

The Forum for America's Ideas

EARLY LEARNING EFFECTS: WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY AND WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HIGH-PERFORMING COUNTRIES?

A PRESENTATION TO CHAIRS OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3RD 2017



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

Objectives

- To learn about the main results from a consensus review of pre-K research (+ 400 studies)
- To learn about how international education leaders approach early learning
- Hear from a cross-sector panel on implications and next steps
- Participate in a collaborative activity with a colleague from the other Committee



Statement 1:

Studies of different groups of preschoolers often find greater improvement in learning at the end of the pre-k year for economically disadvantaged children and dual language learners than for more advantaged and English-proficient children.

Statement 2:

Pre-k programs are not all equally effective. Several effectiveness factors may be at work in the most successful programs. One such factor supporting early learning is a well implemented, evidence-based curriculum. Coaching for teachers, as well as efforts to promote orderly but active classrooms, may also be helpful.

Statement 3:

Children's early trajectories depend on the quality of their early learning experiences not only before and during their pre-k year, but also following the pre-k year. Classroom experiences early in elementary school can serve as charging stations for sustaining and amplifying pre-k learning gains. One good bet for powering up later learning is elementary school classrooms that provide individualization and differentiation in instructional content and strategies.

Statement 4:

Convincing evidence shows that children attending a diverse array of state and school district pre-k programs are more ready for school at the end of their pre-k year than children who do not attend pre-k. Improvements in academic areas such as literacy and numeracy are most common; the smaller number of studies of social-emotional and self-regulatory development generally show more modest improvements in those areas.

Statement 5:

Convincing evidence on the longer-term impacts of scaled-up pre-k programs on academic outcomes and school progress is sparse, precluding broad conclusions. The evidence that does exist often shows that pre-k induced improvement in learning are detectable during elementary school, but studies also reveal null or negative long-term impacts for some programs.

Statement 6:

States have displayed considerable ingenuity in designing and implementing their pre-k programs. Ongoing innovation and evaluation are needed during and after pre-k **to ensure continued improvement in creating and sustaining children's learning** gains. Research-practice partnerships are a promising way of achieving this goal. These kinds of efforts are needed to generate more complete and reliable evidence on effectiveness factors in pre-k and elementary school that generate long-run impacts.

Why is this important?

School Readiness Gaps

- Low-income students are on average 11-13 months behind more affluent peers in math and literacy skills respectively at kindergarten entry^{1,2}
- These gaps generally persist throughout school³

Benefits of High Quality Pre-K

- Especially beneficial for low-income, minority and English learner students⁴
- Return on investment: from 2.5:1 to 4:1 (conservative estimates) and range up to 13:1⁵
- Can reduce kindergarten entry gap by 27% in math and 41% in reading⁶



International Surveys Sound Alarms

U.S. RANKING ON PISA

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a comparative study of 15-year-old students' knowledge in key areas including math, reading and science.

YEAR (COUNTRIES TESTED)	U.S. RANKING		
	READING	MATH	SCIENCE
2000 (32)	15th	19th	14th
2003 (41)	18th	28th	22nd
2006 (57)	NR	34th	28th
2009 (65)	17th	30th	22nd
2012 (65)	24th	36th	28th

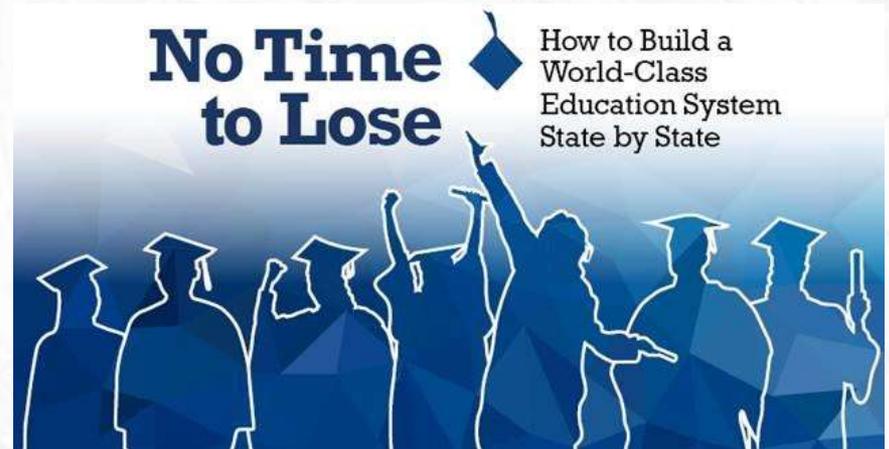
NCSL Graphic | Source: National Center on Education and the Economy,
Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2013

- Little to no progress
- Outranked by less-developed nations
- Many other nations do a better job educating the most disadvantaged students
- More students in the bottom quintile of performance, fewer in the top



Early learning in high-performing countries

- All children come to school ready to learn
- Extra support is given to struggling students so that all have the opportunity to achieve high standards



Action steps for states (not U.S.)

- ✓ Build an Inclusive Team and Set Priorities
- ✓ Study and Learn from Top Performers
- ✓ Create a Shared Statewide Vision
- ✓ Benchmark Policies
- ✓ Get Started on One Piece
- ✓ **Work Through “Messiness”**
- ✓ Invest the Time



Urgent Call to Action: No Time to Lose!

“As state policymakers, it is our responsibility to provide our citizens with a world-class education. We cannot let another generation settle for anything less. Our future workforce, national defense, economic vitality and democratic foundation depend on our ability and willingness to get this done.

If we assemble the best minds in policy and practice, implement what we know works, and commit ourselves to the time, effort and resources needed to make monumental changes, we can once again be among the best education systems in the world. If they can do it, so can we. But **there’s no time to lose.”**



Panel Discussion

- Dr. Dale Farran
 - Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Psychology and Human Development, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University
- Dr. Elizabeth Alves
 - Assistant Superintendent for Early Learning and Literacy, TN Department of Education
- Representative Raumesh Akbari
 - House District 91 (Memphis); served since 2013; House Criminal Justice Committee and Subcommittee, House Education Administration and Planning Committee, House Ethics Committee and Subcommittee, and House Democratic Floor Leader.



ESSA State Plans: Early Childhood Education

- AIR and EducationCounsel project

- Handout

- Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrKlLeHr2ww&feature=youtu.be>



Collaborative Activity

1. Partner up with Chair from other group (ED w/HHS, can be same from previous session or new partner)
2. Introductions and an icebreaker
3. Questions:
 - a. What potential does collaboration between these committees hold?
 - b. What new issues can you tackle or in what new ways can you address old issues?
 - c. Generate a new policy idea blending the work of each committee (or modify an existing policy).
4. Share Out





Matt Weyer

Matthew.weyer@ncsl.org

303-856-1424

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/early-learning.aspx>



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

References

- 1. Friedman-Krauss, A., Barnett, W.S., & Nores, M. (2016). How Much can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps? *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from: <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/NIEER-AchievementGaps-report.pdf>
- 2. Burchinal, M., et al. (2011). Examining the Black-White achievement gap among low-income children using the NICHD study of early child care and youth development,” *Child Development*, 82(5): 1404– 1420.
- 3. Duncan, G.J. & Magnuson, K. (2011). The Nature and Impact of Early Achievement Skills, **Attention Skills and Behavior Problems.”** In Greg J. Duncan and R.J. Murnane, eds., *Whither Opportunity: Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances*. (New York: Russell Sage).
- 4. Phillips, D., et al., (2017). The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre -Kindergarten Effects. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. Retrieved from: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/duke_prekstudy_final_4-4-17_hires.pdf
- 5. García, J.L., Heckman, J.J., Duncan, E.L., & Prados, M.J.(2016). **“The Life-cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program.”** Retrieved from: https://heckmanequation.org/assets/2017/01/F_Heckman_CBAOnePager_120516.pdf
- 6. Friedman-Krauss, A., Barnett, W.S., & Nores, M. (2016). How Much can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps? *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from: <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/NIEER-AchievementGaps-report.pdf>

