consuming the assessment becomes to administer. Additional domains also place a burden upon teachers to complete the assessment and students to take the assessment. When the state previously used South Carolina Readiness Assessment instrument, there were over 40 indicators and the assessment was given three times per year. A lesson from the state's experience with the SCRA suggests focusing on fewer indicators and reducing the burden on teachers to administer the test. An additional concern about more detailed assessment is the burden on information systems in analyzing and interpreting the data produced. At least one state has articulated these concerns as important considerations in choosing its kindergarten entry assessment.[41]

Regardless of whether three, four or five domains are measured, any kindergarten entry assessment must be linked to the standards being taught in kindergarten. Every state that applied for the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge aligned the state's early learning standards and kindergarten entry assessment.[42] South Carolina's Good Start, Grow Smart Early Learning Standards were developed by a multi-organizational taskforce led by the Office of Early Childhood Education at the South Carolina Department of Education. These

voluntary standards for preschool children include five domains of development:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Mathematics
- Language and Literacy
- Physical Development and Health

An important step in developing a South Carolina kindergarten entry assessment is to take state early learning standards into account.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) have also underscored the need for a systematic approach to link assessments with curriculum and instruction.[43] Aligning assessment instruments with early learning standards helps to reinforce the concept that the skills children need to be ready to enter school should be closely aligned with skills being taught in school.

(direct assessments vs. teacher observational assessments)

Another consideration in creating a statewide kindergarten entry assessment is whether the assessment will be administered directly to children, or measured by teacher observation of students' work or performance over time.[44] Both direct and observation assessments have been used in South Carolina. The Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB) was a direct assessment given at a point in time and the South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA) was a series of teacher observations of student work during the kindergarten year of school.

Nationally, there has been a dramatic movement towards observational assessments. Almost all of the 37 states submitting applications for the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge proposed using an observational or "authentic" assessment instrument administered by kindergarten teachers during the first two months of school.[45]

There are several disadvantages of direct assessments.

- Direct assessments often require schools to purchase testing kits and tools
- Some direct assessments for young children, if given one-on-one to the child, may also require specialized knowledge to administer
- Often these assessments are adaptive and require the person administering the test to ask different questions depending on the answers a child gives
- A single point-in-time test cannot comprehensively capture all of the cumulative experiences in the home, in programs, and in the community that a young child has experienced[46]
- At times, direct assessment of child performance require some young children to use objects less familiar to them, such as using a pencil and paper or computer

Observational assessments, on the other hand, can provide more complete information about a child because the child is in a familiar setting with familiar people. However, observational or "authentic" assessments can be expensive to administer in both the time it takes to observe a child and also in the time it takes to train teachers to give the assessment instrument consistently. Observational assessments may also be biased depending on the person conducting the assessment and may not be standardized if completed in different contexts for different children.[47] Ultimately, the quality of data from observational kindergarten

entry assessments depends on teachers' ability to administer assessments and record the results appropriately, accurately, and consistently across multiple children and school-related circumstances.[48]

Both types of assessments may have costly licensing, reporting, and analysis fees. Often these fees are associated with the expenses of the materials necessary to administer the assessment, conducting ongoing research about the assessment, and updating reporting and analysis features.

With finite financial and human resources, it is important to balance the expense of assessment with the quality of information provided. States that are confronting this decision consider the desired use of the data as well as the feasibility and costs of implementing these major types of assessments. Pilot testing of differing assessments can lead to better decision making related to the type of kindergarten entry assessment to select. In addition, an understanding of assessments currently used in the early grades may identify commonly administered direct or observational assessments across the state.

(professional development)

Most kindergarten entry assessments require significant professional development for teachers who administer the assessment. Professional development is needed to ensure that those administering the test understand the purpose and guidelines of conducting the assessment. If appropriate professional development is not provided, assessment results are compromised and cannot be used to effectively make local or state-level decisions. Picture-based, paper-pencil, and computer-adapted direct assessments generally require the least professional development because most of the assessment content is given directly to the child.

Some direct assessments, particularly those designed for young children, require some questioning or direction-giving by the administrator. Observational assessments typically require significantly more professional development as observers gain an understanding of attributes that they are observing and methods of scoring those attributes. While this professional development may be time-consuming, it is necessary to promote a better overall understanding of the child's skills and abilities and potentially lead to more focus on areas in future classroom interactions and instruction.

(random sampling vs. administering to all kindergarteners)

Nationally, the trend is to assess all entering kindergarteners. In 2010, of the 25 states with kindergarten entry assessments, 21 assessed every entering kindergartener and three included a large percentage of kindergarteners.[49] Two states that did not require assessments enacted legislation for the assessments to become mandatory in the future.[50] Minnesota is the only state in the nation that has reported using a representative sample of students. [51]

Using a random sample of students makes the assessment significantly less expensive to

administer. Furthermore, sampling reduces the potential for misuse of the data produced.[52] However, administering a kindergarten entry assessment to a random sample of children limits the ability to use the kindergarten entry assessment to inform instruction on an individual basis.[53] This significantly limits the usefulness of a kindergarten entry assessment for both teachers and parents. Nevada's Early Childhood Advisory Council found that if a kindergarten entry assessment adds value for educators and school districts, then the assessment is more likely to be successful.[54] Also, not administering a kindergarten assessment to every child means that data from the test may not be useful to evaluators who later want to examine the impact of not being ready for school on other poor educational outcomes later in life.

> "If decision makers want to use a kindergarten entry assessment to inform individualized teaching at home and in the school, then the assessment should be administered to all students."

While there are several considerations in determining whether to administer a kindergarten entry assessment to all children or a random sample, if decision makers want to use a kindergarten entry assessment to inform individualized teaching at home and in the school, then the assessment should be administered to all students.

(state-created vs. proprietary assessments)

Several high-quality nationally-recognized kindergarten entry assessments have been designed by companies that specialize in assessment instruments. Many have particular strengths and are appropriate for children with differing cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some assessments measure development in a particular domain such as literacy skills. Others assess multiple areas of child development.[55]

Some of the more widely recognized assessments include Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Early Development Instrument (EDI), Teaching Strategies Gold, Work Sampling System (WSS), and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Almost all of these instruments are used in school districts in South Carolina.

Many proprietary assessments have a research base that supports how the assessment should be used. For example, the EDI was specifically designed to provide information at the neighborhood level to specifically plan community-based interventions and prevention strategies.[56] Much of the research is from studies in Australia where the EDI has been implemented nationwide since 2009.

Several states have created their own assessment tools.[57] State-created assessment instruments can be tailored to better reflect state-specific learning standards and can be less costly than proprietary assessment materials. However, state-created instruments should also meet reliability and validity standards. Reliability is the degree to which an assessment provides the same result when different people administer the assessment to the same child. Validity is the degree to which an assessment measures what the assessment is intended to measure.[58] Ensuring that state-created assessments meet these standards permits results to be analyzed for trends over time. However, reliability and validity testing is often time and labor intensive.[59] Minimizing the importance of reliability and validity standards can result in data that may not predict kindergarten readiness and may not truly reflect a child's development in various areas.

Whether South Carolina chooses to develop its own assessment or use a proprietary

kindergarten entry assessment, or a combination of both, it is crucial to understand costs, flexibility, validity, and reliability of either a state-created or proprietary assessment.

(reporting data)

As mentioned above, assessments can provide valuable information about children's educational trajectories. This type of information may be particularly helpful in looking at educational outcomes over time for groups of children by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. However, kindergarten entry assessment data are most useful when the data are reported to the state level and connected with other data about similarly situated children.

Many states have a state longitudinal educational data system, or SLEDS. Several states have recognized the need to integrate kindergarten entry assessment data into the state's longitudinal data system.[60] A state longitudinal education data system can link data from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary and into the workforce, to help decision makers to answer a broad range of program and policy questions and target improvement strategies. [61]

While housing the data in the state longitudinal educational data system is critical for longitudinal analysis and the inclusion of multiple factors in analyses, counties and local decision-makers need access to these data as well. Data dashboards that allow decision makers to look at multiple data points related to their program, school, or community are gaining popularity for their ease of use and provision of clear data points.

South Carolina is fortunate to have the significant expertise of the Budget and Control Board's Office of Research and Statistics Data Warehouse. Much of the data needed for a state longitudinal educational data system is already collected and reported at the state level. Nevertheless, efforts to improve access to these data are an important component of an effective kindergarten entry assessment system.

Next Steps

- CONVENE a stakeholders group to finalize a kindergarten readiness description. A statewide definition and description of kindergarten readiness will provide a common framework for understanding and promoting kindergarten readiness across the spectrum of early care and learning environments. Including families, early education programs, and schools will also help align a statewide kindergarten readiness definition and description with South Carolina early learning standards and K-12 learning standards.
- IDENTIFY kindergarten entry assessments that are aligned with the state's definition of school readiness and provide data necessary to understand children's progress in key domains. This will allow for resource planning and promote longitudinal analysis of progress at the state and community levels.
- PILOT TEST multiple kindergarten entry assessments and gain feedback from local assessment experts, instructional leaders including teachers, and county and state-level early childhood decision makers. Input from teachers who will be administering the test, will be key to sustaining and ensuring the success of any assessment that is adopted.
- Most important, a pilot process allows decision makers to EVALUATE the professional development needs related to the assessments, feasibility of the assessments within school settings, effective reporting processes, and the appropriate data to guide resource planning and analysis of progress.

(conclusion)

This is an encouraging time to improve early care and learning in South Carolina. State and national attention has never been greater and data driven decision making is becoming more commonplace. The General Assembly's recent expansion of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) and current attention being given to the importance of early literacy skills make this an auspicious time to examine ways to improve children's kindergarten readiness and systems that support school services.

A common understanding of the concept of kindergarten readiness will afford more children the opportunity to enter school prepared to succeed. Convening a group of knowledgeable education and early childhood development leaders to guide a readiness definition is important. This group of stakeholders could include representatives from various early care and learning programs, family representatives, kindergarten and elementary school teachers, administrators, and researchers from across the state. Input from public and private practitioners, researchers, and community leaders will ensure that a description of school readiness and kindergarten assessment produces information that is useful for families, teachers, and early childhood programs to strengthen their work with young children.

A kindergarten entry assessment allows for continual quality improvement in the educational system. From South Carolina's past history, we know that what gets measured gets done. The early Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery administered at the beginning of first grade showed the power of a statewide readiness measurement tool. In 1980, 36.3% of entering first graders scored "not ready." Ten years later, the "not ready" rate had declined to 25.6% and a decade later the "not ready" rate declined to 13.6%.[62] This consistent and dramatic reduction over time is clear evidence that developing and continuously using a statewide kindergarten entry assessment tool will significantly impact and focus the state's attention on what matters for children.

South Carolina was on the forefront to understand children's skills and abilities at school entry in the late 1970s. The state maintained a focus on capturing information about children in their earliest years of school until 2008. Across that time, children's experiences prior to school entry have become more diverse with larger numbers of children attending some type of early childhood education program or receiving early intervention.

South Carolina programs, resources, and strategies related to early care and education have grown, providing numerous opportunities for families and young children. However, lack of common understanding of kindergarten readiness and no method for assessing strengths and areas for improvement have left South Carolina and her early childhood programs without a common metric for measuring progress. A common school readiness definition and a kindergarten entry assessment have the potential to allow South Carolina to focus on data-based quality improvement across the next several years for its youngest citizens and to encourage higher levels of academic success in their early academic years and beyond.

Please visit www.instituteforchildsuccess.org/research to download full listing of endnotes.

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Illustrations © Sylvie Wickstrom

School Readiness Assessment

Kelly L. Maxwell and Richard M. Clifford

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Research in Review is a regular series of articles appearing in *Young Children.* This article was edited by past journal research editor **Diane M. Horm,** Ph.D., professor and director of the University of Rhode Island Child Development Centers, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, in Kingston.

This is an expanded version of an article on pp. 42–49 of the January 2004 issue of *Young Children.*

School readiness assessment is a hot topic these days, in large part because of increased accountability pressures in both the public schools and early care and education settings. What exactly is meant by the phrase *school readiness assessment* and what should early care and education teachers and administrators know about it? This Research in Review article uses a question-and-answer format to address several issues about school readiness.

What is school readiness?

School readiness is more than just about children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, involves children, families, early environments, schools, and communities (NASBE 1991). Children are not innately *ready* or *not ready* for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school. With 81 percent of U.S. children in nonparental care arrangements the year before kindergarten (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken 2000), child care centers and family child care homes are important early environments that affect children's development and learning.

Schools are also an important piece of the readiness puzzle because different schools have different expectations about readiness. The same child, with the same strengths and needs, can be considered ready in one school and not ready in another school. It is the school's responsibility to educate all children who are old enough to legally attend school, regardless of their skills (see "Characteristics of Ready Schools").

Characteristics of Ready Schools

The National Education Goals Panel identifies 10 keys to schools being ready for children. Ready schools should

1. Smooth the transition between home and school.
2. Strive for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools.
3. Help children learn and make sense of their world.
4. Make a commitment to every child's success.
5. Show they are committed to every teacher's success.
6. Introduce and expand strategies that have been shown to improve achievement.
7. Function as learning organizations that change their practices if they do not help children.
8. Serve children in communities.
9. Take responsibility for results.
10. Maintain strong leadership.

Source: Shore 1998.

Finally, communities are important because readiness for school success is a community responsibility, not just the responsibility of parents and preschool teachers. Communities, for example, should provide high-quality health care and support services for families of young children and work to ensure that all families with young children have access to high-quality care and education.

Most school readiness assessments focus on one part of the puzzle—the child. The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP 1997) identifies five domains of children's development and learning that are important to school success: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp 1995; see NEGP 1997 for a family-friendly description of school readiness). The NEGP work on school readiness has been important in broadening people's understanding of readiness beyond the ABCs and 123s and highlighting the interconnections among the five domains.

What can we learn from school readiness assessment?

School readiness assessment typically refers to assessment of young children around school entry—right before kindergarten, at kindergarten entry, or very early in the kindergarten year. The tools described as school readiness assessments vary in their purposes and designs. Thus, people using the phrase "school readiness assessment" may be referring to very different kinds of assessment.

The NEGP report *Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments* (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz 1998) identifies and describes five major purposes for assessing young children. School readiness assessments typically fall under one of these purposes. It is important to understand the different purposes of assessment because assessment tools are typically developed for a single purpose and cannot easily be used for some other purpose. Each of the five purposes described in the *Principles and Recommen-*

It is a school's responsibility to educate all children who are old enough to legally attend school, regardless of their skills.

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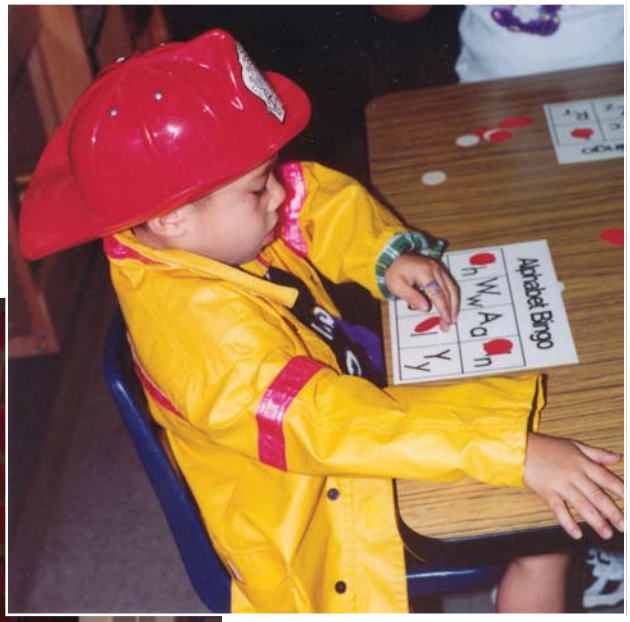
dations report are highlighted on the following pages.

1. Improve learning. Teachers of young children assess children's skills to help teachers adapt their teaching. The information is gathered on all children because the teacher needs to know the strengths and needs of each child in the class, not just some. Assessments are often informal, such as teacher observations or children's work samples, but may also include more formal assessments. The content of assessments for this purpose should be closely tied to the classroom curriculum.

These assessments can help kindergarten teachers improve classroom instruction by indicating children's strengths and weaknesses. Well-prepared teachers assess children's skills throughout the day, for example, by taking a picture of a child's block structure or writing a note at the end of the day about two children's social interaction. Focusing on school readiness assessment for the purpose of improving learning can support good teaching practices. These assessments also help families to better understand the developmental status of their children.



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A Note

Although most school readiness assessments focus only on children's skills, a few states, like North Carolina, also include schools in their official definitions and assessments of school readiness (North Carolina Ready for School Goal Team 2000; Maxwell et al. 2001).

2. Identify children with special needs. This type of assessment generally uses a two-step process. First, all children are screened. If the screening suggests that a child's development is atypical, then the second step is implemented—the child is referred for a more thorough assessment to determine specific needs and eligibility for special education or related services. More thorough assessments must meet high standards of technical adequacy because they will be used to help make important decisions about children.

Many early care and education programs and public schools routinely conduct screenings of young children when they enter the program. Screening tools should cover general developmental milestones in multiple areas, rather than be tied specifically to a curriculum. The reason is that screening serves to determine whether a child's development is within the range of what is expected for children that age, not whether the child is learning particular concepts covered in a curriculum. Screening tools can tell parents, teachers, and specialists whether a child's development is within the range of expectations or whether the child should be referred for a more in-depth evaluation. Screenings, however, cannot positively identify children with special needs.

3. Evaluate programs. Assessments of young children's skills are often included in evaluations to determine the effectiveness of early childhood programs. Assessments chosen for this purpose should reflect program goals and be appropriate for the

children attending the program. Generally, child assessments for the purpose of program evaluation need only include a sample of children rather than all. Program effectiveness can be determined by showing that a representative group of children from the program has improved; the program does not have to demonstrate success for each and every child. Gathering evaluation data on a sample of children rather than all children minimizes the likelihood of information being used inappropriately to make decisions about individual children or judgments about individual teachers. School readiness assessments for program evaluation provide important indicators of an early childhood program's effectiveness in preparing children for school. They provide useful feedback to help administrators continuously improve program quality. If teachers complete these assessments, there must be safeguards to ensure that the data are not biased because the teachers are invested in the results (that is, want children in their class or program to do well). Assessments for the purpose of measuring program success typically cannot provide teachers with information to help improve children's learning. Such assessments often sample only some, not all, children, and the tools used often are not designed for the purpose of improving instruction.

Multiple conversations will most likely be needed to enable a community to reach consensus about school readiness.

4. Monitor trends over time. Communities or states may choose to conduct school readiness assessments to provide a snapshot of children as they enter kindergarten. Were this snapshot taken of a group of kindergartners every few years, then policy makers could monitor readiness trends (for example, determine whether over time children come to school with more skills). This type of school readiness assessment is broader than that done for program evaluation purposes. It does not focus on a single program but instead allows the public and policy makers to determine whether the many early childhood investments collectively are positively affecting school readiness.

As with program evaluation, child assessments for determining a ready school generally should be conducted on only a sample of children. Such assessments can provide a general picture of the characteristics of a group of children as they enter kindergarten but cannot relate information about individual children's skills. Program assessments rarely provide detail about any individual program's effectiveness. (See Love, Aber, & Brooks-Gunn 1994 for a discussion of community school readiness assessments and Scott-Little, Kagan, & Clifford 2003 for a discussion of state school readiness assessments.)

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5. Use for high-stakes accountability. Assessments become high stakes if used to make decisions about individual children or teachers. Assessment tools for this purpose must meet rigorous standards of technical accuracy because they will be used to make important decisions about individuals. Because few assessment tools for young children meet high standards, the NEGP report (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz 1998) recommends that no child assessments be conducted for high-stakes accountability purposes until third grade.

Assessments of all children, for any purpose, may be used for high-stakes accountability. Once data are gathered and available, it may be tempting to use them to make decisions about individual children and teachers. For example, readiness assessments may be used to deny or discourage entry into kindergarten even when children are legally entitled to the service. Similarly, such assessments may be used to punish teachers whose average classroom assessment scores are low, even though the assessment tool did not meet high standards of technical adequacy. The potential risk for harm must be considered *before* any assessment data are collected. Safeguards should always be in place to minimize risks.

Bill Geiger

What characteristics of children are related to school readiness?

As stated earlier, individual children vary widely in their skills. However, research has shown that there are some general group differences in children's school readiness skills. The most recent and comprehensive national data about children's skills when they enter kindergarten come from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K)—a study of a nationally representative group of approximately 22,000 kindergartners conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (Zill & West 2001). Relevant findings from this study are highlighted below.

Family background characteristics. The ECLS-K study demonstrates that children with particular risk factors—living in a family that receives food stamps or temporary assistance; living in a single parent home; having a mother with less than a high school education; and having parents whose primary language is not English—had lower skills when they entered school (Zill & West 2001). Specifically, children with at least one of the four risk factors had lower skills in reading, math, and general knowledge, and were more likely to be in poorer health upon entering kindergarten compared to children with no risk factors. The effect of risk factors was cumulative: children with more risk factors had lower skills in all five areas of development tested (physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognitive development and general knowledge) as they entered school.

Ethnicity. Using data from the same national study of children entering kindergarten, Lee and Burkam (2002) found that African American, Hispanic, and other children (including biracial and Native American) had lower math and reading skills at the beginning of kindergarten than did White or Asian children. African American and Hispanic children in families from lower socioeconomic status had the lowest math and reading skills.

Gender. Zill and West (2001) found that girls in the ECLS-K study had slightly higher reading skills than boys, were about the same as boys in math and general knowledge, had better prosocial skills than boys, and were less likely to engage in problem behaviors than boys at the beginning of kindergarten.

These research findings suggest that some groups of children tend to start school less prepared to succeed than others. It is important to remember that these are *group* differences. Not all children within the at-risk groups had poor skills when they entered school (Zill & West 2001). Some children within each at-risk group had strong skills. Understanding group differences may help early childhood and kindergarten teachers plan appropriate learning opportunities needed for children at risk. Teachers must not make assumptions, however, of individual children's skills based on their membership in one or more of the groups discussed.

What are the limitations of school readiness assessments?

There are several important limitations of school readiness assessments. First, each assessment tool is designed for *a particular purpose* and cannot automatically or easily be used for another purpose. This means that the purpose of the assessment must be clear

before an appropriate assessment tool can be selected. It also means that multiple assessment tools or approaches are needed to address multiple purposes.

Second, each school readiness assessment tool is designed with an explicit or implicit definition of school readiness. Assessment users must articulate their own definition of school readiness before they can select an appropriate measure that matches their definition. If this is not done, then the assessment instrument(s) will by default define school readiness—for better or for worse. For instance, if school readiness is defined as covering all five domains described by NEGP, then the school readiness assessment needs to measure all five domains. If the assessment measures only early literacy, then users are automatically equating readiness with literacy skills.

The purpose of the assessment must be clear before an appropriate assessment tool can be selected. Multiple assessment tools or approaches are needed to address multiple purposes.

Third, assessments are only as good as the people conducting them. Any assessment requires careful training before use. If assessments are not done well, then the data collected may not provide the information sought. This, in turn, could lead to worse—not better—decisions being made about young children and programs.

How should I choose a school readiness assessment?

A team of people, rather than one individual, generally works together to plan a school readiness assessment. Ideally, this team includes administrators, teachers, families, and experts in the assessment of young children's skills. The following key questions can help guide the team's planning.

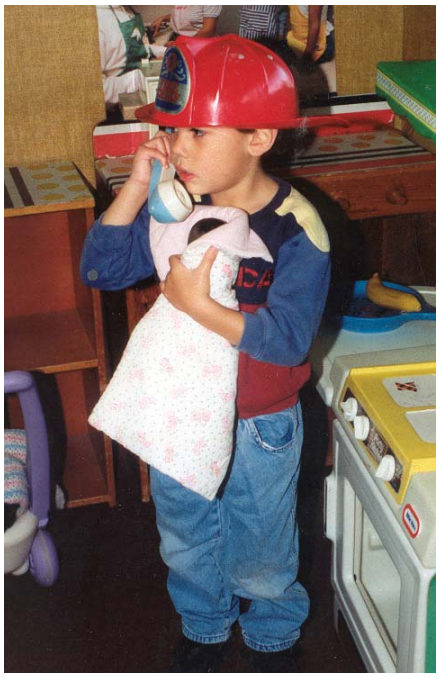
• What is your definition of school readiness? Are you interested in all five domains of development—physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognitive development and general knowledge? If so, do you already collect information on some domains (for example, health), or are you looking for assessment tools that cover all five domains? If the purpose of the assessment is to improve learning, does the content of the assessment match the curriculum content?

• What is your purpose or purposes? You will need to select an assessment tool or tools to match each of your purposes.

• What are the characteristics of the children to be assessed? How old are they? Do they speak languages besides English? What are their races or ethnicities? Do some have disabilities? In what part of the country do they live? The assessment tools selected should be designed to be used with children similar to the ones you will be assessing. Furthermore, the assessment tool should include documented evidence of the characteristics of children on which the assessment was tested.

• What are the technical properties of the assessment? Is there evidence for adequate validity (the tool really measures what it claims to measure)? Is there evidence for adequate reliability (i.e., the tool produces similar results for a child, across a short time frame or across the different individuals administering the assessment)? Different purposes require different standards of technical properties (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz 1998).

Assessment tools for the purposes of program evaluation and monitoring trends must meet high standards for technical properties. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME Joint Committee 1999) may be a useful resource for evaluating the technical adequacy of assessments.



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What are appropriate tools for conducting school readiness assessments? Who should gather school readiness assessment data?

There is no one best approach to or tool for assessing school readiness. Different purposes require different approaches. Even within a particular purpose, there is still variability in the assess-

Type of Assessment

	Naturalistic	Standardized, norm-referenced
Advantages	• Does not disrupt a child's ongoing routine • A child has multiple chances to demonstrate skill • If done over time, it may more accurately reflect a child's skills	• Allows comparisons of same-age children • Better agreement across multiple teachers or observers • Less chance for observer/teacher bias to affect assessment results
Disadvantages	• Does not typically allow comparisons of same-age children • Hard to achieve agreement across multiple teachers or observers because each may have different understandings of the assessment items • Observer/teacher bias may affect assessment results if individuals know that the results will be used to make decisions about them or their programs • May not be as accurate for determining group comparisons or program effects • Typically requires more of the teacher's time	• May not reflect skills for individual children accurately because it is usually conducted outside the natural environment • A child is given only one opportunity to demonstrate skill • A child's performance may be less accurate if the person administering the assessment is unfamiliar to the child • Typically provides less information of use in guiding instruction for individual children • Available measures may not accurately reflect the skills of children from diverse backgrounds and of children who do not speak English

ments chosen. For example, a review of state prekindergarten evaluation reports identified 42 different assessment tools used in 13 state evaluations (Gilliam & Zigler 2001). For a review of commercially available school readiness assessments, see *Assessing Kindergarten Children: A Compendium of Assessment Instruments* (Niemeyer & Scott-Little 2001).

Generally, there are two different kinds of school readiness assessments: naturalistic assessments (sometimes referred to as informal or authentic) and standardized, norm-referenced assessments (sometimes referred to as formal). Naturalistic assessments include observations, work samples, and teacher checklists. Although both types of assessment are sometimes used for various purposes, the naturalistic type is most often used for the purpose of improving learning.

Standardized, norm-referenced assessments follow a standard set of administration rules so that each child theoretically experiences the assessment similarly (for example, each person administering the test gives the same instructions). Norm-referenced assessments permit a child's performance to be compared to those of other children his age. This type of assessment is used frequently for identifying children with special needs, for evaluating programs, and in high-stakes accountability. The table above highlights key advantages and disadvantages of each type of assessment.

With regard to gathering assessment information and from whom, generally it is best to tap multiple sources—teachers, families, and the child himself (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz 1998). In North Carolina's statewide school readiness assessment, for instance, teachers provided information about children's social skills and problem behaviors, families contributed knowledge about children's health and their approaches toward learning, and one-on-one assessments conducted with children added to the learning about children's communication skills and general knowledge (Maxwell et al. 2001). Gathering information from multiple sources is useful in understanding children's skills across various settings. Families, for example, have a perspective on their children's skills from experiences at home that may differ from how teachers see children in a group, classroom setting.

Families, for example, have a perspective on their children's skills from experiences at home that may differ from how teachers see children in a group, classroom setting.

Photos by Casey Sills

Research suggests that delaying school entry does not generally benefit children.

What should happen to children who are *not ready* for school?

The NEGP concept of a ready school suggests that it is a school's responsibility to educate all children who walk through its door, regardless of whether children are ready or not ready. The idea of schools' readiness for children is also evident in state policies regarding school entry. Most states use age, not skill level, as the criterion for determining when a child is eligible—and legally entitled—to attend public school (Saluja, Scott-Little, & Clifford 2000). Thus a child's readiness should not be a factor in determining eligibility for kindergarten. However, practice does not always follow this philosophy. Some families, school administrators, and teachers may want to delay school entry based on children's readiness. But research suggests that delaying school entry does not generally benefit children. (See Marshall 2003 and Stipek 2002 for research summaries on the effects of delayed kindergarten entry.)

If a child is deemed not ready for school, preschool teachers and administrators can talk to the family and kindergarten teacher about the particular needs of the child and work together to develop strategies for improving the child's skills. If concerned that the child's skills are far behind those of her peers, the team may refer the child for screening to determine whether she has a disability. Recognizing that school readiness concerns more than just the child, the team can also identify strategies all can use to support the child's success. The preschool teacher and administrator, for example, can discuss strategies for ensuring that the child receives high-quality, individualized, and developmentally appropriate instruction that addresses all five domains of development.

If the team believes that the child is considered not ready because of inappropriate expectations from school staff, then a larger effort is likely needed to bring about change. The next section of this article discusses these larger efforts to develop consensus on school readiness.

What if preschool and kindergarten programs differ in their expectations of readiness? How can they work together to set appropriate expectations?

Even with the work of the NEGP and multiple years of research and discussion, a common definition of school readiness remains elusive (Meisels 1999). Parents,

preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers—even within the same community—may differ in their expectations of school readiness (Graue 1993; NEGP 1993). Discussions about people's views of school readiness are needed to develop a community-wide set of expectations regarding school readiness.

Communities, schools, or preschool programs can sponsor school readiness forums in which families, teachers, administrators, and community leaders discuss school readiness. Individual preschool programs can host meetings to discuss school readiness among preschool teachers and parents from their program along with kindergarten teachers in their neighborhood schools. Multiple conversations most likely will be needed to enable the group to reach a consensus about school readiness.

Joint professional development and kindergarten transition activities can be helpful in minimizing differences in expectations between preschool and kindergarten programs (Firlik 2003). Public schools and early care and education programs in the school district could cosponsor staff training for preschool and kindergarten teachers. Such experiences may help teachers from different systems develop more views in common on readiness. Preschool teachers visiting kindergarten classrooms gain a better understanding of the kindergarten experiences their students will encounter. And when kindergarten teachers visit preschool classrooms, they appreciate and understand the preschool experiences their students have had.

What can I do to support appropriate practices regarding school readiness assessments?

Although the many challenges in ensuring that school readiness assessments are done appropriately require the efforts of many, every individual can make a difference. Here are some ways an individual can work to support the appropriate use of school readiness assessments.

When kindergarten teachers visit preschool classrooms, they appreciate and understand the preschool experiences their students have had.

- **Be informed.** Reading about school readiness and participating in other professional development activities will help you develop expertise in this area.
- **Get involved.** Apply your expertise to the discussion of school readiness at the local, state, or national level. You can speak out to help ensure that school readiness assessment efforts benefit, not harm, young children. Start with your own program, making sure that you are using the appropriate instruments and procedures for your particular purpose of interest and that the program's assessment results are used to help children.
- **Build partnerships.** People have different perspectives about school readiness and school readiness assessments, which can lead to some heated discussions. Strengthening relationships with preschool teachers, administrators, families, and public school staff makes it easier to work together toward a common understanding of this controversial topic. If you work in an early care and education setting, reach out to kindergarten teachers to discuss your views of school readiness and assessment. If you are a kindergarten teacher, work with preschool teachers on school readiness issues.

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Inequalities at the Starting Line:
State Kindergarten Policies

By Emily Workman
March 2013

It is throughout the earliest years of a child's education that he/she gains the foundation upon which subsequent learning is built. A high-quality, full-day, everyday kindergarten program is a critical period in the education continuum, yet there is significant diversity in access to these programs within and across states. The striking variation demonstrates that at a pivotal time for cognitive and social/emotional development, children are not receiving fair and equitable early education opportunities. Yet, all children are held to the same rigorous expectations throughout their educational careers, starting in kindergarten.

> Significant diversity in state kindergarten policies demonstrates that children are not receiving equitable early education opportunities.

P-3 is a Continuum
President Obama recently made a proposal to significantly expand access to pre-K for low- and middle-income families across the nation. While a state or federal emphasis on pre-K is a big win for children, pre-K represents only a single point on the P-3 continuum. Equal emphasis must be placed on ensuring that students have access to high-quality, full-day kindergarten programs in order for this early investment to produce long-term positive results.

Higher Expectation in the Early Grades
A strong P-3 system requires that students transitioning from high-quality pre-K programs do not land in kindergarten programs that fail to build on this strong beginning. This has never been truer than now, as the rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS), being implemented in 46 states plus the District of Columbia, were constructed to build on a foundation of early knowledge beginning with kindergarten.

Current Trends in Kindergarten State Policy
The Education Commission of the States (ECS) reviewed policies across all 50 states—policies that we believe are significant markers in the quality of a state's kindergarten program. For other critical elements where policies were not reviewed, research is presented to demonstrate their importance. This report presents findings on six key components of a kindergarten system: availability, length of day, student assessment, quality of instruction, standards and curriculum, and funding. It is important to note that this is entirely a policy review and ECS recognizes that practice is way ahead of policy in many states.

There is SIGNIFICANT Diversity in State Kindergarten Policies
The report's findings highlight the significant diversity that exists in state kindergarten policies across and within states. The findings reveal a system of providing the next generation with high-quality, full-day, everyday kindergarten that is highly unequal across the states and perpetuates, if not exacerbates, the achievement gap.
The goal of the report is to illustrate the implications of the presence of such diverse kindergarten policies, to raise questions about the implications of that diversity, and to encourage policymakers to consider the impact their state's policies have on children's future educational success.

The Importance of Availability

Availability	Length of Day	Student Assessment	Quality of Instruction	Standards/ Curriculum	Funding

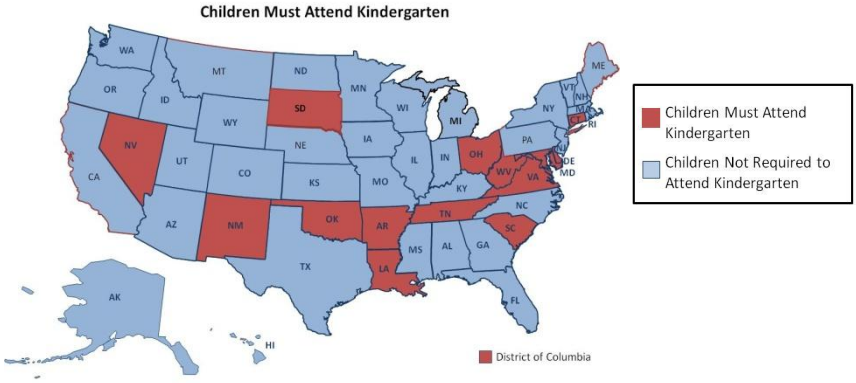
What We Found

Districts must offer kindergarten

- 11 states plus D.C. require districts to offer full-day kindergarten.
- 34 states require districts to offer half-day kindergarten.
- Five states do not require districts to offer kindergarten, leaving the decision to school districts.

Children must attend kindergarten

- 15 states plus D.C. mandate kindergarten attendance.
- 35 states do not require that children attend kindergarten.



Why it Matters

- Benefits of kindergarten attendance are clearly supported by research.
- The CCSS are built on a strong foundation that begins in kindergarten.
- Early literacy and mathematics skill-building, and social/emotional competencies are critical for later proficiency and school success.

Critical Decision Points

- Are sufficient high-quality, full-day kindergarten programs available for students?
- Are full-day programs offered every day?
- Will parents have the option to enroll their child in a full-day program?
- Are students required to attend kindergarten?
- Do districts receive state funding for half-day only or full-day? Does the funding formula need to be revisited?
- Is access to kindergarten programs free of charge? Are parents charged tuition if they choose to send their children to full-day programs?
- Are districts authorized to contract with another district or outside provider for kindergarten programs?

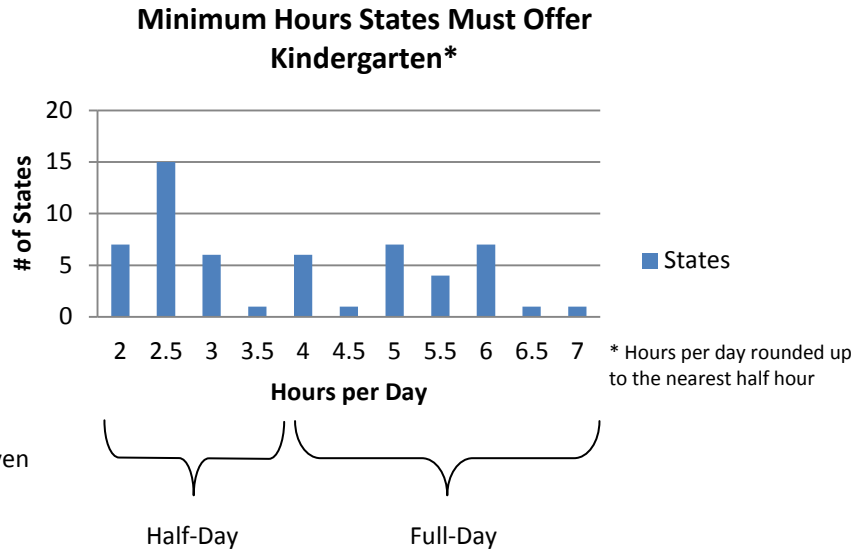
Length of Day: What Constitutes a Kindergarten Program?

Availability	**Length of Day**	Student Assessment	Quality of Instruction	Standards/ Curriculum	Funding

What We Found

Most discussion of kindergarten policy centers on whether programs are half-day or full-day—and most policymakers are probably unaware of the significant discrepancies in instructional time within and across states, whether half-day or full-day programs.[1]

- State requirements for half-day programs range from a minimum of two hours to three-and-a-quarter hours per day.
- Requirements for full-day programs range from a minimum of four hours to seven hours per day.



Why it Matters

- Kindergarten is an essential part of the foundation upon which future learning and social/emotional development is built.
- Students in one school district might receive more than three times the learning and developmental opportunities than those in a neighboring district. This is an equity and effectiveness issue.
- With the introduction of the CCSS, all kindergarten students will be expected to meet the same rigorous standards whether they spend two hours or six hours per day in the classroom.
- For students who attend high-quality preschool programs, offering continuity in the number of hours they spend in a classroom each year thereafter will avoid disrupting schedules, and support working families so that they do not need to continually adjust childcare arrangements.

Critical Decision Points

- Are students expected to attend kindergarten for the same amount of time every day?
- Is the length of the kindergarten day providing sufficient opportunity for deeper learning?
- How can the school funding formula provide districts with incentives to increase enrollment and expand full-day, every day kindergarten programs?
- Are minimum hours well-aligned to the hours required in pre-K and 1st-grade classrooms?

Kindergarten Entry Assessments

Availability	Length of Day	**Student Assessment**	Quality of Instruction	Standards/ Curriculum	Funding

An increasing number of states require the administration of kindergarten entry assessments. The primary purpose of kindergarten assessments is to offer teachers and administrators a tool to support the development of appropriate instructional practices, identify students requiring additional supports, and to ensure that pre-K programs are adequately preparing students for the rigors of kindergarten. Nonetheless, further evidence on the effect of kindergarten entry assessments on student achievement is needed.

What We Found

- 25 states plus D.C. currently require the administration of a kindergarten entry assessment.
    - 14 states plus D.C. use a state-developed kindergarten entry assessment.
    - 11 states require districts to develop and administer local kindergarten entry assessments.
- Four states are in the process of developing a kindergarten entry assessment, expected in 2014.

Why it Matters

Kindergarten entry assessments can be used to:

- Identify strengths and needs of young children
- Predict the need for additional supports for children
- Inform teachers, improve classroom instruction, and ensure services are made available to students
- Indicate whether pre-K programs are aligned with school expectations (K-3).

Key Decision Points

- How is readiness for kindergarten defined?
- Are the assessments developmentally appropriate and do they capture social, emotional, and behavioral development of students?
- Is a particular assessment tool required? How does state policy influence selection of assessments? Are assessment choices nationally normed?
- At what time or intervals throughout the year are the assessments administered, and who administers them?
- For what purpose is the assessment used?
- Is the assessment aligned to standards and curriculum?
- What are the costs of creating, administering and evaluating results in time and dollars? Does it produce a positive return on investment?

Quality of Instruction: The Classroom – Class Size

Availability	Length of Day	Student Assessment	**Quality of Instruction**	Standards/ Curriculum	Funding

What We Found

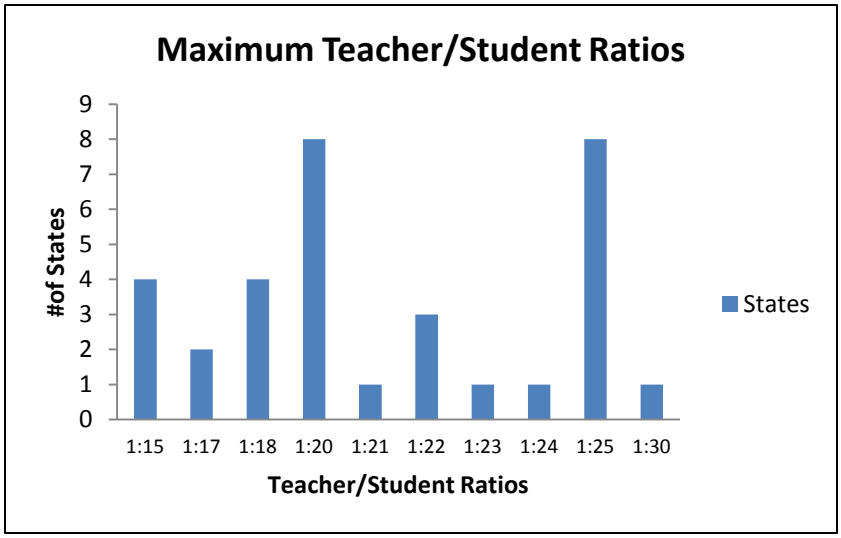
- Lowest maximum teacher/student ratio specified in law is 1:15.
- Highest maximum ratio is 1:30.
- Some states specify ratios if an aide or teaching assistant is in the classroom, ranging from 2:20 to 2:30.

Why it Matters

- Although research is mixed in its support for smaller class sizes, for early grades and students from low-income families, evidence supports the premise that smaller class size contributes to student achievement.

Key Decision Points

- What evidence is being used to determine the optimal class size for kindergarten or P-3 classrooms?
- Are there enough qualified teachers available to meet the needs of smaller class size and therefore more kindergarten classrooms?
- What is the evidence for using aides as a less-costly support for teachers assigned to larger classes so that teachers are freed up to focus solely on instruction?



Quality of Instruction: Teacher Preparation, Licensure, and Professional Development

Availability	Length of Day	Student Assessment	**Quality of Instruction**	Standards/ Curriculum	Funding

Effective teacher preparation, licensure, and professional development are critical components of a P-3 system. Research shows that the developmental needs of students in early childhood education are unique to that age group, and specialized training is required for teachers to fully understand how young children learn and to gain the skills needed to teach in ways that are developmentally appropriate.[2] Teacher preparation programs should offer separate tracks for teachers planning to work in the early grades, and the use of P-3 licensing that documents skills in teaching early literacy and mathematics as well as a deep understanding for the social/emotional needs of young children can help ensure that early grade teachers are well-prepared to meet the needs of that age group. Although some states offer a P-3 license, many school leaders prefer that their staff hold a K-6 or K-8 license because it provides them with maximum flexibility in teacher placement. This is an area ripe for deeper discussion and research.

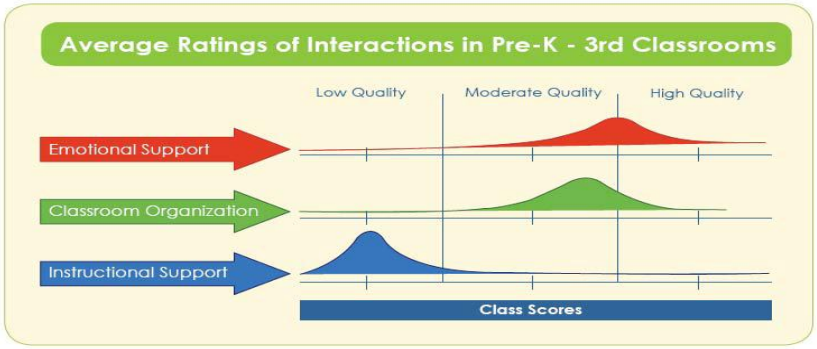
Coupled with teacher preparation and certification, an essential element to ensuring high instructional quality is the availability of ongoing, effective professional development. High-quality teacher training and education should not end when a teacher enters the classroom.

Why it Matters

- The cognitive, social/emotional, and behavioral needs of kindergarten students are unique, and teachers working with that age group need to be prepared and well-trained to meet their needs.
- Teachers who lack the critical knowledge or skills for teaching young children too often find themselves assigned to kindergarten classrooms, resulting in instruction that may be developmentally inappropriate.

Critical Decision Points

- Are teacher preparation programs effectively preparing teachers who will work in a P-3 environment?
- Does the current license reflect a strong preparation base for teaching young children?
- Is a P-3 license available, and is it a requirement for teaching in a P-3 setting?
- Is professional development tailored to the needs of P-3 teachers and students? Is it provided?
- Are there resources available for effective professional development?



Source: Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, *Measuring and Improving Teacher-Student Interactions in PK-12 Settings to Enhance Students' Learning* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, 2011).

State Standards and Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

Availability	Length of Day	Student Assessment	Quality of Instruction	**Standards/ Curriculum**	Funding

Making full-day kindergarten accessible to all is the first step, but not a sufficient step. The quality of a kindergarten experience is fundamental to the ultimate impact on children and their success in school and in life. To ensure quality, state standards need to be aligned across the P-3 continuum, curricula that support the standards need to be of high-quality and developmentally appropriate, and quality of individual programs needs to be evaluated.[3] Developmentally appropriate means that kindergarten programs should not simply emphasize basic skills, but help children build their physical, social/emotional, and intellectual capabilities through exploration and play.[4]

Most states have early learning standards, but the degree to which they have been integrated with the Common Core or high-quality curricula is far less clear. In order to be successful in kindergarten, students must be given the opportunity to master the expectations set forth for them in the standards. High-quality curricula are essential in achieving this goal.

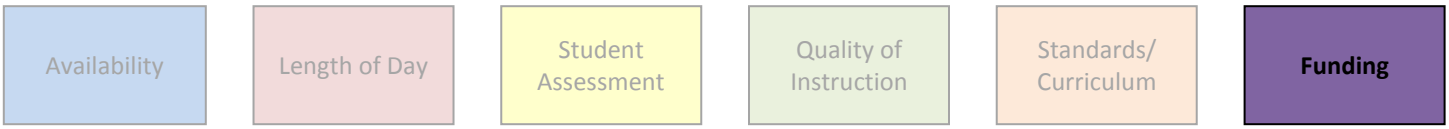
Why it Matters

- Student capacity for growth and learning is significant in the early years.
- Documented, common expectations will provide teachers with roadmaps and benchmarks to tailor to developmentally appropriate lessons.
- Expectations of deeper learning by the end of kindergarten have greatly increased with the introduction of the Common Core.
- Deeper learning does not equate to “less play” or playful learning activity. Attention needs to be paid to developmentally appropriate instructional practice.

Critical Decision Points

- Has the state developed standards for early learning, and are they aligned to K-12 standards?
- Are curricula selected based on independently gathered evidence, and is curriculum aligned to the kindergarten standards?
- How does state policy support ensuring that the curricula available are developmentally appropriate? Are schools offered a menu of nationally normed curricula, state-developed curricula, or curricula that is locally developed but approved by the states?

State Kindergarten Funding:



The way a state chooses to fund its kindergarten programs can provide districts with strong incentives or disincentives to offer high-quality, full-day kindergarten programs. A state can fund a full-day kindergarten program in one of three ways:

a) At a higher level than its half-day program
b) At the same level as the half-day program but equal to or greater than what is provided for 1st grade
c) At the same level as the half-day program but less than what is provided for 1st grade[5].

In many states, parents who choose to send their child to a full-day program are held responsible for paying tuition to cover the second half. In order for students to meet the rigorous demands of kindergarten, it is wise for policymakers to provide incentives to districts to offer high-quality, full-day, everyday programs. The most powerful incentive is funding.

Why it Matters

- Disparities in funding both within and across states can significantly affect access, equity, and effectiveness.
- The way a state chooses to fund kindergarten can provide incentives or disincentives to districts to offer full-day kindergarten.
- Funding full-day kindergarten outside the funding formula makes it less predictable.
- Without adequate funding, parents will be required to cover the costs of kindergarten or administrators are put in a position of raising private funds.

Critical Decision Points

- How is kindergarten funded?
- Does the current funding formula provide incentives/disincentives to districts to offer full-day kindergarten?
- Is the funding provided sufficient to fund a high-quality, full-day kindergarten program?
- Is state funding support restricted to operating costs, or does it also allow districts to use it for additional classroom space that might be necessary? What provisions does the state make for those districts that do not have adequate space?

Conclusion

All children are being held to high standards, yet too many are not getting a fair and equitable start. With such significant diversity in state kindergarten policies both within and across states, the education that some students are receiving is far superior to that of others. It is impossible to expect students in low-quality programs—whether it's due to a length of day that does not give them adequate learning time, poor teaching quality, or low standards—to develop at the same speed as their peers. The result will be very different outcomes for children and the perpetuation of the achievement gap.

Offering kindergarten to young children so they can begin building a foundation on which future learning can be built is not a new idea. Children have been attending kindergarten in large numbers for more than 100 years. A rich body of research asserts that through high-quality early learning opportunities, children boast stronger academic performance throughout their educational careers, making the return on investment for states well worth the costs of ensuring these programs are universal, full-day, every day, and of high-quality. To do so, policymakers would be well served by taking a hard look at the details of their kindergarten policies and programs, with special attention paid to availability, length of day, how assessment is used, how quality of instructional programs and staff are ensured, how developmentally appropriate standards and curriculum are implemented,

and how funding works to support these essential programs. State policy and decision making would be further enhanced if states renewed a commitment to collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on kindergarten.

An Agenda for Change

A special thanks goes out to the members of the ECS P-3 Early Learning Caucus for their constructive feedback on this report.

The Caucus whose primary purpose is to serve as ambassadors for strengthening a P-3 approach to early learning through guidance regarding emerging early learning issues has identified a number of areas of early learning for ECS to focus its' P-3 future work. Such areas include but are not limited to family engagement; equity in availability, funding, standards and professional requirements across programs; K-3—quality of instruction, licensure and training; and cross-system alignment between preschool and K-3.

We encourage our constituents to indicate whether any of these issue areas would be beneficial to your work and are eager to receive input and suggestions from all our readers!

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Equipping Education Leaders, Advancing Ideas

[1] Marga Mikulecky, *Number of Instructional Days/Hours in the School Year,* (Education Commission of the States, March 2013).

[2] Margaret Hardy Snider, and Victoria R. Fu, "The effects of specialized education and job experience on early childhood teachers' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Volume 5, Issue 1, March 1990, 69–78; Steven Barnett, "Better Teachers, Better Preschools: Student Achievement Linked to Teacher Qualifications," *Preschool Policy Matters*, Issue 2, Revised December 2004; Marisa Bueno, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Danielle Gonzales, *A Matter of Degrees: Preparing Teachers for the Pre-K Classroom*, (Washington D.C.: The PEW Center of the States, Education Reform Series, March 2010).

[3] NAEYC, *Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation: Building an Effective, Accountable System in Programs for Children Birth through Age 8* (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009); *Preschool Curriculum: What in it For Children and Teachers?* (Washington, D.C.: The Albert Shanker Institute, 2009.

[4] S. Bredekamp, *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age eight: Expanded Edition*, (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1987); Bredekamp, S. & Rosegrant, T., *Reaching potentials: Appropriate curriculum and assessment for young children (Vol 1)*, (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992); J. Frost, S. Wortham, & S . Reifel, *Play and Child Development (2nd ed.)* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hallm, 2007)

[5] ECS, *Full-Day Kindergarten: A Study of State Policies in the United States* (Education Commission of the States, June 2005).

Fast Fact: Information and Resources on Developing State Policy on Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)

February 2014[1]

Information Request:
CEELO was asked to provide information on how other states are approaching the development and implementation of KEA as part of a comprehensive assessment system. Specifically, the request asked for information about KEA measures used by other states, the processes states have used to develop their KEA state policy, and how states are supporting the training and professional development of practitioners and administrators in various settings.

Background:
This state has recently received supplemental Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge funding to develop a policy to implement a kindergarten entry assessment process. The state implements a four-year-old kindergarten program, and collaborates with other state agencies to support the use of its state's model early learning standards and implement its comprehensive screening and assessment system.

What We Learned:

- Development and implementation of state policies to support developmentally appropriate, valid and useful kindergarten entry assessment requires a multi-stage long-term process.
- It is important to engage diverse stakeholders, use research, link assessments to goals, and develop a plan to support training and professional development when developing a KEA.
- Defining and operationalizing the term "school readiness" is critically important to assure the KEA measure accurately assesses key domains of development.
- It is important to determining how data from the KEA will be used and who will be using the data when developing policies and guidance for a new KEA. Who will use the data and how the data will be used has implications for the current system for reporting data, at the local level or state level (NCSL, Stedron & Berger, 2010).
- For RTT-ELC states, it is important to consider up front whether the state plans to link KEA data with their state's longitudinal data system.

Recommendations for Stakeholders:

- Review the information contained in this resource, and identify specific questions or state examples or resources that would be most helpful for the committee to review in the initial exploration stages of the state's effort to develop KEA policies and approaches.
- Determine the goals, guiding principles, and purposes for the KEA in relation to the state's goals for children and in concert with a comprehensive approach to early childhood assessment.
- Engage in a process of gaining input from all key stakeholders to assure the KEA reflects the priorities of administrators, teachers and parents.

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[1] This KEA Fast Fact was updated on 02/11/2014 to include resources obtained after it was first published on February 1, 2014.

- Review the validity and reliability of existing tools and consider the alignment of existing measures with the state's definition of school readiness after engaging in a process of gaining stakeholder buy-in of key definitions and domains. (CEELO can provide this information by request.)
- Assure professional development and supports are in place so that administrators, teachers, and parents can use KEA information to support children's development.

What We Did

To inform the state's early childhood leaders, CEELO reviewed existing definitions of kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). Next, we conducted online searches of state education agency websites to find current state policies on the development and implementation of a kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). We also performed secondary analysis of data reported in the 2013 State of Preschool Yearbook. In addition, we reviewed key documents produced by national organizations and states on the development and implementation of KEAs. Finally, we analyzed the findings to determine if key themes arose regarding the development and implementation of KEAs.

We used the definition of KEA provided by the U.S. Department of Education to refine our search to identify state policies around determining a single state-wide measure, conducted within the first few weeks/months of children's attendance in kindergarten, for the purpose of state-wide reporting and to inform instruction in kindergarten.

What is a Kindergarten Entrance Assessment?

The U.S. Department of Education defines "Kindergarten Entry Assessment" as an assessment that:

- Is administered to children during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten;
- Covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- Is used in conformance with the recommendations of the National Research Council[1] reports on early childhood; and
- Is valid and reliable for its intended purposes and for the target populations and aligned to the Early Learning and Development Standards.

Federal guidance on the purpose of the assessment suggests that "results of the assessment should be used to inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, and to inform parents about their children's status and involve them in decisions about their children's education. This assessment should not be used to prevent children's entry into kindergarten or as a single measure for high-stakes decisions." The requirement for the KEA to be used to inform parents is new for the FY 2013 Competition, as is the prohibition of using the KEA as a single measure for high-stakes decisions.

How Many States Have Kindergarten Entry Assessments?

A growing number of states are developing, piloting or implementation new kindergarten entry assessments, spurred by new legislation and new funding opportunities, (e.g. Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge funding and Enhanced Assessment Grants). For example,

- In 2010, just 7 states (Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, and Vermont) collected KEA data for the purposes of aggregating data at the state level.[2]
- In 2012, 25 states required assessments during the kindergarten year. Of these, 12 reported assessing children at entry, 10 during the school year, and 3 at both at entry and during. Some states such as Iowa, Maine, Oklahoma, Vermont, and Wisconsin offer kindergarten for four-year olds but the NIEER Yearbook questions do not ask about these separately from the regular kindergarten.
- In 2013, 34 states described plans for a KEA in their RTT-ELC applications; and 9 states that did not submit a RTT-ELC application have some type of KEA.

- [2] Daily, S., Burkhauser, M. & Halle, T. (2010). A review of school readiness practices in the States: Early Learning Guidelines and Assessments. *Early Childhood Highlights (Child Trends), 1(*3). Retrieved from: http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Child_Trends-2010_06_18_ECH_SchoolReadiness.pdf

- Of the states that have a 4 year old Kindergarten program, as of the 2012 school year the following policies applied:
    - IA - the measure is locally determined, but the state provides Teaching Strategies Gold online, and about 85% of districts use TS Gold;
    - VT - Work Sampling System or Teaching Strategies Gold is used by most 4K programs;
    - OK, ME and PA - local decision; and
    - SC - no assessments are required.

State Policies and Resources

Table 1 provides updated information as of January 2014 on 33 State's policies and resources related to kindergarten entry assessments, including information on the results of pilot studies, estimation of costs, and types of professional development offered.[3] The table includes the 18 states that recently received Enhanced Assessment Grant funding[4] and additional states that are implementing new laws or new policies on kindergarten entry assessment. States are in varying stages of implementing kindergarten entry assessment policies:

- AZ, AR, NY for example are in the *exploration stage* of engaging stakeholders and conducting research;
- DC, DE, and NJ for example are in the *installation phase* of conducing pilots or vetting kindergarten/school readiness definitions;
- MD, VT, WV, CO, and CA for example are in the *initial or full implementation stages*, collecting data to report to state or local stakeholders, and implementing comprehensive professional development systems.

TABLE 1
State Information on Kindergarten Entry Assessment Policies and Resources

State	State Kindergarten/KEA Home Page or KEA Reports (as available)	Additional Resources on Professional Development, Pilot Studies, and Other information
Arizona	A report to the Arizona Department of Education from the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory Stakeholder Taskforce	Definition of School Readiness, vetting by stakeholders
Arkansas	Kindergarten Readiness Program Home Page	Arkansas recently revised their kindergarten readiness indicators for parents. They are exploring options for a KEA.
California	Desired Results Developmental Profile- School Readiness	See also DRDP tech data system and online professional development modules.
Colorado	School Readiness Home Page	School Readiness Assessment Guidance for Kindergarten, includes individual school readiness plans
D.C.	Kindergarten-Entry Assessment (KEA) 2013-2014 Pilot Home Page	
Delaware	Delaware Early Learner Survey	Delaware Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Study: Results from a Statewide Survey of Kindergarten Teachers Kindergarten Readiness: An Overview of Components
Florida	Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) Home	

[3] Information was accessed through an online search and has not been reviewed by the state. Additional states may also be in the process of developing KEA policies but information was not available on line.

[4] The following states recently received funding through the Enhanced Assessment Grants program to develop comprehensive K-3rd grade assessment systems. The **North Carolina** consortium includes **Arizona, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington DC** and **South Carolina** as a collaborating state. The **Maryland** consortium includes **Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada and Ohio** to develop a KEA and aligned formative assessments. **Texas** will implement the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment System (TX-KEA).

State	State Kindergarten/KEA Home Page or KEA Reports (as available)	Additional Resources on Professional Development, Pilot Studies, and Other information
	Page	
Georgia	Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills Home Page	
Hawaii	Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA)	Hawaii is revising the HSSRA. They piloted TS Gold in the 2013-2014 school year with 140 teachers, and offered training to kindergarten teachers and administrators. KEA legislation to expand the pilot is currently before the legislature. See video of teachers and principals on the impact of the pilot.
Illinois	Kindergarten Corner Home Page	Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey A New Beginning: The Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Iowa	Task Force on Early Childhood Assessment	
Kentucky	Common Kindergarten Entry Screener Home Page	
Louisiana	Early Childhood Home Page	Training on Birth to Kindergarten Entry Assessment Tool- Teaching Strategies Gold
Maryland	Maryland Model for School Readiness Home Page	
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)	Readiness Centers in each region support information and professional learning communities in implementing the MKEA
Michigan	Kindergarten Entry Assessment Home Page	KRA frequently asked questions
Minnesota	School Readiness/Kindergarten Home Page	
Missouri	School Readiness Home Page	Results of the pilot study, including cost information is available at- http://dese.mo.gov/stateboard/meetings/June/documents/ec-assessment-pilot.pdf
Nevada	Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Silver State KIDS (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide)	
New Jersey	Division of Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten	KEA Implementation Pilot Proposal
New Mexico	New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten	New Mexico has issued an RFP to identify a vendor to develop a KEA based on the observation rubrics in their ELGs.
New York	Regents Approve Development of Kindergarten Readiness Tool for Use in 2014-15 School Year	
North Carolina	North Carolina Ready to Achieve Kindergarten Entry Assessment Process	North Carolina Ready to Achieve Guidebook for K-3rd grade literacy (KEA is element of this law)
North Dakota	Kindergarten Entry Assessment Consortium	SRI designing assessment: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/project.pdf
Ohio	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L) Home Page	
Oregon	Kindergarten Assessment Home Page	Oregon Kindergarten Assessment (OKA) Specifications, 2013-2014 school year
Pennsylvania	The 2012 Pennsylvania Kindergarten Entry Inventory Pilot Report, May 2013	Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning

State	State Kindergarten/KEA Home Page or KEA Reports (as available)	Additional Resources on Professional Development, Pilot Studies, and Other information
Rhode Island	Early Childhood Assessment	Early Learning Standards & Assessment Subcommittee Home Page
Texas	Texas Kindergarten Reading Assessment Program	Texas has received an Enhanced Assessment Grant and will be revised the kindergarten reading assessment to develop a kindergarten entry assessment.
Utah	Kindergarten Assessment Home Page	
Vermont	Early Education: Kindergarten Readiness	
Washington	Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills	See, WaKIDS: Washington State's KEA Process
West Virginia	West Virginia School Readiness Profile 2012	SR Profiles include data by county on access, enrollment, and health; child outcomes data on PreK children using the Early Learning Scale on 10 domains is reported at 3 points in the year. WV is developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

What Assessment Tools Do States Require School Districts to Use?

There is variability in the assessment instruments used, how data are used, and areas of children's learning that are assessed. State kindergarten assessment policy is currently in flux, and therefore current national data on the assessments tools that states are requiring for kindergarten entry assessments (that meets the federal definition) in the 2014 school year is not available at this time. An analysis of NIEER Yearbook data from the 2011-2012 school year found that of the states that had a kindergarten assessment policy, the most common policy was to allow localities to determine the measure (12 states) followed by a policy that required the use of state-developed assessments (7). Required kindergarten assessment/screening instruments included DIBELS (required by 5 states), PALS (required by 2 states) and Brigance (required by 2 states). Three states reported a variety of instruments from which localities could choose. This information though cannot be interpreted as required for kindergarten entry assessments, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

How Do State's Approach Developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment Policy?

Most states have engaged local stakeholders in the development of the KEA policy, often establishing advisory committees or workgroups to inform state policy. These workgroups have reviewed the research, conducted surveys, focus groups and informant interviews of teachers, school districts, and parents, and often, issued a report of findings and recommendations. Most states have developed an extended timeline to pilot the instrument(s), provide training, collect data, and determine the final implementation plan. Generally, states either *adopt* a commercially available or state developed tool, *adapt* a commercial tool or state developed tool, and a few are *creating new* tools. See **Appendix A** for a checklist of considerations on developing a state tool, adopting a commercial tool, or modifying a commercial tool.

Below we briefly describe the approaches and lessons learned by selected states to develop a kindergarten entrance assessment policy, including the identification of one or more required tools, involvement of stakeholders, training of teachers, professional development, and estimating costs. These resources will be invaluable to states as they begin their process specific to the state's goals and context. (See **Table 1** for links to relevant websites for further information.)

California- State Developed Assessment

California developed the Desired Results Developmental Profile- School Readiness (DRDP-SR) to align to the formative assessment measure, the Desired Results Developmental Profile- preschool (DRDP-PS), which it has required of publicly funded preschool programs for many years. They have also developed a web-based data entry and online professional development portal, DRDPtech. The data system has multiple functions including preparing reports for teachers and allows child records to follow children between schools or districts. The materials and resources are available in English and Spanish.

Delaware - Modified Commercial Assessment
Delaware developed the "Early Learner Survey" (ELS) based on Teaching Strategies Gold customized for use in Delaware. The KEA was authorized by House Bill 317, which required kindergarten children to be assessed in five Domains of Learning within 30 days of kindergarten entry. Statewide implementation will be completed by 2015 with all teachers, from start-up year in 2012-13. Delaware stakeholders reported the following "lessons learned" from the roll-out of the ELS.

- Teacher, district and union partnership were key as part of Delaware's strategy for both design and implementation, with active engagement.
- Tool revisions (lessening number of items) are underway, with ongoing attention to validity so that our more manageable tool is still valid and reliable
- Teaching Strategies, Inc. is creating Delaware-specific online version and teacher manual
- Significant focus on professional development and support for teachers with Delaware specific resource tools, including a resource kit and supplementary guide for teachers' use during the implementation phase, inter-rater reliability training, and selected teachers within each district to offer technical assistance
- Statewide Kindergarten Conference with teacher and administrator tracks that will focus on the whole child and ways in which to design instruction and assessment strategies to support the whole child
- Strategies to inform districts about how they can phase out existing assessments to maximize impact and efficiency
- Family engagement important to the initiative and phased-in starting in 13-14. Plan to be finalized within the next 60 days
- Building connection with formative child assessment through Delaware Stars, the QRIS, where we will offer the tool to the Stars programs for their use with infants, toddlers and preschoolers

Florida- Adapted Commercial Assessments
The Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS), composed of FAIR and ECHO assessments, is administered annually to all kindergarteners in public schools and to all available kindergarteners attending nonpublic schools as a state assessment by the Department of Education. Results of children participating in VPK are compared to those who have not participated in the program. Florida's VPK program is reviewed annually as part of the legislative appropriation process.

Georgia- Modified Commercial Assessment
Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment, used statewide, is modified from the Work Sampling System. For the 2011-2012 school year, the online version was used for approximately 45,540 children, more than half of children enrolled in the state-funded pre-K program. Georgia's Department of Education developed a specific instrument for kindergarten assessment (GKIDS), similar to Work Sampling System, which is administered throughout the kindergarten year.

Illinois- Modifying CA's DRDP-SR
The Illinois Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Stakeholder Committee submitted a report in 2011 to the State Board of Education outlining the research and recommendations for the Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (IL KIDS Initiative). The report reviewed the research and established eight priorities for IL's KIDS. The report made a number of recommendations, including adapting an available instrument (and aligning it with the states early learning standards) through a request for proposal process, establishing a timeline for piloting and implementation, offering training, and communicating with stakeholders. As a result of the pilot, IL chose to adopt California's Desired Results Developmental Profile- School Readiness version, and engaged in a memorandum of agreement with CA to implement and eventually adapt the DRDP as the IL KIDS. The IL KIDS is a formative assessment tool, with assessments occurring three times during the kindergarten year, across multiple domains. Teachers and administrators attend a two-day training and online training is available through a web-

portal (DRDPtech). Certified coaches also attend on-going training. Data collected through KIDS is linked to the statewide longitudinal data system.

Louisiana- Adopted Commercial Assessment
Legislation passed in 2011 requires Louisiana districts to move toward the use of a single kindergarten assessment, Developing Skills Checklist (DSC). The original timeline for implementation was 2014-2015, but funds were available to purchase tools and training on the DSC so that it could be used for the 2012-2013 school year. Individual providers may supplement DSC with Brigance, DSC, DRA, DIBELS, DIAL, Chicago, ESI-R, Screening Test for Education Prerequisite Skills (STEPS), or the Miller Assessment for Preschoolers for kindergarten assessment instruments. Additionally, seven targeted districts piloted the LA DOE Student Performance Checklist in 2011-2012. This checklist is aligned with 12 of the prekindergarten standards that are aligned to the Kindergarten Common Core State Standards.

Maryland--Developing New Assessment
Maryland and Ohio, with both RTT-ELC and Enhanced Assessment Grant funds, are developing a comprehensive assessment system for children birth through 3rd grade that includes a kindergarten entry assessment, formative assessments (36-72 months), and recommended developmental screening instruments. These three components are being developed and will be supported by a statewide technology infrastructure for both online reporting and eventually will be used to deliver assessment items electronically, and an on-line professional development system. Professional development is embedded in the technology support for the KEA and includes embedded professional development recommendations, including direct links to specific, contextual guidance to support KEA assessment delivery and classroom instruction, a comprehensive series of online PD modules and resources; and the use of simulation software to familiarize teachers with the KEA protocols and technology.

Missouri - Adopting CA DRDP-SR
Missouri conducted a pilot in 2012-13 to choose an assessment for use in preschool programs (including state Pre-K, community-based, home-based programs, Head Starts, Title I programs) and kindergartens for both formative and summative purposes, including measuring status at kindergarten entry. These assessment results are meant to be used by: (a) teachers to guide individual and group instruction; (b) administrators to monitor class, program, and building achievement; (c) parents interested in examining achievement information across time; and (d) policy makers and researchers to answer crucial policy questions. Based on review of relevant research and position statements, existing instruments, other state systems, and input from a statewide stakeholder meeting, three instruments were chosen to pilot: Brigance's *Inventory of Early Development II Standardized* (IED-II), the *Desired Results Developmental Profile* (DRDP), and *Teaching Strategies GOLD*.

Stratified random sampling (based on region, program type, and classroom poverty level) was used to assign teachers and classrooms to instrument group. A total of 62 classrooms participated throughout the pilot: 20 for IED-II, 18 for DRDP, and 24 for GOLD. Participants were trained during the summer of 2012 and were asked to assess all children in their classrooms two to three times (beginning, middle, end of year) during the pilot. Participants were surveyed three times: after training; after the first assessment checkpoint (October 31, 2012); and after the final assessment checkpoint (April 30, 2013).

Based on the data from the surveys—as well as other considerations, including alignment with Missouri's Early Learning Standards and cost—the Early Childhood Assessment Pilot Steering Committee determined that the *Desired Results Developmental Profile* (DRDP) would be the tool recommended to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education based on the pilot. The State Board of Education subsequently has adopted the DRDP as the DESE-recommended tool for use with children birth through kindergarten.

North Carolina -- Creating a New Assessment
North Carolina is leading a consortium of 10 states with funding from the EAG. This will build on the development of a comprehensive assessment system, as part of its RTT-ELC grant and required by a new K-3rd grade literacy law (Read to Achieve). The Office of Early Learning within the NC Department of Public Instruction will lead the development of a K-3 formative assessment that includes a Kindergarten Entry Assessment Process. This process

will gather data within the first 60 days of kindergarten, which will generate a Child Profile and be entered into the state's longitudinal data system. This Child Profile will also serve as the baseline for the broader K-3 assessment.

The K-3 Assessment will capture the wealth of knowledge about each child from families, service providers, school personnel, community members and teachers. This assessment will build upon the foundation set in the earlier years by emphasizing all five domains of development and learning, thus providing K-3 teachers a more complete picture of the whole child. Recently, the State Superintendent June Atkinson convened a "think tank" consisting of 22 educational experts to inform this work. The panel is exploring what is critical to assess within multiple domains of learning and development and how these areas can be appropriately and efficiently assessed in the early grades beginning at kindergarten entry. The group's recommendations will be used to craft the assessment. The goal is to create more that measurements. Instead, each child's assessment will guide daily instructional practices tailored to that child's needs.

Oregon- Composite Commercial Assessment

In 2012 legislation was passed to develop a new kindergarten entry assessment. The Early Learning Council (ELC) and the Department of Education engaged a broad range of stakeholders to develop the plan for determining and piloting the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment (OKA). The ELC surveyed school districts, conducted focus groups, and identified pilot sites. They also recommended the KRA incorporate a composite of the Child Behavior Rating Scale and the easy CBM math and literacy measures, based on considerations of alignment to their goals and standards, costs, and teacher/administrator time for training.

Pennsylvania- Created New Assessment

Pennsylvania's work to develop a kindergarten entry assessment began with the development of a continuum of early learning standards. These standards start with infant-toddler, and maintain alignment through pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 and 2, and link to Pennsylvania's grade 3 academic standards. The state selected 18 key standards from four key learning areas were identified as indicators of student progress that were most important for determining kindergarten readiness. The Common Core Standards, which were adopted by Pennsylvania's State Board of Education on July 1, 2010, were also incorporated.

The Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) convened stakeholder workgroups to develop recommendations for an instrument that could be used in a pilot study to determine the status of children as they enter kindergarten. Invited participants included kindergarten teachers, preschool and Head Start personnel, administrators, and content specialists in math and literacy, all from within the state. Workgroup participants reviewed the Learning Standards and the Common Core Standards to develop definitions of skill levels for select learning standards in the following key learning areas: Social and Emotional, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, and Approaches to Learning (SELMA). The workgroup provided examples and a set of indicators for each skill level. These were used to develop a kindergarten entry teacher observation tool and a series of supporting documents for recording, tracking, and summarizing individual and class outcomes.

A relatively small group of individuals (44) gave feedback surveys and 37 participants participated in conference calls. This group recommended further reducing the number of indicators to: 1) those most predictive of later school success and most easily measured at kindergarten entry, 2) Collect data earlier in the school year (end of September/beginning of October) to provide a balance between conducting an authentic measure and providing a true snapshot of skills at kindergarten entry. 3) Clearly indicate on the reporting form what was observed and not yet observed. OCDEL revised the Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI), is continuing to expand implementation, with state-wide implementation expected in SY2016.

Washington - Adopted Commercial Assessment

The Washington Department of Early Learning contracted with SRI International to conduct research to make recommendations to the legislature for a statewide kindergarten assessment process. The report, completed in 2008 defined a kindergarten assessment process, conducted a local survey of districts and a survey of teachers, solicited input from Tribes, and proposed a draft implementation plan. In 2011, the legislature appropriated funds, and private funds supported the implementation of three components of the kindergarten assessment process,

these are:
1- Family connection-- teachers meet with families one on one at the beginning of the kindergarten year
2- Early Learning Collaboration-- EC teachers and K teachers meet
3- Whole Child Inventory- piloted three tools (TS Gold, Work Sampling System, Developmental Skills Checklist)

Based on the pilot, TS Gold was selected as the assessment instrument. In the fall 2012, the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WAKIDS) was mandatory in state-funded full-day kindergarten and voluntary in other schools.

Additional Resources

Build Initiative:

- Top Ten Recommendations for State Leaders Implementing Kindergarten Entry Assessments
- Kindergarten Entry Assessment: Discussion Guide 2013
- Families Know Best

Council of Chief State School Officers' Kindergarten Assessment Position Paper

Early Learning Challenge Collaborative- Kindergarten Entry Assessments- KEA
http://www.elccollaborative.org/assessment/77-kindergarten-entry-assessment.html

Education Commission of the States: 50 State Analysis Kindergarten Readiness Assessments, January 2013

National Association for the Education of Young Children, Developing Kindergarten Readiness and Other Large Scale Assessments

National Institute for Early Education Research Assessment Resources at http://nieer.org/research/assessment

National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), State Approaches to School Readiness Assessment, updated August 2010.

Appendix A
Considerations in Developing, Purchasing or Modifying a KEA
Developed by Peter Mangione, WestEd

State-developed:

- ❑ Facilitates close alignment of standards and assessment
- ❑ Engages the state's early childhood community in development process
- ❑ Allows for calibrating the instrument with a sample representative of state
- ❑ May be costly and time-consuming to develop and test

Off-the-shelf:

- ❑ Provides a ready-to-use instrument that's been studied with national sample
- ❑ May be costly to use

Modified tool:

- ❑ May be able to enter in agreement with developer (other state or private vendor) to facilitate cost-free or low-cost use
- ❑ May allow for adding and deleting items to tighten alignment with state's standards
- ❑ Able to calibrate modified instrument with sample representative of state

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3

Identifying Early Literacy Learning Needs

Implications for Child Outcome Standards and Assessment Systems

Elizabeth Spencer, Trina Spencer, Howard Goldstein, and Naomi Schneider

The origins of conventional literacy skills are evident in early childhood development. Emergent literacy skills, as measured in preschool and kindergarten, are strong predictors of later literacy achievement. Current educational research and policy (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, PL 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425, 2001) emphasize assessment of preschool children to inform identification and instruction. The assessment of emergent literacy skills can serve to identify those children who may be at risk for later reading difficulties. Furthermore, assessment can guide the content and delivery of early literacy instruction. Failure to identify children early and provide appropriate intervention to promote emergent literacy skills is likely to have serious repercussions for later development of conventional reading skills.

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Effective early literacy assessment can provide valuable information. However, decisions about what to assess must be guided by evidence. The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP; 2008) report identifies those emergent literacy skills that are reliable predictors of later reading skill. In this chapter we review the predictors identified by NELP and make recommendations for assessment relative to those predictors. We discuss the different purposes of early literacy assessment and provide guidelines for the implementation of a measurement framework that encompasses these purposes in light of the availability of well-developed assessments. We also discuss the alignment of assessment with state early childhood education standards.

WHAT INFORMATION DOES THE NELP REPORT PROVIDE TO INFORM EARLY LITERACY ASSESSMENT?

One purpose of the NELP report was to identify preschool and kindergarten predictors of conventional literacy skills (i.e., later reading, writing, and spelling outcomes). To address this research question, the panel conducted a meta-analysis of empirical studies published in refereed journals (see Chapter 1). The selected studies provided information to allow for the calculation of average correlations to identify predictors that were interpreted as strong (average correlations of .50 or larger), moderate (between .30–.49), and small (less than .30); a minimum of three studies examining a predictor variable were required to compute an effect size. In addition, the panel analyzed information provided by multivariate studies; these studies provided information about the strength of predictors when additional variables (e.g., IQ) were controlled.

The panel identified a set of skills that are precursors to later literacy achievement in decoding, reading comprehension, and spelling. A review of correlational evidence identified skills with high predictive validity, including *alphabet knowledge* (knowledge of letter names and sounds), *phonological awareness* (the ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze spoken words independent of meaning, including syllable and phoneme-level tasks), *rapid automatized naming* (the ability to rapidly name a repeating sequence of random sets of letters, numbers, colors, or pictures), *early writing or name writing* (the ability to write letters in isolation or write one's own name), and *phonological memory* (the ability to remember spoken information for a short time). Skills with moderate predictive validity included *concepts about print* (knowledge of print conventions and concepts, such as reading from left to right), *print knowledge* (combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and early decoding ability), *oral language* (the ability to produce and comprehend spoken language, including semantics

and syntax), *visual processing* (the ability to match or discriminate symbols), and *reading readiness* (combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, vocabulary, memory, and phonological awareness).

As the authors of the NELP report point out, this approach is limited by the research available. If there is a lack of research on a particular emergent literacy skill, it is not possible to examine that skill as a predictor. Moreover, different statistical methods for identifying predictors of later literacy development may reveal different information (Paris & Luo, 2010).

The panel is careful to caution against drawing causal conclusions about the relationships between predictors and outcomes. We encourage this caution as well. Experimental research is needed to determine causality. The first step is to establish the efficacy of intervention approaches on what are thought to be important predictors. When there are robust intervention approaches, it is easier to determine their immediate and long-term effects on conventional literacy development (e.g., decoding, fluency, comprehension, writing). Identifying predictors is helpful but does not always fully inform the goal of promoting the full complement of literacy skills. For example, within the important domain of phonological awareness, phoneme awareness may be a stronger predictor of decoding than rhyme awareness (Macmillan, 2002).

At least three domains with predictive validity remain poor candidates for emergent literacy instruction given the current knowledge base: rapid automatized naming, phonological memory, and visual processing tasks. Interventions that target these skills and produce robust short- and long-term learning effects have yet to appear in the literature. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine practical tasks that could be taught to improve these skills in ways that relate to literacy development. Therefore, practitioners would be wise to focus on teaching skills that appear to have functional or causal relationships to later reading acquisition (e.g., phonological awareness).

Two additional domains with predictive validity warrant further explanation. Alphabet knowledge involves the naming of letters and their associated sounds. Identifying the names of letters, as an isolated skill, does not have a direct influence on learning to read. Learning letter names is a strong predictor of learning to read because it facilitates learning letter sounds (Ehri & Wilce, 1979), but naming letters without phonological awareness and letter-sound association has little effect on reading development. Concepts about print play a similar role in the development of reading. Knowing the directionality of print, differences between print and pictures, and other print conventions are indicators of children's familiarity with books and can help in learning other more critical literacy skills, but they do not have a direct causal link to read-

ing development (Neuman & Roskos, 2005). Although research indicates that concepts about print and letter names can be taught successfully to young children, in this chapter we focus on those predictors that have the greatest relevance for early literacy instruction.

The domains of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge (with emphasis on letter-sound correspondence), oral language, and early writing are the focus of this chapter because the NELP report identifies them as moderate or strong predictors of later reading performance and because there is substantial evidence supporting their causal role in literacy development, thus highlighting their relevance to early literacy instruction. As we discuss the predictors of later reading in the context of early childhood assessment, the potential value of assessing the less practical predictors of reading ability (e.g., rapid automatized naming, concepts about print) should not be ignored. They may be especially good in discriminating among children who should be eligible for special education services, for example. On the other hand, practitioners might be expected to give little priority to tracking those skills. This is discussed further in the context of the various purposes of assessment described below.

EMERGENT LITERACY STANDARDS

Recognition of critical emergent literacy skills has substantial implications for early childhood educational practices. One way the NELP report is likely to influence practice is through the development or revision of states' early learning guidelines (also called child outcome standards). With encouragement from federal initiatives to improve early childhood education such as *Good Start, Grow Smart* (White House, 2002), states began developing early childhood standards that resemble those mandated for K–12 education. Initially, though, many standards were crafted by a consensus of content experts instead of referencing research evidence (Neuman & Roskos, 2005). This is understandable for content domains lacking well-developed literature bases, but the release of the NELP report eliminates a lack of scientific evidence as a feasible excuse for neglecting key emergent literacy skills in state early childhood standards.

At present, all 50 states have developed, are developing, or are revising their early childhood guidelines (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011). Of those states that are implementing early learning standards, many have not included guidelines for all key emergent literacy skills. Some states, however, paid close attention to early literacy research and either created a new domain called emergent literacy (e.g., Florida) or expanded their language and literacy domain to include pho-

nological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print recognition, and writing strategies (e.g., California). California and Florida's early learning standards, for example, reflect rather comprehensive coverage of the essential precursors of conventional literacy skills.

The importance of including all of the critical emergent literacy skills is evident when considering the purpose of state standards. Child outcome standards describe the development and learning expectations for young children. Standards guide curriculum, assessment, and professional development (Bodrova, Leong, & Shore, 2004). Thus, standards prescribe what should happen in classrooms. In the standards-based education reform movement, standards are believed to lead to higher student achievement. In K–12 education, states that implemented standards-aligned instruction have shown improved student achievement (Education Commission of the States, 2000). Moreover, students taught by teachers whose professional development matched state standards and reform plans demonstrated impressive gains in reading (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Early learning guidelines have the potential to have a similar impact for preschool children. However, if critical emergent literacy skills are neglected from the standards as key child outcomes, they are likely to be neglected in preschool classrooms as key instructional objectives. Because of the foundation that emergent literacy provides for later reading achievement, educational programs incur substantial risk of poor outcomes if they fail to teach skills identified in the NELP report as moderate or strong predictors of later reading performance (i.e., alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, oral language, and early writing skills).

The identification of early predictors of later reading and writing achievement also amplifies the need to assess them. In general, educators and policy makers agree that assessment is an integral component of an effective early childhood educational program, but there is little agreement on how assessment should be carried out. For example, there is no consensus on how assessment data should be collected, who should collect assessment data, or how assessment information should be interpreted and reported. Several books and policy papers have addressed the challenges to effective early childhood assessments (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2010; Epstein, Schweinhart, DeBruin-Parecki, & Robin, 2004; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] & National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education [NAECS/SDE], 2009; National Research Council, 2008; Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998). Concerns regarding the resources necessary to properly assess young children, the appropriateness of norm-referenced, standardized tests, and questionable reliability and validity associated with assessment alternatives for young children

are paramount (Bagnato et al., 2010; Burns, Midgett, Leong, & Bodrova, 2003; Epstein et al., 2004).

Perhaps the most fundamental and consistent recommendation is that assessment instruments should be used for their intended purposes. Using tests for reasons other than their intended purpose is an unfortunate and common misuse of assessment instruments in early childhood. To reduce this risk and help prepare all children for kindergarten, practitioners need psychometrically sound and socially valid instruments to accomplish each educationally relevant purpose.

In this climate of accountability and increasing calls for scientifically based education, effective applications of assessment will be essential for early identification and instruction of emergent literacy. The NELP report suggests which early literacy skills are worthy of thoughtful assessment. As a next step, this chapter describes three major purposes of assessment and focus on how those purposes relate to identifying early literacy needs for children in early childhood educational programs. In Table 3.1, we overlay the purposes of assessment onto the alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, oral language, and early writing domains to help guide practitioners in the responsible use of available early literacy assessment instruments. Although it is not an exhaustive list, the table includes many of the assessment tools used in preschool for early literacy assessment. In addition, the following analysis of the intersection of assessment purposes and key emergent literacy skills helps identify areas of need in research and development.

PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT OF EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

This section discusses three primary purposes of early childhood assessment: 1) informing instructional decisions, 2) identifying children who require intensified intervention, and 3) helping educational programs make systematic improvements (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2009). In the context of early learning guidelines, the focus of assessment remains on promoting successful outcomes for children and facilitating positive programmatic changes (Bodrova et al., 2004).

Informing Instructional Decisions

Early childhood educators use assessment data to inform two types of instructional decisions. Before delivering instruction, teachers first assess children's strengths and needs with respect to the classroom curriculum. This type of information helps identify what to teach and informs how to teach it (i.e., instructional planning). Once instruction begins, teachers use assessment data to monitor the effect their instruction has on

Table 3.1. Standardized early literacy instruments for preschoolers

	Purpose	Phonological awareness	Alphabet knowledge	Oral language	Early writing	Composite of early literacy
Information instruction	Instructional planning	GGG PALS-PreK	PALS-PreK	GGG NLM:P	CELF-P2 supplemental subtest PALS-PreK	CELF-P2 PALS-PreK
	Progress monitoring	GGG		GGG NLM:P		
Identification	Screening	GGG GRTR-R PALS-PreK	GRTR-R PALS-PreK	DELV–Screening Test Fluharty-2 GGG LAP-D PLS-4 Screen SPELT-3	PALS-PreK	GRTR-R PALS-PreK
	Eligibility	CELF-P2 TOPEL	TERA-3 TOPEL	CELF-P2 DELV–Screening Test EVT LAP-D OWLS PLS-4 PPVT-IV TOLD-P4 TOPEL		TERA-3 TOPEL
Program improvement	Program-level instruments: CLASS Pre-K, ECERS-R, ELLCO Pre-K					

Key: CELF-P2, Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, Preschool—Second Edition (Wiig, Secord, & Semel, 2004); CLASS Pre-K, Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ Pre-K (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008); DELV–Screening Test, Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation–Screening Test (Seymour, Roeper, & de Villiers, 2003); ECERS-R, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale—Revised Edition (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005); ELLCO Pre-K, Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool, Pre-K (Smith, Brady, & Anastasopoulos, 2008); EVT, Expressive Vocabulary Test–Second Edition (Williams, 2007); Fluharty-2, Fluharty Preschool Speech and Language Screening Test–Second Edition (Fluharty, 2000); GGG, Get it, Got it, Go! (Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, 1998); GRTR-R, Get Ready to Read! Revised (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2009); LAP-D, Learning Accomplishment Profile-Diagnostic–Third Edition (Hardin, Peisner-Feinberg, & Weeks, 2005); NLM:P, Narrative Language Measures: Preschool (Spencer & Petersen, 2010); OWLS, Oral and Written Language Scales (Carrow-Woolfolk, 1995); PALS-PreK, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004); PLS-4, Preschool Language Scale–Fourth Edition (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2002); PLS-4 Screen, Preschool Language Scale Screening Test–Fourth Edition (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2005); PPVT-IV, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test–Fourth Edition (Dunn & Dunn, 2007); SPELT-3, Structured Photographic Expressive Language Test 3 (Dawson, Stout, & Eyer, 2003); TERA-3, Test of Early Reading Ability–Third Edition (Reid, Hresko, & Hammill, 2001); TOLD-P4, Test of Language Development-Primary–Fourth Edition (Newcomer & Hammill, 2008); TOPEL, Test of Preschool Early Literacy (Lonigan, Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 2007).

student learning. Progress monitoring via repeated probes of student performance further informs decisions regarding when and how to make instructional adjustments.

In early childhood education, criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) that compare student performance to a set of preestablished learning objectives or criteria (Sattler, 2000) often are used to document students' progress and identify targets that need to be taught. Many comprehensive preschool curricula include companion CRTs that Bagnato et al. (2010) call curriculum-embedded assessments. Examples of curriculum-embedded CRTs include *The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum for Ages 3–5* (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2006) and *The Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs* (Johnson-Martin, Attermeier, & Hacker, 2004). Often, curriculum-embedded assessments lack standardized administration procedures, as well as evidence of reliability and validity. In contrast, early childhood developmental CRTs that are not companions to specific curricula are more likely to have standardized administration and scoring procedures and established norms so that they can also be used to determine eligibility for intensive services (e.g., the Battelle Developmental Inventory–Second Edition [Newborg, 2005] and the BRIGANCE Inventory of Early Development II [Brigance & Glascoe, 2010]). Even though developmental CRTs and comprehensive curriculum-embedded CRTs can be used to plan instruction and monitor progress, the extent to which CRTs capture children's performance in key emergent literacy domains is restricted. Comprehensive curriculum-embedded CRTs and CRTs with norms typically cover multiple developmental domains such as personal-social, cognition, communication, fine motor, and gross motor domains. If included, emergent literacy skills may be buried among many other equally weighted skills. Thus, although general developmental inventories and curriculum-embedded tests are useful in early childhood assessment, they may not be sufficient for informing emergent literacy instruction.

As of 2012, there are only a few publicly available assessment tools designed to inform instructional decisions that target emergent literacy skills specifically and have adequate psychometric properties (see Table 3.1). The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool (PALS-PreK; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004) has brief, simple, and standardized administration and scoring procedures and includes early writing, alphabet knowledge, print knowledge, and phonological awareness tasks. Another assessment tool, Get it, Got it, Go! (GGG; Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, 1998), also has brief and standardized administration and scoring procedures and assesses two of the domains identified by NELP: phonological awareness and oral language. GGG includes three

Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs): rhyming, alliteration (both of which are measures of phonological awareness), and picture naming (a measure of expressive vocabulary). A third assessment tool, Narrative Language Measures: Preschool (NLM:P; Spencer & Petersen, 2010) includes personal narrative, narrative retell, and story comprehension subtests, all of which fall into the oral language domain. The NLM:P administration and scoring procedures also are brief and standardized.

The assessment schedule or frequency of test administration affects the extent to which results can be used to inform instructional decisions. Assessment schedules vary according to decisions made at local levels and the measurement tools available. In early childhood education, an assessment schedule of three times per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring) is common because the majority of available tools have lengthy administration times, making them impractical for more frequent measurement (e.g., curriculum-embedded CRTs, developmental CRTs). The time necessary to administer PALS-PreK and GGG is sufficiently brief to be practical for more frequent monitoring of early literacy skills; however, neither assessment tool includes multiple equivalent forms to be used weekly. Repeated administrations of GGG are allowed, but the developers recommend that repetition be limited to once per month.

An infrequent assessment schedule may not be sufficient for all early literacy progress- monitoring needs or to inform strategic planning of emergent literacy instruction. Research has shown that frequent monitoring of students' progress enhances teachers' ability to plan instruction and make timely instructional changes that have positive effects on student achievement (Connor et al., 2009; Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Hamlett, 1993; VanDerHeyden, Snyder, Broussard, & Ramsdell, 2008). NLM:P was specifically designed for frequent monitoring of language growth over time and has 40 equivalent forms. In a recent study, researchers administered NLM:P daily to preschoolers receiving an oral language intervention and found the test to be sensitive to intervention effects (Spencer & Slocum, 2010).

To inform instructional decision making around early literacy, there is a need for instruments that measure preschoolers' performance on key early literacy skills, that have simple procedures and brief testing times, and that can be administered with a frequency sufficient to provide an index of progress. GGG and PALS-PreK meet several of these criteria. However, neither of these measures assesses all key domains (phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, early writing, and oral language) nor were they designed for frequent administration. NLM:P has multiple equivalent forms for repeated administration, but it does not measure children's performance in areas of emergent literacy

besides language. Therefore, additional measures will need to be developed to inform instructional decision making.

In addition to measures that can be administered more frequently, there is a need for measures that assess multiple emergent literacy domains. Currently, researchers are developing measures that will be similar to the IGDI tasks in GGG but that will assess additional domains, including alphabet knowledge and comprehension. Investigators in Minnesota are working on additional IGDIs that will be appropriate for assessing several emergent literacy skills (McConnell, Missall, Rodriguez, & Wackerle-Hollman, 2010). In contrast to the current GGG versions of IGDIs, the new items are scaled using an item response theory approach. This permits scaling of items for screening that covers a broad developmental age range. For the quarterly measures, the items selected can be scaled to take into account expected progress in critical language and literacy skills. Thus, the item pool would be different for different points in the school year or for different developmental levels.

There is a specific need for measures that can serve as progress-monitoring tools. Ideally, these measures could yield information to serve multiple purposes, assess skills in a number of early language and literacy domains, and align with early learning standards and other measurement tools. These measures should be able to be administered and scored quickly and reliably by practitioners (Deno, 2003). Additional research about the development of early literacy skills is necessary to guide the design of progress-monitoring measures that are appropriate for young children. For example, progress monitoring in the domain of early writing may not be appropriate for many preschool children if early writing skills are not expected to develop until late in the prekindergarten year.

Curriculum-based assessment (CBA) tools that include test stimuli drawn from the local classroom curriculum provide a viable alternative for monitoring progress to inform instruction. CBA is a general term encompassing methods to collect information about student performance in reference to the curriculum for the purpose of informing instruction (Tucker, 1985). Under this general umbrella of curriculum-relevant assessment, CBA can involve a variety of teacher-made tools such as observation recording forms, worksheets, and portfolios, as well as standardized, objective tests (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2008; Tucker, 1985). The direct correspondence between what is taught and what is assessed is an advantage of CBA. Teachers may use these tools to monitor mastery of the lessons taught each week or in each unit and use this information to differentiate instruction for children who may lack skills to progress to more advanced lessons. However, these mastery-monitoring CBAs may lack standardized administration and scoring procedures

and evaluations of their reliability and validity. Because this mastery-monitoring approach to assessment may provide limited information about the extent to which students have learned beyond the explicit context of the classroom curriculum (Fuchs & Deno, 1991), it should be supplemented with other standardized measures.

As is evident in Table 3.1, assessments for monitoring progress are limited in the phonological awareness and oral language areas and are absent in the alphabet knowledge and early writing areas. Consequently, early childhood education professionals may need to rely on general CRTs or CBAs that they develop themselves or that are recommended within existing curricula.

Identifying Children Who Require Intensified Intervention

Identifying young children who need additional instructional support occurs in two ways. The traditional method involves screening and follow-up eligibility testing. Screening, typically a first step, involves a brief sampling of the young children's principal developmental skills for the purpose of detecting possible delays. If potential delays are detected, further in-depth eligibility assessment is conducted to determine the allocation of intensified intervention (Bagnato et al., 2010; National Research Council, 2008; Shepard et al., 1998).

Within the last decade, an alternative way to identify children who require intensified intervention has emerged in early childhood education based on response to intervention (RTI) conceptualizations. Although eligibility determinations are necessary before students receive special education services, early detection and prevention efforts such as RTI involve expanded options for children identified as needing intervention via screening measures. An at-risk identification at screening also could lead to increased monitoring or an immediate increase in instructional support without necessitating time- and resource-intensive eligibility assessments. As part of a RTI framework, universal screening occurs on a quarterly schedule (consistent with common early childhood assessment schedules). Assessment that is carried out in fall, winter, and spring is sometimes called benchmarking because students' development, skills, and achievements are compared with specific criteria or benchmarks for learning. In a RTI context, the extent to which student performance meets benchmarks and the extent to which students have progressed since the previous assessment point can be considered when determining students' needs for intensified literacy instruction.

The allocation of supplemental instruction and intervention is contingent upon screening and eligibility assessment results. Because financial and personnel resources necessary to provide intensified interven-

tion are valuable and scarce, the consequence of an identification error can be costly. Therefore, screening and eligibility assessment instruments have stringent psychometric requirements. Educators will want to select screening tools (e.g., Get Ready to Read! Revised [GRTR-R]; National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2009) and eligibility instruments (e.g., Test of Preschool Early Literacy [TOPEL]; Lonigan, Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 2007) with sufficient evidence of reliability and validity. With respect to emergent literacy skills, screening instruments also should have evidence of predictive validity with conventional reading and writing. Screening tools should involve standardized administration and scoring procedures and yield either criterion-referenced or norm-referenced scores to help determine when potential delays exist. Nearly all tests used as the primary method for determining eligibility for special education are norm-referenced and standardized. To identify children who require intensive intervention, such as special education, educators will want to select measures that also have evidence of good sensitivity and specificity. Sensitivity and specificity are indicators of a test's accuracy in identifying a condition. If a test is sensitive, a person with a condition will test positive for the condition on the measure. If a test is specific, a person without a condition will test negative for the condition on the measure. Test development methods, such as receiver operating characteristic (ROC) analysis (Catts, Petscher, Schatschneider, Bridges, & Mendoza, 2009; Compton et al., 2010; Johnson, Jenkins, & Petscher, 2010), have improved practitioners' ability to design instruments that optimize sensitivity and specificity, as well as the accuracy of predicting developmental delays.

Screening Instruments Several assessments are available for screening purposes in early language and literacy. As can be seen in Table 3.1, the domain with the most screening measures is oral language; the majority of measures provide a score cutpoint to identify children who need further assessment. Other screening instruments sample skills across multiple domains. For example, GRTR-R is a composite instrument that measures alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and phonological awareness and provides a score cutpoint.

Several of the measures discussed in the previous section on informing instruction have the potential to be useful as a first step in the identification of children who require intensive intervention. PALS-PreK and GGG, administered in the fall, might provide information to educators about children who should receive additional assessment. However, neither PALS-PreK nor GGG provide score cutpoints or benchmarks to identify such children. PALS-PreK provides a developmental range for spring of the prekindergarten year. GGG suggests using local

normative information to create benchmarks. Educators will need to make decisions about a child's performance on these measures to determine if additional testing is necessary. There is a need for the further development of instruments for early literacy screening purposes, especially instruments that provide norm-referenced or benchmark scores to indicate children who may be eligible for additional intervention.

Eligibility Instruments There are many norm-referenced and standardized measures available for the purpose of eligibility determination in the domains of early language and literacy. Educators also will need to make careful decisions about the domains of early language and literacy that are assessed to determine eligibility. NELP has identified key predictors for assessment; educators will need to determine which of these predictors will be assessed to identify children who require intensified intervention. It may be most appropriate to assess those domains that are potential intervention targets. However, educators may supplement eligibility evaluations with measures of rapid automatized naming, phonological memory, and visual processing, which NELP identified as moderate or strong predictors of later reading. Although they are less functional for emergent literacy instruction, rapid automatized naming, phonological memory, and visual processing are good indicators of risk and may be helpful in the identification of children who require intensive literacy intervention (Weismer et al., 2000).

Often, measures that assess a broad range of early language and literacy skills will be most appropriate. For example, some students may struggle to acquire many early literacy skills, including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary. Other students may have a weakness only in a particular domain, such as oral language. Educators will need to select assessments that determine not only eligibility for additional services but also the type of services (e.g., early literacy intervention, speech-language services). Tests that provide both a composite score and scores for subtests that relate to particular domains might serve this purpose. Table 3.1 provides examples of available measures that can assist with eligibility determination and that have adequate psychometric properties. More comprehensive information about assessment tools can be found in the report *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How* (National Research Council, 2008).

TOPEL is an example of a measure that can be useful for the purpose of eligibility determination. It assesses skills in several of the domains identified by NELP and includes three subtests: print knowledge, definitional vocabulary, and phonological awareness. Children receive standard scores for each subtest and a composite score. Although the test

manual reports strong reliability and validity, it does not provide information about sensitivity and specificity in identification.

NELP reports that measures of complex oral language skills (i.e., grammar and listening comprehension) have been found to be stronger predictors of later decoding and reading comprehension than simple measures of vocabulary. Therefore, measures of oral language that assess a broad range of skills may be most appropriate for determining children's eligibility for intensified intervention. The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamental, Preschool–Second Edition (CELF-P2; Wiig, Secord, & Semel, 2004) is an example of a widely used measure for determining eligibility in the domain of oral language. CELF-P2's core language subtests assess the language skills of sentence comprehension, word structure, and expressive vocabulary. Children receive standard scores for each subtest and a composite standard score based on performance on the core language subtests. CELF-P2 also has subtests and supplemental measures that could be used to assess other early literacy skills, including phonological awareness and early writing. The test manual provides strong evidence of reliability and validity. Sensitivity and specificity are high (.85 and .82, respectively) in identification of children with language disorders when the criterion for a disorder was set at 1 standard deviation below the mean.

Educators selecting assessment tools for oral language also will need to consider dialectical variations. Assessments of oral language, both for screening and eligibility purposes, may overidentify children who speak a dialectical variation as needing intervention. Measures such as the Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation—Screening Test (DELV–Screening Test; Seymour, Roeper, & de Villiers, 2003) have been developed to distinguish between children who are speakers of a dialectical variation and children who have language impairments.

In summary, assessments developed to serve the function of identifying children's eligibility for additional services comprise the greatest concentration of assessments in Table 3.1. This is especially evident in the oral language area. As can be seen in the table, early writing assessment has been included only in one screening assessment (PALS-PreK). It also was sampled in a supplemental subtest of the CELF-P2. The findings of the NELP report have provided an impetus for further development in this area. Puranik and Lonigan (in press) are among the investigators who are working on the development of a test of early writing skills.

Helping Programs Make Systematic Improvements

Improving the quality of early childhood educational programs is a third purpose of assessment. However, the use of assessment data for the for-

mative evaluation of a program's early literacy curriculum and instruction is not commonplace. A major reason for this is that few assessment instruments are designed with this specific purpose in mind. Nonetheless, making data-based systematic changes can utilize child-level data combined with program-level measures of teacher behavior, literacy environment, and curriculum content (Epstein et al., 2004).

Although child-level data serve as a reasonable basis for program improvement, there are a number of issues to be considered. First, using child-level data should not be an afterthought. Instead, administrators should plan assessment data collection using valid designs and procedures to properly answer questions about program effectiveness. Second, it is not necessary to test all children in the program, which can be costly for programs with limited resources. With large or more homogeneous programs, sampling procedures can be used strategically to assess enough children to represent the population in the program. Third, child-level data should be aggregated in meaningful ways that reflect the impact of teachers, classrooms, or curricula. Examining an individual child's assessment data reflects the child's ability to learn, but examining a class's annual progress compared with a different class's annual progress may reflect differences in instructional quality. Fourth, children's gains over time as opposed to a static performance assessment provide the best estimate of programmatic impact. Assessment of program effectiveness for the purpose of program improvement is similar to progress monitoring of student performance to determine the effectiveness of that student's instruction, but it occurs on a much larger scale (National Research Council, 2008). Because growth cannot be established using a single assessment score, it is necessary to design program improvement measurements with at least two (beginning and end of year) or three (quarterly evaluation) data collection times across a year. Fifth, to effectively address program improvement goals, results of child-level data should be used to identify professional development needs, because results can be analyzed to reveal strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction (Epstein et al., 2004; NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2009).

Many of the assessment instruments discussed in the previous two sections, if executed properly, can be used in the collection of child-level program improvement data. However, the results of these assessments offer only one source of information for evaluation. Program-level information, such as the quality of the classroom literacy environment, the breadth and depth of emergent literacy coverage in the program's curriculum, and the quality of teacher–student literacy interactions, also should inform systemic improvement efforts. These types of data should inform systematic and focused professional development and the selection of evi-

dence-based curricula and instructional approaches. For example, programmatic data indicating that a teacher provides limited opportunities for shared book-reading experiences and makes little effort to expand children's spoken vocabulary should lead to customized training and coaching on how to encourage vocabulary development and incorporate shared book reading into classroom activities. Likewise, if an examination of the program's curriculum finds that it does not include instructional suggestions and objectives for teaching phonological awareness, then selection of a curriculum that does is warranted.

A number of environmental inventories require raters to observe classroom environments to characterize the availability of materials and organization conducive to learning (e.g., the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale–Revised Edition [ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005], the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool, Pre-K [ELLCO Pre-K]; Smith, Brady, & Anastasopoulos, 2008). ELLCO Pre-K was developed for the purpose of characterizing the classroom literacy environment in particular. It consists of an observational checklist and supplemental teacher interview with items that relate to classroom structure, curriculum, language environment, books and book reading, and print and early writing. The content of ELLCO Pre-K overlaps with the predictors identified by NELP. Although these instruments give general information about the classroom environment, they are limited in their ability to capture details of instructional and classroom quality. For example, observational indicators in the domain of print and early writing describe the availability of writing materials, the display of written material, and opportunities for children to practice early writing skills. These indicators do not directly measure instruction in early writing.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™, Pre-K (CLASS™ Pre-K; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) also is used to inform early childhood educational program improvement. This measure is an observational recording system designed to characterize teacher–student interactions in three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. CLASS Pre-K measures aspects of teacher–student interactions that relate to the development of early literacy skill. However, CLASS Pre-K is designed to measure characteristics of classroom interactions across all content domains.

To inform program improvement, there is a need for measures that can more accurately describe the instructional experiences of children in relation to the early language and literacy skills identified by NELP. Classroom CIRCLE: Code for Interactive Recording of Children's Learning Environments (Atwater, Lee, Montagna, Reynolds, & Tapia, 2009) is an example of an observational tool that can provide detailed informa-

tion about instructional quality in the domain of early language and literacy. Using an event-recorder device (e.g., a personal digital assistant), the observer codes teacher and child behavior every 15 seconds for three 10-minute observations. The coding scheme allows observers to capture information on the focus of classroom instruction, the interactions of teachers and children, and the engagement, academic or otherwise, of children. Classroom CIRCLE yields a time-sampled record of teacher behavior and calculates the amount of time teachers spend teaching domains of early language and literacy instruction, including phonological awareness, alphabetic and print concepts, vocabulary, comprehension, or reading. This measure also provides estimates of the amount of time that children are engaged in early writing and early reading as well as other activities.

Several research groups have developed tools for the evaluation of preschool curricula. Some measures are designed to provide educators with a tool to examine curricular practices across content domains (e.g., socioemotional, mathematics, early literacy). For example, the Curriculum Rating Rubric (Pretti-Frontczak, Robbins, Jackson, Korey-Hirko, & Harjusola-Webb, 2008) allows educators to rate curricular practices as they relate to assessment, scope and sequence, activities and instruction, and progress monitoring. Other measures have focused on early language and literacy domains. Another curriculum evaluation tool, the Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool (Virginia Department of Education, 2007) helps educators compare preschool curricula in the domains of oral language and vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print knowledge, and comprehension. Although the Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool can provide information about early language and literacy instruction, the rubric's items are general and lack the level of specificity necessary to make decisions about program improvement. For example, in the domain of phonological awareness, the item related to rhyming is simply whether rhyming is taught in the curricula.

The extent to which curricula provide instructional support that teachers find useful (e.g., suggestions for explicit teaching strategies, recommendations for teacher- and child-led activities) is likely to guide programs in the selection of curricula. The Preschool Curricula Checklist (PCC; Kaminski & Carta, 2010) is a tool for examining the instructional design evident in preschool curricula in early language and literacy. Using the checklist, educators can evaluate the instructional support provided by a curriculum in the domains of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary and oral language, and comprehension. The checklist can provide information about the scope of skills addressed, the sequence of lessons to address those skills, and

the materials provided to teachers. PCC also gives an indication of the adaptations suggested for teachers to address the needs of children who struggle to acquire early literacy skills. Items on the checklist are specific and can capture details that will assist educators in the selection of curricula. For example, in each domain educators rate the curriculum resources provided for implementing activities, including the materials required for the lesson or activity, a description of skills to be taught, suggested wording for how to teach the skills, and specific examples and content for teaching. Tools such as PCC can guide educators in the selection of curricula that provide strong support for instruction in early language and literacy.

In summary, evaluations of educational program quality can be informed by several sources of data: 1) test information about children's achievement and development, 2) instruments that rate the quality of literacy environments and teacher–student interactions, 3) instruments that summarize the extent to which teachers and students are engaged in literacy instruction, and 4) analyses of the adequacy of literacy instruction in classroom curricula. The results can be used to make decisions about targeted professional development and selection of new curricular programs.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is meant to help early education professionals construct a system of assessment that can address the multiple purposes of assessment: informing instructional decisions, identifying children who require intensive intervention, and helping educational programs make systematic improvements. The focus of the system of assessment should be on promoting successful outcomes for children and facilitating positive programmatic changes. Although the NELP findings help inform the selection of early language and literacy assessments that can guide decision making, they also highlight gaps in the availability of suitable assessments. Further research and development is necessary to provide educators with reliable and valid measures for assessment in early childhood. Optimally, teachers need measures that will allow them to easily and reliably assess how children are developing phonological awareness skills, alphabet knowledge (especially letter-sound correspondence), oral language, and early writing skills.

Recommendations for a System of Assessment

In the next section, we make recommendations for a system of assessment that can address the multiple purposes of assessment. This system

includes measures for universal screening, for instructional planning and progress monitoring, for determining eligibility, and for program improvement.

Universal Screening All children entering prekindergarten should be screened using measures that can be administered reliably and yield a score that can serve as a first step in identifying children who may need additional intervention. Many children enter early childhood educational programs with limited emergent literacy skills. For many children who have limited language and literacy experiences, early childhood education could facilitate rapid development of emergent literacy skills. Other children may fail to make significant progress. Thus, screening should be readministered on the same assessment schedule that is already common in early childhood education (i.e., fall, winter, and spring) to make sure that children who are struggling are detected in a timely manner. Aggregated universal screening results at the local level could inform program improvement and can be used to establish benchmarks to help identify children in need of intervention.

Instructional Planning and Progress Monitoring Measures selected for this purpose should be brief assessments that align closely with the instruction provided in the classroom, which in turn should align with early learning standards. All children should participate in quarterly progress monitoring (fall, winter, and spring). Depending on the instruments employed, universal screening and progress monitoring can be accomplished using the same tests (e.g., Get it, Got it, Go! IGDIs). Quarterly progress monitoring can address general classroom needs as well as the needs of individual children. First, performance of the group of children in a class can inform educators about the effectiveness of classroom instruction. For example, if a classroom of children has made progress in the domain of alphabet knowledge but demonstrates limited improvement in phonological awareness, educators can modify instruction to emphasize phonological awareness. Thus, instructional planning can be reflected in revisions in the scope and sequence of emergent literacy skills targeted in the general classroom curriculum. Second, quarterly progress monitoring can identify children who fail to respond to instruction or who are falling behind in certain emergent literacy areas. This would allow teachers to target areas of need for children who require additional instruction.

More frequent progress monitoring is necessary for children who have, or are at risk for, limited early language and/or early literacy skills, whether they receive intensified instruction or not. For example, a child who performed below benchmark on a screening measure at the begin-

ning of preschool should be monitored more frequently to determine if he or she needs a more intensified level of instruction. Alternatively, educators can provide extra support immediately and monitor the child's progress.

In contrast to screening assessments that provide cutpoints, progress-monitoring assessments should provide a means of evaluating whether children are making progress consistent with their peers. For example, Figure 3.1 provides an example of vocabulary development based on the Get it, Got it, Go! picture-naming IGDI. The example shows a child who may have experienced limited home literacy opportunities and performed well below normative levels in August. After an opportunity to see the effects of the preschool's general curriculum, little progress was evident in October. With no progress evident a month later in November, the teacher decided that the child required supplemental language instruction. The effects of implementing this intervention were readily evident from IGDI measures over the next 3 months. Monthly IGDI assessments in December, January, and February reflected an upward trajectory as evidenced by the steep trend line. When the child reached the aim line for typical development in February, the supplemental language intervention ceased. IGDI measures were then administered quarterly, and the child showed development consistent with typical development at the end of the year and the beginning of the following school year. Figure 3.1 offers an illustration of how progress-monitoring measures could be examined to determine whether more intensive instruction is needed and whether it is successful in improving a child's developmental trajectory.

Eligibility Assessment Timely, comprehensive assessments are necessary to determine whether developmental delays are significant enough to warrant eligibility for intensive intervention services. Intensive intervention services typically include special education services (e.g., speech-language pathology services, reading specialists). Eligibility assessments work best in conjunction with screening and progress monitoring. If universal screening and progress-monitoring measures are in place, rather than a "wait-to-fail" model, educators should be able to efficiently identify the children for whom more information is needed. Consistent with RTI models, how well a child responds to small group or individual instruction may help determine the need for a comprehensive eligibility assessment. Assessments that are used to determine eligibility should yield information about the array of children's developmental needs. Therefore, these assessments need to be comprehensive, in that they assess across and within developmental domains. These assessments should serve to provide a profile with estimates of developmental

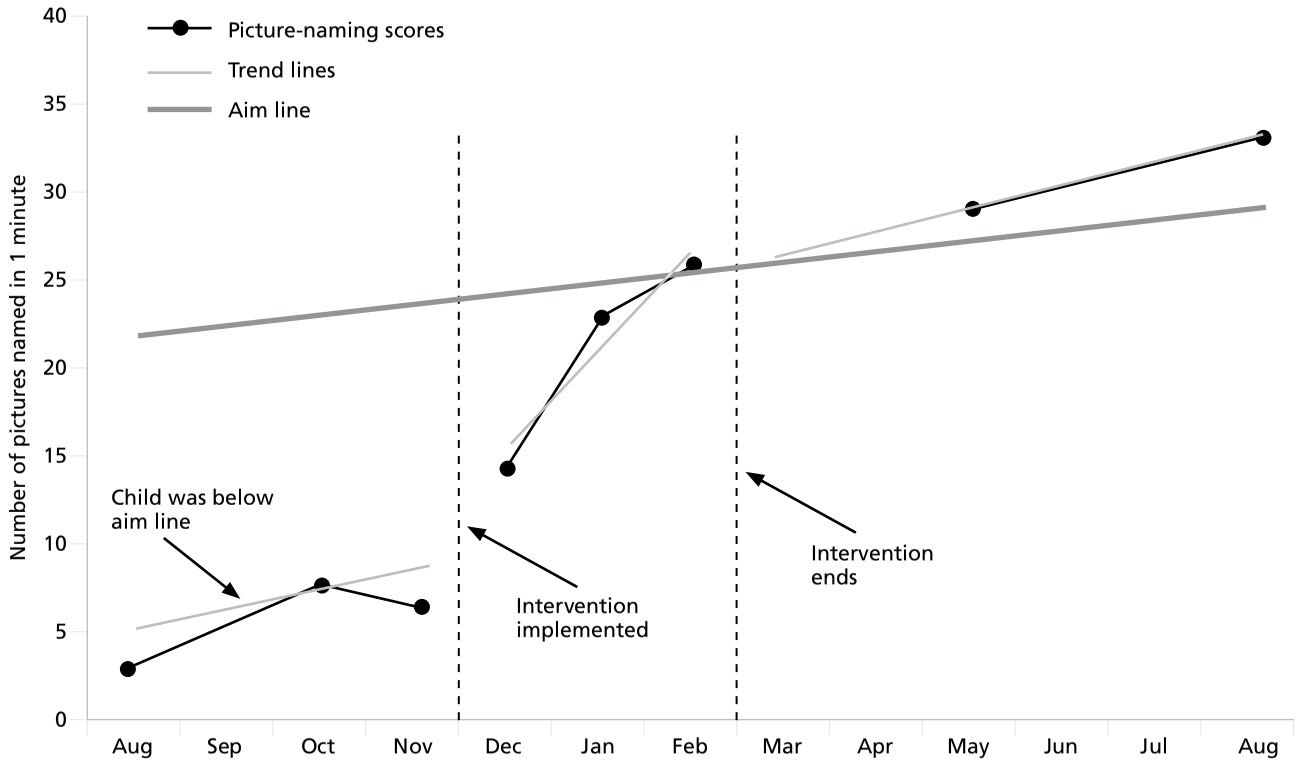

Figure 3.1. An illustration of the use of progress-monitoring assessment to direct intervention efforts, based on the Get it, Got it, Go! picture-naming Individual Growth and Development Indicator (Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, 1998). The trend lines indicate the slope of growth before, during, and after intervention.

status across domains that are indicative of areas of strength and the particular instructional needs of a child. Reading specialists, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists are among the professionals who should have sufficient expertise in emergent literacy to contribute to this process.

Program Improvement Decisions about educational program improvement should be made using a combination of child-level assessments and program-level assessments of instructional quality and curricular support. Child-level data need to be reported in ways that can be meaningful for this purpose. For example, rather than only reporting the mean score of the classroom or center, distributions of child data should be provided. This information would inform program improvement that addresses the needs of all children in a classroom. Child-level data might identify classrooms in which teachers could benefit from professional development in a particular early language or literacy domain (e.g., phonological awareness) or in instructional strategies for a particular subgroup of children (e.g., English language learners). Data that are aggregated across the classrooms within a center might identify domains of early language and literacy that are not sufficiently addressed in the curriculum. As part of a coherent system of assessment, measures that inform program improvement should align with early learning standards.

In summary, an effective system of assessment in early language and literacy can only be put into place if appropriate measures exist to be a part of this system. As we have highlighted in this chapter, there is a need for further research to develop reliable, valid measures of early language and literacy.

CONCLUSION

An effective system of assessment in early language and literacy includes instruments that provide coherent information (National Research Council, 2008). Coherence should be demonstrated in multiple ways. First, educators should strive for consensus on goals for children's learning and the purposes of assessment. Second, educators should strive for assessments that align with early learning standards as well as curriculum and instruction. Third, educators should strive for assessments that provide in-depth information at the child's developmental level but have the ability to relate to a broader range of development. Fourth, educators should strive for alignment among measures. If educators are *screening* for a particular skill (e.g., phonological awareness), then they will want a measure that allows them *to monitor progress* of that skill.

One reason that educators may develop a system of assessment is to implement a RTI model. Although an in-depth discussion of RTI models is beyond the scope of this chapter, the recommendations we make for a system of assessment align closely with those that would be part of a RTI model. Additional recommendations for assessment in RTI for reading are available in the Institute of Education Sciences practice guide on assisting school-age children who are struggling with reading (Gersten et al., 2008). With an increasing acceptance of RTI in early childhood, it will be important to examine the extent to which assessment systems for school-age children apply to early childhood education (Greenwood et al., 2008). To a great extent, this chapter's recommendations for assessment of young children's early literacy skills are consistent with those applied in primary grades. Unfortunately, the availability of assessment tools in early childhood that can fulfill RTI assessment functions currently is limited. The importance of addressing literacy early, the extension of RTI to early childhood, and the need for increased early childhood assessment options make the development of preschool early literacy assessment instruments an urgent priority.

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NUMBERS, FACTS AND TRENDS SHAPING THE WORLD

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The Rising Cost of *Not* Going to College

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About This Report

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the Pew Research Center, provided the editorial guidance and also edited the report. Kim Parker, director of social trends research, developed and managed the survey. Rich Morin, senior editor, wrote the Overview and co-wrote Chapter 2 of the report along with Anna Brown, research assistant. Rick Fry, senior research associate, conducted the analysis of census data and wrote Chapter 1 of the report. Eileen Patten, research analyst, and Brown assisted in data analysis, chart production, formatting and number checking. Marcia Kramer of Kramer Editing Services copy-edited the report. Find related reports online at pewresearch.org/socialtrends

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Overview

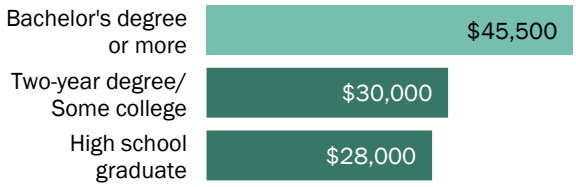
For those who question the value of college in this era of soaring student debt and high unemployment, the attitudes and experiences of today's young adults—members of the so-called Millennial generation—provide a compelling answer. On virtually every measure of economic well-being and career attainment—from personal earnings to job satisfaction to the share employed full time—young college graduates are outperforming their peers with less education. And when today's young adults are compared with previous generations, the disparity in economic outcomes between college graduates and those with a high school diploma or less formal schooling has never been greater in the modern era.

These assessments are based on findings from a new nationally representative Pew Research Center survey of 2,002 adults supplemented by a Pew Research analysis of economic data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

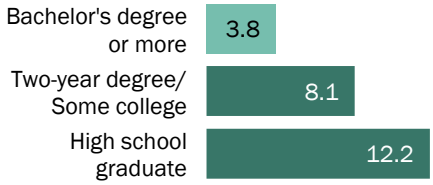
The economic analysis finds that Millennial college graduates ages 25 to 32[1] who are working full time earn more annually—about $17,500 more—than employed young adults holding only a high school diploma. The pay gap was significantly smaller in previous generations.[2] College-educated Millennials also are more likely to be employed full time

Disparity among Millennials Ages 25-32 By Education Level in Terms of Annual Earnings ...

(median among full-time workers, in 2012 dollars)



Unemployment Rate ...



And Share Living in Poverty ...

Notes: Median annual earnings are based on earnings and work status during the calendar year prior to interview and limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who worked full time during the previous calendar year and reported positive earnings. "Full time" refers to those who usually worked at least 35 hours a week last year. The unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force (those working or actively seeking work) who are not employed. Poverty is based on the respondent's family income in the calendar year preceding the survey.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Sample

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[1] The Millennial generation includes those born after 1980 (which would include adults ages 18 to 32 in 2013). Unless otherwise noted in the text, references in this report to the economic outcomes of Millennials are based only on those ages 25 to 32, a period in which most young adults have completed their formal education and have entered the workforce.
[2] Throughout this report, references to those who are "high school graduates" or who have a diploma refer to those who have attained a high school diploma or its equivalent, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

than their less-educated counterparts (89% vs. 82%) and significantly less likely to be unemployed (3.8% vs. 12.2%).

Turning to attitudes toward work, employed Millennial college graduates are more likely than their peers with a high school diploma or less education to say their job is a career or a steppingstone to a career (86% vs. 57%). In contrast, Millennials with a high school diploma or less are about three times as likely as college graduates to say their work is "just a job to get [them] by" (42% vs. 14%).

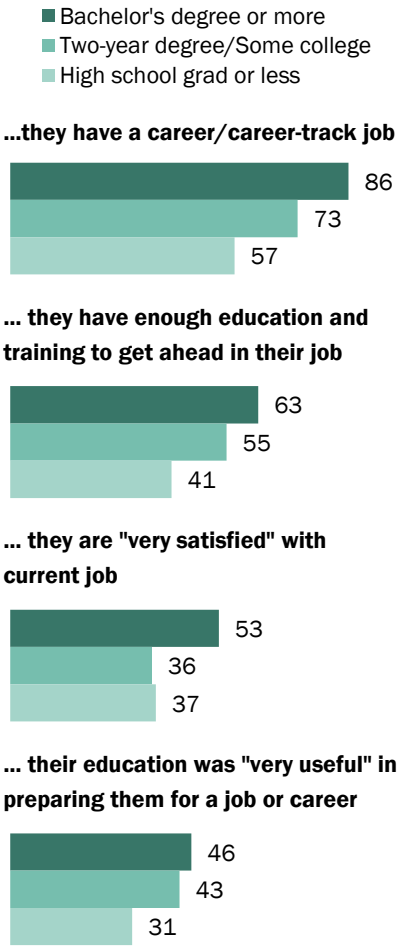
The survey also finds that among employed Millennials, college graduates are significantly more likely than those without any college experience to say that their education has been "very useful" in preparing them for work and a career (46% vs. 31%). And these better educated young adults are more likely to say they have the necessary education and training to advance in their careers (63% vs. 41%).

But do these benefits outweigh the financial burden imposed by four or more years of college? Among Millennials ages 25 to 32, the answer is clearly yes: About nine-in-ten with at least a bachelor's degree say college has already paid off (72%) or will pay off in the future (17%). Even among the two-thirds of college-educated Millennials who borrowed money to pay for their schooling, about nine-in-ten (86%) say their degrees have been worth it or expect that they will be in the future.

Of course, the economic and career benefits of a college degree are not limited to Millennials. Overall, the survey and economic analysis consistently find that college graduates regardless of generation are doing better than those with less education.[3]

Education and Views About Work

% of employed adults ages 25 to 32 with each level of education saying ...



Notes: Based on currently employed 25- to 32-year-olds (n=509).

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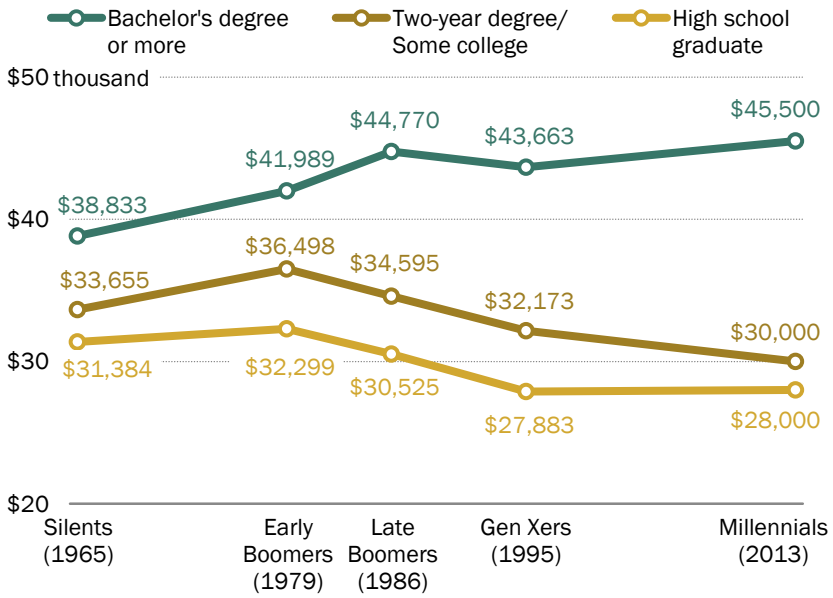
[3] For a detailed look at economic outcomes by education, see the Pew Research Center blog post "The growing economic clout of the college educated" by Richard Fry.

But the Pew Research study also finds that on some key measures, the largest and most striking disparities between college graduates and those with less education surface in the Millennial generation.

Rising Earnings Disparity Between Young Adults with And Without a College Degree

Median annual earnings among full-time workers ages 25 to 32, in 2012 dollars



Notes: Median annual earnings are based on earnings and work status during the calendar year prior to interview and limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who worked full time during the previous calendar year and reported positive earnings. "Full time" refers to those who usually worked at least 35 hours a week last year.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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For example, in 1979 when the first wave of Baby Boomers were the same age that Millennials are today, the typical high school graduate earned about three-quarters (77%) of what a college graduate made. Today, Millennials with only a high school diploma earn 62% of what the typical college graduate earns.

To be sure, the Great Recession and the subsequent slow recovery hit the Millennial generation particularly hard.[4] Neither college graduates nor those with less education were spared. On some key measures such as the percentage who are unemployed or the share living in poverty, this generation of college-educated adults is faring worse than Gen Xers, Baby Boomers or members of the Silent generation when they were in their mid-20s and early 30s.

But today's high school graduates are doing even worse, both in comparison to their college-educated peers and when measured against other generations of high school graduates at a similar point in their lives.

[4] For a detailed look at the impact of the Great Recession on various demographic groups, see the Pew Research Center report "How the Great Recession Has Changed Life in America"

For example, among those ages 25 to 32, fully 22% with only a high school diploma are living in poverty, compared with 6% of today's college-educated young adults. In contrast, only 7% of Baby Boomers who had only a high school diploma were in poverty in 1979 when they were in their late 20s and early 30s.

Percentage of Generation in Poverty, by Educational Attainment

	All	College graduate	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
Millennials in 2013	16	6	15	22
Gen Xers in 1995	13	3	10	15
Late Boomers in 1986	12	4	8	12
Early Boomers in 1979	8	3	6	7

Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. Poverty is based on the respondent's family income in the calendar year preceding the survey. Silent generation not shown because poverty measures are not available before 1968.

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To examine the value of education in today's job market, the Pew Research Center drew from two complementary data sources. The first is a nationally representative survey conducted Oct. 7-27, 2013, of 2,002 adults, including 630 Millennials ages 25-32, the age at which most of these young adults will have completed their formal education and started their working lives. This survey captured the views of today's adults toward their education, their job and their experiences in the workforce.

To measure how the economic outcomes of older Millennials compare with those of other generations at a comparable age, the Pew Research demographic analysis drew from data collected in the government's Current Population Survey. The CPS is a large-sample survey that has been conducted monthly by the U.S. Census Bureau for more than six decades.

Specifically, Pew analysts examined CPS data collected last year among 25- to 32-year-olds and then examined data among 25- to 32-year-olds in four earlier years: Silents in 1965 (ages 68 to 85 at the time of the Pew Research survey and Current Population Survey); the first or "early" wave of Baby Boomers in 1979 (ages 59 to 67 in 2013), the younger or "late" wave of Baby Boomers in 1986 (ages 49 to 58 in 2013) and Gen Xers in 1995 (ages 33 to 48 in 2013).

The Generations Defined

The Millennial Generation
Born: After 1980
Age of adults in 2013: 18 to 32*

Generation X
Born: 1965 to 1980
Age in 2013: 33 to 48

The Late Baby Boom Generation
Born: 1955 to 1964
Age in 2013: 49 to 58

The Early Baby Boom Generation
Born: 1946 to 1954
Age in 2013: 59 to 67

The Silent Generation
Born: 1928 to 1945
Age in 2013: 68 to 85

* The youngest Millennials are in their teens. No chronological end point has been set for this group.

Note: The "Greatest Generation," which includes those born before 1928, is not included in the analysis due to the small sample size.

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The Rise of the College Graduate

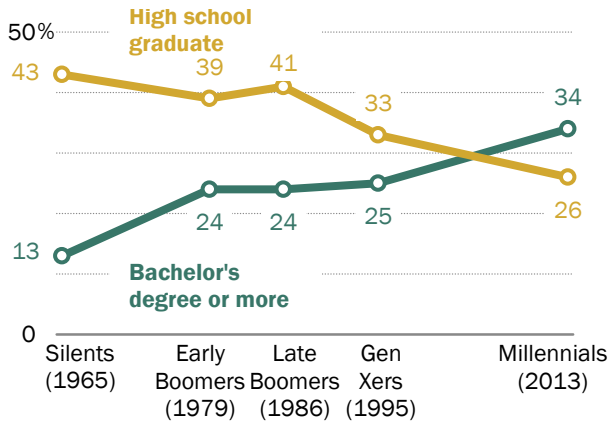
Today's Millennials are the best-educated generation in history; fully a third (34%) have at least a bachelor's degree. In contrast, only 13% of 25- to 32-year-olds in 1965—the Silent generation—had a college degree, a proportion that increased to 24% in the late 1970s and 1980s when Boomers were young adults. In contrast, the proportion with a high school diploma has declined from 43% in 1965 to barely a quarter (26%) today.

At the same time the share of college graduates has grown, the value of their degrees has increased. Between 1965 and last year, the median annual earnings of 25- to 32-year-olds with a college degree grew from $38,833 to $45,500 in 2012 dollars, nearly a $7,000 increase.

Taken together, these two facts—the growing economic return to a college degree and the larger share of college graduates in the Millennial generation—might suggest that the Millennial generation should be earning more than earlier generations of young adults.

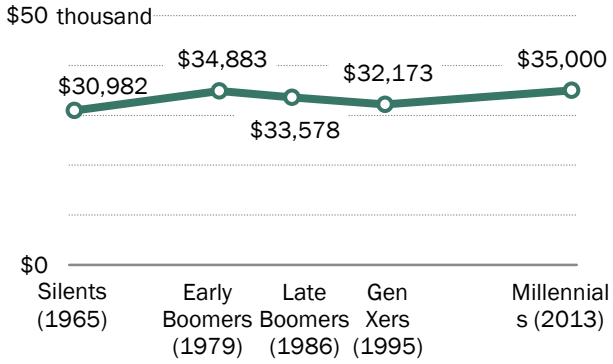
But they're not. The overall median earnings of today's Millennials ($35,000) aren't much different than the earnings of early Boomers ($34,883) or Gen Xers ($32,173) and only somewhat higher than Silents ($30,982) at comparable ages.

While Education Levels of 25- to 32-year-olds Have Risen Dramatically Across the Generations ...



... Median Annual Earnings Have Remained Relatively Flat

(among full-time workers, in 2012 dollars)



Notes: The Census Bureau altered the educational attainment question in 1992. See Appendix B for details on comparability. Median annual earnings are based on earnings and work status during the calendar year prior to interview and limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who worked full time during the previous calendar year and reported positive earnings. "Full time" refers to those who usually worked at least 35 hours a week last year.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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The Declining Value of a High School Diploma

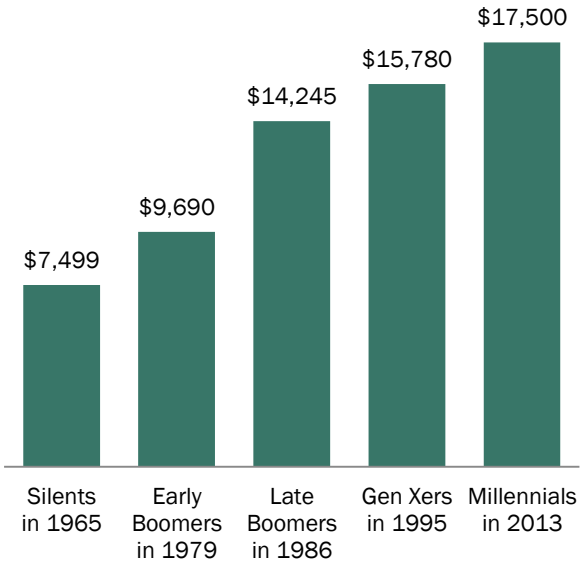
The explanation for this puzzling finding lies in another major economic trend reshaping the economic landscape: The dramatic decline in the value of a high school education. While earnings of those with a college degree rose, the typical high school graduate's earnings fell by more than $3,000, from $31,384 in 1965 to $28,000 in 2013. This decline, the Pew Research analysis found, has been large enough to nearly offset the gains of college graduates.

The steadily widening earnings gap by educational attainment is further highlighted when the analysis shifts to track the difference over time in median earnings of college graduates versus those with a high school diploma.

In 1965, young college graduates earned $7,499 more than those with a high school diploma. But the earnings gap by educational attainment has steadily widened since then, and today it has more than doubled to $17,500 among Millennials ages 25 to 32.

The Widening Earnings Gap of Young Adults by Educational Attainment

The difference in median annual earnings of college and high school graduates when members of each generation were ages 25 to 32



Notes: Median annual earnings are based on earnings and work status during the calendar year prior to interview and limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who worked full time during the previous calendar year and reported positive earnings. "Full time" refers to those who usually worked at least 35 hours a week last year. "College graduates" are those with a bachelor's degree or more.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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Other Labor Market Outcomes

To be sure, the Great Recession and painfully slow recovery have taken their toll on the Millennial generation, including the college-educated.

Young college graduates are having more difficulty landing work than earlier cohorts. They are more likely to be unemployed and have to search longer for a job than earlier generations of young adults.

But the picture is consistently bleaker for less-educated workers: On a range of measures, they not only fare worse than the college-educated, but they are doing worse than earlier generations at a similar age.

For example, the unemployment rate for Millennials with a college degree is more than double the rate for college-educated Silents in 1965 (3.8% vs. 1.4%). But the unemployment rate for Millennials with only a high school diploma is even higher: 12.2%, or more than 8 percentage points more than for college graduates and almost triple the unemployment rate of Silents with a high school diploma in 1965.

The same pattern resurfaces when the measure shifts to the length of time the typical job seeker spends looking for work. In 2013 the average unemployed college-educated Millennial had been looking for work for 27 weeks—more than double the time it took an unemployed college-educated 25- to 32-year-old in 1979 to get a job (12 weeks). Again, today's young high school graduates fare worse on this measure than the college-educated or their peers in earlier generations. According to the analysis, Millennial high school graduates spend, on average, four weeks longer looking for work than college graduates (31 weeks vs. 27 weeks) and more than twice as long as similarly educated early Boomers did in 1979 (12 weeks).

Similarly, in terms of hours worked, likelihood of full-time employment and overall wealth, today's young college graduates fare worse than their peers in earlier generations. But again, Millennials without a college degree fare worse, not only in comparison to their college-educated contemporaries but also when compared with similarly educated young adults in earlier generations.

The Value of a College Major

As the previous sections show, having a college degree is helpful in today's job market. But depending on their major field of study, some are more relevant on the job than others, the Pew Research survey finds.

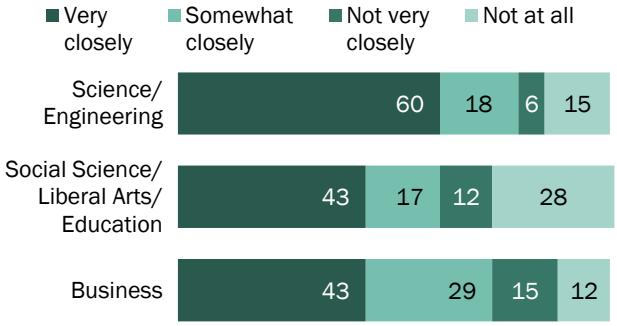
To measure the value of their college studies, all college graduates were asked their major or, if they held a graduate or professional degree, their field of study. Overall, 37% say they were social science, liberal arts or education majors, a third (33%) say they studied a branch of science or engineering and a quarter (26%) majored in business. The remainder said they were studying or training for a vocational occupation.

Overall, those who studied science or engineering are the most likely to say that their current job is "very closely" related to their college or graduate field of study (60% vs. 43% for both social science, liberal arts or education majors and business majors).

At the same time, those who majored in science or engineering are less likely than social science, liberal arts or education majors to say in response to another survey question that they should have chosen a different major as an undergraduate to better prepare them for the job they wanted.

Usefulness of Major, by Field of Study

% of majors in each area who say their current job is ... related to their major in college or graduate school



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are employed full time or part time (n=606). "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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According to the survey, only about a quarter of science and engineering majors regretted their decision (24%), compared with 33% of those whose degree is in social science, liberal arts or education. Some 28% of business majors say they would have been better prepared for the job they wanted if they had chosen a different major. (Overall, the survey found that 29% say they should have chosen a different major to better prepare them for their ideal job.)

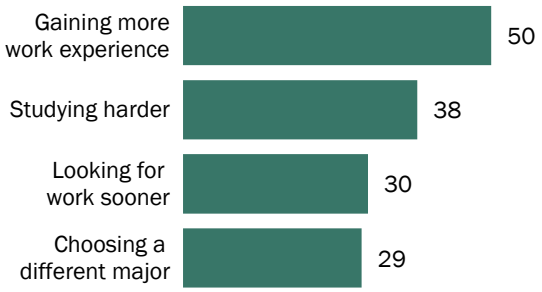
Major Regrets

In addition to selecting a different major, the Pew Research survey asked college graduates whether, while still in school, they could have better prepared for the type of job they wanted by gaining more work experience, studying harder or beginning their job search earlier.

About three-quarters of all college graduates say taking at least one of those four steps would have enhanced their chances to land their ideal job. Leading the should-have-done list: getting more work experience while still in school. Half say taking this step would have put them in a better position to get the kind of

College Days, Reconsidered

% who say doing each of the following while they were undergraduates would have better prepared them to get the job they wanted



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included.

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job they wanted. About four-in-ten (38%) regret not studying harder, while three-in-ten say they should have started looking for a job sooner (30%) or picked a different major (29%).

When analyzed together, the survey suggests that, among these items tested, only about a quarter (26%) of all college graduates have no regrets, while 21% say they should have done at least three or all four things differently while in college to enhance their chances for a job they wanted.

The survey also found that Millennials are more likely than Boomers to have multiple regrets about their college days. Three-in-ten (31%) of all Millennials and 17% of Boomers say they should have done three or all four things differently in order to prepare themselves for the job they wanted. Some 22% of Gen Xers say the same.

The remainder of this report is organized in the following way. The first chapter uses Census Bureau data to compare how Millennials ages 25 to 32 with varying levels of education are faring economically. It also examines how economic outcomes by level of education have changed over time by comparing the economic fortunes of Millennials with those of similarly educated Gen Xers, Baby Boomers and Silents at comparable ages.

The second chapter is based exclusively on data from a recent Pew Research Center survey. It examines how all adults assess the value of their education in preparing them for the workforce and specifically how these views differ by levels of education.

About the Data

Findings in this report are based mainly on data from: (1) The Current Population Survey and (2) A new Pew Research Center survey conducted in October 2013.

Data on Labor Market and Economic Outcomes: The labor market and economic data are derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Conducted jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CPS is a monthly survey of approximately 55,000 households and is the source of the nation's official statistics on unemployment. The CPS is nationally representative of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. This analysis uses the Annual Social and Economic Supplement collected in March of each year. The March CPS features an expanded sample size (about 75,000 households in 2013) and is the basis for the widely noted Census Bureau's annual Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage estimates reported each fall (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor and Smith ,2013). The data analysis used the University of Minnesota Population Center's integrated version of the March CPS (King, Ruggles, Alexander, Flood, Genadek, Schroeder, Trampe, and Vick ,2010).

Survey Data: The Pew Research survey was conducted October 7-27, 2013, with a nationally representative sample of 2,002 adults age 18 and older, including 982 adults ages 18 to 34. A total of 479 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline telephone and 1,523 with those contacted on their cellular phones. In order to increase the number of 25- to 34-year-old respondents in the sample, additional interviews were conducted with that cohort. Data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the United States. Survey interviews were conducted in English and Spanish under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.7 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.

Chapter 1: Education and Economic Outcomes Among the Young

As college costs have increased in recent decades, so, too, have many of the economic rewards for getting a four-year degree as well as the penalties for not doing so, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

The analysis, which focuses on young adults in the first phase of their working lives, finds that the earnings gap by education level among 25- to 32-year-olds has widened significantly over the past half century. Those with a bachelor's degree or higher are earning more in inflation-adjusted dollars than their similarly educated counterparts from prior generations did at the same age, while those with a high school diploma or some college are earning less.

As a result of these shifts, young adults today have more unequal earnings between education levels than their same-aged peers did in earlier times—mirroring the broader increase in income inequality that has become one of the defining features of American life. This Pew Research analysis focuses primarily on earnings, but it also tracks other key measures of economic well-being, including employment characteristics, unemployment rates, duration of unemployment, poverty, wealth, personal income and household income. With some minor variations, the overall story is the same across all of these measures: the gap in economic well-being by education level has grown over time.

The analysis produces a mixed picture, however, when it compares the overall economic well-being of all of today's young adults with that of their same-aged counterparts in earlier times. While today's young adults are doing better on some measures (earnings, adjusted median household income), they are doing worse on others (unemployment, poverty, wealth and median personal income).

This overall lack of economic progress from one generation of young adults to the next is notable in view of the fact that today's young adults are the best-educated generation in history: Some 34% of 25- to 32-year-old Millennials have a bachelor's degree or more, compared with 25% of Gen Xers, 24% of Baby Boomers and 13% of the Silent generation when they were the same age as today's Millennials.

The remainder of this chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the labor market and economic outcomes associated with attainment of a bachelor's degree among today's Millennial adults. First it compares outcomes for Millennials who have at least a bachelor's degree to those of Millennials with some college education (but not a bachelor's degree) and Millennials with a high

school diploma but no further formal education. It also compares the economic outcomes of today's young adults with those of earlier generations when they were the same age that Millennials are now.

Definitions and Methods

Throughout the chapter, "young adults" refers to those ages 25 to 32 (inclusive). Unless noted, all figures refer to 25- to 32-year-olds.

Consistent with earlier Pew Research definitions, Millennials were born after 1980. Gen Xers were born from 1965 to 1980, Baby Boomers from 1946 to 1964 and Silents from 1928 to 1945.

Labor market and economic outcomes are examined in 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 (when available). Young adults in 2013 were Millennials. Most young adults in 1995 were Gen Xers. Young adults in 1986, 1979, and 1965 capture late Boomers, early Boomers and the Silents, respectively.

The 2013 data were collected in March of 2013 and (according to the official National Bureau of Economic Research business cycle dating) captures economic outcomes four years into the economic recovery. The Great Recession officially ended in June 2009.

The 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 time points are comparable to 2013 in that they also represent a point in time four years into an economic recovery. NBER designates bottoms of economic recessions occurring in March 1991, November 1982, March 1975, and February 1961, respectively.

Observing 25- to 32-year-olds in National Economic Context

	Year observed	Prior economic trough	National unemployment rate	Real to potential GDP	Capacity utilization
Millennials	2013	Jun 2009	7.6%	97.7	78.2
Largely Gen Xers	1995	Mar 1991	5.4%	100.7	84.4
Late Boomers	1986	Nov 1982	7.2%	100.6	78.4
Early Boomers	1979	Mar 1975	5.8%	101.6	86.2
Silents	1965	Feb 1961	4.7%	103.1	NA

Notes: National unemployment rate is the civilian unemployment rate in March. The unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force (those working or actively seeking work) who are not employed. Real to potential GDP compares the quarterly real GDP to FRED's estimated quarterly potential GDP (in the first quarter). Capacity utilization is estimated monthly and is used by corporations and factories to describe the ratio of how much is actually being produced to the amount that could potentially be produced within resource constraints if there was market demand for the goods. Figure shown is for March. Capacity utilization is not available before 1967.

Source: Unemployment rate and real to potential GDP downloaded from FRED (Federal Reserve Economic Data), Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Capacity utilization is published by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve system.

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Though the five time points examined mark years that were four years into an economic recovery, national macroeconomic conditions were not identical in the five years. Prominent macroeconomic indicators suggest that the aggregate economy was less vigorous in 2013 than the earlier comparison points.

Common wisdom also suggests 2013 marks a distinct period. After all, the Great Recession is coined the Great Recession.

Though aggregate economic conditions may be weaker in 2013 than earlier years, this does not necessarily imply that Millennials are worse off than earlier generations. That depends on how they are faring in the labor market and their particular circumstances, the subject of this chapter.

College Graduates in the Labor Market

Most young adults have few income sources beyond what they can earn on the job. And a basic motive for pursuing college is to enhance one's skills and fortunes in the job market. This section focuses on what young workers are paid, the ease of finding work, and some characteristics of their jobs (such as pension coverage and unionization).

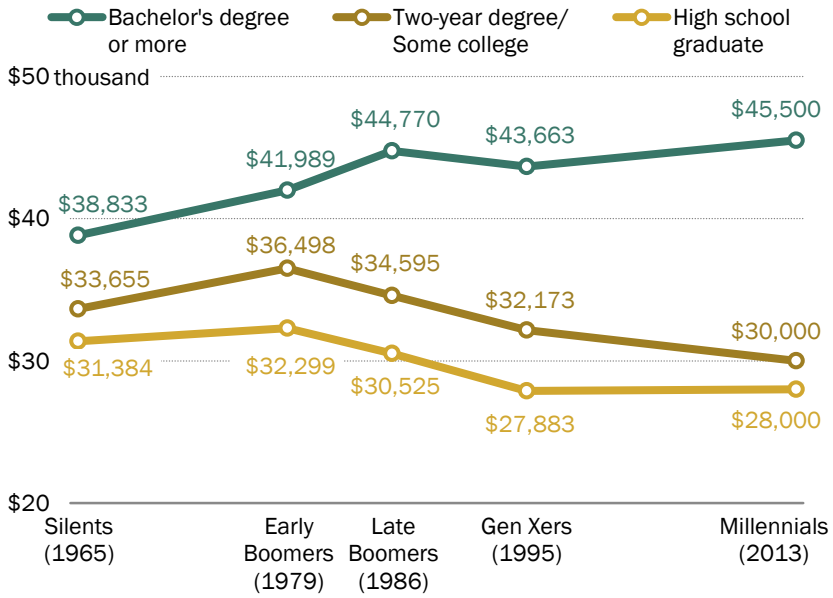
On the one hand, it is clear that young, college-educated workers are having more difficulty landing work compared with earlier cohorts of young adults. They are more likely to be unemployed, and it takes them longer, on average, to find a job. On the other hand, once they're employed, their earnings are higher than those received by earlier cohorts of young, college-educated adults. For less-educated young workers, there is no upside: They are more likely to be unemployed and they are spending more time searching for a job compared with less-educated young workers who came before them. And their earnings are significantly below those received by less-educated young workers in earlier generations (with the exception of high school-educated Gen Xers).

Annual Earnings

One dimension where Millennial college graduates are faring better than prior generations is in annual earnings. The Census Bureau collects detailed information on earnings and hours worked for the calendar year before the Current Population Survey is collected. Among Millennials who usually worked full time during 2012, the typical college graduate earned about $45,500. This is

Median Annual Earnings of 25- to 32-year-olds, by Educational Attainment

Median annual earnings among full-time workers, in 2012 dollars



Notes: Median annual earnings are based on earnings and work status during the calendar year prior to interview and limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who worked full time during the previous calendar year and reported positive earnings. "Full time" refers to those who usually worked at least 35 hours a week last year.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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significantly higher than the earnings of Gen X college graduates in 1995 ($43,663, in 2012 dollars). The earnings of college-educated Millennials also tend to be above their late Boomer ($44,770), early Boomer ($41,989), and Silent generation ($38,883) counterparts.

Earnings for Millennials without a bachelor's degree are significantly lower than for similarly educated young adults from previous generations. Earnings for young, full-time workers without a bachelor's degree were at their highest level in the late 1970s. Among young adults in 1979, those with a high school diploma had median annual earnings of $32,299. By comparison, the average Millennial with only a high school education made $28,000 in 2012.

While the earnings of less-educated Millennials are sinking in comparison with earlier less-educated young adults, the earnings of all Millennials have remained relatively flat. In 2013, the earnings of all Millennials employed full time were about $35,000. That compares with about $34,900 for all early Boomers in 1979. Two factors are supporting the earnings of Millennials: College-educated Millennials tend to earn more than college-educated young adults used to, and there has been a compositional shift among this age group. More Millennials are college-educated than was the case for earlier cohorts.

Share of 25- to 32-year-olds with at Least a Bachelor's Degree

%

Notes: In 1992, the Census Bureau changed the educational attainment question. Before 1992 respondents completing four or more years of college are assumed to have finished a bachelor's degree.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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These earnings figures utilize the median earnings of college graduates working full time in the prior year. The median refers to the amount earned by the full-time college graduate in the middle, or earning more than exactly half of full-time college graduates. Although the middle full-time college graduate might be earning more than prior generations, it is possible that earnings outcomes are now more variable and that more Millennials are experiencing low earnings compared to earlier generations. The table on the next page compares the earnings level of the bottom one-fifth of college graduates to that of the median college graduate. The distribution is for all college graduates who had positive earnings, not just those working full time the prior year. At least at the 20th percentile, earnings do not appear to be

Annual Earnings Variability of Workers with at Least a Bachelor's Degree

In 2012 dollars

	20th percentile	Median	Ratio of 20th percentile to median
Millennials in 2013	$24,020	$43,300	0.55
Gen Xers in 1995	$22,980	$41,058	0.56
Late Boomers in 1986	$21,978	$40,700	0.54
Early Boomers in 1979	$21,437	$38,759	0.55
Silents in 1965	$21,358	$38,833	0.55

Notes: Based on earnings during the calendar year prior to interview. Limited to 25- to 32-year-olds who reported positive earnings during the previous calendar year.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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more variable for Millennials than earlier generations. Some Millennial college graduates did earn low amounts during 2012, but no more so than earlier cohorts.

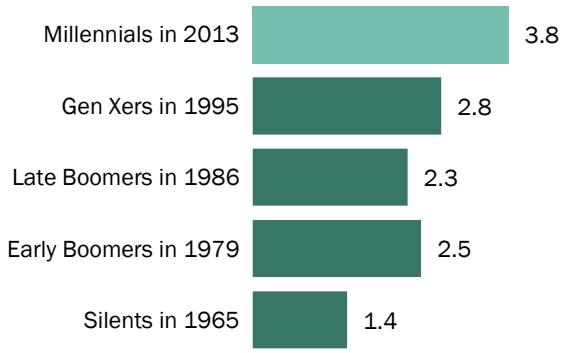
Unemployment

Today's recent college graduates have had more difficulty finding employment than earlier generations. Among Millennial college graduates, 3.8% were unemployed in 2013.[5] By comparison, only 2.5% of early Boomer college graduates were unable to find work in March 1979.

In 2013, better-educated Millennials experienced much lower unemployment rates than their less-educated peers (see chart in Appendix A). For example, 12.2% of Millennials with only a high school education were looking for work in 2013, 8 percentage points higher than the rate among college-educated Millennials.

Unemployment Rate of 25- to 32-year-olds with at Least a Bachelor's Degree

%



Notes: The unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force (those working or actively seeking work) who are not employed.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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[5] The unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force (those working or actively seeking work) who are not employed. In March 2013 the national unemployment rate for persons of all ages (16 and older) and education levels was 7.6%.

College-educated young adults in each generation had less difficulty finding work than their less-educated counterparts. In 2013, college-educated Millennials were a third less likely to be unemployed than were Millennials with only a high school education. In 1995, 2.8% of college-educated Gen Xers were unemployed, compared with 6.9% of Gen Xers whose formal education did not go beyond high school. Similarly, back in 1979, college-educated early Baby Boomers were more than half as likely to be unemployed (2.5%) as those with only a high school education (6.1%).

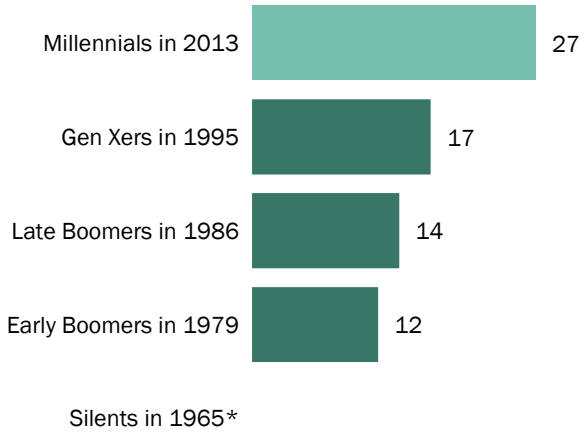
Across generations, those with some college experience (but not a bachelor's degree) have fared somewhat better than those with no college experience. In 2013, Millennials with a bachelor's degree were about half as likely to be unemployed as Millennials with some college (3.8% vs. 8.1%). The unemployment differential between Gen Xers with some college (4.7%) and their peers who had finished college (2.8%) was a bit narrower in 1995. The unemployment differential was similar in 1979: 2.5% for early Boomer college graduates vs. 4.7% for early Boomers with some college.

Weeks unemployed. The typical unemployed college-educated Millennial has spent much longer searching for work than earlier generations of college graduates. In 2013, the average unemployed college-educated Millennial had been looking for work for 27 weeks. By comparison, college-educated 25- to 32-year-olds who were unemployed in 1979 spent on average only 12 weeks looking for a job. And in 1995, unemployed Gen Xers with a bachelor's degree spent on average 17 weeks looking.

Typical unemployed college-educated Millennials have not been looking for work as long as their less-educated counterparts (see chart in Appendix A). In 2013, unemployed Millennials without a college degree had been looking for work on average 31 weeks. And there is some evidence that the advantage that the college-educated have in regard to shorter unemployment length may have widened over

Average Weeks of Unemployment of Unemployed 25- to 32-year-olds with at Least a Bachelor's Degree

In weeks



*Unemployment duration not available before 1968.

Notes: Duration of unemployment for the currently unemployed is top-coded at 98 weeks.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986 and 1979 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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time. In 1979 there was little difference in the average length of unemployment between college graduates and less-educated young adults.

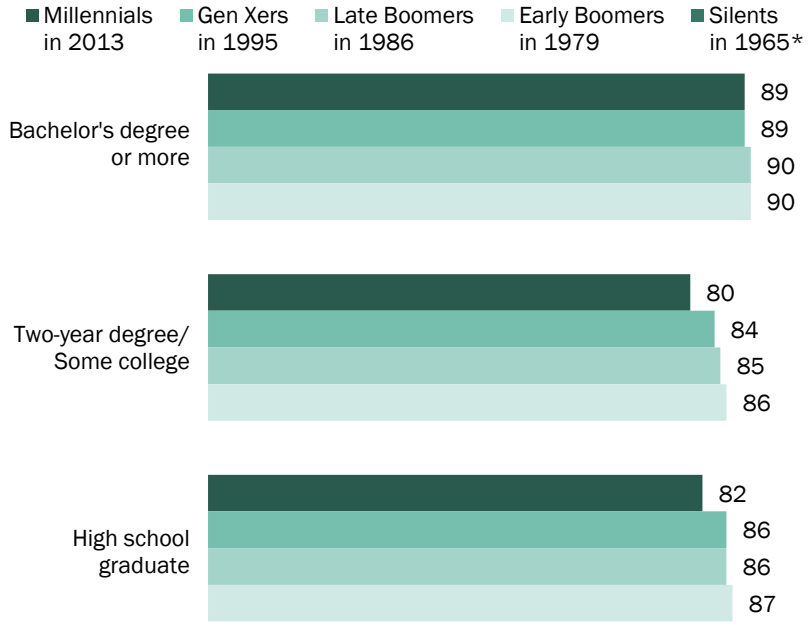
Hours of Work

Full-time employment. College-educated Millennials are no less likely than earlier generations of young adults to land full-time work. In 2013, 89% of employed college-educated Millennials worked full time (usually working at least 35 hours per week in the job they held in the week prior to the interview). This is only slightly below the share of young-adult college graduates who were employed full time in 1979 (90%).

Less-educated Millennials were significantly less likely than their college-educated peers to land full-time work in 2013. For example, only 82% of high school-educated Millennials with jobs worked full time.

Likelihood of Full-time Employment among 25- to 32-year-olds, by Educational Attainment

%



*Full- or part-time status is not available before 1976.

Notes: The rate plotted is the share of employed 25- to 32-year-old civilians who are employed full time. "Full time" refers to those usually working at least 35 hours a week in the job they held in the week prior to the interview.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986 and 1979 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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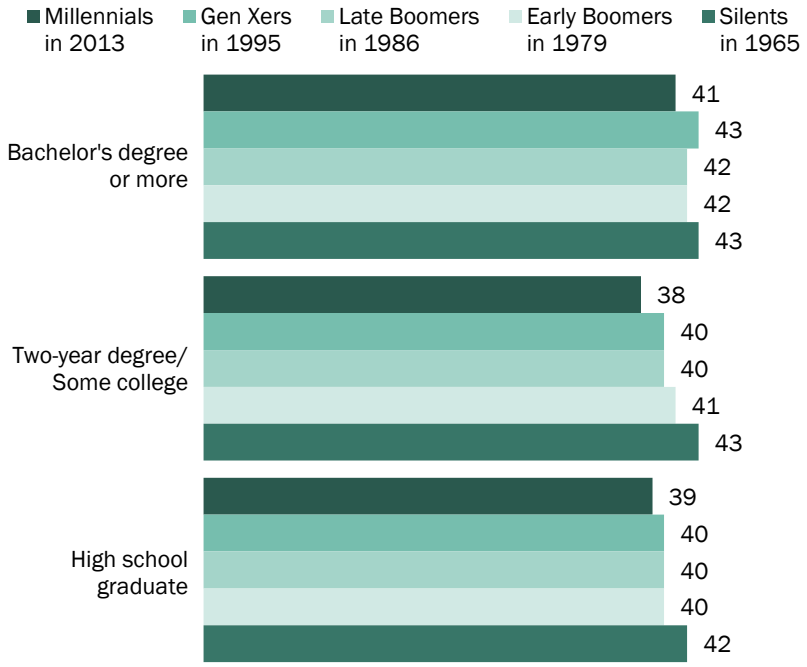
The disparity in working full time between the more-educated and less-educated has widened over time. For example, among young adults in 1979, college graduates were only slightly more likely than those with a high school education to be working full time (90% vs. 87%). In 2013, the disparity between college graduates (89%) and those with a high school education (82%) had widened to 7 percentage points.

Average hours worked. The length of the average workweek has declined somewhat among college-educated young adults. In 2013, college-educated Millennials worked on average 41 hours per week. In 1965, college-educated young adults (members of the Silent generation) worked an average of 43 hours a week.

However, college-educated Millennials tend to have longer workweeks than their less-educated counterparts. In 2013, the average Millennial with some college education worked 38 hours (compared with 41 for the average college graduate).

Average Hours Worked of 25- to 32-year-olds, by Educational Attainment



Notes: Average hours worked is limited to civilians employed and at work last week. It is based on total number of hours the respondent was at work during the previous week.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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Job Characteristics

Though complete information is not available on the earlier cohorts of young adults, the Census Bureau has queried respondents on several employment dimensions.

Union coverage. Some 14% of college-educated Millennials were employed in a unionized workplace in 2013. Among Gen X college graduates in 1995, a similar share (13%) worked in unionized settings. An educational gap in union coverage is apparent among Millennials in 2013. Among Gen Xers in 1995, those with no formal education beyond high school were slightly more likely than college graduates to have a unionized employer. However, in 2013, Millennials with a high school education (6%) are substantially less likely than college-educated Millennials (14%) to be employed in a unionized setting.

Retirement plan or pension coverage. Fewer college-educated Millennials worked for employers offering a pension or other retirement plan (other than Social Security, i.e., defined contribution plans) compared with earlier generations. In 2013, 61% of college-educated Millennials worked for an employer with a retirement plan. By comparison, 66% of college-educated late Baby Boomers had pension coverage in 1986; the share rose to 70% for college-educated Gen Xers in 1995. However, pension coverage has declined for all young adults, and the decline has been more pronounced among the less-educated than for the college-educated. For example, only 36% of high school-educated Millennials labored for an employer with a pension plan in 2013, a decline of 11 percentage points from the incidence of pension

Employment Characteristics of 25- to 32-year-olds

%

	All	Bachelor's degree or more	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
Union representation				
Millennials in 2013	11	14	13	6
Gen Xers in 1995	13	13	14	16
Employer offers a pension or retirement plan				
Millennials in 2013	46	61	45	36
Gen Xers in 1995	55	70	58	49
Late Boomers in 1986	51	66	52	46
Paid by the hour				
Millennials in 2013	57	33	72	76
Gen Xers in 1995	59	30	66	72

Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. "Union representation" includes union members and workers who are not union members but whose jobs are covered by a union contract. Hourly pay and union coverage is for civilian 25- to 32-year-olds currently employed as wage and salary workers. Pension or retirement plan coverage refers to the civilian 25- to 32-year-old's union or employer on his or her longest job during the preceding calendar year. Information on hourly pay and union coverage is not available before 1990. Information on pension coverage is not available before 1980.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995 and 1986 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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coverage among high school-educated late Baby Boomers in 1986 and a decline of 13 points from the high school-educated Gen Xers in 1995.

Hourly pay. In March 2013, one-third of college-educated Millennial workers were paid by the hour. By comparison, 30% of Gen X college graduates were paid by the hour in 1995, when they were a comparable age. Among young adults, those with some college or only a high school education were much more likely than their college-educated counterparts to be hourly workers, and the increased incidence of hourly pay among Millennial workers compared with Gen X workers was at least as great among the less-educated as among the college-educated.

The Broader Economic Arrangements of College Graduates

This section examines the larger economic context of young adults by education. These outcomes reflect more than just someone's success in the labor market. Well-being reflects the young adult's household arrangements and thus depends on the size of the person's household, whether the person has a spouse or unmarried partner, as well as whether there are children present and parental decisions on how much to work.

The measures together present a mixed picture. Considering the outcomes in absolute fashion, college-educated young adults today are faring better than earlier generations on some measures, and worse on others. But consistently, the gaps in outcomes between the college-educated and their less-educated counterparts have grown. Since the 1970s, education increasingly tends to demarcate

Monetary terms

The analysis presents several monetary measures to assess young adult outcomes:

Earnings of full-time workers: the young adult's pretax wage and salary income received during the previous calendar year. It does not include the value of fringe benefits. It is reported for employees who usually worked at least 35 hours a week during the prior calendar year.

Household income: the sum of the total income during the previous calendar year of all household members ages 15 and older. It includes wage and salary income, rents, dividends and interest income, as well as cash income transfers. The specific measure presented performs the common adjustment of adjusting for the number of persons in the household.

Personal income: the total income of the young adult during the previous calendar year. It includes wage and salary income, rents, dividends and interest income, as well as cash income transfers.

Household wealth: the value of the assets of all household members (in households headed by a young adult) minus the value of all liabilities of all household members (in households headed by a young adult).

All dollar figures are adjusted for inflation and expressed in 2012 dollars.

the more economically successful from the less economically successful.

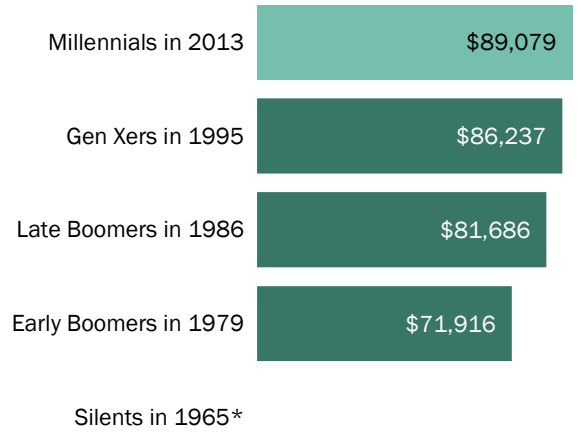
Household Income

The incomes of households headed by college-educated 25- to 32-year-olds have markedly increased since the 1970s. The median (size-adjusted) income of households headed by a college-educated Millennial was $89,079 in 2013.[6] By contrast, the median income of households headed by a college-educated young adult in 1979 was only $71,916.[7]

At least three factors likely contribute to the rising household incomes of the young and college-educated. First, as shown in the last section, the earnings of college graduates have been increasing, and that directly contributes to rising household income. Second, as young adults increasingly delay marriage and childbearing, it follows that college-educated households headed by Millennials likely have fewer children than college-educated households in earlier generations. Since size-adjusted household income takes account of household size, Millennials' smaller households will be reflected in a boost to this measure of household income. Third, with fewer children in the household, less time can be devoted by the parent(s) to child care and more time can be devoted to market work, again indirectly boosting household income.[8]

Median Adjusted Household Income of Households Headed by 25- to 32-year-olds with at Least a Bachelor's Degree

In 2012 dollars



*Household income is not available before 1968.

Notes: Based on household income in the calendar year preceding the survey. Income standardized to a household size of three. For details, see http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/07/the-rising-age-gap-in-economic-well-being/4/#appendix-a-data-sources-and-methodologyappendix. Household income is not available before 1968.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986 and 1979 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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[6] By comparison, the median adjusted household income of all households (all ages and education levels) was about $60,000 in 2013.
[7] Rather than examining the household incomes of households headed by the college-educated, the household incomes of all college-educated young adults are presented in the Appendix. The substantive conclusions are unchanged.
[8] It is well known that women, in particular, have significantly boosted their hours spent in market work and the increase has been concentrated among better-educated women. Aguiar and Hurst (2007) find that college-educated women increased their market work hours by 4.3 hours per week between 1965 and 2003, while high school-educated women increased their hours by only 2.0 hours per week and women without a high school diploma decreased market work by 2.4 hours per week.

The household incomes of young adults with less education tend to be substantially lower than their college-educated counterparts, and they have been falling since the 1980s. For example, the median income of households headed by a Millennial with a high school education was $39,842 in 2013, about $50,000 below that of college-educated counterparts ($89,079). And the gap in the typical household income of young household heads with and without a college degree has increased substantially over time. In 1979, college-educated young adults had household incomes about $22,000 above those of households headed by young adults with only a high school education. That gap has widened to $50,000 among Millennials.

For details on median personal income, see Appendix C.

Economic Well-being of 25- to 32-year-olds

	All	Bachelor's degree or more	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
Median adjusted household income (in 2012 dollars)				
Millennials in 2013	$57,175	$89,079	$51,962	$39,842
Gen Xers in 1995	$54,081	$86,237	$55,168	$45,164
Late Boomers in 1986	$54,140	$81,686	$59,518	$47,986
Early Boomers in 1979	$55,384	$71,916	$58,432	$50,097
Silents in 1965*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Median personal income (in 2012 dollars)				
Millennials in 2013	$25,000	$40,003	$24,524	$19,000
Gen Xers in 1995	$26,045	$39,986	$27,194	$22,980
Late Boomers in 1986	$26,455	$40,700	$29,101	$24,217
Early Boomers in 1979	$27,335	$38,759	$30,684	$24,483
Silents in 1965	$18,769	$34,736	$23,947	$19,417
Share in Poverty				
Millennials in 2013	16	6	15	22
Gen Xers in 1995	13	3	10	15
Late Boomers in 1986	12	4	8	12
Early Boomers in 1979	8	3	6	7
Silents in 1965*	NA	NA	NA	NA

*Household income and poverty are not available before 1968.

Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. Household income figures are adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2012 dollars. Based on household income in the calendar year preceding the survey. Income standardized to a household size of three. For details, see http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/07/the-rising-age-gap-in-economic-well-being/4/#appendix-a-data-sources-and-methodologyappendix. Household income is tabulated over households headed by 25- to 32-year-olds. Personal income is tabulated over 25- to 32-year-olds and is based on the total pretax personal income in the calendar year preceding the survey. Poverty is based on the respondent's family income in the calendar year preceding the survey. Poverty refers to the share of 25- to 32-year-olds living in poverty.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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Poverty and Wealth

Though household income figures indicate that the typical college-educated Millennial household is better off than in previous generations, poverty figures indicate that a segment of the college-educated are faring worse. In 2013, 6% of college-educated 25- to 32-year-olds were living in

poverty, double the poverty rate of college-educated young adults in 1979 (3%).[9] Poverty has been on the rise among all young adults, and the increase has been greatest among lesser educated 25- to 32-year-olds. Poverty has tripled among 25- to 32-year-olds with only a high school education. In 1979, 7% of young adults with only a high school education were living below the poverty line. Among high school-educated Millennials in 2013, fully 22% were poor.

Another common measure of economic well-being is wealth or net worth. Income and poverty are based on the resources obtained by the household over the prior calendar year. Wealth is the household's nest egg or what it has been able to save out of income over the years. Wealth is what the household has or the value of what it owns (assets) minus what it owes (debts). Wealth is advantageous for a number of reasons, including that it is a storehouse of value that can be accessed during spells of unemployment and other adverse events.

Median Net Worth of Households Headed by 25- to 32-year-olds

In 2012 dollars

	All	Bachelor's degree or more	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
2011	$7,262	$26,058	$5,681	$3,137
1984	$14,204	$29,521	$16,319	$11,455

Notes: "All" includes households whose heads are not high school graduates.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 1984 and 2011 Survey of Income and Program Participation data.

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The Census Bureau measures income and poverty every year, but it captures household wealth less regularly. In 2011, the wealth of the typical household headed by a 25- to 32-year-old with at least a bachelor's degree was $26,058.[10] In 1984, the median wealth of households headed by a 25- to 32-year-old with a bachelor's degree was $29,521, so typical wealth levels have declined 12% for the young and college-educated. Declines in wealth have been even greater for less-educated households. In 2011, the median wealth level of households headed by a 25- to 32-year-old with a high school education was $3,137. This represents a 73% decline in the typical wealth of similar households in 1984 ($11,455).

[9] Poverty thresholds depend on the size of the family and composition. In 2012, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children was $23,283 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor and Smith, 2013).
[10] By comparison, the median net worth of all households (all ages and education levels) was about $70,000 in 2011.

Living Arrangements

Are Millennials earning enough to live independently? The answer depends on which Millennials you focus on. For young adults without a bachelor's degree, the passage to financial independence may be taking longer. But college graduates are not substantially delaying their departure from the parental nest, a reflection in part of their superior fortunes in the labor market.[11]

College-educated Millennials are much less likely to be married than their counterparts in earlier generations. In 1965, of college-educated young adults (members of the Silent generation), nearly eight-in-ten (78%) were married. In 2013, less than half of college-educated Millennials (45%) were married. The decline in marriage among 25- to 32-year-olds has been even greater among less-educated young adults. In 1965, 86% of high school-educated Silents were married. In 2013, only 40% of their Millennial counterparts were married.

Living Arrangements of 25- to 32-year-olds

%

	All	Bachelor's degree or more	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
Married				
Millennials in 2013	42	45	41	40
Gen Xers in 1995	54	53	55	54
Late Boomers in 1986	59	56	59	62
Early Boomers in 1979	68	64	68	72
Silents in 1965	84	78	84	86
Living in Parent's Home				
Millennials in 2013	15	12	16	18
Gen Xers in 1995	13	12	14	14
Late Boomers in 1986	12	9	13	13
Early Boomers in 1979	9	8	8	9
Silents in 1965	8	10	7	9

Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. "Living in parent's home" refers to young adults who are the child of the head of the household, regardless of their marital status.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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The decline in marriage among the young and college-educated does not imply that college-educated Millennials are not forming their own households and living independently of their parents. Though college-educated Millennials may not have a spouse, many of them have unmarried partners.[12]

[11] A number of studies show that the share of young adults living at home has increased since 2007 (when the Great Recession began). The increase has been more prominent among young adults without a bachelor's degree (Fry, 2013; Mykyta, 2012).
[12] The data used for this analysis, the Current Population Survey (CPS), began tracking the unmarried partner relationship status in 1995. In March 2013, 15% of adults ages 25 to 32 had an unmarried partner residing in their household.

Some 12% of college-educated 25- to 32-year-old Millennials were living in a parent's home in 2013. By comparison, 10% of college-educated young adults lived with their parent(s) in 1965. So the tendency to live at home has increased among the college-educated, but it seems to be a measured increase among young adults with at least a bachelor's degree. By contrast, the likelihood of living at home has markedly increased among less-educated young adults. For example, 9% of Silents with a high school education lived at home in 1965. In 2013, 18% of high school-educated Millennials were living at home, twice the rate of Silents.

Chapter 2: Public Views on the Value of Education

For today's young workers, the surest path to a good job and satisfying career runs through college. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center finds that college graduates outpace those with less education on virtually every measure of job satisfaction and career success.

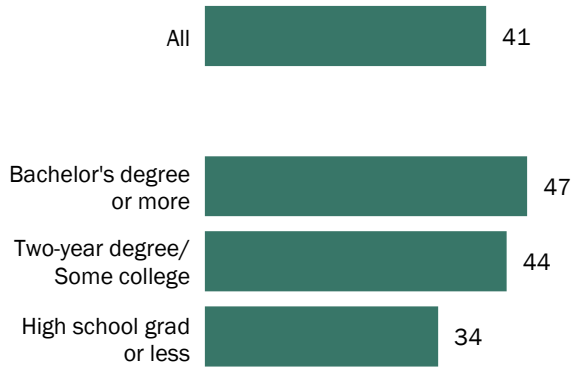
While most workers say their education has been at least somewhat helpful on the job, fully 47% of college graduates[13] ages 25 to 32 report that their schooling has been "very useful" in getting them ready for a job or career.

In contrast, only about a third (34%) of young adults with a high school education or less say their education has been as helpful to them, the survey found.

When it comes to their current jobs, about half (53%) of all employed college graduates in their mid-20s and early 30s say they are "very satisfied" at work. In contrast, only 37% of comparably aged Millennials with a high school diploma or less are as satisfied with their job, according to the Pew Research survey.

Education and Work

% of Millennials ages 25 to 32 in each group who say their education was "very useful" in preparing them for a job or career



Notes: Based on Millennials ages 25-32 (n=630).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q20

Employed college graduates ages 25 to 32 also are more likely than those with only a high school diploma or less to say they are in a career or career-track job (86% vs. 57%) and less likely to say their current job is just something "to get [them] by" (14% vs. 42%).

When they look ahead, about six-in-ten (63%) Millennial college graduates in their late 20s and early 30s are confident that they have enough training and education to get ahead in their current job or career. In contrast, about four-in-ten (41%) of comparably aged high school graduates feel they have enough education to advance on the job.

[13] Unless otherwise noted in this report, "college graduate" refers to those who have a bachelor's degree or more education.

Even though the current Millennials ages 25 to 32 are better educated than the generations of young adults who preceded them,[14] the survey found only one significant generational difference in the overall perceived value of their education in preparing them for a job and career—some 41% of Millennials ages 25 to 32, 45% of Gen Xers and 47% of Baby Boomers say their schooling was "very useful" in getting them ready to enter the labor force. A somewhat larger share of Silents than Millennials say their education prepared them very well (50% vs. 41%).

The Value of a College Degree

Turning to college graduates, the survey finds that, regardless of their generation, adults with college degrees recognize the benefit of their undergraduate education.

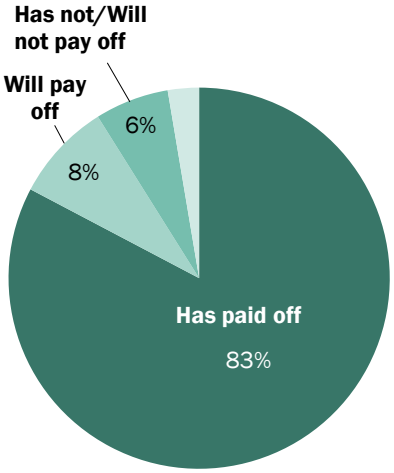
About nine-in-ten adults with a bachelor's degree or more education (91%) say that considering what they and their family paid for their undergraduate education, it has paid off for them or they expect it will pay off in the future. The sentiment is shared by an even higher proportion (96%) of those with a graduate or professional diploma.

About seven-in-ten college graduates (69%) also say their undergraduate or graduate major is at least somewhat related to their current work. And few express serious regrets about their choice of college major: Only 29% say that selecting a different field of study would have better prepared them to get the kind of job they wanted.

But these views vary significantly by major, the survey found. A third (33%) of all liberal arts, social science and education majors say they should have selected another field of study to better prepare them for their ideal job. In contrast, only about a quarter (24%) of science and engineering majors express a similar regret.

Most Graduates Say College Has Paid Off

% who say that considering what they and their family paid for their undergraduate education, it ...



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). "Not sure/Don't know/Refused" responses shown but not labeled.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q9-11

As a group, those with a graduate or professional degree are the most likely to say their education was "very useful" in preparing them for the working world (69% vs. 47% for all respondents).

[14] According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the share of 25- to 32-year-olds with a college degree increased from 13% in 1965 to 34% in 2013.

These highly educated adults also are more likely to be very satisfied with their current job (66% vs. 52% for all) or to say they have sufficient education and training to advance in their job or career (84% vs. 59%).

Turning to demographics, Millennial college graduates are significantly less likely than older generations to currently have a job "very closely" related to their major (36% for Millennials vs. 54% for older adults).[15]

Many alumni look back on their college days fondly—but also with regrets. When it comes to better preparing themselves for the labor force, half of all college graduates say gaining more work experience while they were undergraduates would have helped their chances to get the job they wanted. Men (55%) are more likely than women (45%) to say this. About four-in-ten (38%) say that studying harder also would have improved their employment prospects—a view shared by some 47% of men but only 31% of women college graduates. As a generation, Millennials have struggled to find work during and in the aftermath of the Great Recession[16]—one likely reason that they are more likely than older adults to say more work experience in college (65% vs. 45% for older graduates) and looking for work sooner (43% vs. 26%) would have enhanced their job prospects.

The remainder of this chapter explores of these findings in greater detail. The first section examines how those with different levels of education assess the value of their schooling in preparing them for a job and career. The next section examines whether college graduates believe their degrees were worth the money they or their families spent to send them to college. The final section explores the value of individual college degrees in the job market as well as reports what college graduates say they should have done while in school to better ready themselves for the working world.

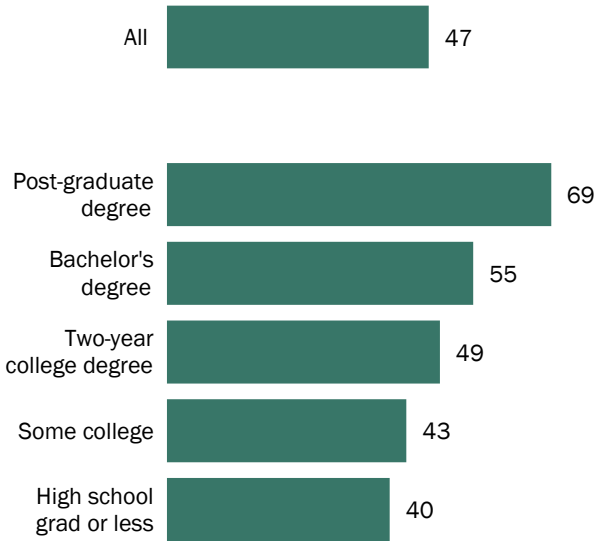
[15] To draw comparisons to the economic data in Chapter 1, the opening section of this chapter looked at the segment of Millennials ages 25 to 32. From this point forward, all Millennials ages 18 to 32 are included in the analysis.
[16] For a detailed look at how the Great Recession affected the employment and well-being of young adults, see the Pew Research Center report "Young, Underemployed and Optimistic" Feb. 9, 2012.

Education and Work

The Pew Research Center survey confirms what generations of parents have told their children: To get a good job, get a good education. At the same time, the findings suggest that the definition of a good education has changed in recent decades, with the rewards of education disproportionately concentrated among better educated adults while those with less education are lagging far behind.

College Graduates More Likely to Say Education Prepared Them for Work

% of each group who say education was "very useful" in preparing them for a job or career



Notes: Based on full sample (N=2,002). "Post-graduate degree" includes professional degrees.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q20

Overall about eight-in-ten adults say their education has been "very useful" (47%) or "somewhat useful" (34%) in preparing them for a job or career. Only 16% find that their education has done little or nothing to prepare them for work, the survey found.

But just beneath the overall numbers lies this striking pattern: As educational attainment increases, so do favorable judgments about the usefulness of their education in getting them ready for the labor force. In fact, these positive views rise in virtual stair-step fashion as education levels rise.

According to the survey, about seven-in-ten adults with a graduate or professional degree say their education was very useful preparing them for work, about 15 percentage points higher than those who had completed a bachelor's degree (69% vs. 55%).

The increase is nearly as large as you move up from the lower rungs of the education ladder. Some 40% of those with a high school education or less find their education very useful on the job, a proportion that increases to 49% among those with a two-year college degree.

Millennial Women More Likely than Men to See Education Useful

With one notable exception, few demographic differences exist on this question. Nearly half of all whites (45%), blacks (48%) and Hispanics (48%) say their education was "very useful" in

preparing them for a job or career. Similar shares of Millennials (46%), Gen Xers (45%) and Baby Boomers (47%) agree.

At the same time, Millennial women are more likely than either Millennial men or older men to say their education was "very useful." Among Millennials, only about four-in-ten men (39%) but 53% of women have found their education to be very beneficial in preparing them for the workforce. About half of older women (49%) and nearly as many non-Millennial men (45%) share this view.

Career and College

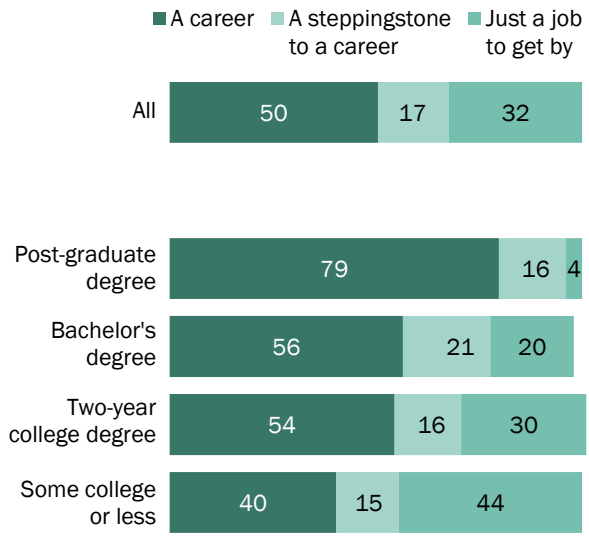
College is the most direct route to a good job and career. The higher their level of education, the more likely an individual is to say that his or her current job is a career or a steppingstone toward a career, a relationship that also crosses generational boundaries.

About two-thirds of all employed adults say their current job is their career (50%) or a steppingstone on the path to a career (17%). For the remaining 32%, their work is "just a job to get [them] by."

But this profile shifts dramatically by levels of education. About eight-in-ten (79%) of those with graduate or professional degrees say their current job is their career. Some 56% of those with bachelor's degrees and about an equal share (54%) of those with two-year college degrees also say they currently have a career-level position.

Better Educated More Likely to Be in a Career-track Job

% of each group who say their current job is ...



Note: Based on those who are employed (n=1,301). "Post-graduate degree" includes professional degrees. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q34

In contrast, only four-in-ten adults who have not graduated from college report that their current job is their career, and 15% say they are on the path to a career. The remaining 44% say their current job is just something to get them by, roughly ten times the proportion of those with a graduate degree who offer the same view.

Other Demographic Differences

The education divide is not the only significant demographic difference separating those with a career and those who are not yet there. In fact, it's not even the largest.

Large differences emerge when the focus shifts to race and ethnicity. Non-Hispanic whites (59%) are about twice as likely as blacks (29%) or Hispanics (22%) to say their current job is their career.

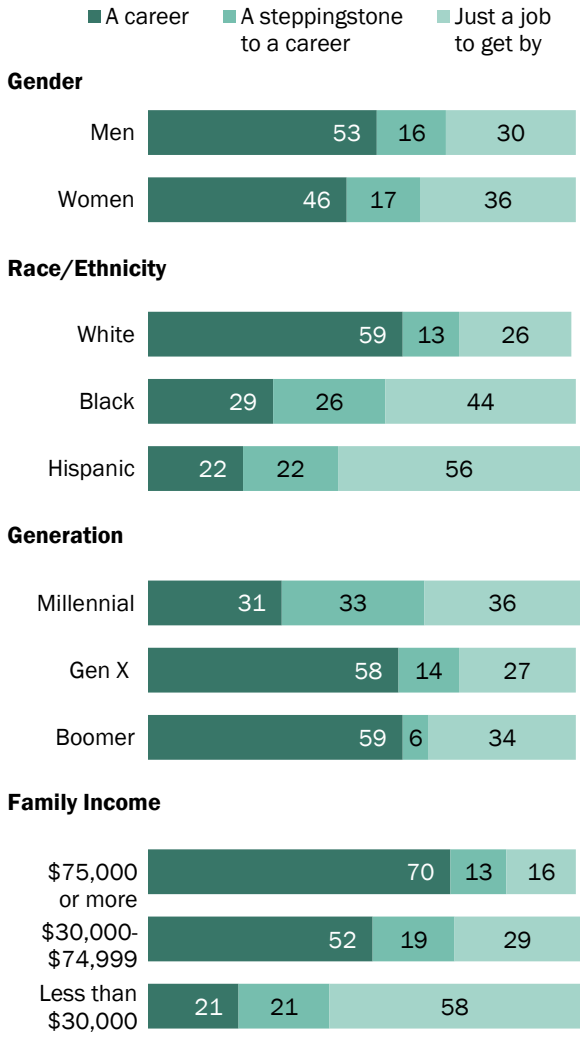
At the same time, Hispanics are about twice as likely as whites to say they their current job is just something to get them by (56% vs. 26%), a disparity that in part reflects educational differences between Hispanics and whites. For much the same reason, blacks also are significantly more likely than whites to be off the career path (44% vs. 26%).

More predictably, Gen Xers (58%) and Baby Boomers (59%) are significantly more likely to say they are in a career than Millennials (31%), who are just beginning their working lives. But a third of Millennials say they have their foot in the door: They are about twice as likely as Gen Xers (33% vs. 14%) and roughly five times as likely as Boomers (33% vs. 6%) to say their current job is a steppingstone to a career.

But when it comes to non-career jobs, similar shares of Millennials (36%) and Boomers (34%) say their current job is just something "to get me by."

Who Has a Career?

% of each group who say their current job is ...



Note: Based on those who are employed (n=1,301). Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Millennials are ages 18 to 32. Views of members of the Silent generation are not shown in this graphic and others in this report because the sample size was too small. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q34

Labor economists know that income, education and employment type are closely associated. Better-educated individuals are more likely to occupy better paying jobs, which largely explains why survey respondents with annual family incomes of $100,000 or more are more than twice as likely as those making less than $50,000 to say they are in career jobs (77% vs. 31%).

At the same time, about half (49%) of those with family incomes below $50,000 say their work is just a job to get them by, a view held by only 10% of highest-earning adults.

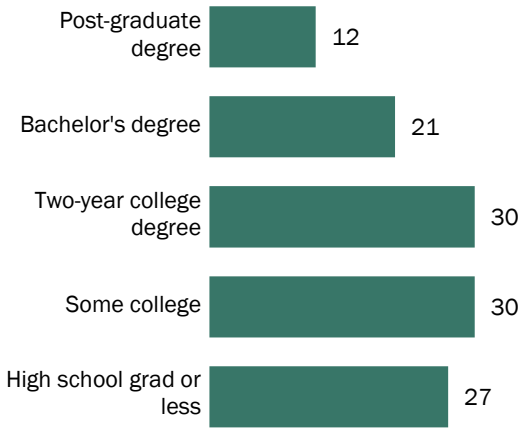
Back to School

The value of education on the job is clearly seen when adults younger than 65 and not in school are asked if they ever plan to resume their education. A quarter say they intend to return to school someday, and an additional 11% say they might.

According to the survey, those who have not obtained a bachelor's degree are more likely than those who have at least a bachelor's degree to have plans to return to school (28% vs. 18%). Yet even people who have a four-year degree under their belt are considering going back to school, with fully 21% of bachelor's degree holders and 12% of post-graduate degree holders saying they will resume their education.

Most Don't Intend to Go Back to School

% saying they plan to return to school



Note: Based on those under age 65 and not currently enrolled in school (n=1,349). Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included. "Post-graduate degree" includes professional degrees.

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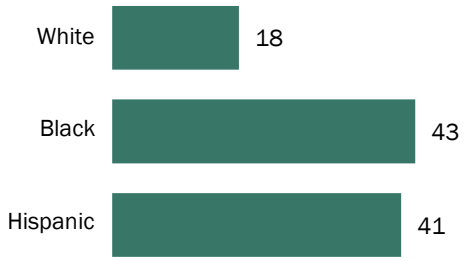
Social science, liberal arts and education majors are more likely than business majors to say they will return to school or "maybe" will go back (40% vs 23%). Some 28% of science and engineering majors say they are definitely or maybe planning to return to school.

The survey also found that blacks and Hispanics are twice as likely to say they plan to go back to school as whites. About four-in-ten (43% of blacks and 41% of Hispanics) say this, compared with 18% of whites—a relationship that holds up even accounting for different levels of education.

For example, 42% of blacks with less than a bachelor's degree and 41% of Hispanics with the same level of education intend to return to school, compared with 21% of whites with comparable education.

Minorities More Likely Than Whites to Say They Want to Return to School

% saying they plan to return to school



Note: Based on those under age 65 and not currently enrolled in school (n=1,349). Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER RSCHL

As might be expected, plans to return to school diminish with age. About half (54%) of 18- to 29-year-olds intend to return to school. This share falls to 28% among 30- to 49-year-olds and only 10% among 50- to 64-year-olds. The question was not asked of respondents ages 65 and older.

Household income also is modestly correlated with the intent to go back to school. People in families making less than $50,000 per year are the most likely to have plans to return (33% say they will). By contrast, 18% of those in families making between $50,000 and $99,999, and 14% of those making $100,000 or more say they plan to go back to school.

As might be expected, those who think they need more training or education to succeed in their career are more likely to plan to go back to school. About four-in-ten (41%) of those currently employed who say they need more training to get ahead in their job or career intend to go back to school, compared with only 14% of those who feel they already have the necessary education. A similar share (45%) of those not employed who say they need more training in order to get the kind of job they want intend to return to school, while only 17% who already have the education they need have plans to go back.

Is College Still Worth It?

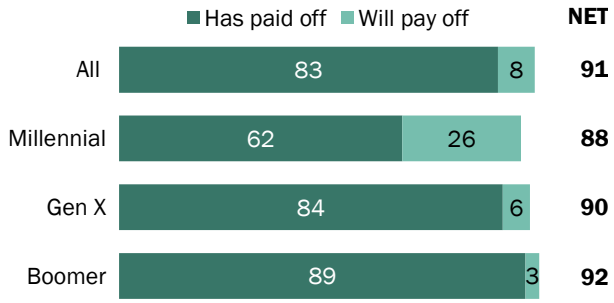
In spite of rising tuition rates at both public and private colleges, most college graduates agree that college has paid off.[17] A significant majority (83%) of bachelor's degree holders believe that they have already seen a return on what they and their family paid for their bachelor's degree. An additional 8% say that it hasn't paid off yet, but they believe it will in the future. Only 6% of graduates say that college has not paid off for them and that they do not expect it to in the future.

The generations agree that getting their college degree was worthwhile. But Gen Xers (84%) and Boomers (89%) are significantly more likely than Millennials (62%) to say they already have seen a payoff. By contrast, for the remainder of those who say their degree has not yet paid off, Millennials are more likely than older generations to think it will eventually be worth it (26% vs. 6% for Gen Xers and 3% for Boomers.)

Majorities of college graduates say their education paid off, regardless of their family income. But college graduates with family incomes of at least $50,000 per year are more likely than those earning less to feel that their degrees have already paid off (90% vs. 63%). Those in the top income tier, earning $100,000 or more, are the most likely to say this (98%).

Generations Agree: College Is Worth It

% of college graduates in each generation who say that considering what they and their family paid for their undergraduate education, it ...



Notes: Based on college graduates (n=790). "College graduates" are those with a bachelor's degree or more. "All" includes adults in the Silent and older generations. Millennials are ages 18 to 32. Those who said college has not and will not pay off and voluntary responses of "Not sure/Don't know/Refused" not shown.

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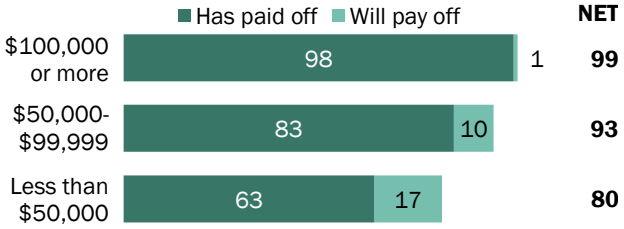
College Graduates Who Earn More Say College Degree Was Worth It

% of each group of college graduates who say that considering what they and their family paid for their undergraduate education, it has paid off or will pay off



Notes: Based on college graduates (n=790). Income groups are based on family income. "College graduates" are those with a bachelor's degree or more. Those who said college has not and will not pay off and voluntary responses of "Not sure/Don't know/Refused" not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q9-11

[17] For a detailed look at trends in college costs, see this Pew Research Center report "Is College Worth It?" May 15, 2011.

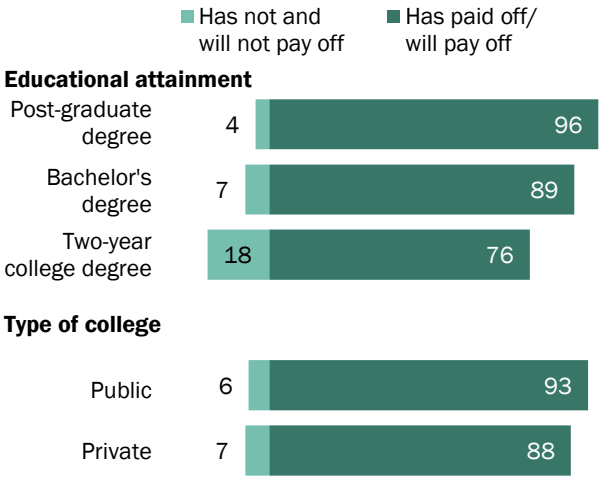
The Pew Research Center poll shows that the higher the degree attained, the more graduates feel their undergraduate education has paid off. Among those with postgraduate degrees, almost all have no regrets (93% say their bachelor's degree has paid off and 3% believe it will in the future).

Slightly fewer of those whose highest educational attainment is a bachelor's degree are as positive (89% say it's paid off or think it will), and even fewer—but still a sizable majority—of those with two-year college degrees say the same (76%).

Despite the higher sticker price at most private colleges, graduates from public and private schools express similar satisfaction in value for their money. Some 84% of public college graduates and 81% of private college graduates say that their education has paid off, and an additional 9% of public college graduates and 7% of private college graduates say it will pay off in the future.

The Value of College, by Education and College Type

% of each group who say that considering what they and their family paid for their undergraduate education, it ...



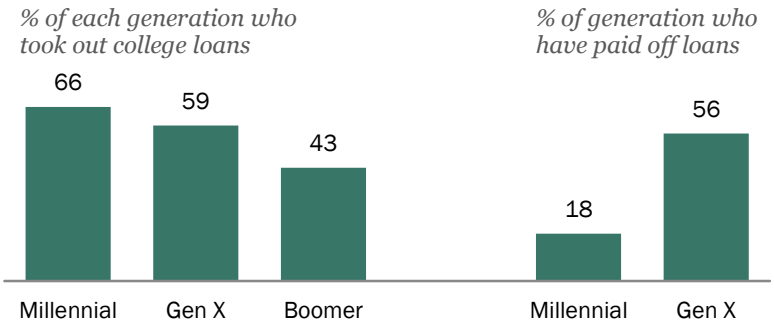
Notes: Educational attainment based on those with a two-year college degree or more (n=982). "Post-graduate degree" includes professional degrees. Type of college based on those with a bachelor's degree or more (n=790). Voluntary responses of "Not sure/Don't know/Refused" not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q9-11

Student Loans

Half of college graduates took out loans to help finance their education. Perhaps reflecting the fact that college tuition has risen sharply over the decades, Millennials (66%) and Gen Xers (59%) are more likely than Boomers (43%) to have taken out loans to pay for their education. Among those

Borrowing for College ... and Paying It Back



Notes: Percent of each generation who took out college loans is based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are not currently enrolled in college (n=767). Percent of generation who have paid off loans is based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are not currently enrolled in college and who took out loans (n=341). Millennials are ages 18 to 32. The sample size of Boomers who took out loans is too small for analysis.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q12,14

who did take out loans, Gen Xers are much more likely (56%) to have finished paying them back than Millennials (18%). The sample size of Boomers who took out loans is too small for analysis.

College graduates at all income levels are about equally likely to have taken out loans. But those earning more are significantly more likely to have finished paying off their student debt, in part because they are older and have had more time to pay off their loans. About two-thirds (68%) of college graduates who took out loans and who have a family income of at least $75,000 have paid off their loans, compared with 42% of college graduates making less than $75,000.

Those who have completed at least a bachelor's degree are the most likely to have taken out loans, compared with those who have a degree from a two-year college (50% vs. 37%).

College graduates who did not take out loans are more likely than those who did borrow money to say that their degree has paid off (91% of non-borrowers say this, compared with 79% of those who took out loans). Conversely, those who took out loans to help pay for college are more likely to say that their education will pay off in the future (10% vs. 3%). And those who borrowed less money are more likely to say that their education has already paid off (87% of those who took out less than $20,000 in loans say this, compared with 68% of those who took out more). The biggest contrast is among graduates who have paid off their loans compared with those who have not. Fully nine-in-ten (93%) of those who have already repaid all the money they borrowed say that their degree has paid off, compared with only 59% of those who are still in the process of paying them off.

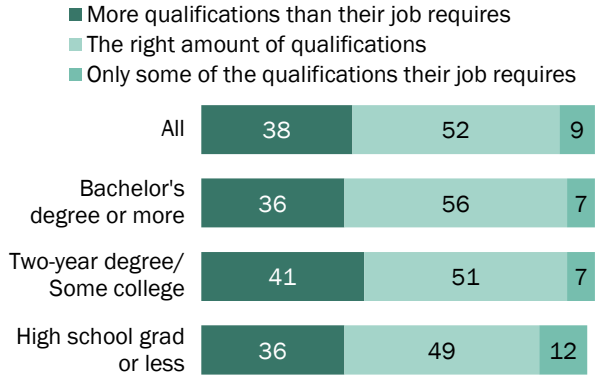
Job Preparation

Regardless of level of education, about half (52%) of people who are currently employed feel they have the right qualifications for the job. Most of the remainder (38%) feel overqualified for their current job, and only a few (9%) think they are underqualified.

But these views vary by demographic characteristics. For example, blacks are more likely (53%) than either Hispanics (39%) or whites (36%) to feel that they have more qualifications than their job requires. And Millennials are more likely than older

Regardless of Education, Few Workers Feel Underqualified for Job

% of each group who say they have ...



Notes: Based on those currently employed (n=1,301). "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q35

generations to say the same (46% of Millennials, compared with 34% of older adults).

People in the upper half of the income scale feel more content with their qualifications than those in the lower half. More than half of those making at least $50,000 say they have about the right amount of qualifications for their job (61%), compared with 43% of those who make less than $50,000. Those making less than $50,000 are more likely to say they are overqualified than those making at least $50,000 (45% vs. 33%).

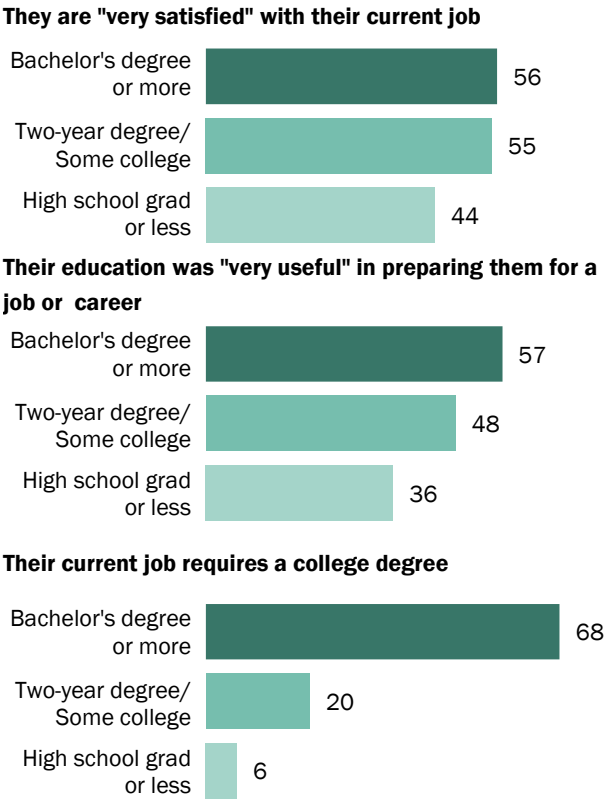
College degrees or at least some experience at college may help with other measures of job satisfaction. Those with at least some college experience are more likely to report being "very satisfied" in their current job than those with a high school diploma or less.

Those with a degree from a four-year college are more likely than those with less education to say their education was "very useful" in preparing them for a job or career. About six-in-ten (57%) bachelor's and graduate degree holders say this, compared with 48% of those who completed a two-year degree or went to college but did not graduate and 36% of those with a high school diploma or less.

As might be expected, college graduates are much more likely to be in a job requiring a college degree—yet a notable number of those without diplomas also say they hold a job that requires a college degree. About two-thirds (68%) of those who have at least a bachelor's degree say their job requires a college degree. Roughly one-third (31%) of two-year college graduates say the same. Yet fully 14% of those who say they attended some college but did not graduate and 6% of those who have a high school diploma or less say they work in a job that requires a college degree.

Education and Work

% with each level of education who say ...



Notes: Based on currently employed (n=1,301).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q2c,20,36

The Value of a College Major

About seven-in-ten college graduates (69%) say their undergraduate or graduate field of study is at least somewhat related to their current work and only 29% say they should have selected a different undergraduate field of study to prepare them for their ideal job, according to the Pew Research survey.

But these views vary significantly by field of study and how far an individual went in school. By most measures tested in this survey, science and engineering majors are more likely than respondents with degrees in liberal arts, social science or education to say their education is a better fit with their current job and career goals. At the same time, those with graduate or professional degrees are more likely than other college graduates to say their job is closely related to their studies.

For example, only about a quarter (24%) of science and engineering majors say they should have selected another major to better prepare them for their ideal job. In contrast, a third (33%) of all liberal arts, social sciences and education majors express a similar view.

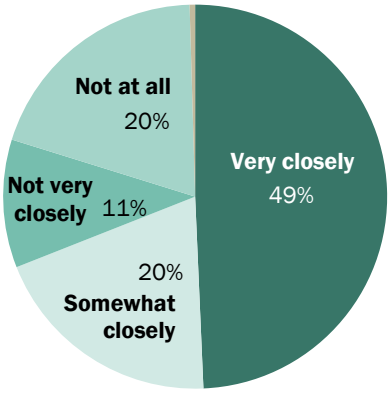
In a similar vein, social science, liberal arts and education majors are significantly more likely than science and engineering graduates to say they are overqualified for their job (42% vs. 28%).

Most Say Job Is Related to Major

The survey found that about seven-in-ten college graduates say their work is "very closely" (49%) or "somewhat closely" (20%) tied to their undergraduate or graduate degree.

About Half Say Current Job Is "Very Closely" Related to Field of Study

% who say their current job is ... related to their major in college or graduate school

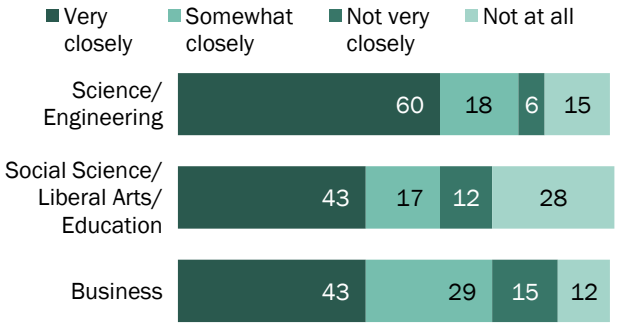


Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are employed full time or part time (n=606)."Don't know/Refused" responses are shown but not labeled.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q40

Usefulness of Major, by Field of Study

% of majors in each area who say their current job is ... related to their major in college or graduate school



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are employed full time or part time (n=606). "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q40

Science and engineering majors and, to a lesser extent, those who majored in business are more likely than those who majored in the liberal arts, social science or education to say their current job is closely related to their college majors.

Overall about eight-in-ten science and engineering majors (78%) say they have a job related to their field of study, including 60% who say it is "very closely" linked to their major. A similar share of business majors say that their job is related to their field of study (73%), but a smaller share of business majors than science and engineering majors say it is "very closely" related (43% vs. 60%). Only 59% of social science, liberal arts or education majors say their job is related to their degree, with 43% saying it is very closely related.

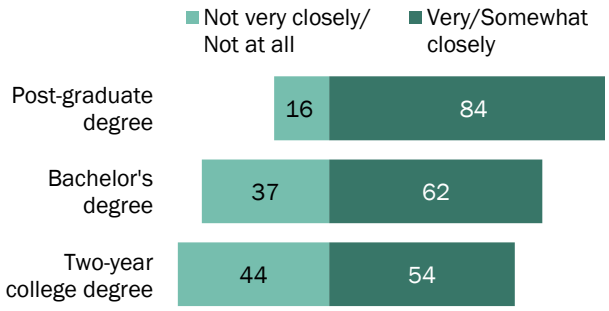
Millennials and their Majors

Compared with other generations, a larger share of Millennials are college graduates. At the same time, these young college graduates are significantly less likely than older graduates to say their current job is closely related to their field of study, in part because so many of these recent college graduates fill entry-level positions.

According to the survey, 36% of Millennials say their job is very closely related to their major. In contrast, about six-in-ten Gen Xers (59%) and 48% of Baby Boomers say they have a job that is very closely aligned with their major field of study.

Usefulness of Major to Current Job, by Degree Type

% who say their current job is ... related to their major in college or graduate school

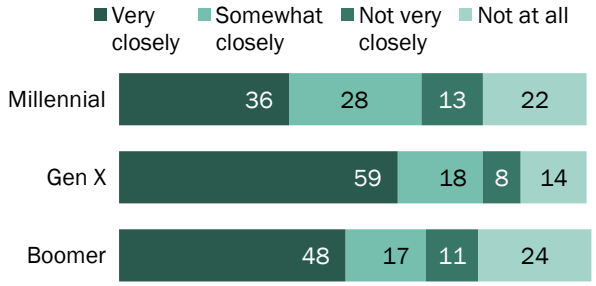


Notes: Based on those with at least a two-year college degree who are employed full- time or part time (n=742). "Post-graduate degree" includes professional degrees. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q40

Usefulness of Major, by Generation

% of those in each generation who say their current job is ... related to their major in college or graduate school



Notes: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are employed full time or part time (n=606). Millennials are ages 18 to 32. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q40

At the same time, Millennials are more likely than Gen Xers or Baby Boomers to say their current job is somewhat closely related to their undergraduate or graduate majors (28% for Millennials vs. 18% for Gen Xers and 17% for Boomers). Altogether, the share of Millennials saying their job is "very" or "somewhat" related to their major is 64%, smaller than the share among Gen Xers (77%) but similar to the share of Boomers who say the same (65%).

Roughly a third of Millennials (35%) say their current job is either "not very closely" or "not at all" related to their majors. That's the same as the overall share of Boomers (35%) but larger than the share of Gen Xers (22%) who express the same view.

Other Demographic Differences

Non-Hispanic whites and individuals with a graduate degree are more likely than minorities or those with a bachelor's or two-year degree to say their major is very closely related to their current job.

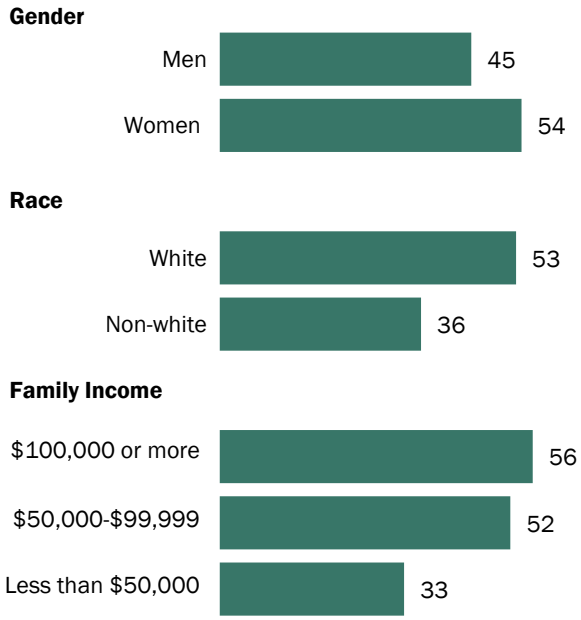
According to the survey, about half 53% of all non-Hispanic whites report their major and their job are very closely related, but just 36% of blacks, Hispanics and other minorities say this. (The sizes of the black and Hispanics samples were too small to analyze separately.)

Respondents with a graduate or professional degree (68%) are more likely to say their current job matches very well with their degree than those with a bachelor's degree (40%) or a two-year degree (37%).

At the same time, some 56% of those with family incomes of $100,000 or more say their current job is very closely connected to their major, compared with 33% of those earning less than $50,000.

Usefulness of Major, by Key Demographic Groups

% of each group who say their current job is "very closely related" to their major in college or graduate school



Notes: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are employed full time or part time (n=606). Whites include only non-Hispanics. Non-whites include Hispanics.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q40

Second Thoughts about their Major

Roughly three-in-ten college graduates (29%) say that selecting a different field of study as undergraduate students would have better prepared themselves for their ideal job.

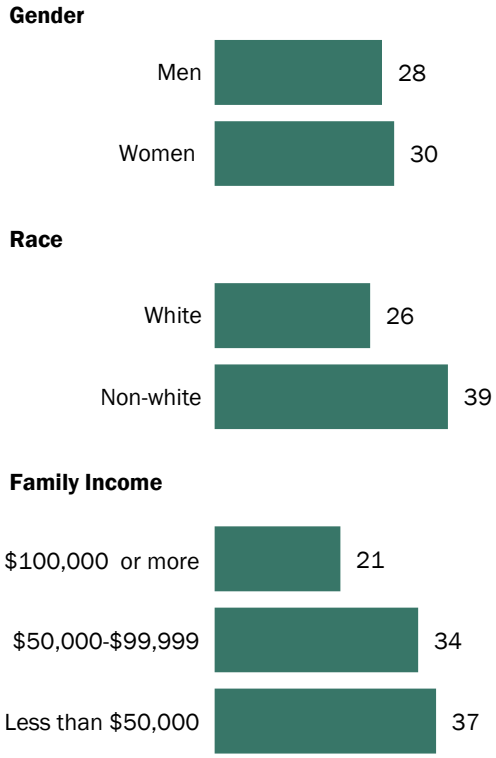
In terms of preparing them for their desired job, liberal arts, social science and education majors are significantly more likely than those who majored in science and engineering to have second thoughts about their undergraduate field of study (33% vs. 24%).

Minority college graduates in particular say a different major would have better prepared them for the type of job they wanted. According to the survey, about four-in-ten non-whites (39%) say they would have enhanced their chances of getting a job they wanted if they had chosen a different major, compared with 26% of whites.

Similarly, those with family incomes of less than $50,000 are much more likely than those earning $100,000 or more to express some degree of regret with their majors (37% vs. 21%).

College Majors, Reconsidered

% of each group who say selecting a different undergraduate major would have better prepared them to get the job they wanted



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included. Whites include only non-Hispanics. Non-whites include Hispanics.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q22a

Looking Back

In addition to selecting a different major, the Pew Research Center survey asked college graduates whether they could have better prepared for a job they wanted while still in school by gaining more work experience, studying harder or beginning their job search earlier.

About three-quarters of all college graduates (74%) say taking at least one of those four steps would have enhanced their chances to land their ideal job.

Leading the should-have-done list: getting more work experience while still in school. Half say taking this step would have put them in a better position to get the kind of job they wanted. Roughly four-in-ten (38%) regret not studying harder, while three-in-ten say they should have started looking for work sooner (30%) or picked a different major (29%).

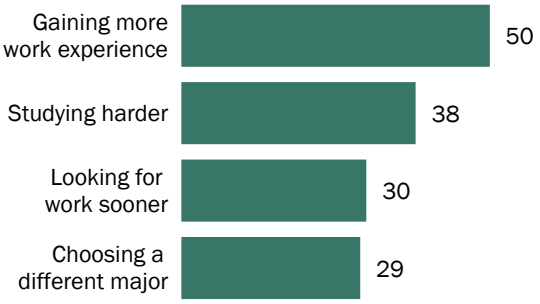
Taken together, the survey suggests that, among these items tested, only about a quarter (26%) of all college graduates have no regrets, while 21% say they should have done at least three or all four things to enhance their chances for their desired job.

Millennials See More Missed Opportunities

Millennials are significantly more likely than Baby Boomers to express regrets on three of the four items tested and to express multiple regrets about their college experience, the

College Days, Reconsidered

% who say doing each of the following while they were undergraduates would have better prepared them to get the job they wanted

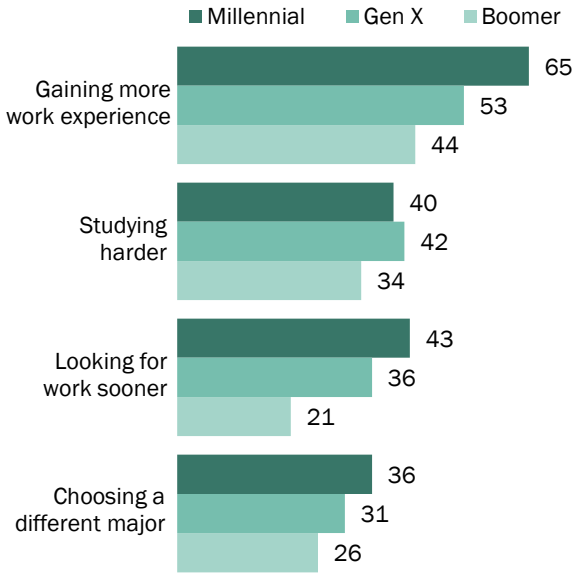


Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q22a-d

Looking Back, by Generation

% of each generation who say ... while they were undergraduates would have better prepared them to get the job they wanted



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). Millennials are ages 18 to 32. Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q22a-d

survey found. (The sample of those in the Silent generation was too small to analyze.)

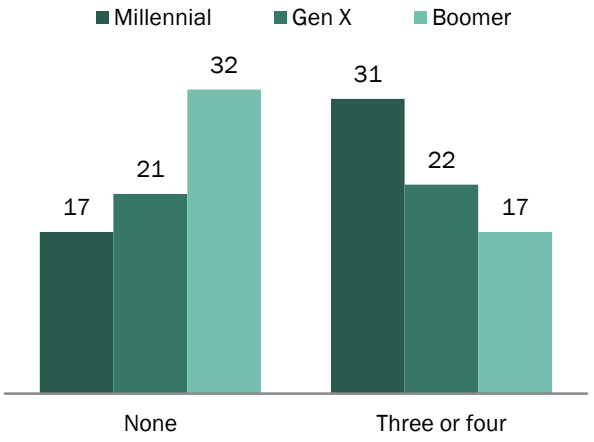
About two-thirds of all Millennials (65%) but 53% of Gen Xers and 44% of Baby Boomers say they should have gotten more work experience while in college. Millennials also are more likely than Boomers to say they would have improved their employment prospects if they had looked for work sooner (43% vs. 21% for Boomers). About a third (36%) of Gen Xers said this.

When it comes to majors, Millennials (36%) are more likely than Boomers (26%) to say their job prospects would have been enhanced if they had chosen another field of undergraduate study.

There were no significant differences among the generations in terms of those who say they should have studied harder.

Millennials Most Likely to Say They Could Have Done Things Differently in College

% of college graduates in each generation that say it would be better if they had done this number of things differently while they were undergraduates to prepare themselves to get the job they wanted



Note: Tested were "Choosing a different major," "Gaining more work experience," "Starting to look for work sooner" and "Studying harder." Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). Millennials are ages 18 to 32. Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included in counts.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q22a-d

Overall, Millennials are more likely to have multiple regrets about their college experience. Only 17% of Millennials say none of the four steps would have prepared them to get the job they wanted, while larger shares of Baby Boomers (32%) had no regrets. About two-in-ten Gen Xers (21%) say they have no regrets about their educational experience.

In contrast, three-in-ten (31%) of all Millennials but 17% of Boomers say they should have done three or all four things differently in order to prepare themselves for the job they wanted. Some 22% of Gen Xers say it would have been better if they did three or four things differently when they were undergraduates.

The Major Disconnect

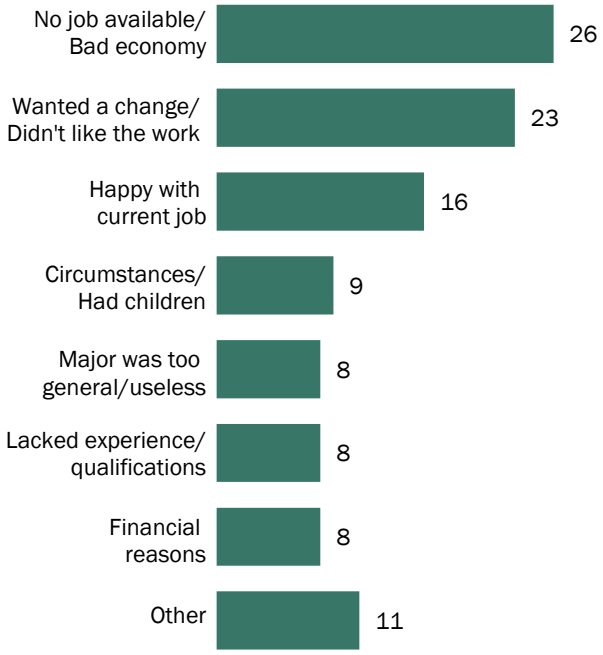
When college graduates who say their job is "not very closely related" or "not at all related" to their field of study in college or graduate school were asked why, no single reason dominated. About a

quarter (26%) blame the bad economy or say they were unable to find work in their field. A similar share wanted a change or found that the work wasn't for them (23%), while 16% say they are happy with their current job.

For others, life got in the way. About one-in-ten say they had children or other life circumstances interfered (9%), and 8% say their major was too general or it was useless, they lacked the experience or qualifications to find work in their field, or they chose a non-related job for financial reasons.

Most Found They Preferred Other Types of Jobs, or Couldn't Find Work in Field of Major

% saying the main reason for not currently working in a job more closely related to their major in college or graduate school is ...



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree who are employed full time or part time in a job that they say is "not very closely" or "not at all" related to their major in college or graduate school (n=181). Question was open-ended. "Don't Know/Refused" responses not shown.

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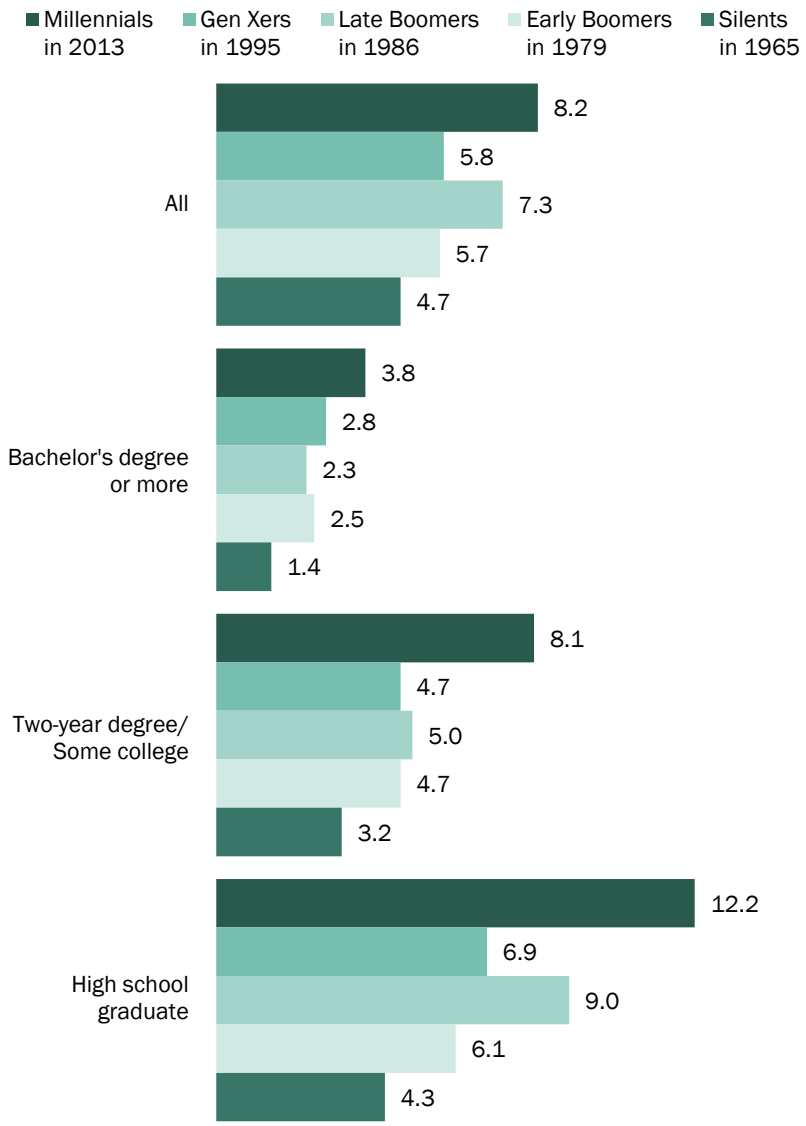
Appendix A: Additional Charts on the Labor Market

Unemployment Rate of 25- to 32-year-olds, by Educational Attainment

%



Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. The unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force (those working or actively seeking work) who are not employed.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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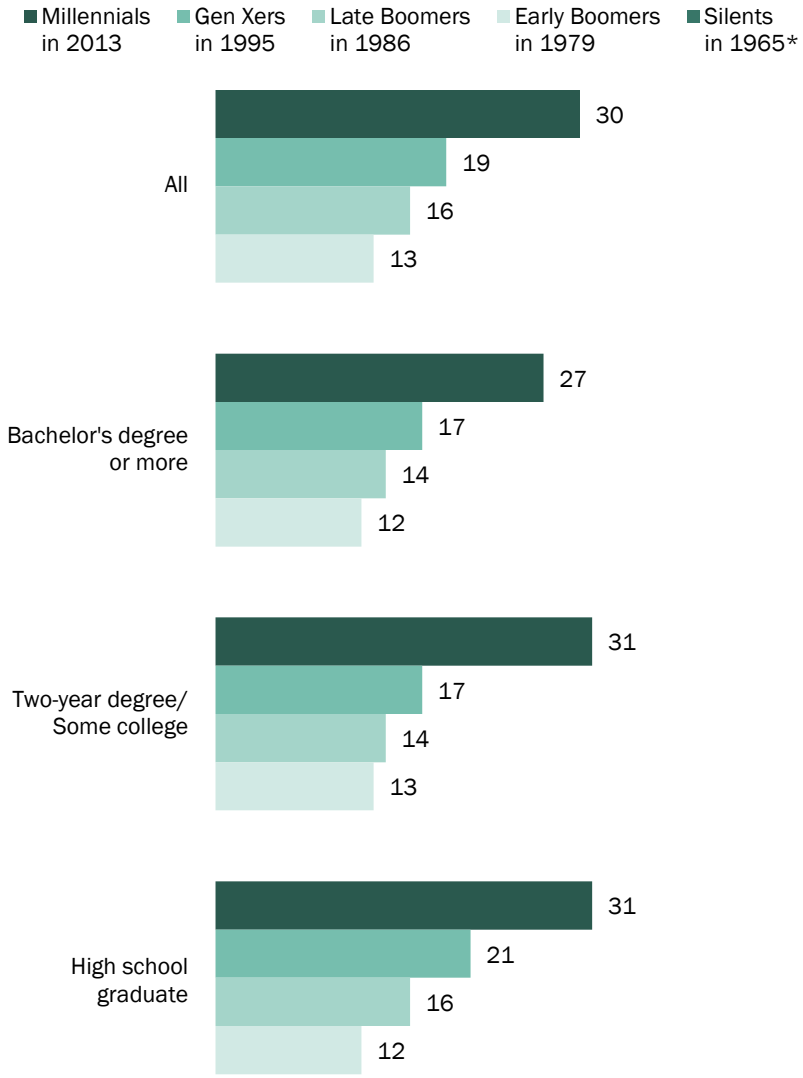
Average Weeks of Unemployment of Unemployed 25- to 32-year-olds, by Educational Attainment

In weeks



*Unemployment duration not available before 1968.

Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. Duration of unemployment for the currently unemployed is top-coded at 98 weeks.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986 and 1979 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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Appendix B: Data Sources

Government Data

Most of the analysis in Chapter 1 is based on the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is collected monthly by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey is the basis for the widely reported monthly national unemployment rate. This report uses the CPS's Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC), conducted in March of each year. The CPS sample size is expanded for the ASEC collection and in 2013 was based on interviews with about 75,000 households. The CPS is nationally representative of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The integrated micro data files of the March CPS produced by the University of Minnesota were analyzed. Additional documentation on the March CPS IPUMS can be found at https://cps.ipums.org/cps/.

The unweighted number of 25- to 32-year-olds in each survey year are as follows:

	All	Bachelor's degree or more	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
2013	20,512	6,686	6,088	5,574
1995	17,783	4,458	5,036	5,861
1986	22,177	5,171	4,810	9,189
1979	20,509	4,778	4,589	8,041
1965	6,837	890	835	2,977

Note: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates.

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The CPS has been collected since the 1940s, but there have been revisions in the information collected since its initiation. In 1992, the Census Bureau altered the educational attainment question. Prior to 1992, respondents were asked about the number of grades of school completed rather than their highest educational degree attained. So for surveys before 1992 (1986, 1979 and 1965) a "high school graduate" refers to those who completed 12th grade (regardless of whether they received a high school diploma); "some college" refers to those who reported completing one to three years of college, and respondents who completed at least four of years of college are considered to have at least a bachelor's degree.

Most of a person's characteristics refer to the individual's characteristics at the time of the survey or March of the year. However, annual earnings, household income and poverty status are based on the respondent's income characteristics in the calendar year prior to the survey.

The figures on the net worth of households on page 26 were tabulated from the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). SIPP has consistently collected detailed data on household asset and liabilities since 1984. The Census Bureau has periodically published reports on the nation's net worth in its P70 report series. For further details, see Gottschalk (2008).

Dollars figures in the report were converted to 2012 dollars using the research series of the consumer price index (CPI-U-RS).

Survey Methodology:

Results for the Pew Research Center survey are based on telephone interviews conducted October 7-27, 2013 among a national sample of 2,002 adults 18 years of age or older living in the United States (a total of 479 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,523 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 929 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial (RDD) samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. The landline RDD sample was drawn using traditional list-assisted methods where telephone numbers were drawn with equal probabilities from all active blocks in the U.S. The cell sample was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

In order to increase the number of 25 to 34 year-old respondents in the sample additional interviews were conducted with that cohort by screening RDD cell sample and by calling back 25 to 34 year-olds from recent PSRAI surveys.

Number of Interviews Conducted by Sample Segment

	Population	Interviews
Landline RDD	18+	420
Cellular RDD	18+	975
Cell RDD screened	25-34	205
Landline callback	25-34	59
Cell callback	25-34	343
Total		2,002

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Both the landline and cell samples were released for interviewing in replicates, which are small random samples of each larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of telephone numbers ensures that the complete call procedures are followed for all numbers dialed. As many as 7 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. The calls are staggered over times of day and days of the week (including at least one daytime call) to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. An effort is made to recontact most interview breakoffs and refusals to attempt to convert them to completed interviews.

Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. The additional interviews with 25- to 34-year-olds from the cell sample were administered an age screener; those who were in the target age range completed the interview. For the landline callback sample, interviewers asked to speak with the person based on age and gender who participated in an earlier survey. For the cellular callback sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone once it was confirmed that they were in the target age range.

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to adjust for effects of sample design and to compensate for patterns of nonresponse that might bias results. The weighting was accomplished in multiple stages to account for the different sample frames as well as the oversampling of 25-34 year-olds. Weighting also balances sample demographic distributions to match known population parameters.

In the final stage of weighting, the combined sample was weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, and region to parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey data. The population density parameter is county based and was derived from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match

current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the July-December 2012 National Health Interview Survey.

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample – the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is plus or minus 2.7 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methods, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 2.7 percentage points away from their true values in the population. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Margin of Error at 95% Confidence Level

	Sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	2,002	2.7 percentage points
18- to 32-year-olds	810	4.2 percentage points
Bachelor's degree or more	790	4.3 percentage points
Two-year degree/Some college	560	5.1 percentage points
High school grad or less	643	4.7 percentage points

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In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Appendix C: Young Adult Living Arrangements and Household Incomes

The second section presented typical adjusted household incomes for households headed by young adults ages 25 to 32. Not all 25- to 32-year-olds reside in households headed by a 25- to 32 year-old, and the likelihood of living in such a household may have changed over time. Are the patterns evident among 25- to 32-year-old heads of households not representative of the household income patterns for all young adults? No, this appendix demonstrates that the patterns evident among 25- to 32-year-old heads of households are replicated when we consider the full population of young adults.

Rather than focusing on households headed by young adults, let's examine the adjusted household incomes of all young adults. Following Bell, Burtless, Gornick, and Smeeding (2007), the most serious shift in living arrangements that might undermine the tabulations based on heads of households is that greater proportions of Millennials are living with mom and/or dad compared with earlier generations.[18] Fewer Millennials are married, but that is largely offset by the fact that more Millennials have unmarried partners.

The Appendix Table below tabulates the median adjusted household incomes for the universe of young adults who are not residing with their parent(s) and those residing in the household of their parent(s). Not surprisingly, for any year-education cell the household incomes of 25- to 32-year-olds who reside in the home of their parent(s) tends to exceed the corresponding year-education group of young adults who reside independently of their parent(s).

Yes, there may have been some shifting around between marriage/cohabitation and between living with parents and living independently. The bottom panel of the table shows the adjusted household incomes of ALL 25- to 32-year-olds. Similar to the median-adjusted household income of 25- to 32-year-old heads of households, the household income of all young adults:

a) Exhibit a growing dispersion by the education of the young adult from early Boomers to Millennials.

b) The adjusted household income of all early Boomers in 1979 is not above the typical adjusted household income of all Millennials ages 25 to 32 in 2013.

[18] See Bell, Lisa, Gary Burtless, Janet Gornick, and Timothy M. Smeeding. 2007. "Failure to Launch: Cross-National Trends in the Transition to Economic Independence," in *The Price of Independence: The Economics of Early Adulthood*, edited by Sheldon Danziger and Cecilia Rouse. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Household Incomes of 25- to 32-year-olds

In 2012 dollars

	All	Bachelor's degree or more	Two-year degree/ Some college	High school graduate
Median Adjusted Household Income of Young Adults Not Living in Parents' Home				
Millennials in 2013	$60,626	$92,836	$56,777	$44,543
Gen Xers in 1995	$57,140	$90,450	$59,353	$48,999
Late Boomers in 1986	$56,675	$86,003	$62,564	$50,895
Early Boomers in 1979	$56,766	$75,181	$60,516	$52,643
Silents in 1965*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Median Adjusted Household Income of Young Adults Living in Parents' Home				
Millennials in 2013	$71,800	$113,181	$75,080	$55,864
Gen Xers in 1995	$76,543	$106,636	$84,323	$65,939
Late Boomers in 1986	$69,304	$100,455	$77,512	$63,602
Early Boomers in 1979	$70,082	$93,667	$78,661	$69,120
Silents in 1965*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Median Adjusted Household Income of All Young Adults				
Millennials in 2013	$62,000	$94,911	$59,583	$46,550
Gen Xers in 1995	$59,705	$92,129	$61,627	$51,028
Late Boomers in 1986	$58,072	$87,233	$64,587	$52,312
Early Boomers in 1979	$57,868	$76,553	$61,817	$53,862
Silents in 1965*	NA	NA	NA	NA

*Household income data are not available before 1968.

Notes: "All" includes those who are not high school graduates. Household income figures are adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2012 dollars. Based on household income in the calendar year preceding the survey. Income standardized to a household size of three. For details, see http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/07/the-rising-age-gap-in-economic-well-being/4/#appendix-a-data-sources-and-methodologyappendix. In this table the adjusted household income of all 25- to 32-year-olds is utilized. In the chart and table on pages 24-25 the adjusted household income of 25- to 32-year-old heads of households was shown.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) Integrated Public Use Micro Samples

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Rather than examining household incomes, the personal incomes of young adults can be examined. These are presented in the second panel of the table on page 25. Personal incomes simply reflect the total income (including sources of income other than earnings) of the young adult. Personal incomes do not account for the income contributed by other members of the household. Nor do they account for any dependents the young adult may have. Conventional measures of economic well-being (for example, poverty) are household-based and recognize that

economic gains can be realized from shared living arrangements (for example, two can rent an apartment cheaper than one) and that dependents may entail some economic costs.[19]

[19] See Fry, Richard, D'Vera Cohn, Gretchen Livingston, and Paul Taylor. 2011. *The Rising Age Gap in Economic Well-being*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center Social & Demographic Trends project, November. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/07/the-rising-age-gap-in-economic-well-being/

Appendix D: Topline Questionnaire

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
OCTOBER 2013 HIGHER EDUCATION AND GENDER SURVEY
OCTOBER 7-27, 2013
TOTAL N= 2,002 ADULTS 18+ INCLUDING 982 ADULTS AGES 18-34

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES GREATER THAN ZERO BUT LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS.

QUESTIONS 1-2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED; NO QUESTION 3; QUESTION 4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

Now I have some questions about your background.

SEX,AGE NOT SHOWN

ASK ALL:
EDUC What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received? [DO NOT READ]
[INTERVIEWER NOTE: Enter code 3-HS graduate" if R completed vocational, business, technical, or training courses after high school that did NOT count toward an associate degree from a college, community college or university (e.g., training for a certificate or an apprenticeship)]

4	Less than high school (Grades 1-8 or no formal schooling)
6	High school incomplete (Grades 9-11 or Grade 12 with NO diploma)
32	High school graduate (Grade 12 with diploma or GED certificate)
20	Some college, no degree (includes some community college)
11	Two-year associate degree from a college or university
17	Four year college or university degree/Bachelor's degree (e.g., BS, BA, AB)
1	Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no postgraduate degree (e.g. some graduate school)
9	Postgraduate or professional degree, including master's, doctorate, medical or law degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, JD, graduate school)
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO DID NOT ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL (EDUC=5,6): [n=690]
ED1 What year did you graduate from college? (OPEN-END, RECORD FOUR-DIGIT YEAR)
ASK COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO ATTENDED GRADUATE SCHOOL (EDUC=7,8): [n=292]
ED2 What year did you receive your undergraduate or Bachelor's degree? (OPEN-END, RECORD FOUR-DIGIT YEAR)

Trends:

Oct 2013		March 2011
8	1960s or earlier	12
15	1970s	15
15	1980s	17
20	1990s	22
37	2000 or later	30
2	Still enrolled in college (VOL.)	n/a
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4
(n=982)		

ASK IF AGE < 65: [n=1,639]
SCHL Are you currently enrolled in school?
[IF YES, PROBE TO DETERMINE IF ATTENDING HIGH SCHOOL, TECHNICAL TRADE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, A COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE OR IN GRADUATE SCHOOL]

17	Yes, enrolled
1	in high school
2	in technical, trade or vocational school
12	in college (undergraduate)
3	in graduate school
83	No, not enrolled
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF AGE < 65 AND NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL (SCHL=5,9): [n=1,349]
RSCHL Do you ever plan to return to school?

25	Yes
62	No
11	Maybe (VOL.)
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF AGE < 65 AND CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OR PLAN TO RETURN (SCHL=1,2,3,4 OR RSCHL=1,3): [n=855]
SCHL2 How much further in school do you plan to go? [DO NOT READ]

2	Finish high school
6	Technical, trade, or vocational school
2	Attend college, no degree
9	Attend college, 2 year/associate's degree
32	Attend college, bachelor's degree
31	Graduate or professional school or degree
2	Some other non-degree certification/licensing/training (e.g. teaching certificate, continuing learning requirements, language learning)
2	No further (VOL)
3	Other [Specify] (VOL)
12	Don't know/Refused (VOL)

NO QUESTION 5-6; QUESTIONS 7-8 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK IF GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE AND NOT CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN COLLEGE (EDUC=5,6,7,8 AND SCHL NE 3): [n=922]
Q.9 Thinking about what you and your family paid for your (IF EDUC=7,8, INSERT: undergraduate) college education, would you say your education has paid off for you, or not?
IF NO OR TOO EARLY TO SAY (Q.9=2,4), ASK: [n=184]
Q.10 Do you think it will pay off for you in the future, or not?

86	NET College has/will pay off
79	Has paid off
7	Will pay off
10	College has not and will not pay off
4	Not sure if has/will pay off (VOL.)
(n=922)	

IF CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN COLLEGE (SCHL=3), ASK: [n=166]
Q.11 Thinking about what you and your family are paying for your college education, do you think your education will pay off for you in the future, or not?

90	Yes, will pay off
6	No, will not pay off
3	Depends (VOL.)
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE OR ENROLLED IN COLLEGE OR GRADUATE SCHOOL (EDUC=5-8 OR SCHL= 3,4): [n=1,096]
Q.12 **(IF SCHL=3,4:** Have you taken**; OTHERWISE:** Did you take**)** out any loans to help finance your education, or not?

45	Yes
55	No
*	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY ENROLLED AND TOOK OUT LOANS (SCHL=5,9 AND Q.12=1): [n=389]
Q.13 Do you happen to know approximately how much money you borrowed to finance your education? Was it… **[READ]?**

29	Less than $10,000
30	Between $10,000 and $20,000
18	Between $20,000 and $30,000
6	Between $30,000 and $40,000, or
14	More than $40,000
3	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY ENROLLED AND TOOK OUT LOANS (SCHL=5,9 AND Q.12=1): [n=389]
Q.14 Have you paid back all the money you owe in **(IF EDUC=8, INSERT:** undergraduate**)** student loans, or are you still in the process of paying the money back?

		Trend for comparison:[20]
Oct 2013		March 2011
52	Have paid off loans	63
46	Still paying off loans (includes deferment)	35
2	Haven't started to pay them off yet **(VOL.)**	*
*	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	2

ASK IF GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE AND NOT CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN COLLEGE (EDUC=5,6,7,8 AND SCHL NE 3): [n=922]
Q.15 Thinking about the **(IF EDUC=7,8, INSERT:** undergraduate**)** college you graduated from, was it a private college or university or was it a public college or university?

		March
Oct 2013		2011
29	Private college/university	32
70	Public college/university	66
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	2

ASK IF CURRENTLY IN COLLEGE (SCHL=3): [n=166]
Q.16 Thinking about the college you attend, is it a private college or university or is it a public college or university?

		March
Oct 2013		2011
17	Private college/university	17
83	Public college/university	82
*	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	*

[20] In March 2011, question read, "Have you paid back all the money you owe in (IF ANY POST-GRADUATE TRAINING, INSERT: undergraduate) student loans, or are you still in the process of paying the money back?"

ASK IF GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE AND NOT CURRENTLY IN COLLEGE OR GRAD SCHOOL (EDUC=5,6,7,8 AND SCHL NE 3,4): [n=848]

Q.17 What was your major field of study in **(IF EDUC=5,6,7:** college**; IF EDUC=8:** graduate school**)? [OPEN-END; RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE; ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR MORE THAN ONE.]**

ASK IF CURRENTLY IN COLLEGE (SCHL=3) [n=166]:

Q.18 What is your major field of study in college? **[OPEN-END; RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE; ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR MORE THAN ONE.]**

ASK IF CURRENTLY IN GRAD SCHOOL (SCHL=4) [n=82]:

Q.19 What is your major field of study in graduate school? **[OPEN-END; RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE; ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR MORE THAN ONE.]**

Total[21]		College major	Graduate school major
20	**(NET) Business (VOL.)**	**26**	**16**
17	Business management/Finance/Marketing/Accounting/ Human Resources	22	14
2	Communications/Broadcasting	3	1
2	Economics	2	*
20	**(NET) Science (VOL.)**	**19**	**24**
14	Life sciences/Health sciences/Medicine	14	15
4	Natural sciences	3	7
2	Science (unspecified/other)	2	2
*	Agriculture/forestry/horticulture	*	0
13	**(NET) Social Science/Law (VOL.)**	**11**	**17**
6	Social sciences (unspecified/other)	5	6
4	Psychology/Behavioral science	4	5
2	Law	1	4
1	Social work/Human services	1	2
*	Anthropology	*	0
12	**(NET) Liberal Arts (VOL.)**	**12**	**12**
3	Liberal arts/Humanities/General studies	4	*
3	English/Literature	3	4
2	History	1	4
1	Art	2	1
1	Journalism	1	1
1	Philosophy/Religion/Theology	*	1
1	Music	1	*
*	Architecture	*	1
*	Foreign languages	*	*
12	**(NET) Engineering (VOL.)**	**13**	**8**
6	Engineering/drafting	6	4
5	Computer and information sciences	5	3
1	Mathematics/Statistics	1	1
11	**(NET) Vocational (VOL.)**	**13**	**5**
8	Vocational/Technical	10	4
3	Police and protective services/Criminal justice	4	1
10	**Education (VOL.)**	**8**	**17**
5	Other **(VOL.)**	3	10
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	1	0
(n=1,096)		(n=779)	(n=317)

[21] Figures add to more than 100% because total first and second responses showing.

ASK ALL:

Q.20 How useful was your **[IF EDUC=1-4:** education; **IF EDUC= 5,6:** college education; **IF EDUC=7,8:** graduate school education**]** in preparing you for a job or career? Would you say very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not useful at all?

Total	
47	Very useful
34	Somewhat useful
7	Not too useful
9	Not at all useful
1	Can't say, still in graduate school/college **(VOL.)**
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK IF ANY GRAD SCHOOL (EDUC=7,8): [n=292]

Q.21 And how useful was your undergraduate college education in preparing you for a job or career? Would you say very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not useful at all?

55	Very useful
35	Somewhat useful
7	Not too useful
1	Not at all useful
1	Can't say, still in graduate school **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK IF GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE (EDUC 5,6,7,8): [n=982]

Q.22 Still thinking back to when you were **(IF EDUC=5,6:** a college student; **IF EDUC=7,8:** an undergraduate college student), do you think any of the following things would have better prepared you to get the kind of job you wanted, or not? First/Next, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [REPEAT IF NECESSARY:** Do you think this would have better prepared you to get the kind of job you wanted, or not?

a. Choosing a different major

31	Yes
66	No
2	Maybe **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

b. Gaining more work experience

52	Yes
45	No
2	Maybe **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

c. Starting to look for work sooner

30	Yes
65	No
1	Maybe **(VOL.)**
3	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

▪

d. **Studying harder**

40	Yes
57	No
1	Maybe **(VOL.)**
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

QUESTIONS 23-24 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE; NO QUESTIONS 25-27; QUESTIONS E3-E3a, D1-D4, E4-E5 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED; QUESTION E6 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK IF EMPLOYED (E3=1,2): [n=1,301]
Q.28 In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get ahead in your job or career, OR do you need more education and training?

Oct 2013		Dec 2011	June 2006
59	Have necessary education and training	59	57
39	Need more	40	42
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	2	1

ASK IF NOT EMPLOYED AND NOT RETIRED (E3=3,4,9): [n=449]
Q.29 In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get the kind of job you want, or do you need more education and training?

Oct 2013	
42	Have necessary education and training
51	Need more
7	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

QUESTIONS 30-31, E7 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED; NO QUESTIONS 32-33

ASK IF EMPLOYED (E3=1,2): [n=1,301]
Q.34 Do you think of your current job as a career, a stepping stone to a career, or do you think of it as just a job to get you by?

Total		Men	Women
50	A career	53	46
17	A stepping stone to a career	16	17
32	Just a job to get you by	30	36
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	1	1
		(n=777)	(n=524)

Trends:

	A career	A stepping stone to a career	Just a job to get you by	DK/Ref. (VOL.)
Oct 2013	50	17	32	1
Dec 2011	44	19	35	2
Jan 2010	51	18	29	2

ASK IF EMPLOYED (E3=1,2): [n=1,301]
Q.35 Still thinking about your current job, would you say you have more qualifications than the job requires, the right amount of qualifications, or only some of the qualifications the job requires?

Oct 2013		March 2011	May 2010[22]
38	More	40	41
52	Right amount	50	51
9	Only some	9	7
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	1	2

[22] In May 2010, the question read "Would you say you have more qualifications than the job requires, the right amount of qualifications that the job requires or only some of the qualifications the job requires?"

ASK IF EMPLOYED (E3=1,2): [n=1,301]
Q.36 Does your current job require a college degree, or not?

Oct 2013		March 2011
31	Yes	28
68	No	71
*	Job requires an associate's degree **(VOL.)**	*
*	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	*

QUESTION 37 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE; NO QUESTION 38-39

ASK IF COLLEGE GRADUATE AND CURRENTLY EMPLOYED (EDUC=5,6,7,8 AND E3=1,2): [n=742]
Q.40 How closely related is your current job to the field or major you received your (**IF EDUC=5,6,7:** college; **IF EDUC=8:** graduate) degree in? **[READ]**

46	Very closely
19	Somewhat closely
10	Not very closely
25	Not at all related
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

IF JOB NOT VERY CLOSELY/NOT AT ALL RELATED TO COLEGE MAJOR (Q.40=3,4), ASK: [n=236]
Q.41 What would you say is the main reason you are not currently working in a job that is more closely related to field you majored in? **(OPEN-END; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES)**

Total[23]	
23	No job available in field/Bad economy **(VOL.)**
21	Wanted a change/Didn't like the work/Wasn't for me **(VOL.)**
17	Happy with current job/Job security **(VOL.)**
11	Financial reasons/Better pay **(VOL.)**
10	Lacked experience/Not qualified **(VOL.)**
8	Circumstances/Moved/Had children/Flexible hours **(VOL.)**
8	Major was very general/Major was useless **(VOL.)**
10	Other (includes retired, still in school) **(VOL.)**
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

MARITAL, LWP NOT SHOWN; QUESTION M2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED; NO QUESTION 42; QUESTIONS 43-52 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED; NO QUESTION 53; KIDS1, KIDS2, KIDSAGE NOT SHOWN; KIDS3, QUESTIONS 54-58 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED; OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS NOT SHOWN

[23] Figures add to more than 100% because total first, second and third responses showing.

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GREAT PRINCIPALS AT SCALE:

CREATING DISTRICT CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE ALL PRINCIPALS TO BE EFFECTIVE

JUNE 2014

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THE BUSH INSTITUTE AT THE GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

New Leaders

WHO WE ARE

NEW LEADERS

New Leaders is a national nonprofit that develops transformational school leaders and designs effective leadership policies and practices for school systems across the country. Since 2001, New Leaders has trained over 1,000 school leaders, impacting more than 300,000 students in 12 urban areas across the country. New Leaders has developed expertise in evaluating principal preparation programs and has conducted its own robust longitudinal study of its program quality and the impact of its graduates on student outcomes. Additionally, in partnership with RAND, New Leaders is studying the conditions and context that enable transformational leaders to succeed and have the greatest impact on student achievement. The New Leaders' policy and evaluation team captures and spreads knowledge to improve the context in which school leaders operate.

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The George W. Bush Presidential Center is home to the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum and the George W. Bush Institute. President and Mrs. Bush founded the Bush Institute to continue their policy work expanding freedom at home and around the globe.

Rooted in President and Mrs. Bush's belief that "excellent schools must first have excellent leaders," the Bush Institute developed the Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL) to dramatically improve the way our Nation's principals are prepared and supported. AREL is the Bush Institute's flagship program which signifies that school leaders are critical in the lives of our children. Because every child deserves an excellent principal, AREL shapes its ideas and actions around its mission of ensuring there is an effective principal, able to significantly advance student achievement, at the helm of every school.

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INTRODUCTION

Principals matter. Research demonstrating the importance of principals for student learning has grown substantially over the last decade.[1] On average, a principal accounts for 25 percent of a school's total impact on student achievement—significant for a single individual.[2] Indeed, the difference between having an average and an above-average principal can impact school-level student achievement by as much as 20 percentage points.[3] Principals can have a stronger effect on all students in a school than teachers do because teachers affect only their particular students.[4] Researchers have also documented the actions and practices that differentiate the most effective principals, in particular, the way that they develop great teachers and create school culture and working conditions that keep great teachers in the field.[5] The ambitious education reform initiatives our nation has undertaken over the past few years heighten the imperative for leaders who can successfully lead this work. Simply put, to turn around low-performing schools, ensure effective teaching in every classroom, and educate all children to college and career-ready standards, we need to ensure that there is an effective principal in every school.[6]

The difference between having an average and an above-average school principal can impact student achievement by as much as 20 percentage points.

A superhero strategy is not scalable. Truly exceptional and often heroic leaders can and do succeed in even the most challenging circumstances found in some districts.[7] These "superhero principals"—preternaturally driven leaders who buck bureaucracies, work around the clock, and circumvent endless barriers to create oases of high performance even if they are in the midst of dysfunctional systems—have become something of a motif in our national education narrative. However, while these leaders deserve tremendous praise, their prominence is actually a reflection of systemic failure rather than success. There are simply not enough superheroes for all the schools and students who need them. Yet, the "superhero principal" narrative has encouraged some districts and policymakers to pin their hopes on such leaders, churning through principals while wondering why they cannot find enough people capable of delivering superhuman results in untenable contexts. Given the superhero jobs these leaders have to do, they often burn out quickly and leave the very schools and districts that need their long-term commitment and sustained work.[8]

There are simply not enough superheroes for all the schools and students who need them.

Current conditions often hinder principal success. Over the past 13 years of developing and supporting school leaders, the New Leaders team has seen firsthand the impact that system conditions can have on leader success. Excellent school systems help propel strong leaders to greater levels of success and student achievement—and enable this effectiveness across their districts.

Sometimes, however, districts undermine leaders' efforts. Currently, too many school systems require principals to perform a multitude of tasks misaligned with the core school-based practices and actions that differentiate the most effective principals. In interviews, principals spoke of having to navigate complex bureaucratic approval processes for basic services like schoolwide Internet access, attend district-mandated meetings on topics tangential to their core jobs, make repeated inquiries to human resource departments to ensure new teachers are added to the payroll, and track down procurement departments to get paper and light bulbs replenished. Such tasks distract principals from the core work that has a greater connection to student achievement. As a result, principals are often unable to focus on the leadership activities that matter, such as coaching teachers, evaluating student data, and creating a culture and climate of success within their buildings.

1 Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson (2010); Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin (2012); The Wallace Foundation (2012).
2 Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004); Louis et al. (2010).
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4 Branch, et al. (2012).
5 New Leaders (2012).
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7 New Leaders, 2009. [School case study]. Unpublished raw data.
8 Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb (2011); Horng, Kalogrides, & Loeb, (2009); Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng (2010).

In addition, some school systems have practices and cultural norms that inadvertently hinder school leader success. Rather than working as a team to achieve shared goals for students, mistrust divides central office staff and school-level leaders.[9] In such circumstances, central office staff sees their roles as monitoring compliance rather than supporting school-level leaders.[10] Instead of providing tools and support, central office systems become obstacles that make it more difficult for principals to accomplish their goals.[11] Even in the many districts with positive school-central office relationships, these interactions are sometimes characterized by bureaucratic formality.

Creating the conditions for school leader success requires both more effective district systems to support effective leadership practice and a radically different district culture in which district staff and school leaders support one another, hold themselves and one another accountable, and work together as partners to reach shared student achievement goals. There must be a shift away from a compliance-based "gotcha" culture to a developmental culture where school leaders are encouraged to take risks and are supported in their efforts to achieve shared district and school-level goals of student achievement progress. While these are the kinds of cultures on which high-performance results are built, they are not yet the norm in many school systems.

Ensuring that all of our children succeed necessitates having strong school leadership in every school, which in turn means that we need to stop holding out for—or burning through—superheros.

Many school systems need to update their practices. Ensuring that all of our children succeed necessitates having strong school leadership in every school,[12] which in turn means that we need to stop holding out for—or burning through—superheroes. Instead, we need to start providing the tools and support that enable good principals to replicate the results that only a few superheroes currently produce. Effective districts and charter management organizations provide conditions that enable good leaders—not heroes—to produce exceptional results because school systems provide the right circumstances to support their success.

Although researchers have documented that well-trained principals are more effective when they are provided with the working conditions necessary for success,[13] the literature on this topic is inconsistent in the descriptions of the dimensions of principals' working conditions that impact their ability to improve student achievement. Most studies and frameworks have focused on a few specific conditions that matter, but have not identified and prioritized a comprehensive set of conditions that could enable good principals to succeed. In the absence of a clear, consistent voice as to which particular working conditions really do matter or how to integrate these critical conditions, states and districts are unable to take the important next steps of designing and executing strategies, policies, and practices that create the conditions necessary for good leaders to succeed.

9 Daly, Der-Martirosian, Ong-Dean, Park, & Wishard-Guerra (2011).
10 Honig (2012).
11 Honig (2012).
12 Quality of leadership is particularly important in low-performing schools where school improvement does not occur without strong leadership (Bryk et al., 2010; Louis et al., 2010; Aladjem et al., 2010).
13 Augustine et al. (2009); Southern Regional Education Board (2009).

New Leaders and the Bush Institute's Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL) launched the Conditions for Effective Leadership Project and partnered with leading researchers and practitioners to generate a comprehensive and research-based framework outlining the conditions necessary for transformational school leaders to succeed. The project used a combination of literature review, empirical data collection, and expert convenings to build consensus and bundle the disparate ideas into a single framework that is accessible to school system leaders. In addition to this framework, the project also created the *Great Principals at Scale Toolkit*. This is a set of tools aimed at helping school system leaders access and improve their leadership conditions to scale the number of effective principals able to impact student achievement.

In the framework presented in this report, school system conditions that enable principals to be successful are arranged into four key strands:

- *Alignment among goals, strategies, structures, and resources*
  so that the work of every staff member in the district is supporting system-wide goals focused on increasing student achievement;

- *Culture of collective responsibility, balanced autonomy, and continuous learning and improvement*
  that allows central office and school leaders to work collaboratively towards goals;

- *Effective management and support for principals*
  with on-going opportunities for development and feedback—and most notably, roles and responsibilities that are doable; and

- *Systems and policies to effectively manage talent at the school-level*
  giving principals the authority and support to appropriately staff teaching and leadership roles in ways that meet school needs.

Unfortunately, our expert advisors agree that these conditions typically do not exist in most school systems (including school districts and charter management organizations). Furthermore, creating them will not simply be a matter of new policies and programs—it will require a sea change in how most school systems operate. Moreover, the changes will require a well-functioning governance system—be that a school board or mayor—that prioritizes students' learning and needs, and has the stability to sustain commitment to a plan over time.

These conditions are in no way substitutes for the essential training and competencies that all leaders should have when they become principals—rather they are the conditions that enable a well-prepared principal to fully utilize key skills and competencies to improve children's learning.

This final report is a synthesis of input from research, experts, and stakeholders. The following section provides an overview of the four strands. The overview is followed by in-depth descriptions of the conditions within each strand, including explanations for why these conditions matter. We discuss the ways in which current practice in many school systems diverges from these conditions, and offer examples of school systems that have been successful in implementing the conditions effectively. Specific tools and recommendations are provided on how school systems can move toward more fully implementing the conditions for success.

Conditions need to change because the principal's role has changed.

The changing economy, more rigorous standards, and increased accountability have placed new demands on our students, schools, and leaders. Enabling all of our students to meet these increased demands has led the field to redefine the principal's role. A growing body of research on school leadership—including more than 70 studies commissioned by The Wallace Foundation—has documented the critical role that principals play in leading improvements in teaching and learning.[i] Effective school systems allow school leaders to focus on the specific set of leadership activities that research shows are related to improved student achievement:[ii]

• Developing a shared vision for high achievement and college and career readiness for all students: Effective principals establish a school-wide vision for high student achievement and college and career readiness. They inspire all staff, students, and families to believe that all students can achieve at high levels academically and it is everyone's responsibility in the school to enact the vision.

• Creating a culture that values all students and provides a supportive environment for learning and family engagement: Effective principals create a supportive environment that sets high expectations for all students and adults. To support these expectations, principals implement a consistent code of conduct aligned with school values; maintain a supportive, safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment; and implement schoolwide routines to maximize instructional time and ensure seamless transitions. They develop students' and adults' understandings of different cultural backgrounds and a commitment to equity by publicly modeling beliefs in the potential of every student to achieve at high levels. They engage families and communities as partners to enhance student achievement and success.

• Improving teaching and learning: Effective principals ensure that the curricula and instruction are aligned to standards for college and career readiness. They track student-level data to drive continuous improvement by using multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data to assess and monitor instruction. They build their staff's capacity to analyze and use data, modify their instruction based on the data, and to develop and implement standards-based lessons and unit plans that will prepare students for year-end goals.

• Managing and developing talent: Research shows that one critical way that principals impact student learning is by hiring, placing, developing, retaining, and managing talent to improve overall teacher effectiveness in the schools they lead. Effective principals recruit and select effective teachers; help teachers to improve their practice through observation, coaching, and other professional learning opportunities; dismiss underperforming teachers who do not improve with support; and retain effective teachers by providing them growth or leadership opportunities. A key component of this work is cultivating teachers' leadership capacity and developing highly effective leadership teams to whom principals can delegate and distribute instructional and other leadership roles to allow the principal to focus on the most critical tasks that only the principal can do.

• Strategically planning, implementing, and monitoring systems and resources in support of the vision: Effective principals set school-wide priorities and goals and allocate resources—including budget, staff, and time—to align those priorities. They set the clear strategies and implementation plans and processes to ensure that all other elements of their work (such as curriculum alignment, data use, talent management, school culture, school scheduling, and resource allocation) are aligned to and support the vision. They create the management and system processes to help them oversee and lead the execution of the strategy and continually check in on the process. They relentlessly pursue opportunities to access additional resources that align to strategic priorities.

Implementing these activities is not an easy job. It is an incredibly challenging one that requires new skills (such as strong knowledge of instruction and ability to coach and lead adults) as well as substantial preparation and commitment. But it is one that a non-superhero can do, with the right preparation and support, and under the right conditions.

i See The Wallace Foundation (2013) for a summary. See http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership for links to individual studies.

ii New Leaders, (2011); The Wallace Foundation, 2013; Young & Mawhinney, Eds. (2012).

Project Methodology: Identifying Essential Conditions for Effective Leadership

The project began with a thorough literature review of the conditions for effective leadership.[iii] We found that the existing research studies and frameworks tended to focus on one area of conditions—such as principal autonomy—and/or they tended to represent the views of one organization or group of researchers. There was a need for a clear, comprehensive summary of what conditions matter and how they matter. School system leaders also needed tools to assess and engage in the often complicated and challenging task of improving their conditions.

New Leaders and the Bush Institute convened a working group of experts—including researchers and practitioners listed at the beginning of this report—to identify, prioritize, and define conditions for effective school leaders. We provided the experts with a series of references to ground their work in evidence-based research, including an annotated review of literature on conditions, copies of seminal research studies on the topic, and a paper that New Leaders commissioned from the RAND Corporation.[iv]

The experts read the research review and, during two 2-day meetings in September and November 2012, engaged in a set of activities to identify, prioritize, and define the conditions based on the research and on their expert field experience. This group of experts then provided input on the draft of this paper. Expert researchers were asked to critique the framework with regard to its consistency with prior research. Expert practitioners were asked to contribute detailed examples that helped to clarify the conditions as well as critique the *Great Principals at Scale Toolkit* with regard to usefulness and usability. We also solicited input from a group of America Achieves Fellows consisting of 22 principals and 12 district leaders who are exemplary educators committed to improving national education policy. The fellows engaged in similar activities to prioritize and define the conditions that the expert group had identified in its first convening. Finally, several experts, including researchers, provided a final review to this paper.

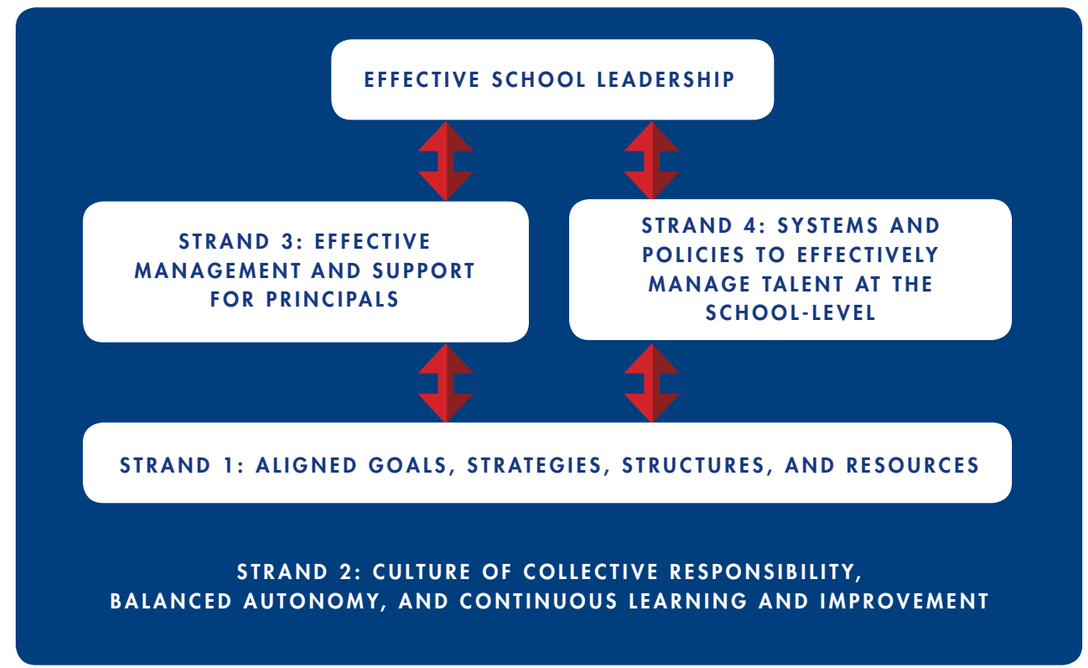
iii New Leaders unpublished annotated bibliography; contact authors to obtain a copy.
iv Ikemoto, Gates, & Hamilton (2009).

OVERVIEW: CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

This report describes the set of conditions that effective school systems need to implement to enable principals to be successful. Effective systems include the following:

- *Strand 1:* Alignment among goals, strategies, structures, and resources, so that the work of every staff member in the district is supporting system-wide goals focused on increasing student achievement;
- *Strand 2:* Culture of collective responsibility, balanced autonomy, and continuous learning and improvement;
- *Strand 3:* Effective management and support for principals with on-going opportunities for development and feedback—and most notably, roles and responsibilities that are feasible; and
- *Strand 4:* Systems and policies to effectively manage talent at the school-level, giving principals the authority to implement staffing models that meet school needs and to appropriately staff teaching and leadership positions.

Figure 1: The Effective Leadership Conditions Framework



Strand 1: Alignment Among Goals, Strategies, Structures, and Resources

Principals can be more effective when their district has a strategic plan that identifies and aligns goals, strategies, structures, and resources. First, the strategic plan has set up ambitious goals for all students that create a sense of urgency for realizing high levels of student achievement necessary for success in college and in their careers. The strategic plan identifies the few focused strategies that each school and district department will use and sustain to achieve these goals. The plan also specifies the organizational structures, staffing models, and budget plans that are aligned to the goals and strategies. Finally, the plan identifies a system for monitoring progress that informs improvement. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: Alignment among elements of the strategic plan enables principals to actualize the plan at the school-level.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: Alignment among elements of the strategic plan enables principals to actualize the plan at the school-level.

Strand 2: Culture of Collective Responsibility, Balanced Autonomy, and Continuous Learning and Improvement

Principals can be more effective when there is a district-wide culture of joint responsibility for achieving shared student outcome goals. In effective districts, central office staff works in the service of schools and are responsible for providing quality services and developing the capacities of school leaders to implement their improvement plans.[14] Expectations, norms, and formal accountability structures hold central office staff accountable for supporting schools in addressing the challenges that arise, including coordinating with other central office departments to marshal the support that schools need.[15] At the same time, schools and principals support district-wide priorities, goals, and initiatives, and demonstrate belief in the district vision. Responsibilities for successes and failures are co-owned. All players share a feeling of "we're in this together, trying to achieve the same goals."

In a culture of collective responsibility, there is balanced autonomy. School leaders are trusted by the central office with discretion to implement policies and initiatives in ways that meet student needs without compromising their intent and essential components—ensuring successful implementation. In the spirit of a partnership culture, school leaders are safe in telling central office staff—including their managers—when policies and initiatives need more support or are not working. When necessary to meet the needs of a particular school population, central office staff and school leaders collaborate to adapt policies or initiatives as needed to best serve students. In other cases, when similar feedback is received across multiple schools, the central office uses the feedback to improve the policy or initiative. The central office staff also determines how the feedback will be utilized. As such, the district is a learning organization that actively seeks to understand the quality and impact of its reform initiatives, soliciting feedback to improve its approach.

Principals are more effective when central office staff and school leaders work together to differentiate district policies and improve them over time.

14 Southern Regional Education Board (2010).
15 Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton (2010).

Strand 3: Effective Management and Support for Principals

Principals can be more effective when districts implement holistic performance management systems that systematically develop, support, motivate, and retain quality leadership talent. Effective performance management of principals is not simply a matter of creating new principal evaluation systems—although evaluations designed to support principal development are a critical component of a performance management system. Principals need to be managed in ways that facilitate on-going learning and improve their practice over time. Effective systems provide principals with on-going supervision and support from highly skilled principal managers who partner with principals to improve student achievement, provide support and a sounding board, and who work to remove barriers to principal success. As one principal from Denver, Colorado, reflected, "My [principal] manager helps me define what the real work is and then helps me improve at doing the work."[16] Principal managers redefine the role of principals to make it more feasible and to retain principals in their role. This approach necessitates staffing principal manager positions with individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and caseloads that enable them to effectively hire, develop, and evaluate principals.

"My manager helps me define what the real work is and then helps me improve at doing the work," a principal from Denver, Colorado.

Strand 4: Systems and Policies to Effectively Manage Talent at the School-Level

Principals can be more effective when they have systems and policies in place to manage talent in the schools they lead. According to our expert researcher and practitioner work group, the most important, yet most commonly lacking condition for principal effectiveness is the authority of principals to create appropriate staffing models for their school, including the ability to hire, promote, and dismiss teachers, school leaders, and other school-based staff. Districts enable principal effectiveness when they eliminate barriers to principals' authority and create systems and tools, such as effective human resource and teacher performance management systems, as well as effective evaluation systems that enable principals to effectively manage their teachers and school staff. Supportive districts provide teachers with access to high-quality professional learning opportunities that align to school and district goals and with teachers' specific needs and areas for growth. They also redesign human resource departments to serve as strategic partners, working to identify and recruit talent and create a district-wide pipeline of effective teachers, teacher leaders, and other leadership personnel.

The following sections of the report review each of these strands of conditions in detail. Each section includes descriptions of how the conditions are relevant to leadership effectiveness, what effective districts do to support leaders, and what happens when they do not put these conditions in place. The appendices include a summary chart of the conditions and indicators. Additionally, accompanying this report is the *Great Principals at Scale Toolkit*, which includes a set of tools to support school systems in diagnosing and improving their leadership conditions.

According to our expert work group, the most important and most commonly lacking condition for principal effectiveness is the authority of principals to create appropriate staffing models for their school, including the ability to hire, promote, and dismiss teachers, school leaders, and other school-based staff.

16 New Leaders, 2012. [Focus group with America Achieves Fellows]. Unpublished raw data.

STRAND 1: ALIGNMENT AMONG GOALS, STRATEGIES, STRUCTURES, AND RESOURCES

Effective school leaders set the school vision. They set goals, identify strategies, and allocate resources—including budget, staff, and time—to align to priorities and build an understanding of these goals with their staff and community. This school-level improvement planning is more effective when it is embedded in and aligned to a high-quality strategic planning process at the school system (i.e., district or charter management organization) level.

> The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: Alignment among elements of the strategic plan enables principals to actualize the plan at the school-level.

A high-quality district strategic plan identifies clear and ambitious goals and strategies and resources that are aligned to the goals. The goals create a sense of urgency to attain the high levels of student achievement necessary for success in college and careers. This includes goals for narrowing the achievement gap between sub-groups of students and ensuring that students who were behind get caught up. The strategic plan also identifies the priority strategies that the district will use and sustain to achieve its goals. This includes specifying goals and strategies for each school and district department and linking those school and department-level goals to the broader organizational goals. The plan also specifies organizational structures, staffing models, and budget plans that are aligned to the goals and strategies. At the central office level, resources (including staffing) are targeted towards areas of strategic priority. At the school-level, resources are allocated equitably, providing greater resources to address student populations with greater need. Finally, the plan identifies a system for monitoring progress and informing improvement. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: Alignment among elements of the strategic plan enables principals to actualize the plan at the school-level.

Historically, the impact of the district strategic plans has been limited due to a number of factors: A lack of continuity across school years, uneven implementation, and plans that attempt to address too many priorities simultaneously.[17] Strategic plans have been abandoned when school boards with different visions or philosophies are elected or when superintendents transition. Inadequate planning and poor implementation have prevented strategies, staffing, organizational models, and resources from supporting school improvements. The resulting efforts leave school leaders with the responsibility of navigating mandates and seemingly uncoordinated initiatives in order to be able to create their school-based plans and create coherence for their staff. These challenges unintentionally hinder school leaders' effectiveness by undermining the urgency for rigor and improvement, creating incoherence, and requiring the school to implement too many initiatives at the same time. Districts can alleviate this situation by engaging in high-quality improvement planning that includes and aligns all of the following:

- *Strategic Plan:* A strategic plan that identifies clear and ambitious goals as well as strategies for achieving those goals;
- *Organizational Structures:* Organizational structures and staffing aligned to the strategic plan;
- *Budget Alignment:* Organizational budget that is aligned to the strategic plan;
- *Systems and Resources for School Support:* Curricula and data that are aligned to the strategic plan and support its implementation; and
- *Goal Monitoring:* Systems for monitoring progress toward the goals and expectations that allow the system to make real-time adjustments to strategies as needed.

The power in improvement planning is in the alignment among all of these elements and in their consistent implementation of the elements.

17 Ikemoto et al. (2009).

Strategic Plan

District has a strategic plan that identifies clear and ambitious goals as well as strategies for achieving the goals. *Effective districts begin their strategic planning process by setting goals for improving overall student achievement and for ensuring that every subgroup is achieving at high levels.* A frequently referenced 2011 study funded by The Wallace Foundation found a statistically significant relationship between the existence of a district-wide shared vision, mission, and goals for students and student outcomes.[18] This finding is particularly striking because it is generally very difficult for researchers to find statistically significant relationships between district-level actions and student achievement. This same study found that all high-performing districts developed and effectively communicated a comprehensive vision and set of rigorous goals for student learning—the clarity of the vision and goals allowed principals and central office staff to implement an aligned strategic plan.

These goals should be developed with stakeholder involvement and input. They should be informed by the school data and perspectives and opinions of school leaders. Research has found that effective districts develop their improvement plans in very close partnership with their school leaders.[19] Some of the most successful districts "build up" their plans from their schools' improvement plans. Close involvement of schools also helps to improve buy-in and implementation of the district plan.

Without a clear mandate from the district for improved performance that closes achievement gaps and prepares all students for college and career success, it becomes more difficult for principals to establish a culture of high expectations at the school-level. RAND conducted a series of case studies that documented the challenges faced by several New Leaders' trained principals in building momentum for change when district goals did not support their vision of raising all students to proficiency.[20] In one school, for example, only 60 percent of students achieved grade-level proficiency, yet the school performed well relative to other more troubled schools in the district. As a result, the staff had become accustomed to viewing the school as a model of success for other schools to emulate rather than a school that had significant work to do to raise all its students to standards commensurate with college and career readiness. Perceptions—reinforced by the district—that this level of achievement was "good enough" hindered the principal's ability to get the teachers and staff to buy-in and implement the meaningful changes needed for significant increases in student achievement.

Once goals are set, *district improvement plans should identify the critical few strategies that are collectively likely to have the highest impact.* In doing so, they establish clear priorities to guide resourcing and implementation decisions. For example, the District of Columbia Public Schools prioritized improving teacher talent across the district by implementing a robust teacher evaluation system. Because the goal was clear and the evaluation system was prioritized, the resources required to implement the system were protected despite multiple budget cuts. These tough choices about priorities stand in stark contrast to many district improvement plans that include a laundry list of initiatives that compete with each other for the time and attention required for successful implementation at the school and classroom-level. Principals in such districts may attempt to implement their districts' improvement strategies, but they can become stretched so thin that they are not implementing anything well. For example, one New Leaders' principal listed the numerous district-mandated programs aimed at students who were off track for graduation that were being concurrently implemented in his building, including a twilight program, night school, and an evening credit recovery program. However, the principal disclosed that most of these programs were poorly implemented and had limited efficacy: "The district has mandated them but has not provided the resources and funding to implement them effectively."[21]

18 Leithwood (2011).
19 Leithwood (2013).
20 Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto (2012).
21 New Leaders, 2010. [School case study]. Unpublished raw data.

Effective improvement strategies are intentionally and thoughtfully communicated to maximize the likelihood of successful implementation. Effective districts realize that initiatives are more likely to succeed if they are shared with stakeholders well in advance of roll out. Once plans for a new strategy are decided, they create an implementation timeline and communication plan that will enable and support high-quality roll-out. They invest time in creating district-wide readiness by including an information-sharing phase in their implementation timelines. They clearly articulate the rationale for new initiatives and indicate how they will work with or replace other initiatives in service of the district goals.

Too often, central offices operate in triage mode—looking for a solution only when crisis strikes. As a result, information is shared "just-in-time" and new initiatives are introduced at the last minute. This puts schools in the difficult position of trying to adapt to new initiatives while being expected to implement them as well. School leaders are further disadvantaged when shifts in strategies are made without clear communication that explains the goal and rationale for the shift. For example, districts sometimes adopt a new curriculum just days before the start of school or after the start of school when there is no time left to introduce or prepare teachers for the new body of work.[22] This problem is exacerbated when several initiatives are rolled out all at once.

Finally, strategic plans *ensure stability and consistency of focus over time,* even while allowing for adaptation of specific strategies in response to feedback and evidence of their efficacy. The district should stick to its long-term strategy—in spite of possible leadership changes—to provide schools with the time and focus to implement strategies effectively. In a RAND survey of principals, over half of the principals reported that "district policies and priorities change frequently" and their reports of this problem correlated with weaker student achievement results.[23]

Too often, radical swings in priorities occur when there is a change in district or school board leadership. Regardless of the cause, when priorities change, school leaders often do not have the time or opportunity to reconfigure resources, work, and structures to align to the new initiatives. The situation becomes even more frustrating when district leaders decide to change direction abruptly, abandoning initiatives to focus on new priorities just as educators become familiar with them. To prevent abrupt shifts in strategy and maintain greater continuity, district leaders will need to build deep commitment to the strategic plan within and beyond school board members. They need to build public awareness and garner support from other stakeholders, such as parents and guardians, community members, business members, and philanthropists.

Organizational Structures

Organizational structures and staffing are aligned to the strategic plan. Just as important as establishing goals and strategies, *effective district improvement plans include an organizational structure aligned to the priorities in the plan.* Effective districts thoughtfully review the function of each department to ascertain if current teams and divisions are aligned to and support the strategic plan. When there is not alignment, effective districts shift personnel and reconfigure structures to match the new priorities. To make this happen, districts may need to build the skills and capacity of their current staff members or make changes if a new strategy or body of work requires a different skill set.

Too often, district organizational structures resemble a house that is built one room at a time without a total house plan, and in this case, silos and legacy positions are created with no clear connection to one another or alignment with the existing district goals and strategy. Districts add departments or functions on top of existing structures, but rarely make tough choices to deprioritize or discontinue existing functions and reorganize teams to fit the new strategic work streams. One large district, for example, continued to support both a centralized professional development team and professional development teams in each of the district's nine regions.[24] The teams did not coordinate content or timing with one another, yet both expected principals and their staff members to attend out-of-school day-long trainings. Outdated structures and redundancies that school leaders have to wade through are inefficient and distract from the essential work of a school leader.

22 Ikemoto (2007).
23 Ikemoto et al. (2009).
24 New Leaders, 2011. [School case study]. Unpublished raw data.

Budget Alignment

Organizational budget is aligned to the strategic plan. A 2011 study examining the relationship between district conditions and student outcomes found that high-performing systems were able to *align resource allocations—including personnel resources—to their strategic priorities.*[25] Resource alignment sometimes means making an unpopular decision to discontinue funding for a long-standing program that is no longer aligned to district priorities or a politically challenging decision to distribute funds equitably (according to need) rather than equally across schools. For example, one North Carolina school district has adopted a "sunset clause" that requires programs and services to be reviewed on a three-year cycle and a determination made about whether to reduce, eliminate, or expand them.[26]

Systems and Resources for School Support

Curricula and data are aligned to the strategic plan and support its implementation. Effective principals ensure that the *curricula and instruction are aligned to standards for college and career-readiness.* They track student-level data to drive continuous improvement by using multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data to assess and monitor student progress. They build their staff's capacity to analyze and use data, implement standards-based lessons and unit plans that will prepare students for year-end goals, and modify their instruction based on the data to ensure that students are making progress.

To effectively execute these instructional leadership practices, principals need access to high-quality tools and systems, including curriculum, assessments, and student data systems. The move by 44 states and the District of Columbia to implement Common Core State Standards creates a renewed need for districts and states to provide updated tools. Two types of systems and tools are particularly critical: (a) high-quality curriculum and assessments aligned to college and career-ready standards, and (b) data systems that support data-driven instruction and tracking progress toward school goals. High-quality district-provided tools and content have been found to have a strong relationship with principals spending time on instructional leadership practices, particularly monitoring classroom instruction and engaging with teachers outside the classroom in order to improve instruction.[27]

When districts provide high-quality curriculum and assessments, they can ensure that curricula and instructional materials are horizontally and vertically aligned across the district, providing continuity of experience and learning when children move between schools within the district or advance from grade-to-grade. Common assessments also allow the district to recognize which teachers and schools are having success with sub-groups of students who have traditionally under-performed; common assessments making it possible to learn from these successes and to share their practices with other teachers and schools that have not yet succeeded in supporting similar populations.

The development of quality district curriculum also reduces redundancy of efforts by every school and allows for a central skilled team to be dedicated to this work. With aligned, high-quality content in place, school leaders can focus their time on supporting teachers in effectively implementing the curriculum instead of creating it. In the absence of such tools and resources, instructional leaders must focus valuable time and resources to create them in-house. For example, when districts do not provide curriculum and assessments aligned to state standards, many principals have found themselves leading teams of teachers in writing or adapting content or interim assessments. Developing content can require a large amount of time which reduces the leader's ability to focus on successful implementation of the curriculum and strong instructional practices across classrooms.

Research also identifies robust district data systems as a key condition for effective school leadership.[28] Timely and reliable access to student, classroom, and school-level data enable principals to effectively analyze data to improve instruction. Central offices can support effective use of data by investing in data infrastructure, and new forms of data and evidence

25 Leithwood (2011).
26 Hansen, Ikemoto, Marsh, & Barney (2007).
27 Augustine et al. (2009).
28 Augustine et al. (2009); Leithwood (2011); Southern Regional Education Board (2010).

that can be used to inform improvements in teaching and learning. Most importantly, districts can develop the capacity of school-based and district staff to sort through and make meaning of large quantities of data to complete nuanced analyses.[29] In a study in which the relationship between school system conditions and effective leadership was examined in 10 states and 17 districts, the researchers found that timely access to reliable and useful data was positively related to time spent on instructional leadership practices.[30] Effective data systems also enable principals and teachers to track individual students and student subgroups; integrate and compare different types of data (such as attendance and test performance); disaggregate interim assessment data by standard, test item, classroom, and subgroup; and examine longitudinal trends over time. Such systems provide "on demand" access to a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data—not just student test scores—including data on attendance, course failure rates, and disciplinary actions.

Goal Monitoring

Districts have systems for monitoring progress toward goals and expectations. High-quality and aligned plans are meaningless unless they are implemented effectively. District monitoring of implementation and effectiveness is therefore just as important as the identification of goals and strategies. Effective districts *set clear metrics and institute systems that allow them to collect the data and information to understand whether and how effectively a strategy is being implemented*. Districts can then use that information to make improvements or change course when necessary.

One typical reason why reforms fail is because districts spend more time on design of their plans and strategies than on implementation—often failing to set-aside sufficient resources for implementation. One district, for example, implemented a new learner-centered math curriculum but failed to monitor implementation or detect that its high school teachers, who had previously been using a teacher-directed approach in their classrooms, did not have the skill set to implement the learner-centered approach that was part of the new curriculum. The initiative lacked milestone measurements that would have allowed the district to understand that a mid-course correction was necessary and make changes accordingly. As a result of the poor implementation, the new research-based strategy actually had a statistically significant negative impact on student achievement.[31]

A variety of tools exist to help districts monitor and improve implementation. The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) works with districts to develop balanced score cards to ensure alignment of goals and strategies. GLISI also provides districts with tools and protocols to continuously measure, monitor, and make course corrections to district strategies and initiatives.[32] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools adopted data tools for all levels of the school system to understand their performance and the efficacy of their work. The expectation was for a data-driven culture to be instituted system-wide, with teachers, school leaders, and central office staff reviewing diverse data regularly to monitor progress. Though most data tools were first adopted only during the 2010-2011 school year, and overall training and adoption varied across the system, by the end of that school year, the district saw gains on multiple measures of student performance.

When a well-developed strategic plan is in place, all stakeholders in the district understand the vision of success and the pathway that the system will take to move towards that vision. They also have the structures, resources, and monitoring systems to successfully implement the plan. Successful execution, however, also requires a culture of collective responsibility, balanced autonomy, and continuous improvement, as described in the following section.

29 Knapp, Copland, Honig, Plecki, & Portin (2010).
30 Augustine et al. (2009).
31 Pane, McCaffrey, Steele, Ikemoto, & Slaughter (2010).
32 Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (2012).

STRAND 2: CULTURE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, BALANCED AUTONOMY, AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Principals can be more effective when there is a district-wide culture of joint responsibility for achieving shared student outcome goals. In effective districts, central office staff and school leaders collaborate and support one another to mutually achieve success. Central office staff works in service of schools and are responsible for providing quality services and developing the capacities of school leaders to implement their improvement plans.[33] Expectations, norms, and formal accountability structures hold central office staff accountable for supporting schools in addressing challenges that arise, including coordinating with other central office departments, to marshal the support that schools need.[34] At the same time, school improvement plans should include clear expectations for schools as they are held accountable for meeting those expectations. Schools and principals support district-wide priorities, goals, and initiatives, and demonstrate belief in the district vision. Responsibilities for successes and failures are co-owned—all players share a feeling of "we're in this together, trying to achieve the same goals."

> Principals are more effective when central office staff and school leaders work together to differentiate district policies and improve them over time.

In a culture of collective responsibility, school leaders are trusted by the central office with discretion to implement policies and initiatives in ways that meet student needs while not compromising the initiative's intent or essential components.[35] This autonomy is balanced with expectations that are clearly articulated, supported, and monitored to ensure that progress is being made toward achieving them. In the spirit of a partnership culture, school leaders are safe in telling central office staff—including their managers—when policies and initiatives need more support or are not working. When necessary to meet the needs of a particular school population, central office staff and school leaders collaborate to adapt policies and initiatives as needed for that population. In other cases, when similar feedback is received across multiple schools, the central office uses the feedback to improve the policy and the manner in which it is implemented.

Therefore, the district is a learning organization that actively seeks to understand the quality and impact of its reform initiatives, soliciting varied forms of feedback with the purpose of improving its approach.[36] The culture creates a safe environment for candid, open discussion of progress and results, placing a high priority on dialogue with stakeholders. Principals, in particular, have a perspective that is highly valued and actively sought. Mechanisms exist for soliciting input from principals, teachers, and students' parents or guardians with a process for reviewing and deciding how to use the input to inform decision making and continuous improvement. In some cases, this improvement involves strengthening the implementation of current initiatives, and in other cases, it involves making significant tactical changes to address identified issues. When districts have a learning orientation, they are willing and able to do the hard work of changing systems, structures, and habits to achieve goals.

According to our expert advisors, this type of partnership culture rarely exists in most districts and it can be the most difficult condition to implement and maintain. The relationship between central office and schools is typically structured as either fully decentralized or completely centralized. In the decentralized structures, decision making is often relegated to the school-level and schools are given autonomy to make decisions about curriculum and resources that meet their needs. While this

33 Southern Regional Education Board (2010).
34 Honig et al. (2010).
35 Louis et al. (2010).
36 Honig et al. (2010).

approach often limits instances of the district "getting in the way," it also means that schools often do not have the systems, supports, and tools (as discussed in Strands 1 and 4) that enable effective and efficient school leadership. It also creates inefficient redundancy. In the centralized structures, the district retains decision making, which often brings much needed district-wide coherence—particularly in systems with high student and staff mobility. However, centralized systems often retain too much power at the top, imposing "one-size fits all" mandates on schools that disempower and preclude the principal from fully addressing the specific student population's needs.

Three conditions are present in district cultures that promote mutually supportive partnerships between schools and central office staff:

- *Collective Responsibility.* District central offices and schools function as collaborative team members working towards the same goals;
- *Balanced Autonomy.* Principals have discretion to implement policies in ways that meet the needs of their students and schools balanced with the necessary tools, support, and oversight; and
- *Continuous Improvement.* District values organizational learning and continuous improvement.

Collective Responsibility

District central offices and schools function as collaborative team members working towards the same goals. A system that truly supports effective school leadership at scale across a district is one in which *central offices and schools work together as a team in iterative processes to identify and implement strategies that meet the needs of individual schools.* Honig and colleagues stated the following in a seminal study on district reform:

> Our findings reveal that central office transformation moves beyond old debates in education about whether schools or the central office should be driving reform and show that improving teaching and learning district-wide is a systems problem—a challenge that requires the participation of both central offices and schools in leadership roles to realize such outcomes.[37]

Building and sustaining a new district culture is more complicated than implementing a specific set of policies or checking off boxes on a to-do list. It requires a practice and values shift and a day-in-day-out commitment that starts at the top and infuses all aspects of the district's practices and all team members. *District superintendents and leadership teams model a culture of partnership, shared ownership and responsibility and put in place norms and systems that embed this culture throughout the organization.* They hold all stakeholders accountable for the successes and failures of the district ensuring that schools are not the only ones held accountable for meeting district goals. They involve school leaders in the development of district strategies and ensure that all individuals in the district—including school and central office staff—understand how their work relates to district goals and feel a sense of personal responsibility to attain them. Effective districts develop networks among their schools to problem-solve together to address shared challenges.[38] They create an open, developmental culture of feedback and safety. Leaders, systems, and norms nurture the development and maintenance of this culture over time, so that it is consistent and distributed throughout the organization over personnel and other context shifts, and not dependent on individual leaders within the organization.

In a culture of collective ownership, the central office reframes the focus of its monitoring and oversight activities away from monitoring people for compliance and instead emphasizes supporting the implementation of programs and initiatives and their outcomes. To successfully make this shift, districts sometimes need to invest in professional development supports for

37 Honig et al. (2010).
38 Katz, Earl, & Jaafar (2009).

central office staff to help them gain new skills and knowledge that would allow them to understand each school's individual goals, context, and implementation challenges. Central offices have a customer service orientation to schools and district leadership holds central offices accountable for their role in supporting district goals. Top district leaders gather input from principals on the quality of central office service and support, and create action plans to address major areas for improvement. They can also set clear accountability structures and goals for central office teams that are visible to principals. For example, in Gwinnett County Public Schools, the central office team has specific responsiveness goals that are tracked and monitored.

Unfortunately, many districts—even districts that declare themselves learning organizations—have institutionalized norms and practices that reinforce a top-down compliance culture. Implementation follow-up is characterized by "gotcha" check-lists and accusations when initiatives are not implemented as intended. Implementation problems are presumed to be the fault of school-level lack of will, skill, or capacity as opposed to the fault of poorly conceived design, hasty rollout, or inadequate support. As such, the system lacks structures that allow schools to provide feedback to the central office, and instead, encourages schools to hide their efforts to address implementation challenges with adaptations or deliberate decisions not to implement faulty policies and initiatives.

Balanced Autonomy

Principals have discretion to meet the needs of their schools balanced with the necessary tools, support, and oversight. Many leadership studies have found that *school effectiveness improves when principals have autonomy over decision making.*[39] The 2009 Wallace study of 17 districts found that authority over decision making was positively related to time spent on almost all of the instructional leadership practices and was most correlated with principals' time spent on promoting staff professional development and motivating staff. It also had a positive relationship with appropriateness of time spent building a common vision, monitoring classroom instruction, and developing leadership staff.[40]

Other studies have found positive impact when autonomy initiatives focused decision-making rights on teaching and learning and provided on-going supports for building a school's capacity for implementation.[41] Effective districts have found that some centralized structures can support schools by enabling principals to focus on instruction and to fully leverage autonomies. Examples of centralized structures could include common calendars, timing for interim assessments, professional development strands deeply connected to district strategies, and curriculum. However, effective districts are strategic in deciding which practices to centralize and ensure they are part of the shared agreements and goals described in Strand 1.

Based on a six-year study that involved 180 schools in 43 districts in nine states, Louis and colleagues recommended that districts recognize the varying needs of different school contexts and avoid one-size-fits all policies.[42] As districts select the few areas for consistency and centralization, there are some areas that the research and our expert convening indicate are best made at the school-level. In particular (as discussed in Strand 4), our expert advisors and researchers agree that school-level autonomy to make staffing decisions is absolutely critical.[43] In a paper that draws lessons from the private sector, Milanowski and Kimball (2008) write, "Principals are key players at three high leverage points for building an effective faculty: teacher and leadership team hiring, the tenure decision, and professional development. Districts need to make sure their policies support sound principal decision making at these points."[44]

Despite the research-based need for school-level autonomy, principals are often required to implement practices and policies that were designed without their input, and which may not advance, or may even hinder their own school-level goals. Often, districts do not give principals clear opportunities to implement district policies in ways that make sense for their schools,

39 e.g., Adamowski, Therriault, & Caranna (2007); Augustine et al. (2009); Barber et al. (2010).
40 Augustine et al. (2009).
41 Honig & Rainey (2011).
42 Louis et al. (2010).
43 Adamowski et al. (2007).
44 Milanowski & Kimball (2008).

forcing school leaders to try to succeed in spite of, rather than in coordination with, the district's policies. When autonomies do exist, principals and central office staff are unclear about how to exercise these in practice.

In any system of significant autonomy, *effective districts provide tools, processes, and supports for principals to utilize decision-making authority effectively.*[45] Many systems have determined that autonomies should be earned based on past performance, instead effective districts give all principals autonomy and differentiate their level and types of support. These supports are particularly important and will likely be more intense for early tenure principals or those who have been identified as still developing. In Gwinnett County Public Schools, principal managers are organized as "brokers" of other central resources. They work closely with principals to identify specific supports needed from other central offices, and then they help make the request for that support, whether from curriculum and instruction or from human resources. In turn, the central office teams are accountable for timely and effective response to the needs identified by schools and principal managers. When a principal or school is brought to the superintendent as underperforming, the superintendent first asks the cabinet what supports have been provided to this leader and school, reinforcing the sense of accountability for providing school-level support. For example, as part of a broader set of district reforms, Baltimore City Schools adopted a new funding model, "Fair Student Funding," which gave resources directly to schools to control and allocate as they saw fit rather than pushing specific resources out from the central office to schools. Principals had new authority to control the use of resources to meet the needs of their schools and students, but needed support to do so effectively. To this end, the district created budget guidance resources for principals. More significantly, they created a new structure in the district, a system of networks that would support the schools and help principals with operational aspects of their work—such as budget decisions—so that principals could remain focused on instructional responsibilities. These supports were considered helpful overall, though they could be further improved by ensuring that network staff are truly responsive to the principal's needs, and by improving the availability of budgeting tools and guidance documents.

Without sufficient tools, processes, and support, autonomy can actually be detrimental to good decision making. For example, in a study of a New York City empowerment structure, which gave principals increased autonomy in a number of areas, Hemphill and Nauer found that while this empowerment structure allowed some principals to turn around failing schools, some principals—particularly new and inexperienced ones—struggled with the lack of guidance and support that accompanied increased independence.[46]

In a culture of shared ownership and responsibility, effective districts allow principals to adjust how and when strategies are implemented—including district priorities—if the principal can provide a strong rationale and data to demonstrate how their alternate proposal will serve students better. They support principals in making decisions that both meet the best interest of students and are aligned to the spirit and goals of the district. For example, a New Leaders' principal assessed that a new curriculum would overwhelm her teachers. She and her regional superintendent developed a plan to delay full adoption of the balanced literacy model for one year, while slowly introducing instructional strategies used in the new curriculum. Initially, the school began implementing the writing portion of the new district curriculum, which incorporated many of the elements that teachers would later use to teach reading, such as mini-lessons. "It was enough that you have a new principal, a new superintendent, whole system reorganization, and now you're telling them to learn a whole new way of teaching."[47] Over time, the leader was able to develop the staff through on-going support that included outside coaching, peer consultancies with effective teachers, and frequent cycles of observation and feedback, readying the faculty for full adoption of the district initiative.

Principals are best positioned to make decisions that support their students' learning and that develop the effectiveness of teachers. In a system of balanced autonomy, the central office partners with principals in a way that provides them with necessary supports and oversight to ensure that the school, teachers, and students are improving student achievement.

45 For example, according to a study by The New Teacher Project (2008), the district central office provided important tools and processes to enable schools in making good decisions when New York City decentralized hiring to schools.
46 Hemphill & Nauer (2010).
47 New Leaders, 2011. [School case study]. Unpublished raw data.

Recognizing the need to enable decentralized decision making, some districts make the mistake of providing autonomy without support or oversight. While this often enables principals to make better decisions, it can also lead to poor decisions that conflict with and undermine district-wide initiatives, and in the worst cases, hinder student growth. These processes and systems enable central office and school leaders to work together to negotiate and identify optimal solutions.

Continuous Improvement

District values organizational learning and continuous improvement. *Districts with collective responsibility actively seek to understand the quality and impact of all their reform initiatives and activities, soliciting, and analyzing varied forms of information.* Continuous learning requires district leaders to foster an environment where tough feedback can be given and used to change, adapt, or refine reform efforts. In a learning culture, stakeholders are accepted as skilled practitioners in their departments or functional areas. School leaders are recognized as experts in instruction and management, and their opinions and experience are given value and credence. Similarly, school leaders acknowledge the big picture lens that central office staff is able to see as they look across the system. This interplay of perspectives and knowledge is leveraged to strengthen initiatives and to openly address and fix reforms, structures, or initiatives that are ineffective. Over time, the system incentivizes continued authentic engagement and direct feedback by making mid-course corrections to support system-wide learning and improvement.

There is an expectation that all individuals within the community—students, teachers, and leaders at all levels—are constantly learning and growing over time. Data are collected at all levels—student, classroom, school, and district—to analyze performance and inform changes in instruction and operations approaches. Unfortunately, principals often have little to no meaningful input at any point in the decision-making process—before, during, or after implementation decisions have been made. School systems often roll out reforms but rarely perform site visits or otherwise collect data on how those reforms are working at the school and classroom-level. As a result, they are unaware when an initiative is not being implemented as intended, or when it conflicts with the needs or context of particular schools. This means that district staff is not in a position to make mid-course corrections, tailor the program more effectively, or provide the supports necessary for better implementation.

When there is a culture of collective responsibility, balanced autonomy, and continuous improvement, the school system has values and norms that allow schools and central offices to work together to implement the strategic plan, as described in Strand 1. This work is further enabled when the district provides effective management and support to the principals, as described in the next section.

STRAND 3: EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR PRINCIPALS

As described earlier in this report, the roles and responsibilities of principals have changed in response to new demands on schools to prepare all students to be successful in college and in their careers. These new roles and responsibilities require strong skills in vision setting, culture building, talent management, and instructional leadership. Effective school districts help principals implement the new and demanding responsibilities with holistic performance management systems that systematically develop, support, motivate, and retain quality leadership talent. Effective performance management of principals is not simply a matter of creating a new principal evaluation system. Although evaluations designed to support principal development and assessment are critical components of effective principal performance management, effective management also includes managing them in ways that facilitate on-going learning to improve their practice over time. These systems begin with a clear vision of effective leadership focused on the key school leadership actions that enable principals to improve student achievement. The vision is codified in standards for effective leadership that outline expectations for principal performance and what excellence looks like in the principal's role.

> "My manager helps me define what the real work is and then helps me improve at doing the work," a principal from Denver, Colorado.

Effective districts set expectations for principals' day-to-day work that are aligned to and reinforce effective leadership practices defined by the standards. By encouraging principals to focus on the things that matter, districts allow principals to use their time efficiently and they make the job feasible. The standards also form the basis for a developmental performance management cycle and are used to inform principal professional learning and to facilitate on-going conversations about practice and growth. Effective systems provide principals with ongoing supervision and support from highly-skilled principal managers who partner with principals to improve student achievement, provide support as a sounding board, and work to remove barriers to principals' success. As one principal from Denver, Colorado, reflected, "My [principal] manager helps me define what the real work is and then helps me improve at doing the work."[48] Principal managers redefine the role of principals to make the job more feasible, and thus, retain principals in their important roles to ensure student success. Principal managers map their observations to the standards and use the framework as the foundation for giving principals meaningful feedback and opportunities for development. School systems use these formative assessments to make real-time adjustment to professional learning opportunities offered so they can support improved performance and skills. Evaluations provide clear expectations and measure performance against these expectations. This approach necessitates staffing principal manager positions with individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and caseloads that enable them to effectively hire, develop, and evaluate principals. In short, designers of effective systems are thoughtful about the ways they structure, assess, develop, and support principals and have put in place the necessary systems, resources, and staffing to do this work well. These specific conditions for effective performance management include the following:

- *Principal Role Definition.* Principals' roles have been defined in a way that is feasible within resource constraints and enables leaders to make teaching and learning a priority;
- *Principal Performance.* Principal standards are research-based and the evaluation process is fair, transparent, rigorous, and aligned to the standards;
- *Professional Learning.* Principal professional learning opportunities are on-going, high-quality,and focused on principals' needs; and
- *Principal Managers.* Principal supervisors have the capacity and bandwidth to effectively manage and support principals.

48 New Leaders, 2012. [Focus group with America Achieves Fellows]. Unpublished raw data.

Principal Role Definition

Principal role has been defined in a way that is feasible within resource constraints and enables leaders to make teaching and learning a priority. Effective districts structure—or allow principals to structure—the principal role in ways that enable principals to strategically focus their time on the most important aspects of the job (such as instructional leadership) and in ways that make the job feasible and sustainable at scale—not just by a few superhero principals.

Currently, most principals do not think their job is achievable. In a New Leaders funded survey of 247 principals, RAND found that 72 percent of survey respondents agreed, "I lack the necessary resources, such as time and staff support, to accomplish all that is required to lead this school effectively." As a result, principals reported that they were spreading their time so thinly across so many roles and tasks that they found themselves not doing any of them well enough.[49] This problem can become even more acute in charter schools, where principals often lack the administrative support of a district or CMO central office. These principals have more non-instructional leadership responsibilities—such as securing and managing facilities, recruiting students and teachers, and fundraising—than principals in traditional districts.[50] Not surprisingly, many principals burn out; research suggests principal turnover of 15 to 30 percent annually in school systems nationwide.[51]

Effective districts enable principals to focus their time on the most important aspects of their job by limiting central office requests, such as how often they require principals to leave their school buildings to attend meetings and the number and burden of day-to-day requests that central offices send to principals including: paperwork requirements, requests for input on district policies, unexpected visits from district officials, and last minute data requests.[52] One district conducted an analysis of principals' email inboxes and found that principals were receiving significant numbers of disparate emails from central office every day. These requests can be particularly problematic when principals are given little time to respond because it causes them to abandon critical instructional leadership activities they are concurrently being asked to prioritize.

Districts can also allow principals to strategically focus their time by improving the effectiveness of central office functions. When central offices are responsive to school needs, as discussed in Strand 2, they are able to process requests quickly. Too often, principals find themselves spending many hours of time processing mundane requests like adding new teachers to the payroll or ordering light bulbs. Effective districts cut down time principals need to spend on mundane administrative tasks, thereby allowing them to focus on more critical leadership practices.

Districts can also encourage and enable principals to distribute leadership to other staff in the school building. When districts give principals the autonomy to determine the configuration of the leadership team, they can meet the unique needs of the school and complement their strengths. In some cases, principals may distribute some instructional leadership tasks and responsibilities to a broader leadership team, including teacher leaders. In other cases, the leader may delegate administrative and operational tasks to other staff in the school, such as a business manager or director of operations. Effective districts provide principals with structured guidance and support to help them distribute leadership in ways that make sense for their particular school. They also provide budget flexibility to enable principals to create teacher leadership roles.

Districts can also facilitate sustainable leadership roles by eliminating policies that preclude principals from utilizing teacher leaders and instructional coaches; for example from conducting teacher observations that can inform teacher evaluations. By allowing a broader set of leaders to take part in the evaluation process, districts can create significant new instructional leadership capacity at the school-level and allow teachers to be observed and receive feedback more frequently.

The National School Administration Manager Innovation Project (SAM), initially funded by The Wallace Foundation, provides a process to assist principals in evaluating how they spend their time and identifying ways to delegate administrative leadership responsibilities to other staff, enabling principals to spend an average of 27-55 more days on

49 Ikemoto et al. (2009).
50 Campbell & Gross (2008).
51 Béteille et al. (2011).
52 Jerald (2012).

instructional leadership each school year. Distributing leadership tasks to other staff also provides opportunities for teachers to grow professionally and cultivates the leadership pipeline. Some states participating in the SAM project treated the position as an official stepping-stone for future principals.[53] By allowing the leaders to customize aspects of their role based on personal expertise and school context and build a leadership team to distribute the broad range of work, the district enables the principals to be more effective, focused on the key work that only principals can do, and thus, have a more sustainable job.

Principal Performance

Principal standards are research-based and the evaluation process is fair, transparent, rigorous, and aligned to the standards. Effective school systems that improve principal effectiveness have performance management systems that are built on a shared vision of the principalship that is described through high-quality, research-based principal performance standards. These standards then drive professional development, goal setting, and evaluation processes. Standards support principal development by providing a shared language for frank conversations about principal performance and growth. They give the leader guidance on where to focus and on what activities will have the greatest impact on student outcomes. Principal managers can use these standards as a tool to develop a shared understanding of principals' roles and what effective performance looks like and a starting point for conversations about performance. When school systems lack strong standards, the district, principals, and principal managers may have different expectations and may not have aligned leadership priorities. A lack of clear and consistent expectations can hinder frank and open conversations between principals and their managers regarding how principals should prioritize time and improve their practices. This type of confusion can lead to a system where people are all working to improve student achievement but without clarity of a common vision of practice and expectations.

Effective school systems also have formal evaluation systems that are fair, transparent, and rigorous. They are grounded in research-based standards, and assessments of principals that incorporate multiple sources of evidence related to student learning, principal actions, and teacher effectiveness. In a well-designed performance management system, assessment is embedded in an ongoing cycle, where standards and assessment are worked on throughout the year, making the summative evaluation feel like a culminating checkpoint to assess progress, rather than a one-time event. Evaluations also include opportunities for professional growth and learning and inform personnel decisions, including promotion, retention, placement, and compensation.[54]

When systems are not in place to effectively evaluate leaders, there is the risk that mediocre leaders will be left in a role unchecked for several years. Without clear standards and an accompanying evaluation system, districts lose the opportunity to create clear expectations for principal practices and outcomes. These system-wide standards and evaluations enable both principals and their managers across the system to have a shared understanding of focus, practice, and expectations.

Professional Learning

Principal professional learning opportunities are on-going, high quality, and focused on principals' needs. Effective school systems provide professional learning models that are grounded in the belief that leadership skills can be developed and expanded through on-going, job-embedded opportunities for authentic practice, feedback, and follow-up.[55] It is believed that high-quality professional learning experiences simultaneously improve student learning outcomes, enhance district culture, and increase the effectiveness of individual leaders. Well-planned professional learning for principals creates direct connections between the district, the school, and the leader's goals. It focuses on building skills for adult leadership, developing and

53 Turnbull, Erikson, & Sinclair (2011).
54 For more details on effective principal evaluation systems, see New Leaders Principal Evaluation Handbook available at: http://www.newleaders.org/newsreports/publications/principal-evaluation-handbook/.
55 Jerald (2012).

maintaining effective school cultures, improving instructional practices, implementing strategic plans, and supporting change management. Additionally, it provides opportunities and space for leaders to receive detailed feedback on their practice from peers and their managers—reinforcing a culture of continuous learning and improvement district-wide. Unfortunately, district professional development for principals typically involves workshop-style meetings where one-size-fits-all content is delivered to principals who are patient and sit and listen. Although it sometimes provides opportunities for principals to describe their practices to peers, they rarely have opportunities to receive critical feedback.

When district leaders and principals develop a shared vision for how learning supports will drive improvements, they ensure that on-going learning and development remains a priority. Districts adapt topics to meet emerging needs and to course correct for structures that prove less effective in changing practices. They differentiate opportunities based on the school's context and the leader's experience, letting each leader customize their learning. For districts, this means creating a variety of overlapping structures that provide a net of support for leaders. Structures are typically developed and led by principal managers and may include one-on-one supports, communities of practice structures where similar schools and leaders learn with and from one another, and district-wide development sessions to introduce key initiatives and common practices used by all effective leaders (e.g., observation and feedback for teachers). The specific structures will vary, but the essential characteristic of effective districts is that they have intentionality in the choice of structures and topics and coordinate structures to create clear priorities and clear messages. Effective districts continually assess and improve the quality of principal support.[56]

Principal Managers

Principal supervisors have the capacity and bandwidth to effectively manage and support principals. As the research suggests, district staff who manage principals play a critical, but often overlooked, role in creating the conditions for effective leadership. Research by McKinsey and Company found that the world's best school systems build leadership capacity by focusing on the middle-tier system leaders who oversee groups of schools but not entire systems. In these systems, principal managers are not authoritarian compliance monitors but partners who work with principals to set goals and support them to overcome challenges and achieve those goals for the academic success of students. They also support principals' professional growth by managing clusters of schools to facilitate lateral learning between principals who would otherwise be isolated in their buildings, and by identifying or providing coaching or other forms of professional development linked to individual principals' needs.[57] In the United States, however, principal manager roles have traditionally focused on monitoring principals as opposed to developing them. Using principal managers to drive school improvement as they do in higher academic school performing nations will require districts to do two things: get the right people in the right positions and structure the positions so that principals can focus on the most critical tasks for success.[58] Only when both conditions are in place can principal managers effectively manage principals through the full performance management cycle of setting expectations, defining roles, providing coaching, and other support for professional growth and evaluating their performance.

Effective districts hire individuals into the principal manager role that understand and share the district's research-based vision of effective leadership, including the importance of instructional leadership, talent management, and culture building skills. Ideally, principal managers are former principals who were themselves successful in implementing these practices and strong developers of adults, enabling them to assess principal practices and provide useful feedback. However, because principal manager roles have traditionally focused on monitoring and compliance as opposed to developing principals, selection for these manager roles has not always prioritized the ability to develop or coach principals as instructional leaders. As a result, some individuals currently in these roles—whether or not they have past experience as principals—may lack instructional leadership expertise or lack the skills to coach or develop principals.

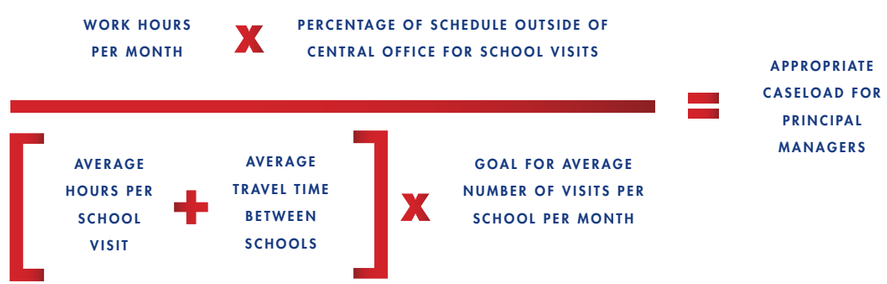
56 In addition to the tools included with this report, a toolkit for assessing principal supports is available from the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership available at: http://www.k-12leadership.org/leading-for-effective-teaching.
57 Barber, Whelan, & Clark (2010).
58 Honig (2012); Honig et al. (2010).

Effective districts are redefining the principal manager role into one that is focused on improving principals' ability to be instructional leaders. To fill this new role, districts are hiring individuals who have skills related to setting and monitoring principal goals, facilitating group networks and communities of practice, coaching, providing feedback on leadership practices, and evaluating principals as well as those who understand the critical practices of effective school leadership. In the best case, principal managers are closely matched with the leaders they are coaching based on the expertise of the former and the needs of the latter.

Greater clarity and guidance on the role of principal managers is a helpful first step, but it must be accompanied with access to opportunities for professional growth. Unfortunately, many principal manager positions are filled by individuals who were not successful principals. Even when some were excellent principals, they often were not automatically good at managing other principals. They often need to develop skills that are new and different from the skills they used as a principal. The typical principal manager has been in his or her position for two years or less—and districts rarely provide them with training and support.[59]

Effective districts assign principal managers with caseloads that are low enough that managers can effectively implement the full performance management cycle with each principal, providing enough time to check-in weekly with each principal, including time to review data with principals and observe them and provide feedback. A recent study of principal supervisors in six urban districts found that principal managers oversee an average of 24 schools each.[60] With caseloads this large and little to no support staff, principal managers typically do not have sufficient time to visit schools frequently enough to deeply understand the strengths and weaknesses of their principals and the specific needs of the schools they oversee—let alone provide individualized support for principal development and problem solving. Meredith Honig, a national expert on principal managers at the University of Washington, typically recommends smaller caseloads of six principals to enable principal managers to provide the levels of support necessary to better support each principal's professional growth as shown in Figure 2,[61] and refers to this new type of principal managers as Instructional Leadership Directors.[62]

Figure 2: Recommended Formula for Principal Manager Caseload



When principals are effectively managed and supported, they have the clear direction from their managers—as well as opportunities to improve their leadership practices—that enable them to effectively lead implementation of the strategic plan described in Strand 1. Since school leaders influence improvements in student learning primarily by influencing improvements in teacher effectiveness, they also are enabled when they have systems and policies to effectively manage talent at the school-level, as described in the following section.

59 New Leaders, 2012. [Principal manager interviews]. Unpublished raw data.
60 Corcoran, Casserly, Price-Baugh, Walston, Hall, & Simon (2013).
61 Jerald (2012).
62 Honig et al. (2010).

STRAND 4: SYSTEMS AND POLICIES TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE TALENT AT THE SCHOOL-LEVEL

Researchers have found that one of the most critical ways in which principals impact student learning is by hiring, placing, developing, retaining, and managing talent to improve teacher effectiveness in the schools they lead.[63] Yet, principals often lack the authority, tools, and systems they need to conduct this role effectively. District and state policies sometimes limit leaders' abilities to manage human capital on school campuses. These limits include the inability to place teachers in the positions where they will be most effective, to retain effective teachers, or to remove consistently ineffective teachers. Collective bargaining agreements often protect the most senior teachers regardless of their effectiveness and require leaders to hire teachers that they did not select and have no opportunity to reject.

Principals can be more effective when they have systems and policies in place to manage talent in the schools they lead. According to our expert researchers and practitioners work group, the most important, yet most commonly lacking condition for principal effectiveness, is the authority of principals to create appropriate staffing models for their school, including the ability to hire, promote, and dismiss teachers, school leaders, and other school-based staff. Districts support principal effectiveness by eliminating barriers and creating systems and tools, such as effective human resource and teacher performance management systems—including effective evaluation systems—that enable principals to effectively manage teachers and school staff. One example of this system-level support is the recent work in Houston Independent School District (HISD). Over the past three years, HISD has implemented significant reforms in human capital management. Its focus has been to create policies that support principals in their work to improve teacher effectiveness. The district implemented a new teacher evaluation system to raise expectations for teacher quality and give principals new tools for assessing teacher quality. In addition, the district created new data systems and reports around human capital for every school, allowing principals to review the current status of every staff member in terms of tenure, evaluation results, areas for growth, certifications, and other information necessary to support effective staff planning. Principal managers review these reports with their principals a few times a year to identify strategies and next steps for specific staff members, and to plan ahead for human capital and staffing supports needed from the central office for the school. Supportive districts provide teachers with access to high-quality professional learning opportunities that align with school and district goals and with teachers' specific needs and areas for growth. They also redesign human resource departments to serve as strategic partners, working to identify and recruit talent, and creating a district-wide pipeline of effective teachers, teacher leaders, and other leadership personnel.

The key conditions that enable principals to effectively manage school-level talent include the following:

- *Staffing Decisions.* Principals have authority to hire, reassign, or dismiss school-based staff;
- *Teacher Performance.* Teacher performance is assessed through a transparent, fair, rigorous process, according to research-based standards and including student outcomes; and
- *Human Resource Systems.* Human resource systems enable schools to attract, hire, and retain top-quality candidates at all levels.

63 New Leaders (2012).

Staffing Decisions

Principals have authority to hire, reassign, or dismiss school-based staff. Researchers have found that frequently principals lack sufficient discretion over staffing decisions and this condition is correlated with weaker student achievement results.[64] Several common district policies constrain principals from selecting the teachers who best match the needs of their school.[65] For example, some collective bargaining agreements allow teachers to choose their school and grade/subject placements based on seniority, giving principals little or no say over which teachers work in their schools. It is also very common for districts to move a teacher who has been "excessed"—meaning that the position has been eliminated due to program, enrollment, or budget shifts—and place that teacher in another position or school without input from that school's principal. These "forced placements" occur without consideration of the school's needs, the teacher's strengths and weaknesses, or the fit between the teacher and school. These quality-blind policies undermine principals' ability to maximize teacher effectiveness, as evidenced by one example of a New Leader principal who was forced to "excess" two National Board Certified first-grade teachers with a track record of high performance while replacing them with two veteran fifth-grade teachers with a history of poor performance and no experience teaching first grade.[66]

Districts should eliminate rules and regulations that require schools to accept excess teachers, and instead institute "mutual consent" hiring systems[67] where both the principal and the teacher must agree to any placement. In these systems, school vacancies are posted and all teachers in the system who seek particular positions must apply to the school for the job. The principal then selects a candidate from the pool of applicants. Teachers are also free to accept or reject an offered position without risk of missing other placements if they reject the first one they are offered. In a study of mutual consent hiring in New York City, researchers found that mutual consent policies provide fair and equal access to vacancies for teachers, do not disadvantage high-poverty schools, and result in positions that teachers find satisfying and that they plan to keep.[68]

Principals also need the authority to hire and to staff their leadership teams. As mentioned in Strand 3, leadership teams are key supports to the leader and provide essential capacity, but they also are supports who keep the school vision, mission and goals in focus for teachers. The leadership team also balances the skills of the principal, so that no one person has to have strong skills in all aspects of school leadership. Because of their central role in the school, they must share the leader's vision and be able to effectively implement it throughout the school. Currently, however, many school districts make central decisions about assistant principal assignments or have policies that make it difficult for principals to select their own assistant principals. Many systems also staff instructional coaching roles centrally and assign them to schools.

Teacher Performance

Teacher performance is assessed through a transparent, fair, rigorous process, according to research-based standards and including student outcomes. Once principals have selected teachers and other staff to work in their schools, they need to develop and manage these staff members over time. Effective school leaders act as coaches, developers, and ultimately evaluators of teachers. To effectively manage talent, principals need authority to recognize, reward, and retain effective teachers, and to develop improvement and intervention plans for those identified as underperforming, while having the authority to dismiss those whose performance has not improved after corrective support.

Districts can support leaders by providing quality teacher standards that outline the expectations for effective instruction. When standards are well developed, they can be the basis for meaningful conversations about performance; they serve as guideposts for teachers and principals in setting specific growth goals, tracking progress, and framing constructive feedback. Districts have a role to play in creating or adopting standards and then building common understanding of them across the district. The standards become the common language of effective practice that leaders can use in both their formative and evaluative conversations with instructional staff.

64 Ikemoto et al. (2009).
65 Plecki, Alejano, Knapp, & Lochmiller (2006).
66 New Leaders, 2010. [School case study]. Unpublished raw data.
67 Daly, Keeling, Grainger, & Grundies (2008).
68 Daly et al. (2008).

Districts can support effective management of talent by instituting common and holistic evaluation systems that assess teachers' performance against the standards through high-quality observations of teacher practice and student outcome data to assess student progress. Effective evaluation models help leaders to focus their coaching and developmental supports. Teachers and principals use the teacher effectiveness standards to assess teachers' current practice; they then work together to identify growth goals that match the teacher's individual areas of growth with the needs of their students. Those goals become the playbook that the principal and other school leaders use when coaching that teacher. Throughout the year, the evaluation system prompts moments of formal reflection that contribute to the summative evaluation.

Districts have a role to play in designing and implementing high quality evaluation systems. District support is especially effective when assessment tools are accompanied by on-going supports such as training for observers, high-quality research-based rubrics or other observation tools that focus on key components of effective instructional practice and guidance on finding time to conduct observations.

Unfortunately, district policies and practices too often unintentionally undermine rather than support principals in managing, developing, and retaining talent. For example, in one district that was rolling out a new state-developed teacher evaluation system, the district required that each classroom visit last at least 15 minutes. This district-determined guideline was used later by the union to file a grievance against any principal who stayed in a classroom longer than 15 minutes, citing their presence as a form of harassment.[69]

When, over the course of the year, teachers fail to improve after receiving feedback and professional development, principals need fair, efficient, and timely processes that allow them to remove teachers within a reasonable timeframe (no longer than one school year) and without onerous process requirements. Too many districts have overly complicated multi-step and time-consuming dismissal policies for underperforming teachers that require more than one school year. Principals also need authority over hiring and dismissal of non-teaching staff such as custodians, administrative assistants, or security guards whose interactions with students and adults can have a significant impact on school culture and teacher working conditions.

Human Resource Systems

Human resource systems enable schools to attract, hire, and retain top-quality candidates at all levels. Giving principals autonomy over staffing decisions does not mean leaving them entirely to their own devices in recruiting, hiring, and developing teachers. Principals can use their autonomy most effectively when the *district human resources department functions as a strategic partner that works to create high-quality applicant pools and provides efficient systems to enable timely hiring.* This means that, "district HR departments need to move from a transaction processing focus to become active partners with principals in more strategic human capital management."[70] To do this, human resources departments work with principals to identify their schools' specific human capital needs. HR is proactive in building a pool of high-quality candidates with a variety of specialties and certifications. For example, when a position in the chemistry department is open, HR can partner with school leaders to assess the school's needs and match them with effective candidates. They also can provide school leaders with rubrics and interview guides to help principals to effectively interview, even providing them training on tools to increase interviewing skills. HR can help to change district policies by removing barriers that prevent schools from hiring talented staff, including modifying inefficient hiring timelines and limitations on hiring outside the district. Principals and schools that engage in these types of practices are more likely to be able to find and successfully hire high-quality candidates that match the school's philosophy and needs.[71]

69 New Leaders, 2011. [Principal focus group]. Unpublished raw data.
70 Odden (2011).
71 New Leaders (2012).

At the most basic level, human resource systems recruit a high-quality pool of applicants for new positions and establish timely hiring processes so that principals are able to make hiring decisions early enough to attract the most promising candidates.[72] Doing so is likely to require significant changes in some district human resource offices to streamline recruitment and hiring process, adopt electronic application and screening systems, and develop new pipelines for hard-to-staff teaching areas.[73] The more strategic human resources departments actively provide data and tools to help principals effectively hire and manage staff. For example, the Houston Independent School District's human resource department created comprehensive reports of human capital information that summarized data on teachers' effectiveness ratings, identified areas for improvement, and highlighted teachers who were up for tenure. These reports were shared directly with schools at multiple points throughout the year. HR leaders and staff ensure that budgeting and staffing practices are aligned to help principals determine staffing needs to recruit and fill positions with the best possible candidates.

Unfortunately, district human resource offices typically are not strategic partners. They often lack the staff capacity to help recruit candidates. Their hiring processes create burdensome paperwork or processes that slow down rather than speed up the hiring process, causing schools to loose strong candidates to other school systems that are more efficient. This is especially true in urban districts that are often in most need of the best teachers.[74] On the other hand, when principals have systems and policies to effectively manage talent at the school-level, they are enabled to lead improvements in teacher effectiveness that can result in improvements for student outcomes.

72 Levin & Quinn (2003).
73 Odden (2011).
74 Levin & Quinn (2003).

CONCLUSION

Even as they prioritize leadership, districts should also recognize that they cannot depend on "superhero" principals to drive radical improvement without district support. Even the best leaders cannot achieve their potential in systems that do not support them—or, even worse, act as barriers to their success.

Districts bear the primary responsibility for creating the conditions that enable leaders to be effective. Facilitating effective school leadership at scale will require a deep cultural shift in many districts to create a climate of shared ownership, trust, and mutual accountability in which central office and school-level leaders see one another as partners in meeting students' needs. School boards and superintendents cannot impose this culture by fiat. However, there are concrete steps district leaders can take to foster this culture and inculcate it into the structures, norms, policies, and practices of their districts. In addition, districts should put in place specific tangible supports, resources, and policies to support principals and other school leaders in their work.

When these conditions are in place, principals can focus on their most critical work as instructional leaders—creating a strong school culture, developing teacher talent, and driving instructional improvement. Rather than managing numerous mundane details, principals can provide laser-like focus on supporting instruction and enabling teachers to do what needs to be done to generate dramatically better student-learning outcomes. With the right resources and support to make the job sustainable, they are able to produce these results year in and year out—not just for a limited period of time. When principals are given the conditions that allow them to carry out this work, the schools they lead can transform children's lives.

Accompanying this description of effective conditions is the *Great Principals at Scale Toolkit* that will help districts assess the current status of their effectiveness, and identify priority areas and actions that they can put in place to create conditions that allow school leaders to be effective.

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