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SRCD State Policy Fellow Professional Portfolio Abstracts: Lillie Moffett, Ph.D.

2021-2022 SRCD State Post-Doctoral Policy Fellow at the California Department of Education.

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Introduction: In California, Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a program that was created to provide an introductory year of kindergarten to older four-year-old children who just missed the age cutoff for kindergarten enrollment. However, in the 2020-2021 Budget agreement, Governor Gavin Newsom dedicated funding to support the implementation of TK as a universally available program for all four-year-old children. Beginning in the Fall of 2022, with full implementation by the 2025-2026 academic year, TK will expand age eligibility to all four-year-old children, essentially creating a public prekindergarten program in the California public school system. Now that TK and the California State Preschool Program are slated to both serve four-year-old children, there is a need for greater alignment across these delivery systems, collectively termed Universal PreKindergarten (UPK). One core area in need of guidance is curriculum selection. Currently, statute requires California State Preschool Programs (CSPP) to adopt curricula that align with the California

Preschool Learning Foundations and the Desired Results Developmental Profile assessment, and requires TK programs use a "modified kindergarten curriculum." This language is broad, and leaves preschool programs and school districts implementing TK with a wide variety of commercial and alternative curricular options to choose from– and very little guidance to support their selection. As a result, as TK and CSPP programs are expanding, districts are looking to the California Department of Education (CDE) for more concrete guidance for how to select curricula to meet the developmental and learning needs of the children they serve. To meet this need, I have helped the CDE draft guidance to districts on curriculum selection for their UPK programs, including TK (Portfolio Entry 1), conducted a state-wide survey to better understand the type of curricula currently used in TK programs across California (Portfolio Entry 2), organized and presented a CDE webinar to over 700 people on curriculum alignment from preschool to third grade (Portfolio Entry 3), and drafted a curriculum scan and proposal for the CDE to fund the development of a California UPK curriculum (Portfolio Entry 4).

Portfolio Entry 1: California Department of Education (CDE) Guidance for Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Curriculum and Assessment Selection

Project Overview:

Background: This entry is part of a larger guidance document for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) on how to utilize their UPK Planning and Implementation (P&I) Grant Funding to implement UPK in their districts. The UPK P&I Grant is available to all LEAs that operate a kindergarten program, and grant funds may pay for costs associated with creating or expanding access to the California State Preschool Programs or Transitional Kindergarten (TK), or establish and strengthen partnerships with other Pre-K providers within the LEA. The guidance document that accompanies the UPK P&I Grant is publicly available on California Educators Together website.

Goal(s): To provide research-based guidance to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) planning UPK curriculum selection for use in California State Preschool Program and Transitional Kindergarten settings

Contributions of Fellow:

- Wrote the section on curriculum guidance for UPK programs in California

Activity Focus Keywords: Document Review
Policy Area Keywords: Local Education Agency (LEA); Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K); State-Funded Preschool
Knowledge & Skills Keywords: Processes to connect research to policy and practice; Effective communication between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers

Portfolio Entry 2: California Statewide Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Curriculum Survey Report

Project Overview:

Background: The California Department of Education (CDE) does not collect data on the type of curricula that are used in Universal PreKindergarten programs (UPK). This makes it difficult to understand the need for curriculum guidance, professional development, and other curriculum-related assistance from the state to programs serving four-year-old children.

Goal(s): The purpose of this survey report is to gain a better understanding of the current curricula that TK programs use across a range of districts and counties in California.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Drafted and distributed a curriculum survey to districts in California on the name(s) of the curricula or combinations of curricula they use (whole-child, math-specific, literacy-specific, science-specific, social-emotional-specific etc.) and to describe their overall curriculum approach used in TK programs
- Analyzed the survey data
- Created a report on results which was sent to leadership at the CDE, and the UPK State Leadership Team.

Activity Focus Keywords: Data Analysis; Data Collection; Data Visualization Disseminate Findings; Survey Design; Written Report"
Policy Area Keywords: Local Education Agency (LEA); Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K)
Knowledge & Skills Keywords: How data informs decision-making; What information policymakers need; Conducting research that’s useful to policy and practice

Portfolio Entry 3: California Department of Education Webinar on P-3 Curriculum and Assessment

Project Overview:

Background: The California Department of Education (CDE) has a webinar series conducted every two months on preschool to third grade (P-3) alignment practices. The June 2022 webinar highlights curriculum and assessment specifically by introducing current California policy on curriculum and assessment in preschool through third grade, the research on P-3 curricula and assessment, and specific organizations and districts speak on their approach to curriculum and assessments

Goal(s): The purpose of this webinar is to provide guidance to programs and districts in California on how to implement aligned preschool to third grade curricula and assessments.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Created and edited slide content for the webinar
- Invited speakers and directed them on which topics to share in their presentations
- Organized all logistics of the webinar, including presenter facilitation and presenting some slides on the day of the webinar

Activity Focus Keywords: Cross-Agency Collaboration; Presentation
Policy Area Keywords: Local Education Agency (LEA); Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K); Research-Practice Partnerships
Knowledge & Skills Keywords: Processes to connect research to policy and practice; Effective communication between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers

Portfolio Entry 4: Curriculum Scan and Proposal for California to Develop its own UPK Curriculum

Project Overview:

Background: After completing Portfolio Entries 1-3, it is clear that there is a need in the state of California for more guidance on UPK curriculum selection. Furthermore, the California Budget Act of 2021 includes the creation of “curriculum and resources that align with the California Preschool Learning Foundations”, yet we know from research that development of one-time resources are not sustainable practice, and California needs to engage fully in a curriculum policy that not only meets the cultural and linguistic needs of

California's young children, but is firmly rooted in the research of what matters most for children's learning gains.

Goal(s): The purpose of this curriculum scan and proposal is to demonstrate to CDE leadership the need for California to develop a UPK curricula that authentically encompasses the cultural and linguistic diversity of children in California, while also providing a scope and sequence in literacy and math content, embedding assessment, and providing a joyful, playful learning experience.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Conducted curriculum scan and review
- Drafted proposal advocating for creation of California UPK Curriculum

Activity Focus Keywords: Curriculum Development; Grant Application Development; Literature Review
Policy Area Keywords: Center-based Child Care; Dual Language Learners (DLLs); Family Child Care; Family Engagement; Head Start; Local Education Agency (LEA); Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K); State-Funded Preschool
Knowledge & Skills Keywords: Processes to connect research to policy and practice; Incorporating a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

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