



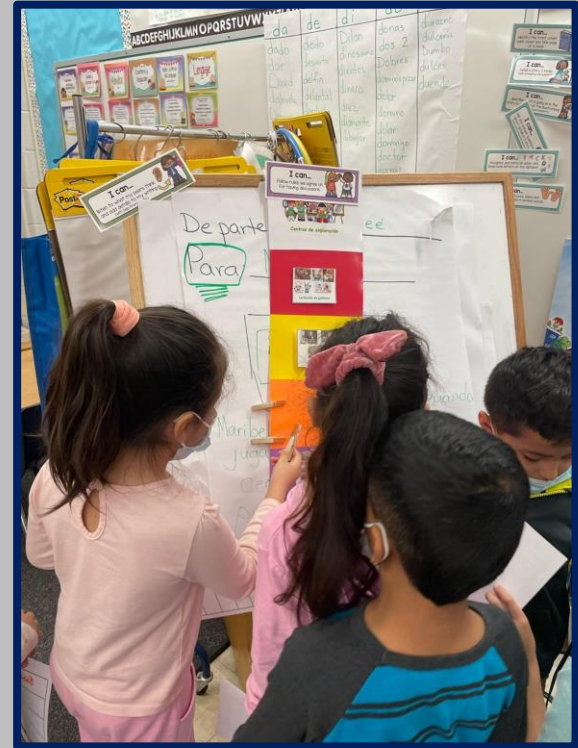
2022 Department Update

Dr. Josh Carpenter

Ms. Katie Cox

Purpose:

- Review the early learning department internal audit findings: focus groups and kindergarten readiness data review
- Share initial recommendations from external audit with the National P-3 Center at the University of Colorado
- Discuss initial efforts as a result of both of these audits to address department needs and increase Kindergarten readiness
- Identify next steps for our work to increase our early learning opportunities and increase our impact across our community



2021-2022 Internal Department Audit

Review: current screening process, enrollment data, most recent ISBE monitoring for all preschool programs, grant and local department budgets, student outcome data for preschool and kindergarten, classroom materials, and furniture needs.

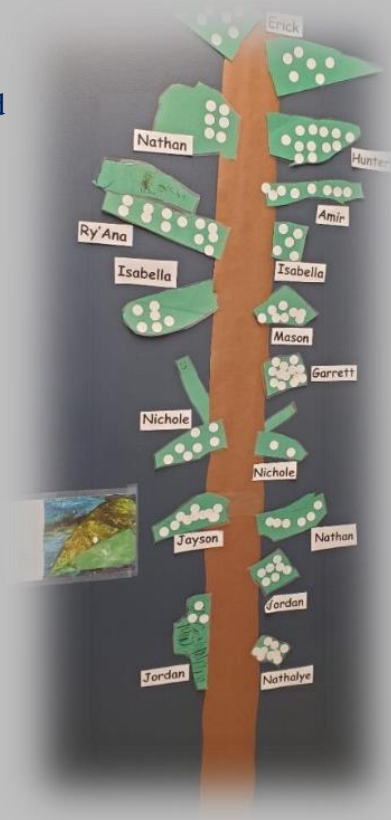
37 Focus Groups Conducted (Spring 2021)

- Preschool Building and Program Administrators
 - Elementary Principals
 - Special Education Administrators
 - Kindergarten and Preschool Teachers
 - Preschool Itinerant Teachers
 - Preschool Paraprofessionals
 - Birth to Three Parent Educators
 - Parent and Community Educators and Outreach Support Staff

87 Participants

Groups were asked three questions:

1. What is working well in our early learners department?
2. Where are the opportunities for growth in our department?
3. What can I do, as the director, to support your work?



2021-2022 Internal Department Audit Focus Groups

Strengths

- Play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Appropriate assessment practices for early learners
- High quality, dedicated, and collaborative teaching staff
- Administrators are supportive, accessible, and know our students

Growth Opportunities

- Entry processes, procedures, record keeping and systems need to be improved and aligned
- Need to unify the department; working in silos
- Department has lacked consistency, structure, and communication
- Need for vertical articulation and alignment from birth to elementary school
- Classrooms need to be updated with furniture and curricular materials

Support needed from Director

- Consistent and clear communication and expectations
- Targeted professional development opportunities at every level of the department
- Be visible and visit



Initial improvements in response to findings

Collaboratively define our department's mission, vision, motto, and logo to create department unity and define our work together.

Initiate monthly "Director's Notes" to all elementary leaders, early learner teachers and department staff to unite and have consistent communication and messaging.

Centralized registration and screening office formed to support enrollment in our birth to five programs.

Leverage Grant funds to be used for capital improvements (new playground updates at Independence and Illinois Park), summer home learning backpacks/materials for summer 2021, updated classroom materials and furniture, and updated curriculum resources.

Form two work groups to streamline our assessment practices, resulting in a revised and aligned parent reporting system for assessment information for preschool and kindergarten.

Coordinate External Audit to be completed in 2021-2022 by National P-3 Center, University of Colorado, Denver to examine how the district is organized to support high-quality early learner efforts (P-3).



Kindergarten Readiness Landscape: Pre and Post Pandemic

The Illinois State Board of Education requires the district to survey all Kindergarten students during the first 40 days of school. This provides a profile of each child's development across four developmental domains: Approaches to learning, social emotional development, language and literacy development and cognition, math.

U-46 has been giving this survey of our Kindergarten students since 2016. Below you will see our KIDS data from 2019-2020 and 2021-2022.

Note: 2020-2021 data was collected in May of 2021 due to the pandemic and is not consistent with typical protocol, it is not included.

Approaches to Learning: Self Regulation	2019-2020 School Year (FALL)	2021-2022 School Year (FALL)	Variance
Black	72 % meet or exceeds	42% meet or exceeds	-30%
Hispanic	77% meet or exceeds	40% meet or exceeds	-33%
White	85% meet or exceeds	52% meet or exceeds	-33%



Language and Literacy: Text Comprehension	2019-2020 School Year (FALL)	2021-2022 School Year (FALL)	Variance
Black	78% meets or exceeds	47% meets or exceeds	-31%
Hispanic	74% meets or exceeds	44% meets or exceeds	-30%
White	87% meets or exceeds	57% meets or exceeds	-30%

Math: Number Sense	2019-2020 School Year (FALL)	2021-2022 School Year (FALL)	Variance
Black	82% meet or exceeds	48% meet or exceeds	-34%
Hispanic	74% meets or exceeds	43% meets or exceeds	-36%
White	92% meets or exceeds	75% meets or exceeds	-17%



Efforts to increase kindergarten readiness in our children

Reduction in preschool class size to 15, from 17-20, to better meet the needs of our students.

Rising Kindergarten Summer School Program to support student success in their transition to kindergarten.

Revised Kindergarten transition process and plan for increased support for students transitioning to Kindergarten from the district preschool programs and newcomers to the district.

Implementation of academic teaming and U-46 rising work across all early learning classrooms.

Continued partnership with our community day care providers by providing professional development to help get us all working toward the same goals.

Continued partnership with Elgin Partnership for Early Learning focused on increasing access to high quality early learning and increasing opportunities in non-traditional settings across the U-46 communities.

Continued partnership with Alignment Collaborative for Education focused on supporting and developing our local early learning workforce to serve ALL of our kids.

Working to increase opportunities for preschool in the district across elementary schools with Unite 46.



Results from the Developmental Evaluation of the U-46 Early Learner Efforts
The National P-3 Center
University of Colorado- Denver
June 2022

Evaluation Purpose:

Elevate the voices and perspectives of U-46 leaders to gain an understanding of the current early learner efforts in the district and community

Use the *District P-3 Audit* tool to examine district level capacities, culture and routines as they pertain to leading strong P-3 systems

Provide recommendations based on information gathered from the teams reflections, audit tool results, and best practices in leading this work.



University of Colorado, Denver National P-3 Center

Method of Evaluation:

A work group of nine members was established: five district leaders, three building leaders, and one community leader.

Group met monthly for four months, for an hour and a half each session.

Participants collaboratively identified strengths and areas for growth in six categories:

1. Mission and Strategic Plan with Explicit P-3 Goals
2. Central Office Organization and Culture
3. Decision Making Practices Supported by Aligned Data
4. Investments in Instruction and Professional Learning
5. External Relations and Cross-Sector Strategies
6. Equitable Access

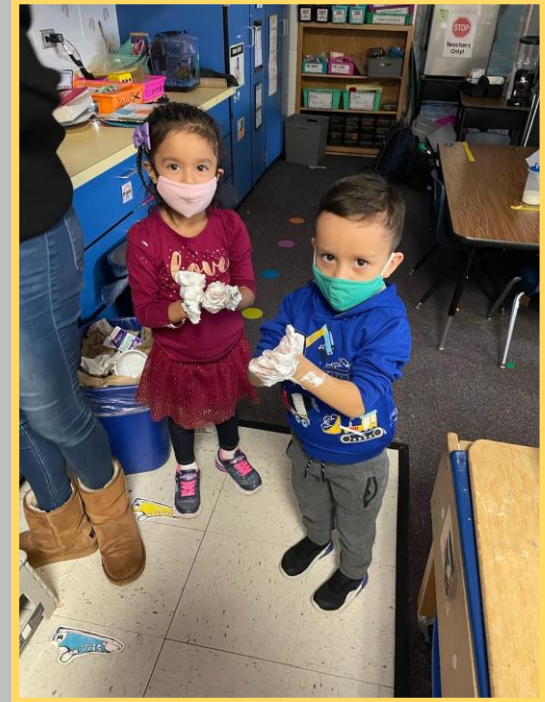


Reflections and Recommendations, *from the Executive Summary*

Recommendation #1

Expand the prominence of the district's messaging about the importance of P-2/early learner efforts both internally and externally.

- Consider ways district leaders can elevate their recognition of the work and consistently name early learning as one of the essential strategies for the district's overall success.
- Establish an early learner cabinet/advisory group comprised of a diverse group of leaders from across the district org chart. The group can look for ways to support the department mission across the district and not just in the early learner branch.
- Conduct a scan of the district's website, meeting agendas, and communication tools to ensure leadership consistently messages, both internally and externally, the the district is a preschool-12th grade system.
- As district strategic plans are updated include statements that the district is committed to increase the number of schools, principals, and teachers who are prepared to support every young child's developmental progress.



Recommendation #2

Expand the number of staff roles dedicated to P-2 efforts within the Early Learners Department, and elevate the visibility of P-2 responsibilities across the district organizational chart.

Rename the Early Learner Initiatives department to signal that it is more than an office of independent initiatives, but one that focuses on the overall success of early learners.

As budgets permit, increase the number of staff devoted to early learner efforts. In addition to overall staff capacity, increasing the leadership strength in the department would be beneficial.

In addition to increasing the size of the early learner staff, the department could be restructured to better reflect the complexity of the priorities and initiatives that fall within a comprehensive P-2 vision.



Recommendation #3

Increase the availability and types of professional supports, specific to Preschool-2nd Grade (P-2), for both administrators and teachers to support the district's P-2 vision and goals.

- Work across departments to identify opportunities to embed a focus on instructional strategies that incorporate play-based learning, not just for preschool and kindergarten teachers, but also 1st and 2nd grade teachers.
- Work with Elgin Partnership for Early Learning (EPEL) to create a plan for professional learning opportunities that can be shared across school-based and community-based ECE teachers.
- Extend training and support related to P-2 instruction, play based learning and child development to administrators in all elementary schools, not just those in early childhood sites.
- Adopt Charlotte Danielson's Preschool-3rd grade framework as the tool to inform district-wide P-2 teacher evaluation.
- Identify opportunities for district-level administrators and site-based leaders to continue to expand their own professional learning related to P-2 and to engage with administrators across the country who are learning into comprehensive early learning/early grads work.



Mission:

Together we work to create inclusive learning communities for children birth through Kindergarten and their families. We elevate student and family engagement through hands-on learning, open-ended play, family support, and community outreach. This nurturing partnership enhances cultural identity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and academic growth in order to bring relevant contributions to the world.

Vision:

Our early learning community nurtures safe, playful learning experiences that encourage our children and their families, as they begin the journey to become empathetic, ambitious and interdependent global citizens.



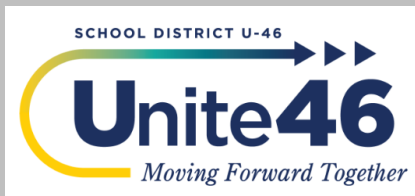
2022 Early Learner Initiatives Efforts At a Glance

Parents As Teachers	Preschool Assessment Office	Early Childhood Special Education	Preschool For All	Preschool for All Expansion	Kindergarten
150 Children Enrolled (133 Families) 767 Children Screened 150 Slots	372 Children Assessed through EI transition 1,163 Children Screened for preschool/Child Find (542 in 20-21)	Currently enrolled: 135 enrolled in instructional program Transitioned from EI: 303 Children	1,043 enrolled 1,178 Slots	164 enrolled 200 Slots	2,674 enrolled
First Steps Office 1019 East Chicago		Illinois Park Independence Horizon	Hilltop Huff Illinois Park Independence Ontarioville Sycamore Trail Timber Trails	Horizon More at Four	All 40 Elementary Schools

*Within U-46, there are 18,744 children ages 0-5 in the community, two out of three children in U-46 do not have access to early childhood programming. (Risk and Reach Report, Erikson Institute, 2019).



2022-2023
District
Preschool
Sites



Transition Planning

- Begin department restructuring to develop the early learning leadership capacity of our district and elementary leaders
- Continue to build out department infrastructure to support increasing numbers of children served
- Review full University of Colorado report reflections, share findings, and initiate recommendations
- Creating a steering committee to guide the transition process and program design
- Including parent, community, and staff voice

Vision for the Future of Early Learning in U-46

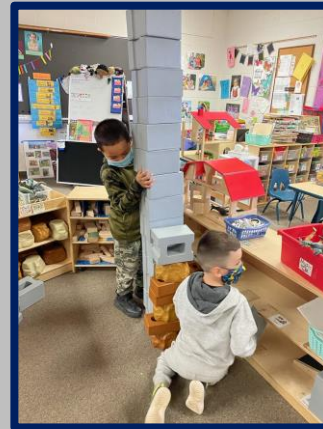
*Reduce
Barriers*



*Increase
Opportunities*



*Improved
Outcomes*



*Greater
Readiness*

