County Needs Assessment Report Draft

June 2012

Kindergarten Entry Assessment & Early Childhood Data Systems (KEDS)

Developed for Lyon County, Nevada

Table of Contents

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

Lyon County Profile

Lyon County is located in western Nevada. Its county seat is Yerington. Lyon County has two cities: Fernley and Yerington. Fernley is located at the intersection of Interstate 80, U.S. Route 50 Alternate, and US 95 Alternate. Although it originally spanned the Lyon/Washoe County line, a county boundary change in 2005 left it entirely in Lyon County. Yerington is located at the intersection of US 95 Alternate and Nevada State Route 208. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 1.7 square miles (4.4 km2), all land.

Lyon County was one of the nine original counties created in 1861. Its first County Seat was Dayton, which had just changed its name from Nevada City in 1862, and had been called Chinatown before that. After the Dayton Court House burned down in 1909, the seat was moved to Yerington in 1911.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 2,016 square miles, of which, 1,994 square miles of it is land and 23 square miles of it is water. It is adjacent to Washoe County to the north, Storey County to the northwest, Churchill County to the east and Douglas County to the west.

Lyon County Demographics

Total Population (2010)[1]	51,980
Number of Children Ages 0-5 (2010)[2]	3,404
Median Household Income (2010)[3]	$47,108
Homeless population (school age group)	374
Food Insecure Children: Ages 0-18 (2012)[4]	4,060 or 31.0%
Enrolled in NV Checkup: Ages 0-18 (2012)[5]	500
Number of Children Receiving Early Intervention Services: Ages 0-3 (2010)[6]	77 (28.63 hours per child)

Lyon County is the third most economically stressed county in the United State according to the Nevada Legislative Fact Sheet (December, 2010). Poverty is rising within the county and the county unemployment rate is 18.7%. The district identified 310 homeless students in 2011 and the district had already identified 378 homeless students as of January 31, 2012, according to the Striving Readers Application. Nearly 20% of the students at Silver Springs Elementary are considered homeless.

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[1] (Nevada State Demographer)
[2] (Nevada State Demographer)
[3] (U.S. Census Bureau)
[4] (Feeding America , 2012)
[5] (Nevada Check up, 2012)
[6] (Nevada Department of Education, 2011)

As evident in the following table, there are a large percentage of minority students in LCSD. This raises issues with language, since a larger number of English Language Learners or of children that are not fluent in any language. There are also two tribal colonies served by LCSD. Most Paiute students (two colonies) and children from Schurz attend school in Yerington. There are Head Start programs in Lyon (Fernley) and in Yerington (Tribal).

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown (2010)[7]		Total Population	% of Total Population
Total		51,980	100%
Asian		725	1.4%
Black or African American		417	0.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native		1,286	2.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander		130	0.3%
White		44,164	85.0%
Other		3,320	3.4%
Multi-Racial		1,938	3.7%
*Population that identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.		7,674	14.8%

Another issue impacting LCSD is the increase in children with special needs.

Lyon County Subpopulations	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
Children Living in Poverty	34.2%	36.6%	38.1%	46.4%
Minority	27.9%	29.5%	30.4%	35.9%
Transiency Rate	19.1%	22.2%	24.1%	21.3%
Students with Disabilities	10.6%	11.3%	11.2%	13.4%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	6.8%	6.3%	7.0%	6.8%

The Striving Readers application noted that 40% of students entering kindergarten are performing below bench mark in December of their kindergarten year as measured by Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).

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[7] (Nevada State Demographer)

Schools:	DES	Sutro	RES	SSES	FES	EVES	CES	YES	Total
% of Non-proficient Students in Reading	31%	39%	28%	39%	48%	35%	32%	52%	40%

According to Nevada Annual Reports of accountability, the student to teacher ratio in kindergarten classrooms was 24:1. There is full day kindergarten offered at Yerington. All other kindergarten classrooms are half day, but, like all districts in Nevada, kindergarten is not mandatory.

Special Populations

	Total Enrollment	IEP		LEP		FRL		Migrant	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State	437,057	47,195	10.8 %	87,240	20.0 %	209,503	47.9 %	96	0.0 %
District	8,541	1,148	13.4 %	584	6.8 %	3,962	46.4 %	15	0.2 %
Elementary Schools									
Cottonwood ES	536	84	15.7 %	29	5.4 %	215	40.1 %	-	-
Dayton ES	398	68	17.1 %	55	13.8 %	197	49.5 %	-	-
East Valley ES	470	59	12.6 %	35	7.4 %	185	39.4 %	-	-
Fernley ES	480	96	20.0 %	91	19.0 %	256	53.3 %	-	-
Fernley IS	557	74	13.3 %	30	5.4 %	254	45.6 %	-	-
Riverview ES	340	39	11.5 %	38	11.2 %	143	42.1 %	-	-
Silver Springs ES	387	58	15.0 %	27	7.0 %	269	69.5 %	-	-
Sutro ES	339	22	6.5 %	28	8.3 %	153	45.1 %	-	-
Yerington ES	506	83	16.4 %	127	25.1 %	330	65.2 %	-	-
K-12 School									
Smith Valley SCH	198	16	8.1 %	18	9.1 %	63	31.8 %	-	-
Data as of: Count Day District totals do not include state or district sponsored charter school data.									
'-' indicates data not presented for groups fewer than 10. 'N/A' indicates that this population was not present. '*' indicates that the data was not available. IEP = Students with disabilities LEP = Students with Limited English Proficiency FRL = Students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch									

Almost half (46%) of children enrolled in LCSD qualify for free and reduced lunch. Qualification for free and reduced lunch is an indication that families may struggle to meet basic needs. These characteristics are important and related to kindergarten entry assessment, and, data suggests that children that experience one or more of these situations may be less likely to graduate from high school than those that don't. Meeting educational needs early in the child's life can help to correct for these disparities in graduation and academic achievement.

Lyon County: Snapshot of Early Childhood Education and Care

There are currently eight elementary schools and one K-12 school in the district: Cottonwood, East Valley, Dayton, Fernley, Riverview, Silver Springs, Smith Valley (K-12), Sutro and Yerington. Title 1 schools for 2011-12 included Fernley Elementary School, Silver Springs Elementary School and Yerington Elementary School. Yerington is the only school with full day kindergarten, where four classrooms are in place. As with every other county in Nevada, kindergarten is not mandatory.

Lyon County School District (LCSD) received a Striving Readers grant in 2012. The Striving Readers application noted that Lyon County Human Services estimates that less than 2% of three and four year old in Lyon County are enrolled in a preschool. There are nine licensed early childhood education and care centers in the county and three preschools but only one private preschool is licensed by the state. The LCSD offers preschool to non-disabled students in Title 1 elementary schools, serving only a small percentage of children of an age to attend preschool. No children in Lyon County were enrolled in private kindergarten in 2010-2011.

Based on information from the Nevada Registry, there are a total of 515 licensed care slots in the county (Nevada Registry, 2012). The current early childhood education and care capacity in Lyon County is as follows:

County Early Childhood Education and Care Resources	#	Enrollment Capacity	Children Enrolled in District Classrooms (2011)	
			Pre-K	K
Public Schools (elementary)	9	N/A	81	606
Charter Schools (elementary)	0	N/A		
Private Schools (elementary)	0	N/A		
Licensed Family Child Care	5	30		
Licensed Group Child Care	0	0		
Licensed Child Care Centers	6	419		

Sources: Nevada Registry, Nevada Department of Education

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 early childhood education and care (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 Lyon 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 domains[8]:

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.

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[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.

"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 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.

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[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.

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]

ECE and kindergarten teachers and administrators in Lyon County reacted favorably to this definition of school readiness. This is also supported in the LCSD Striving Readers application which recognizes that parents and family involvement are critical to student success. In addition, the application notes that partnering with community member organizations creates a strong safety net for more students.

Kindergarten teachers in a focus group supported the school readiness definition, particularly that parents need to see themselves as the children's first teacher. They noted that in Lyon County, a lot of families are in survival mode due to conditions described in the previous section. Kindergarten teachers felt the school readiness definition supported the importance for children to be loved, talked to and fed.

They noted that a lot of parents lack knowledge of child development. They described that a number of parents have never been outside the valley and haven't learned the importance of talking to or reading with their children. Kindergarten Teachers and ECE providers who completed surveys also supported the five domains in the school readiness definition, with language and early literacy, cognition and general knowledge and approaches to learning all ranked as being the most important.

Please indicate the importance of measuring the following areas of children's skills and development in a statewide kindergarten entry assessment process:						
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Less Important	Not at All Important	Response Count
Social and emotional development	2	1	0	0	0	3
Language and early literacy	3	0	0	0	0	3
Physical development and health	2	1	1	0	0	3
Cognition and general knowledge	3	0	0	0	0	3
Approaches to learning	3	0	0	0	0	3
					answered question	**3**
					skipped question	**0**

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[10] Nevada working definition from bill draft request

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Description of Existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment

According to the Striving Readers application, LCSD kindergarten teachers assessed the readiness of their students in the fall prior to school starting. Based on the assessment, kindergarten teachers reported the following deficiencies in the performance of incoming kindergarten students:

- Comprehension
- Book Knowledge
- Recognition of letters and knowledge of letter names
- Letter sounds
- Writing and illustrating
- Taking runs
- Listening

The way kindergarten teachers in LCSD administer assessments varies by school. There is a variety of forms but no universal assessment. For example, Yerington teachers administer an assessment in the spring as a leveling tool for balanced classrooms. The assessment is done as part of pre-kindergarten enrollment. This typically happens in May. According to interviews with school administrators, some schools do an assessment prior to school (the week before) or in August. Typically the assessment is used to identify who is reading, who needs help identifying numbers.

Kindergarten teachers also use Criterion Reference Test (CRT). They use the Brigance, the Phonological Awareness Assessment (PALS) and the results are reported for the kindergarten report card that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. They also use the Northwest Evaluation Association NWEA MAP in the winter (December) and spring with kindergarten students. In addition, LCSD uses the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for assessing and documenting students' development as readers over time. Math and reading strands are used throughout the school district. Lyon County School District uses PowerSchool and the Director of Testing and Educational Technology can create custom reports for schools or district wide.

Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS) Northwest Regions provides family-centered multidisciplinary diagnostic and early intervention services to Lyon County. Staff includes developmental specialists, a pediatrician, speech, physical and occupational therapists, nutritionists, audiologists and social workers. According to the Striving Readers grant, LCSD plans to use multiple assessments to determine literacy readiness. All students in the early childhood education and care preschool and COW Bus programs will be assessed using the Brigance and The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) for pre and post achievement. 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 20–30 minutes. No reading is required by the individual, and scoring is rapid and objective.

Teachers will monitor student growth using the Work Sampling System, an observational tool which collects personal and social development, language and literacy data. The Implementation Literacy Coach will chair the Data Based Decision Making (DBDM) Team. All district teachers and COW Bus staff will be on the team and will meet monthly to review data from the Brigance, PPVT, and the Work Sampling System to monitor and adjust instruction.

Goals for a Common Kindergarten Entry Assessment

When asked to identify goals for a kindergarten entry assessment, parents surveyed felt that screening children for special needs was a very important goal. In contrast, kindergarten teachers only felt it was a very important goal if there were sufficient resources to refer to should a child be identified with a special need.

Parents also felt that the assessment could be used to help families prepare children for kindergarten and to inform parents of children's strengths and areas for growth. Kindergarten teachers also felt those were important goals. However, they expressed concern that they don't have sufficient time to inform parents of strengths or areas of growth if it takes away from instructional time. Parent responses were as follows, with three parents skipping the question:

If you think a statewide kindergarten entry assessment is a good idea, which of the following goals do you think are important?						
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	Response Count
Guide teachers to provide individualized instruction	3	2	1	0	0	6
Support the child's transition from childcare or preschool to kindergarten	3	2	1	0	0	6
Screen children for potential special needs	5	1	0	0	0	6
Help families prepare children for kindergarten	5	1	0	0	0	6
Inform parents of their child's strengths and areas for growth	5	1	0	0	0	6
Help guide district and school planning	3	3	0	0	0	6

In a focus group with kindergarten teachers, they noted that the three most important purposes of a kindergarten entry assessment should be to guide individual instruction, guide classroom instruction and inform parents of strengths and areas for growth. Kindergarten teachers noted that when children

with special needs are identified, parents expect the teachers to address those needs in the classroom rather than finding resources for case management services outside of the classroom.

The following goals for a common kindergarten entry assessment were identified by focus group participants as the most appropriate purposes of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment:

- Be useable for teachers to identify the type of instruction to provide, how to group kids, to measure growth. Kindergarten teachers identified that an assessment could be a way to accomplish this goal.
- Engage parents in their children's learning and preparation for kindergarten.
- Support the transition and alignment between early childhood education and care (ECE) programs and K-12 schools was a goal.
- Collect data that would support the case for mandatory kindergarten.
- Allow teachers to better balance the mix of students in classrooms.
- Identify needed community programs to support school readiness including for children with special needs.
- Help guide individual instruction.

One question raised by school administrators and kindergarten teacher was to accommodate differences between half day and full day kindergarten and to recognize that whatever process is used needs to work in the half day setting. Kindergarten teachers did not advocate for full day kindergarten for all children, noting that some children are not developmentally ready to be in kindergarten for a full day.

Attributes for a Common Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Focus group participants in Lyon County expressed the following suggestions for a common kindergarten entry assessment:

- Engaging parents must be a component. (100% of parents surveyed strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that parent input should be included as an information source in a kindergarten entry assessment process).
- Kindergarten teachers felt it would be most appropriate if the teachers do the assessment
- They advocated for an assessment process that does not use paper and pencil. Rather, they advocated for an approach that relied on watching and observing.
- The assessment needs to align with the Common Core State Standards and what will be required.
- Opinions varied on whether the assessment should occur prior to kindergarten entry to ensure that it doesn't take away from instruction time or take place during the start of the school year
- Regardless, results should not be used to deny entry to kindergarten.
- Assessments should drive instruction (i.e., information gained through assessments should impact and shape the curriculum).

- Education of parents must be a component. A benefit for parents would be to have information to coach them on how to help ready their child for kindergarten but this would mean having sufficient time to complete the assessment and share results with parents.

Summary of Assets

The LCSD Striving Reader program is an asset that in the future will provide systemic and comprehensive literacy strategies for students, targeted professional development and supports for teachers, interventions and supplemental strategies for at-risk students and populations, and will support community outreach, guidance, and support for birth to Pre-K providers and populations.

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

- A Lyon County Literacy Team and a Lyon County Literacy Plan are in place and the plan will be implemented as part of the Striving Reader's grant.
- Implementation Literacy Coaches, placed in each school, will provide professional development, modeling, and coaching to increase the quality of instruction being provided by teachers.
- LCSD has contracted with WestEd to align the curriculum and develop Common Core State Standards pacing guides with instruction units and common assignments.
- LCSD will also develop common formative assessment based on the units. Through the Striving Readers Program, WestEd will support the development of these assessments using a test item bank which aligns to the standards and meets gold standards for reliability and validity. The assessment will be implemented in January 2013.
- There is a strong partnership between LCSD and Community Chest's Classroom on Wheels (COW) Bus. This will be expanded through the Striving Readers grant to add preschool classrooms and purchase additional buses to serve an additional 90 students over the two year period.
- LCSD will implement a Parent University as part of the Striving Readers to offer parents an opportunity to learn ways to be a more effective "first teacher" of their child.
- There is also a partnership with the Boys & Girls Club to provide literacy instruction and student support.
- The county library operates a preschool reading program.
- Lyon County is part of a pilot program to implement a lottery program for those students who qualified for FRL to receive grocery stipends in June, July and August, strengthening support for families in need.

Summary of Barriers

Parents in Lyon County cited the following as being barriers which may hinder the creation and implementation of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. They were very concerned that the assessment not put pressure on children too soon or that children end up being labeled because of the assessment. Results were as follows:

The ECAC is sensitive to concerns that parents may have. Do you have any concerns about kindergarten entry assessment?							
	Very Concerned	Slightly Concerned	Neutral	Not Very Concerned	Not Concerned at All	Don't Know	Response Count
The expense to schools and districts	3	**3**	1	2	1	0	9
The possibility that people will misuse children's assessment information	**3**	1	1	**3**	1	0	9
The ability of schools and systems to assess children in a meaningful way	2	**5**	0	0	2	0	9
Time away from teaching or instruction	2	**4**	1	0	2	0	9
Additional work for teachers	1	**3**	2	1	2	0	9
Pressure on young children to do too much too soon	**6**	1	1	0	1	0	9
Concerns that children will be labeled	**5**	3	0	0	1	0	9
Concerns that children's assessment information won't be private / secure	**2**	**2**	**2**	1	**2**	0	9

- Parents did not report knowing what to expect when it came to preparing their child for kindergarten. Of nine parents of children 0 to 5, two felt they were provided enough information about what was expected of their child when he or she entered kindergarten whereas four said they did not know what was expected and three were unsure of what was expected.
- The implementation of the Common Core State Standards was a barrier identified by both kindergarten teachers and administrators. Teachers noted that there is so much content to cover that they won't have six weeks to do an assessment for kindergarten entry. Administrators noted that the standards put additional pressure on teachers.

- Transportation can be a challenge in a number of communities in Lyon County. In bedroom communities like Fernley families aren't able to have their children in preschool because of transportation. In Silver Springs, LCSD has to double run buses to address transportation challenges.
- Lack of socialization is also an issue in Lyon County and often, older children are caring for their younger siblings as latchkey children.
- LCSD teachers and administrators noted that there needs to be consensus about what the assessment measures. Teachers would give it a chance if it measured the same things they measure which is limited to book knowledge, how to read a book, what line to start on, how to hold a book.
- The assessment should focus on pre-literacy, Rote count and developmentally appropriate skills such as the child's ability to count objects.
- Funding to support the assessment and the resources needed to implement it is a major concern. An unfunded mandate with no resources would be a major barrier to implementation.
- Lack of parent education and knowledge regarding child readiness and child development was highlighted by focus group participants as critical to improving school readiness.
- Low income families and students living in poverty are on the rise in Lyon County and some areas face serious challenges with substance abuse.
- There has been an increase in children with special needs throughout the county including autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Early Childhood Data System

Description of Existing Efforts Related to Early Childhood Data

This section includes information from various groups and individuals regarding the existing data infrastructure in Lyon County.

According to school administrators, at this time there is no formal infrastructure to link the ECE providers and school. At the same time, it was noted that the community is small and people know who has gone where for preschool. However, this happens on an ad hoc basis. At this time, it is difficult to administer kindergarten entry readiness assessments at preschool because the students in any district early childhood program are in the program because they have been identified as being developmentally delayed. Therefore, they may not perform at the same level. It was noted that the early childhood education and care program does make up the difference by the time they reach kindergarten but there is a need for universal preschool. If more preschool was available, it would be easier to link early childhood data to kindergarten.

There is not a single source of data currently being collected. NWEA has the MAP assessment which is used throughout LCSD. PowerSchool also has assessments entered into it. LCSD also builds its own custom reports. As noted later in this report, LCSD will purchase a data warehouse with Striving Readers. A decision on the data warehouse should be made by the end of June 2012.

LCSD Administrators noted that for district early childhood education and care programs, data are shared with kindergarten teachers. For LCSD ECE programs, the students are all on IEPs and that information is provided to teachers.

In terms of describing how early childhood data is linked to school data, key informants noted that CRTs and proficiency (state testing) are reported to parents. LCSD noted that they are not required to, but do provide MAP assessments to parents. However, they noted that they can't use it for accountability or for screening.

Some data is also collected by the Child Find program. In terms of coordination with the state, the state can pull data from the Student information system. Web-based applications are not a challenge for LCSD but that is depended on the volume of data being collected and reported. They currently have a 45 mp connection to the Internet but are working to get to 150 mps. The LCSD provides information via Bighorn, the Nevada Statewide Longitudinal Data System. It provides a living academic history for each student, and their teachers and schools, from 2005 to the present. Bighorn serves Stakeholders, Districts, Schools, and Teachers by providing automated tools and information to help them improve academic outcomes in Nevada.

In terms of technology, the district is equipped as follows:

Educational Technology	# of classrooms	# of classrooms with Internet access	# of labs, libraries and media centers	# of labs, libraries and media centers with Internet access	# of classroom instructional computers	# of classroom instructional computers with Internet access
Cottonwood	23	23	3	3	156	153
Dayton ES	33	33	3	3	135	73
East Valley ES	24	24	2	2	127	93
Fernley ES	32	32	2	2	338	171
Fernley IS	30	30	4	4	187	187
Riverview ES	22	22	3	3	108	112
Silver Springs ES	30	30	2	2	147	161
Sutro ES	24	24	3	3	108	105
Yerington ES	23	23	2	2	157	138

The Striving Readers application identified that an Implementation Literacy Coach will chair the Data Based Decision Making (DBDM) Team. All district teachers and COW Bus staff will be on the team and will meet monthly to review data from the Brigance, PPVT, and the Work Sampling System to monitor and adjust instruction.

In the future, LCSD will be using eWalk as a data collection tool that will allow schools and teachers to use the data and target instructional intervention accordingly. Using this technology will allow LCSD to

communicate real-time observation data with individual teacher and also use data to drive school and district-wide early childhood education and care professional development.

Some of the above mentioned data system components are planned for implementation immediately while others will be implemented over the next two years. Integrating these efforts with any new data system will be critical for the system's success. It would be a missed opportunity not to align the implementation of systems related to Striving Readers with other data systems across the state.

Goals for Early Childhood Data System

School administrators and kindergarten teachers were asked their thoughts about the goal that, "an early childhood data system for the state of Nevada would allow various systems to share information for the purpose of improving outcomes for children." They expressed support for information sharing to improve outcomes but also noted concern that the state provides support for the systems needed to share information.

In reviewing the LCSD Striving Readers application and analyzing data from focus groups and interviews, the following goals were identified for an early childhood data system.

- Whatever is adopted needs to be linked to the Common Core State Standards.
- Data sharing and reporting need to be efficient and uniform across the state for the system to be of value.
- Counties need the ability to use the data for their own purposes.
- Data should be used to balance classrooms and identify children with special needs.
- There are a number of unmet needs in Lyon County that data could be used to document and hopefully address.
- Of nine parents surveyed, five felt that an early childhood system that facilitated the sharing of data was an important goal, three did not feel it was an important goal and one was not sure.
- Of those six parents surveyed that indicated data sharing was important, they indicated that there are a number of goals of the system that would be very or somewhat important:

If you think data sharing across different systems is a good idea, which of the following goals do you think are important?						
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	Response Count
Teachers have information about the child to help guide their instruction	3	2	1	0	0	6
Teachers are aware of special needs and strengths of the child	5	1	0	0	0	6
Preschools and childcare have information about how well they have prepared children for kindergarten so that they can make improvements	4	1	1	0	0	6
Districts and schools have more	4	1	1	0	0	6

information for planning						
It is easier for children to move among schools or districts	4	1	1	0	0	6
					answered question	**5**
					skipped question	**0**

Attributes of an Early Childhood Data System

The LCSD Striving Readers goal that impacts a data system is to establish Data Based Decision Making Teams at schools that are aligned with a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework and maintain a purposeful, respectful environment in which data can be collected, analyzed and used to continually improve literacy achievement. To accomplish this goal, School DBDM Teams will be established at each site. Data will be analyzed monthly and used with the Instructional consultation (IC) Model. Data will be maintained on the student learning and management data warehouse. Each grade level will have a DBDM Team that will review data from MAP, CRT, and common formative assessments to identify student performing far below grade level and to plan instruction. Any student served by a preschool program that the district is providing or partnering with will be in the system.

> **Of course there are concerns when it comes to data sharing; however, it is the time that we live in. We use technology a great deal and families are more transient than they used to be. Most children do not go to one school throughout their entire K-12 education anymore. Overall I think that it would help kids, families, and educators. –**Lyon County Survey respondent.

Attributes of an early childhood data system identified by key stakeholders included:

- It was noted that the specific criteria for measuring readiness for kindergarten entry needed to be adopted statewide but not used to bar entry to kindergarten.
- Tracking students longitudinally should be an outcome of such a system.
- The ability for districts to choose tools and methods from a specified list was considered ideal but there was willingness to utilize a statewide assessment if agreement could be reached on the tool.
- Resources need to be available to support the assessment.
- Districts should be able to develop local procedures to meet specified criteria.
- Professional development for teachers to administer the assessment will be essential.
- Funding to support implementation is necessary if it is administered outside of the school year.
- LCSD could also choose to administer it within three to four weeks of school starting, possibly in a small group setting.

Summary of Assets

Assets noted in the Striving Readers application include plans to:

- Strengthen collaboration time by including data driven decision-making, review of student work, and common planning.
- Formalize and implement a district-wide evaluation system for the District Literacy Program
- The Striving Readers grant and the additional resources and infrastructure it will afford LCSD will be an asset in implementing a data system that links to the state.
- LCSD will implement computer-based assessment in a number of ways; MAP assessment will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards. DRA Tango will be used as a diagnostic, electronic results upload to student learning.
- A management data warehouse will be implemented as part of Striving Readers
- Common Formative Assessments are under development by WestEd and will be moved to a computer based system.
- Data will be housed in the student learning and management data warehouse managed by the data analysis and used by DBDM teams.
- A Work Sample System will be used to monitor progress and plan instruction.
- Classroom eWalk templates will be implemented for evaluation.

> We have lots and lots of numbers but making it meaningful and useful for decision making is the challenge. We have too much data and need to filter out things.
>
> --LCSD Key Informant Interview

Finally, LCSD has a number of partnerships in place that should be engaged in the process including the Healthy Communities Coalition, Boys and Girls Club and Community Chest.

Summary of Barriers

According to school administrators and kindergarten teachers in LCSD, 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.

At this time, the burdens that currently exist for providers related to data collection and reporting include the lack of funding to support such an effort and the lack of linkage and integration between ECE and public school systems. Other barriers identified included that currently, collaboration time is primarily used for training purposes rather than data driven decision-making based on evidence. This is likely to change with Striving Readers. School administrators also noted that they lack the ability to turn data into useful information, which should be a goal for the system.

Parents in Lyon County rated the relative significance of challenges related to implementing an early childhood data system. The following table represents their concerns:

Do you have concerns about any of the following issues related to an early childhood data system? If so, how important are they to you?						
Answer Options	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Neutral	Not Concerned at All	Don't Know	Response Count
Cost to districts and schools	1	3	2	2	1	9
Cost to early childhood education and care providers	1	4	2	1	1	9
Misuse of data	3	3	0	3	0	9
Data analysis and reporting capacity	3	4	0	2	0	9
Time away from instruction	1	4	2	1	1	9
Teacher burden	0	6	1	1	1	9
Pressure on children	4	2	1	2	0	9
Concerns that children will be labeled	5	2	0	2	0	9
Security of data	2	3	1	3	0	9

Survey respondents that represented parents of children 0 to 5 identified the following challenges as being the most significant barriers to implementing early childhood data system process:

- Concerns that children will be labeled.
- Pressure on children.
- Data analysis and reporting capacity across systems.

Other concerns noted included concern about the misuse of data and the potential additional burden on teachers. The major challenge identified during a focus group with kindergarten teachers included how to implement a system for half day kindergarten classrooms.

Needs Assessment Summary

Lyon County School District administrators and kindergarten teachers were very supportive of and verbalized their readiness for implementing a common kindergarten entry assessment. For it to be feasible to implement KEDS, the following issues need to be addressed for Lyon County:

- Their readiness is considered moderate to high, as long as the resources and support are available to aid in implementation.
- Their major concern is that there be adequate time and resources for an entry assessment and that the process is uniform across the state.
- Resolving key issues of who does the assessment, which assessment is used and when it is administered will be a key to its implementation in Lyon County.

- Lyon County School District administrators and teachers demonstrated interest in implementing an early childhood data system and an eagerness to get meaningful data that could be useful in improving outcomes.
- They noted that the resources they have varies from year to year and that uncertainty impacts whether preschool will be available and how it will be funded.
- Implementing a system to link to ECE won't be of value if there is no preschool available.
- One school administrator interviewed stated that readiness is high.
- LCSD would need to communicate with parents about what it is and what the assessment would be used for.
- It would be important to note that it is not a tool to identify who is gifted or screen children out.

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 Lyon County

Surveys

- ❖ **As of June 30 2012, 3 providers from Lyon County answered the survey.** All 3 represented either ECE teachers with in Lyon County.
- ❖ **As of June 30 2012, 9 parents from Lyon County had answered the parent survey.** All nine were parents of children ages 0 to 5 and none of them had attended a KEDS focus group.

Interview/Focus Group

Interviews

Scott Lommori, Director of Testing and Educational Technology

Claudia Fadness, Director of Curriculum and Accountability

Kathy Griffin, Grants Coordinator

Pam Tognoli, Special Education Data Manager

Nadine Boschert, Student Information Systems Administrator

Focus Groups

Tami McDonald, Lyon County Human Services, Tri-County ECAC

Leanna Hale, CSA Head Start (Washoe, Churchill, Lyon)

Jennifer Chico, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District

Lucella Glazier, Lyon County School District, Tribal ECAC

G. L. Roy, Tribal ECAC, YPT

Kerry Stevens, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District

Bonnie Bobrick, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District

C. Champagne, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District

Kim Swanson, FIS, PTA Conference Attendee

Linda Barba, FIS, PTA Conference Attendee

Other Information Resources

- Lyon County Striving Readers Application
- 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

- Lyon County School District website: www.lyon.k12.nv.us
- 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