

County Needs Assessment Report Draft

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Kindergarten Entry Assessment & Early Childhood Data Systems (KEDS)

Developed for Humboldt 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 Humboldt 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 Humboldt County, and concludes with a subjective assessment of the feasibility for implementing KEDS in Humboldt County.

County Profile

Humboldt County, the oldest county in Nevada, was one of Nevada's original nine counties created in 1861. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 9,658 square miles. Humboldt County is located in the rugged high desert region of north-central Nevada, bordered on the north by Oregon and by neighboring Nevada counties to the west, south and east. The County is located in the rich gold mining center of the Western U.S. and is the leading agricultural county in the State of Nevada with over 100,000 acres under cultivation. Tourism is also a large part of the County's economic base due to the large numbers of visitors the gaming industry brings to the area and the draw of the beautiful wide open spaces, historical sites, and great hunting and fishing. Many of Winnemucca's residents are employed by mining companies or by companies serving the mining industry. Other employers include the many casinos, hotels and restaurants located in the city.

The population density is relatively two persons per square mile. Winnemucca, the county seat, is the sole incorporated city in the county. Approximately 45 percent of Humboldt County residents live in Winnemucca. McDermitt is the sole census-designated place in the county. Other unincorporated areas include: Denio, Golconda, Orovada, Paradise Valley, Stone House, and Valmy. Humboldt County School District serves Humboldt County, and has tuition agreements in place with several neighboring counties, including Pershing and Lander, which allows students to attend the school that is geographically closest to their community, even though it is located in a different county. The tuition agreement in place with Pershing County affects 30-40% of preschoolers living there.

The Winnemucca Indian Colony of Nevada, a federally recognized tribe of Northern Paiute and Western Shoshone Indians in western Nevada, has its headquarters in Winnemucca. Additionally, a portion of the Summit Lake Paiute Reservation is geographically within Humboldt County's borders, in the northeast corner of Nevada bordering Oregon. Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation is also located in Humboldt County.

In recent years Humboldt County's economy has been dominated by mining. Agriculture also plays a significant role in the local economy. Winnemucca Farms operates the world's largest potato dehydration plant. As the dominant sector of the local economy, the mining boom during the past couple of years has had a direct impact on education. The positive impact is seen in increased funding resources for the school district and the local community, and of course in the economic status of many county residents. However, there have also been challenges associated with an extreme shortage in affordable housing, forcing miners to commute and their families to live and educate their children outside of the county.

There is a significant lack of infant/toddler care options, prompting many Humboldt County families to care for their children at home. Similarly, there is a high demand for preschool slots, and school district administrators report that "a lot of town people try to get in every year". There are 45 children signed up to enroll in the state-funded pre-K classroom next year, with no teacher hired at this time and an active waiting list.

Humboldt County Demographics

Total Population (2010) ¹	16,528
Number of Children Ages 0-5 (2010) ²	1,274
Median Household Income (2010) ³	\$59,960
Homeless population (school age group)	No Data Available
Food Insecure Children: Ages 0-18 (2012) ⁴	1,360 or 26.8%
Enrolled in NV Checkup: Ages 0-18 (2012) ⁵	140
Number of Children Receiving Early Intervention Services: Ages 0-3 (2010) ⁶	32 (41.49 hours per child)

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown (2010)⁷

	Total Population	% of Total Population
Total	16,528	100%
Asian	120	0.7%
Black or African American	87	0.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	692	4.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19	0.1%
White	13,053	79.0%
Other	2,095	12.7%
Multi-Racial	462	2.8%
*Population that identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.	4,038	24.4%

Humboldt County: Snapshot of Early Childhood Education and Care

According to the Nevada Department of Education, there are a total of eight elementary school classrooms operating in Humboldt County School District (2011), five of which serve remote rural areas of the County. These include **McDermitt** Combined School (K-12), **Denio** School (K-8), **Kings River** School (K-8), **Orovada** School (K-8), and **Paradise Valley** School (K-8).

There are three K-4 elementary schools that serve sections of Winnemucca: **Grass Valley**, **Sonoma Heights**, and **Winnemucca Grammar School**. The district's administration offices are also located in Winnemucca, the county seat. The four schools in HCSD that offer full-day kindergarten include: Denio,

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, 2010)

⁷ (Nevada State Demographer)

McDermitt, Orovada, and Winnemucca Grammar School. Humboldt County does not have any charter schools at this time. As with every other county in Nevada, kindergarten is not mandatory.

Pre-K Resources: Humboldt County School District has operated a state-funded full-day preschool classroom for the past four years at Grass Valley Elementary School in Winnemucca. The district is preparing to evaluate Grass Valley’s pre-K outcomes, noting that in a perfect world, they would have pre-K classroom in every elementary school.

In terms of private ECE providers, Humboldt County has a total of five licensed child care options, three of which provide center-based care. The **Learning Ladder** Center has capacity for 45 children, ages 2 to 6 years, and operates five days per week (closed during the summer). **Zion Lutheran Church Preschool** operates a half-day preschool that operates five days per week (closed during the summer) and has capacity for 50 children, ages 3 to 5 years. This center also offers a full-year day care center for up to 28 children, ages 2 ½ to 12 years. **TMC Head Start** is a Migrant Seasonal Center that is federally funded to provide center based services to migrant and seasonal children of families that migrate to the area to work during the agricultural season. During this time, this center operates a full-day preschool for up to 20 children, ages 3 to 5 years, as well as a nursery that can serve up to eight children, 18 months to 2 years.

In addition, **Carmel’s Day Care** is a family care home that can serve up to six children (birth to 6 years), and operates six days per week from 5 am – 10 pm. **Cheri Duncan’s Home Child Care** offers group care for up twelve children, ages birth to 18 years. This provider operates five days per week and will take up to four children under 12 months, and up to eight children under 3 years.

Humboldt County has one Head Start site that is run through the Inter Tribal Council of Nevada (McDermitt Head Start).

County Early Childhood Education and Care Resources	#	Enrollment Capacity	Children Enrolled in District Classrooms (2011)	
			Pre-K	K
Public Schools (elementary)	8	n/a	44	252
Charter Schools (elementary)	0	0		
Private Schools (elementary)	0	0		
Licensed Family Child Care	1	6		
Licensed Group Child Care	1	12		
Licensed Child Care Centers	2	107		

Sources: Nevada Registry, Nevada Department of Education

While the number and percent of children that have not had any preschool preparation in Humboldt County are unknown, HCSD personnel participating in the site visit and focus group note that it is easy to determine which children enrolling in kindergarten have been in a pre-K setting. They report that it can take up to six months to bring those children with no pre-K exposure up to the same level of readiness to learn as the children that have participated in preschool.

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 Humboldt 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 domains⁸:

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.



⁸ 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.

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.⁹

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

⁹ 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.

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.¹⁰

School district administrators and elementary school principals in Humboldt County reacted favorably to this definition of school readiness. They noted that “college and career readiness starts in pre-K”, and liked the fact that the school readiness definition addresses the role of parents and the community. They report that the percentage of families with young children qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) is trending upward. While they are not sure what to attribute this to, it is partially a result of the growth in low-wage service industries that have accompanied the mining boom and subsequently driven the socioeconomic status of families in the community lower. To offset that, there is a strong sense 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.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Description of Existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment

All schools in HCSD 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 Standards. This is true for elementary schools as well. HCSD officials note that, while the social/emotional aspect of a child’s development is not a defined standard in the assessment process, it is implied and becomes an expectation school-wide.

¹⁰ Nevada working definition from bill draft request

For the most part, the PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) is used to assess kindergarten readiness, in conjunction with an informal observation checklist. More information about PALS is provided below. The kindergarten entry assessment process takes place over one to two days toward the end of the school year, and involves the kindergarten teaching staff from every elementary school in the district. The event is held at the convention center so as not to disrupt learning at the school sites. Assessment results are reviewed with the parents immediately, and assessment data is stored in the incoming kindergarten student’s file.

After kindergarten entry, additional screenings and assessments are administered throughout the year, including: a teacher-created assessment, standards-based report card, and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments are given to students in grades 1-9 (grades 3-9 in 2009 and earlier) in the Fall of each year to determine that year’s baseline or ‘starting spot’ for each student. The MAP is also used in most kindergarten classes, with the exception of Winnemucca Grammar School, which has been operating a full-day state-funded pre-K for the past four years and has set up a different assessment process. Where the MAP is used, it is typically administered three times per year. HCS D administrative staff emphasized during the focus group interview that they do not value testing for testing’s sake alone. They see it as mission-critical to get students “over the bar” by 12th grade, rather than drawing the line in the sand at 3rd grade.

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is a measure of children’s knowledge of several important literacy fundamentals: phonological awareness, alphabet recognition, concept of word, knowledge of letter sounds and spelling. PALS-K provides a direct means of matching literacy instruction to specific literacy needs and

provides a means of identifying those children who are relatively behind in their acquisition of these fundamental literacy skills.

PALS is a research-based assessment with strong technical adequacy. It is the essential screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool for measuring the fundamental components of literacy. Typically administered three times a year, the PALS Online Score Entry & Reporting System provides fast and efficient score entry, reports and graphs for instructional planning and data

analysis, and additional progress monitoring assessments. For more information, see website: <https://www.palsmarketplace.com/about/>

PALS Assessments Measure:			
Tasks	PALS-PreK	PALS-K	PALS 1–3
Print and Word Awareness	✓		
Nursery Rhyme Awareness	✓		
Name Writing	✓		
Rhyme Awareness	✓	✓	
Beginning Sound Awareness	✓	✓	
Alphabet Recognition	✓	✓	✓
Letter Sounds	✓	✓	✓
Concept of Word	✓	✓	✓
Blending		✓	✓
Sound-to-Letter		✓	✓
Spelling/Phonics		✓	✓
Word Recognition in Isolation		✓	✓
Oral Reading in Context (accuracy, fluency, rate and comprehension)			✓

Some of the HCSD schools are also utilizing the **Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2)** with students beginning in kindergarten. This tool, which is appropriate for grades K-3, provides teachers with a proven diagnostic reading assessment that not only establishes each student's reading level but also gives the teacher a Focus for Classroom Instruction designed to assist students' progression to the next reading level. Focus group input indicated that HCSD sees promise with the DRA, but wants to ensure that the data is reliable.

Goals for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

HCSD is expecting in the next 3-5 years to demonstrate a return on investment for full-day kindergarten. Prior to that, they do not plan to make any changes to the program or curriculum. The focus group conducted in Humboldt County included the Assistant Superintendent (who is the incoming Superintendent for the upcoming school year), an elementary school principal, and the district Director of Curriculum and Technology. This group noted several priorities and goals that should be considered related to implementing a common kindergarten assessment throughout Nevada.

1. Assessment needs to show growth (similar to the MAP), and include a level of data to tell the right story about a student's progress and individual needs. Also similar to MAP, the assessment data should be easy to upload and provide easy-to-read graphs that are easy for parents to understand. Training support should be available for all teaching and assessment staff.
2. The general premise and norming of school readiness assessment tools should remain the same, even though version 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.
3. Any kindergarten entry assessment needs to leverage what is already working in Humboldt 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.

Attributes for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

In addition to the goals for a common kindergarten assessment identified above, focus group participants noted a number of attributes that would be of value to such an initiative in Humboldt County. These are enumerated below:

1. The assessment/screening tool needs to be brief and provide a quick method to screen children to identify special needs/health issues, link them with needed services, and learn about the individual needs and strengths of the child.
2. From a parent and family perspective, Humboldt County focus group participants were emphatic that the assessment tool and process needs to be easy for parents to understand, and must provide them with guidance that helps them support their child's individual needs and growth.

3. Assessments should be conducted with sufficient frequency to allow a better understanding of developmental progression as it occurs (and identify any special needs earlier). They noted that certain tools are essentially worthless in terms of providing comparison data. This includes assessments like the CRT, in which a third of the test changes annually. According to the focus group participants, in talking to principals that make the CRT the focus, there is a sense that a lot more kids get left behind. HCSD 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 Assets

The input gathered during the Humboldt County focus group identified a number of assets in the current community and ECE environment that are of significant value to their current operations, and need to be considered in the context of potential adoption of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment.

1. HCSD typically performs slightly higher than most of Nevada's other counties on the CRTs, and has a high quality staff across the board.
2. There is a strong support system in the community for education, and a broad commitment to literacy. Key stakeholders in literacy-related initiatives that are also assets for early childhood education and care in Humboldt include the FRC, the Rotary (which puts literacy bags together for school children), and the library (which operates several literacy programs, including a popular summer reading program and a Book Mobile which a lot of families take advantage of).
3. Humboldt is building capacity related to engaging and involving parents from the very beginning. Parent engagement and support is a catalyst that motivates school performance. Hispanic parents are gradually becoming more involved and the district is putting more resources toward literacy trainings, monthly Pre-K parent-teacher nights, and phone messenger is in English followed by Spanish.
4. Technology is the top priority for HCSD, and capacity building efforts are underway in each school that will support early childhood education and care.
5. Mining money is a big blessing right now for the entire community. However, the School Board's plan is to maintain current resources and focus growth-related expenditures on infrastructure than can be sustained in the event that mining goes through a bust cycle.

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.

1. The transient nature of the economy in Humboldt is problematic for a number of reasons. Due to the agricultural season, a lot of families move into the community during the summer when staff are not present to take registrations and 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 (there are currently nine students at Grass Valley Elementary School– 1 in 4 – whose parents are in jail), as well as in the influx of students needing ELL services. Some of these students are second generation English Language Learners.

2. There are insufficient linkages between pre-K programs and kindergarten to support information exchange that supports the kindergarten teacher’s capacity to handle the needs of a widely varying student population. HCSD got screened out of applying for the Striving Readers Grant due to its size, but was planning to establish a committee to link pre-K and K-12 in its application. Unfortunately, planning only occurred at a preliminary level. In a perfect world, HCSD teachers would love to have more assistance. Currently, kindergarten classrooms operate at a 23:1 ratio, mostly with no aides, although parents and volunteers are a supportive resource.
3. There is not a seamless flow between Nevada’s Pre-K Standards and Common Core standards. HCSD officials believe that there are far too many standards to be practical for pre-K.
4. Relationships between the tribe and the school district are not as effective as they could be, primarily in McDermitt. While HCSD and the tribe meet quarterly, this relationship would benefit if the tribe’s education committee could reengage with HCSD to promote early childhood education and care including efficient transition between the Head Start program and the school district.
5. Humboldt County parents need more education and engagement resources. A fair number of parents don’t understand what is involved in ensuring that their child is school-ready, according to district personnel interviewed. Having a Nevada-specific definition of school readiness should help with this, as long as there are also resources devoted to a messaging effort for parents to educate them on what they can and should be doing to prepare their children for school.

Early Childhood Data System

Description of Existing Efforts Related to Early Childhood Data

Like most of Nevada’s rural counties, Humboldt 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. HCSD 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
Denio ES	2	2	0	0	12	12

Grass Vly ES	26	26	2	2	190	196
Kings River ES	2	2	0	0	12	12
McDermitt ES	6	6	2	2	48	50
Orovada ES	2	2	0	0	23	23
Paradise Vly ES	3	3	1	1	27	27
Sonoma Heights ES	29	29	2	2	183	187
Winnemucca GS	26	26	2	2	141	143

As part of the requirement related to operating state-funded pre-K classroom, HCSD is 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.

Goals for Early Childhood Data System

The district continues to work on continuing implementation programs in support of student academic growth, including: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Data Teams, differentiated instruction, Common Formative Assessments and creating a clearly articulated K-12 curriculum with the introduction of the Common Core State Standards. The development of a District Leadership Team continues to bring together 40+ teachers on a monthly basis from all sites. This collective insight and direction solidifies and guides the implementation of District and School Improvement goals. This work has allowed the district to move beyond CRT's as the only driving data used to inform instruction.

HCSD also has made strides in replacing antiquated computer systems throughout the district with major infrastructure upgrades being sought out for upcoming years. District personnel expressed support for increased information sharing between pre-K and K-12 to improve outcomes, noting that while there is presently a cordial relationship between the district and private ECE providers, there is no formal mechanism for information exchange. It would be helpful to have data about their students' progress after they have moved on to higher grades.

Attributes of an Early Childhood Data System

The following goals were identified related to an implementing an early childhood data system:

- Whatever is adopted needs to be linked to the Common Core Standards.
- Data sharing and reporting need to be efficient for teachers and data entry staff.
- Counties need the ability to use the data for their own purposes.
- Data needs to be easy to understand and share with parents as well as students.
- Data should facilitate a better understanding of how Humboldt compares at every level – child, teacher, school, district, county, state and nationally – about performance, student achievement, and school readiness.

According to HCSD school administrators, the priority issues that need to be addressed related to implementing a coordinated ECE data system include identifying how it will be funded and how to

address the potential of lost instructional time. Both could impact implementation. 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 revamp local tools and processes. The ability for individual counties to select tools and methods that met statewide criteria related to the data elements is considered ideal for Humboldt. Funding to support implementation is likely to be necessary.

Summary of Assets

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

- An existing plan to strengthen the district’s technology infrastructure.
- Relatively small student/county population allows for easier management of data entry and analysis.
- Strong culture for collaborative planning and peer-to-peer learning will support planning and progress toward data-driven decision making.
- High level of parent engagement already exists to facilitate community buy-in.
- Supportive Board of Trustees and forward-thinking superintendent are willing to look at all options related to improving student, school, teacher and district performance.

Summary of Barriers

At this time, the burdens that currently exist in Humboldt 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 lack the capacity, in terms of staffing, training and technology, to use data to guide decision-making and performance improvement, which should be a goal for the system. Other concerns noted included concern about the misuse of data and the potential additional burden on teachers.

Needs Assessment Summary

Overall, Humboldt County expressed qualified support for participating in KEDS as a county. 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 Humboldt or negatively impact its students and staff. For it to be feasible to implement KEDS, the following issues need to be address for Humboldt County:

- Early education and care personnel are invested in the developmental progress of young children, and have demonstrated an interest in investing in full day kindergarten and adopting innovative solutions.
- District-wide strategic planning is underway that prioritizes improvements in technology infrastructure which will be built up over the coming 1 to 2 years.
- The community and district have relatively few resources in place devoted to early childhood education and care. However, the current mining boom might potentially serve as an asset to support community goals related to improving school readiness for children.
- No formal linkages exist currently between pre-K centers and K-12 programs. However, informal linkages are in place as a result of the cordial referral relationships that have been developed.
- 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 for Humboldt County.
- HCSD administration wants to see any ideas and plans related to implementation before committing, noting that the final design has to be meaningful, valuable, and not a waste of time. This includes utilizing a tool that is evidence-based and not too subjective, and is ideally simple to use and not too time consuming.

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 Humboldt County

Group Interview/Focus Group

David Jensen, Assistant Superintendent (incoming Superintendent), Humboldt County School District

Tim Connors, Principal, Grass Valley Elementary School

Kelly Novi, Director of Curriculum and Technology, Humboldt County School District

Other Information Resources

- ESEA Title I Allocations to Local Educational Agencies – NEVADA; <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy11/nevada.pdf>
- Food Bank of Northern Nevada
- Humboldt County website
- Humboldt County School District website: www.hcsd.k12.nv.us
- Insight, Center For Community Economic Development, The Economic Impact of early Care and Education in Nevada
- KEDS Parent survey results
- KEDS Provider survey results
- Learning Ladders Preschool Facebook page
- 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
- Zion Lutheran Preschool webpage