

County Needs Assessment Report Draft

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Kindergarten Entry Assessment & Early Childhood Data Systems (KEDS)

Developed for Elko 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).



Nevada Early Childhood
Advisory Council

Introduction

This report summarizes the findings for Elko 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 Elko County and concludes with a subjective assessment of the feasibility for implementing KEDS in Elko County.

County Profile

Elko County is located in the northeastern corner of Nevada, along Interstate 80, at an elevation of 5,100. Nearly 45% of the county residents reside in the city of Elko, which is the county seat. The Elko area includes the City of Elko, the Spring Creek suburb, the community of Lamoille, and the areas of Osino and Ryndon. In addition to Elko, the county contains the cities of Carlin, Wells, and West Wendover as well as the unincorporated towns of Jackpot, Montello, and Mountain City.

Elko is home to Great Basin College, which offers two-year and four-year degrees, along with satellite programs in many outlying communities. Other regional facilities serving the area include the Elko Regional Airport, and Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital. Elko's economic base consists of hard rock mining, manufacturing, cattle ranching, gaming, tourism, recreation, government and a large retail and service industry. Elko County is the fourth largest gold producing area in the world, and one of the fastest growing regions in Nevada.

Elko County is home to the Elko Colony of the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone Indians, which is one of the four separate colonies that comprise the tribe. The Elko Colony reservation encompasses 193 noncontiguous acres adjacent to the city of Elko, the only major city near the reservation. The tribe operates a community center in Elko. The Indian Health Service operates a clinic on the reservation with one doctor and two nurses. Tribal youth attend the public schools in Elko. The Colony operates a child care center for preschoolers.

The Duck Valley Indian Reservation was established as a homeland for members of both the Shoshone and Paiute tribes. It lies directly on the state line between Idaho and Nevada, with the southern half lying in northwestern Elko County. Over 80% of residents live on the Nevada side. Its only significant community is Owyhee, Nevada. In 1956 the reservation school system was consolidated into the Elko County School District of Nevada and today is known as the Owyhee Combined Schools (K-12). Recently, a Community Education Center was placed in Owyhee for GED and higher education courses.

The Wells Colony is located in the high desert of northeastern Nevada, just west of the city of Wells, in Elko County. Elko, the major population center in northeastern Nevada, lies approximately 45 miles southwest of the Wells Colony via Interstate 80. Tribal youth attend public schools in Wells.

Tribal relations with the Elko County School District are formalized and relatively strong. A community-based advisory group exists to work with the district to determine how Title 7 funding (which provides formula funding to support public education services for American Indian students) should be utilized. There are Native American tutoring programs in Elko, Owyhee, Wells, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding and an active grant with Inter-Tribal Head Start.

Elko County Demographics

Total Population (2010)¹	48,818
Number of Children Ages 0-5 (2010)²	4,078
Median Household Income (2010)³	\$66,210
Homeless population (school age group)	Data not available
Food Insecure Children: Ages 0-18 (2012)⁴	3,010 or 22.2%
Enrolled in NV Checkup: Ages 0-18 (2012)⁵	414
Number of Children Receiving Early Intervention Services: Ages 0-3 (2010)⁶	81 (19.22 hours per child)

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown (2010)¹			
		Total Population	% of Total Population
	Total	48,818	100%
	Asian	442	0.9%
	Black or African American	378	0.8%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	2,594	5.3%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	69	0.1%
	White	38,772	79.4%
	Other	5,022	10.3%
	Multi-Racial	1,541	3.2%
	*Population that identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.	11,158	22.9%

Elko County: Snapshot of Early Childhood Education and Care

Elko County School District (ECSD) has 11 elementary schools. Of those, two schools (Southside and West Wendover) have state-funded pre-K classrooms. All classrooms are modeled after Great Basin College (GBC) developmental pre-K classrooms, which use a child-centered curriculum that promotes the physical, social, emotional, creative, and intellectual growth and language development of young

¹ (Nevada State Demographer)

² (Nevada State Demographer)

³ (U.S. Census Bureau)

⁴ (Feeding America , 2012)

⁵ (Nevada Check up, 2012)

⁶ (Nevada Early Intervention Services, 2012)

children. GBC’s preschool is a lab school that provides training to the early childhood education and care (ECE) students on campus in conjunction with the college’s program. Two additional preschool programs are available in Carlin and Wells as a result of support from the district, Great Basin College, Communities in Schools as well as community support. Pre-K programs are also available in Owyhee and Jackpot through Inter-Tribal Head Start and Head Start of Northeastern Nevada.

County Early Childhood Education and Care Resources	#	Enrollment Capacity	Children Enrolled in District Classrooms (2011)	
			Pre-K	K
Public Schools (elementary)	16	N/A	75	780
Charter Schools (elementary)	1	N/A		
Private Schools (elementary)	3	N/A		
Licensed Preschools	1	25		
Licensed Family Child Care	1	6		
Licensed Group Child Care	3	36		
Licensed Child Care Centers	8	520		

Sources: Nevada Registry, Nevada Department of Education

Due to decreases in state funding over the last several years, ECSD kindergarten and 1st grade class sizes have increased to a student-to-teacher ratio of 25:1. There are approximately 96% of students district wide qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) program. This is an indicator that families may struggle to meet basic needs. Meeting educational needs early in the child’s life can help to correct for these disparities in graduation and academic achievement. Owyhee, Southside and West Wendover elementary schools each have active 21st Century Community Learning Center grants that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for students, particularly those in high-poverty and low-performing schools, to help them meet academic standards. ECSD also has formalized partnerships with nine agencies to provide literacy services to families with children ages birth to 3 years.

Early childhood education and care resources are scarce in Elko County, and are inadequate to meet the demand. Based on ECSD’s average kindergarten enrollment, it is estimated that only 26% of 3 to 4 year olds are currently receiving quality pre-K services. According to a 2009 report issued by the Children’s Cabinet, licensed child care in Elko County can only meet 32% of the demand for child care for children from birth to 5, decreasing to 16.08% for children ages birth to 9. When combining licensed child care capacity and average daily attendance of school-age programs, only 17.8% of the demand for care for children ages birth to 14 is met. One of the impacts from the mining boom is an increase in parents working 12 hour days and dropping off kids at the Boys and Girls Club all day as a result of not having access to affordable early childhood education and care resources.

The following table indicates which communities in Elko County have licensed facilities that offer early learning and care resources.

	Capacity	Age
Elko		
Head Start of Northeastern Nevada-Child Care	36	3-5 years

	Capacity	Age
Head Start of Northeastern NV- Early Head Start Nursery	46	Birth – 3 years
Head Start of Northeastern NV- Preschool	102	3-5 years
Mark H. Dawson Child and Family Center Lic. (GBC)	115	3-6 years
Just For Kids Preschool	25	2-5 years
Noah's Ark. Preschool/Nursery	57	6 wks – 12 years
St. Mark Lutheran Preschool	47	3-5 years
Kidz Kabin Child Care Center	33	2-12 years
Jackpot		
Head Start of NE Nevada - Jackpot Center/Preschool	18	3-5 years
Spring Creek		
Adventures in Learning Preschool/Group Home	12	2-5 years
Alphabet Soup Preschool .Group Home/Preschool	12	3-5 years
Caring 4 Cubs Group Home	12	3-5 years
Creative Kids Co-Op Preschool	81	2-12 years
Creative Kids Co-op Nursery	10	6 mos – 2 years
Wells		
Wells Family Resource and Cultural Center	50	2-13 years
West Wendover		
Bonnie's Child Care Family Care Home	12	Birth – 12 years

Elko County has two Family Resource Centers (FRCs); one in Wells and one in Elko. The FRCs report that 85% of the families they serve are young families that have moved into the area related to the mining boom. In partnership with the school district and GBC pre-K, the Wells FRC offers a pre-K program for children (ages 3 ½ to 5 years) and an Early Steps to Learning Program serving children (ages 2 to 3 ½ years) that reside in Wells. They use a literacy-based curriculum in their classrooms, and provide extended care for children of working parents.

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 Elko 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 domains⁷:

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.

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.



⁷ 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.

“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.⁸

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.

⁸ 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.

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.⁹

School district administrators and early childhood educators in Elko County reacted favorably to this definition of school readiness. Focus group and interview participants liked the fact that the school readiness definition addresses the role of parents and the community, noting that parents need a great deal of support and education in order to understand what they can do, beginning at birth, to support their child's readiness to enter school.

There was also broad support for the focus on multiple developmental domains, rather than a more singular focus on academic readiness. Stakeholders in Elko County report that children enter kindergarten with huge variance in terms of readiness, and observe that the difference in children who access full day and half day kindergarten is significant. Parents often don't know what to do to ensure that their children are ready for school, and many providers have been in the business so long that they feel it is common sense to understand what school readiness looks like, even though it is not always as clear to parents. They also point to generational differences in thinking related to what is needed to prepare children for school, particularly with respect to the increasing number of grandparents that are serving as primary caregivers. Stakeholders note that there a growing number of social issues (e.g. access to health care, cultural and language barriers, behavioral health, food insecurity, etc) that impact both children, families and communities and prevent school readiness, and it is unrealistic to expect families to practice developmental exercises when they are facing crisis situations at home.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Description of Existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment

All schools in ECSD utilize different assessments, based on teacher preference and principal choice. The primary focus of assessment, regardless of the tool used, is on preparing students for readiness related to Nevada's Common Core State Standards. This is true for elementary schools as well. State-funded pre-K classrooms 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.

Wells pre-K uses the Brigance Early Childhood Development Inventory, and wants to add the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) because it aligns with what the district is doing. As noted earlier, all district pre-K classrooms received training from GBC, which uses the ASQ-3. They note that it is easy to use, easy to share with parents, and based on child-parent interaction. Most private providers and Early

⁹ Nevada working definition from bill draft request

Intervention Specialists prefer the ASQ-3I as well, in that it is a questionnaire designed to help parents check their child's development. Parents can use the results of the ASQ to help talk with pediatricians, teachers or other professionals if they have concerns about their child's development. This facilitates early diagnosis and treatment of developmental delays to help give a child the best opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

The core of ASQ is a series of 20 questionnaires that correspond to age intervals from birth to 5 years. Each questionnaire contains simple questions for parents to answer about activities their child is (or is not) able to do. The answers are scored and help to determine whether the child's development is on schedule or whether the child should be referred for a developmental checkup with a professional. Activities discussed in each questionnaire reflect developmental milestones for each age group. Parents can learn more about what to expect their child to be able to do at each stage of development.

Goals and Attributes for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

Elko County stakeholders interviewed noted several priorities, goals and attributes that should be considered related to implementing a common kindergarten assessment.

- Assessment needs to show growth, and include a level of data to tell the right story about a student's progress and individual needs. The general premise and norming of school readiness assessment tools should remain the same, even though the version of the tool changes as they get older. Furthermore, kindergarten-level assessments need to align with 3rd grade testing, so that consistent expectations can be set for students - even those students that have not participated in a pre-K program.
- Any kindergarten entry assessment needs to leverage what is already working in Elko County and should help teachers to individualize instruction for children while also facilitating a better balance in the classroom so that students are progressing in a more even fashion as a result of improved school readiness.
- Community/parent engagement is critical, and there are a whole range of things that they need to know beyond academics so that parents can start to support in the early years, beginning at birth. The adoption of a Common Kindergarten Entry Assessment needs to result in an increase in the value that the community and parents place on the importance of early childhood education and care, and should facilitate the ability for the community to come to a collective agreement on what it means to be kindergarten-ready, and demonstrate how important pre-K is to child development.
- The tool should be developmentally appropriate and culturally competent, and align with Common Core State Standards. Timing of assessment should begin in preschool, and be administered at least three times per year (and ideally quarterly). Additionally, assessments should follow the development and growth of one student in a common format over the years.

In a survey administered to parents to gather input and feedback related to KEDS, parents were asked which goals of Kindergarten Entry Assessment are the most important. The following table summarizes their responses:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral
Guide teachers to provide individualized instruction	87.5% (42)	10.4% (5)	2.1% (1)
Support the child’s transition from childcare or preschool to kindergarten	81.6% (40)	16.3% (8)	2.0% (1)
Screen children for potential special needs	89.8% (44)	8.2% (4)	2.0% (1)
Help families prepare children for kindergarten	81.6% (40)	18.4% (9)	0.0% (0)
Inform parents of their child’s strengths and areas for growth	98.0% (48)	2.0% (1)	0.0% (0)

Summary of Assets

The input gathered from Elko County stakeholders identified a number of assets in the current community and ECE environment that could potentially facilitate adoption of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. These include:

- Elko County is highly invested in early childhood education and care as well as literacy, and is proceeding with establishing an Early Childhood Literacy Council that was envisioned as a part of its Striving Readers application, even though it did not get funded.
- Additionally, Elko has established an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) which is modeled after the state-level council. It brings together the many ECE providers and stakeholders all of the players to share best practices, collaborate and leverage assets that already exist in the community without the district having to seek additional funding.
- Great Basin College is an excellent resource not only for teacher preparation, but for training, leadership, and mentoring as well.
- Mining money is a big blessing right now for the entire community, including the school district. Mining has supported a number of early childhood education and care resources, particularly in order to support parents working in the mining industry, including the center located in Carlin, Nevada.
- Assessments should be conducted with sufficient frequency to allow a better understanding of developmental progression as it occurs (and identify any special needs earlier). Elko is seeking a way to use comparison data between kindergarten entry assessments and subsequent assessments to prove the value of full-day kindergarten.

Summary of Barriers

In addition to the assets noted above, those providing input for this needs assessment also noted some existing challenges that need to be considered when developing the implementation plans for a common kindergarten assessment. They include:

- There needs to be equitable and available access to early childhood education and care resources, and the gap between what is available and what families can afford needs to be reduced. To offset the severe shortage of pre-K resources and capacity in Elko County to meet the high demand, there is a need for more targeted outreach to parents and certain cultural communities to link them with what is available.
- One of the greatest needs in Elko County is a Child Find program. Stakeholders don't know which children aren't attending preschool, and kindergarten teachers report that the children who are struggling are those that don't go to preschool. To underscore this challenge, Sage Elementary in Spring Creek did a survey of 45 families in the community and found that nearly 50% of their children hadn't attended preschool.
- Data about children needs to be available for pre-K teachers that help them to better prepare children. This is especially a concern when it comes to children that do not participate in preschool programs. While a common tool and assessment may assist with instruction in kindergarten for those children that have been in preschool, it will function as more of a screen for those that have not. One focus group interviewed suggested that a report card format could be developed that outlines the pre-K and K-12 standards with a crosswalk that would foster one set of expectations about development and readiness, and ease the transition for everyone by making it more seamless.
- The cultural barriers that exist within the community need to be addressed, and better linkages and relationships need to be formed with minority communities.
- There is a need for training so that a shared understanding of school readiness and how to assess is developed. For instance, focus group participants noted that a disconnect exists between some providers, including Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS), and ECSD because a different tool and definition is being used, so ratings don't always mean the same thing from one provider to the next.

Early Childhood Data System

Description of Existing Efforts Related to Early Childhood Data

Like most of Nevada's rural counties, Elko County uses PowerSchool, a web-based student information system for K-12, and also participates in uploading data to BigHorn, Nevada's longitudinal data system. The following table summarizes the technology capacity for the elementary schools in the district. ECSD has a technology plan in place for 2010-2012 that has put a priority on upgrading its use of technology, including an overhaul of the school district website and upgraded technology resources to improve ability to track and monitor performance at every level.

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
Carlin ES	34	34	3	3	173	174
Elko Grammar #2 ES	25	25	2	2	200	192
Independence Vly ES	1	1	0	0	5	5
Jackpot ES	15	15	2	2	57	0
Montello ES	1	1	0	0	8	8
Mound Vly ES	1	1	0	0	6	6
Mountain View ES	39	39	2	2	114	89
Northside ES	32	32	2	2	100	74
Owyhee ES	7	7	1	1	37	19
Ruby Vly ES	2	1	0	0	7	6
Sage ES	31	31	2	2	156	122
Southside ES	37	37	1	1	211	211
Spring Creek ES	39	39	8	8	164	180
Wells ES	12	12	2	2	87	61
West Wendover ES	42	42	2	2	149	149

Goals and Attributes for Early Childhood Data System

The district continues to work on continuing implementation programs in support of student growth, including: upgrading its network capability and information technology (hardware and software), and upgrading technology to further encourage/support parental involvement. Private providers are interested in aligning their framework with local curriculum and state pre-K standards, ensuring that what they measure relates to what children need to be prepared for school entry, and that both assessment and instruction align with standards.

The priority issues that need to be addressed related to implement a coordinated ECE data system in Elko County include identifying how it will be funded and how data will help the district and its community-based partners communicate the value of early childhood education and care in order to help “level the playing field” by increasing the community’s investment in public preschool. Many of the stakeholders interviewed would like to see a uniform measurement for cross-classroom/school/county comparisons, and see multiple advantages to adopting universal instruments and measurements.

Teachers would like data in the aggregate to help them know what interventions might be needed in “real time” (if done 3 to 4 times a year). Implementation of (and participation in) a coordinated statewide ECE data system would need to be supported with sufficient training and technical assistance support to ensure that teachers in both pre-K and kindergarten classrooms, as well as administration and support staff, could become proficient without taking away from instruction time. They also noted that the system should be designed to allow counties to continue utilizing effective practices and upload student information without having to significantly revamp local tools and processes. Funding to support implementation is likely to be necessary.

The KEDS survey asked parents to indicate which goals related to information sharing about their child are the most important. The following table summarizes their responses:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important
Teachers have information about the child to help guide their instruction	82.4% (42)	9.8% (5)	7.8% (4)	0.0% (0)
Teachers are aware of special needs and strengths of the child	90.4% (47)	7.7% (4)	1.9% (1)	0.0% (0)
Preschools and childcare have information about how well they have prepared children for kindergarten so that they can make improvements	82.7% (43)	13.5% (7)	3.8% (2)	0.0% (0)
Districts and schools have more information for planning	72.5% (37)	17.6% (9)	7.8% (6)	2.0% (1)
It is easier for children to move among schools or districts	70.6% (36)	15.7% (8)	11.8% (6)	2.0% (1)

The following attributes were identified related to what an early childhood data system should include:

- Data sharing and reporting need to be efficient for teachers and data entry staff.
- Data needs to be easy to understand and share with parents as well as students.
- Data should facilitate a better understanding of how Elko compares at every level – child, teacher, provider, school, district, county, state and nationally – about performance, student achievement, and school readiness.

Summary of Assets

Assets in Elko County that can be leveraged to support implementation and participation in a coordinated ECE data system include:

- A plan is already in place to strengthen the district’s technology infrastructure.
- The majority of parents completing a KEDS survey (72.7%) indicate that it is a good idea for information about their child’s progress to be exchanged between educators and other providers, as long as the information is used to support their child’s development and is not misused.
- Invested Board of Trustees and forward-thinking superintendent see the value of early childhood education and care and are already working in partnership with GBC, the tribes, and community-based providers to look at all options related to improving student, school, teacher and district performance.

- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) set up in state pre-K facilitate support and information sharing, spread of best practices, and peer support. These could be expanded to incorporate non-district programs, as well as to improve linkages between pre-K and kindergarten educators.

Summary of Barriers

At this time, the burdens that currently exist in Elko County related to data collection and reporting on children participating in early childhood education and care programs include the lack of funding to support such an effort and the lack of formal coordination between pre-K providers and the K-12 system. School administrators also noted that they want to increase capacity in the classroom to use data to guide decision-making and performance improvement, which is a goal for the private providers as well. Other concerns noted included misuse of data and the potential additional burden on teachers.

The transient nature of the economy as well as the residents in Elko County is problematic for a number of reasons. Mining families that are moving into the area, as well as those working in the service sector, often have no support system in place. Families in the more remote communities face daunting challenges related to transportation, access to needed services, and a sense of isolation. Many families move into the community during the summer when it is more difficult for the schools to make a direct connection with parents of new students. School district officials attribute a drop-off in parent involvement to the high transiency rate as well, noting that there has been a spike in criminal involvement, as well as in the influx of students needing ELL services. Some of these students are second generation English Language Learners.

There are concerns among parents, especially Hispanic parents, who are wary about how information about their child will be used and tend to give out minimal information about everything. The same is true about native tribes, who are very sensitive about confidentiality and don't like the idea of anyone talking about them or their families. As a result, these cultural differences lend to a barrier in terms of data tracking and sharing related to their children. Other concerns noted included that parents don't consistently have the tools or skills or time to be able to help their children.

Needs Assessment Summary

Overall, the stakeholders in Elko County expressed enthusiastic support for participating in KEDS as a county, since it aligns with their goals and planning efforts already underway. From the school district's perspective, it makes sense and would be feasible. There appears to be a general willingness to explore participation in this statewide initiative, as long as it does not come in the form of an unfunded mandate or require implementation of tools and processes that don't make sense in Elko. For it to be feasible to implement KEDS, the following issues need to be address for Elko County:

- The community and district have an insufficient number of quality pre-K resources in place related to the need and demand for these programs. However, the current mining boom might

potentially serve as an asset to support community goals related to improving school readiness for children.

- Some formal linkages are being put into place between pre-K centers and K-12 programs as a result of the local ECAC and the newly formed Early Childhood Literacy Council.
- Aligning pre-K assessments and kindergarten assessments would provide more of a longitudinal sense of how children are doing, and stakeholders agree that parents would like having this information. This could also assist to project a child's trajectory and ensure that she or he receives the necessary services and supports to succeed. Training needs to be available to support this alignment so that continuity for children making the transition is ensured.
- Elko sees an advantage on having the data on students coming in to the county, and doesn't think it would be a big deal to upload it.
- Kindergarten teachers should be involved in creating the assessment to facilitate buy-in.
- District leadership (Board of Trustees, superintendent, and elementary school principal) is supportive of early childhood education and care and is willing to invest resources if they are available.
- Early childhood education and care personnel is invested in the developmental progress of young children, and has demonstrated an interest in looking at model programs, working collaboratively with peers in their own and other counties, and adopting innovative solutions.

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 Elko County

Surveys

As of June 30 2012, 55 parents from Elko County had answered the parent survey. (Of these, 92.7% report being the parent of children age 5 or younger.)

Group Interviews/Focus Groups

Kerry Ann Aguirre, Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital
Melissa Aguirre, Communities in Schools of Northeastern Nevada
Carol Banghart, Elko County School District
Jan Brizee, State of Nevada Office of Consumer Health Assistance
Jack French, Elko County School District
Corrie Herrera, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
Brenna Malone, Head Start of Northeastern Nevada
Lynette McFarlan – Great Basin College Early Education Program
Ron Pavelko, Friends of the Elko County Library
Michele Oke, PACE Coalition
Cathy McAdoo, PACE Coalition
Chris Pacini, Family Resource Center of Northeastern Nevada
Martha Schott-Bernius, Nevada Early Intervention Services
Tammy Wright, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
Connie Zeller, Great Basin College Preschool

Other Information Resources

- Children’s Cabinet, Child Care Report by County for 2009
- ESEA Title I Allocations to Local Educational Agencies – NEVADA;
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy11/nevada.pdf>
- Elko County School District website: www.ecsdnv.k12.nv.us
- ECSD Striving Readers Application
- Elko County website
- Insight, Center For Community Economic Development, The Economic Impact of Early Care and Education in Nevada
- KEDS Parent survey results
- KEDS Provider survey results
- Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, <http://www.nevadareportcard.com/>
- Nevada Department of Education, <http://nde.doe.nv.gov/SD.htm>
- Nevada Department of Education, <http://www.doe.nv.gov/Resources/QuickSTATS.pdf>
- Nevada Department of Education, NRS 387.303 Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2011,
http://nde.doe.nv.gov/SchoolFunding_Stats.htm
- Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
- Nevada Health Division, Licensed Child Care Facility List;
<http://health.nv.gov/childcare/ChildCareFacilityList.pdf>

- Nevada Health Division Nevada Early Intervention Services Rural and Frontier Rate Study Report, 2011, http://health.nv.gov/PDFs/New/EI_RuralFrontier_v5.pdf
- Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy
- Nevada Registry: http://www.nevadaregistry.org/fb_files/State05.12.pdf
- Nevada State Demographer, 2010 Census Profiles by County, <http://nvdemography.org/nevada-2010-census/2010-census-profiles-by-county/>
- Running With A Spork: Nevada Child Nutrition Programs, 2009-10, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition & School Health