2018–2019 Recommended Use of Funds

Prekindergarten—Grade 3 Systems Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEA Strategic Priority:</th>
<th>#2—Build A Foundation in Reading and Math</th>
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<td>Statutorily allowable use of funds:</td>
<td>Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs—Schoolwide Programs. Instructional coaching for teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school personnel to improve instruction and/or data-driven instruction.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Title II, Part A: Preparing, Training, Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Leaders, Principals, Other School Leaders. Offer high-quality, personalized, evidence-based coaching to teachers, instructional leadership teams, principals, or other school leaders.</td>
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Project Summary

To ensure gains made in high-quality prekindergarten are sustained, it is essential that systems leaders, administrators, and educators in prekindergarten—grade 3 are equipped with specialized knowledge and skills needed to support the continuous growth of early learners. Evidence suggests children benefit from a system of early childhood education that starts at preschool and continues through third grade and includes aligned learning environments, standards, curricula, instruction, and assessments. Young children often experience discontinuities in these elements, as they move through grade levels, particularly when moving from a community-based preschool provider into a district or charter program for prekindergarten or kindergarten. This discontinuity also adversely affects families. Vertical alignment from preschool through grade 3 will provide greater continuity for children and families.

Building prekindergarten—grade 3 systems requires cross-sector collaboration, increasing administrator and teacher capacities, quality family engagement and support for continuous quality improvements. To achieve this, the Early Childhood Division at TEA will support regional ESC staff by providing ongoing training and technical assistance, as well as district assistance to school districts and charters, by supporting shared learning across districts and charters.

Educators in early grades should have a firm understanding of the science of child development and the impact on the sequence of learning across multiple domains of learning / development. Early childhood educators need to know what happens before and after the specific grade or age level they teach and be able to identify gaps in learning or development to remediate those gaps.

Improving alignment across prekindergarten through third grade through systems-building will support TEA’s Strategic Priority #2: Building A Foundation in Reading and Math, as sustaining the outcomes of prekindergarten through aligned learning environments, standards, curricula, and instruction will work to ensure positive child outcomes related to reading and math.

LEA Financial Commitment (start-up and annual costs)

The start-up and ongoing costs associated with prekindergarten—grade 3 systems building may include contracting with the LEA’s ESC or other professional development providers for training or technical assistance in this area. The costs associated with these services vary significantly depending on the provider. School districts and charter schools may be able to develop the instructional coaching staff and resources in-house.

※ When possible, TEA staff has estimated costs by major expenditure categories used in the ESSA Consolidated Application and the Expenditure Reporting (ER) System. Costs, such as locally-determined salaries, benefits, and wages, could not be estimated.
Project Description

To build strongly aligned, powerful prekindergarten—grade 3 systems, LEAs will need to develop leadership and educator skills within multiple target areas. To build early learning capacity, LEAs, in partnership with ESCs and other professional development providers, will need to:

- Support partnerships between community-based preschool providers and districts/charters to create continuity between programs.
- Strengthen PLC models in districts/charters in increase horizontal and vertical alignment of learning environments, standards, curricula, and instruction.
- Increase administrators’ and educators’ capacity to use on-going, observation-based formative assessments across multiple domains of development and learning to drive instructional decisions.
- Offer annual joint professional development related to the learning and development of children from birth through age 8.
- Give compensation for added responsibilities and activities related to teacher leadership, such as peer instructional coaching, mentorship and induction, recruitment and retention, curriculum design, and advising on public policy.
- Offer training for educators on how to develop a comprehensive plan to support and engage families in the education of their children.

Goals and Student Achievement Objectives

A well-designed, high-quality prekindergarten—grade 3 system will lead toward increased leadership and educator capacity to support positive child outcomes across multiple domains of learning and development.

Expected Outcomes

The list below offers a sample of expected outcomes for successful implementation formatted as SMART goals (the percentage of will increase from X% to Y% by Z or the number of will increase from X to Y by Z).

- Increased percentage of children meeting Kindergarten Readiness assessment standard from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increase in student achievement in math and literacy in early grades from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increased number of teachers evaluated as effective or high-quality on annual performance evaluations from X to Y by Z.
- Increased number of staff meeting qualifications for prekindergarten—grade 3 classrooms from X to Y by Z.
- Greater leadership from principals on practices that create continuity of instruction and resources within and across early grades determined by an increased number of principals assessed as effective in annual staff evaluations from X to Y by Z.
- Increased percentage of students meeting grade level standard on 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade STAAR Reading and Math assessments from X% to Y% by Z.

Training and Support TEA Offers

The Division of Early Childhood Education at TEA is leading a professional learning community with the 20 Educational Service Centers. As part of this work, the Division will focus on aligning professional development offered by each center. Over the coming years, TEA will develop educator and leadership technical assistance and professional development to aid in prekindergarten through third grade system alignment. TEA will also give recommended resources for ESCs and LEAs for prekindergarten—grade 3 systems.
Required Activities or Components

Under Title II, Part A Sec. 2103 (b)(3)(G)(k) and (ii) Uses of Funds Activities, LEAs may use funds to increase the knowledge base of teachers, principals, or other school leaders on instruction in the early grades and on strategies to measure whether young children are progressing; and the ability of principals or other school leaders to support school and preschool program educators to meet the needs of students through age 8, including through joint professional learning and planning activities that address the transition to elementary school.

Program Duration, Timeline, or Significant Milestones

Implementation would include the following activities:

- Obtaining or providing leadership training, including professional learning communities (PLCs), vertical alignment, data analysis, development of systems to support prekindergarten—grade 3 alignment, family engagement, and resources and other topics relevant to early grades success.
- Obtaining or providing educator training on practices associated with aligned prekindergarten—grade 3 classroom instruction, assessment data analysis, horizontal planning, vertical planning, developmental needs of children 0-8 years old, differentiated instruction based on student data, continuous improvement practices, family engagement and other topics relevant to early grades success.

Staffing Requirements for LEAs

Districts looking to implement a prekindergarten—grade 3 aligned system will need to identify a school lead on system development. If technical assistance, instructional coaching, or professional development is offered by ESCs or other external providers, a school district may need to appoint someone within the district to coordinate these services.

Resources

Prek-3rd Grade

- The Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Pre-K–3rd Grade Approaches offers a vision for approaches designed to improve the quality and coherence of children's learning opportunities, from preschool through third grade. Ultimately, comprehensive P–3 approaches hold the potential to improve child outcomes and prevent or close achievement gaps. This framework is intended to be referenced and used over an extended period for reflection, self-evaluation, and improvement of P–3 efforts. It is designed primarily for use by schools, school districts, early learning programs, and other community partners.
- Developed by a panel of leading practitioners, Leading Pre-K-3–Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice, from the National Association of Elementary School Principals, defines new competencies, and outlines a practical approach to high-quality early childhood education that is critical to laying a strong foundation for learning for young children from age three to third grade.
- Principal's Corner: Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in Pre-K–3rd Grade, from New America, is based on focus groups of elementary school principals conducted in five U.S. cities. The six briefs take a closer look at principals' perceptions of what should take place in pre-K and early grade classrooms, while offering recommendations for States and school districts regarding building principals' expertise in this area.
- Case Studies of Schools Implementing Early Elementary Strategies: Preschool Through Third Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction, from the U.S. Department of Education, examines five programs that implemented strategies to align instruction practices across preschool through third grade.
• The National P-3 Center at the University of Washington offers several resources on P-3 systems building and alignment ranging from case studies, policy briefs, and model programs. Resources examine statewide and district-level perspectives.
• The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes and the National Institute for Early Education Research both offer research, technical assistance, and resource materials on P-3 systems and alignment.

Workforce

• Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. This report from the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine offers recommendations to build a workforce that is unified by the foundation of the science of child development and early learning and the shared knowledge and competencies that are needed to provide consistent, high-quality support for the development and early learning of children from birth through age 8.

TEA Contact Information

Jacquie Porter, Statewide Director
Division of Early Childhood Education
Department of Academics
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress
Austin, TX 78701
Email: jacquie.porter@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8886

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