

*County Needs Assessment Report Draft*

*June 2012*

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# Kindergarten Entry Assessment & Early Childhood Data Systems (KEDS)

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

# County Profile

Nye County's population was estimated to be 43,945 as of 2010. At 18,159 square miles, it is the largest county in Nevada and the third largest county in terms of area in the United States, excluding the boroughs of Alaska. Its county seat is Tonopah.

The center of Nevada is located in Nye County, very near Yucca Mountain. The largest community in Nye County is Pahrump, an unincorporated town.

Nye County is larger than the combined total area of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Delaware. Of this vast land area, only 822,711 acres, or just over seven percent of the total, is private land; the majority of the county's land (92 percent) is owned by the federal government.

The county features several environmentally sensitive areas, including Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the White River Valley, several Great Basin sky islands and a portion of Death Valley National Park. Visitors to Death Valley often stay at Beatty or Amargosa Valley.

The county has no incorporated cities. The seat of government in Tonopah is 160 miles from Pahrump, where about 86 percent of the county's population resides. Nye County was created in 1864 and named in honor of James W. Nye, who served as the first governor of the Nevada Territory and later as a U.S. Senator from the state. The first county seat was Lone in 1864, followed by Belmont in 1867, and finally by Tonopah in 1905.

## Nye County Demographics

Total Population (2010) <sup>1</sup>	43,946
Number of Children Ages 0-5 (2010) <sup>2</sup>	2,209
Median Household Income (2010) <sup>3</sup>	\$41,054
Homeless population (school age group) <sup>4</sup>	No data available
Food Insecure Children: Ages 0-18 (2012) <sup>5</sup>	3,140 or 34.3%
Enrolled in NV Checkup: Ages 0-18 (2012) <sup>6</sup>	251
Number of Children Receiving Early Intervention Services: Ages 0-3 (2010) <sup>7</sup>	36 (19.9 hours per child)

<sup>1</sup> (Nevada State Demographer)

<sup>2</sup> (Nevada State Demographer)

<sup>3</sup> (U.S. Census Bureau)

<sup>4</sup> Rural Nevada Continuum of Care 2012 Point in Time Report

<sup>5</sup> (Feeding America , 2012)

<sup>6</sup> (Nevada Check up, 2012)

<sup>7</sup> (Nevada Early Intervention Services, 2010)

According to Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, the student to teacher ratio in Nye kindergarten classrooms was 30:1. There is full-day kindergarten offered at Nye schools but, like all districts in Nevada, kindergarten is not mandatory.

District wide, the percentage of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is higher than that of the state (15.4% compared to 10.8% statewide). There are 444 (7.6%) children that have limited English proficiency, and approximately 54.6% of children district wide qualify for free and reduced lunch (Nevada Department of Education ). Qualification for free and reduced lunch is an indication that families may struggle to meet basic needs. These characteristics are important and related to kindergarten entry assessment, and, data suggests that children that experience one or more of these situations may be less likely to graduate 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.

<b>Racial/Ethnic Breakdown (2010)<sup>8</sup></b>			
		Total Population	% of Total Population
	Total	43,946	100%
	Asian	572	1.3%
	Black or African American	874	2.0%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	703	1.6%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	211	0.5%
	White	37,755	85.9%
	Other	2,273	5.2%
	Multi-Racial	1,558	3.5%
	*Population that identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.	5,967	13.6%

### **Nye County: Snapshot of Early Childhood Education and Care**

There are 14 elementary schools in Nye County. The 12 public elementary schools include: Amargosa Valley School, Beatty Elementary/Middle School, Duckwater School, Early Childhood Special Edu., Floyd Elementary, Gabbs School, Hafen Elementary, J.G. Johnson Elementary School, Manse Elementary, NCSD Parent Involvement & Engagement, Round Mountain Elementary, and Tonopah Elementary/Middle School. The two private elementary schools, Community Christian Academy and New Hope Christian Academy, are both located in the town of Pahrump. There are nine licensed early childhood education and care centers located in Nye County; the majority of these are located in Pahrump. Tonopah and Beatty do not have any operating facilities open as of the drafting of this report.

<sup>8</sup> (Nevada State Demographer)

County Early Childhood Education and Care Resources	#	Enrollment Capacity	Children Enrolled in District Classrooms (2011)	
			Pre-K	K
Public Schools (elementary)	12	N/A	92	392
Charter Schools (elementary)	2	N/A		
Private Schools (elementary)	1	N/A		
Licensed Family Child Care	2	8		
Licensed Group Child Care	5	60		
Licensed Child Care Centers	3	275		

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 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 Nye 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<sup>9</sup>:

**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



<sup>9</sup> 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.

others and their capacity for self-regulation. Emotional development includes children’s perceptions of themselves, their abilities to understand the feelings of other people, and their ability to interpret and express their own feelings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**“Ready Schools”** accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers as defined above.

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

**“Ready Systems”** describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices including data collection that enhance access to needed

supports, information and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) be ready for children to be ready for school.<sup>10</sup>

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 pre-kindergarten, 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 is 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.<sup>11</sup>

Focus group participants were provided information about the working definition of school readiness. The group reacted favorably to the model of school readiness. The participants felt that one of the strengths of the model was that illustrated the comprehensive and interconnected nature of school readiness. One participant noted, "I like the model because it recognizes that there are lots of different factors that influence a child's readiness. It is important to coordinate and support all of the elements involved in school readiness."

Stakeholders in Nye also supported the five domains in the school readiness definition, with language and literacy being the most important.

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<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Nevada working definition from bill draft request

# Kindergarten Entry Assessment

## Description of Existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment

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

Kindergarten teachers in Nye County conduct an assessment twice per year. The assessment process takes approximately 45 minutes per student. The following tests are administered to all of Nye County School District students<sup>12</sup>:

- NWEA: The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) benchmark assessments are used to measure student academic growth three times a year. The NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) inventories are computer-based and aligned with the Nevada state standards. The MAP's are designed to answer the question, "Are students gaining reading, writing, and math skills and content?" The MAP assessments are adaptive and measure the growth of each student based on his or her ability level in each subject.
- Criterion Referenced Test (CRT): These tests measure what each child has learned on the Nevada State Standards in reading and math in grades 3-8 and in science at grades 5 and 8.

The following tests are administered to appropriate students based on individual needs:

- The Language Assessment Scale (LAS) is given to students with limited English proficiency upon enrollment. An annual English proficiency exam (LAS-LINKS) is administered to students who qualify for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program.
- Some special education students may qualify for an alternative assessment called the Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA).

The information above was taken from the Nye County School District 2010-2011 Parent/Student Handbook.

## Goals for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

One participant noted that it would be beneficial to consider aligning KEDS with international standards and best practices rather than with the more narrow state standards. This participant stressed that our ultimate aim should be to raise the level of child readiness to the highest standards in the world.

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<sup>12</sup> The information above was taken from the Nye County School District 2010-2011 Parent/Student Handbook.

The following table represents survey responses of stakeholders in Nye County related to goals for a common kindergarten assessment. Respondents indicated the highest levels of agreement with the following purposes of a statewide kindergarten assessment: 1) Supporting transition and alignment between early childhood education and care (ECE) programs and K-12 schools, 2) Screening for potential special needs, 3) Inform parents of strengths and areas of growth.

<b>Another goal of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge was to develop a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment. For each of the following choices, please indicate if you feel they are an appropriate purpose of a statewide kindergarten assessment process.</b>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Help guide individual instruction	5	2	0	0	0	7
Support transition and alignment between early childhood education and care (ECE) programs and K-12 schools	7	2	0	0	0	9
Screen for potential special needs	6	2	0	1	0	9
Help guide planning for early learning investments	4	3	0	0	0	7
Help guide classroom instruction	5	3	0	0	0	8
Inform parents of strengths and areas of growth	8	1	0	0	0	9
Help guide district and school planning	6	1	0	0	0	7

Stakeholders in Nye County articulated the following vision and desired outcomes for a statewide kindergarten entry assessment:

**Vision**

- All children in Nye county would have access to quality early childhood education and care.
- Inspire all members of the community to celebrate the potential of the community and education to work together and prepare our children for a global view.
- All parents will know how to support their child’s education through parent education opportunities such as literacy nights and programs for infants and toddlers.
- Anything is possible. Focus on what we can do, not what we can’t.
- Funding for ECE will be increased.
- Instill a love of learning.

**Outcomes**

- Children are ready for school.

- Increase in the number of children identified for ECE special needs services.
- Increase of knowledge by parents and community of existing programs.
- Increased test scores.
- Parents of children accessing services will feel more valued.
- Increase graduation rates and skills that prepare children for successful lives.

### Attributes for a Common Kindergarten Assessment

Focus group participants in Nye County concur that one standard kindergarten assessment should be used across all districts, and that the kindergarten assessment should be aligned with existing “common core” standards.

The focus group participants did not agree as to who should administer the assessment. Two main schools of thought emerged regarding this topic. Proponents of the first school of thought believed that a district wide team of trained professionals should conduct the assessment. Supporters of the second school of thought believed that the kindergarten teachers were the best choice to administer a kindergarten entry assessment. All focus group participants recognized that the first option could offer the advantage of greater consistency and standardization, while the second option could offer the advantage of greater reliability. The participants generally agreed that a trained team of district wide assessors would be able to conduct an assessment in a more consistent manner, but teachers would be able to more accurately assess the students since they would have observed the child over a greater period of time and in a variety of situations.

Survey participants were asked to react to the following potential implementation approaches for a statewide kindergarten assessment process. The majority of participants felt that one standard assessment process for all districts would be the most favorable approach.

What is your reaction to the following potential implementation approaches for a statewide kindergarten assessment process?						
Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
One standard assessment process for all districts	7	3	0	1	0	0
Districts choose tools and methods from a specified list	2	2	2	0	1	2
Districts develop local procedures that meet specified criteria	4	2	2	1	0	1
All decisions are made by districts with technical assistance from state or others	3	4	2	2	0	1
<i>answered question</i>						<b>10</b>
<i>skipped question</i>						<b>1</b>

Focus group participants felt that assessments should be conducted in a “pre and post” model, i.e. assessments should occur within the first weeks of kindergarten and then again late in the year. It

should be noted that many of the existing assessment tools are conducted in this way. Some assessments (e.g. MAP) are conducted tri-annually. The majority of survey respondents selected “direct assessments” and “portfolios and work samples” as their preferred method for collecting information on what children know and are able to do.

Suggested assessment frequency ranged from two to four times per year with the majority of focus group participants preferring the biannual model.

## Summary of Assets

Focus group participants in Nye County listed the following as assets for implementation of a kindergarten assessment process:

- Nye County is not densely populated. Schools tend to have smaller class sizes and better teacher to student ratios.
- The district has caring, dedicated teachers.
- We have Title 1, state & special education preschools-(in some communities).
- Great kids and great families live in Nye.
- Private individuals are willing to help out the community.
- We have recognized the needs of our county and are looking for resolutions.
- Nye County Coalition is an asset.

## Summary of Barriers

The following challenges were identified by stakeholders in Nye County:

- Lack of funding in the district.
- Lack of ECE centers and pre-K facilities in most of Nye County.
- Lack of licensed ECE providers in most of Nye County.
- There is a large disparity between Pahrump and the rest of Nye in terms of resources and funding available (this point was especially important to several of the focus group participants).
- Having an insufficient supply of transportation assets makes finding children with high needs more difficult.
- Child Find (a system aimed at identifying children with high needs) is not smoothly orchestrated for the outlying areas in Nye.
- Large geographical size of the county makes transportation more time consuming and costly (this makes resource sharing more difficult).
- Lack of adequate pre-K effectively turns Kindergartens into preschools. Children entering are not prepared for a normal kindergarten curriculum and must therefore be instructed at a remedial level when they enter school.
- Inconsistent standards, teaching methods, and assessment tools produce challenges for transitioning students and the schools / teachers to which they are transferred.

Stakeholders in Nye County rated the relative significance of challenges related to implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process. The following table represents survey responses of stakeholders in Nye County.

<i>How significant do you anticipate the following challenges will be to implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process?</i>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very Significant</b>	<b>Somewhat Significant</b>	<b>Less Significant</b>	<b>Not Significant at All</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Cost to districts and schools	6	4	0	0	0	10
Training of teachers or assessors	4	5	0	0	0	9
Misuse of data	1	3	5	0	0	9
Data analysis and reporting capacity	4	3	1	1	0	9
Time away from instruction	2	6	1	0	0	9
Teacher burden	3	3	2	1	0	9
Pressure on children	2	0	5	1	0	8
Privacy Concerns	1	1	4	3	0	9
Security of Data	1	2	3	2	0	8

Survey respondents identified the following challenges as being the MOST significant barriers to implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process:

- Cost to districts and schools.
- Training of teachers and assessors.
- Data analysis and reporting capacity.
- Teacher burden.
- Time away from instruction.

Survey respondents identified the following challenges as being the LEAST significant barriers to implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process:

- Misuse of data.
- Privacy concerns.
- Security of data.

Focus group participants suggested the following areas that should be improved:

- The early childhood screening process needs to be more user-friendly to parents.

- Increase support from Nye County School District for research on early childhood education and care and invest in ECE for better outcomes.
- Educators should advocate for ECE.
- Education for child care providers should be available.
- We should create Child Find in each community.
- All children and their families should have opportunity for early childhood education and care and quality child care services that meet their needs.
- School district needs to share funding between departments to provide funding for ECE.
- We need to advocate for the importance of early childhood education and care.

## Early Childhood Data System

### Description of Existing Efforts Related to Early Childhood Data

The NCSD 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:

<b>Educational Technology</b>	<b># of classrooms</b>	<b># of classrooms with Internet access</b>	<b># of labs, libraries and media centers</b>	<b># of labs, libraries and media centers with Internet access</b>	<b># of classroom instructional computers</b>	<b># of classroom instructional computers with Internet access</b>
<b>Amargosa Vly ES</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Beatty ES</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>826</b>
<b>Clarke MS</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Duckwater ES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Floyd ES</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Gabbs ES</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Hafen ES</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Johnson ES</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Manse ES</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Mt Charleston ES</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>Pahrump Vly HS</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>826</b>
<b>Pathways MS/HS</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Round Mtn MS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Tonopah ES</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Tonopah HS</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>

According to school administrators, at this time there is no formal infrastructure to link the ECE providers and school. Elementary schools in Nye County utilize PowerSchool to store and track student information. Grades, parent contact information, and demographic data are the most common types of information stored in the PowerSchool system. If more preschool was available, it would be easier to link early childhood data to kindergarten.

### Goals for Early Childhood Data System

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.

Focus group participants listed information about the following as being especially important to know about students prior to entry in kindergarten:

- Language and early literacy.
- Approaches to learning.
- Cognition and general knowledge.

One preschool director in Nye County wrote, “I feel that this information would help us a lot and the School Districts in giving children a head start for us to help them in the fields they need help in and off to a great future.”

Parents who were surveyed identified all of the listed goals as being somewhat or very important.

<b>If you think data sharing across different systems is a good idea, which of the following goals do you think are important?</b>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Not Very Important</b>	<b>Not Important at All</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Teachers have information about the child to help guide their instruction	2	1	0	0	0	3
Teachers are aware of special needs and strengths of the child	3	0	0	0	0	3
Pre-schools and childcare have information about how well they have prepared children for kindergarten so that they can make improvements	2	1	0	0	0	3
Districts and schools have more information for planning	1	2	0	0	0	3
It is easier for children to move among schools or districts	2	1	0	0	0	3
<i>answered question</i>						<b>3</b>
<i>skipped question</i>						<b>0</b>

Ten stakeholders completed surveys and all ten strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the goal that “an early childhood data system for the state of Nevada would allow various systems to share information for the purpose of improving outcomes for children.”

### **Attributes of an Early Childhood Data System**

Focus group participants in Nye County suggested that an early childhood data system should be able to track where a student is relative to their native language, as well as what level they have reached with English language skills. Participants noted that some non-English speakers have more advanced language skills in their native language than they do in English. Assessing and tracking children in English only will not provide a complete and accurate snapshot of a child’s language proficiency. Participants agreed that this was an especially important point to record.

Focus group participants in Nye County also listed the following as desired attributes of an early childhood data system:

- Resources need to be available to support the system.
- Districts should be able to develop local procedures to meet specified criteria.
- Professional development for teachers to utilize the system will be essential.
- Funding to support implementation is necessary if it is administered outside of the school year.

Participants in Nye County expressed a preference for a standardized, district-wide, web-based data system.

### **Summary of Assets**

Focus group participants in Nye County listed the following as assets for implementation of an early childhood data system:

- Loving parents educators who stand for all children.
- Existing programs such as state pre-K, Title 1 and ECE special education.
- Support for P-3.
- Yerington Elementary is tracking some data.

### **Summary of Barriers**

Focus group participants in Nye County listed the following as challenges for implementation of an early childhood data system:

- Lack of dynamic workforce.
- Language barriers.
- Unequal resources.
- Children at risk.
- Lack of communication between all grade levels for planning and transitioning of student.
- Rural isolation.
- Not able to identify students for ECE special education programs.

- Not enough parent involvement opportunities.
- Lack of program awareness.
- Lack of communication with all parents of ECE students.
- Lack of communication with early childhood education and care programs across the county.
- Loss of programs such as even start and family to family.
- Voices from parents and community are not always heard.

Focus group participants identified the following as being particularly significant barriers to implementing a statewide early childhood data system:

- Cost.
- Time required inputting data.
- Time involved with training on data system.
- Difficulty accessing children 0 through 5 years of age.

Participants remarked that getting children screened is hard to accomplish. Outreach is difficult. Parents don't always know if their children are having developmental delays or other problems and if they do suspect a problem, they may be disinclined to seek help out of embarrassment or concerns of how such action could impact their child.

Focus group participants asked the following questions regarding the implementation of an early childhood data system:

- How would data on children ages 0 through 5 be collected?
- Where?
- When?
- By whom?
- Who would have access to the data?
- How would data collected inform funding? Curriculum?

## Needs Assessment Summary

Members of Nye County School District administration expressed reluctance to participate in the project. This was at least in part because there was not information about what it would include, how it would be funded, etc. Other stakeholders that were engaged through the Nye County Early Childhood Advisory Council and Tribal Early Childhood Advisory Council demonstrated an interest in implementing a kindergarten entry assessment and early childhood data system toward meaningful data that could be useful in improving outcomes.

Stakeholders noted that there are aspects of the current system that work well. While they would be open to change, these positive aspects would hopefully be retained, including the ability to quickly see results of assessment and use them in practice. MAP currently provides resources for educators to align

assessment to instruction. Because the community is small, the system can be modified to meet the needs of children, educators, and families.

Stakeholders identified several significant challenges and barriers to implementation. They noted that the resources available vary 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. A similar concern that relates to resources was identified for kindergarten entry assessment. Their major concern is that there be adequate time and resources for an entry assessment.

Resolving key issues of who does the assessment, which assessment is used and when it is administered will also be a key to determining whether it is of interest and feasible within Nye County. Readiness will be higher if the proper resources and support are available to aid in implementation.

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 Nye County

### Surveys

- ❖ As of June 30, 2012, 11 providers from Nye County had answered the survey. Most of those who answered the survey were teachers (62.5%), but some respondents were early childhood education and care providers (25%) or an administrator (12.5%).
- ❖ As of June 30, 2012, three parents from Nye County had answered the parent survey.

### Group Interview/Focus Group

- Natasha Wickenden, ECE provider
- Sarai Gromis, ECE provider
- A focus group was conducted on April 16th, 2012 in Beatty. Focus group participants from Nye County included teachers, early childhood education and care providers, ELL professionals, a NCSD counselor, and other professionals from relevant fields. In the interest of confidentiality the names of the participants have not been included in this report.

### 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
- Nye County School District website: [www.nye.k12.nv.us](http://www.nye.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](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](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](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