

County Needs Assessment Report

August 2012

Kindergarten Entry Assessment & Early Childhood Data Systems (KEDS)

Developed for Clark County, Nevada



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This document contains information collected during the planning process that is specifically from and related to the county. Assets and needs are documented for the purpose of understanding the existing systems and circumstances within each of Nevada’s counties. The ultimate goal of the project is to support the development of a **statewide kindergarten entry assessment and early childhood data system that supports school readiness toward long-term success of each child.**

This project was funded with federal stimulus funds (under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act). It was envisioned and made possible by the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which is managed by the Nevada Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office (HSC & ECSO).



Introduction

This report summarizes the findings for Clark County that are the result of a statewide needs assessment conducted in the first half of 2012 related to the Kindergarten Entry and Data System project (KEDS).

“KEDS” is a statewide effort to build a comprehensive early childhood education and care (ECE) system that supports the ability of all children in Nevada to enter kindergarten ready to learn. The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC) managed by Nevada’s Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems (HSC&ECS) Office, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), is leading this effort, which has identified two major components of system change as priorities for implementation:

- a) Adoption of a Common Kindergarten Entry Assessment; and
- b) Development of a Coordinated Data System that links pre-K to K-12 (and beyond) in order to support early childhood educators to understand and utilize child assessment data to improve programs, curriculum and environments.

The vision for this project, known as KEDS for short, is defined by the NECAC as follows:

Nevada’s statewide data system leads to a shared understanding of school readiness. Everyone who touches children’s lives will have a broad awareness of the strengths, needs and status of Nevada’s children; and information that improves children’s development and learning.

To carry out this vision, a comprehensive needs assessment was launched in January 2012 with a focus on determining the feasibility at both the state and county level for adopting a statewide approach. To ensure that every one of Nevada’s 17 counties were represented in the needs assessment process, an extensive effort was made to obtain local stakeholder input regarding county-level needs, assets, and buy-in related to participating in the implementation of a Statewide Early Childhood Data System and a Common Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

The needs assessment process included focus groups and site visits in all 17 counties and school districts to understand current practices, resource needs, specific barriers, and level of willingness to participate in this statewide systems change initiative. This needs assessment will allow Nevada to determine the most sensible approach for improving each county’s ability to ensure that its children enter kindergarten ready to learn, socialize, and thrive. This report summarizes the needs assessment process and findings specifically for Clark County, and concludes with a subjective assessment of the feasibility for implementing KEDS in Clark County.

County Profile

Founded 104 years ago in 1908, Clark County is located in southern Nevada and is the sixth largest of Nevada's seventeen counties, covering approximately 8,084 square miles (20,937 square kilometers) and accounting for 4.4% of Nevada's total surface area of 110,540 square miles (286,297 square kilometers).¹ Clark County is the most populous of Nevada's 17 counties with nearly 2 million residents and 70% of the state's population. It is comprised of urban, suburban and rural areas and has five cities: Las Vegas (pop. 606,656), Henderson (pop. 276,428), North Las Vegas (224,940), Boulder City (pop. 15,886) and Mesquite (pop. 21,142).²

Clark County is boarded to the west by California and to the southeast by Arizona. Most of the county is located within the Mojave Desert, which provides a warm climate most of the year. While Clark County is known best for Las Vegas, a world renowned tourist destination, the county is home to a variety of other attractions, including Mt. Charleston, Red Rock National Conservation Areas, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Clark County Demographics

Total Population (2010) ³	1,951,269
Number of Children Ages 0-5 (2010) ⁴	138,982
Median Household Income (2010) ⁵	\$51,427
Homeless population (elementary students group) ⁶	2,838
Food Insecure Children: Ages 0-18 (2012) ⁷	132,350 or 27.6%
Enrolled in NV Checkup: Ages 0-18 (2012) ⁸	15,313
Number of Children Receiving Early Intervention Services: Ages 0-3 (2010) ⁹	1,282 (30.88 hours per child)

¹ (Nevada Office of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, 2012)

² (Clark County Nevada, 2012)

³ Invalid source specified.

⁴ Invalid source specified.

⁵ Invalid source specified.

⁶ (CCSD, CCSD Homeless Residency Data, January 26, 2011)

⁷ Invalid source specified.

⁸ Invalid source specified.

⁹ (Nevada Early Intervention Services, 2010)

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown (2010)¹⁰

	Total Population	% of Total Population
Total	1,951,269	100%
Asian	168,831	8.7%
Black or African American	204,379	10.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	14,422	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	13,628	0.7%
White	1,188,112	60.9%
Other	262,506	13.5%
Multi-Racial	99,391	5.1%
*Population that identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.	568,644	29.1%

Clark County: Snapshot of Early Childhood Education and Care

One in seven (70.9%) of Nevada’s K-12 population resides in Clark County. A high proportion of students who enter kindergarten in Nevada, do so lacking the readiness skills necessary to succeed. This has been identified as a significant factor contributing to K-12 educational deficits in the state.

According to the Nevada Department of Education audited report for 2011, there were 2,932 preschool students and 23,817 kindergarten children enrolled in public or charter schools in Clark County School District (CCSD) for Fiscal Year (FY 2011).

Four out 10 children in Clark County had no preschool experience prior to entering kindergarten in 2012. This was based on a survey of kindergarten parents, which indicated the type of preschool involvement children had, as follows:

*Pre-school Enrollment (2012)	Number of Children	Percent
Head Start	549	9.5%
Private	1,304	22.5%
Home-Based	329	5.7%
School/University Campus	599	10.3%
None/Stayed Home	2,426	41.9%
Other	61	1.1%
Multiple	49	0.8%
State Funded Pre-K	474	8.2%
	5,971	100%

*Pre-school data obtained through survey given to kindergarten parents.

¹⁰ Invalid source specified.

The number and types of early learning environments available in Clark County in 2012 are shown in the table below. The district numbers indicate the number of children enrolled in classrooms that offer early childhood education and care resources.

County Early Childhood Education and Care Resources	# (2012)	Enrollment Capacity	Children Enrolled in District Classrooms (2011)	
			Pre-K	K
Public Schools (elementary)	219*	NA	2,932	23,817
Charter Schools (elementary)	1	NA		
Private Schools (elementary)	80	NA		
Private Schools (k-12)	16	NA		
Licensed Family Child Care	165	996		
Licensed Group Child Care	8	96		
Licensed Child Care Centers	235	23,783		

Sources: Child Care Licensing Office Nevada State Health Division, Nevada Department of Education

*includes one K-12 school

Acelero Learning provides Head Start services at eleven sites, ten in Las Vegas and one in Henderson. Six of the centers offer extended day programs. Nevada pre-K is provided through CCSD.

According to Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, the student to teacher ratio in kindergarten classrooms was 24:1. Both half-day and full-day kindergarten is offered but, like all districts in Nevada, kindergarten is not mandatory.

A systematic process is in place to determine how many and which English language learners (or ELL students) have language-related learning needs. Clark County School District is working to identify the nature and extent of student needs through a home language survey and an initial English language assessment on entry into school.¹¹

Across the last four years the number and percent of individual education plan (IEP) students in the Clark County School District has remained fairly level, at just over 10% for the District. However, the percentage of students with limited English proficiency increased by 3.6% to 23%, and the percentage of students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch is now over half of all CCSD students. The percentage of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) district wide is slightly lower that of the state (10.2% compared to 10.8% statewide). There are 71,247 children that have limited English proficiency, and approximately 50.8% of children district wide qualify for free and reduced lunch (Nevada Department of Education). Qualification for free and reduced lunch is an indication that families may struggle to meet basic needs. These characteristics are important and related to kindergarten entry assessment and data suggests that children that experience one or more of these situations may be less likely to graduate

(CCSD, Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant, 2012)¹¹

from high school than those that don't. Meeting educational needs early in the child's life can help to correct for these disparities in graduation and academic achievement.

School Year	Enrollment	IEP		LEP		FRL	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
2007-08	308,554	31,888	10.30%	60,593	19.60%	131,272	42.50%
2008-09	311,039	31,860	10.20%	62,734	20.20%	132,587	42.60%
2009-10	309,335	30,898	10.00%	56,232	18.20%	135,083	43.70%
2010-11	309,749	31,561	10.20%	71,247	23.00%	157,290	50.80%

IEP = Students with disabilities, LEP = Students with Limited English Proficiency, FRL = Students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch

Of the elementary student population for the 2009-10 school year, the IEP population was 10% of enrollment. More than one in four children in that cohort had limited English proficiency, and almost half qualified for Free/Reduced Lunches. Data for the 2010-11 year was similar.

Clark County School District recognizes the relationship of third grade reading proficiency and poverty to high school graduation rates, and identified challenges for ELL students in the Striving Readers grant application. They noted that 30 CCSD schools did not make Adequate Yearly Progress in 2009–2010 because of low performing IEP students. CCSD contains even higher percentages of disadvantaged students (minority, low-income, and limited English skills) when compared to State averages, as shown below and presented in the CCSD statement of needs for the Striving Readers grant application.

Category	CCSD	Nevada	% of State
Students	309,749	437,057	70.9%
Non-White	210,875	267,929	78.7%
Free or Reduced Lunch	157,290	209,503	75.1%
Limited English Proficient	71,247	87,240	81.7%
Special Education Students	31,561	47,195	66.9%
Non-Proficient Students Grades 3-11	64,482	87,815	73.4%
Striving Readers Funding	\$50,000,000	\$70,436,631	70.9%

Over the next four years, 81 elementary schools that have a high population of disadvantaged students will be assisted through implementation of Striving Readers, with goals as summarized below:

- Goal 1. Teachers will understand and apply elements of affected literacy instruction and potentially use instructional materials that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) so that every student knows how to use reading, writing, listening, viewing, speaking, presenting, and critical thinking skills from birth through grade 12.
- Goal 2. Ensure that all students (including students who are experiencing difficulties and students were progressing ahead of their peers) are identified and served appropriately.
- Goal 3. Maintain a purposeful, respectful environment in which data can be collected, analyzed, and used to continually improve literacy achievement.

Specific strategies to achieve the goals will establish or provide:

- Literacy coaches at each site to provide coaching, mentoring, training, and modeling of best practices in the classroom.
- Data-based decision making (DBDM) literacy teams at the LEA level and at school sites to assist in reviewing data, supported teachers in making evidence based instructional decisions, and providing ongoing progress monitoring.
- High quality, job embedded professional development and summer academies for teachers.
- Assessments.
- Intervention programs and materials.
- Summer school.
- Community partners to implement birth to grade 12 literacy programs with students and families, including: the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE), community childcare centers, Vegas PBS, and local libraries.

The Striving Readers goals and strategies are consistent with many of the key aspects of a kindergarten assessment and data system, as described by stakeholders through key informant interviews, focus groups and surveys conducted for the needs assessment.

School Readiness in Nevada

An important goal of the county-level needs assessment for this project was to solicit feedback from stakeholders at the local level in order to support adoption of a Nevada-specific definition of school readiness. A working definition was developed and shaped at a statewide School Readiness Summit held in February 2012, and subsequently reviewed by hundreds of ECE stakeholders, including parents and providers, who were asked to provide input on the working definition as well as to validate the need for a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment and coordinated early childhood data system.

Feedback from Clark County stakeholders indicated support of the working Nevada definition of school readiness, which was formally adopted in June 2012 by the NECAC.

There is consensus, based upon a wealth of research, that a child's readiness for school should be measured and addressed across five distinct but connected domains¹²:

Physical Development and Health--This domain covers such factors as health status, growth, and disabilities; physical abilities, such as gross and fine motor skills; and conditions before, at, and after birth.

¹² Based on findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: A 17-State Partnership and reviewed and revised at the Nevada School Readiness Summit, 2012.

Social and Emotional Development--This domain combines two interrelated components affecting children’s behavioral health and learning. Social development refers to children’s ability to interact with others and their capacity for self-regulation. Emotional development includes children’s perceptions of themselves, their abilities to understand the feelings of other people, and their ability to interpret and express their own feelings.

Approaches to Learning--This domain refers to children’s inclination to use skills and knowledge. Key components include enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence on tasks.

Language and Early Literacy Development--This domain includes communication and emergent literacy. Communication includes listening, speaking, and vocabulary. Emergent literacy includes print awareness, story sense, early writing, and the connection of letters to sounds.

Cognition and General Knowledge--This domain refers to thinking and problem-solving as well as knowledge about particular objects and the way the world works. Mathematical knowledge, abstract thought, and imagination are included.

As the graphic on the previous page indicates, Nevada’s definition of school readiness incorporates these five domains into the following equation: **READY FAMILIES + READY EDUCATORS + READY SCHOOLS + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SYSTEMS = CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL**. Each factor necessary for the outcome that “Children are Ready for School” is further defined below:

“Ready Families” have adults who understand they are the most important people in the child’s life, understand age appropriate development, and support the child’s school readiness. Adults recognize their role as the child’s first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning.

“Ready Educators” are skilled teachers, who understand age appropriate development, possess the skills to develop appropriate curriculum based on children’s development, recognize, reinforce, and extend children’s strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences, including children with special needs.

“Ready Schools” accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school



welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers as defined above.

“Ready Communities” play a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children’s readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood education and care service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

“Ready Systems” describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices including data collection that enhance access to needed supports, information and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) be ready for children to be ready for school.¹³

Children’s readiness for school is made up of multiple components and shaped by numerous factors. Improving school readiness, therefore, must address children’s development of skills and behaviors as well as the environments in which they spend their time. Early childhood education and care leaders at the state and national level agree that efforts to improve school readiness must address three interrelated components:

- Children’s readiness for school.
- School’s readiness for children.
- The capacity of families and communities to provide developmental opportunities for young children.

Ultimately the goal is that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children. School readiness is an ongoing process from the moment of birth, to prekindergarten, and through the transition into elementary school and beyond. It is the foundation defined by the intersection of two critical components:

- 1) Children’s condition to learn based on the five identified domains of learning, and
- 2) The school’s capacity to meet the needs of all children to prepare them for future school success and the 21st century.

This includes, but not limited to providing access to high quality services for all children including aligned standards and curriculum, supportive relationships, engaging environment, smooth transitions and strong family and community connections.¹⁴

¹³ Bruner, C. and Coperman, A. (2003, March). Measuring children’s school readiness: options for developing state baselines and benchmarks. A paper prepared for the State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴ Nevada working definition from bill draft request

Early childhood educators responding to a survey also supported the five domains in the school readiness definition, with social and emotional development being the most important (90.1%) followed language and literacy (85.2%).

Please indicate the importance of measuring the following areas of children's skills and development in a statewide kindergarten entry assessment process:						
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Less Important	Not at All Important	Response Count
Social and emotional development	73	7	1	0	0	81
Language and early literacy	69	10	2	0	0	81
Physical development and health	57	18	6	0	0	80
Cognition and general knowledge	62	15	2	1	0	80
Approaches to learning	59	16	6	0	0	81

Although outreach indicated support for the school readiness definition, stakeholders did offer comments and observations. One focus group suggested using the term “self-regulate” rather “self-control,” in the definition for “Ready Families,” to be consistent with desired outcomes for children as identified through research and best practices.

When defining Ready Schools, an observation was made that public schools might have more difficulty meeting that definition and separating children into smaller cohorts with similar developmental levels; yet this is a valuable approach to meeting this definition (school readiness).

Finally, the definition shared with stakeholders in Clark County is supported in the Striving Readers application which includes engaging community partners to implement birth to grade 12 literacy programs with students and families; and emphasizes CCSD’s commitment to exceeding the achievement targets set forth in the Striving Readers RFA, as well as Nevada’s Literacy Plan.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Description of Existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment

As a funded part of state pre-K, Carson, Churchill, Clark, Elko, Humboldt, Mineral, Nye, Pershing, Washoe and White Pine counties participate in evaluations. All projects are required to administer the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) at the beginning and end of the year. The PPVT is an untimed, test of receptive vocabulary for Standard American English and provides a quick estimate of their verbal ability or scholastic aptitude. The test is given verbally and takes about 20 to 30 minutes. No reading is required by the individual, and scoring is rapid and objective.

The current practice for conducting kindergarten assessments in CCSD, as described in the Kindergarten Assessment Recommendations (Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement, May 16 2012) notes kindergarten teachers administer the assessment four times (baseline, test 1, test 2, and test 3) during the school year. Once the assessment is administered, the data is entered directly into INFORM, the district information system. This year (2012) the information entered into INFORM populated the Kindergarten Report Cards. Kindergarten teachers were provided with different options to assess the remaining standards not included on the assessment. Teachers could do this in one of three ways: through an Easy Grade Pro (EGP) Kindergarten gradebook; a student portfolio; or through a paper/pencil gradebook. CCSD sought recommendations on the Kindergarten Assessment from principals' and teacher committees' and through meetings and surveys with kindergarten teachers.

Principal and teacher committees recommended that kindergarten teachers would utilize an EGP gradebook to keep record of all assessment information. The Kindergarten Essential Skills Table would be the First Trimester Kindergarten Report card with a regular report card being sent home for Trimesters 2 and 3.

Recommendations resulting from additional outreach (meetings and surveys) with kindergarten teachers resulted in three prioritized options:

Option 1: 87 kindergarten teachers selected. For the 2012-2013 school year, kindergarten teachers would continue to use the CCSD Assessment used during the 2011-2012 school year. Kindergarten teachers would be provided time prior to the first day of school to complete the administration of the pre-test with a "Kindergarten Roundup." Teachers would be compensated for their time.

Option 2: 26 kindergarten teachers selected. For the 2012-2013 school year, kindergarten teachers would continue to use the CCSD Assessment used during the 2011-2012 school year. The test would be administered four times during the school year with data entered directly into INFORM.

Option 3: 8 kindergarten teachers selected. For the 2012-2013 school year, kindergarten teachers would transition to the new assessment system TBD.

In addition to the process outlined above, participants in focus groups and key informant interviews identified other assessments or screenings that are used in CCSD:

- For Title 1 pre-K, every child is assessed with the Brigance to mark their start to get in to preschool. The Brigance Test of Basic Skills, also known as the Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills-Revised, is a criterion referenced assessment that identifies a student's academic level of functioning. It is also used as a tool in standardized assessment for identifying a student's strengths and weaknesses.
- In CCSD preschool they are given Creative Curriculum assessments at the end of every trimester, as well as a baseline assessment 30 days after enrollment. This assessment is an observation-based tool, which spans the social-emotional, physical, cognitive and language domains.

Children are also regularly assessed for progress toward school readiness by early childhood education and care providers outside of the CCSD system, using a variety of tools and instruments, including:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) conducted in November and spring.
- Anecdotal assessments/checklists every six months including circle time observations.
- Brigance (explained previously).
- Creative Curriculum assessments (explained previously).
- Discovery Education Learning K-12 Assessment which screens for students at risk, monitors progress, measures growth, and identifies students' response to instruction.
- Early Screening Inventory (ESI) developmental screening instrument that identifies children who may need special education services in order to perform successfully in school.
- HighScope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR) instrument which assesses young children's knowledge and abilities in all areas of development.
- HighScope Online PQA (Preschool Quality Assessment) that evaluate the quality of early childhood education and care programs and identify staff training needs.
- Head Start and other center-developed assessment tools, using the pre-K standards, issued as a pre and post-test.
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (explained previously).
- Portfolios including the pre-K standards .
- Proprietary/commercial academic assessments packages used by some private centers, which include social-emotional, gross and fine motor skills; and for some centers can be used to show how well children do exiting into kindergarten or first grade.
- Teaching Strategies Gold assessments (also called Creative Curriculum), which are aligned with Common Core State Standards, state early learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.
- Woodcock Johnson which measures academic achievement and scholastic interest (the math portion is used).
- Written assessments that are shared with the parents.

Typically, stakeholders want assessment data to be accessible to them, customized to pre-K standards and shared only to benefit the child, teaching professionals and improve the learning environments and outcomes. Stakeholders use assessment data to determine how to individualize curriculum to help children attain skills they will need to succeed in school.

Goals for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

Focus group participants and early learning educators agreed that children entering kindergarten should be assessed across the five domains and that these assessments would take place in the child's natural environment in order to get a valid result. However, they noted the time it takes to conduct an assessment which can be a barrier to implementing a comprehensive, reliable, and meaningful assessment process. Stakeholders emphasized the need to apply the results of the assessment to identify school readiness issues. They noted conducting an assessment does not necessarily mean the results will be used to make sure children that are placed in kindergarten are actually ready to be there. Parent involvement is important, with four out of five parents (84.4%) surveyed agreeing that "Parent input should be used in a kindergarten entry assessment process."

Information collected through provider surveys identified screening for special as the most appropriate purposes for an assessment. Supporting transition and alignment between early childhood education and care (ECE) programs and K-12 schools was also a goal that survey respondents strongly agreed with.

The following goals for a common kindergarten entry assessment were identified by focus group and key informant participants as the most appropriate purposes of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. Results from a common assessment would be used to:

- Engage parents in their children's learning and preparation for kindergarten; provide guidelines to show and discuss with parents and teachers to increase confidence level in tool and results.
- Support transition and alignment between ECE programs and K-12 schools.
- Collect data that would support the case for mandatory kindergarten.
- Identify and address concerns, and potentially recommend delaying a child's entry into kindergarten if they are not ready by their enrollment age; allowing enough time to build foundational skills and provide interventions for students who are not ready to experience success in kindergarten. However, focus group participants were clear the assessment should not be used to *exclude* children from kindergarten.
- Allow teachers to better balance the mix of students in classrooms to improve learning outcomes.
- Screen for potential special needs.
- Help guide individual instruction.
- Link with Nevada's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- Provide feedback on student progress to preschools to help with that school's program planning and design.

Focus group participants and key informants were clear that assessments should not be used to promote specific preschools or programs, or conversely call out lower performing schools in a public

manner. However, they also stated their positive assessment results could help promote their center to the community; which they would likely do.

An issue raised consistently by public and private school directors, administrators, teachers, evaluators and data analysts was whether parents and schools would use such an assessment when kindergarten isn't mandatory, and whether results would be meaningful.

The economic implications of implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment tool were raised by focus group and key informant participants. Additionally, the Child Care Association of Nevada submitted written responses to key informant questions, cautioning that *"In our current economy, one in which we serve working parents anything that would add increased tuition costs to families will only force parents to take their children into a non-licensed, non-regulated environment."*

Private child care providers (center and home based) whose children already exceed kindergarten entry standards, cautioned against creating an assessment tool or system that negatively affected their operations, or drives them out of business. Private providers that do not receive any public funding are concerned about mandated or legislated regulations which impose changes inconsistent with their values and business model.

Attributes for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

Focus group participants and key informants in Clark County made suggestions for a common kindergarten entry assessment, noting it should:

- Produce tools and systems which are relevant to schools, parents, teachers, and community members.
- Be used to move children forward in their development, empower parents and centers, and build relationships.
- Be administered in a child's natural environment, by a person trained in early childhood education and care, and allow necessary time to complete.
- Include a baseline assessment, against which future assessments and growth can be compared.
- Require training specific to conducting accurate, reliable and meaningful assessments.
- Inform and shape instruction, the curriculum and areas for teachers to focus on, either for an individual child or the entire class.
- Be shared with parents/caregivers, along with information and coaching on how to help prepare their child be ready to learn and transition into kindergarten.
- Include parent input (88.4% of provider and 81% of parents surveyed strongly or somewhat agreed that parent input should be included as an information source in a kindergarten assessment process).
- Lead to consistent statewide data concerning the kindergarten readiness, increase understanding about children's developmental progression beyond academics and improve the ability to intervene at an early age to increase success in school.
- Be tied to standards – recognizing that children need to play and to grow; and that schools need to provide parents with the concrete results they want to see about their child's progress.

Preschool providers noted that if assessments were conducted at program exit, then results could go with child to kindergarten and be used by that teacher/school for placement and curriculum development; as long as the information was not used to label or exclude a child from participating.

Kindergarten teachers participating in focus groups identified the following characteristics of a successful kindergarten entry assessment. The assessment should be the same throughout the state, and it should align with Common Core State Standards and other school district standards. It needs to be simple and short; the data collected must be concrete, and measurable. It needs to assess social skills, dependency, classroom skills, “learning to learn” behaviors, and link to school achievement as well as academics.

Providers were asked to react to several potential implementation approaches for a statewide kindergarten entry assessment process. When combining responses for “strongly agree” and “somewhat agreed,” their preferences varied. Most often selected was “One standard assessment process for all districts” (61.5%), followed by “Districts develop local procedures that meet specified criteria” (56.7%) , then “Districts choose tools and methods from a specific list” (52.6%), and finally “All decisions are made by district with technical assistance from state or others” (40.8%).

What is your reaction to the following potential implementation approaches for a statewide kindergarten assessment process?						
Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
One standard assessment process for all districts	32	16	11	9	10	78
Districts choose tools and methods from a specified list	9	31	16	12	8	76
Districts develop local procedures that meet specified criteria	14	32	15	12	5	78
All decisions are made by districts with technical assistance from state or others	11	20	22	16	7	76

When responses for “strongly agree” and “agree” were combined for provider survey respondents, the three most important purposes of a kindergarten assessment process were found to be: (1) screen for potential special needs, (2) inform parents of strengths and areas of growth, and (3) help guide planning for early learning investments, as shown in the following table.

Another goal of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge was to develop a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment. For each of the following choices, please indicate if you feel they are an appropriate purpose of a statewide kindergarten assessment process.						
Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Help guide individual instruction	50	22	7	1	1	81
Support transition and alignment between early childhood education and care programs and K-12 schools	52	23	4	2	0	81
Screen for potential special needs	56	24	2	0	0	82
Help guide planning for early learning investments	46	30	5	1	0	82
Help guide classroom instruction	50	19	10	1	1	81
Inform parents of strengths and areas of growth	51	26	2	1	1	81
Help guide district and school planning	44	28	5	3	0	80

Summary of Assets

Stakeholders in Clark County cited the following as being significant assets which will help facilitate the creation and implementation of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment:

- Striving Readers schools will receive professional development training with regularly scheduled follow-up trainings and coaching opportunities.
- A new grant (Windsong) is expanding CCSD’s early learning programs. Altogether, there will be close to 500 early childhood education and care programs in the district next year.
- The CCSD Literacy Plan supports assessments and using reliable measures and data to determine progress toward student growth and school performance.
- CCSD is implementing the new INFORM database system which replaced SASI. The new system provides more robust and meaningful data.
- United Way of Southern Nevada’s TAPS (Tuition Assistance Preschool Scholarships) and Success by 6 initiatives already assess and analyze data, and use it to improve instruction and child readiness.
- A broad range of early childhood education and care sites, both private and public exists; many of which are participating in the State Quality Improvement Rating System (QRIS).
- The involvement of higher education in the early childhood education and care field including professional development and direct services.
- There is a shared value for ongoing professional development in both public and private early childhood education and care settings. Children’s success is the primary motivation, even though there are different strategies and philosophies for achieving this goal.

Summary of Barriers

Stakeholders in Clark County cited the following as being barriers which may hinder the creation and implementation of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. This information was provided via interviews with key informants, focus group with kindergarten teachers and from surveys:

One of the biggest challenges to successfully implementing a meaningful kindergarten entry assessment is educating parents on what the skills are that their child needs to have to be ready for school. Early childhood educators and funders emphasized that engaging parents is essential in this process. Parents must understand and value early childhood education and care, their role in the process, and understand how it links to future learning and educational success.

A number of other concerns were identified by early childhood educators, some applied to implementation and others to using results.

Implementation related concerns included:

- Assessments cannot be cumbersome, must measure and link pre-K standards to school readiness.
- Impact on children; a common entry assessment could drive children beyond what is developmentally appropriate and conducting an assessment in other than the child's natural setting could diminish the validity of results.
- Funding to support the assessment and the resources needed to implement it is a major concern. An unfunded mandate with no resources would be a major barrier to implementation. Sufficient time and resources to conduct a fair and valid assessment for each child must be available.
- Provider surveys and parent surveys also identified this barrier with cost to districts and schools listed as a very or somewhat significant concern by 60% for each group.
- Parents surveyed indicated they were most concerned that (1) the assessment would not be meaningful (81%), (2) it would take time away from teaching (65%), and the assessment information would be misused (63%); each concern is considered a barrier to implementation.
- Requirements and implications for private centers, including questions about the extensiveness of the assessment, whether externally (statewide common kindergarten entry assessment) would conflict with current programs and measurements.
- Protecting the integrity, results and reputation (centers' brand and credibility); ensuring the centers' "product" (children ready for school and engaged in learning) and that student confidentiality aren't compromised through external requirements.
- An assessment process must somehow adjust for children who have had no preschool or early childhood education and care prior to entering kindergarten.

Concerns about using results and follow-up included:

- Providing parents with supports to take action on identified concerns. For example, many parents don't have the knowledge of how to share reading with their children in those pre-kindergarten years.

- Lack of parent education and knowledge regarding child readiness and child development (this barrier was highlighted by focus group participants as critical to improving school readiness).
- Lack of consistent communications, relationships and linkages between preschool and the K-12 system impact the transfer of important information from the preschool and early childhood education and care settings to K-12 (and back again).
- Reliability and accuracy for any assessments conducted at the end of preschool / or end of school year. There are lots of developmental changes in the summer for children, so an assessment done at the end of a school year wouldn't be accurate in the fall.
- Philosophical differences between many private childcare and pre-K providers and the public education system about the nature and purpose of early childhood education and care and learning, public education funding, and public policy around early childhood education and care. The Child Care Association of Nevada is concerned about the expansion of legislation and a regulatory system with required reporting; a kindergarten entry assessment; and the development of a childhood data collection system for all children within childcare centers.
- Assessment results should be available and used to discuss the developmental stage of the child with parents and caregivers. Some parents send children to kindergarten based on age, when developmentally they are not ready; resulting in learning and socialization issues which could be better addressed in a different setting. Other parents put their children in kindergarten because they need full day care in order to work. In these instances assessment results could help parents choose the learning environment that best meets their child's development and learning stage.

Early Childhood Data System

Description of Existing Efforts Related to Early Childhood Data

The CCSD provides information via Bighorn, the Nevada Statewide Longitudinal Data System. CCSD is able to export data and upload to Bighorn, which provides a living academic history for each student, and their teachers and schools, from 2005 to the present. Bighorn serves Stakeholders, Districts, Schools, and Teachers by providing automated tools and information to help them improve academic outcomes in Nevada. In terms of technology, the district is equipped as follows:

Educational Technology	# of classrooms	# of classrooms with Internet access	# of labs, libraries and media centers	# of labs, libraries and media centers with Internet access	# of classroom instructional computers	# of classroom instructional computers with Internet access
CCSD	15,988	16,201	1,956	1,966	106,057	106,68

At this time there is no formal infrastructure to consistently link the private, community based ECE providers and public schools. What linkages there are tend to be due to relationships established by

individual sites and schools themselves, or established through pilot programs and grant funding. For example, United Way of Southern Nevada's TAPS program has been working closely with CCSD to track children's progress upon exit from preschool and entry into kindergarten. Children transitioning from the pilot preschools are assigned unique identification numbers and their progress is tracked. CCSD produces data runs and exports from SPSS which can go into Excel or another text delimited format, and then be used to analyze gains in students. However, this project covers only a small number of children who need to be assessed and data tracked and shared, when compared to all children enrolled in kindergarten.

As more public schools have implemented full day programs, relationships with "feeder" preschools have changed. There is a new sense of competition for revenue; accompanied by less communication and sharing of students (morning sessions at one provider site, before/after school sessions at another provider). More than one center noted the need to become much more business oriented due to the economy. They are doing more of everything; offering anything to support families and bring in revenue through strategies such as adding grade levels. The data systems implementation will need to understand and support these changes, and the economic impacts a kindergarten entry assessment data system could have on the early childhood education and care system.

The needs assessment outreach process sought to understand the various ways in which data is currently being used by stakeholders. Focus group and key informants talked about how they currently use (or seek to use) data. Most centers share results between teachers and parents; they are maintained in the student's file for future reference and tracking. Some centers have proprietary or online data systems they upload results into so they can track changes, and where systems provide for, establish goals and milestones for a child. Other examples from stakeholders:

- Data is used across center types (public, private, faith-based) to identify curriculum modification needs, customize learning environments and goals, and identify professional development needs. Although child assessment results are not explicitly tied to teacher evaluation and performance reviews, center administrators acknowledged they are a factor.
- CCSD uses the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-revised (ECERS-R) across the board to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten aged children, from 2 through 5 years of age. ECERS-R is frequently used to evaluate the quality of early childhood education and care program environments as defined by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards. As part of the new Striving Readers grant, teachers will receive intensive coaching and materials based on ECERS. A review of two NAEYC certified pre-K programs (n=2) compared with non-certified pre-K programs (n=18) showed the certified programs with a 0.70 higher post score (4.17 compared to 4.87). The ECERS-R is a 7 point scale, so a nearly one point gain is significant. The overall goal of Striving Readers is to increase ECERS-R scores to 5's, 6's, while building internal capacity for managing ECERS-R with reliability within CCSD. Data from ECERS-R reports will continue to be used to identify and provide for professional development of teachers.
- United Way of Southern Nevada (UWSN) TAPS pilot sites use data from the Preschool Quality Assessment (PQA) for classroom improvement plans, teacher development; identify materials

needed to enhance quality; and develop action plans. They use the COR audit tool in house to tell directors that they are getting quality assessments; which lets them “scaffold” up to next level of development. UWSN also uses data at the quarterly directors meeting to report on benchmarks; and as a performance measure to determine if centers are reaching their goals and how well they are using the resources. They use the comparison data provide through their partnership with CCSD to track how children are doing over time (e.g., against their 3rd grade class cohorts, CCSD, state, and national achievements). Kindergarten transition conversations take place at the Family Engagement Resource Centers (FERCs), using the COR report which is shared between the teacher and family, and linked to a lesson plan. UWSN has similarly invested long term in family engagement to increase high school graduation rates for incoming freshmen determined to be at risk of not graduating on time. Working with five pilot school selected by CCSD, UWSN is providing support through funding high school FERCS staff with AmeriCorps; tracking outcome data tied to overall student success measures (e.g., improved attendance, GPA and credit acquisition); and, tracking and reporting on process measures (e.g. increased parent engagement and family involvement throughout high school years, communications and relationships between schools and families, and parent-student relationships and communication related to education). Data is monitored and discussed across the pilot sites three times per year. Student outcomes are reported and compared across cohorts twice per year. In this way the pilot sites have information needed to enhance results for the target population.

- Kindergarten teachers participating in a focus group indicated that if they had a kindergarten entry assessment they would use the information to: track their own students as they get older; share with parents so they know what to expect with kindergarten and value the preschool experience; and to help preschool teachers know what type of kindergarten program the child will transition to from their centers.

Stakeholders outside of the formal public education system repeatedly discussed the need to use data across systems in order to meet children’s needs. For example, one private center indicated not having any connection with the school system, and would like more information about whether they are doing a good job or not. For other schools whose children don’t feed into their own private kindergarten, they would like a system of receiving information between systems so they can educate the parents about what they should be expecting in public kindergarten. One home childcare provider changed her program after learning about how CCSD is using Common Core State Standards. She is teaching towards the standards, believing she has to expose children to more things in preschool so they can keep up with their peers.

Schools participating in Striving Readers will have coaches and mentors, and a DBDM Leader at each site as well to monitor and manage the data systematically and efficiently. Regularly scheduled site meetings will take place and the team will share results and data with the district DBDM Team.

The district DBDM Team will meet monthly. Participants will include the Program Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent of Education Services, principals, DBDM Leaders from each site, Director of Special

Services, Director of Curriculum/Instruction/Title III, Director of Assessments and Grants, and district literacy trainers.

All of the aforementioned data system components are planned for implementation over the next three years. Integrating these efforts with any new data system will be critical for the system’s success. It would be a missed opportunity not to align the implementation of systems related to Striving Readers with other data systems across the county and the state.

Goals for Early Childhood Data System

Eighty-two providers completed surveys and 88.9% of those that responded either strongly or somewhat agreed with the goal that, “an early childhood data system for the state of Nevada would allow various systems to share information for the purpose of improving outcomes for children.”

One of the goals from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge was to develop a statewide early childhood data system. An early childhood data system for the state of Nevada would allow various systems to share information for the purpose of improving outcomes for children. What is your reaction to the idea of developing a statewide early childhood data system?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	64.2%	52
Somewhat Agree	24.7%	20
Neutral	6.2%	5
Somewhat Disagree	3.7%	3
Strongly Disagree	1.2%	1

In reviewing and analyzing data from focus groups and interviews, the following priorities were identified for an early childhood data system:

- Connect children’s kindergarten readiness skills to any new CCSD Growth Model measures and to the Common Core State Standards. The system needs to work with the electronic portfolio system, and also the CCSD P-12 Literacy Initiative. The initiative is supported by leadership throughout the district and requires data tracking toward achievement of its measurable goals.
- Prior to implementing, the system should be direct tested (merge kindergarten assessments with elementary education systems) to make sure data can be tracked and the systems work together.
- Provide needed training and resources, and then ask preschools to issue the same assessment and use it as a baseline to track progress measures once a child is entered kindergarten.
- Ensure the assessment is vertically aligned, the data is consistent, and analysis can show growth measures year to year.
- Access to real-time data and reporting functions is essential. UWSN’s pilot sites, many private centers, and CCSD all have current data systems that allow them to update student data and run reports real-time. This functionality needs to be maintained so data is relevant and used in a timely manner.

Specific to CCSD:

- The system needs to resolve differences between how data is defined and used (data dictionary and analysis). For example, there is currently a disconnect with how IEP students are counted and reported between CCSD and the Nevada Department of Education.
- Agreement on a single assessment system (e.g. AIMSweb or DIBELS). AIMSweb is a web-based assessment, data management and reporting system that provides the framework for Response to Intervention (RTI) and multi-tiered instruction. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a database for schools and districts to enter and report on student performance results. Clark County uses both currently. Once a system is selected, agreement must be reached on how the assessment should be conducted (e.g., during the same week throughout the county) needs to be reached. One suggestion offered was to use scheduling similar to the CRT tests, so the district can accommodate the year round schools. This schedule would need to be adjusted down for full day kindergarten (e.g., to 10 days rather than 20 post start date) so it reflects the same number of instruction hours for half-day kindergarten students.

It’s important to note that the schools can collect data only on children who were actually enrolled in CCSD programs. Once enrolled, CCSD can track and report out by student, school, or at the teacher level if data is entered into the INFORM system. Therefore, a process for bridging pre-K and K-12 data systems will need to be put in place to achieve the goals outlined by stakeholders in this document.

Parents surveyed indicated that there are a number of goals of the system that would be very or somewhat important. The top two, when combined, are that teachers are aware of children’s special needs and strengths and preschools and childcare have data and information to make improvements.

If you think data sharing across different systems is a good idea, which of the following goals do you think are important?						
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	Response Count
Teachers have information about the child to help guide their instruction	192	39	13	1	1	246
Teachers are aware of special needs and strengths of the child	211	28	7	0	1	247
Preschools and childcare have information about how well they have prepared children for kindergarten so that they can make improvements	180	52	10	3	1	246
Districts and schools have more information for planning	149	71	21	2	2	243
It is easier for children to move among schools or districts	145	62	28	6	2	243

Other comments from parents surveyed related to goals note that only specific people should have access to the data, and that data could be used to support parents in preparing their child for kindergarten and school success.

Attributes of an Early Childhood Data System

Attributes and considerations for developing a meaningful early childhood data system were identified by key stakeholders throughout Clark County:

- A state system that could allow data to be transferred in from other school districts which would aid teachers when they get new students.
- Create a smooth online interface (upload/download) so staff, teachers, and other users can access and keep data current.
- A site-based system so that schools can upload information to the district or state, but where the actual data and information remains with the school.
- The ability to run reports and pull out data on children in the future (longitudinal tracking).
- Provide numbers linked to the standards (e.g., COR system) enabling teachers/directors to run reports to compare child's individual growth to him/herself and other cohorts.
- A system that would be able to recognize and links to other systems. For example, Challenger, Head Start, KinderCare, and UNLV each has their own, closed tracking systems.
- Relationships need to be vertical (school) with external supports (mentor) – look for self-motivation for improving quality.
- Training to implement the system needs to be included. Technical support is important to success.
- Need to have access to computers in the classrooms for access to data systems. Going online improves efficiency.
- Want to be able to run parent reports of how kids are doing; what parents, teachers and children can be doing better. Teachers want information from the system to help inform action steps parents can take so their children are ready for kindergarten. When they leave the program, [parents] just want to know that their kids are ready.
- Most useful has been QRIS type of data, where external assessor can provide recommendations for improvements and funding was available for materials, technical assistance and coaching (allow centers to move on the recommendations).

One issue raised by school administrators, teachers and echoed by parents was the need to be clear about how parents and schools would use data from such an assessment in general. Parents want assurances that their child won't be labeled or penalized because of earlier assessment data. And educators and administrators want to know how data will be consistent when kindergarten isn't mandatory. One concern raised was that the assessment not be used to exclude children from kindergarten.

CCSD and private early childhood educators want clarity about what components of an assessment are planned to be collected and where they need to reside. This means resolving issues of data security, student privacy, who has access to the data and how it is used.

Another key decision point of interest within the district was whether the data is housed at the district or housed elsewhere. Currently CCSD teachers, administrators and evaluators have access to a wide variety of data held at the district level. If data is maintained by the state, access to needed data could be limited or considerably more cumbersome, and therefore less easily used to achieve the desired outcomes of such a system.

Summary of Assets

Some assets including infrastructure and leadership were identified by key informants and focus group participants as being in place and supportive of a common, statewide data system.

Clark County has community leaders and funders already supporting improved school readiness outcomes through United Way of Southern Nevada's Education Council and its leadership team. The Higher Education community (University of Nevada Las Vegas, UNLV and College of Southern Nevada, CSN) are engaged in quality improvement efforts, and a number of public and private preschool classrooms are participating in QRIS activities and training.

The desire to share information to benefit children's learning and outcomes is shared by most stakeholders, with the caveat that data is used to improve results for children's school readiness, family supports and engagement, and systems enhancement and not to exclude children.

The CCSD Literacy Plan lays a foundation for a common assessment tool and process with its focus on evidence-based instructional strategies and methodologies; and data-based decision making. The plan sets forth the importance of access to quality reading instruction for all children and a system of early prevention, intervention, and instructional supports to meet the full range of students' needs from early childhood through high school graduation. The Literacy Plan aligns with the Common Core State Standards and focuses on all teachers delivering the core curriculum effectively so that expectations for what students should know and be able to do are clearly articulated; allowing for measuring gains over time through assessments and other measures.

CCSD has many internal resources for implementing ECERS assessments, and sub-contracts for assessments on its state preschool classrooms. CCSD assessed 35 early childhood special education classrooms through ECERS and provided coaching from the consultant on areas that needed strengthening. As a result, 33 of 35 classrooms were subsequently accredited by NAEYC; and the other two are on track for accreditation. CCSD is providing professional development to these classrooms through Striving Readers.

The Striving Readers grant also outlines objectives for preschool students, including that they demonstrate literacy achievement, including oral language development that will indicate data documented growth in all subpopulations. Kindergarten entry assessments can assist in measuring these gains.

Acelero Head Start has distilled the Nevada pre-K standards down to approximately standards, covering all the domains. They are willing to share this tool with anyone else interested. It could serve as a common exit tool for preschools, or even be used prior to exit for planning.

United Way of Southern Nevada has funded the TAPS (Tuition Assistance Preschool Scholarship) program to increase access to quality early childhood education programs. With 279 active scholarships and 500 award letters issued, UWSN is focused on increased school readiness initiatives that deliver relevant and impactful results. UWSN also supports the Success By 6 Family Engagement Resource Centers at ten partner Child Development Centers, which provided 19 family engagement workshops on family literacy, health education and connections to community resources that provide additional services for families in need. UWSN has a strong connection to the community and the ability to mobilize resources and develop partnerships; they understand systems and bridging silos.

Kindergarten teachers participating in focus group noted some benefits from implementing an effective data system. They noted an effective system may potentially align practices for ECE programs – best practices and developmentally appropriate practices (DAP). Data from the system may ultimately lessen stress on children by way of kindergarten teachers now having a better data and awareness of individual children’s development, knowledge, and skills. Finally, the system may allow kindergarten to “get back to basics” focusing on individual children’s goals versus teaching as if all students are at the same level, while supporting all programs/professionals to all be on same page for what to expect for kindergarten readiness.

Summary of Barriers

At this time, the burdens that currently exist for providers related to data collection and reporting include the lack of funding to support such an effort and the lack of linkage and integration between ECE and public school systems. Any new regulations, new standards or new curriculum requirements represents a significant cost burden to the private sector providers. How much depends on exactly what is required, but there will be costs and centers may be forced to either pass those costs on to parents or in the worst case go out of business.

The following table represents survey responses of providers in Clark County when asked about data system concerns.

Do you have concerns about any of the following issues related to an early childhood data system? If so, how important are they to you?						
Answer Options	Very Significant	Somewhat Significant	Less Significant	Not Significant at All	Don't Know	Response Count
Cost to districts and schools	23	33	16	6	2	80
Cost to early childhood education and care providers	39	27	11	3	2	82
Misuse of data	42	24	13	1	2	82
Data analysis and reporting capacity	35	28	12	0	4	79
Time away from instruction	37	27	13	1	2	80
Teacher burden	38	24	17	2	1	82
Pressure on children	41	18	19	2	2	82
Privacy concerns	33	21	18	5	1	78

Do you have concerns about any of the following issues related to an early childhood data system? If so, how important are they to you?						
Answer Options	Very Significant	Somewhat Significant	Less Significant	Not Significant at All	Don't Know	Response Count
Security of data	36	24	15	2	1	78

Survey respondents identified the most significant (very significant) challenges as barriers to implementing an early childhood data system process. These were: misuse of data (42), pressure on children (41), cost to early childhood education and care providers (39).

Parents shared the concerns about the possibility that people will misuse children's assessment information and that an assessment would put pressure on young children to do too much too soon.

The major challenge identified during a focus group with kindergarten teachers included what would be required and how it would be used. As one participant noted, "I am concerned about getting all this great data but having it not be used. For example, what if we identify children who are not ready for kindergarten? What can we do for parents to help them? Will any programs or resources be available to them? Why collect data if we can fix the problem?"

Stakeholders in Clark County rated the relative significance of challenges related to implementing an early childhood data system. CCSD administrators participating in focus groups noted that teachers have concerns about the time it will take to administer an assessment. Considering that it took a long time to get teachers to accept assessments being conducted for CCSD, it will be important for them to have the time to adapt to the current CCSD system before making other major changes.

CCSD staff noted that within the general education population, so far only the state preschool information feeds into the state data base. This type of data includes pre and post-test on Expressive One Word, and in the English language learner pre-test for LASS. Title 1 schools started implementing the PPVT pre/post-tests, but those results do not feed into the early childhood data base at the state.

Other barriers noted by focus groups and key informants included consistency with data input, and training to ensure reliability. Making sure teaching staff has an opportunity to review assessments and the system data will be entered into before it is put into place would aid implementation.

Needs Assessment Summary

Clark County School District administrators, principals, and kindergarten teachers, program managers and evaluations/data teams were supportive of implementing a common kindergarten assessment. They are already moving in this direction and feel they have the dedication, willingness and infrastructure in place to make such an assessment a success. At the same time, they identified a number of practical concerns with linking their processes to a larger statewide system. Many of these concerns were shared and identified by other stakeholders through key informant interviews and focus groups.

For it to be feasible to implement KEDS, the following issues surrounding the assessment and the data system need to be address for Clark County.

Complex System of Early Childhood Learning Providers. The size and mix of the preschool and early learning providers in Clark County, along with the mix of funding sources and related requirements for assessment and evaluation provide a challenge to designing a process that streamlines and increases value to providers and ultimately early learning and school readiness.

Parent Support for Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Parents need to be supported on two levels. First, parents will need to be educated about the value and use of a kindergarten entry assessment and be assured that it will be used in the interest of their child. Even though nearly 80 percent of parents of children between the ages of birth and 5 in Clark County that completed a survey, agreed with Nevada adopting a statewide kindergarten entry assessment, the rest were uncertain. However, the survey responses represented only slightly more than 1% of the total number of children in pre-K and kindergarten. Second, parents will need to know what to do with the assessment results, and have access to resources and services to support their child.

Time. The issue surfaces in two ways. On one front, stakeholders are concerned that teachers (or whoever administers the assessment) won't have sufficient time to observe and accurately understand the child's level of readiness. As a result, the assessment results will not be reliable or meaningful. At the same time, focus group participants (public and private center of directors, teachers, funders, and evaluators) identified time away from instruction as a challenge for implementing a kindergarten entry assessment. However, when providers were surveyed, there was little agreement about the amount of time teachers were willing to invest in the assessment process per child per year. Responses to the provider survey indicated that one-third of respondents were unsure how much time they would be willing to spend; one in four would be willing to spend up to four hours; and, one in six said they would spend up to one hour on an assessment. The table that follows shows the number of responses for each option.

How much instructional time per child are you willing to invest in the assessment process for one year?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	2.4%	2
Less that 30 minutes	2.4%	2
Up to 1 hour	18.3%	15
Up to 2 hours	7.3%	6
Up to 3 hours	7.3%	6
Up to 4 hours	7.3%	6
More than 4 hours	22.0%	18
Unsure	32.9%	27

Reconciling Varying Kindergarten Participation Levels. Public and private teachers, administrators and evaluators identified that implementation would have different implications for half-day versus full-day kindergarten students, as they receive different levels of instruction based on time. Furthermore, since kindergarten is not mandatory and some cultures value keeping children in the home longer, children may go directly into first grade. This has implications on how assessment results are used and tracked longitudinally.

Qualifications, Reliability and Affordability. Key issues will need to be resolved early about who does the assessment, which assessment is used, when it is administered, how results are used and shared, and how the system is funded. Resolving these issues will be essential to successful implementation in Clark County as well as the state. Stakeholders want to be assured that processes are consistent across settings and that the tool selected is meaningful to children’s outcomes and providers’ improvement efforts in order for buy-in. The economic reality of implementing a statewide system must be addressed, especially for private providers and organizations that are already scaling back due to the economy.

Regulation and Policy Implications. There are a total of 504 private providers (elementary schools, K-12, licensed family child care, group care, and child care centers) caring for more than 25,000 children in Clark County. Concerns about policy and regulations that may impact their ability to provide a needed service which parents can afford must be acknowledged and addressed. The economy is slow to recover and these centers and many, but not all, of the families they serve are sensitive to increased costs that could result from implementing KEDS.

As part of implementation, the factors will be re-assessed to determine feasibility of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment and data system in the fall of 2012. Using the results from the first phase of this project, the findings for each county will be synthesized and prepared into a preliminary paper to frame draft goals for both Early Childhood Data System and Kindergarten Entry Assessment System, including recommendations. The results will then be documented into implementation plans and implementation templates for each individual county. After distributing the template to the counties, SEI consultants will work with them to provide assistance and direction in completing their plans, based on their readiness and unique needs.

Summary of Contacts and Information Sources for Clark County

Surveys

- ❖ **As of June 30 2012, 82 providers from Clark County had answered the survey.** Description of those who answered survey. More than two-thirds (60 or 68.5%) identified their background or field as early childhood education and care. The remainder of respondents represented special education (4.1%), K-12 (15.1%) and advocacy/policy (2.7%). More than half (56.2%) were administrators or directors, 17 identified themselves as teachers/instructors (23.3%), and the remaining three stated they were parents.
- ❖ **As of June 30 2012, 292 parents from Clark County had answered the parent survey.** Nine of the surveys were completed in Spanish. Nine out of ten parents (261) participating in the survey had at least one child age 5 or younger. Ninety –five respondents (32.57%) had a child between the ages of 6 and 10; and, 66 respondents (22.6%) had a child between the ages of 11 and 18. Only 20 individuals (7%) completing a parent survey also participated in a KEDS focus group.

Group Interview/Focus Group

CCSD

Kathlene Banak, Early Childhood Program
LeNora Bredsguard-Brown, Project Facilitator, Literacy, K-12
Sue Daellenbach , Assistant Superintendent, Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement
Jeff Halsell, IDS-Instructional Data Services/Testing
Deena Holloway, Coordinator, Literacy Innovative Programs
Eric Johnson, Director, Math and Instructional Technology
Julie Rae Kasper, Early Childhood Program
Lisa Pitch, Coordinator, Department of Research, Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement
Karen Schiemer, Coordinator, Mathematics, K-5
Karen Stanley, Assistant Superintendent , Curriculum & Professional Development

Early Childhood Educators

D'Ann Blatt, Manager/Director Litl Scholars School
Carol Levins, Director, Creative Kids Learning Center
Nikki Mead, Regional Director Bright Horizons
Michael Thompson, via written submission for Child Care Association of Nevada
Gary Vause, Owner, Litl Scholars School

UWSN

Margot Chappel, Director, Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office
Dolores Hauck, Director, Community Development
Angela Simmons
Clara Westfall

Focus Group Participants

Please note that names are from sign in sheets. In some cases, the spelling of the name was difficult to read, and therefore, there may be errors among some names.

UWSN TAPS Directors Meeting

Andriana Leon, Hill & Dale
Jeri Seidman, Hill & Dale
Suzanne Cordero, Kinder Cottage
Sarah Wright, Kinder Cottage
David Wary, NCA Learning Center
Kristy Kao, NCA Learning Center
Rhonda Clausen, UWSN
Ruby Collins, VELC
Stacy Burrell-Turner, UWSN
Brandi Heiseler, WMG
Denice Feldman, Kids Corner
Kim Crandall, Creative Beginnings
Clara Westfall, UWSN
Tammy Gates, Hill and Dale

Family Care Home Providers Network

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Gayle Thomsen, Ms. Gayle's Little School
Nicole Gardner, Gardner Family Daycare
Sheryl Howard, Tiny Tots
Kristine Miller-Anderson, Vineyards Family Child Care
Marie Nisou, Marie's Home Daycare
Yvonne Montenegro, Here We Grow
Laurie Ciardullo, Roots & Wings Daycare

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Angela Woywod, Centennial CC
Donita Murphy, Faith Lutheran Preschool
Cheresa Barefield, The Little Bare's In the Field Child Care
Lonnie Kritzler, Congregation Ner Tamid
Mary Riding, In Home
Rebecca Weaver, Calvary Chapel Preschool Spring Valley
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Jolynne Barnum, Junior Junction
Susan Whitney, Junior Junction
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Barbie Blakeley, CDE, Lake Mead Christian Academy
Kayla Boykin, Kidz Kidz Kidz
Loretta Pilafas, KinderCare
Nancy Breneman, KinderCare
Sheryl Howard, Tiny Dots

Other Information Resources

- ESEA Title 1 Allocations to Local Educational Agencies – NEVADA; <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy11/nevada.pdf>
- Food Bank of Northern Nevada
- Clark County School District website, <http://ccsd.net/>
- US Census Data
- CCSD Striving Readers needs assessment, project narrative and application
- CCSD Literacy Plan
- KEDS Parent survey results (5)
- KEDS Provider survey results
- Running With A Spork: Nevada Child Nutrition Programs, 2009-10, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition & School Health
- The Food Bank of Northern Nevada, Inc.
- Nevada State Demographer, 2010 Census Profiles by County, <http://nvdemography.org/nevada-2010-census/2010-census-profiles-by-county/>
- Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
- Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy
- http://health.nv.gov/HCQC_Childcare.htm
- Insight, Center For Community Economic Development, The Economic Impact of early Care and Education in Nevada
- Nevada Department of Education, <http://nde.doe.nv.gov/SD.htm>
- Nevada Department of Education, <http://www.doe.nv.gov/Resources/QuickSTATS.pdf>