SB

6

<TARGET><BILL>SB 6</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
6</SUBJECT><COMM>SEDC27</COMM></TARGET>

4/4 University

27-LS0058\B
Mischel
2/28/11

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 6( )

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS DAVIS AND FRENCH

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act relating to prekindergarten programs within a school district; relating to pre-elementary students and pre-elementary schools; and providing for an effective date."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

* **Section 1.** AS 14.03.060(a) is amended to read:

(a) Except as provided in (e) of this section, an elementary school consists of grades kindergarten through grade eight or any appropriate combination of grades within this range**, and a prekindergarten program provided by a school district for students four and five years of age**.

* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.060(e) is amended to read:

(e) In addition to the grades enumerated in (a) of this section, an elementary school consists of a **prekindergarten** [PRE-ELEMENTARY] program supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8), operated by the department as a head start program under AS 14.38.010, or located in a public school [FOR FEDERAL FUNDING PURPOSES. EXCEPT FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY WHO IS

RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION OR RELATED SERVICES UNDER AS 14.30.180 - 14.30.350, PRE-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS MAY NOT BE COUNTED IN A SCHOOL'S AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP UNDER AS 14.17].

* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 14.03.065. Prekindergarten program. (a) A school district may provide a prekindergarten program for students who are four or five years of age and who reside in the district if the program is

(1) optional for a student;

(2) supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8); and

(3) consistent with regulations adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165.

(b) A student who is enrolled in and attends a prekindergarten program provided by a district shall be counted as a part-time student in the district average daily membership count estimate under AS 14.17.500, except that for the first year of the program the student count estimate used shall be for the current fiscal year.

* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(g) A child who is four or five years of age on or before September 1 following the beginning of the school year and who is under school age may enter a public school prekindergarten program.

* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

(a) The department shall

(1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state except the University of Alaska;

(2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state, adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement of the public schools;

(3) provide advisory and consultative services to all public school governing bodies and personnel;

(4) prescribe by regulation a minimum course of study for the public

schools; the regulations must provide that, if a course in American Sign Language is given, the course shall be given credit as a course in a foreign language;

(5) establish, in coordination with the Department of Health and Social Services, a program for the continuing education of children who are held in detention facilities in the state during the period of detention;

(6) accredit those public schools that meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; these regulations shall be adopted by the department and presented to the legislature during the first 10 days of any regular session, and become effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session, whichever is earlier, unless disapproved by a resolution concurred in by a majority of the members of each house;

(7) prescribe by regulation, after consultation with the state fire marshal and the state sanitarian, standards that will assure healthful and safe conditions in the public and private schools of the state, including a requirement of physical examinations and immunizations in pre-elementary schools; the standards for private schools may not be more stringent than those for public schools;

(8) exercise general supervision over pre-elementary schools **and district prekindergarten programs** that receive direct state or federal funding;

(9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

(10) accredit private schools that request accreditation and that meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; nothing in this paragraph authorizes the department to require religious or other private schools to be licensed;

(11) review plans for construction of new public elementary and secondary schools and for additions to and major rehabilitation of existing public elementary and secondary schools and, in accordance with regulations adopted by the department, determine and approve the extent of eligibility for state aid of a school construction or major maintenance project; for the purposes of this paragraph, "plans"

include educational specifications, schematic designs, projected energy consumption and costs, and final contract documents;

(12) provide educational opportunities in the areas of vocational education and training, and basic education to individuals over 16 years of age who are no longer attending school;

(13) administer the grants awarded under AS 14.11;

(14) establish, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, a school bus driver training course;

(15) require the reporting of information relating to school disciplinary and safety programs under AS 14.33.120 and of incidents of disruptive or violent behavior;

(16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance, under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(14) or (15); the regulations must include

(A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;

(B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in AS 14.07.030(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in math, reading, and writing as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(2)(A); and

(C) a process for districts to petition the department for continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

(17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(14) or redirecting public school funding under AS 14.07.030(15);

(18) assist the Department of Natural Resources in developing and implementing the farm-to-school program established under AS 03.20.100.

* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to read:

(c) In this section, "pre-elementary school" means a school for children [AGES] three through five years **of age,** if the school's primary function is

educational**, and a prekindergarten program for children four or five years of age that is provided by a school district**.

* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.07.165 is amended to read:

Sec. 14.07.165. Duties. The board shall adopt

(1) statewide goals and require each governing body to adopt written goals that are consistent with local needs;

(2) regulations regarding the application for and award of grants under AS 14.03.125;

(3) regulations implementing provisions of AS 14.11.014(b);

(4) regulations requiring approval by the board before a charter school, state boarding school, or a public school may provide domiciliary services;

(5) regulations implementing the secondary school student competency examination provisions of AS 14.03.075, including the criteria and procedure under which a governing body uses a waiver to grant a diploma to a student; criteria regarding granting a waiver must include provisions that a waiver may only be granted for students who enter the system late or have rare or unusual circumstances meriting a waiver;

(6) regulations for the implementation of a prekindergarten program by a school district using the model curriculum developed by the department under AS 14.07.030(13).

* **Sec. 8.** AS 14.17.905(a) is amended to read:

(a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in a district is subject to the following:

(1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100, shall be counted as one school;

(2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425, shall be counted as

(A) one elementary school, which includes those students in grades kindergarten through six**, and, except as provided in (c) of this section, a prekindergarten program provided by a school district for students four and five years of age**; and

(B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades seven through 12;

(3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 175 shall be counted as a part of the school in the district with the highest ADM.

* **Sec. 9.** AS 14.17.905 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) A school district may not include in the average daily membership of a school students who are four or five years of age if the students are enrolled in a program that receives funding other than funding under this chapter.

* **Sec. 10.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2013.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number
Bill Version **SB6**
() Publish Date

Identifier (file name): SB006-EED-ESS-2-25-11
Title "An Act relating to providing a prekindergarten program within a school district; and providing for an effective date."
Sponsor Senators Davis and French
Requester Senate Education

Dept. Affected EED
Appropriation K-12 Support
Allocation Foundation Program
OMB Component Number 141

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information					
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**FY 2012**	**FY 2012**	**FY 2013**	**FY 2014**	**FY 2015**	**FY 2016**	**FY 2017**
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants	83,651.9						
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	**83,651.9**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
CHANGE IN REVENUES							

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF	83,651.9						
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other (please identify)							
TOTAL	**83,651.9**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**

Estimate of any current year (FY2011) cost

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Prepared by Elizabeth Nudelman, Director
Division School Finance
Approved by Mike Hanley
Commissioner

Phone 465-8679
Date/Time 2/25/11 4:30 PM
Date 2/25/2011

(Revised 1/27/2011 OMB)

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA **BILL NO.** SB6
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Analysis

This bill defines elementary schools as kindergarten through grade eight and a prekindergarten program for students four and five years of age. The prekindergarten program must be optional.

This bill will allow districts to receive prekindergarten funding through the foundation formula provided the students meet the age requirement of four and five years of age before September 1 following the beginning of the school year, and are not funded by another source.

This fiscal note general fund appropriation was calculated by taking the most recent kindergarten enrollment , to represent a kindergarten cohort, and multiplying by the FY2012 projected average state aid per student.

Future eligibility for space allocations and capital improvment projects through the department's facilities programs are not analyzed in this fiscal note.

Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Education Comm.
COMMITTEE NAME

committee on SB6, dated 3/30/11.
BILL / SUBJECT TODAY'S DATE

I want to thank all of you for your on-going efforts to build a comprehensive early education program for Alaska. As you know, the current research on the importance of early learning (birth to 5) is compelling. We must take advantage of these early years to build strong, healthy brains if we want to have children who succeed in school and become young adults ready to work, to contribute to our economy and to engage in our democratic process.

The Title I preschool pilot project is a good start, but does not begin to address the needs of all our young children. I strongly believe that there should be high quality preschool for 3 and 4 year olds in all communities, and it must be available to ALL children, not just the so-called disadvantaged or "at risk".

I also urge you to look at developing a diverse delivery system for such programs. All the funding should not be placed only in the hands of public schools. I appreciate the good work done in public schools, but in some communities, it might be appropriate to have preschools as part of child care centers, or to provide supplemental funding so the local Head Start can accept more children (not restricted to the Federal income guidelines).

One of the reasons Head Start and Even Start programs do so well is because of the addition of home visiting staff who can connect families to resources, help parents learn life skills, strengthen parenting skills, provide support to assist in cases of domestic violence ...in short, helping families develop the protective factors that will allow them to flourish. So, I urge you to commit to including the cost of having home-school liaison staff, or developing collaborations between pre-schools to other local programs such as Parents as Teachers or Healthy Families that can provide that component.

Thank you for your attention,

Signed: Lolita Bracke Lolita Bracke
TESTIFIER (Signed, PRINTED NAME)

Kachemak Kids Early Learning Center
REPRESENTING

PO Box 2508 Homer, AK 99603
ADDRESS

2990694
PHONE NO.

St. Mary's School District
P.O. Box 9
St. Mary's, AK 99658

Phone (907) 438-2411
Fax (907) 433-2735

DeWayne Bahnsen, Principal

David Herbert, Superintendent

Senator Joe Thomas
State Capitol Room 514

Dear Senator Thomas:
This letter is being written in support of funding a voluntary four year old, half day, preschool program for the State of Alaska. Early childhood education is one of the most important investments the State of Alaska can make for the children of the state. Not every family in the state has access to the resources required to provide their children with the needed educational material or the instructional abilities required to teach early childhood education.

Currently, the children of St. Mary's have access to programs such as early head start from ages zero to three, however, there is no program for students once they turn four years of age. The St. Mary's School District feels that it is imperative we offer a voluntary half day program to the four year old students in our community. Offering students a half day preschool program allows students to overcome separation anxiety, learn how to socially interact in a school setting, develop some of the basic academic skills needed to be successful in school, and become accustomed to the structure required to learn. In addition, the parents of the students become involved in helping their child to learn at an earlier age and it provides an avenue for the district to give parents resources and guidance on how to help their children learn at an earlier age.

There are many districts throughout the state which can demonstrate that students are coming into their kindergarten programs one to two years behind. By providing a voluntary half day, four year old preschool program funded by the State of Alaska the state would be helping to ensure that students enter kindergarten at grade level. There is a tremendous amount of evidence that demonstrates if a child enters kindergarten below grade level that chances are that student will remain below grade level throughout their educational years.

The St. Mary's School District is very proud of the fact that we have made AYP and that we have a 90% graduation rate. These successes are related in part to the fact that we offer a half day four year old preschool program. The District is very concerned that without some sort of funding for the preschool program that the program may no longer be affordable. The district makes every effort to be accountable to the state for all funds received by producing students who can demonstrate that they are proficient on the state standards based assessments in reading, writing, and math. Although we continue to strive for excellence and we are not yet where we want to be, we have been producing students who are proficient and we have been making AYP.

Funding a half day voluntary four year old preschool program would help many districts throughout the state produce students who are proficient on the state standards based assessments and would be one of the wisest investments the state could make in the field of education.

Respectfully,

David Herbert

Thomas Obermeyer

From: Thomas Obermeyer
Sent: Monday, February 07, 2011 9:34 AM
To: Edra Morledge; Murray Richmond
Subject: SB 6 - Sectional and request for fiscal notes
Attachments: SB 6 Sectional Summary 27-LS0058M.pdf

Dear Edra and Murray,

Attached is the sectional summary for SB 6, 27-LS0058\M.

Have you requested or received fiscal note(s) for SB 6? The Anchorage Daily News reported statewide cost numbers for the bill in an AP article over the weekend.

Please forward to me all fiscal notes on Senator Davis's bills when you receive them so we are better prepared for (S)EDC hearings.

Thank you for your consideration. Have a great week.

Tom

Thomas S. Obermeyer, MO Atty, M.B.A.
Office of Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Alaska State Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol Rm 30
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
907-465-3762Direct
907-465-3822 Office
907-465-3756 Fax
800-770-3822 Toll Free
Thomas_Obermeyer@legis.state.ak.us

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM February 4, 2011

SUBJECT: Sectional Summary of SB 6 (Work Order No. 27-LS0058\M)

TO: Senator Bettye Davis
Attn: Tom Obermeyer

FROM: Jean M. Mischel
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1. Amends the description of an elementary school to include a prekindergarten program provided by a district.

Section 2. Establishes standards for a school district to provide an optional prekindergarten program.

Section 3. Amends the school age to include four or five year olds who attend a district prekindergarten program.

Section 4. Amends the current definition of "pre-elementary school" to include a prekindergarten program provided by a district.

Section 5. Adds a duty of the Board of Education and Early Development to adopt regulations for the implementation of a district prekindergarten program.

Section 6. Amends the determination of the number of schools in a district to include prekindergarten students for state funding purposes.

Section 7. Provides an exception to state funding of prekindergarten students for students four or five years of age who are enrolled in an alternatively funded preschool program at the school.

JMM:ljw
11-071.ljw

Thomas Obermeyer

From: Thomas Obermeyer
Sent: Monday, February 07, 2011 10:58 AM
To: Edra Morledge; Murray Richmond
Attachments: SB 6 -Docs- Memo-LegLegl - Expl.Sec.6,7.pdf

Dear Edra and Murray,

Attached is a memo I requested to clarify the effect of sections 6 and 7 of SB 6, 27-LS0058\M. You may wish to include it in the hearing package behind the sectional summary.

Tom

Thomas S. Obermeyer, MO Atty, M.B.A.
Office of Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Alaska State Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol Rm 30
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
907-465-3762Direct
907-465-3822 Office
907-465-3756 Fax
800-770-3822 Toll Free
Thomas_Obermeyer@legis.state.ak.us

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM February 7, 2011

SUBJECT: Explanation of secs. 6 and 7 (SB 6)
(Work Order No. 27-LS0058\M)

TO: Senator Bettye Davis
Attn: Tom Obermeyer

FROM: Jean M. Mischel
Legislative Counsel

You have asked about the effect of secs. 6 and 7 in the above bill. Those sections amend AS 14.17.905, pertaining to facilities constituting a school, by including prekindergarten students in the student count for school size purposes. A school size factor is applied under the funding formula under AS 14.17.450. For communities with an average daily membership of at least 101 but not more than 425, only one elementary school and one secondary school may be counted, but the size of the elementary school is affected by public prekindergarten students under sec. 6. That section clarifies the age of students who should be counted as elementary school students to include 4 and 5 year olds who are prekindergarten students at a district school. Since the smaller and larger districts do not differentiate between elementary and secondary students, the same change is not necessary, but the prekindergarten students are also counted in the average daily membership. Sec. 7 provides that no district, of whatever size, may include 4 or 5 year olds in the average daily membership count if the program in which the child is enrolled receives funding that is not provided for in the funding formula for the school under that section.

The context of bill sections 6 and 7 makes them more clear. In each section of the statutes where a description of a public elementary or pre-elementary school appears, the bill amends the description to include the optional district-based prekindergarten program students. Although the bill does not explicitly state that the students will be included in the average daily membership count (consistent with the structure of AS 14.17), if the prekindergarten students are enrolled in a public school, they are counted as such unless they are funded by another source. In other words, if the prekindergarten student is enrolled in a public school district program, by implication, the student is counted along with all other enrolled students. If the program is half day, then the 4 and 5 year olds will be counted as part-time students.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

JMM:ljw
11-073.ljw

Alaska State Legislature

Interim: (May - Dec.)
716 W. 4th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: (907) 269-0144
Fax: (907) 269-0148

Session: (Jan. - May)
State Capitol, Suite 30
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-3822
Fax: (907) 465-3756
Toll free: (800) 770-3822

Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us
http://www.akdemocrats.org

Senator Bettye Davis

Senate Bill 6 27-LS0058

"An Act relating to providing a prekindergarten program within a school district; and providing for an effective date."

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Pre-K programs are growing in popularity across the country. Developmental research, neuroscience, and program evaluations have found that a child's experiences from birth to age five shape the brain's architecture and influence later life outcomes. SB 6 provides for a prekindergarten (Pre-K) program within Alaska school districts for students four and five years of age. Parents are not required to enroll their children in a Pre-K program. School districts are not required to initiate Pre-K programs but they must be supported in funding and development if they do. Students who are enrolled in a prekindergarten program will be counted in the "average daily membership" count for foundation formula funding.

Early education programs are one of the best public investments available to states. Over 40 states and the District of Columbia offer state-funded prekindergarten, and at least 17 states have provided funding supplements to Head Start. Early childhood policies vary from state to state, as well as program options, such as private child care, preschools, federally funded Head Start, and state prekindergarten programs. State leaders are responding to the realities of today's working families, federal and state policy pressures, and demands of the No Child Left Behind Act. More women with young children are in the workforce than in previous decades, and many children spend full workday hours in the care of others. For every dollar invested in Pre-K, there is estimated a $4 to $9 return to society in higher graduation and employment rates, higher earnings, less crime, less need for special education services, less use of public welfare systems, and better health.

Alaska not only has the benefit of building on a long history of successful early education programs for the last decade, but it now has the experience and results of the Alaska Pilot Pre-kindergarten Project (AP3) funded by the Legislature in 2009. Year One of the Pilot Pre-K Project found high numbers of children exceeding expected growth. While there is still extremely high need for the majority of children coming to the Pilot Pre-K Project behind typically-developing peers, this program shows what can be done with unprecedented levels of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration between Head Start programs and school districts which helped in alignment, transition, common planning and training. SB 6 expands on the $2 million start up funding in the Pilot Prekindergarten Project in an effort to make prekindergarten a reality and available all Alaska children statewide.

NCSL REPORT
Early Care & Education

2008 Pre-K Legislative Update

May 2008

During the 2008 legislative session, at least 32 states and the District of Columbia introduced over 150 pieces of legislation on preschool, including bills to expand eligibility, increase or decrease funding, promote higher quality, support teachers, and establish early learning councils. This document provides an overview of proposed state legislation in these areas. Some state legislatures have completed their sessions and a few enacted bill examples are provided in this update.

At least eleven state legislatures— Alabama, Iowa, Florida, Tennessee, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia—are currently considering appropriation bills for preschool. Most of these are governor driven with some states considering significant funding increases even with budget deficits. At least two states have proposed changing their funding structure allocations for preschool. **Illinois** lawmakers proposed a bill that would increase the set-aside amount of the Early Childhood Block Grant from 11 percent to at least 20 percent by 2014 used to fund programs for children birth to age 3, depending on sufficient funding for grants to existing preschool programs. A **Missouri** bill would increase the annual allocation of gaming revenues to the Veteran's Commission and decrease the allocation to the Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Fund, which funds Missouri's pre-k program.

Also, there was legislative activity in states that currently do not have state-funded preschool programs. Seven state legislatures— Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Utah— proposed bills that focused on establishing statewide preschool programs, standards, and taskforces. To date, three state legislatures— Alaska, New Hampshire and Rhode Island—still have bills that are currently pending. A bill overview of these seven states' progress on pre-k is provided later in the document.

Preschool Expansions

Legislators in at least 12 states — California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Tennessee—and the District of Columbia proposed bills to expand their current state preschool programs. **Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Tennessee** and the **District of Columbia** proposed establishing universal preschool for 4-year-olds and **Georgia** proposed a bill to expand pre-k to all 3-year-olds. **Kentucky** and **Minnesota** also proposed bills establishing an at-risk preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds. A **Kentucky** bill would establish a trust fund to allot grants to provide collaborative community-based preschool to serve low-income children living at 200 percent of FPL. **Illinois** lawmakers proposed removing certain provisions that limit funding distribution so that the state may achieve the goal of preschool for all. **Colorado's** school finance bill proposed an increase of 300 preschool spaces to bring its statewide total to 20,160 to be funded by a freeze on property tax mill levies. **Maryland** lawmakers proposed two bills that would expand eligibility to children of military families.

A **Missouri** bill would establish a pilot preschool plus grant program to serve up to 10,000 children with high-quality early childhood education services in school districts with at last 30 percent free or reduced lunch population. A **California** bill specifies that preschool is available to 3-and 4-year-olds and consolidates the funding for pre-k. **New York** lawmakers proposed a bill that would allow the commissioner to grant a waiver to certain school districts to expand grants to certain programs to fund full-day pre-k. A **Minnesota** bill would establish a Preschool through 3rd grade community grant program and would appropriate $5 million for the imitative. **Michigan** lawmakers passed a bill to allocate $99.6 million for school readiness, preschool and parent program grants to enable eligible districts to develop or expand preschool and parenting education programs. The bill is currently awaiting the governor's signature.

Preschool Age Requirement

Three states legislatures—Illinois, Iowa, and Tennessee—proposed changing preschool age requirements. **Iowa** lawmakers proposed that any child who is 4 years old on or before September 15 can enroll in preschool. A **Tennessee** bill changes the date from

September 30 to September 1 of which children must reach age 4 to enter preschool. **Illinois** legislators proposed allowing a child who has attended preschool and who will be 5-years-old by December 31 (currently September 1) to be allowed to attend school.

Other Preschool Program Components

A **Florida** bill proposed revising the number of preschool instructional hours from 540 to 720 hours for private preschool providers to be considered a full-time equivalent student in the voluntary pre-k program. **Colorado** lawmakers proposed a pre-k alignment bill, which would require preschool students to have a numerical identifier that would follow the child through the state's P-16 system. **Florida** legislators proposed a few bills that provide legislative intent to revise laws relating to pre-k through 12th grade and also proposed a bill for an amendment to the state constitution relating to preschool through 12th grade education.

Quality

State legislatures proposed bills on preschool quality, including quality rating systems (QRS), teacher quality improvements and supports. **Florida** lawmakers proposed two bills that would establish the Florida's Sunshine State Star QRS requirement for early learning programs including those participating in the voluntary pre-k program.

Professional Development

A **Florida** bill would establish a pilot program to enhance the quality of pre-k and provide education requirements for teachers. A **California** bill would require a system of professional development for prekindergarten teachers and would require the state to develop teaching competencies. An **Iowa** bill would appropriate $750,000 for implementation of a statewide professional development system to support the statewide 4-year-old preschool program. Another Iowa bill proposes if funding is made available for a professional development system that it be implemented by the state's department of education.

Teachers

State legislatures are examining ways to promote better teacher quality through training, certification and degree requirements for early education teachers. In recent years, some state lawmakers have proposed and enacted bills to increase teacher requirements while other legislatures have proposed or enacted bills to relax requirements. A **Florida** bill would require that pre-k classes by the 2010-11 school year have at least one pre-k instructor who holds an associate or bachelor's degree. **Vermont's** bill would require by 2011 all school district prekindergarten teachers be licensed. The bill also would require the commissioner of education and the commissioner of children and families examine the availability of sufficiently higher trained pre-k teachers. **Minnesota** lawmakers proposed a bill that would require preschool instructors to complete a reading instruction competence assessment before being granted an initial teaching license. **Oklahoma's** bill would require teacher early childhood certification be approved by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation. **New Jersey** legislators proposed a bill that would require certification of new teachers hired by licensed child care centers that provide preschool classes in Abbott districts. A **Florida** bill would allow preschool teachers to be allowed to access Florida's retirement system benefits.

Maine enacted legislation that requires the rules established by the state board of education be amended before being approved to establish eligibility for an endorsement of a teacher employed during a certain period of time in a prekindergarten to 3rd grade program. **Tennessee** enacted legislation that directs the state to survey local school districts with preschool programs to determine if all employment rights for K-12 teachers apply to preschool teachers and report the findings to the legislature.

Community-based Providers

Four state legislatures—Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Vermont—proposed legislation on community-based providers. **Pennsylvania's** bill would allow center or family child care settings that have met or exceed a 3-star standard under the Keystone Stars quality rating system to be eligible for Pre-k Counts funding. **Vermont** lawmakers proposed authorizing school districts that do not yet participate in the STARS programs to be granted a 3-star eligibility if the program is in good regulatory standing. The bill also requires the department of children and families and education to approve rules for the STARS program for public and private providers. A **Missouri** bill would require the state to provide fully subsidized preschool at licensed child facilities that employ highly qualified teachers for children residing in a school district classified as unaccredited or provisionally accredited by the state board of education. **New Jersey's** bill would require the state to monitor twice a year contacts with private preschool providers in Abbott districts.

Assessment

Washington lawmakers proposed a bill that would require the state and Thrive by Five to make recommendations regarding the implementation of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. **Florida** legislators proposed a bill that would have required private pre-k providers and public schools to conduct certain assessments of the progress of students enrolled in the voluntary pre-k program.

Transportation

Lawmakers in four states—Iowa, Illinois, Maine and New York—proposed legislation addressing transportation of preschool students. **New York's** bill would define "bus" to include preschool programs. **Illinois'** bill proposes to change the reimbursement for preschool transportation. **Iowa** lawmakers proposed a bill that would allow community empowerment areas to offer preschool transportation without approval of all the school districts. **Maine** enacted legislation requiring school districts to provide transportation to preschool

students.

Governance, Councils and Studies

Legislators in two states—Kansas and Connecticut—are considering governance bills. The **Kansas** bill transfers the prekindergarten pilot program from the Department of Social Services and the Children's Cabinet to the State Board of Education. **Connecticut's** bill proposes to add new members to the early childhood education cabinet.

At least six states legislatures —California, Hawaii, Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire and New Jersey—are considering bills that would establish a council, commission or partnership to examine early learning. **Hawaii** lawmakers are considering two bills to create an Early Learning Council. **California** legislators introduced legislation to create a preschool advisory council. A **New Hampshire** bill would establish a commission to study the feasibility of creating a preschool program. **Minnesota** lawmakers proposed three bills to create a P-20 Partnership and **New Jersey** proposed to create a P-20 Council. The **Iowa** legislature established a state committee on research an development of preschool through 12th grade. The governor signed the bill and is based on the prek-12 feasibility study committee created in 2007.

Five state legislatures—California, Georgia, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Tennessee—proposed bills to create a task force or conduct a study to examine preschool. **Mississippi** lawmakers proposed three bills establishing a task force to study universal pre-k. **California** legislators proposed a preschool quality commission to examine standards for programs educating 3-and 4-year-olds, including examining a quality rating system (QRS). **Oklahoma's** proposed legislation requires the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board to conduct an assessment of existing pre-k programs for effectiveness and accessibility. A **Tennessee** bill directs the state department of education to report on the costs associated with its preschool programs. **Georgia** passed a measure creating a House study committee on Georgia's pre-k program.

Movement in Non-Prekindergarten States

During the 2008 legislative session, seven states without state-funded preschool programs—Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Utah—proposed bills that focused on preschool.

Alaska lawmakers introduced two prekindergarten bills. One bill would allow the state board of education to adopt regulations to provide early education programs. Another bill, which is currently awaiting the governor's signature, allows school districts to provide pre-elementary and Head Start programs. Alaska's governor also proposed additional funding for the state early childhood education initiatives. **New Hampshire** legislators proposed legislation to establish a commission to study the feasibility of creating a preschool program. **Utah's** proposed bill would create a pilot project using a home-based educational technology program to develop school readiness skills of preschool children. **Utah** lawmakers enacted a bill that appropriates state funds for Head Start for the first time. The **Idaho** legislature considered two bills on pre-k, including a bill to establish a state funded community-based preschool program for at-risk 4-year-olds. Idaho maintained its Head Start supplement with TANF funds at the same level of FY 2007. **South Dakota's** proposed legislation would establish standards for pre-k programs and certified personnel. Lawmakers also proposed a bill that would allow pre-k programs in public schools and funds through the state aid education formula for preschoolers in accredited pre-k programs. **Rhode Island's** bill proposes a preschool program for at-risk 3-and 4-year-olds in communities with low performing schools.

Lawmakers in **Mississippi** introduced a total of seven bills in both houses on prekindergarten, which all failed. One bill would have established a pilot pre-k program eighteen counties that meet certain criteria. Three of the bills proposed would have created a task force to study universal pre-k. Three bills proposed appropriated funding to fund the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2007, which set up a professional development system for early childhood caregivers and teachers. At the end of the session, legislators appropriated $3 million to support the governor's request to provide financial incentives for preschools to increase their educational content.

Other

- Hawaii lawmakers proposed a bill that would require qualified preschool teachers and aides for its junior kindergarten program. Minnesota proposed funding for voluntary full-day kindergarten.
- A New Jersey bill would continue the property tax exemption for portions of tax exempt building for preschool.
- California legislators proposed a bill that would require the creation and funding of a preschool pilot program to develop and demonstrate methods for preschool information transfer to public schools.
- A New Mexico bill would provide for an education data warehouse to serve pre-k through post-graduate education.

- A Minnesota bill would make changes to the prekindergarten exploratory projects and the involvement of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation.

This document contains proposed and a few examples of enacted legislation from January 1, 2008 to April 21, 2008. The author used a variety of sources including state legislative websites and State Net, a legislative tracking database, for bill searches. Bills in carry-over states were highlighted when there was movement on the bill in 2008. This analysis is intended to provide examples of significant legislation in each state and does not include bills with technical changes. Please contact Julie Poppe at julie.poppe@ncsl.org for more information.

adn.com
Anchorage Daily News

Print Page Close Window

Alaska prekindergarten project gets high marks

(02/05/11 15:57:49)

An experimental prekindergarten project has produced good results, shining a light on a need for more attention to developmental education, education specialists told state lawmakers.

The education department delivered a report this week on the pilot project that focuses on Alaska Native households at or below the poverty level in six regions of the state, the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reported. The pupils were 4-year-olds and some 5-year-olds.

Program director Cyndy Curran said more than 70 percent of the 345 students improved their vocabulary levels as expected or performed better during the first year.

But vocabulary tests suggested almost three-quarters of those students entered the pilot program lagging behind their peers nationally, the department said.

The program, which costs $2 million annually, is in its second year.

Gov. Sean Parnell's proposed budget included another $2 million to continue the program, Curran told the House Finance Committee's education subcommittee on Thursday.

Rep. Tammie Wilson, a North Pole Republican who is chairwoman of the subcommittee, asked Curran's office for more information to help lawmakers weigh the project's performance. She said the department estimated a statewide prekindergarten program, similar in function to the pilot project, would cost $130 million.

"Those are big numbers," she said.

The newspaper reported that in the Yukon-Koyukuk district, the project opened new preschool classrooms in Minto, where administrators worked closely with the Tanana Chiefs Conference Head Start program, and Allakaket, where teachers incorporated Athabaskan language immersion into programming.

Print Page Close Window

Larry LeDoux
Commissioner
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500
www.eed.state.ak.us

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Eric Fry
Information Officer
907.465.2851
cell: 907.321.5564
eric.fry@alaska.gov

Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 22, 2009

Six school districts will pilot preschool programs with state grants

JUNEAU -- Six Alaska school districts have been awarded state grants to pilot preschool programs over the next school year, Alaska Education Commissioner Larry LeDoux announced today.

The grants, ranging from $150,000 to $380,000 each, will allow the recipients to serve approximately 330 children and their families in half-day programs during the school year. The pilot program was proposed by the Palin administration and funded at $2 million by the legislature this past session.

"The pilot's purpose is not to establish whether preschool is beneficial for children. We already know it does help prepare children to start kindergarten ready to learn," LeDoux said. "Rather, the pilot will allow school districts to create preschool programs that incorporate Alaska's early learning guidelines in ways that are tailored to their communities."

Improving families' voluntary access to affordable, high-quality early care and education programs is one of the actions recommended in the Alaska Education Plan, created by educators and members of the public at a summit in November 2008. The education plan also recommends that Alaska's public education system be aligned from preschool to postsecondary, so that students are prepared to transition to the next level of education and eventually the work force.

Aside from operating in-school programs, the grant recipients are expected to form partnerships that will strengthen current early learning providers in their communities, and to provide guidance to families that choose to care for their young children at home. The grant also requires the recipients to use specific assessment tools to evaluate the children.

The following school districts received grants:
Anchorage, two classrooms serving 32 children $167,684.
Bering Strait, four classrooms serving 62 children, $362,828.

Nome, two classrooms serving 50 children, $219,539.
Juneau, two classrooms serving 40 children, $201,073.
Lower Kuskokwim, two classrooms serving 40 students, $337,732.
Yukon Koyukuk, seven classrooms serving 39 students, $325,445.

In addition, the department will use the remaining $385,699 of the legislative appropriation to support early learning in chronically underperforming school districts, affecting up to seven additional communities and 100 additional children.

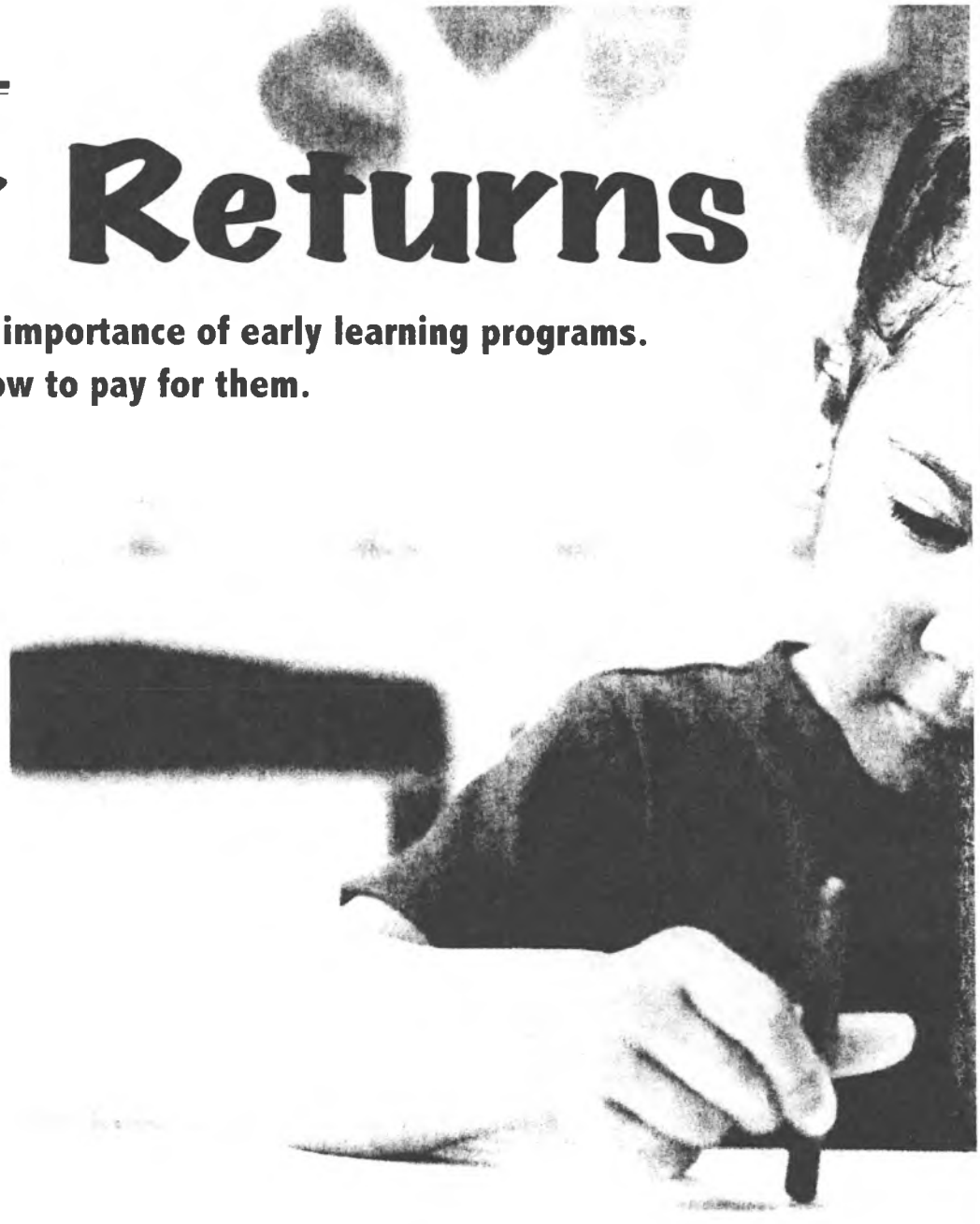
For more information: Paul Sugar, early childhood program manager, 907-465-4862, paul.sugar@alaska.gov.

###

Early Returns

Lawmakers are sold on the importance of early learning programs. Now they're figuring out how to pay for them.

BY JULIE POPPE



Early education programs that prepare children for kindergarten may be the single most important thing that helps them graduate from high school, stay out of trouble with the law and hold good jobs later in life.

Even though the poor economy has restricted the money available for these early programs, state lawmakers have increased funding for pre-K in the last several years. But as states try to cope with shrinking revenues—a situation expected to last at least a couple of more years—they will find it more difficult to do so.

Steve Barnett, a national researcher and economist with the National Institute for Early Education Research, argues that pre-K is an investment in the future. "When states cut pre-K, they increase the future costs of state and local government and decrease future tax revenues, so families get hurt now and in the future," he says. Cuts in state pre-K budgets now come at "just the time when parents have less ability to pay for such programs themselves."

Research shows pre-K improves kids' lives in the short and long term. High-quality preschool programs help promote a child's intellect, build strong social and emotional skills, and boost motivation.

Illinois Representative Roger Eddy, a school superintendent, started pre-K in his district more than 20 years ago. He has seen first-hand the benefits of preschool, but knows cuts are sometimes necessary. "So far," he says, "budget cuts are not trimming [preschool] classrooms."

Some 80 percent of all 4-year-olds attend a preschool program, with about half in public programs and the other half in private, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research. More than 1 million 3- and 4-year-olds attended state-funded pre-K programs in 2008.

Julie Poppe covers pre-K issues for NCSL.

HOLDING ONTO FUNDING

Maybe the most surprising thing about pre-K is that, for the most part, it has not been on the chopping block. According to a recent Pew Center on the States report, overall state pre-K funding in fiscal year 2010 increased by more than $64 million. A legislative fiscal survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures also showed lawmakers increased support for early care and education programs in the previous fiscal year even as budget gaps emerged.

REPRESENTATIVE ROGER EDDY ILLINOIS

Forty states and the District of Columbia currently provide a total of $5.3 billion in state funding for pre-K programs. Twenty-three states and D.C. increased pre-K investments for FY 2010. Alaska and Rhode Island—states that have not previously invested money in pre-K—started pilot programs. Alabama increased funding by $19 million, New Jersey increased funding by 10 percent, and Texas lawmakers authorized a $25 million

increase over two years and pushed for quality improvements. And amid large budget shortfalls, Pennsylvania and Tennessee were able to keep preschool funding stable.

Some state lawmakers last year faced big proposed cuts, however. Illinois, a leader over the years in pre-K support, cut funding, along with nine other states—Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and Washington.

Illinois Representative Elizabeth Coulson was relieved pre-K funding was cut by only 10 percent compared to the proposed 50 percent cut, and that the cuts were made to administrative costs, not services to children. "In a bad budget year," she says, "Illinois lawmakers were able to enact a capital budget bill and provide construction dollars for preschool facilities, with no or limited decreases to services."

REPRESENTATIVE ELIZABETH COULSON ILLINOIS

GETTING CREATIVE

A little creativity goes a long way as state policymakers look for ways to pay for early childhood education.

Maryland and New Jersey have used money provided under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A recent Pew Center on the States report, in fact, recommends state and local policymakers consider new money under the act that was made available through the federal stimulus act.

Decision makers, including school superintendents, may not be aware that Title I can be used for preschool. This flexible funding stream allows districts to subcontract with Head Start and child care programs that meet certain standards to provide services. The U.S. Department of Education issued guidelines for using the money in 2004 and again in September 2009.

In Maryland, 24 school districts use the money for pre-K. The Montgomery County Public Schools used $900,000 from Title I last year to extend 13 Head Start preschool classes from half day to full day for a small group of children. The results are encouraging. These students made strong gains in reading and some gains in math, according to a recent study by the district. It is now using the federal stimulus money and in-kind contributions from Head Start to expand another 21 classrooms to full time. Money also is being used to provide instructional materials and professional development for early education teachers.

"Pre-K is a better use of time and a wiser expenditure of money" than remediation, says Jerry Weast, schools superintendent in Montgomery County, Md. He says he's confident that his district's pre-K programs are setting the foundation for academic, social and emotional skills, and the life-long desire for kids to learn.

FEDERAL FUNDS FILL GAPS

In April 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced it would provide $100 million in federal stimulus money to states to establish State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care, which were mandated by the federal Head Start Act of 2007.

The federal mandate and stimulus money for each state to create an advisory council is an opportunity for legislators to get involved in early childhood policy in their state and address the needs of their youngest citizens. The councils will coordinate existing early childhood efforts among federally and state-funded programs and agencies.

States with early childhood advisory councils that pre-date the Head Start Act also can apply to receive stimulus money. Twenty-one states started early childhood leadership bodies before the federal model was mandated.

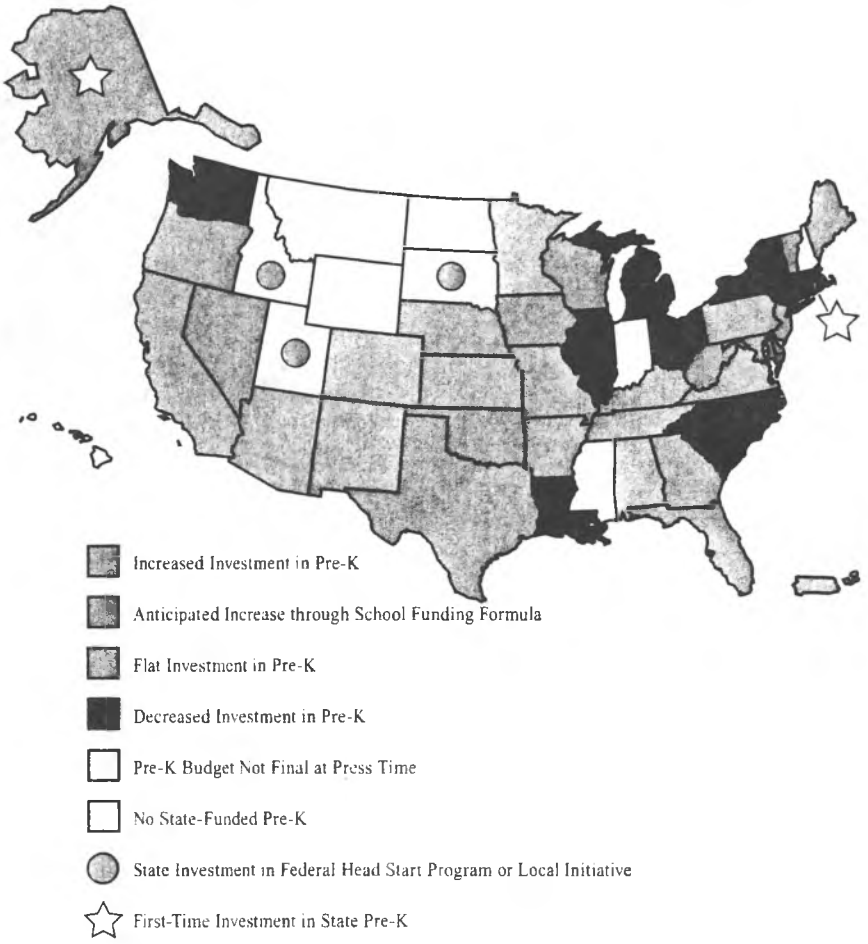
Seventeen states included legislators in council membership. Shortly after the federal act went into effect, Massachusetts and Minnesota passed legislation to create councils and both included legislators, though the federal law does not require it.

Minnesota Representative Nora Slawik, member of the governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, says the council has been working hard to secure the ARRA funds for strategic planning purposes. "Having this money will fill in some of the gaps in the early childhood system and allow us to move forward together more strategically," says Slawik.

REPRESENTATIVE NORA SLAWIK MINNESOTA

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON PRE-K BUDGETS IN FY 2010

In 15 states, lawmakers increased pre-K funding, including two with first-time investments. Nine states and the District of Columbia anticipate increases through their school funding formulas. Six states funded their programs at 2009 levels. Another 10 legislatures decreased pre-K investments. Overall, state pre-K funding increased by a projected $64 million.



Source: Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2010, 2009, Pew Center on the States.

EXPANDING IN TEXAS

During the mid-1980s, Texas began a state-funded early education program for children considered at risk—poor and homeless kids, and those for whom English was a second language. In 2006 and 2007, the state added children of military families and children in foster care. With 18 active military installations and nearly 40 percent of children of active duty military personnel under age 6, Texas lawmakers thought it was important to support the educational needs of these youngsters.

Senator Judith Zaffirini, chair of the higher education committee, believes that success for students in college begins as early as preschool. "We need to look at this as a continuum. The solution to reducing the dropout rate or kids not making it to college is in early childhood education," she says.

Representative Diane Patrick introduced a bill in 2009 aimed at creating a new grant program to provide money to school districts that want to offer full-day programs. "We can't afford dropouts and incarceration, and we can't afford for citizens to not be productive. We need to get kids off to the right start," says Patrick.

SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI TEXAS

REPRESENTATIVE DIANE PATRICK

The bill received bipartisan support from both Texas chambers—Zaffirini co-sponsored the bill in the Senate—and passed with two-thirds of the votes. The governor vetoed the bill, however, saying fewer children would be served if the bill were enacted because it targeted full-day programs. The Legislature was able to add $25 million to the existing pre-K grant program, bringing the funding total to more than $100 million for FY 2011.

"The bill was focused on higher quality standards, such as certified early childhood teachers, standardized curriculum, evaluation, collaborative partnerships with private providers, and increased funding to local districts to pay for the actual cost," says Patrick.

It also would have set the child-to-staff ratio at 1:11, close to the national benchmark of 1:10. "I think the bill would have raised the level of importance of quality of preschool," she says. She intends to address the issue again in 2011 when the legislature holds its next session.

RHODE ISLAND QUALITY

Rhode Island lawmakers faced a $500 million budget gap while crafting their 2010 budget, which is on top of the $449 million gap they closed in 2009. The state is facing more budget cuts for FY 2011, revenue estimates are dire, and nearly 16 percent of the state's 248,000 kids live in poverty.

Even so, the General Assembly is providing $700,000 for pilot programs in a variety of settings in seven school districts. Two of these new pprograms also use Title I stimulus money to help pay for pre-K. Pilot classrooms must adhere to high standards, with all pre-K teachers holding a B.A. with a state certification in early childhood education, and other national benchmarks, including smaller classrooms and fewer children per teacher.

Some in the state see early learning as the "little engine that could" moving another

SENATE PRESIDENT TERESA PAIVA WEED RHODE ISLAND

inch forward even in tough economic times because of legislative, business and community support and advocacy.

Rhode Island Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed has made sure early care and education programs hire certified instructors who have the appropriate skills to deal with young children. She sponsored a bill to create a quality improvement and rating system in 2007, and then sponsored a pre-K bill to explore policy and funding options in 2008. Both were enacted.

"During this serious fiscal situation, I am optimistic that the pre-K pilots will prove their value," says Paiva Weed.

The state is using stimulus money for child care and Head Start, too. Close to $700,000 in stimulus money will pay for better quality infant and toddler care, training for early childhood teachers, financial incentives for providers to meet higher standards, and scholarships for teachers to pursue advanced degrees.

"We have learned to use a combination of strategies to increase quality and access," says Paiva Weed. "Together, they will have a positive impact on a range of social, health and educational outcomes."

Lawmakers are bracing themselves for prolonged fiscal difficulties as revenues decline and federal stimulus money runs out. And while legislators may be less likely to cut programs they have worked hard to expand in recent years, it's going to be a tough year for pre-K.

Illinois' Eddy sums up the difficult position in which many legislators find themselves. "Preschool is definitely among the priorities," he says. "But when property values are down, pension costs are up, Medicaid costs are up and revenue doesn't rebound in our state, this raises some tough questions."

CHECK OUT pending federal legislation that could have a huge effect on funding for preschool education at www.ncsl.org/magazine.

NCSL REPORT

Early Care & Education

2008 Pre-K Legislative Update

May 2008

Preschool Expansions | Preschool Age Requirement | Other Preschool Program Components | Quality | Teachers | Community-based Providers |Assessment | Transportation | Governance, Councils and Studies | Movement in Non-PreK States | Other |

During the 2008 legislative session, at least 32 states and the District of Columbia introduced over 150 pieces of legislation on preschool, including bills to expand eligibility, increase or decrease funding, promote higher quality, support teachers, and establish early learning councils. This document provides an overview of proposed state legislation in these areas. Some state legislatures have completed their sessions and a few enacted bill examples are provided in this update.

At least eleven state legislatures— Alabama, Iowa, Florida, Tennessee, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia—are currently considering appropriation bills for preschool. Most of these are governor driven with some states considering significant funding increases even with budget deficits. At least two states have proposed changing their funding structure allocations for preschool. **Illinois** lawmakers proposed a bill that would increase the set-aside amount of the Early Childhood Block Grant from 11 percent to at least 20 percent by 2014 used to fund programs for children birth to age 3, depending on sufficient funding for grants to existing preschool programs. A **Missouri** bill would increase the annual allocation of gaming revenues to the Veteran's Commission and decrease the allocation to the Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Fund, which funds Missouri's pre-k program.

Also, there was legislative activity in states that currently do not have state-funded preschool programs. Seven state legislatures— Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Utah— proposed bills that focused on establishing statewide preschool programs, standards, and taskforces. To date, three state legislatures— Alaska, New Hampshire and Rhode Island—still have bills that are currently pending. A bill overview of these seven states' progress on pre-k is provided later in the document.

Preschool Expansions

Legislators in at least 12 states — California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Tennessee—and the District of Columbia proposed bills to expand their current state preschool programs. **Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Tennessee** and the **District of Columbia** proposed establishing universal preschool for 4-year-olds and **Georgia** proposed a bill to expand pre-k to all 3-year-olds. **Kentucky** and **Minnesota** also proposed bills establishing an at-risk preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds. A **Kentucky** bill would establish a trust fund to allot grants to provide collaborative community-based preschool to serve low-income children living at 200 percent of FPL. **Illinois** lawmakers proposed removing certain provisions that limit funding distribution so that the state may achieve the goal of preschool for all. **Colorado's** school finance bill proposed an increase of 300 preschool spaces to bring its statewide total to 20,160 to be funded by a freeze on property tax mill levies. **Maryland** lawmakers proposed two bills that would expand eligibility to children of military families.

A **Missouri** bill would establish a pilot preschool plus grant program to serve up to 10,000 children with high-quality early childhood education services in school districts with at last 30 percent free or reduced lunch population. A **California** bill specifies that preschool is available to 3-and 4-year-olds and consolidates the funding for pre-k. **New York** lawmakers proposed a bill that would allow the commissioner to grant a waiver to certain school districts to expand grants to certain programs to fund full-day pre-k. A **Minnesota** bill would establish a Preschool through 3rd grade community grant program and would appropriate $5 million for the imitative. **Michigan** lawmakers passed a bill to allocate $99.6 million for school readiness, preschool and parent program grants to enable eligible districts to develop or expand preschool and parenting education programs. The bill is currently awaiting the governor's signature.

Preschool Age Requirement

Three states legislatures—Illinois, Iowa, and Tennessee—proposed changing preschool age requirements. **Iowa** lawmakers proposed that any child who is 4 years old on or before September 15 can enroll in preschool. A **Tennessee** bill changes the date from

September 30 to September 1 of which children must reach age 4 to enter preschool. **Illinois** legislators proposed allowing a child who has attended preschool and who will be 5-years-old by December 31 (currently September 1) to be allowed to attend school.

Other Preschool Program Components

A **Florida** bill proposed revising the number of preschool instructional hours from 540 to 720 hours for private preschool providers to be considered a full-time equivalent student in the voluntary pre-k program. **Colorado** lawmakers proposed a pre-k alignment bill, which would require preschool students to have a numerical identifier that would follow the child through the state's P-16 system. **Florida** legislators proposed a few bills that provide legislative intent to revise laws relating to pre-k through 12th grade and also proposed a bill for an amendment to the state constitution relating to preschool through 12th grade education.

Quality

State legislatures proposed bills on preschool quality, including quality rating systems (QRS), teacher quality improvements and supports. **Florida** lawmakers proposed two bills that would establish the Florida's Sunshine State Star QRS requirement for early learning programs including those participating in the voluntary pre-k program.

Professional Development

A **Florida** bill would establish a pilot program to enhance the quality of pre-k and provide education requirements for teachers. A **California** bill would require a system of professional development for prekindergarten teachers and would require the state to develop teaching competencies. An **Iowa** bill would appropriate $750,000 for implementation of a statewide professional development system to support the statewide 4-year-old preschool program. Another Iowa bill proposes if funding is made available for a professional development system that it be implemented by the state's department of education.

Teachers

State legislatures are examining ways to promote better teacher quality through training, certification and degree requirements for early education teachers. In recent years, some state lawmakers have proposed and enacted bills to increase teacher requirements while other legislatures have proposed or enacted bills to relax requirements. A **Florida** bill would require that pre-k classes by the 2010-11 school year have at least one pre-k instructor who holds an associate or bachelor's degree. **Vermont's** bill would require by 2011 all school district prekindergarten teachers be licensed. The bill also would require the commissioner of education and the commissioner of children and families examine the availability of sufficiently higher trained pre-k teachers. **Minnesota** lawmakers proposed a bill that would require preschool instructors to complete a reading instruction competence assessment before being granted an initial teaching license. **Oklahoma's** bill would require teacher early childhood certification be approved by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation. **New Jersey** legislators proposed a bill that would require certification of new teachers hired by licensed child care centers that provide preschool classes in Abbott districts. A **Florida** bill would allow preschool teachers to be allowed to access Florida's retirement system benefits.

Maine enacted legislation that requires the rules established by the state board of education be amended before being approved to establish eligibility for an endorsement of a teacher employed during a certain period of time in a prekindergarten to 3rd grade program. **Tennessee** enacted legislation that directs the state to survey local school districts with preschool programs to determine if all employment rights for K-12 teachers apply to preschool teachers and report the findings to the legislature.

Community-based Providers

Four state legislatures—Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Vermont—proposed legislation on community-based providers. **Pennsylvania's** bill would allow center or family child care settings that have met or exceed a 3-star standard under the Keystone Stars quality rating system to be eligible for Pre-k Counts funding. **Vermont** lawmakers proposed authorizing school districts that do not yet participate in the STARS programs to be granted a 3-star eligibility if the program is in good regulatory standing. The bill also requires the department of children and families and education to approve rules for the STARS program for public and private providers. A **Missouri** bill would require the state to provide fully subsidized preschool at licensed child facilities that employ highly qualified teachers for children residing in a school district classified as unaccredited or provisionally accredited by the state board of education. **New Jersey's** bill would require the state to monitor twice a year contacts with private preschool providers in Abbott districts.

Assessment

Washington lawmakers proposed a bill that would require the state and Thrive by Five to make recommendations regarding the implementation of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. **Florida** legislators proposed a bill that would have required private pre-k providers and public schools to conduct certain assessments of the progress of students enrolled in the voluntary pre-k program.

Transportation

Lawmakers in four states—Iowa, Illinois, Maine and New York—proposed legislation addressing transportation of preschool students. **New York's** bill would define "bus" to include preschool programs. **Illinois'** bill proposes to change the reimbursement for preschool transportation. **Iowa** lawmakers proposed a bill that would allow community empowerment areas to offer preschool transportation without approval of all the school districts. **Maine** enacted legislation requiring school districts to provide transportation to preschool

students.

Governance, Councils and Studies

Legislators in two states—Kansas and Connecticut—are considering governance bills. The **Kansas** bill transfers the prekindergarten pilot program from the Department of Social Services and the Children's Cabinet to the State Board of Education. **Connecticut's** bill proposes to add new members to the early childhood education cabinet.

At least six states legislatures —California, Hawaii, Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire and New Jersey—are considering bills that would establish a council, commission or partnership to examine early learning. **Hawaii** lawmakers are considering two bills to create an Early Learning Council. **California** legislators introduced legislation to create a preschool advisory council. A **New Hampshire** bill would establish a commission to study the feasibility of creating a preschool program. **Minnesota** lawmakers proposed three bills to create a P-20 Partnership and **New Jersey** proposed to create a P-20 Council. The **Iowa** legislature established a state committee on research an development of preschool through 12th grade. The governor signed the bill and is based on the prek-12 feasibility study committee created in 2007.

Five state legislatures—California, Georgia, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Tennessee—proposed bills to create a task force or conduct a study to examine preschool. **Mississippi** lawmakers proposed three bills establishing a task force to study universal pre-k. **California** legislators proposed a preschool quality commission to examine standards for programs educating 3-and 4-year-olds, including examining a quality rating system (QRS). **Oklahoma's** proposed legislation requires the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board to conduct an assessment of existing pre-k programs for effectiveness and accessibility. A **Tennessee** bill directs the state department of education to report on the costs associated with its preschool programs. **Georgia** passed a measure creating a House study committee on Georgia's pre-k program.

Movement in Non-Prekindergarten States

During the 2008 legislative session, seven states without state-funded preschool programs—Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Utah—proposed bills that focused on preschool.

Alaska lawmakers introduced two prekindergarten bills. One bill would allow the state board of education to adopt regulations to provide early education programs. Another bill, which is currently awaiting the governor's signature, allows school districts to provide pre-elementary and Head Start programs. Alaska's governor also proposed additional funding for the state early childhood education initiatives. **New Hampshire** legislators proposed legislation to establish a commission to study the feasibility of creating a preschool program. **Utah's** proposed bill would create a pilot project using a home-based educational technology program to develop school readiness skills of preschool children. **Utah** lawmakers enacted a bill that appropriates state funds for Head Start for the first time. The **Idaho** legislature considered two bills on pre-k, including a bill to establish a state funded community-based preschool program for at-risk 4-year-olds. Idaho maintained its Head Start supplement with TANF funds at the same level of FY 2007. **South Dakota's** proposed legislation would establish standards for pre-k programs and certified personnel. Lawmakers also proposed a bill that would allow pre-k programs in public schools and funds through the state aid education formula for preschoolers in accredited pre-k programs. **Rhode Island's** bill proposes a preschool program for at-risk 3-and 4-year-olds in communities with low performing schools.

Lawmakers in **Mississippi** introduced a total of seven bills in both houses on prekindergarten, which all failed. One bill would have established a pilot pre-k program eighteen counties that meet certain criteria. Three of the bills proposed would have created a task force to study universal pre-k. Three bills proposed appropriated funding to fund the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2007, which set up a professional development system for early childhood caregivers and teachers. At the end of the session, legislators appropriated $3 million to support the governor's request to provide financial incentives for preschools to increase their educational content.

Other

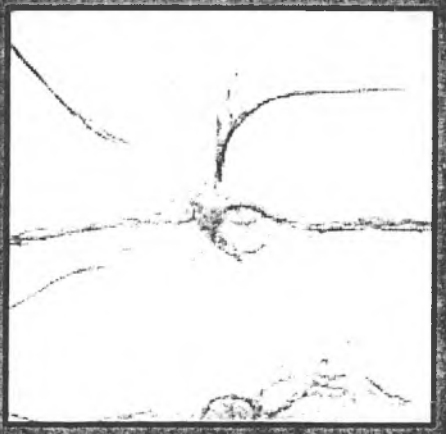
- Hawaii lawmakers proposed a bill that would require qualified preschool teachers and aides for its junior kindergarten program. Minnesota proposed funding for voluntary full-day kindergarten.
- A New Jersey bill would continue the property tax exemption for portions of tax exempt building for preschool.
- California legislators proposed a bill that would require the creation and funding of a preschool pilot program to develop and demonstrate methods for preschool information transfer to public schools.
- A New Mexico bill would provide for an education data warehouse to serve pre-k through post-graduate education.
- A Minnesota bill would make changes to the prekindergarten exploratory projects and the involvement of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation.

This document contains proposed and a few examples of enacted legislation from January 1, 2008 to April 21, 2008. The author used a variety of sources including state legislative websites and State Net, a legislative tracking database, for bill searches. Bills in carry-over states were highlighted when there was movement on the bill in 2008. This analysis is intended to provide examples of significant legislation in each state and does not include bills with technical changes. Please contact Julie Poppe at julie.poppe@ncsl.org for more information.

Denver Office: Tel: 303-364-7700 | Fax: 303-364-7800 | 7700 East First Place | Denver, CO 80230 |
Washington Office: Tel: 202-624-5400 | Fax: 202-737-1069 | 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 515 | Washington, D.C. 20001

The Science of Early Childhood Development

Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do



National Scientific Council
Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
www.developingchild.net

- Environmental protection policies need continuous updating and enforcement if they are to succeed in reducing prenatal and early childhood exposures to substances that have clearly documented toxic effects on the immature brain. These include mercury in fish, lead in soil, and organophosphates in insecticides, among many others.
- The fact that fetal exposure to alcohol is the leading preventable cause of mental retardation in the United States directs our attention to the need for new and creative efforts to reduce alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Concept 3: The interactive influences of genes and experience literally shape the architecture of the developing brain, and the active ingredient is the "serve and return" nature of children's engagement in relationships with their parents and other caregivers in their family or community.

The architecture of the brain is composed of highly integrated sets of neural circuits (i.e., connections among brain cells) that are "wired" under the continuous and mutual influences of both genetics and environment. Genes determine when specific brain circuits are formed and individual experiences then shape how that formation unfolds. This developmental process is fueled by a self-initiated, inborn drive toward competence that is an essential characteristic of human nature. Appropriate sensory input (e.g., through hearing and vision) and stable, responsive relationships build healthy brain architecture that provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and health. The most important relationships begin in the family but often also involve other adults who play important roles in the lives of young children, including providers of early care and education.

What scientists refer to as interaction, mutuality, and reciprocity can be understood as comparable to the process of "serve and return" in games such as tennis and volleyball. In early childhood development, serve and return happens when young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, words, gestures, and cries, and adults respond by getting in sync and doing the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing back at them, and the process continues back and forth. Another important aspect of the serve and return notion of interaction is that it works best when it is embedded in an ongoing relationship between a child and an adult who is responsive to the child's own unique individuality. Decades of research tell us that mutually rewarding interactions are essential prerequisites for the development of healthy brain circuits and increasingly complex skills.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Healthy communities foster the development of healthy children through the informal support that families provide for each other. When parents are inexperienced in child-rearing or overwhelmed by economic insecurity or threatening community conditions, effective parent education and family support programs can help them sustain the kinds of growth-promoting experiences that build child competence and shape healthy brain architecture. When informal supports and community programs are not sufficient, professional assistance can make an important difference in preventing the formation of faulty brain circuits and the developmental problems that follow. However, professionals with appropriate expertise are relatively limited in number, and their availability will require significant investment in specialized training,

particularly in the domains of maternal and early childhood mental health.

- Business executives, civic leaders, and government officials at all levels should work together to develop better private sector and public policies to provide parents with more viable choices about how to balance their work and parenting responsibilities after the birth of a baby or adoption of a child. During early infancy, when parent-child bonding and emerging attachments are so important, there is a pressing need to strike a better balance between options that support parents to care for their babies at home and those that provide affordable, quality child care for parents who return to work or attend school. This also calls our attention to the need for a more child-oriented perspective on the implications of mandated employment for mothers of very young children who receive welfare support.

Increasingly complex skills build on the more basic, foundational capabilities that precede them.

- The important influence of positive relationships in shaping the architecture of the developing brain indicates that all of society would benefit from better trained personnel in early child care settings, as well as reduced staff turnover rates which currently undermine the relationships that young children have with the adults who provide much of their daily care. Policy makers should examine the potential impact of alternative strategies for increasing the retention of qualified staff, such as competitive salaries and benefits, opportunities for career advancement linked to additional education, and greater respect for their work as a valued profession. Promising initiatives can be modeled after the successful investments made by the U.S. Department of Defense, which has a very high quality system of early care and education.

Concept 4: Both brain architecture and developing abilities are built "from the bottom up," with simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding for more advanced circuits and skills over time.

Brain circuits that process basic information are wired earlier than those that process more complex information. Higher level circuits build on lower level circuits, and adaptation at higher levels is more difficult if lower level circuits were not wired properly. Parallel to the construction of brain circuits, increasingly complex skills build on the more basic, foundational capabilities that precede them. For example, the ability to understand and then say the names of objects depends upon earlier development of the capacity to differentiate and reproduce the sounds of one's native language. And the circuits that underlie the ability to put words together to speak in phrases form a foundation for the subsequent mastery of reading a written sentence in a book. Stated in simple terms, circuits build on circuits and skill begets skill.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy makers should consider increasing the availability of parent education and family support programs that have been demonstrated to be effective. These services should begin soon after birth for mothers and fathers with limited education to help them create a home environment that provides the kind of rich language exposure, positive social interactions, and early literacy experiences that increase the probability that their child will enter school with the skills needed to succeed. When children are born under significantly adverse circumstances, immediate intervention is warranted, including prenatal support services where feasible. Effective programs can be provided through voluntary associations, community-based organizations, and employer-sponsored initiatives, as well as through government-funded services. Evidence-based supports that are provided earlier rather than later will have the greatest impact, as they help establish healthy brain architecture during the period when lower-level circuits are being constructed (even before birth), thereby creating a strong foundation on which higher-level skills can be built.

> Emotional well-being, social competence, and cognitive abilities together are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development.

- To help children with developmental impairments master the adaptive skills needed to realize their full potential, outreach efforts should be increased to enroll all eligible children in early intervention programs. When positive changes in development are promoted through interventions at a young age, they help build a sturdier foundation for the later achievement of higher level abilities. This underscores the urgent need to identify sensory impairments as soon after birth as possible, so that corrective devices (e.g., hearing aids and eyeglasses) as well as appropriate habilitative services can be provided during the time that basic brain architecture is being established.

Concept 5: Cognitive, emotional, and social capabilities are inextricably intertwined throughout the life course.

The brain is a highly integrated organ and its multiple functions operate in a richly coordinated fashion. Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development. Thus, oral language acquisition depends not only on adequate hearing, the ability to differentiate sounds, and the capacity to link meaning to specific words, but also on the ability to concentrate, pay attention, and engage in meaningful social interaction. Furthermore, the emotional health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community. Brain architecture and the immune system also interact as they mature, which influences all domains of development and health.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- When parents, informal community supports, and professionally staffed early childhood care and education programs all pay attention to young children's emotional and social needs as well as to their mastery of literacy and cognitive skills, they have maximum impact on the development of sturdy brain architecture.

Conversely, preschool policies and programs that place disproportionate emphasis on didactic approaches to academic skills are less likely to prepare young children to succeed in school than experiences that embed the promotion of literacy and numeracy in a rich environment of age-appropriate social interaction. The science of early childhood and early brain development clearly indicates that state and local officials should support the implementation of both child care standards and preschool curricula that promote a balanced and developmentally appropriate approach to the "whole child."

- Parents, child care providers, and early educators who are seeking help to manage problematic behavior in young children warrant serious attention. With increasing numbers of children being expelled from preschool programs and/or treated with drugs, greater investments are needed to confront the serious shortage of professionals who are qualified to address the behavioral and mental health needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Expanded opportunities for professional training, stronger incentives for clinicians to work with young children and their parents, and the promotion of consulting relationships among early childhood mental health experts, child care providers, and preschool teachers would provide important first steps toward closing the gap between what we know and what we do to deal with difficult behavior and prevent more serious mental health problems in the earliest years of life.

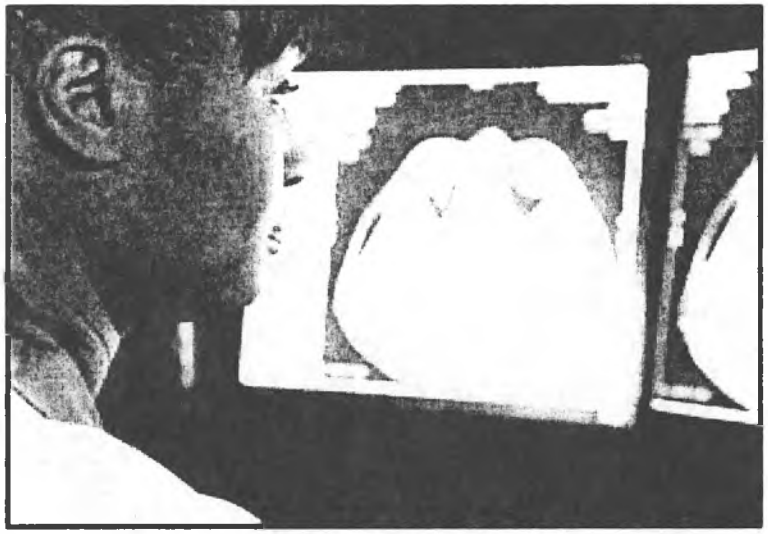
Concept 6: Toxic stress in early childhood is associated with persistent effects on the nervous system and stress hormone systems that can damage developing brain architecture and lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.

Activation of the body's stress management systems produces a variety of physiological reactions. These include an increase in heart rate, rise in blood pressure, and elevated levels of stress hormones (e.g., cortisol) and proteins associated with inflammation (e.g., cytokines). Such responses prepare the body to deal with threat (i.e., "fight or flight") and are essential to survival. Healthy development depends on the capacity of these systems to ramp up rapidly in the face of stress as well as their ability to return to baseline when the threat has been mastered. When these physiological responses remain activated at high levels over a significant period of time, they can have adverse effects. Most prominent among these are the consequences of persistently elevated cortisol levels, which can literally be toxic to developing brain architecture.

The experience of stress in early childhood can be either growth-promoting or seriously damaging, depending on the intensity and duration of the experience, individual differences in children's physiological responsiveness to stress, and the extent to which a supportive adult is available to provide individualized support to help the child deal with adversity. This can be understood within the context of three different kinds of stress, which lead to different outcomes.

- The first, called **positive stress**, is associated with moderate, short-lived physiological responses, such as brief increases in heart rate and blood pressure or mild elevations in cortisol or cytokine levels. Precipitants include a wide variety of normal early childhood experiences, such as the challenges of meeting new people, dealing with frustration, mastering separation, getting an immunization, and coping with adult limit-setting or discipline. Positive stress is an important and necessary aspect of healthy

development that occurs in the context of stable and supportive relationships, which help to bring levels of cortisol and other stress hormones back within a normal range and assist the child to develop a sense of mastery and self control.



- The second kind of stress experience, called **tolerable stress,** is associated with physiological responses that could disrupt brain architecture, but are relieved by supportive relationships that facilitate adaptive coping and thereby restore heart rate and stress hormone levels to their baseline. Precipitants include significant threats, such as the death or serious illness of a loved one, a frightening injury, parent divorce, a natural disaster (such as Hurricane Katrina), or an act of terrorism (such as 9-11). These kinds of experiences could have long term consequences but they are tolerable when they occur in a time-limited period in which supportive adults protect the child by reducing the stressful experience, thereby giving the brain an opportunity to recover from the potentially damaging effects of an overactive stress management system.
- The third and most threatening kind of stress experience, called **toxic stress,** is associated with strong and prolonged activation of the body's stress management systems in the absence of the buffering protection of adult support. Precipitants include extreme poverty in conjunction with continuous family chaos, recurrent physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, severe and enduring maternal depression, persistent parental substance abuse, or repeated exposure to violence in the community or within the family. The essential feature of toxic stress is the absence of consistent, supportive relationships to help the child cope and thereby bring the physiological response to threat back to baseline. In such circumstances, persistent elevations of stress hormones and altered levels of key brain chemicals produce an internal physiological state that disrupts the architecture of the developing brain and can lead to difficulties in learning, memory, and self-regulation. Continuous stimulation of the stress response system also can affect the immune system and other metabolic regulatory mechanisms, leading to a permanently lower threshold for their activation throughout life. As a result, children who experience toxic stress in early childhood may develop a lifetime of greater susceptibility to stress-related physical illnesses (such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and diabetes) as well as mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse). They also are more likely to exhibit health-damaging behaviors and adult lifestyles that undermine well-being.

Stress in early childhood can be either growth-promoting or seriously damaging.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy makers who administer early intervention programs should update their eligibility criteria, based on new brain research, and actively enroll infants and toddlers who are experiencing toxic stress for either preventive or therapeutic services, as needed. Two groups of children and families already known to public agencies are prime candidates for assessment. The first (which is currently mandated for referral by new federal legislation) includes all young children referred to the child welfare department for evaluation of suspected abuse or neglect. When circumstances require removal of a child from his or her home, it is especially critical that policies be in place and implemented consistently to make sure that the

establishment of a nurturing relationship with a new primary caregiver is given the highest priority. The second group that warrants closer attention is young children of mothers supported by welfare who have reached their time limits for public assistance and are unable to secure stable employment. Effective developmental intervention for both groups will require expanded access to child and adult mental health services, which are already burdened by demands that far exceed their capacity.

The essential feature of toxic stress is the absence of consistent, supportive relationships to help the child cope.

- Greater attention should be directed toward maternal depression, not only because it is a common adult mental health problem but also because it is a threat to the health and well-being of a young child. The prevention of developmental impairments in children of depressed mothers requires prompt diagnosis and specialized treatment of both the mother and the mother-child relationship. These findings direct our attention to the need for early detection of maternal depression in pediatric offices and in all programs that serve very young children, as well as the need for expanded clinical services that focus on the mother and child together.
- When accessible and affordable mental health services are available, they put a preventive system in place that catches children before they fall. Programs that target vulnerable young children within a family-centered model can be particularly effective, but the current gap between the supply and demand for skilled personnel requires a major investment in professional development. The costs of increased training and expanded services in early childhood mental health are substantial, but the money "saved" by not treating emotional problems in early childhood is likely to be modest in comparison to the greater long-term costs of serious adult mental illness and/or criminal behavior.

- Generally speaking, policies that focus on the delivery of evidence-based services for the most vulnerable young children will achieve greater financial return than services for children at lesser risk. To this end, issues of quality and cost must be viewed in the context of what a program is expected to do. Programs for families coping with severe depression, substance abuse, or violence must be staffed by skilled clinicians who require higher compensation and smaller case loads than basic supportive services for inexperienced mothers. When program resources match the needs of the children and families they are set up to serve, they can be very effective. When services are asked to address needs that are beyond their capacity to meet, they are likely to have little impact and are therefore too expensive, despite their low cost.

Concept 7: Creating the right conditions for early childhood development

is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age.

As the maturing brain becomes more specialized to assume more complex functions, it is less capable of reorganizing and adapting to new or unexpected challenges. Once a circuit is "wired," it stabilizes with age, making it increasingly difficult to alter. Scientists use the term "plasticity" to refer to the capacity of the brain to change. Plasticity is maximal in early childhood and decreases with age. Although "windows of opportunity" for skill development and behavioral adaptation remain open for many years, trying to change behavior or build new skills on a foundation of brain circuits that were not wired properly when they were first formed requires more work and is more "expensive." For the brain, this means that greater amounts of physiological energy are needed to compensate for circuits that do not perform in an expected fashion. For society, this means that remedial education, clinical treatment, and other professional interventions are more costly than the provision of nurturing, protective relationships and appropriate learning experiences earlier in life. Stated simply, getting things right the first time is more efficient and ultimately more effective than trying to fix them later.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- These findings direct our attention to the importance of informal family support and formal preventive services (when needed) for vulnerable children before they exhibit significant problems in behavior or development. When policy makers assure that all young children who are at high risk for poor outcomes are enrolled in high quality programs whose effectiveness has been documented, the returns are far greater than those achieved when only a subgroup of eligible children are served. At the same time, the extent to which some early concerns may be self-correcting maturational delays underscores the need to avoid premature labelling of vulnerable children and families who could benefit from early assistance.
- The basic principles of neuroscience and the process of human skill formation indicate that early intervention for the most vulnerable children will generate the greatest payback. Although the large number of children and families who could benefit from additional assistance will require significant increases in funding, extensive research indicates that investment in high quality interventions will generate substantial future returns through increased taxes paid by more productive adults and significant reductions in public expenditures for special education, grade retention, welfare assistance, and incarceration. Stated simply, the largest returns will be realized from effective services for the neediest children and families well before they enter school.

Getting things right the first time is more efficient and ultimately more effective than trying to fix them later.

- Research indicates that policy makers can achieve greater return on investments in early childhood education for children from families with low incomes and limited parent education than from remedial programs for adults with limited workforce skills. In fact, long-term studies show that model programs for three- and four-year-olds living in poverty can produce benefit-cost ratios as high as 17:1 and annualized internal rates of return of 18% over 35 years, with most of the benefits from these investments accruing to

the general public. While it is not realistic to assume that all scaled-up early childhood programs will provide such handsome returns, it is likely that benefit-cost ratios still will be considerably greater than 1:1.

- The essence of quality in early childhood services is embodied in the expertise, skills, and relationship-building capacities of their staff. The striking imbalance between the supply and demand for well-trained personnel in the field today indicates that substantial investments in training, recruiting, compensating, and retaining a high quality workforce must be a top priority for society.

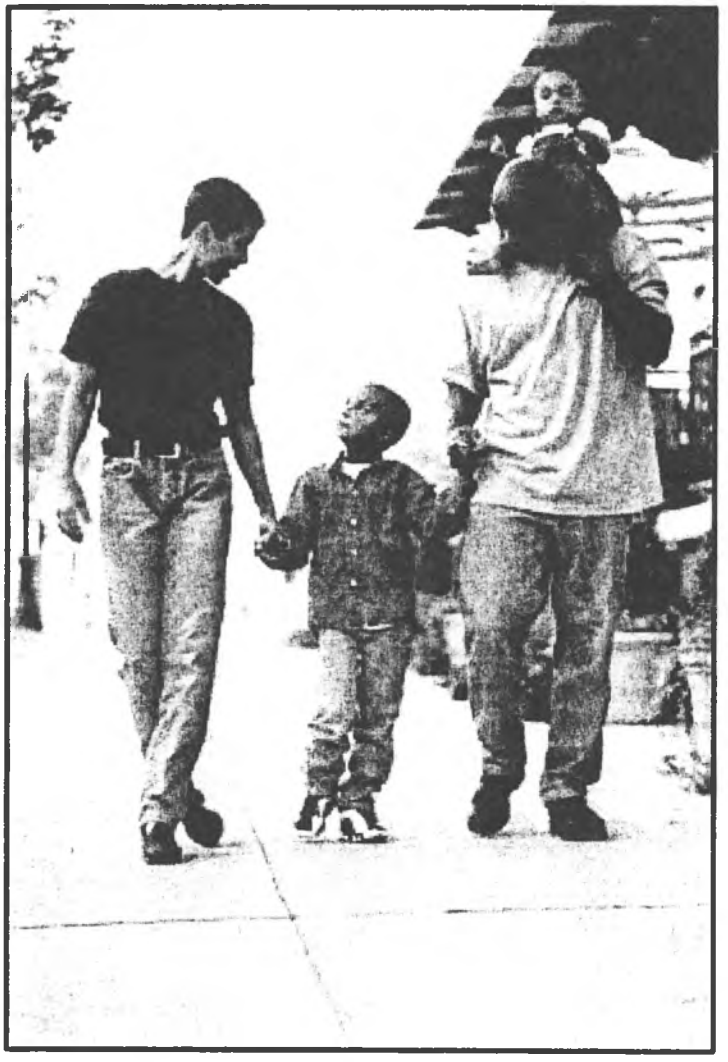
Responsible investments in services for young children and their families focus on benefits relative to cost. Inexpensive services that do not meet quality standards are a waste of money. Stated simply, sound policies seek maximum value rather than minimal cost.

Concluding Thoughts

Decades of rigorous science and centuries of common sense all converge on the core principles articulated in this paper. Within this context, the time has come to begin to close the gap between what we know (from systematic scientific inquiry across a broad range of disciplines) and what we do (through both public and private sector policies and practices) to promote the healthy development of all young children.

The need to address significant inequalities in opportunity, beginning in the earliest years of life, is both a fundamental moral responsibility and a critical investment in our nation's social and economic future. As such, it is a compelling task that calls for broad, bipartisan collaboration. And yet, debate in the policy arena often highlights ideological differences and value conflicts more than it seeks common interest. In this context, the science of early childhood development can provide a values-neutral framework for informing choices among alternative priorities and for building consensus around a shared plan of action. The well-being of our nation's children and the security of our collective future would be well-served by such wise choices and concerted commitment.

It is in this spirit that we, as scientists, offer this paper as a way to share what we know about how brain architecture is constructed and competence is built over time, beginning in the earliest years of life. We trust that the content of this document will inform the important work of citizens and policy makers to support families and communities in promoting the healthy development of young children, just as it will serve as a foundation on which the next generation of scientific knowledge will be built.



Selected Backround Readings

From the National Academy of Sciences

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine: *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, Shonkoff J., Phillips D. (eds.). Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC, National Academy Press. 2000.

From the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

Knudsen, E., Heckman, J., Cameron, J., Shonkoff, J.: "Economic, Neurobiological and Behavioral Perspectives on Building America's Future Workforce." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 2006; 103: 10155-10162.

Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships. (2004)
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No.1
http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp1.html

Children's Emotional Development is Built into the Architecture of their Brain. (2004)
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No. 2
http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp2.html

Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain. (2005)
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No. 3
http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp3.html

Early Exposure to Toxic Substances Damages Brain Architecture. (2006)
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No. 4
http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp4.html

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

50 Church St., 4th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
617-496-2070 • www.developingchild.net

Council Members

Contributing Members

Council Partners

Council Sponsors

Suggested citation: *The Science of Early Childhood Development.* (2007)
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. http://www.developingchild.net

Executive Summary

The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Stated simply, today's children will become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents. When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk.

Two recent developments have stimulated growing public discussion about the right balance between individual and shared responsibility for that strong foundation. The first is the explosion of research in neurobiology that clarifies the extent to which the interaction between genetics and early experience literally shapes brain architecture. The second is the increasingly recognized need for a highly skilled workforce and healthy adult population to confront the growing challenges of global economic competition and the rising costs of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for the aging baby boomers.

In an effort to identify those aspects of development that are accepted broadly by the scientific community, the National Scientific Council, based at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, brought together several of the nation's leading neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, pediatricians, and economists. This document presents their critical review of the existing literatures in their fields and a consensus about what we now know about development in the early childhood years. The objective of the Council is to move beyond the public's fascination with "the latest study" and focus on the cumulative knowledge of decades of research that has been subjected to rigorous and continuous peer review. The goal of this document is to help the public and its policy makers understand the core principles of that body of work that are now sufficiently accepted across the scientific community to warrant public action.

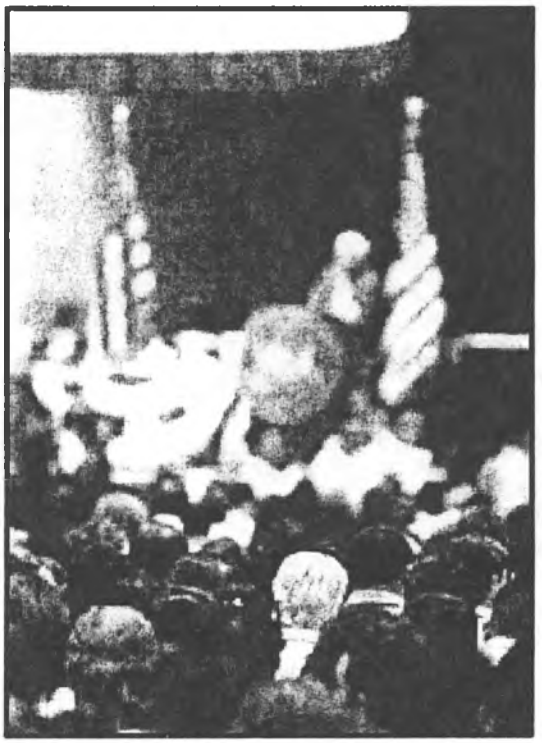
It is our hope and belief that better public understanding of the rapidly growing science of early childhood and early brain development can provide a powerful impetus for the design and implementation of policies and programs that could make a significant difference in the lives of all children. Without that understanding, investments that could generate significant returns for all of society stand the risk of being rejected or undermined. Thus, there is a compelling need for scientists to share with the public and its representatives an objective basis for choosing wisely among competing demands on limited resources.

This paper is designed to provide a framework within which this complex challenge can be addressed most effectively. Its goal is to promote an understanding of the basic science of early childhood development, including its underlying neurobiology, to inform both public and private sector investment in young children and their families. To this end, the paper presents a set of core developmental concepts that have emerged from decades of rigorous research in neurobiology, developmental psychology, and the economics of human capital formation, and considers their implications for a range of issues in policy and practice.

Core Concepts of Development

- Child development is a foundation for community development and economic development, as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.
- Brains are built over time.
- The interactive influences of genes and experience literally shape the architecture of the developing brain, and the active ingredient is the "serve and return" nature of children's engagement in relationships with their parents and other caregivers in their family or community.

- Both brain architecture and developing abilities are built "from the bottom up," with simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding for more advanced circuits and skills over time.
- Toxic stress in early childhood is associated with persistent effects on the nervous system and stress hormone systems that can damage developing brain architecture and lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.
- Creating the right conditions for early childhood development is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age.



Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy initiatives that promote supportive relationships and rich learning opportunities for young children create a strong foundation for higher school achievement followed by greater productivity in the workplace and solid citizenship in the community.
- Substantial progress toward this goal can be achieved by assuring growth-promoting experiences both at home and in community-based settings, through a range of parent education, family support, early care and education, preschool, and intervention services.
- When parents, informal community programs, and professionally staffed early childhood services pay attention to young children's emotional and social needs, as well as to their mastery of literacy and cognitive skills, they have maximum impact on the development of sturdy brain architecture and preparation for success in school.
- When basic health and early childhood programs monitor the development of all children, problems that require attention can be identified in a timely fashion and intervention can be provided.
- The basic principles of neuroscience and the technology of human skill formation indicate that later remediation for highly vulnerable children will produce less favorable outcomes and cost more than appropriate intervention at a younger age.
- The essence of quality in early childhood services is embodied in the expertise and skills of the staff and in their capacity to build positive relationships with young children. The striking shortage of well-trained personnel in the field today indicates that substantial investments in training, recruiting, compensating, and retaining a high quality workforce must be a top priority.
- Responsible investments in services for young children and their families focus on benefits relative to cost. Inexpensive services that do not meet quality standards are a waste of money. Stated simply, sound policies seek maximum value rather than minimal cost.

The need to address significant inequalities in opportunity, beginning in the earliest years of life, is both a fundamental moral responsibility and a critical investment in our nation's social and economic future. Thus, the time has come to close the gap between what we know (from systematic scientific inquiry across a broad range of disciplines) and what we do (through both public and private sector policies and practices) to promote the healthy development of all young children. The science of early childhood development can provide a powerful framework for informing sound choices among alternative priorities and for building consensus around a shared plan of action. The well-being of our nation's children and the security of its future would be well-served by such wise choices and concerted commitment.

The Science of Early Childhood Development

The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Stated simply, today's children will become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk.

Science has a lot to offer about how we as a community can use our collective resources most effectively and efficiently to build that strong foundation. When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we do not make wise investments in the earliest years, we will all pay the considerable costs of greater numbers of school-aged children who need special education and more adults who are under-employable, unemployable, or incarcerated.

Two recent developments have stimulated growing public discussion about the right balance between individual and shared responsibility for child well-being. The first is the explosion of research in neuroscience and other developmental sciences that highlights the extent to which the interaction between genetics and early experience creates either a sturdy or weak foundation for all the learning, behavior, and health that follow. The second is the increasingly recognized need for a highly skilled workforce and healthy adult population to confront the growing challenges of global economic competition and the rising costs of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for the aging baby boomers.

Most policy makers who face decisions among competing actions lack both the time and means to secure sound scientific advice about which investments offer the greatest potential value and what program elements are critical to their effectiveness. Those same policy makers must explain their decisions to business executives and civic leaders who hold a wide range of beliefs about child-rearing and developmental influences. Without better public understanding of the science of early childhood and brain development, policies and programs that could make a significant difference in the lives of children and all of society stand the risk of being rejected or undermined. Thus, there is a compelling need to educate the public and its representatives about how to choose wisely among competing demands.

When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship.

For some, the most important decisions focus on the allocation of resources among alternative approaches defined by need (e.g., universal versus targeted investments) or age (e.g., pre-K for four-year-olds versus parent support programs beginning at birth). Others move quickly to questions about the relative merits of different program models. Some are interested primarily in the results of benefit-cost analyses. Others view the reduction of inequalities in opportunity

as a moral imperative. All are united in the responsibility to assure that limited resources are invested wisely.

Regardless of the questions, it is essential that the answers be grounded in accurate scientific knowledge where it is available and sound professional judgment when it is needed. This is particularly important in the face of inevitable debates over alternative interpretations of the mountains of program evaluation data generated in a policy environment characterized by ideological differences about the means and ends of raising young children.

In October 2000, the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences released a report entitled *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development.* The final paragraph of that 588-page report presented a compelling challenge:

The charge to this committee was to blend the knowledge and insights of a broad range of disciplines to generate an integrated science of early childhood development. The charge to society is to blend the skepticism of a scientist, the passion of an advocate, the pragmatism of a policy maker, the creativity of a practitioner, and the devotion of a parent—and to use existing knowledge to ensure both a decent quality of life for all of our children and a promising future for the nation.

This paper is designed to provide a framework within which this complex charge can be addressed most effectively. Its goal is to promote an understanding of the basic science of early childhood development, including its underlying neurobiology, to inform both public and private sector investment in young children and their families. To this end, the paper presents a set of core developmental concepts that have emerged from decades of rigorous research in neuroscience, developmental psychology, and the economics of human capital formation—and that have survived a rigorous process of debate among the members of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child about what science can tell us about brain architecture and the foundations of learning, behavior, and health.

Core Concepts of Development

Concept 1: Child development is a foundation for community development and economic development, as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.

The early development of cognitive skills, emotional well-being, social competence, and sound physical and mental health builds a strong foundation for success well into the adult years. Beyond their short-term importance for positive school achievement, these abilities are critical prerequisites for economic productivity and responsible citizenship throughout life. All aspects of adult human capital, from work force skills to cooperative and lawful behavior, build on capacities that are developed during childhood, beginning at birth.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy initiatives that promote supportive relationships and rich learning opportunities for young children create a strong foundation for higher school achievement followed by greater productivity in the workplace and solid citizenship in the community throughout the adult years. Thus, current calls for greater emphasis on early literacy must not diminish the importance of attention to other essential capacities,

such as initiative, self-confidence, and persistence in learning, as well as the ability to work cooperatively and resolve conflict with peers—all of which are core characteristics of students in a successful school, citizens in a healthy community, and the workforce of a prosperous nation.

- All of society would benefit from a coordinated effort to reduce significant inequalities in the skills of young children at school entry. Substantial progress toward this goal can be achieved by assuring high quality early learning experiences both at home and in community-based settings, through a range of parent education, family support, early care and education, preschool, and intervention services.

All aspects of adult human capital, from work force skills to cooperative and lawful behavior, build on capacities that are developed during childhood, beginning at birth.

- This calls for a long-term investment by all segments of society—including the business community, private philanthropy, both faith-based and secular voluntary organizations, professional associations, and government at all levels—to work together to strengthen families, educate mothers and fathers, and provide professional assistance for those young children and their parents who need help. In fact, the future vitality of the institutions that each these sectors represent will depend on the wisdom of their investment, as today's children either take up society's important work and roles as adults or are ill-prepared and unable to do so.
- Effective early childhood policies and practices will not eliminate all social and economic inequalities. However, when successful interventions are followed by continuing investments throughout the childhood years, they increase the odds that many more children will grow up to be adults who contribute positively to their communities and raise healthy and competent children themselves, while many fewer will end up on public assistance or in jail.

Concept 2: Brains are built over time.

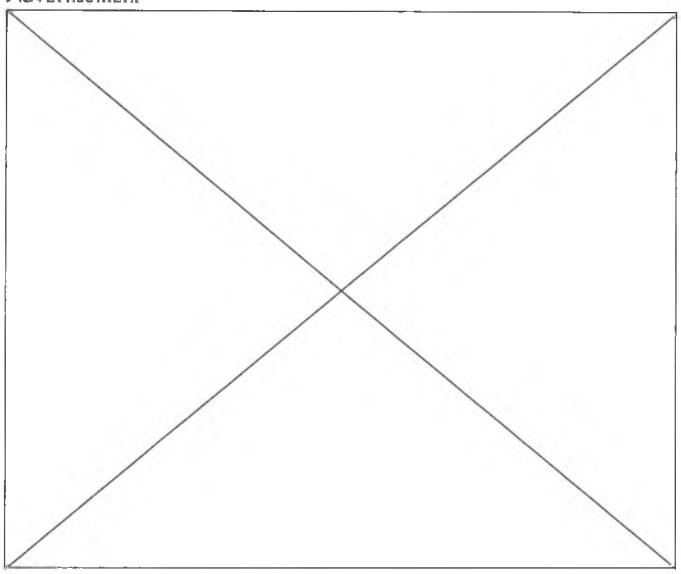
The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. Like the construction of a home, the building process begins with laying the foundation, framing the rooms, and wiring the electrical system in a predictable sequence, and it continues with the incorporation of distinctive features that reflect increasing individuality over time. Brain architecture is built over a succession of "sensitive periods," each of which is associated with the formation of specific circuits that are associated with specific abilities. The development of increasingly complex skills and their underlying circuits builds on the circuits and skills that were formed earlier. Through this process, early experiences create a foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health. A strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes and a weak foundation increases the odds of later difficulties.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- When systems are put in place to monitor the development of all children continuously over time, problems that require attention can be identified early and appropriate responses can be made. This can be accomplished by appropriately trained physicians, nurse practitioners, or developmental specialists within the context of regular health care, as well as through the ongoing observations of skilled providers of early care and education. Fully meeting this goal requires prenatal care for all pregnant women and sustained access to a consistent source of primary health care for all children.

The Washington Post

How teacher development could revolutionize our schools



By Bill Gates
Monday, February 28, 2011;

As the nation's governors gather in Washington for their annual meeting, they are grappling with more than state budget deficits. They're confronting deep education deficits as well.

Over the past four decades, the per-student cost of running our K-12 schools has more than doubled, while our student achievement has remained virtually flat. Meanwhile, other countries have raced ahead. The same pattern holds for higher education. Spending has climbed, but our percentage of college graduates has dropped compared with other countries.

To build a dynamic 21st-century economy and offer every American a high-quality education, we need to flip the curve. For more than 30 years, spending has risen while performance stayed relatively flat. Now we need to raise performance without spending a lot more.

When you need more achievement for less money, you have to change the way you spend. This year, the governors are launching "Complete to Compete," a program to help colleges get more value for the money they spend. It will develop metrics to show which colleges graduate more students for less money, so we can see what works and what doesn't.

In K-12, we know more about what works.

We know that of all the variables under a school's control, the single most decisive factor in student achievement is excellent teaching. It is astonishing what great teachers can do for their students.

Yet compared with the countries that outperform us in education, we do very little to measure, develop and reward excellent teaching. We have been expecting teachers to be effective without giving them feedback and training.

To flip the curve, we have to identify great teachers, find out what makes them so effective and transfer those skills to others so more students can enjoy top teachers and high achievement.

To this end, our foundation is working with nearly 3,000 teachers in seven urban school districts to develop fair and reliable measures of teacher effectiveness that are tied to gains in student achievement. Research teams are analyzing videos of more than 13,000 lessons - focusing on classes that showed big student gains so it can be understood how the teachers did it. At the same time, teachers are watching their own videos to see what they need to do to improve their practice.

Our goal is a new approach to development and evaluation that teachers endorse and that helps all teachers improve.

The value of measuring effectiveness is clear when you compare teachers to members of other professions - farmers, engineers, computer programmers, even athletes. These professionals are more advanced than their predecessors - because they have clear indicators of excellence, their success depends on performance and they eagerly learn from the best.

The same advances haven't been made in teaching because we haven't built a system to measure and promote excellence. Instead, we have poured money into proxies, things we hoped would have an impact on student achievement. The United States spends $50 billion a year on automatic salary increases based on teacher seniority. It's reasonable to suppose that teachers who have served longer are more effective, but the evidence says that's not true. After the first few years, seniority seems to have no effect on student achievement.

Another standard feature of school budgets is a bump in pay for advanced degrees. Such raises have almost no impact on achievement, but every year they cost $15 billion that would help students more if spent in other ways.

Perhaps the most expensive assumption embedded in school budgets - and one of the most unchallenged - is the view that reducing class size is the best way to improve student achievement. This belief has driven school budget increases for more than 50 years. U.S. schools have almost twice as many teachers per student as they did in 1960, yet achievement is roughly the same.

What should policymakers do? One approach is to get more students in front of top teachers by identifying the top 25 percent of teachers and asking them to take on four or five more students. Part of the savings could then be used to give the top teachers a raise. (In a 2008 survey funded by the Gates Foundation, 83 percent of teachers said they would be happy to teach more students for more pay.) The rest of the savings could go toward improving teacher support and evaluation systems, to help more teachers become great.

Compared with other countries, America has spent more and achieved less. If there's any good news in that, it's that we've had a chance to see what works and what doesn't. That sets the stage for a big change that everyone knows we need: building exceptional teacher personnel systems that identify great teaching, reward it and help every teacher get better.

It's the thing we've been missing, and it can turn our schools around.

The writer is co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Alaska Pilot Pre-Kindergarten Project (AP3)

Project Evaluation – Year One

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

January 3, 2011

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Over the past few decades, participation in preschool programs has become much more common, and public support for these programs has grown dramatically. Child development research, neuroscience, and program evaluations demonstrate that the experiences a child has between birth and age five shape the developing brain's architecture and directly influence later life outcomes, including economic stability, work productivity, and mental health. Positive early childhood experiences also improve developmental and school readiness outcomes, increase K - 12 achievement, and contribute to higher rates of high school graduation.

Positive early childhood learning experiences contribute to the following:

29% higher high school graduation rates

20% higher college attendance

70% lower crime incidence

20% lower welfare dependence

Early childhood policies vary across states, as well as across program options, such as private child care, preschools, Head Start, and state pre – kindergarten. Policy makers face key questions about the value of preschool education, whom it should serve, and which program designs are the best to meet our state's needs.

In addition to its primary purpose of providing project evaluation information on the Alaska Pilot Pre-Kindergarten Project (AP3), this document provides a brief review of some of the last decade's early childhood education initiatives in Alaska, as well as a description of grantee and site selection for this project. An outline of each grantee's approach to the project and the partnerships they have formed to provide for its success is included.

- The Anchorage School District (ASD) provided two new complete classrooms in partnership with Kids Corps Inc. (KCI) Head Start. Both are federally recognized Head Start classrooms being jointly provided by the ASD & KCI in a school district setting.
- The Bering Strait School District (BSSD) project is a partnership among three educational agencies: BSSD, Kawerak, Inc. Head Start, and RurAL CAP Head Start. All four BSSD programs are housed in Head Start settings and jointly provided by the district and either of the two Head Start programs.
- The Juneau School District (JSD) provided two complete classrooms in partnership with the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) Head Start.

Both are federally recognized Head Start classrooms being jointly provided by the JSD & CCTHITA.

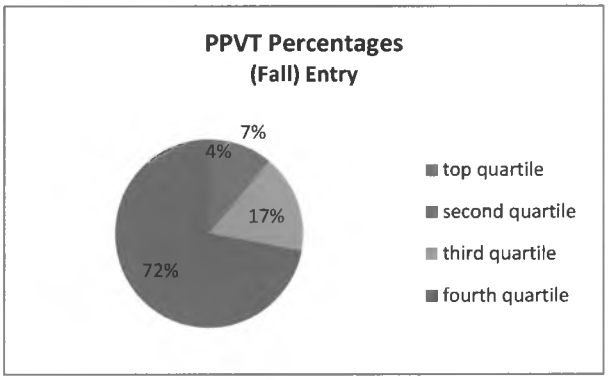
- The Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) provided services to children in one school-based classroom in Bethel.
- In Nome, the program ran two classrooms: one in the Nome Preschool (a private entity) and the other a Kawerak Head Start. Both are run jointly with the Nome Public Schools.
- Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD) provided two new preschool classrooms. One was a district-run program in Allakaket (building in one additional hour of Athabascan language immersion daily as requested by the community). The other new classroom in Minto was in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Head Start. They also worked in Huslia, and Kaltag with TCC Head Start programs.

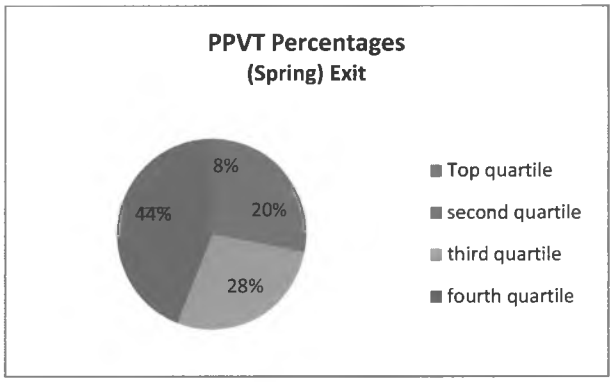
While the majority of this document evaluates the child outcome data from the first year of the Alaska Pilot Pre-Kindergarten Project, it also provides information on programmatic outcomes from each grantee, Department of Education and Early Development outcomes, State outcomes, and conclusions concerning what we have learned so far through this project.

Results: State Aggregate

PPVT Child Outcomes

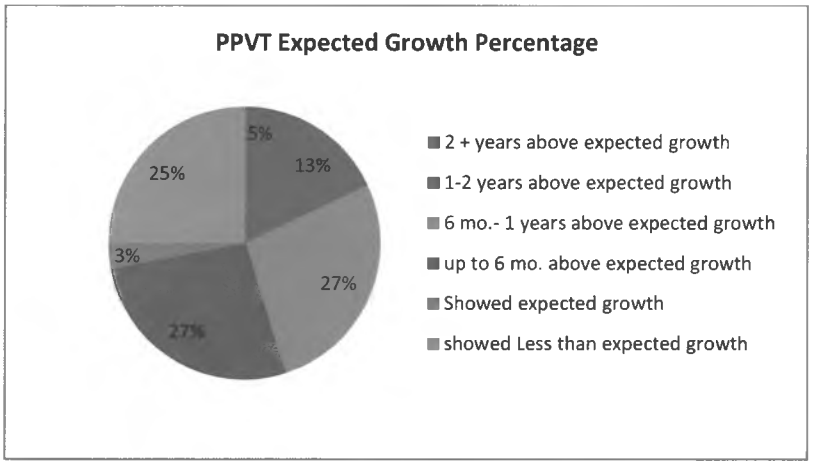
The Peabody Picture Voacabulary Test (PPVT) provides information on vocabulary and receptive language development.





The charts illustrate the large numbers of children entering the AP3 program significantly below their same age peers nationally and the numbers of children showing significant improvement in percentile ranking by the end of the year compared to same age peers nationally. 17% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two, almost tripling the percentage of children at or above the 51st percentile. 28% of the children have moved out of the bottom quartile.

The PPVT data in terms of Age Equivalence shows a greater depth of growth of the students' vocabulary. The Age Equivalence data shows information on the children's, and the programs', success in closing gaps in vocabulary development.



The chart illustrates children's actual growth compared to the expected growth for the time between assessments.

72% of students have shown above-expected growth.

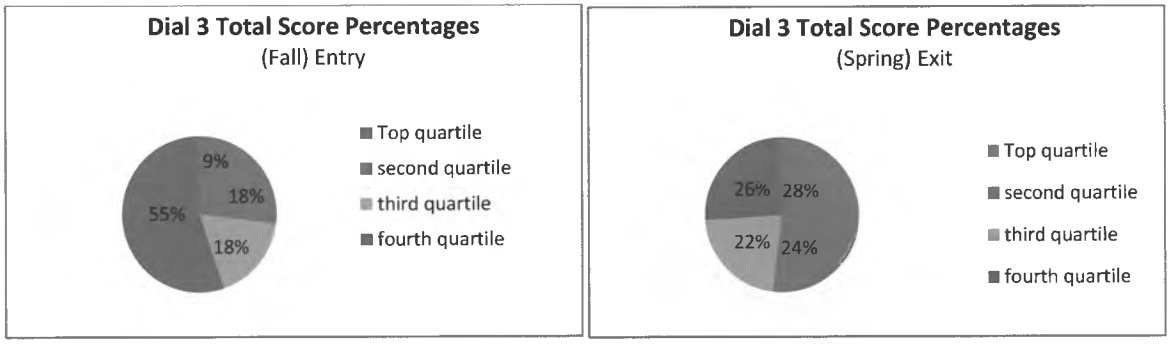
DIAL – 3 State Aggregate Results

The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL -3) provides information on three areas of development in relation to school readiness:

1. Motor Development
2. Concept Development
3. Language Development

A total score based on the scores in all three areas is also given. Dial - 3 data shows how children compare to their peers nationally in terms of percentile.

Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



The charts above illustrate the large numbers of children entering the AP3 program significantly below their same age peers nationally and the numbers of children showing significant improvement in percentile ranking compared to same age peers nationally.

28% of the children are now in the top quartile, more than tripling the percentage of children at or above the 76th percentile.

29% of the children have moved out of the bottom quartile. Over half of the children who started the program in the bottom quartile have moved up.

Results: State Aggregate

ECERS – R Program Outcomes

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R) is designed for use in classroom-based early childhood care and education programs aged two to six years. It is organized into the seven scales below:

State Aggregate	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.76	4.69
Space and Furnishings	3.06	4.08
Personal Care Routines	2.64	3.33
Language-Reasoning	4.10	5.43
Activities	3.16	4.33
Interaction	4.54	4.80
Program Structure	4.26	5.41
Parents and Staff	5.44	6.13

Each program is scored on a seven-point scale, with benchmarks established for 1 = Inadequate, 3 = Minimal, 5 = Good, and 7 = Excellent. Programs that pass some of the items that are part of the benchmark for a 3, but not all of them, are scored a 2 on that subscale. Similarly programs that fall between good and excellent are scored a 6.

These scores represent significant programmatic growth. The AP3 programs began the year above minimal and ended approaching good (almost a full point of improvement in less than a year's time).

Project Results Year-One

Year-one data has shown an extremely high need, with the majority of the children coming to the program behind typically-developing peers. High numbers of children in the program have exceeded expected growth, and there has been significant or higher program growth. The data, coupled with the observations, facilitation, and training provided by the Department as well as anecdotal information from the field, leads to the following conclusions:

- The data shows a significant need for quality early childhood programs.

- While the pre-k children are making large strides in their development and a large number have closed the gap, there are still children performing below expectations. It will be important to see the growth they have accomplished continue through kindergarten, first and second grade so that all our children will have closed the gaps by their third grade assessments.

- Unprecedented levels of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration between Head Start programs and school districts are leading to improved alignment, transition and common planning & training.

While this is a large first step, there is still much more that can be accomplished.

- Year 2 will seek continuous improvement in both child and program outcomes. Child outcome focus will be placed on the children's language and concept development. Program development, beyond the needs expressed in the ECERS data, will also focus on cross-system connections looking to:

    1. Strengthen alignment with and transition to Kindergarten and K-12;
    2. Improve outreach to communities and the programs that serve young children under four years of age;
    3. Share what is working for programs in the AP3 with each other and with other early childhood programs: and
    4. Seek continuation of funding to expand Alaska's AP3 with a focus on both providing for un-served populations and developing better partnerships with a larger number of school districts and/or early childhood programs and systems.

At the state system level we will seek improvement in two directions:

- Within EED to improve integration of early childhood across existing structures:
  1. Teaching and Learning Support;
  2. Assessment;
  3. State System of Support;
  4. Libraries, Archives, and Museums;

- Across departments to:
  1. avoid duplication of services;
  2. integrate data and information on early childhood;
  3. conduct state-wide needs assessments;
  4. assess the capacity and need for professional development.

EED will continue to work to provide support, training, and technical assistance and facilitation to aid program improvement in any and all areas needed.

Introduction

A Brief History of Early Childhood Initiatives in Alaska

In 2001, the Departments of Education & Early Development and Health & Social Services published "Building Blocks" to guide Alaska's initiative looking at the challenges facing young children and their families in Alaska and developing a framework to help address those challenges. After securing a federal grant, the state established the System for Early Education Development (SEED), the main focus of which was to develop a pathway to credentialing for staff working with children in early care and education settings. The Career Ladder that was created is reviewed and revised regularly and continues to serve the early care and education workforce. SEED also funded assistance to existing early childhood systems to improve the quality of service provided to children and families. Through SEED, Alaska's Head Start programs increased the number of teaching staff with Associate of Arts Degrees from 13% to just fewer than 40%. Additionally, Head Starts and childcare increased the number of staff members receiving CDA Certificates.

With the creation of No Child Left Behind and Good Start Grow Smart at the Federal level in 2002, Alaska began its efforts to define the state's expectations concerning the development of young children from birth to kindergarten entry. Gathering Alaskans from around the state to look across all domains of development, EED developed Early Learning Guidelines for the State of Alaska. These guidelines are still in use and are required for all pre-elementary programs in the state that receive state or federal funding. Training is available and being provided around the state on their use in early care and education centers and classrooms, as well as with community groups. Additionally, parent activity booklets have been developed in multiple languages based on the guidelines.

In 2003, EED received a federal grant for the Alaska Community Preschool Project (ACPP). EED provided funding to school districts and encouraged partnerships with existing early childhood care and education providers. This funding allowed districts to choose to work alone or to partner to effect quality improvement in both the district and partner programs. Specific curricula, approaches, and training were required in this project.

Starting in 2004, the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services received a federal grant to support the development of a state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems plan. The Inter-departmental Early Childhood Coordination Council worked to put the plan together covering the required areas of Medical Home & Health, Mental Health and Social Emotional Development, Early Care and Learning, and Family Support and Parenting Education. The plan was published in 2006 and has been disseminated to the early care and learning field and is available on the Web through the Department of Health & Social Services.

In 2005, the *Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force* was created. This task force was the beginning of a public/private partnership for Alaska's early childhood investment. The task force focused on developing recommendations for early childhood in the home, out of the home in early care and education settings, and on looking ahead to long-term sustainability for investment from private, nonprofit, foundation, and government sources.

As the task force completed its work, the public/private partnership began the implementation phase as "Best Beginnings," working to mobilize people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed. Using funds from businesses, foundations, nonprofits, government, and individuals, Best Beginnings provides supports for parents as a child's first teacher, advocates for high quality affordable and accessible child care and early learning programs for all families who want them, and works to make early learning a priority for Alaskans. Best Beginnings has also partnered with EED on the development of the parent activity booklets.

In 2008 & 2009, the state funded expansion grants for Head Start. This initiative was focused on utilizing the existing infrastructure of Alaska Head Start programs to maximize the number of eligible families and children served in our federally recognized Head Start programs.

Alaska Pilot Pre-Kindergarten Project (AP3)

In April of 2009, the Alaska Legislature provided EED with $2,000,000.00 in General Funds for a pilot pre-kindergarten project. EED focused on how the entrance of a new and large player like state-funded school districts coming into the early care and learning field could create a sea of change that would raise the tide of early childhood quality for all boats. The application process was built on the lessons learned in the ACPP model and offered bonus points in the Request for Application (RFA) for partnerships with other entities and for those willing to participate in Department-offered training. EED also required the use of certified teachers with an early childhood background along with specific pre- and post-assessments for outcomes for both the children and the program.

Selection of AP3 Grantees and Sites

Requests for Applications (RFAs) were sent to all Alaska school districts in late April of 2009. Twenty-four districts submitted letters of intent to EED in early May. Twelve of those districts submitted full applications in late May. In early June a five-person review team comprised of Department staff, University of Alaska staff, and Best Beginnings staff with early childhood backgrounds read, scored, deliberated and debated the merits of the applications. After setting aside $300,000.00 for use with Intervention districts (as stated in the RFA), EED negotiated amounts with the top six scoring districts to enable the top half of the applicants to receive grant

awards. The lists of interested districts, those who submitted applications, and those funded are below.

Intent to Apply Forms Received

1. Alaska Gateway Borough School District
2. Anchorage School District
3. Annette Island School District
4. Bering Strait School District
5. Chatham School District
6. Cordova School District
7. Denali Borough School District
8. Galena City School District
9. Juneau School District
10. Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District
11. Kodiak Island Borough School District
12. Lower Kuskokwim School District
13. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
14. Nome Public Schools
15. North Slope Borough School District
16. Northwest Arctic Borough School District
17. Pribilof School District
18. Southeast Island School District
19. Southwest Region School District
20. St. Mary's School District
21. Valdez City Schools
22. Wrangell City Schools
23. Yukon Flats School District
24. Yukon-Koyukuk School District

RFA's Received and Funded

1. Anchorage School District
2. Bering Strait School District
3. Juneau School District
4. Lower Kuskokwim School District
5. Nome Public School
6. Yukon-Koyukuk School District

RFA's Received but not Funded

1. Alaska Gateway Borough
2. Galena City School
3. Ketchikan Gateway Borough
4. Kodiak Island Borough
5. Northwest Arctic Borough
6. Valdez City School

Each district outlined the specific sites, partnerships, and approaches in its application. Fifteen classrooms were supported in this initial pilot project under these grantees. EED initially projected serving approximately 300 children. However the actual number served under these grantees was 200. Additionally EED served 145 students in two intervention districts as described on page 50 of this report for a total of 345 students served. While there was a large diversity of populations served across the AP3, the main groups of children served were Alaska Native children and/or children near, at, or below poverty level. There were a variety of ethnicities represented as well as children with special needs.

Anchorage School District (ASD) provided two new complete classrooms in partnership with Kids Corps Inc. (KCI) Head Start. Both are federally recognized Head Start classrooms being jointly provided by the ASD and KCI in a school district setting. They worked to measurably and significantly reduce the student achievement gap at two Title I elementary schools, Creekside Park and Willow Crest, by collaborating to provide a high quality, comprehensive pre-kindergarten program for 32 children and their families. ASD and KCI bring complementary funding sources and expertise to the project that creates a higher quality pre-school program than either organization could develop independently. The AP3 project met federal Head Start Performance standards and increased school readiness, as defined by Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELG), for children most at risk for school failure.

Bering Strait School District (BSSD) partnered with three educational agencies: BSSD, Kawerak, Inc. Head Start, and RurAL CAP Head Start. All four BSSD programs are housed in Head Start settings and are jointly provided by the district and either of the two Head Start programs. Building upon existing partnerships with both Head Start Programs through this project, BSSD provided ECE teachers for the Head Start programs in four rural villages. The Head Start programs, which met federal standards, implemented the Success for All Curiosity Corner curriculum and other components that supported the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines. The ECE teachers in Gambell, Shishmaref, St. Michael, and Stebbins worked with the Head Start staff in educating the preschool children. They acted as role models of effective teaching practices, and, together with the Head Starts, they provided and shared in on-going professional development for all staff.

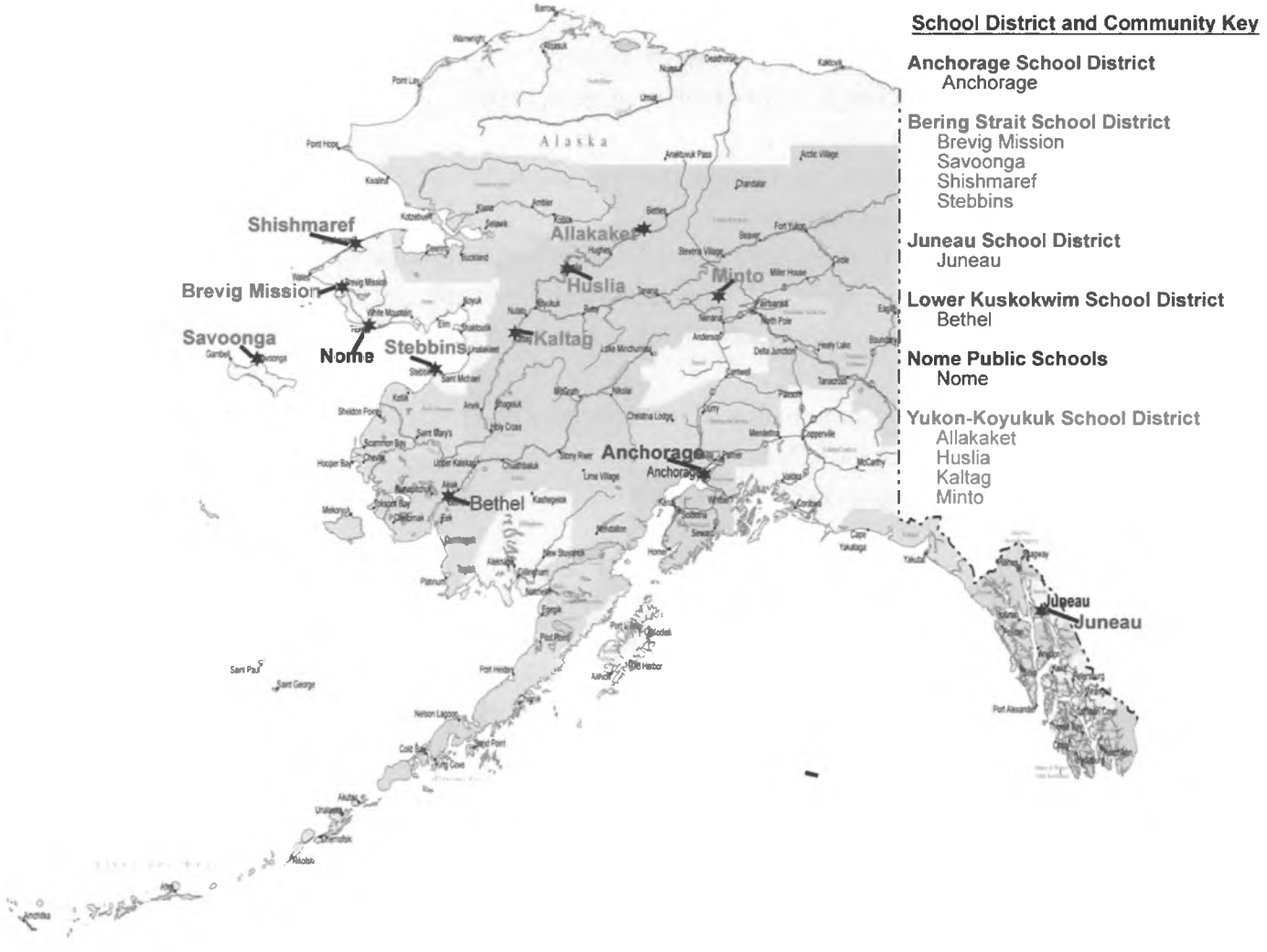
Juneau School District (JSD) provided two complete classrooms in partnership with the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) Head Start. Both are federally recognized Head Start classrooms being jointly provided by the JSD & CCTHITA. Tlingit and Haida Head Start is the only center-based preschool provider in Juneau serving low socioeconomic children and families. The project includes two Title I elementary school sites — Gastineau Elementary, where JSD added a full time certified teacher with strong ECE background, and Glacier Valley Elementary School, where the program matches the model at Gastineau Elementary and 20 additional Head Start eligible children were served by opening a preschool there.

Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) provided services to children in one school-based classroom in Bethel. All children and parents had access to a parent resource center, parent meetings, and trainings. The preschool staff was qualified to work with children of this age. In addition they received training, support, and curriculum resources to meet the academic, social, emotional, cognitive, health, safety, and cultural needs of the children. The program blended what is known about brain development and child development with holding traditional child rearing practices with respect, all to the end of meeting each child's needs for safe, healthy, meaningful individual development, as well as, social and kindergarten readiness.

Nome ran two classrooms -- one in the Nome Preschool (a private entity) and the other a Kawerak Head Start. Both are run jointly with NPS. The program's two certified teachers worked with families with eligible children, particularly those who might not otherwise have considered sending their children to preschool. Using comprehensive assessments, the ECE teachers screened applicants to select the children at the highest risk of school failure. In collaboration with existing staff, the certified ECE teachers used supplemental intervention techniques and materials when focusing specifically on the targeted students in small groups. Parent support and involvement, regular home visits, open-door policies, and monthly family nights were key components of the program. They used ongoing assessment across developmental domains and adjusted instruction accordingly.

Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD) provided the widest range of models within one partnership in the form of two new preschool classrooms -- one by itself in Allakaket (building in one additional hour of Athabascan language immersion daily as requested by the community), and the other new classroom in Minto was in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Head Start. They also worked in Huslia and Kaltag with TCC Head Start providing materials and common assessments to the existing federal Head Start programs. Together YKSD and TCC Head Start worked to implement a comprehensive Pre-K program that integrated activities across the five domains of the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines.

Location & Description of AP3 Programs



Determining Project Outcomes

The AP3 project was designed to effect positive development on a number of levels. Positive outcomes in the areas listed below will demonstrate success. The stronger the growth, the greater the success.

1. Child Outcomes
    - On nationally recognized assessments
    - Through observation
2. Program Outcomes
    - On nationally recognized assessments
    - On the use of the data gathered to drive decision-making for both the children and the program
    - On the level of collaboration between partners
    - On the types of change in how both systems operate
3. EED Outcomes
    - The level of outreach, facilitation, training, and technical assistance provided to grant recipients and their partners
    - The sharing and dissemination of information to AP3 programs, among AP3 programs, with the early childhood field, with the board, and across EED
    - The level of integration of early childhood in the systems and structures of EED
4. State Outcomes
    - The sharing and dissemination of information with the Governor's Office, the Legislature, other state Departments, and the public
    - The level of integration of early childhood in other state structures and systems

Determining Child Outcomes

The child outcome data for the AP3 sites have been generated through the use of the two following instruments: The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning. General information, reliability, and validity data as reported in the literature about all instruments follows.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Third Edition (PPVT)

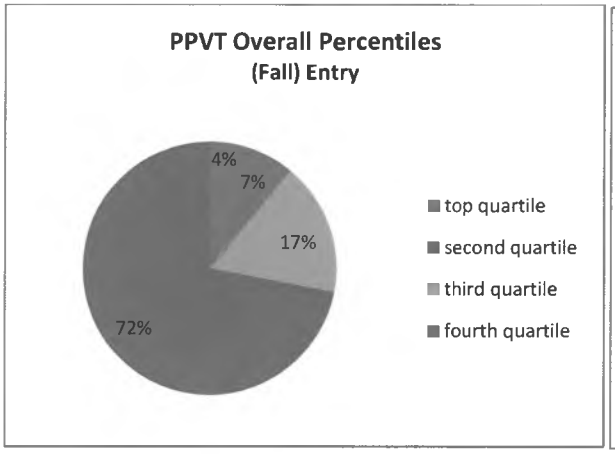
The PPVT is a norm-referenced test designed to assess children's scholastic aptitude in terms of verbal ability from age 2 years 6 months, to age 7 years and 4 months. The PPVT is an English language assessment that has been in use with large numbers of early childhood settings for many

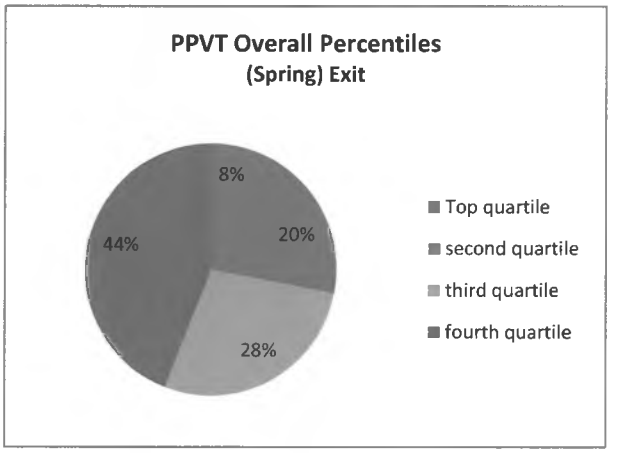
years. It is known for its correlation to later school success. This assessment allows for national comparison and for growth model use in a pre and post methodology.

State Aggregate

PPVT Child Outcomes

The PPVT provides information on vocabulary and receptive language development.



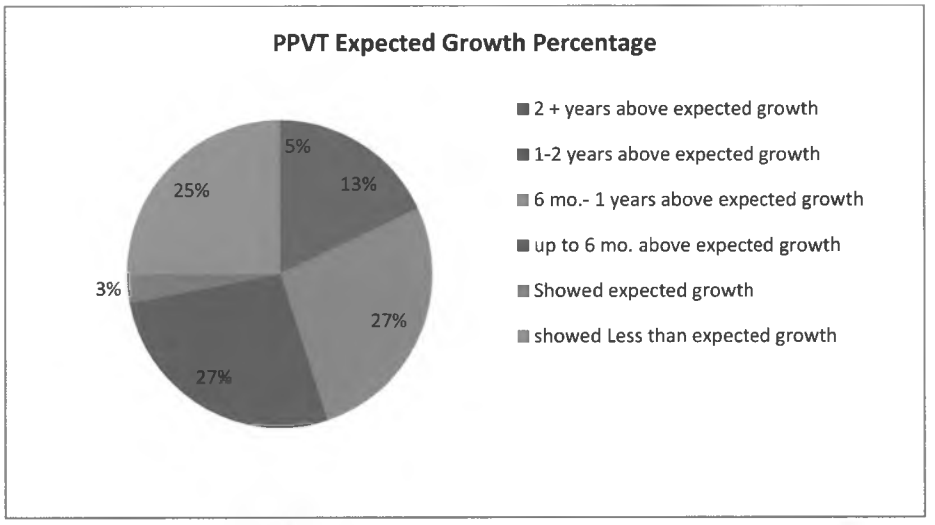


The charts illustrate the large numbers of children entering the AP3 program significantly below their same age peers nationally and the numbers of children showing significant improvement in percentile ranking compared to same age peers nationally.

17% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two, almost tripling the percentage of children at or above the 51st percentile.

28% of the children have moved out of the bottom quartile.

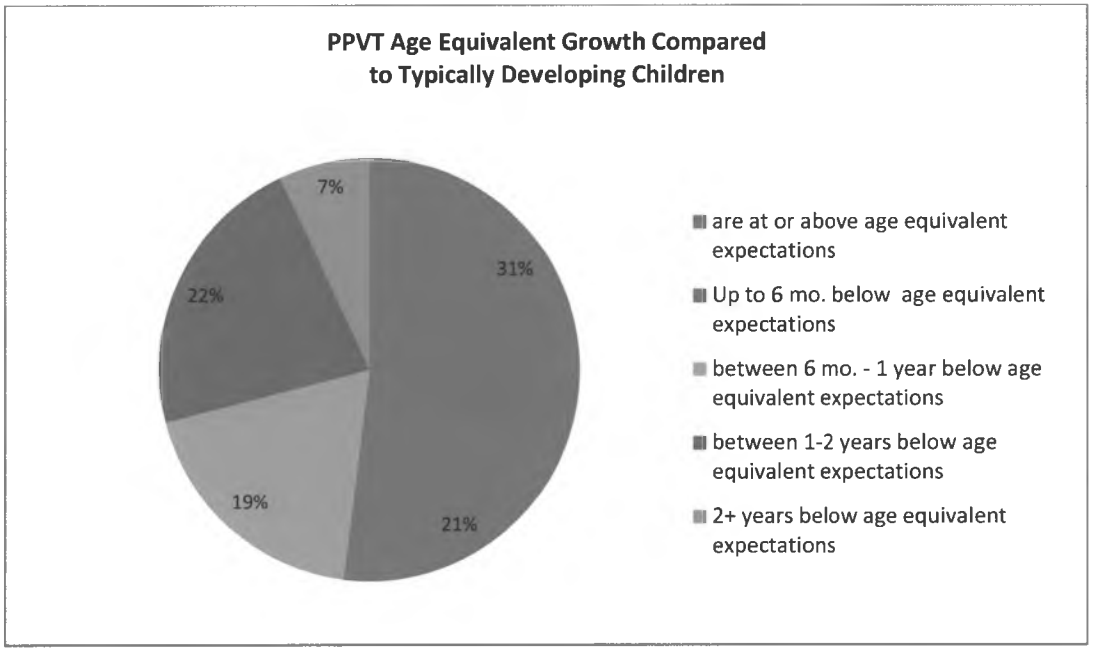
In terms of Age Equivalence, the PPVT data shows greater depth of growth of the students' vocabulary. The Age Equivalence data shows information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in vocabulary development.



The chart above illustrates children's actual growth compared to the expected growth for the time between assessments.

72% of students have shown above-expected growth.

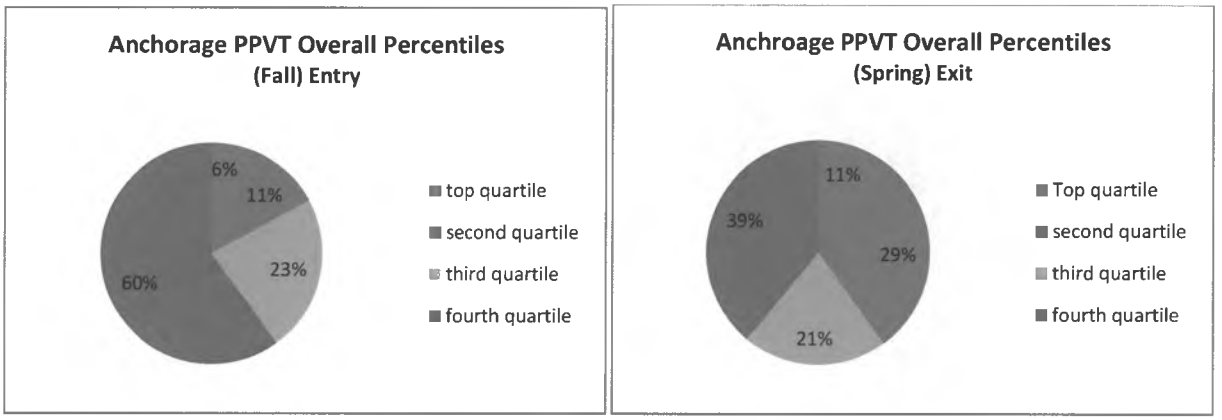
Additional pre and post PPVT analysis:



This final analysis illustrates the students' growth in relation to an age-equivalent typically-developing child on a national level.

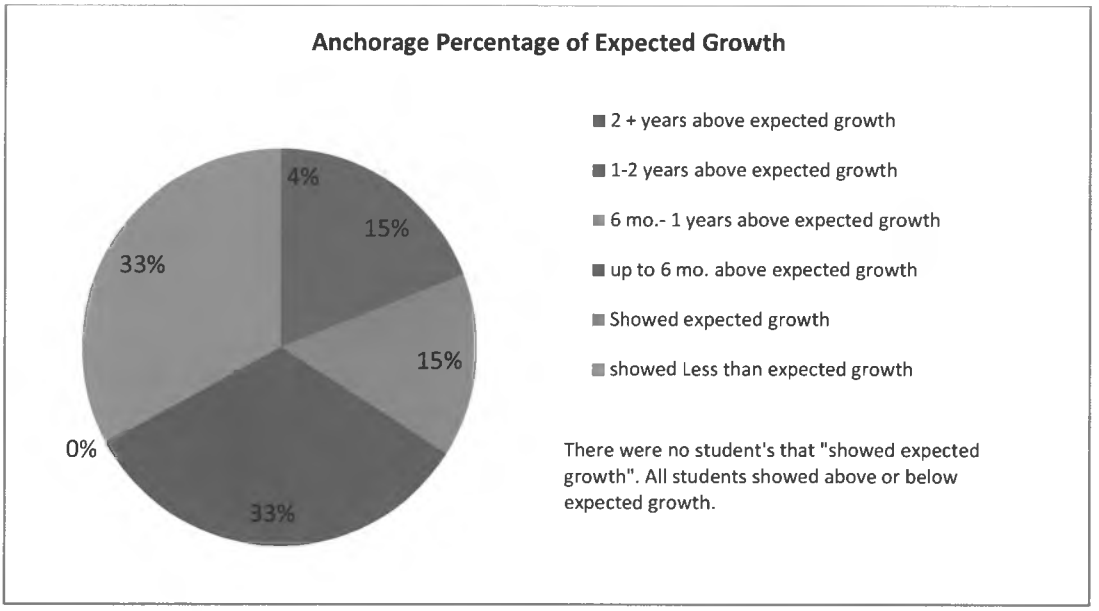
PPVT Results by District

Anchorage School District



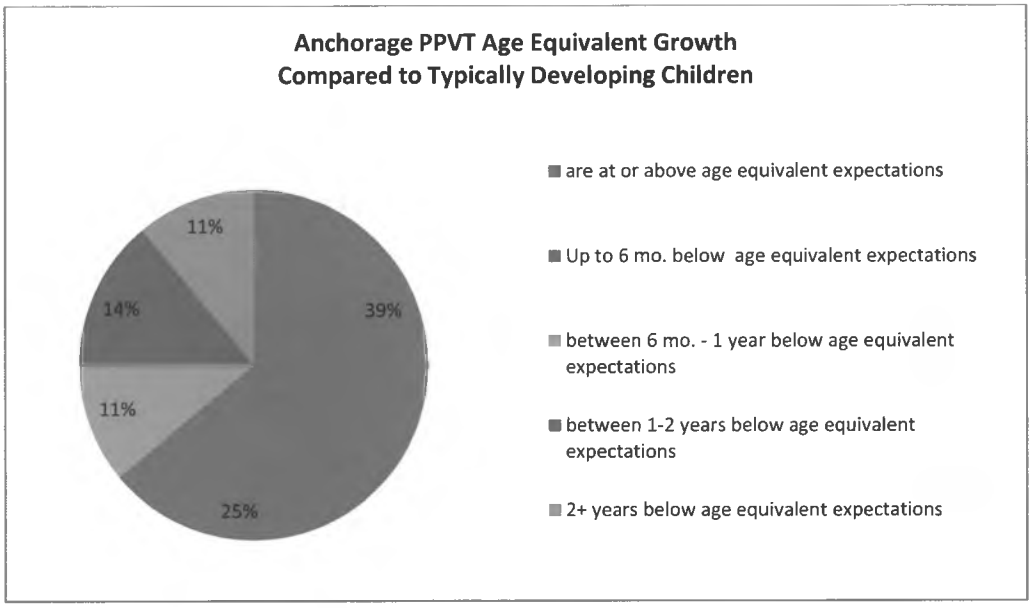
23% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two.

Age Equivalence data below shows information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in development.

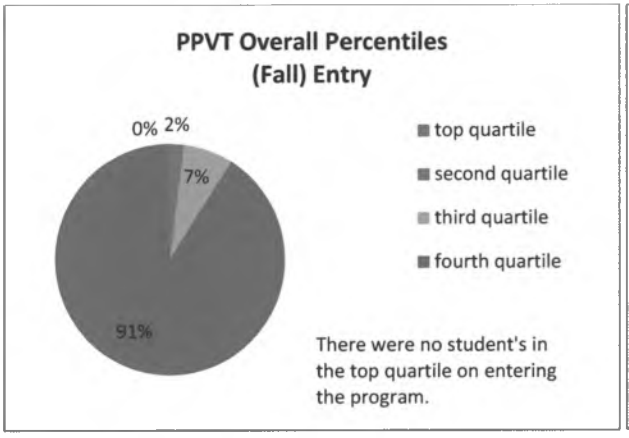


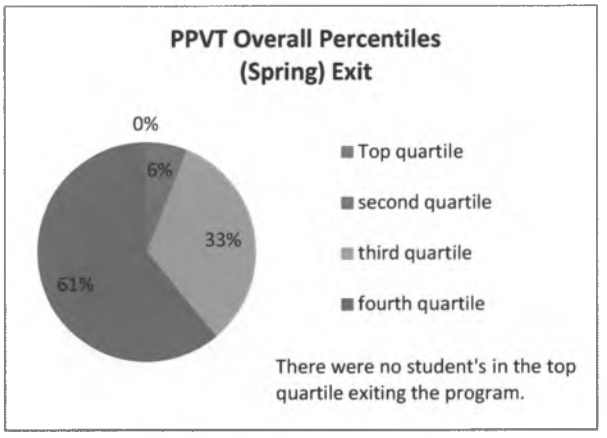
67% of the ASD four year olds showed above expected gains (more months of growth in vocabulary than months in between the pre and post tests).

One final analysis shows the students' growth in relation to an age-equivalent, typically developing child on a national level.



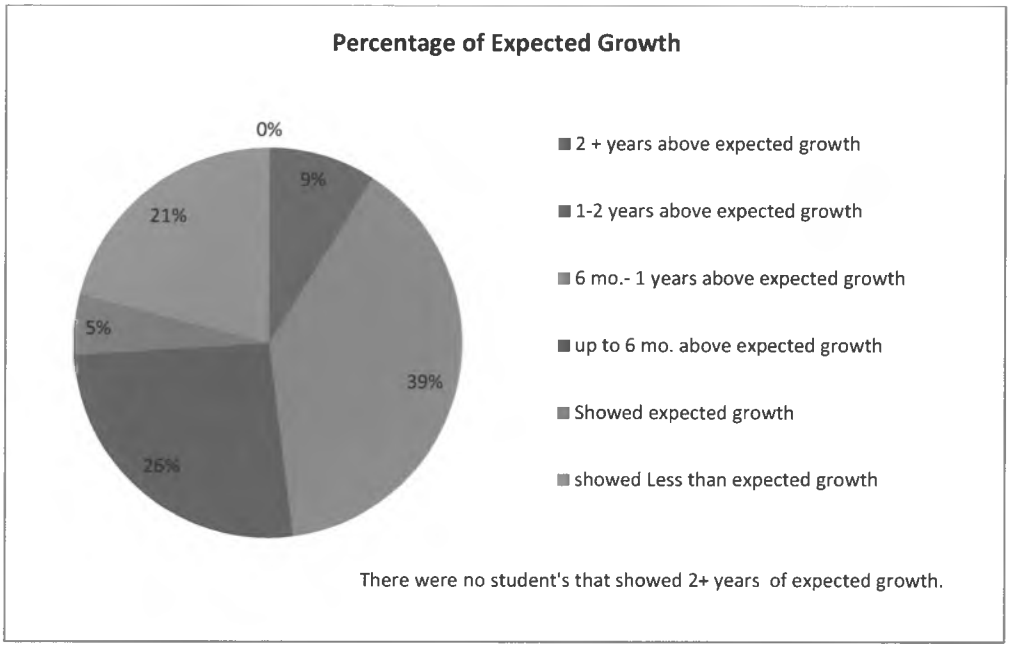
Bering Straits School District



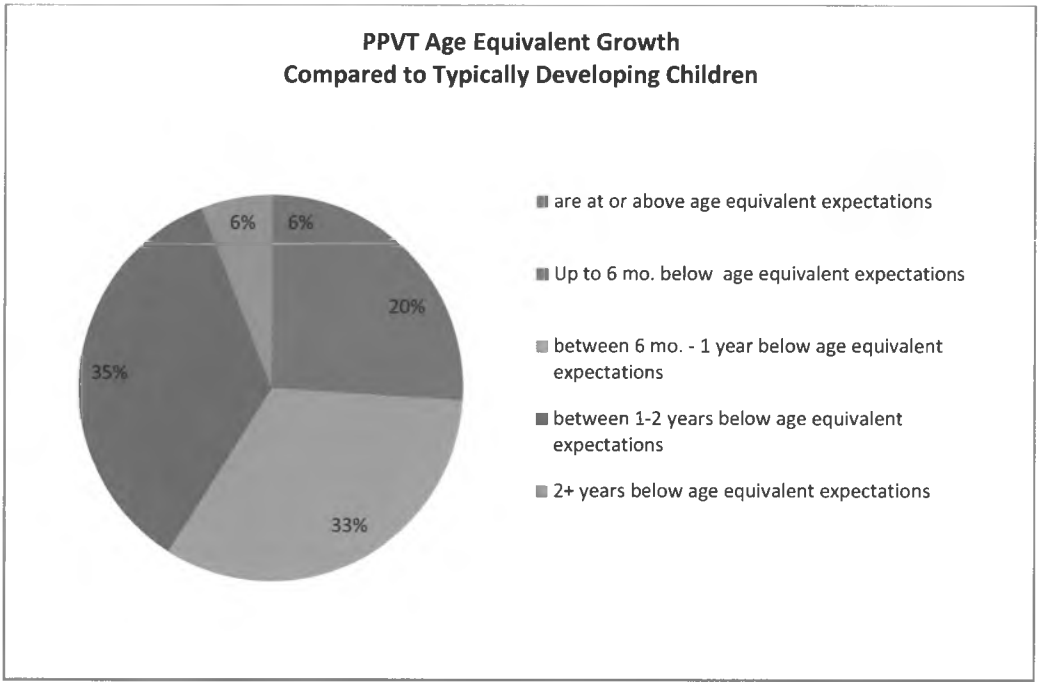


4% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two.
31% of the children have moved up from the bottom quartile.

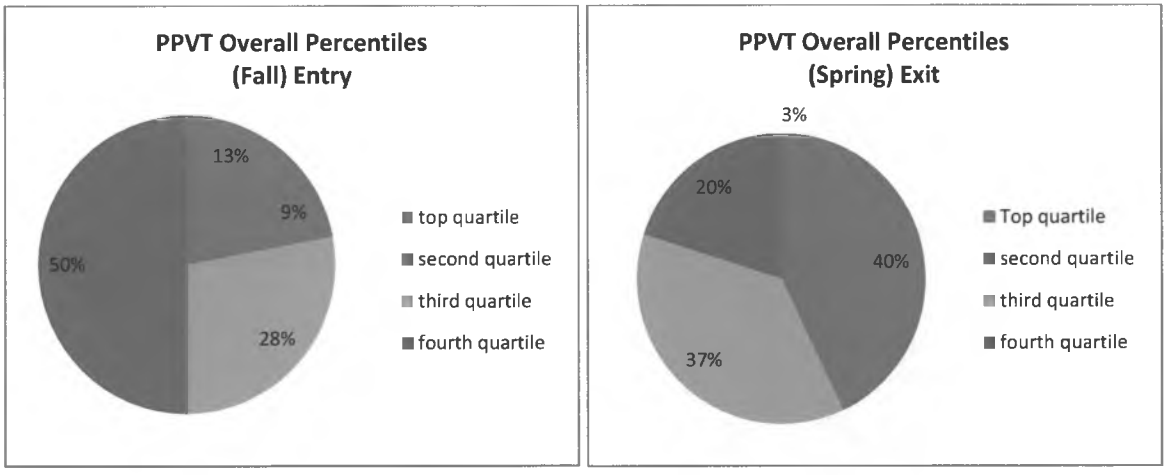
Age Equivalence data shows information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in development.



One final analysis looks to show the students' growth in relation to an age-equivalent typically developing child on a national level.

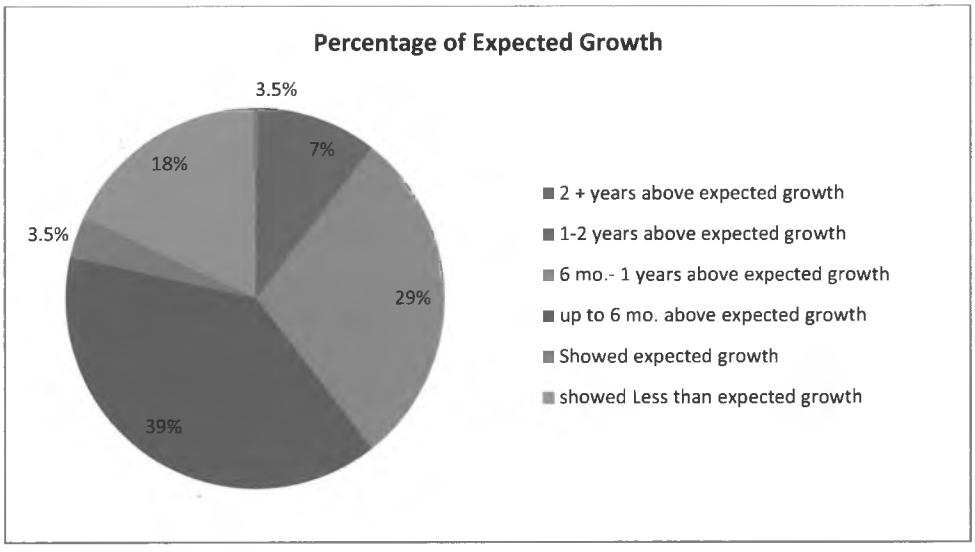


Juneau School District

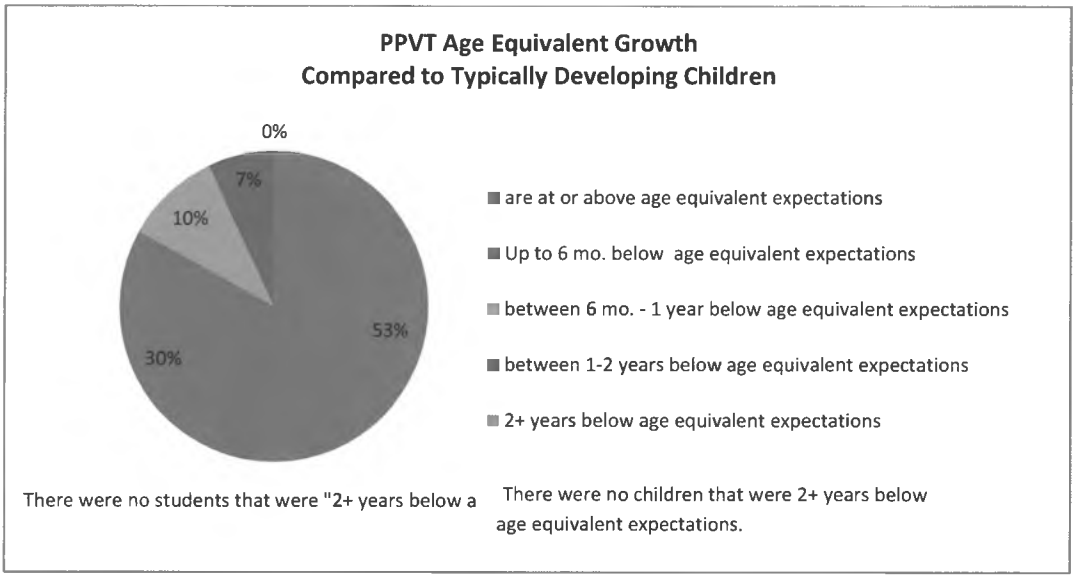


21% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two.
30% of the children have moved up from the bottom quartile.

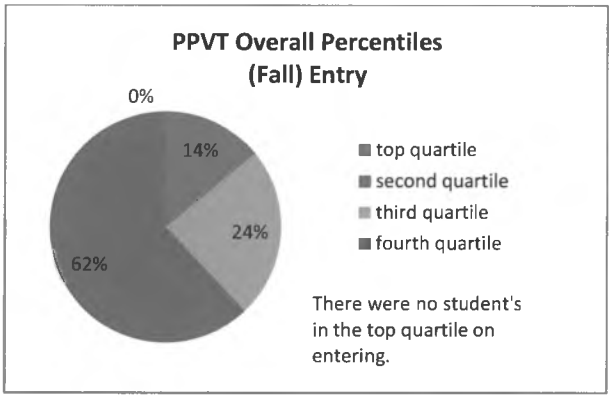
Age Equivalence data shows information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in development.

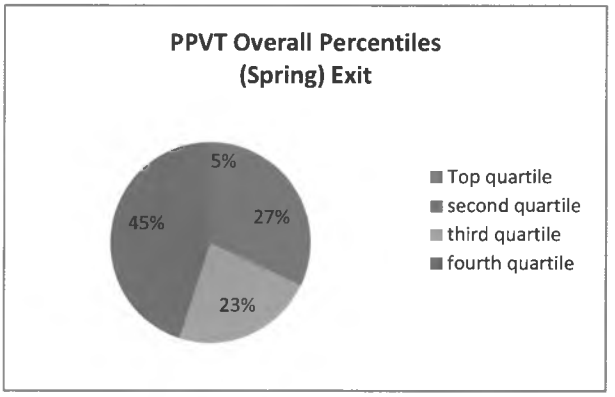


One final analysis shows the students' growth in relation to an age-equivalent typically developing child on a national level.



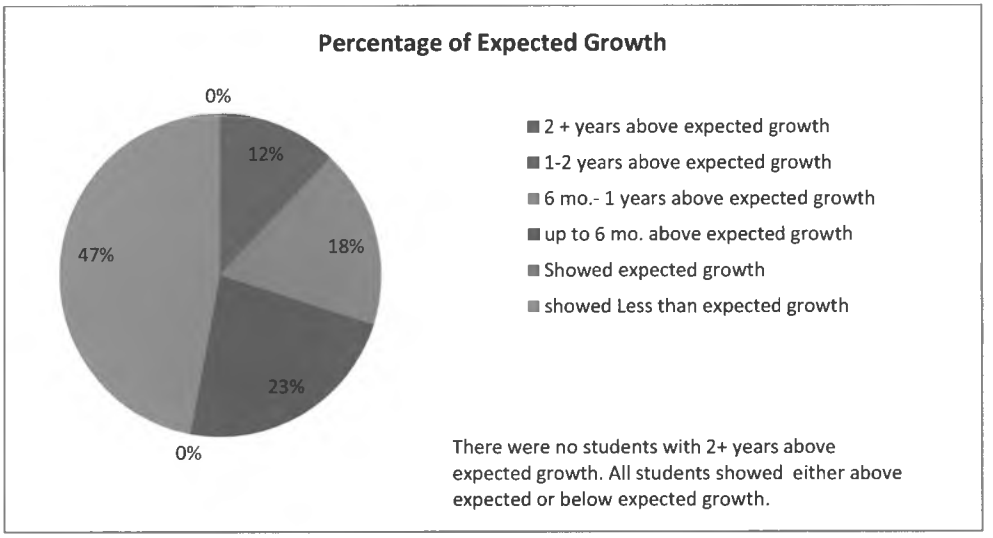
Lower Kuskokwim School District



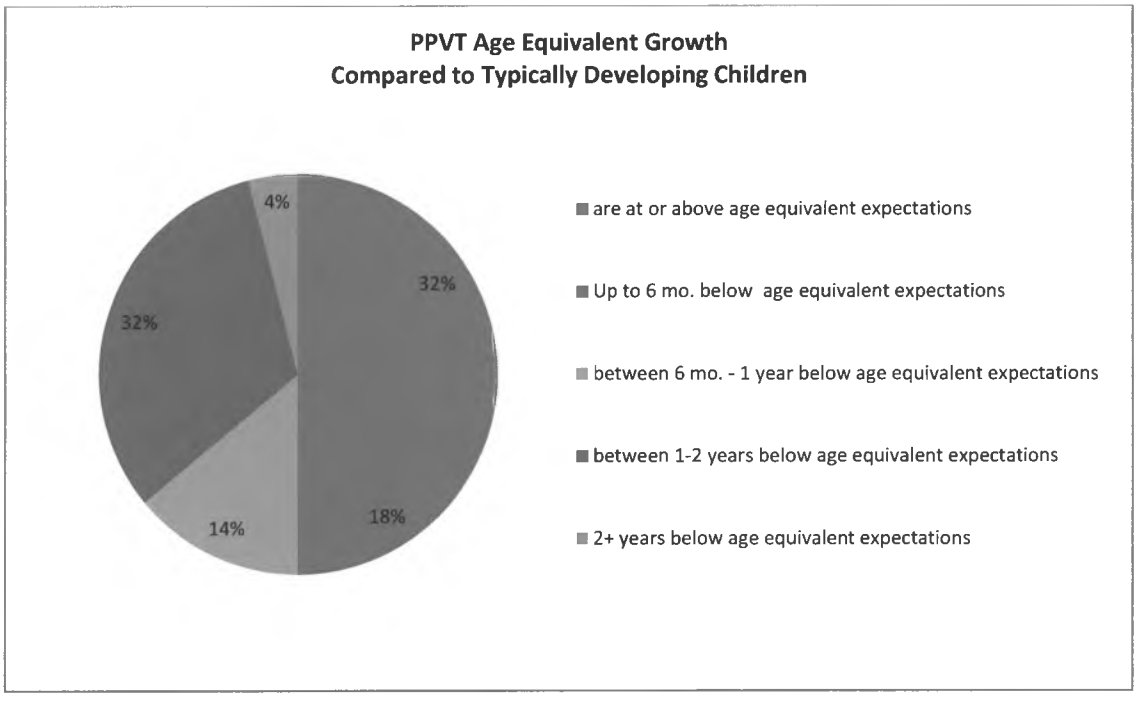


18% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two.
17% of the children have moved up from the bottom quartile.

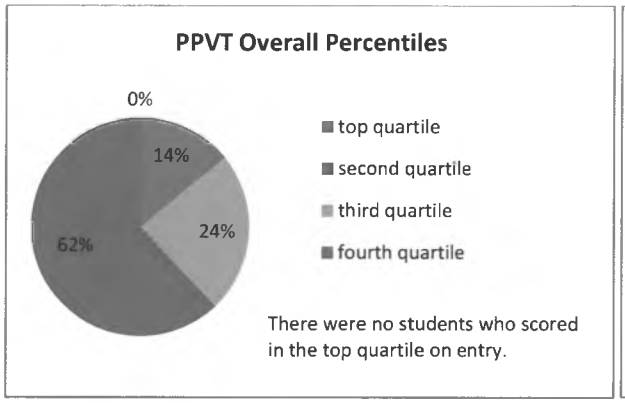
Age Equivalence data shows us information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in development.

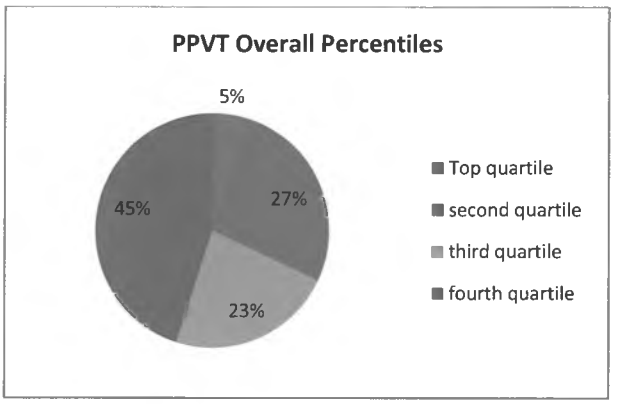


One final analysis shows the students' growth in relation to an age-equivalent typically developing child on a national level.



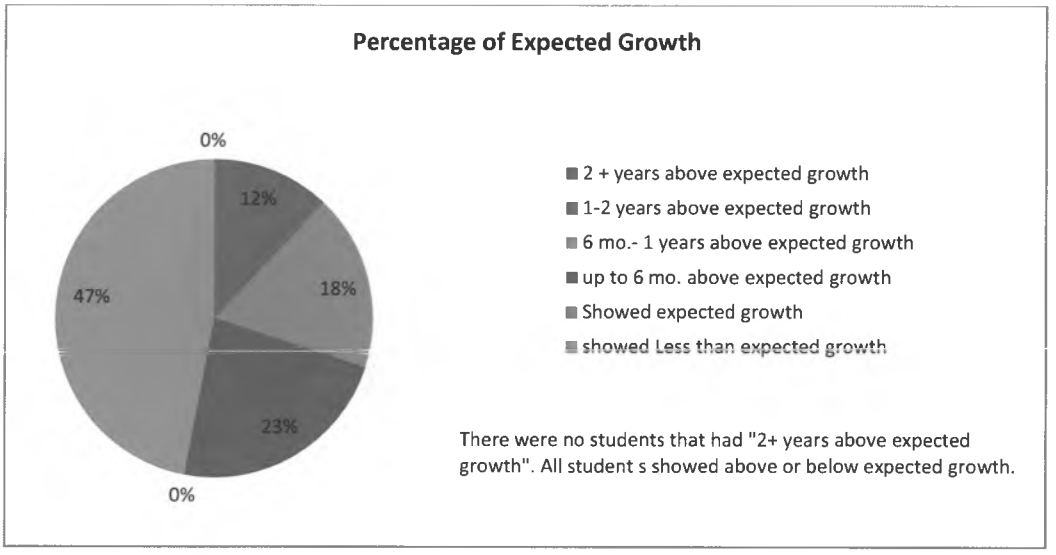
Nome Public Schools



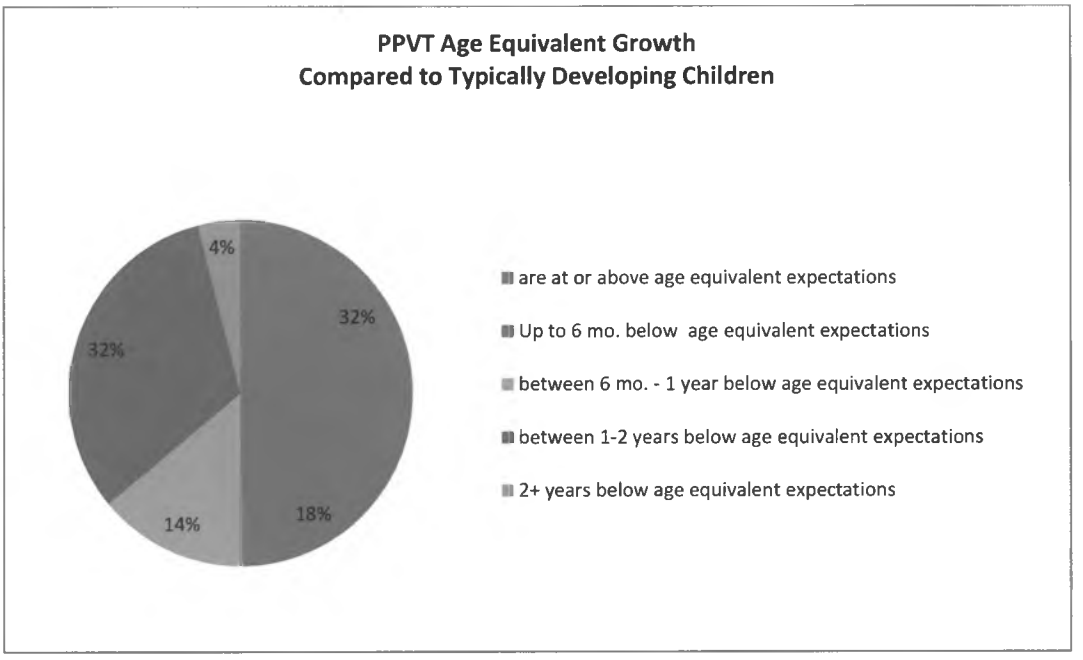


18% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two.
17% of the children have moved up from the bottom quartile.

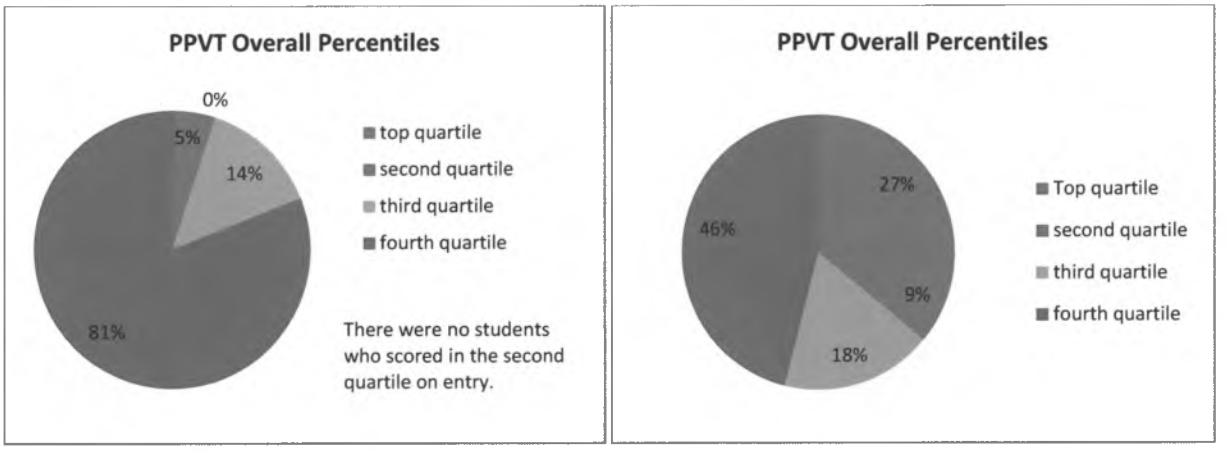
Age Equivalence data shows us information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in development.



One final analysis shows the students' growth in relation to an age-equivalent typically developing child on a national level.

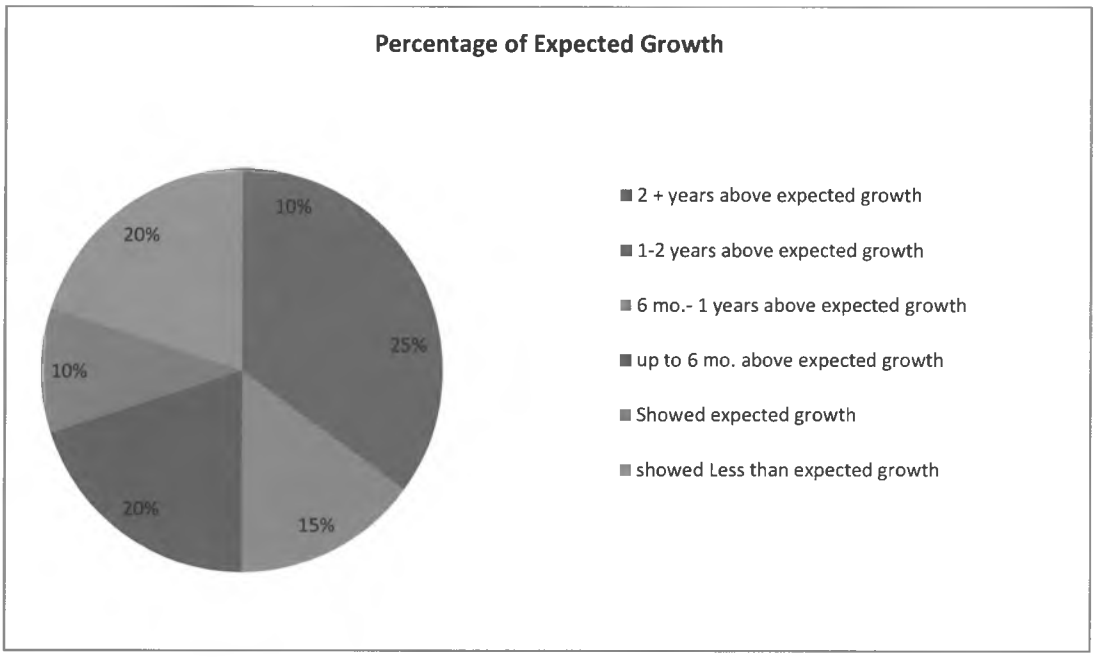


Yukon Koyukuk School District

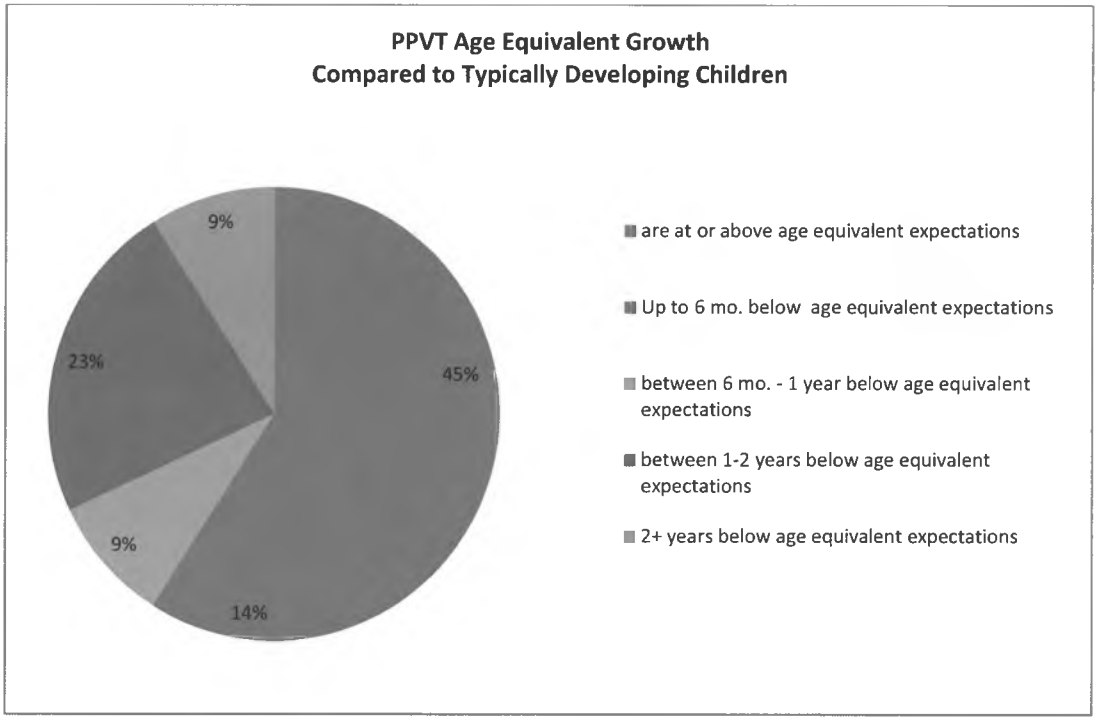


31% of the children have moved from the bottom 2 quartiles to the top two.
35% of the children have moved up from the bottom quartile.

Age Equivalence data shows us information on the children's (and the programs' success) in closing gaps in development.



One final analysis shows the students' growth in relation to an age equivalent typically developing child on a national level.



Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning Third Edition (DIAL-3)

The DIAL-3 is a screening tool of cognitive developmental delays in children who are of ages 3 years, 0 months, to 6 years 11 months. Its three subtests are designed to assess developmental skills that are relevant foundations for academic learning, including the following: the *Motor* skills subtest measuring skills that are relevant for learning to write, the *Concepts* subtest measuring skills that they deemed relevant for learning arithmetic, and the *Language* subtest they considered relevant for learning to read. This assessment in a pre- and post-methodology allows us to focus on prerequisite skills needed for later successful academic achievement.

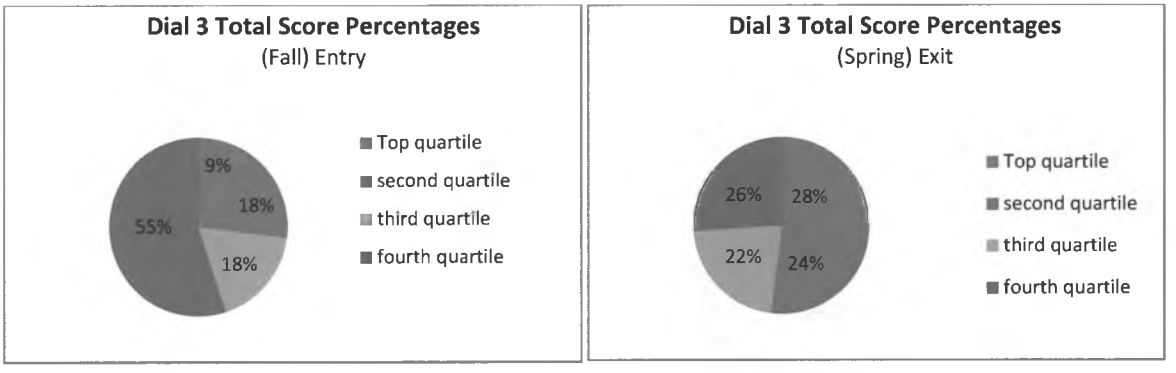
DIAL – 3 State Aggregate Results

The DIAL -3 provides information on three areas of development in relation to school readiness:

1. Motor Development
2. Concept Development
3. Language Development

A total score based on the scores in all three areas is also given. When we look at the Dial - 3 data in terms of percentile, we can see how children compare to their peers nationally.

Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

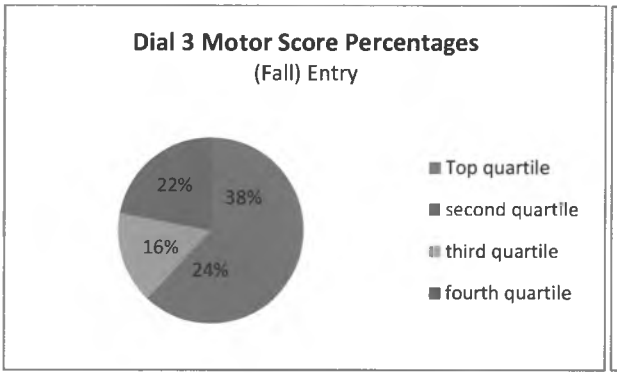


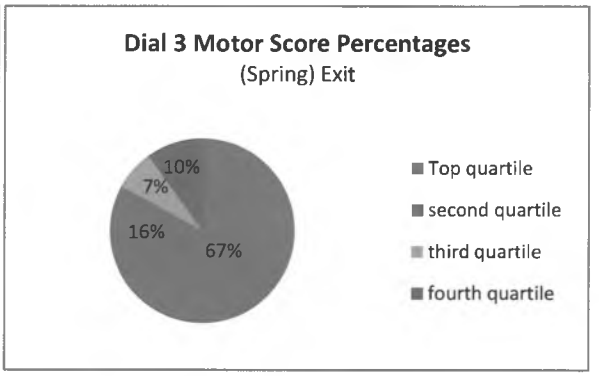
The charts above illustrate the large numbers of children entering the AP3 program significantly below their same age peers nationally and the numbers of children showing significant improvement in percentile ranking compared to same age peers nationally.

28% of the children are now in the top quartile, more than tripling the percentage of children at or above the 76th percentile.

29% of the children have moved out of the bottom quartile (over half of the children who started the program in the bottom quartile have moved up).

Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



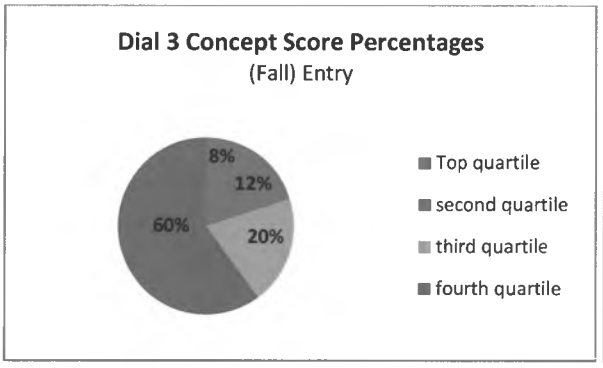


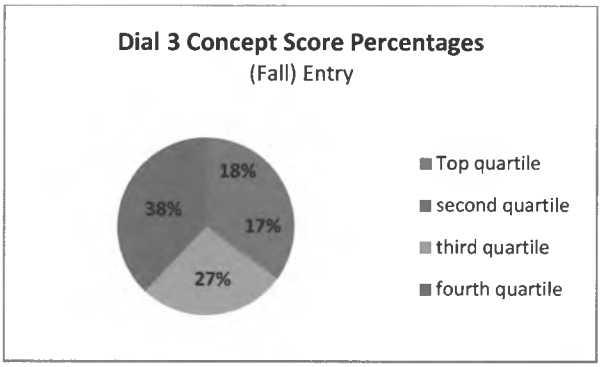
The charts above illustrate the placement of children entering the AP3 program compared to their same age peers nationally in motor development and the improvement of children in the AP3 program.

62% of AP3 children are entering the program in the top two quartiles.
83% of AP3 children are finishing the program in the top two quartiles.

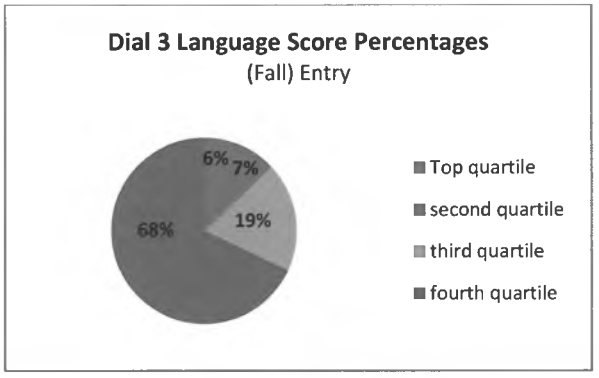
Concept & Language Development Scores Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

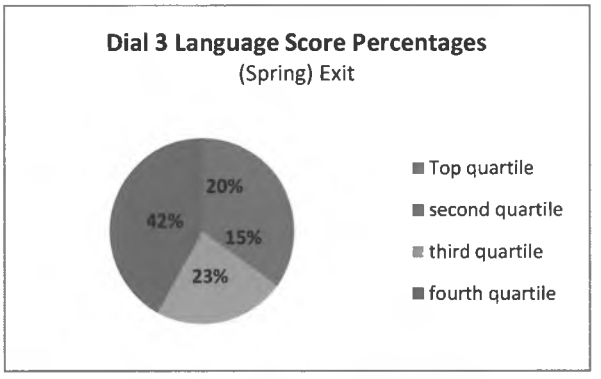
The next sets of charts show the large numbers of children entering the AP3 program significantly below their same age peers nationally in both concept and language development, and the improvement of children participating in the AP3 program.





80% of our AP3 children are entering the program in the bottom two quartiles
35% of our AP3 children are finishing the program in the top two quartiles.
15% have moved from the bottom two quartiles to the top two.



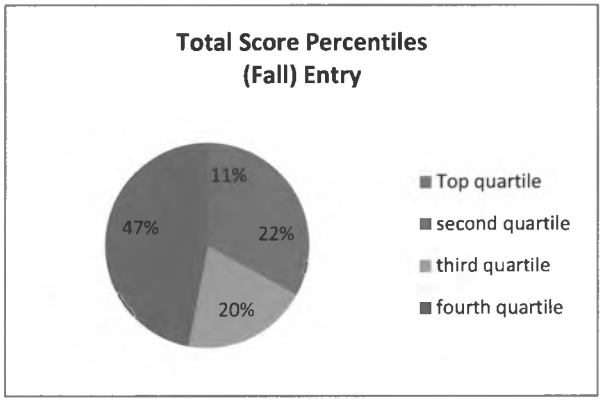


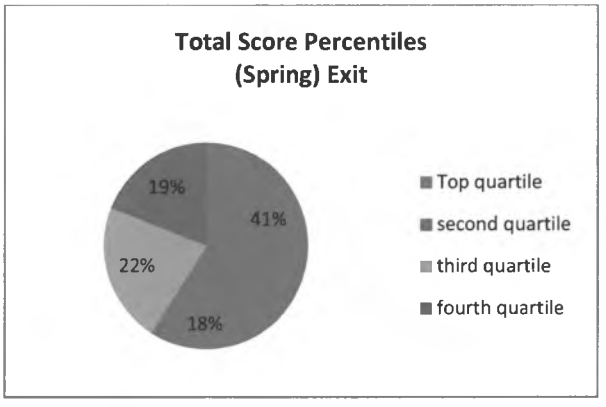
87% of AP3 children are entering the program in the bottom two quartiles.
35% of AP3 children are finishing the program in the top two quartiles.
22% have moved from the bottom two quartiles to the top two.

Dial - 3 Results by District

Anchorage School District

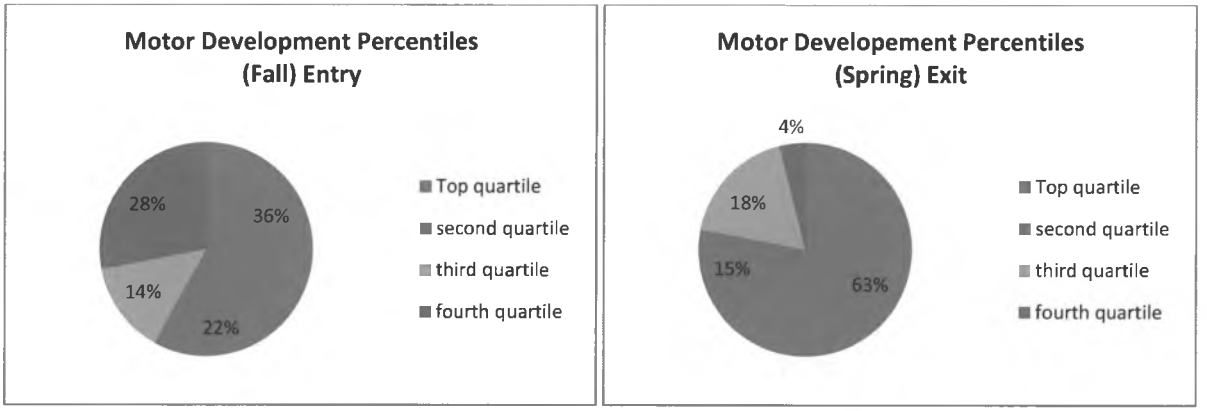
Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3





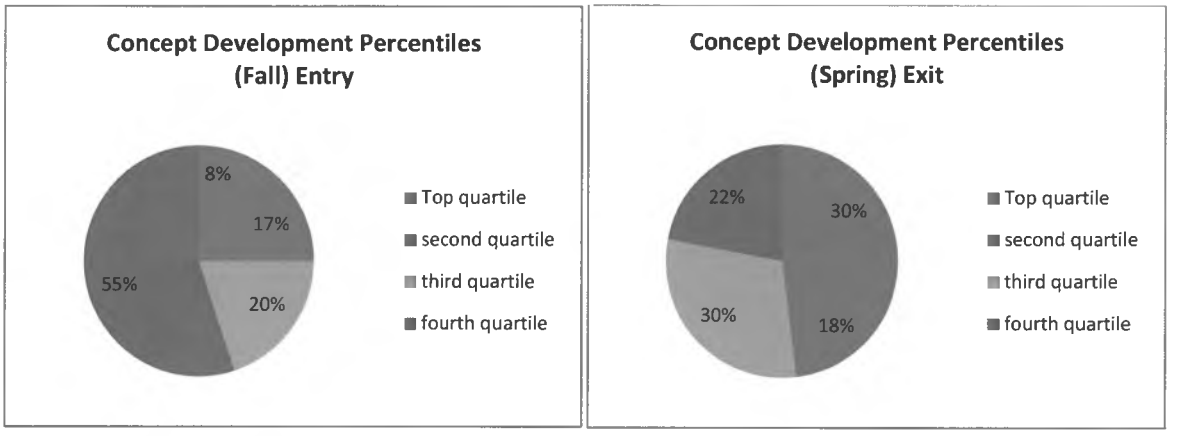
In total score, 30% of the children moved into the top quartile. This means 41% of all children ended the year scoring at or above the 76th percentile. Additionally 28% of the children who started the year in the bottom quartile have moved up, leaving only 19% of the children ending the year at or below the 25th percentile.

Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



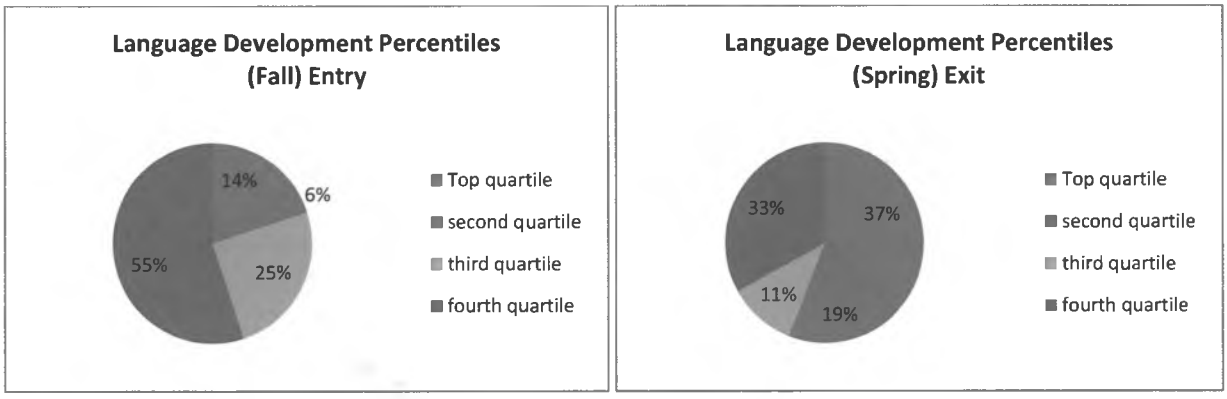
Growth in motor development was substantial, with 63% of the children ending the year at or above the 76th percentile. Whereas 28% began the year in the bottom quartile, only 4% ended the year there.

Concept Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



Concept development showed 22% of the children moving up into the top quartile and 33% moving out of the bottom quartile. The Anchorage School District showed the highest performance of all the grantees in this area of the DIAL-3.

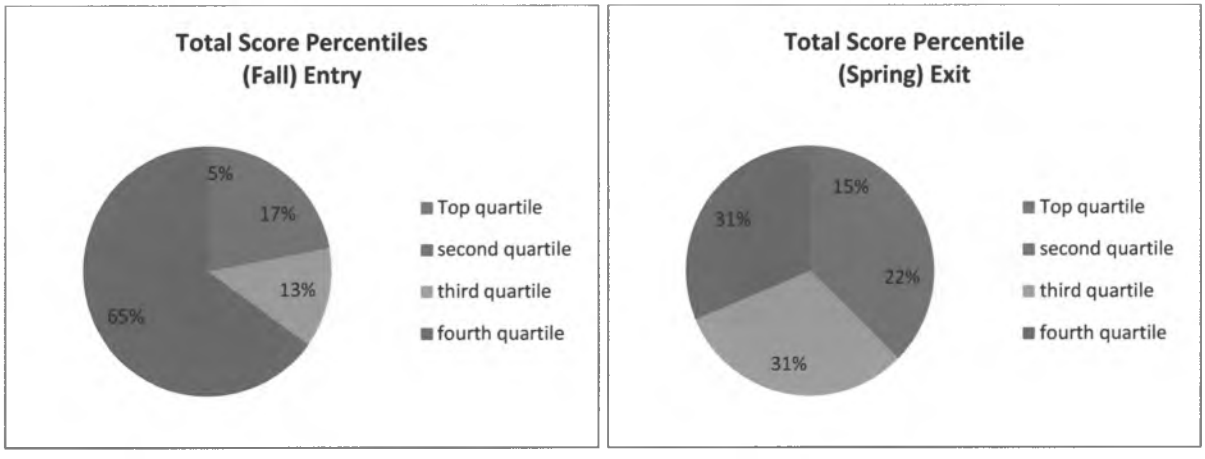
Language Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



As for language development, 37% of the children ended the year at or above the 76th percentile. That showed 23% of the children moving up to the top quartile throughout the year. At the same time, 22% of the children advanced out of the bottom quartile, leaving 33% of the children still scoring at or below the 25th percentile.

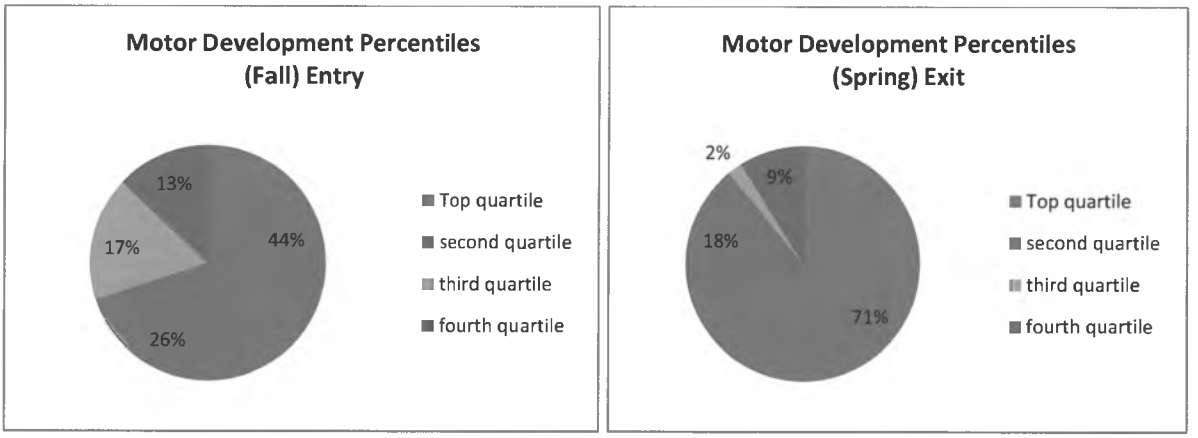
Bering Straits School District

Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



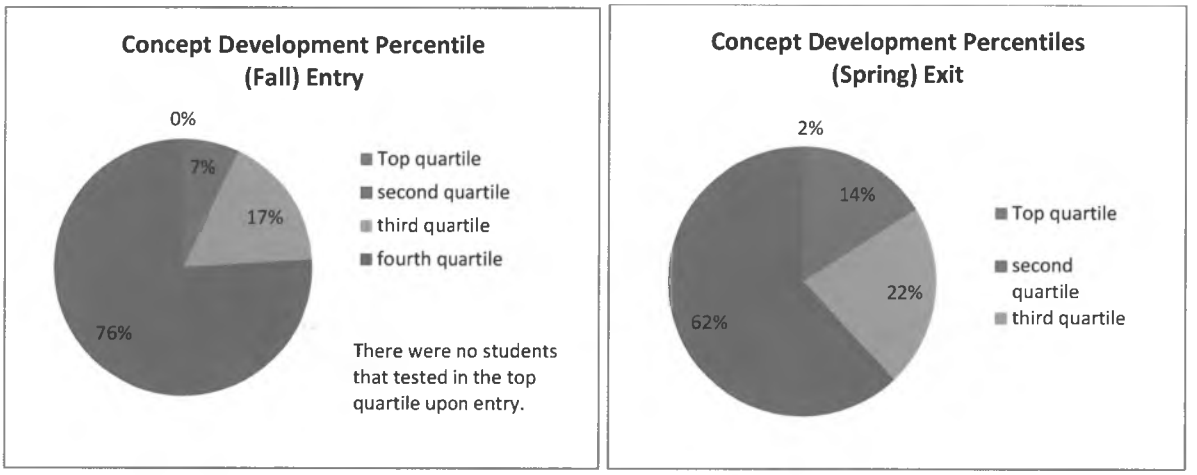
The total score showed 10% of the students moving into the top quartile, with 15% ending the year at or above the 76th percentile ranking. 34% of the children moved out of the bottom quartile by the end of the school year.

Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



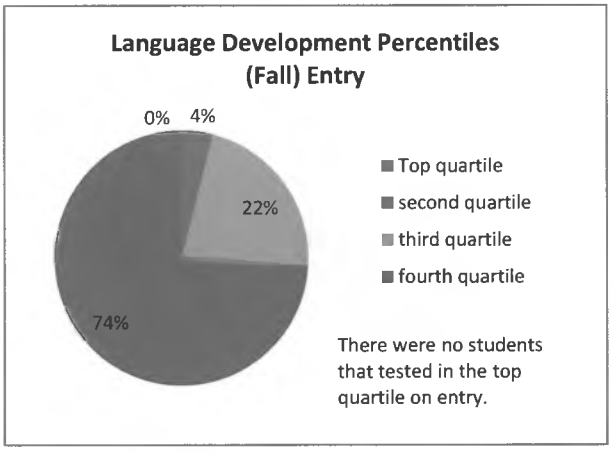
The children in BSSD showed the strongest performance in the area of motor development. 71% of their children ended the school year in the 76th percentile or above. 88% ended the year in the top two quartiles.

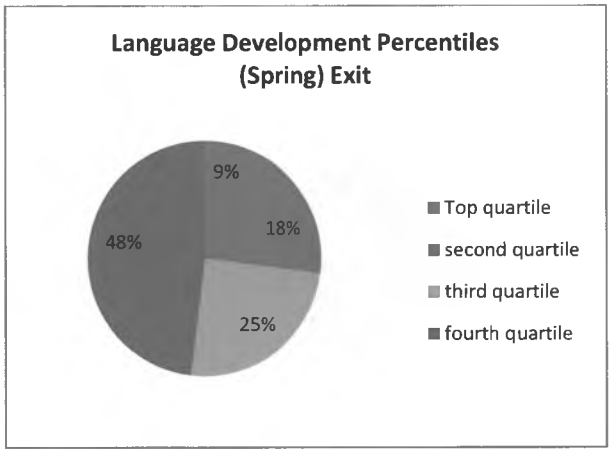
Concept Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



In concept development, 76% of the incoming four year olds scored in the lowest quartile. There were no students in the top quartile. By spring 14% of the children left the bottom quartile and the number of children in the top two quartiles more than doubled.

Language Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

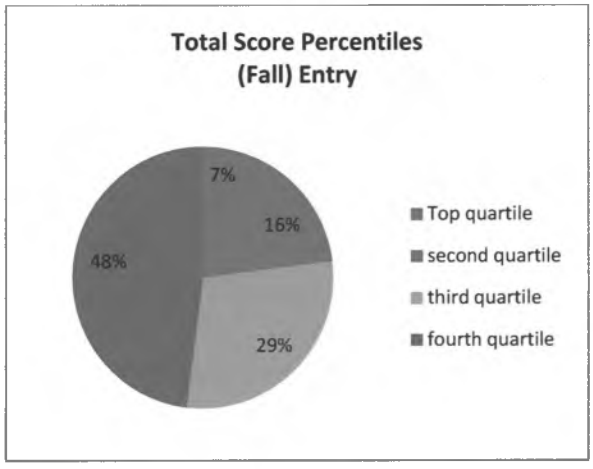


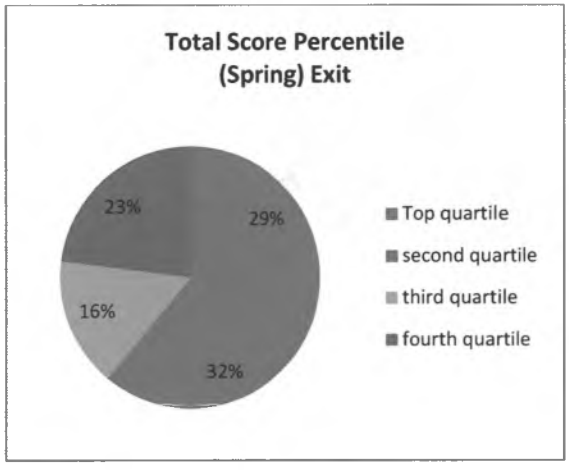


74% of the BSSD students began the year at or below the 25th quartile in language development. Again there were no children in the top quartile. At year's end, 26% of the preschoolers left the bottom quartile, 14% joined the second quartile, and 9% scored at or above the 76th percentile.

Juneau School District

Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

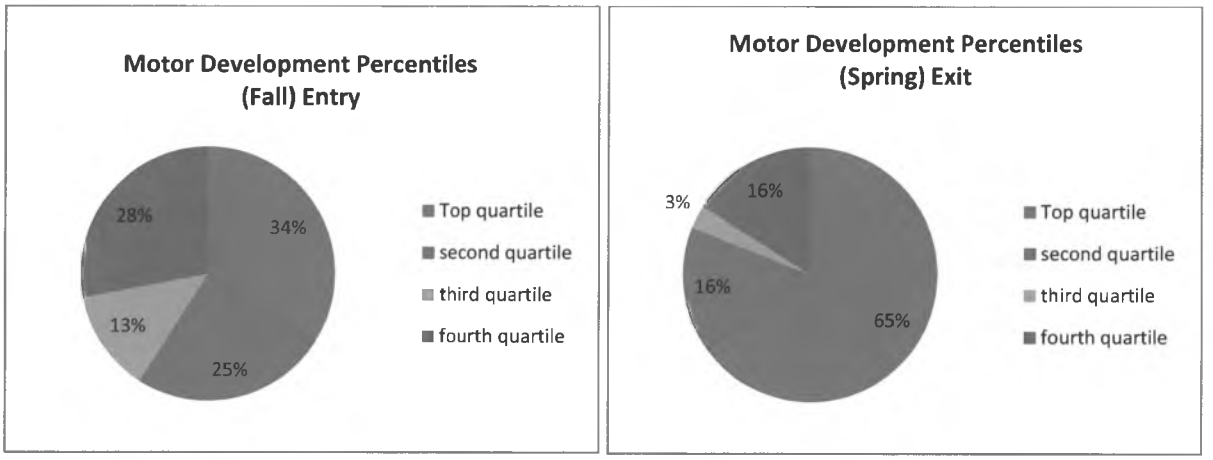




In the fall, 77% of Juneau's preschoolers were in the bottom two quartiles on their total score, with 48% scoring at or below the 25th quartile. 7% scored in the top quartile. The post

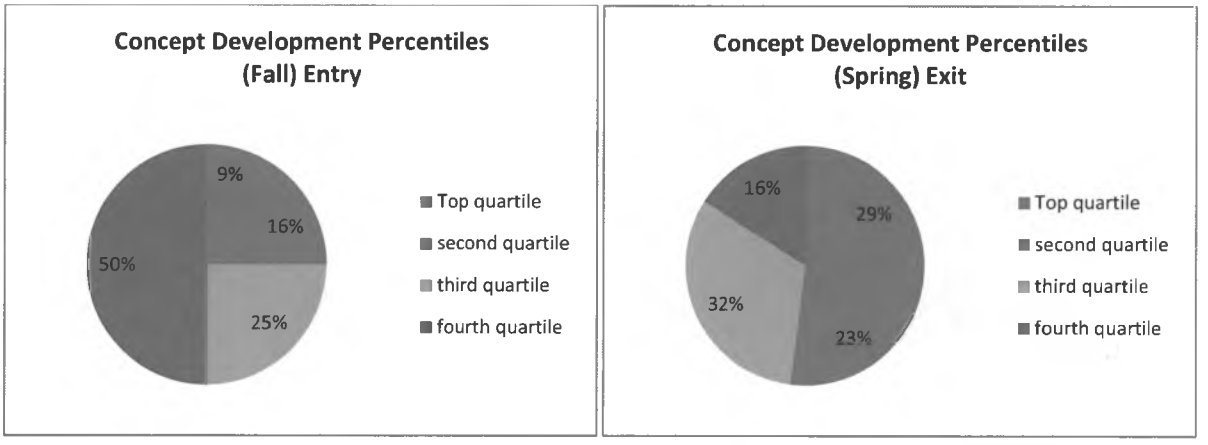
assessment showed 25% of the JSD children moved up from the bottom quartile and an additional 22% moved into the top quartile

Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



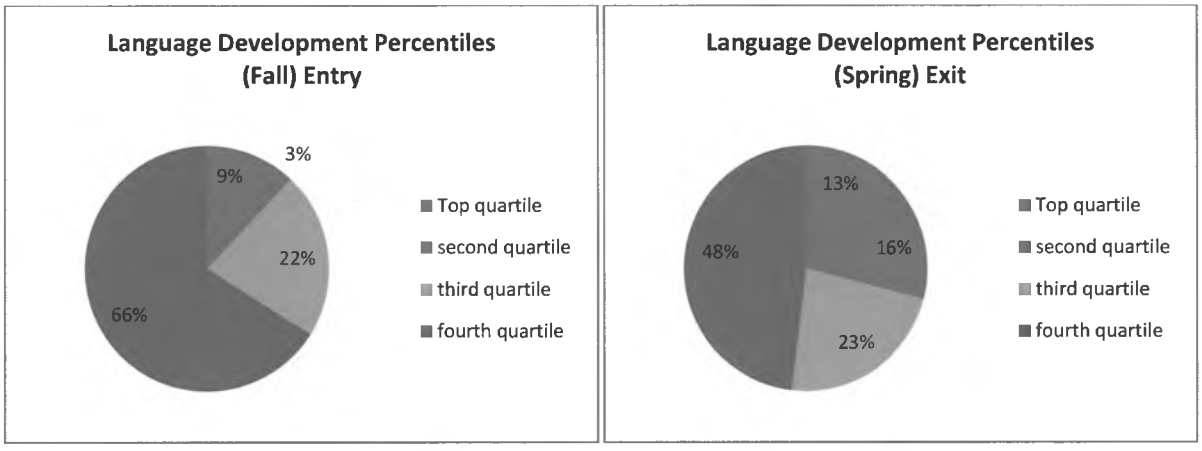
In motor development, 34% of the children started the year in the top quartile with 28% scoring at or below the 25th percentile. The post assessment showed 12% had moved out of the bottom quartile and an additional 31% moved into the top quartile.

Concept Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



As for concept development, 9% of the preschoolers began the fall in the top quartile. 75% of the students were in the bottom two quartiles with half of the children scoring at or below the 25th percentile. By spring, 34% of the preschoolers moved out of the bottom quartile and another 20% had joined the top quartile.

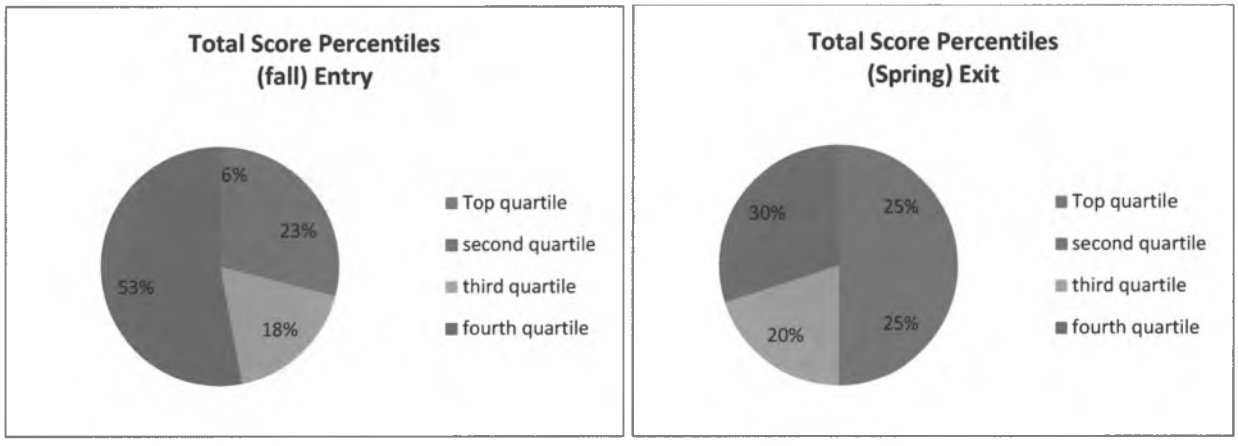
Language Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



In language development, 66% of the children performed in the bottom quartile on the fall pre-assessment with an additional 22% scoring between the 26th and 50th percentile. 12% scored in the top two quartiles. At year end 18% had left the bottom quartile. An additional 17% moved from the bottom two quartiles into the top two quartiles.

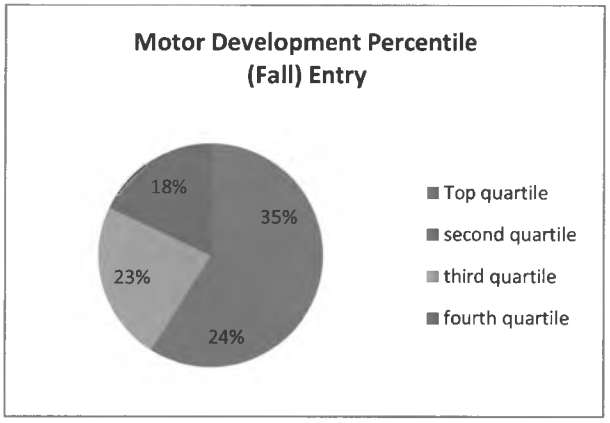
Lower Kuskokwim School District

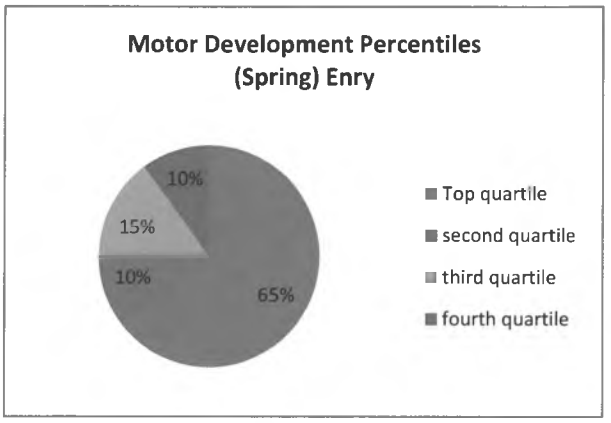
Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



In total score 53% of LKSD's AP3 students began the year in the bottom quartile, with 6% in the top quartile. The spring DIAL – 3 assessment showed 23% of the children moved out of the bottom quartile. 19% joined the top quartile, scoring at or above the 76th percentile.

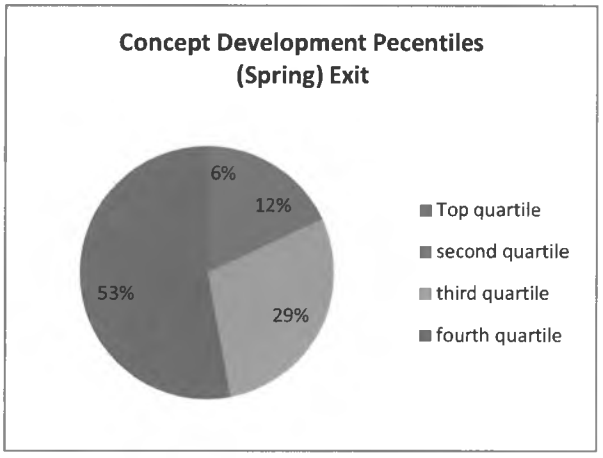
Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

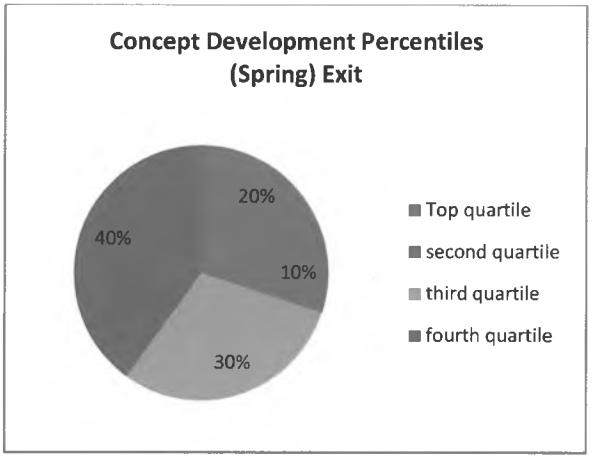




As in most of the AP3 programs, motor development was a strong point for the children in LKSD. They started the year with 35% of the children in the top quartile and only 18% in the bottom. At the closure of the first year of the program, another 30% joined the top quartile, scoring at least in the 76th percentile or higher. An additional 8% left the bottom quartile.

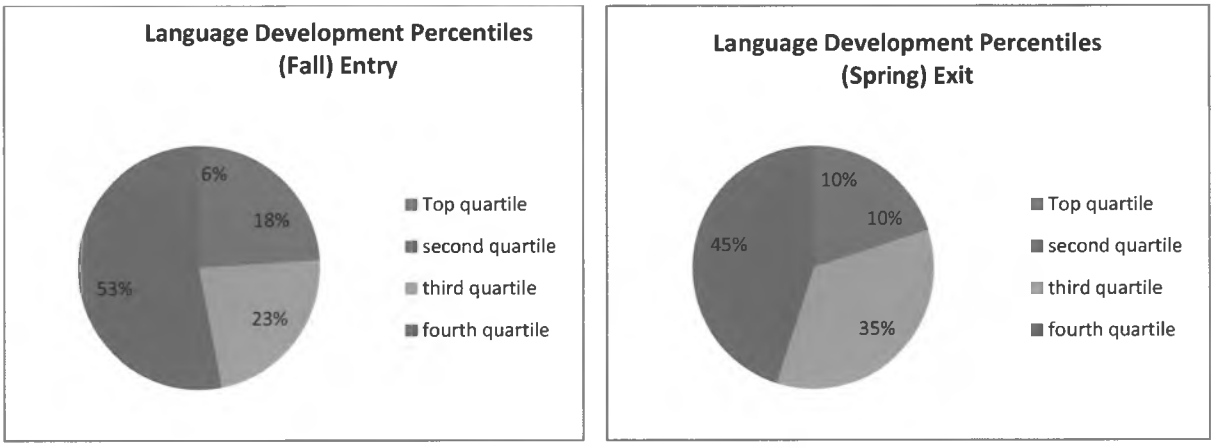
Concept Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3





The scores in concept development showed 82% of the students in the bottom two quartiles to start the school year; 53% were at or below the 25th percentile. Only 6% scored in the top quartile. 13% ended the year moving up and out of the bottom quartile. An additional 14% joined the top quartile.

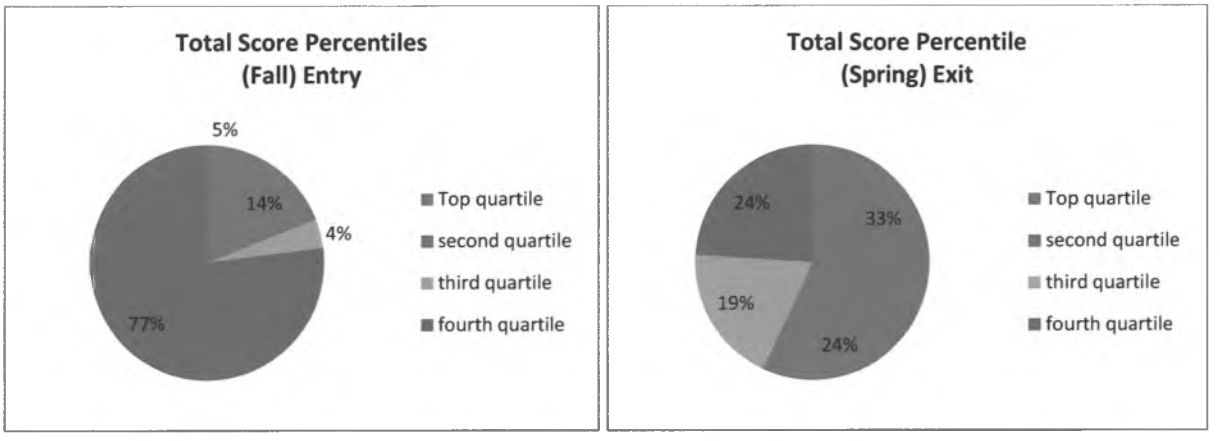
Language Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



Language development scores showed 53% of the preschoolers started the year at or below the 25th percentile with 6% in the top quartile. At year's end 8% left the bottom quartile and 4% moved into the top quartile.

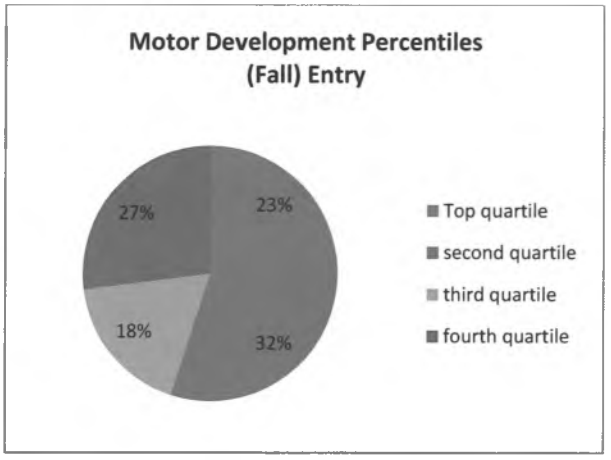
Nome Public Schools

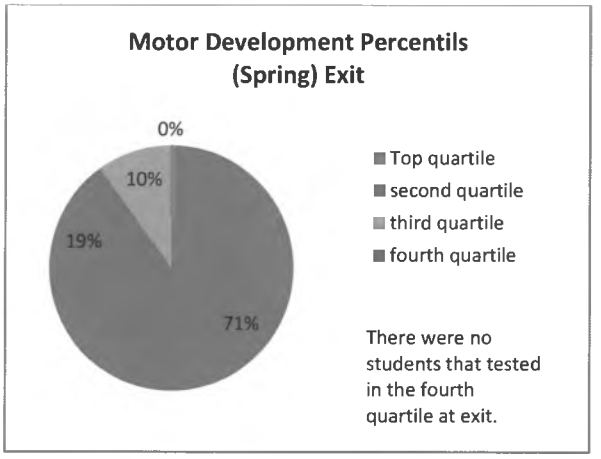
Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3



The Nome DIAL – 3 total score saw 77% of the children start the school year in the bottom quartile with 19% in the top two quartiles, 5% of which scored at or above the 76th percentile. By the spring assessment, 53% of the preschoolers moved up and out of the bottom quartile. 28% joined the top quartile, while 10% moved into the second quartile, and an additional 15% scored between the 26th and 50th percentiles.

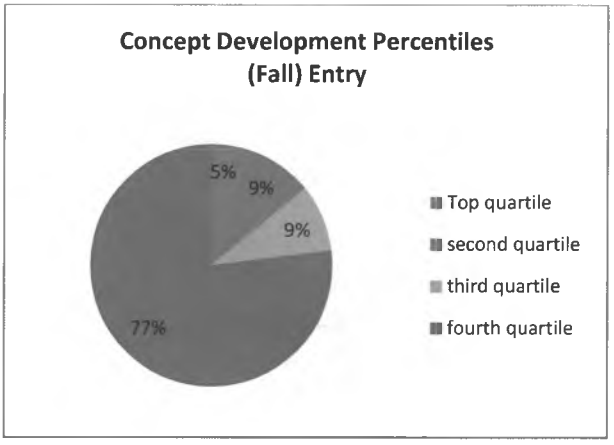
Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

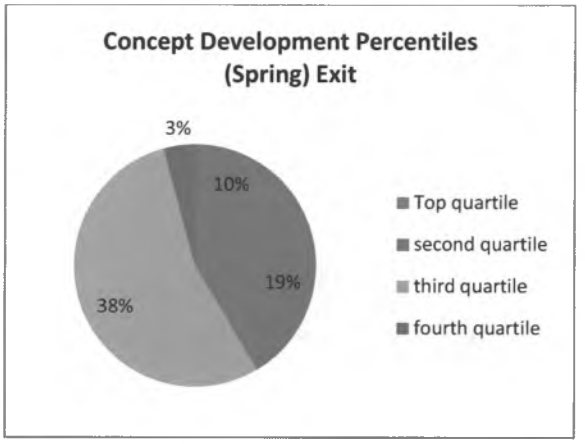




In the fall, the motor development scores showed a fairly even distribution with 23% scoring at or above the 76th percentile and 27% performing in the bottom quartile. At the end of the year, an additional 48% joined the children in the top quartile. None of the Nome AP3 students ended the year in the bottom quartile.

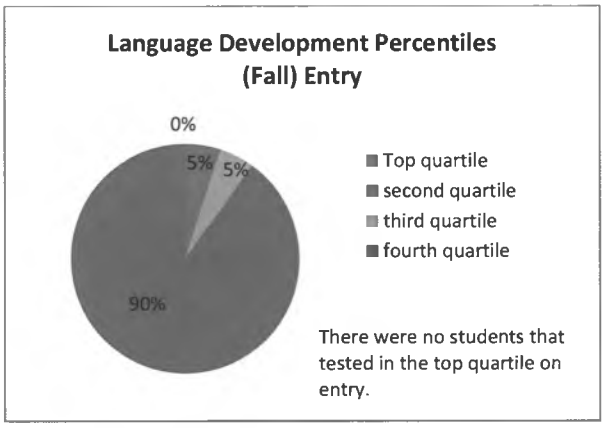
Concept Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

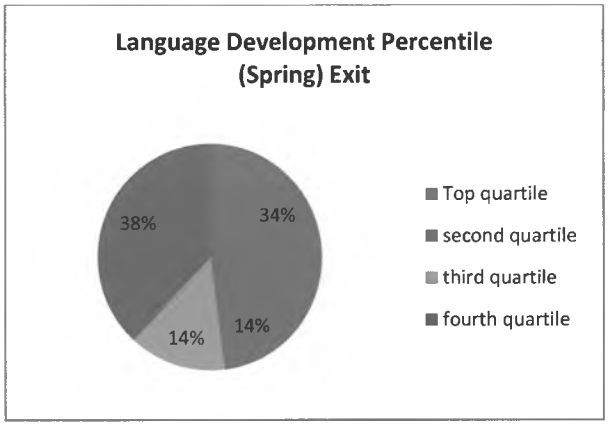




The pre-assessment in concept development showed 77% of the children performing at or below the 25th percentile and 5% in the top quartile. After the spring post-assessment, 44% of the students left the bottom quartile. An additional 5% joined the top quartile, with another 10% scoring between the 51st and 75th percentile.

Language Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

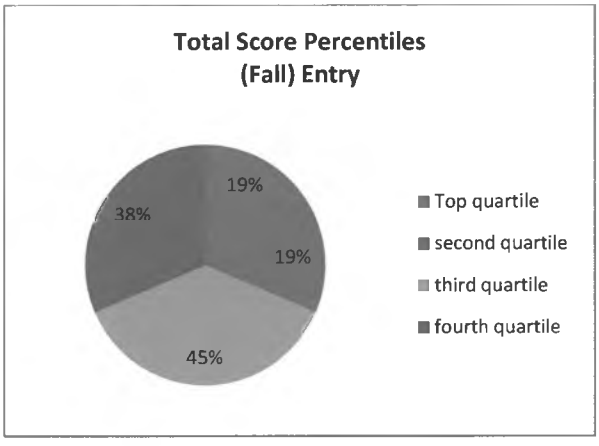


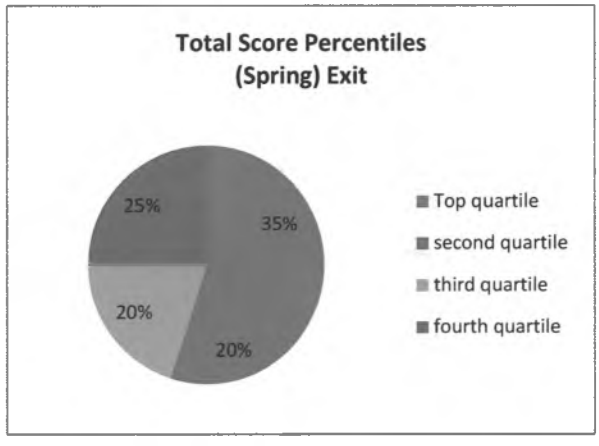


As for language development, 90% of the children began the year at or below the 25th percentile. There were no children performing in the highest quartile. By the end of the year, 52% of the Nome students had moved out of the bottom quartile. 34% entered the top quartile, while 9% joined each of the middle two quartiles.

Yukon Koyukuk School District

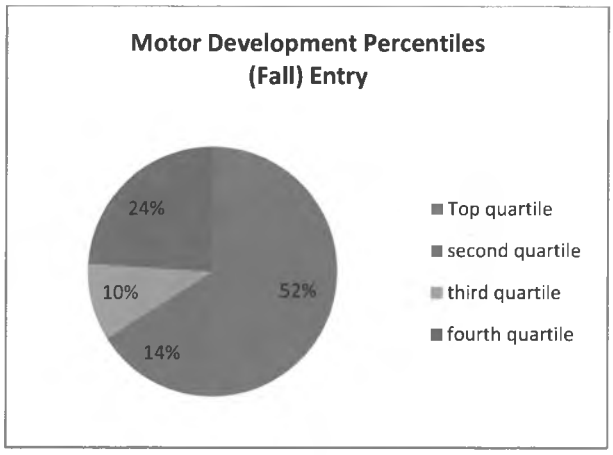
Total Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

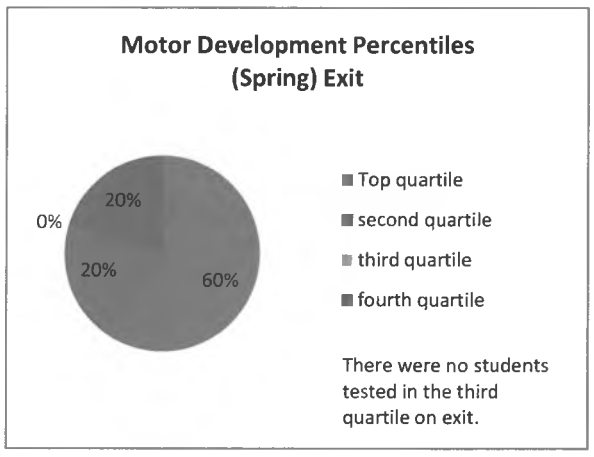




Upon completion of the fall DIAL – 3 assessment, 19% of the YKSD children scored in the top quartile in total score, with 38% scoring at or below the 25th percentile. After the spring assessment, another 16% of the AP3 students joined the top quartile, while 13% left the bottom quartile.

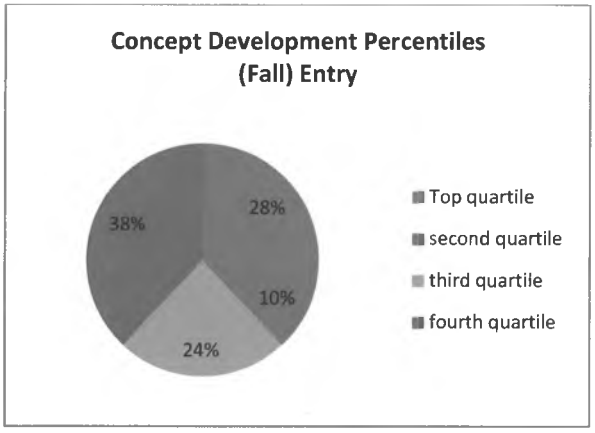
Motor Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

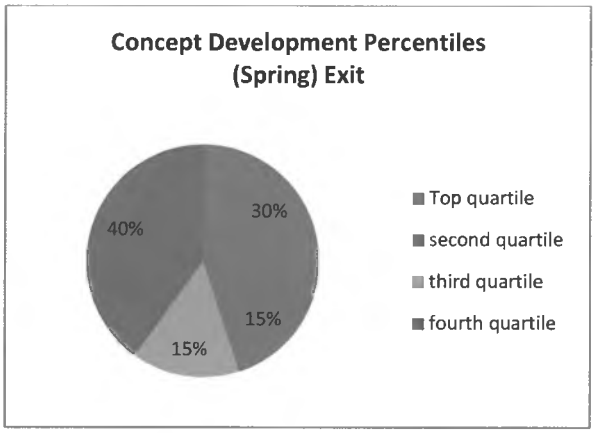




As for motor development, 52% of the children began the year scoring at or above the 76th percentile and 24% began in the bottom quartile. By the year's end, 4% of the students left the bottom quartile and an additional 8% joined the top quartile.

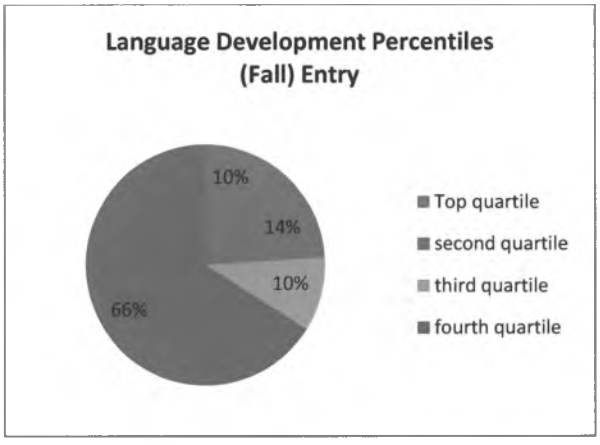
Concept Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3

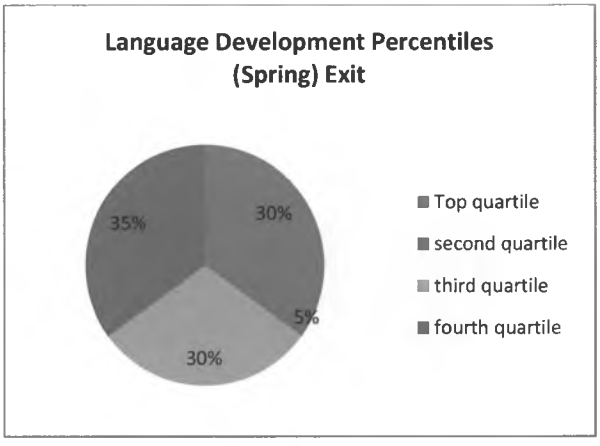




Regarding concept development the YKSD preschoolers started the year with 28% of their children in the top quartile and 38% performing at or below the 25th percentile. At the end of the year, 7% moved from the bottom two quartiles into the top two quartiles.

Language Development Score Fall & Spring DIAL - 3





As school began for the YKSD AP3 program, 66% of the children performed in the bottom quartile in language development. 10% were at the top with scores at or above the 76th percentile. School's end saw 31% of the children move out of the bottom quartile, with an additional 20% of the children joining the top quartile.

Determining Program Outcomes

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R)

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R) is a 43- item scale designed for use in classroom-based early childhood care and education programs aged two to six years. It is organized into seven scales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff. Each scale has additional subscales, with multiple items that must be passed to receive a given score. Each subscale is scored on a seven-point scale, with benchmarks established for 1 = Inadequate, 3 = Minimal, 5 = Good, and 7 = Excellent. Programs that pass some of the items that are part of the benchmark for a 3, but not all of them, are scored a 2 on that subscale. Similarly programs that fall between good and excellent are scored a 6.

Why is the ECERS - R a Valuable tool?

The ECERS-R was developed at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It was designed for use in preschool, kindergarten, and childcare classrooms serving children two and a half through five years of age. It is widely used across a variety of early childhood programs and across the country as a program quality assessment instrument. It can be used by directors for program improvement and staff supervision, by teaching staff for self- assessment, and by agency staff, or other over-site entities staff, for monitoring. The tool has a long history of research demonstrating that quality as measured by the ECERS has good predictive validity and a well-established reliability that makes it particularly useful for research and program evaluation.

Results: State Aggregate. District. & Site ECERS – R Program Outcomes

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R) is designed for use in classroom-based early childhood care & education programs aged two to six years. It is organized into seven scales.

The following chart shows the 43 subscales used to determine the 7-point scales found in the ECERS-R.

Space and Furnishings	**Personal Care Routines**
1. Indoor space	1. Greeting/departing
2. Furniture for routine care, play and learning	2. Meals/snacks
3. Furnishings for relaxation and comfort	3. Nap/rest
4. Room arrangement for play	4. Toileting/diapering
5. Space for privacy	5. Health practices
6. Child-related display	6. Safety practices
7. Space for gross motor play	
8. Gross motor equipment	**Activities**
	1. Fine motor
Language-Reasoning	2. Art
1. Books and pictures	3. Music/movement
2. Encouraging children to communicate	4. Blocks
3. Using language to de develop reasoning skills	5. Sand/water
4. Informal use of language	6. Dramatic play
	7. Nature/science
Interaction	8. Math/number
1. Supervision of gross motor activities	9. Use of TV, video, and/or computers
2. General supervision of children (other than gross motor)	10. Promoting acceptance of diversity
3. Discipline	
4. Staff-child interactions	**Program Structure**
5. Interactions among children	1. Schedule
	2. Free play
Parents and staff	3. Group time
1. Provisions for parents	4. Provisions for children with disabilities
2. Provisions for personal needs of staff	
3. Provisions for professional needs of staff	
4. Staff interaction and cooperation	
5. Supervision and evaluation of staff	
6. Opportunities for professional growth	

State Aggregate	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.76	4.69
Space and Furnishings	3.06	4.08
Personal Care Routines	2.64	3.33
Language-Reasoning	4.10	5.43
Activities	3.16	4.33
Interaction	4.54	4.80
Program Structure	4.26	5.41
Parents and Staff	5.44	6.13

These scores represent significant programmatic growth. The AP3 programs began the year above minimal and ended approaching good (almost a full point of improvement in less than a year's time). Our goal will be to continue improvement to 5 or above in year two.

District & Site Results
ECERS – R Program Outcomes

Anchorage School District

Anchorage School District	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	4.56	4.72
Space and Furnishings	3.63	3.82
Personal Care Routines	2.8	2.2
Language-Reasoning	4.88	5.75
Activities	4	4.52
Interaction	5.9	4.7
Program Structure	4.75	5.54
Parents and Staff	6.67	7

Site: Creekside Elm.	Fall	Spring	Site: Willow Crest Elm.	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	4.32	4.40	**Overall Score:**	4.80	5.03
Space and Furnishings	3.13	3.50	Space and Furnishings	4.13	4.13
Personal Care Routines	2.80	2.0	Personal Care Routines	2.80	2.40
Language-Reasoning	5.00	4.50	Language-Reasoning	4.75	7.00
Activities	3.67	4.60	Activities	4.33	4.44
Interaction	6.00	4.00	Interaction	5.80	5.40
Program Structure	4.25	4.75	Program Structure	5.25	6.33
Parents and Staff	6.33	7.00	Parents and Staff	7.00	7.00

These scores represent significant programmatic growth. The Anchorage AP3 programs began the year working towards an overall rating of good (5) and showing growth in the seven individual areas assessed on the ECERS.

Year one showed high growth in Language and Reasoning, Activities, and Program Structure with the highest score possible received in Parents and Staff.

The goal for year two will be to continue improvement to 5 or above on the overall measure, with a focus on continued growth especially in Personal Care Routines, Interactions, and Space and Furnishings.

Bering Strait School District

Bering Strait School District	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.76	4.24
Space and Furnishings	3.19	3.56
Personal Care Routines	2.8	3.15
Language-Reasoning	3.88	5.25
Activities	2.97	4.01
Interaction	4.35	3.9
Program Structure	4.5	4.06
Parents and Staff	5.42	6.08

Site: Brevig Mission	Fall	Spring	Site: Savoonga	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	4.12	5.29	**Overall Score:**	4.00	4.62
Space and Furnishings	4.00	4.75	Space and Furnishings	3.00	4.25
Personal Care Routines	3.40	4.40	Personal Care Routines	2.80	3.60
Language-Reasoning	3.50	5.50	Language-Reasoning	4.25	5.75
Activities	2.67	4.22	Activities	3.00	4.70
Interaction	5.60	6.40	Interaction	3.80	2.60
Program Structure	5.50	5.75	Program Structure	6.25	4.50
Parents and Staff	5.33	7.00	Parents and Staff	6.33	6.83
Site: Shishmaref	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Site: Stebbins**	**Fall**	**Spring**
Overall Score:	3.74	3.54	**Overall Score:**	3.18	3.50
Space and Furnishings	3.38	2.00	Space and Furnishings	2.38	3.25
Personal Care Routines	2.40	2.20	Personal Care Routines	2.60	2.40
Language-Reasoning	4.00	4.50	Language-Reasoning	3.75	5.25
Activities	3.10	3.10	Activities	3.11	4.00
Interaction	4.60	4.80	Interaction	3.40	1.80
Program Structure	4.25	3.33	Program Structure	2.00	2.67
Parents and Staff	5.17	5.83	Parents and Staff	4.83	4.67

These scores represent significant programmatic growth. The Bering Strait AP3 programs began the year working to move from a minimal rating towards an overall rating of good (5) and showed growth in the seven individual areas assessed on the ECERS.

Their highest levels of growth came in Language and Reasoning, Activities (both with gains of more than a full point on the seven point scale), and Parents and Staff.

The goal for year two will be to continue improvement to 5 on the overall measure, with a focus on continued growth especially in Interactions, Program Structure, and Personal Care Routines.

Juneau School District

Juneau School District	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	2.91	5.4
Space and Furnishings	2.75	5
Personal Care Routines	1.8	3.4
Language-Reasoning	3.38	6.25
Activities	3.06	4.23
Interaction	2.1	7
Program Structure	2.54	6.38
Parents and Staff	4.34	6.5

Site: Gastineau Elm.	Fall	Spring	Site: Glacier Valley Elm.	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	2.83	5.12	**Overall Score:**	2.98	5.57
Space and Furnishings	2.50	5.00	Space and Furnishings	3.00	5.00
Personal Care Routines	1.80	3.80	Personal Care Routines	1.80	3.00
Language-Reasoning	3.50	6.25	Language-Reasoning	3.25	6.25
Activities	3.00	3.56	Activities	3.11	4.90
Interaction	1.60	7.00	Interaction	2.60	7.00
Program Structure	2.75	5.75	Program Structure	2.33	7.00
Parents and Staff	4.50	6.00	Parents and Staff	4.17	7.00

These scores represent highly significant programmatic growth. The Juneau AP3 programs began the year working to move from below a minimal rating towards an overall rating of good (5) and showing growth in the seven individual areas assessed on the ECERS.

Not only did they show growth in all areas, but they achieved outstanding levels of growth (more than two points of growth on the seven point scale) in Space and Furnishing, Language and Reasoning, Interaction, Program Structure, Parents and Staff and in the Overall scale. Personal Care Routines and Activities both showed gains of more than a full point on the seven point scale.

The goal for year two will be to continue improvement from the good rating on the overall measure towards a rating of excellent. We will focus on continued growth especially in Personal Care Routines, and Activities.

Lower Kuskokwim School District

Site: Mikelnguut Elitnaurviat	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.17	5.38
Space and Furnishings	2.25	4.50
Personal Care Routines	1.20	2.60
Language-Reasoning	4.50	6.00
Activities	3.10	5.90
Interaction	3.60	5.80
Program Structure	2.33	6.50
Parents and Staff	5.33	6.50

There is only one classroom in the LKSD AP3 project.

These scores represent highly significant programmatic growth. The LKSD AP3 program began the year working to move from a minimal rating towards an overall rating of good (5) and showing growth in the seven individual areas assessed on the ECERS.

Not only did they show growth in all areas, but they achieved an incredible level of growth in Program Structure of over four points on a seven point scale. They also achieved outstanding levels of growth (more than two points of growth on the seven point scale) in Space and Furnishing, Activities, Interaction, and in the Overall scale. Personal Care Routines, Language and Reasoning, and Parents and Staff all showed gains of more than a full point on the seven point scale.

The goal for year two will be to continue improvement from the good rating on the overall measure towards a rating of excellent. We will focus on continued growth especially in Personal Care Routines, and Space and Furnishings.

Nome Public Schools

Nome Public Schools	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.52	5.09
Space and Furnishings	3.13	4.57
Personal Care Routines	3.2	3.5
Language-Reasoning	4.5	5.5
Activities	2.22	4.5
Interaction	4.7	6.2
Program Structure	4.04	6
Parents and Staff	2.67	6.25

Site: Nome Preschool	Fall	Spring	Site: Kawerak Head Start	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.95	4.60	**Overall Score:**	3.09	5.57
Space and Furnishings	2.88	3.13	Space and Furnishings	3.38	6.00
Personal Care Routines	5.00	3.60	Personal Care Routines	1.40	3.40
Language-Reasoning	4.75	6.25	Language-Reasoning	4.25	4.75
Activities	2.33	4.10	Activities	2.11	4.90
Interaction	5.60	6.20	Interaction	3.80	6.20
Program Structure	3.33	5.00	Program Structure	4.75	7.00
Parents and Staff	5.33	5.50	Parents and Staff	N/A	7.00

These scores represent highly significant programmatic growth. The Nome AP3 programs began the year working to move from a minimal rating towards an overall rating of good (5) and showing growth in the seven individual areas assessed on the ECERS.

Not only did they show growth in all areas, but they achieved an incredible level of growth in Parents and Staff of over three points on a seven point scale. They also achieved outstanding levels of growth (more than two points of growth on the seven point scale) in Activities. Overall, Space and Furnishing, Language and Reasoning, Interaction, and Program Structure all showed gains of a full point or more on the seven point scale.

Our goal for year two will be to continue improvement from the good rating on the overall measure towards a rating of excellent. We will focus on continued growth especially in Personal Care Routines, Activities, and Space and Furnishings.

Yukon Koyukuk School District

Yukon Koyukuk School District	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	4.05	4.45
Space and Furnishings	3	3.94
Personal Care Routines	2.9	4.15
Language-Reasoning	4	4.88
Activities	3.48	4.12
Interaction	5.45	3.7
Program Structure	5.17	5.6
Parents and Staff	5.46	5.42

Community: Allakaket	Fall	Spring	Community: Huslia	Fall	Spring
Overall Score:	3.31	3.24	**Overall Score:**	4.68	5.39
Space and Furnishings	2.63	2.13	Space and Furnishings	2.75	4.50
Personal Care Routines	2.60	2.60	Personal Care Routines	2.40	5.80
Language-Reasoning	3.75	2.75	Language-Reasoning	5.00	5.00
Activities	2.80	2.33	Activities	5.11	4.89
Interaction	4.60	5.00	Interaction	5.20	5.60
Program Structure	3.75	4.25	Program Structure	6.75	6.75
Parents and Staff	4.00	4.83	Parents and Staff	6.50	6.17
Community: Kaltag	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Community: Minto**	**Fall**	**Spring**
Overall Score:	3.32	4.39	**Overall Score:**	4.90	4.76
Space and Furnishings	1.88	3.75	Space and Furnishings	4.75	5.38
Personal Care Routines	2.20	3.60	Personal Care Routines	4.40	4.60
Language-Reasoning	2.25	5.25	Language-Reasoning	5.00	6.50
Activities	1.89	4.44	Activities	4.10	4.80
Interaction	5.20	1.80	Interaction	6.80	2.40
Program Structure	5.50	6.50	Program Structure	4.67	5.00
Parents and Staff	6.00	6.00	Parents and Staff	5.33	4.67

These scores represent significant programmatic growth. The YKSD AP3 programs began the year working to move from an above minimal rating towards an overall rating of good (5) and showing growth in the seven individual areas assessed on the ECERS.

Year one showed significant growth of over one point on the seven point scale in Personal Care Routines, and near one point growth in Space and Furnishing, Language and Reasoning, and Activities.

The goal for year two will be to continue improvement to 5 or above on the overall measure, with a focus on Interactions, Parents and Staff, and Space and Furnishing.

EED Outcomes

EED Outcomes

Increase the level of outreach, facilitation, training and technical assistance provided to grant recipients and their partners:

- Letters, E-mails, and phone calls were made to announce the availability of funds for the project.
- Multiple audio conferences and technical assistance were provided throughout the application process.
- Training was provided prior to fall start-up by EED. Districts and their partners were supported in specific curriculum training and for program and site specific training. Additional training and onsite technical assistance was offered and provided by the department.
- EED provided assessment materials, forms, and technical assistance for data gathering and reporting.
- EED provided face to face and distance delivered facilitation for any issues needing collaborative decision making, such as system development, partnership enhancement, common policy development, and classroom interactions and activities

Expand the sharing and dissemination of information to AP3 programs, among AP3 programs, with the early childhood field, with the State Board, and across EED:

- To and among AP3 programs: Training and technical assistance, ongoing feedback on the specific requested issues, data reporting, shared information on common issues, data driven programmatic information, and shared successful partnership approaches.
- The Early Childhood field: Multiple presentations, updates, and audio conferences at meetings, conferences, and trainings around the state.
- The State Board received updates and pre- and a post-data report.
- There has been close collaboration among EED staff, Head Start, Special Education, Pre-Elementary Approval, the State System of Support, The Director of Teaching & Learning Support, the Deputy Commissioner, and the Commissioner.

Increase the level of integration of early childhood within the systems and structures of EED:

- The main areas of integration have been around facilitation, training and technical assistance, and materials creation and dissemination.

- To a lesser extent there has been integration of data collection and reporting.

Early Learning Efforts in Other Districts

The department provided $300,000 to increase funding for early learning projects in Lower Yukon School District and Yupiit School District. Approximately 90 students in Lower Yukon School District and 55 students in Yupiit School District have been served.

Lower Yukon School District

Lower Yukon School District hired an Early Childhood Specialist in 2010 who focused her work in two directions; providing family training and activities for children who will transition into Kindergarten in Nunam Iqua, a community with no existing early learning program and outreach to the department for involvement in communication, coordination, collaboration, transition and alignment with Head Start and other community entities in targeted communities.

Teleconference calls and face to face meetings were held with district leadership and staff to outline the needs of the district for improving community connections, and for support they would like provided to all early learning programs in order to close the 18 month to two year gap they find in many incoming kindergarteners These meetings were followed by a joint community training with parents, school district and Head Start staff provided in Mountain Village and Hooper Bay. Topics covered were parent involvement, school readiness and transition to Kindergarten, as well as early brain and language development. Community meetings also focused on school connections to Head Start and other community programs, and outreach to provide early learning services to un-served children.

Additionally the department provided Lower Yukon School District with training and technical assistance on site for district staff in preparation for initial discussions with Rural Cap and AVCP Head Start. Issues of curriculum, assessment, interventions, training, and outreach to parents were discussed, as well as clarifying the districts expectations for transition to Kindergarten. District and Head Start Administration held discussions in early October, 2010, with face to face joint training to follow later in the school year. The topics for training and scheduling for regular on site meetings is determined jointly by the District and the Head Start programs.

Yupiit School District

Yupiit School District hired a coordinator to work with district run home visiting programs, local Head Starts, and other local early care and education providers in their three communities; Akiak, Akiachak, and Tuluksak. Work focused on transition and alignment between the birth to three programs, Head Start or other early care and learning programs and the five year olds'

transition to Kindergarten programs and the K-12 system. Shared training and coursework for professional development for all program staff is being developed. An Early Childhood Leadership Team with local representatives from early learning programs was created and joint outreach to local councils is ongoing.

YSD implemented a summer skill enhancement program with the children transitioning into the school in the fall. A face to face meeting was held last spring with district leadership (including a board member), AVCP & RurAL CAP Head Start leadership, and EED. Kindergarten entry data was reviewed; transition and alignment efforts were discussed along with community needs and common issues. Schedules for on-going audio conferences were set around topics of Head Start data sharing, defining school readiness, and shared in-service and pre-service planning.

In FY11 the Yupiit School District continued discussions with Rural Cap Head Start, and AVCP Head Start. They have been holding weekly planning & training meetings with local staff, and hold regular meetings with local early childhood leadership teams in each community. The Department provided training on the use of the Early Learning Guidelines, and helping parents understand their involvement in assessing the progress of their young children.

State Outcomes

Increase the sharing and dissemination of information with the Governor's Office, the Legislature, other state departments, and the public:

- Updates to the Governor's Office and legislative requests, presentations to legislative committees and sub-committees, and a report to the public.

Expand the level of integration of early childhood in other state structures and systems:

- Introduction and expansion of the use of the unique identifier for preschool (first with the AP3 and now with Alaska Head Start programs).
- Interdepartmental work on a comprehensive set of early childhood indicators.
- Expanding the cadre of inter-rater reliable ECERS – R observers, gaining data and experience in the costs and processes of the baseline program data for use across all early childhood programs and systems in the state.
- Additional data towards a statewide needs assessment (24 school districts have stated a need for quality Early Childhood Programs in their service areas).

What We Have Learned

Year one data has shown an extremely high need, with the majority of the children coming to the program behind typically-developing peers. High numbers of children in the program have exceeded expected growth, and there has been significant or higher program growth. The data, coupled with the observations, facilitation, and training provided by EED as well as anecdotal information from the field, have led to the following conclusions:

- The data shows a significant need for quality early childhood programs.

- While the pre-k children are making large strides in their development and a large number have closed the gap; there are still children performing below expectations. The growth they have accomplished needs to continue through kindergarten, first and second grade so that all our children will have closed the gaps by their third grade assessments.

- An unprecedented level of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration between Head Start programs and school districts is leading to improved alignment, transition and common planning & training.

    1. ASD and JSD and their partners have shown high levels of system integration through shared policy development, shared recruitment, training, decision-making, budgeting (beyond the funding and scope of the AP3 program), community outreach, and integration of community based services.
    2. BSSD, NPS, and their partners have created a multi-system block of early childhood programs using common training, curriculum, and community outreach
    3. YKSD and TCC have shared trainings, some joint staffing, community outreach, and coordination of community based services.
    4. LKSD is a stand-alone program provided by the district.

While this is a large first step there is still much more that can be accomplished.

- Year 2 will seek continuous improvement in both child and program outcomes. Child outcome focus will be placed on the children's language and concept development. Program development, beyond the needs expressed in the ECERS data, will also focus on cross system connections looking to accomplish the following:

    1. Strengthen alignment with and transition to kindergarten and K-12;

    2. Improve outreach to communities and the programs that serve young children under four years of age;

    3. Share what is working for programs in the AP3 with each other and with other early childhood programs.

a. JSD & Tlingit & Haida: focus on the social/emotional development domain and connections to local support systems as well as whole staff involvement in the use of the ECERS data and processes.

b. BSSD, NPS, Kawerak, & RurAL CAP: curricular alignment with common training on curriculum use, Head Start requirements and systems, and state training on the uses of the Early Learning Guidelines leading to a common approach on a regional level.

c. ASD and Kids Corps Inc.: extensive coordination between the partners and across the other district early childhood programs, direct contacts with all of the departments in ASD leading to more comprehensive and higher quality programs for both entities, increased expectations for quality comprehensive services from this project into and across the other early childhood programs throughout the district, use of a comprehensive screening tool that looks across all domains in all the ASD & KCI preschool classrooms, a greater understanding of the requirements for both programs, greater staff recognition of the value of families and greater teacher interaction with families in more meaningful ways through the incorporation of the Strengthening Families Initiative model.

d. LKSD: system involvement in the ECERS processes and its use in decision-making, including budgetary decisions.

e. YKSD & TCC: coordination between programs, strengthening connections with the departments within YKSD and Head Start, bringing a health fair for young children and their families to Minto (screenings for kids and health information for parents), and the development of an extended day Athabascan immersion program for the AP3 classroom in Allakaket.

4. Seek continuation of funding to expand Alaska's AP3 with a focus on both providing for un-served populations and developing better partnerships with a larger number of school districts and early childhood programs and systems.

At the state system level we will seek improvement in two directions:

- Within EED to improve integration of early childhood across existing structures:
  1. Teaching and Learning Support;
  2. Assessment;
  3. State System of Support;
  4. Libraries, Archives, and Museums;

- Across departments to:
  1. avoid duplication of services;
  2. integrate data and information on early childhood;
  3. conduct state-wide needs assessments;

4. assess the capacity and need for professional development.

EED will continue to work to provide support, training and technical assistance and facilitation to aid program improvement in any and all areas needed.

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM April 5, 2011

SUBJECT: Changes from version "B" to version "I" (CSSB 6( )
(Work Order No. 27-LS0058/I))

TO: Senator Bettye Davis
Chair of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Attn: Tom Obermeyer

FROM: Jean M. Mischel
Legislative Counsel

You have asked for a summary of the changes from CSSB 6( ), draft version "B" to draft version "I". Draft version "I" changes the age for a student enrolled in a public pre-kindergarten program from four and five years of age to four years of age. This version also expressly provides for inclusion of the prekindergarten students in the student count, without providing for an exception for the first year of the program to allow for an estimated count, and changes the inclusion from a "part-time" student to "not more than a half-time student".

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

JMM:plm
11-223.plm

27-LS0058\I
Mischel
4/5/11

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 6( )

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS DAVIS AND FRENCH

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act relating to prekindergarten programs within a school district; relating to pre-elementary students and pre-elementary schools; and providing for an effective date."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

*** Section 1.** AS 14.03.060(a) is amended to read:

(a) Except as provided in (e) of this section, an elementary school consists of grades kindergarten through grade eight or any appropriate combination of grades within this range**, and a prekindergarten program provided by a school district for students four years of age**.

*** Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.060(e) is amended to read:

(e) In addition to the grades enumerated in (a) of this section, an elementary school consists of a **prekindergarten** [PRE-ELEMENTARY] program supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8), operated by the department as a head start program under AS 14.38.010, or located in a public school [FOR FEDERAL FUNDING PURPOSES. EXCEPT FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY WHO IS

RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION OR RELATED SERVICES UNDER AS 14.30.180 - 14.30.350, PRE-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS MAY NOT BE COUNTED IN A SCHOOL'S AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP UNDER AS 14.17].

*** Sec. 3.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 14.03.065. Prekindergarten program. (a) A school district may provide a prekindergarten program for students who are four years of age and who reside in the district if the program is

(1) optional for a student;

(2) supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8); and

(3) consistent with regulations adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165.

(b) A student who is enrolled in and attends a prekindergarten program provided by a district shall be counted as not more than a half-time student in the district average daily membership count estimate under AS 14.17.500.

*** Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(g) A child who is four years of age on or before September 1 following the beginning of the school year and who is under school age may enter a public school prekindergarten program.

*** Sec. 5.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

(a) The department shall

(1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state except the University of Alaska;

(2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state, adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement of the public schools;

(3) provide advisory and consultative services to all public school governing bodies and personnel;

(4) prescribe by regulation a minimum course of study for the public schools; the regulations must provide that, if a course in American Sign Language is

given, the course shall be given credit as a course in a foreign language;

(5) establish, in coordination with the Department of Health and Social Services, a program for the continuing education of children who are held in detention facilities in the state during the period of detention;

(6) accredit those public schools that meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; these regulations shall be adopted by the department and presented to the legislature during the first 10 days of any regular session, and become effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session, whichever is earlier, unless disapproved by a resolution concurred in by a majority of the members of each house;

(7) prescribe by regulation, after consultation with the state fire marshal and the state sanitarian, standards that will assure healthful and safe conditions in the public and private schools of the state, including a requirement of physical examinations and immunizations in pre-elementary schools; the standards for private schools may not be more stringent than those for public schools;

(8) exercise general supervision over pre-elementary schools **and district prekindergarten programs** that receive direct state or federal funding;

(9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

(10) accredit private schools that request accreditation and that meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; nothing in this paragraph authorizes the department to require religious or other private schools to be licensed;

(11) review plans for construction of new public elementary and secondary schools and for additions to and major rehabilitation of existing public elementary and secondary schools and, in accordance with regulations adopted by the department, determine and approve the extent of eligibility for state aid of a school construction or major maintenance project; for the purposes of this paragraph, "plans" include educational specifications, schematic designs, projected energy consumption

and costs, and final contract documents;

(12) provide educational opportunities in the areas of vocational education and training, and basic education to individuals over 16 years of age who are no longer attending school;

(13) administer the grants awarded under AS 14.11;

(14) establish, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, a school bus driver training course;

(15) require the reporting of information relating to school disciplinary and safety programs under AS 14.33.120 and of incidents of disruptive or violent behavior;

(16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance, under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(14) or (15); the regulations must include

(A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;

(B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in AS 14.07.030(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in math, reading, and writing as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(2)(A); and

(C) a process for districts to petition the department for continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

(17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(14) or redirecting public school funding under AS 14.07.030(15);

(18) assist the Department of Natural Resources in developing and implementing the farm-to-school program established under AS 03.20.100.

*** Sec. 6.** AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to read:

(c) In this section, "pre-elementary school" means a school for children [AGES] three through five years **of age,** if the school's primary function is educational**, and a prekindergarten program for children four years of age that is**

provided by a school district.

* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.07.165 is amended to read:

Sec. 14.07.165. Duties. The board shall adopt

(1) statewide goals and require each governing body to adopt written goals that are consistent with local needs;

(2) regulations regarding the application for and award of grants under AS 14.03.125;

(3) regulations implementing provisions of AS 14.11.014(b);

(4) regulations requiring approval by the board before a charter school, state boarding school, or a public school may provide domiciliary services;

(5) regulations implementing the secondary school student competency examination provisions of AS 14.03.075, including the criteria and procedure under which a governing body uses a waiver to grant a diploma to a student; criteria regarding granting a waiver must include provisions that a waiver may only be granted for students who enter the system late or have rare or unusual circumstances meriting a waiver;

(6) regulations for the implementation of a prekindergarten program by a school district using the model curriculum developed by the department under AS 14.07.030(13).

* **Sec. 8.** AS 14.17.905(a) is amended to read:

(a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in a district is subject to the following:

(1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100, shall be counted as one school;

(2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425, shall be counted as

(A) one elementary school, which includes those students in grades kindergarten through six**, and, except as provided in (c) of this section, a prekindergarten program provided by a school district for students four years of age**; and

(B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades

seven through 12;

(3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 175 shall be counted as a part of the school in the district with the highest ADM.

* **Sec. 9.** AS 14.17.905 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) A school district may not include in the average daily membership of a school students who are four years of age if the students are enrolled in a program that receives funding other than funding under this chapter.

* **Sec. 10.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2013.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA cost ≠ codes
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version **SB006**
Fiscal Note Number
Publish Date

Identifier (file name) SB006-EED-ESS-2-24-12
Title "An Act relating to providing a prekindergarten program within a school district; and providing for an effective date."
Sponsor Senator Davis and French
Requester Senate Education

Dept. Affected Education & Early Development
Appropriation K-12 Support
Allocation Foundation Program
OMB Component Number 141

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**FY13**	**FY13**	**FY14**	**FY15**	**FY16**	**FY17**	**FY18**
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits	0.0	0.0	83,651.9	83,651.9	83,651.9	83,651.9	83,651.9
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	**0.0**	**0.0**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)						
1002	Federal Receipts							
1003	GF Match							
1004	GF	0.0	0.0	83,651.9	83,651.9	83,651.9	83,651.9	83,651.9
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)							
1037	GF/MH (UGF)							
1178	temp code (UGF)							
TOTAL		**0.0**	**0.0**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**	**83,651.9**

POSITIONS							
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs _____ *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs _____ *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Updated at the request of Legislative Finance Division

Prepared by Elizabeth Nudelman, Director
Division School Finance & Facilities
Approved by Mike Hanley
Commissioner

Phone 465-8679
Date/Time 2/24/12 1:00 PM
Date 2/24/2012

(Revised 8/17/2011 OMB)

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB006

Analysis

This bill defines elementary schools as kindergarten through grade eight and a prekindergarten program for students four and five years of age. The prekindergarten program must be optional.

This bill will allow districts to receive prekindergarten funding through the foundation formula provided the students meet the age requirement of four and five years of age before September 1 following the beginning of the school year, and are not funded by another source.

This fiscal note general fund appropriation was calculated by taking the most recent kindergarten enrollment , to represent a kindergarten cohort, and multiplying by the FY2012 projected average state aid per student.

Future eligibility for space allocations and capital improvement projects through the department's facilities programs are not analyzed in this fiscal note.

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 6(EDC)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS DAVIS AND FRENCH, Olson, Kookesh, Ellis

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act relating to prekindergarten programs within a school district; relating to pre-elementary students and pre-elementary schools; and providing for an effective date."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

*** Section 1.** AS 14.03.060(a) is amended to read:

(a) Except as provided in (e) of this section, an elementary school consists of grades kindergarten through grade eight or any appropriate combination of grades within this range**, and a prekindergarten program provided by a school district for students four years of age**.

*** Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.060(e) is amended to read:

(e) In addition to the grades enumerated in (a) of this section, an elementary school consists of a **prekindergarten** [PRE-ELEMENTARY] program supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8), operated by the department as a head start program under AS 14.38.010, or located in a public school [FOR FEDERAL FUNDING PURPOSES. EXCEPT FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY WHO IS

RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION OR RELATED SERVICES UNDER AS 14.30.180 - 14.30.350, PRE-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS MAY NOT BE COUNTED IN A SCHOOL'S AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP UNDER AS 14.17].

*** Sec. 3.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 14.03.065. Prekindergarten program. (a) A school district may provide a prekindergarten program for students who are four years of age and who reside in the district if the program is

(1) optional for a student;

(2) supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8); and

(3) consistent with regulations adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165.

(b) A student who is enrolled in and attends a prekindergarten program provided by a district shall be counted as not more than a half-time student in the district average daily membership count estimate under AS 14.17.500.

*** Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(g) A child who is four years of age on or before September 1 following the beginning of the school year and who is under school age may enter a public school prekindergarten program.

*** Sec. 5.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

(a) The department shall

(1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state except the University of Alaska;

(2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state, adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement of the public schools;

(3) provide advisory and consultative services to all public school governing bodies and personnel;

(4) prescribe by regulation a minimum course of study for the public schools; the regulations must provide that, if a course in American Sign Language is

given, the course shall be given credit as a course in a foreign language;

(5) establish, in coordination with the Department of Health and Social Services, a program for the continuing education of children who are held in detention facilities in the state during the period of detention;

(6) accredit those public schools that meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; these regulations shall be adopted by the department and presented to the legislature during the first 10 days of any regular session, and become effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session, whichever is earlier, unless disapproved by a resolution concurred in by a majority of the members of each house;

(7) prescribe by regulation, after consultation with the state fire marshal and the state sanitarian, standards that will assure healthful and safe conditions in the public and private schools of the state, including a requirement of physical examinations and immunizations in pre-elementary schools; the standards for private schools may not be more stringent than those for public schools;

(8) exercise general supervision over pre-elementary schools **and district prekindergarten programs** that receive direct state or federal funding;

(9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

(10) accredit private schools that request accreditation and that meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; nothing in this paragraph authorizes the department to require religious or other private schools to be licensed;

(11) review plans for construction of new public elementary and secondary schools and for additions to and major rehabilitation of existing public elementary and secondary schools and, in accordance with regulations adopted by the department, determine and approve the extent of eligibility for state aid of a school construction or major maintenance project; for the purposes of this paragraph, "plans" include educational specifications, schematic designs, projected energy consumption

and costs, and final contract documents;

(12) provide educational opportunities in the areas of vocational education and training, and basic education to individuals over 16 years of age who are no longer attending school;

(13) administer the grants awarded under AS 14.11;

(14) establish, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, a school bus driver training course;

(15) require the reporting of information relating to school disciplinary and safety programs under AS 14.33.120 and of incidents of disruptive or violent behavior;

(16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance, under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(14) or (15); the regulations must include

(A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;

(B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in AS 14.07.030(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in mathematics, reading, and writing as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(2)(A); and

(C) a process for districts to petition the department for continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

(17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(14) or redirecting public school funding under AS 14.07.030(15);

(18) assist the Department of Natural Resources in developing and implementing the farm-to-school program established under AS 03.20.100.

* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to read:

(c) In this section, "pre-elementary school" means a school for children [AGES] three through five years **of age,** if the school's primary function is educational**, and a prekindergarten program for children four years of age that is**

provided by a school district.

*** Sec. 7.** AS 14.07.165 is amended to read:

Sec. 14.07.165. Duties. The board shall adopt

(1) statewide goals and require each governing body to adopt written goals that are consistent with local needs;

(2) regulations regarding the application for and award of grants under AS 14.03.125;

(3) regulations implementing provisions of AS 14.11.014(b);

(4) regulations requiring approval by the board before a charter school, state boarding school, or a public school may provide domiciliary services;

(5) regulations implementing the secondary school student competency examination provisions of AS 14.03.075, including the criteria and procedure under which a governing body uses a waiver to grant a diploma to a student; criteria regarding granting a waiver must include provisions that a waiver may only be granted for students who enter the system late or have rare or unusual circumstances meriting a waiver**;**

(6) regulations for the implementation of a prekindergarten program by a school district using the model curriculum developed by the department under AS 14.07.030(13).

*** Sec. 8.** AS 14.17.905(a) is amended to read:

(a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in a district is subject to the following:

(1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100, shall be counted as one school;

(2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425, shall be counted as

(A) one elementary school, which includes those students in grades kindergarten through six**, and, except as provided in (c) of this section, a prekindergarten program provided by a school district for students four years of age**; and

(B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades

seven through 12;

(3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 175 shall be counted as a part of the school in the district with the highest ADM.

* **Sec. 9.** AS 14.17.905 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) A school district may not include in the average daily membership of a school students who are four years of age if the students are enrolled in a program that receives state funding other than funding under this chapter.

* **Sec. 10.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2013.

27-LS0058\I.1
Kirsch/Mischel
2/28/12

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR THOMAS

TO: CSSB 6( ), Draft Version "I"

Page 6, line 9, following "receives":

Insert "state"

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT
First Committee of Referral

DATE: 1/19/11

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: 2/24/11
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 2/29/12

Education Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 6

SB 6-PREKINDERGARTEN SCHOOL PROGRAMS/PLANS

"An Act relating to providing a prekindergarten program within a school district; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

[✓] be **replaced** with **CS** SB 6 (EDC) *[ ] Same Title [✓] New Title*

[ ] adopt **previous CS** _____ (_____) *[ ] Same Title [ ] New Title*

[ ] attached amendment(s)

[ ] adopt _____ Letter of Intent

[ ] further referral to _____ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LEG
CED	LAW
COR	LWF
CRT	MVA
EED	DNR
DEC	DPS
DFG	REV
GOV	DOT
DHS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
EED	✓			1
Fiscal Info Forthcoming				

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

[ ] **APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note**

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	French	✓			
	DAVIS	✓			
				X	
CO-CHAIR:	Thomas	✓			
CO-CHAIR:	Meyer			X	