

LEADERSHIP

Effective Leadership in Prekindergarten through 3rd Grade: Building a Strong Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards



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Leadership



Young Students Need “Ready Schools”

Schools are under tremendous pressure to reduce persistent achievement gaps. Thanks to the Governor’s commitment to invest in prekindergarten programs, our elementary schools and community based child care programs are serving more 4 year old children in prekindergarten than ever before. The early childhood education years span birth to age 8. With greater populations entering our early and primary grades it is crucial to ask whether schools are “ready” to support their developmental needs.

Today’s context has been shifting the structure and focus of the early elementary school years.

Fortunately, there are many examples of elementary schools that provide young children with responsive and engaging instruction that is well aligned from early childhood through the elementary school years. These “ready” schools are reaping the benefits of an evidence-based and comprehensive approach to early education and their students are outperforming their peers. In the following pages we aim to promote and share research-based strategies for leaders to provide young learners with excellent and appropriate instruction.



Principals and other school leaders who take the time to greet children by name twice a day builds a sense of community and lets the students know their school is ready for them.

Effective Leadership in Prekindergarten through 3rd Grade: Building a Strong Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards

The NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council, NYS Head Start Collaboration Office, and the NYS Association for the Education of Young Children are working to support our youngest students, their families, teachers, and leaders by highlighting key features of high quality early childhood teaching. In elementary schools as well as early childhood settings – child care centers and homes, Head Start programs, and prekindergarten sites – administrators shape the culture of their school or program. Leaders’ educational philosophy, instructional decisions, human resources practices, and budget allocations combine to shape a school’s approach to educating young children. Ultimately, leaders who value early childhood development as the foundation for intellectual and social growth consistently promote appropriate and rigorous early childhood instructional strategies to ensure children have high-quality early learning experiences in prekindergarten through 3rd grade.

We firmly believe that young students can best meet the Common Core Learning Standards when they have effective teachers who use intentional, experiential, developmentally and culturally appropriate practices.

The purpose of this brief is to help leaders enact high-quality practice that nurtures and challenges young learners. We begin by describing the evidence base for effective early childhood practice in order to equip administrators and program directors with key facts to bolster their leadership. Next, we discuss how a comprehensive approach to high-quality education from prekindergarten to 3rd grade helps children meet New York’s Common Core Learning Standards. To turn knowledge into action, we recommend strategies that leaders can use to ensure children receive excellent education in their early years. The brief concludes with one community’s story where high-quality education in its elementary school has contributed to great results for student achievement in elementary school and beyond.

Summary of Suggested Leadership Strategies for Providing High-quality Learning Experiences

1. Demonstrate a commitment to high-quality, developmentally appropriate instruction from prekindergarten through 3rd grade
2. Set administrative policies that support high-quality early learning experiences
3. Develop and expand partnerships among prekindergarten through 3rd grade teachers
4. Integrate professional development across the early grades
5. Engage families and communities

Rigorous Early Childhood Practice: Intentional and Experiential

Effective leaders recognize that teachers and caregivers have a special role to play in helping young learners realize their potential. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is a phrase commonly used by early childhood education experts and practitioners to describe the teacher-child interactions that foster children's optimal growth and learning in all developmental domains. Unfortunately, many educators who do not specialize in early childhood education have the false notion that DAP is a hands-off approach to teaching young children in which teachers watch children play. Rather, DAP is an approach to early childhood education that prioritizes intentional instructional practices in which teachers help children develop a comprehensive range of knowledge and skills through *experiential learning opportunities*.

Striking the Balance: Child-Initiated and Teacher-Guided Instruction

There is mounting evidence affirming that young children learn best in classrooms that balance child and adult-initiated instruction. One such study followed children's progress from preschool through elementary school. Researchers noted that a developmentally appropriate approach yielded gains for children in numerous aspects of their development. The results also indicated that the best teachers used a mixture of approaches – scaffolding, extending, discussing, monitoring, and direct instruction – within a child's developmental range.¹

In contrast to the balanced approach, studies suggest that teacher-directed classrooms can inhibit children's learning. For instance, when young children do not engage in dramatic play at school, behavioral challenges and expulsions increase.² Research has also shown that children – especially boys – in teacher-directed classrooms suffer more stress and are less motivated when compared to children in more child-initiated classrooms.³ At the other end of the spectrum, unstructured classrooms are also ineffectual. Indeed, research affirms that neither didactic techniques nor hands-off approaches work. As displayed in Figure 1, a high-quality early learning environment strikes a balance between child-initiated play in the presence of engaged teachers and focused experiential learning guided by teachers.⁴



Figure 1. Early Childhood Instructional Continuum⁵

The orange section depicts the "sweet spot" for maximum learning, trust and discovery.

Early childhood and elementary school teachers that use a balanced approach see positive results across all developmental domains. In particular, studies have shown that children who “engage in complex forms of socio-dramatic play have greater language skills than non-players, better social skills, more empathy, more imagination, and more of the subtle capacity to know what others mean. They are less aggressive and show more self-control and higher levels of thinking.”⁶ Teachers are essential to facilitating the kind of sophisticated play that promotes holistic learning by helping children identify appropriate roles and expanding on their interactions. In other words, effective teachers are *intentional*: they present robust curriculum content with careful attention to learning sequences in all developmental domains and sensitivity to students’ self-regulation, attention, and enjoyment in learning.⁷

High-quality education for children from birth through 3rd grade is also experiential: child-driven hands-on opportunities to work with peers and solve problems, test ideas, invent, create, and grow. Moreover, young learners need to use their skills and apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts. Indeed, Jim McHugh, Principal at Bell Top Elementary School in the East Greenbush Central School District agreed: “We have to be creative. Having young children sit for a 90 minute literacy block doesn’t work.” Instead, a literacy block should be a balance of teacher-guided and child-initiated learning during whole group, small group, and individual times. For example, teachers may provide 20 minutes of small group differentiated guided reading lessons; 20 minutes of whole group interactive read-alouds; 20 minutes of shared reading of songs, poems, and big books; and the final 30 minutes for students to independently practice reading as they engage in learning centers. Having a considerable amount of time to teach literacy (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in a meaningful, developmental, and deliberate fashion is essential for student academic success. With a balanced approach to intentional and experiential learning, effective teachers plan and implement instruction with the goal of building a joyous community of learners.

Implementing Intentional and Experiential Approaches

Although the evidence is clear, translating the research into practice can be challenging, particularly given the pressures from parents and policymakers alike to implement more teacher-directed approaches. Early childhood and school leaders’ support is crucial to help early childhood and early elementary teachers build on children’s interests and experiences while integrating individually and culturally appropriate strategies in five essential areas.

1. Interactions and Instruction:

Teachers scaffold new concepts through interactions that reflect a warm tone in order to establish a safe and stimulating environment in which children can explore new ideas and abilities. Instruction transpires when teachers engage in elaborated interactions and present increasingly challenging tasks across all developmental domains. Throughout small group interactions, teachers and children work together and build their social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Learning also occurs during casual conversations throughout the day, such as during snack time, transitions, and outside play.

2. Curriculum:

Effective curricula address the content and structure of the educational experience that teachers plan and execute when caring for and teaching their students. Curricula should encompass major learning goals in all developmental domains and can be articulated in one curriculum that addresses all domains or several curricula that pertain to specific content or developmental areas. Curricula should be selected or created after teachers and the administration carefully research and consider the benefits of a curriculum for the individual and communal interests of their students.

3. Environment:

In an early learning classroom, the environment encompasses the physical space as well as the overall organization of the classroom, including the structures and guidelines that ensure the time with students is used effectively. A high-quality classroom typically has defined learning centers and a space in which the whole

class can gather for large group instruction. Teachers also establish predictable routines and expectations that help students stay on task and meaningfully engaged.

4. Assessment:

Exceptional teaching is individualized and responsive to each child’s needs and experiences. It is therefore predicated on teachers’ awareness of their students’ knowledge and abilities. Assessment for young children (under age 8) is quite different from the strategies that work with older students. Great care must be taken to use appropriate assessment tools and to collect information about children in many ways, at many points in time.

5. Family Engagement:

Families are their children’s first and most influential teachers. In the early grades, school leaders and teachers play a critical role in setting the tone for a reciprocal and positive relationship with parents. For young students in particular, learning occurs within children’s cultures and most meaningful when it builds on their prior learning and experience. With collaboration, students’ family members can help children extend learning at home.

Parents that are involved in their child’s education in the early grades are much more likely to be involved in later grades. Engaging parents early has a long lasting positive impact on children’s success.

In schools that apply these strategies, children thrive. According to Principal Mary Lavin from Windermere Boulevard School, “Teachers needed to be convinced that allowing students to have choice throughout their day would be beneficial. It took time for the teaching practices to change but with time and support, teacher morale increased, student motivation rose, and student achievement increased.” Indeed, intentional and experiential education fosters creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking skills that will help children meet the sophisticated expectations described in the Common Core Learning Standards.

Rigorous Early Childhood Practice Helps Students Gain the Foundational Skills Needed to Meet the Common Core Learning Standards

Elementary school leaders are guiding their schools in new efforts to meet the Common Core Learning Standards, which specify learning outcomes for each grade level and have raised expectations for students' content knowledge. To promote a cohesive approach to instruction in prekindergarten through elementary school, the State Education Department developed the **Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core**. This tool addresses five essential early learning domains: approaches to learning, language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, social and emotional development, and physical health.

Like developmentally appropriate practice, the Common Core Learning Standards support interdisciplinary learning, higher order thinking, creativity, and the use of language and literacy skills throughout the day. Rigorous early childhood practice embodies the educational context that young children need to gain these skills and knowledge. In a balanced child-initiated and teacher-guided learning setting, children are encouraged to activate critical thinking skills and independently explore their ideas in whole group and small group instruction. A deep focus on language and literacy is seamlessly integrated throughout the curriculum.

Teachers that adhere to developmentally appropriate practices are deep listeners. They challenge children's ideas, asking them to explain their positions to build logic, reasoning, and communication skills. Teachers will also add relevant content to extend students' understanding of key concepts and vocabulary to help them meet learning goals. For example, during interactive shared book reading, teachers ask children to point out story elements and anticipate the ending. They introduce and define new words. The teacher encourages young learners to explain their ideas based on the text, illustrations, and characters.

The classroom environment is also organized carefully. The teacher has established routines and structures to help the students focus and contribute to class discussions, like pictorial schedules for the day and regular morning meetings to orient the class to the key topics they are pursuing. The curriculum is implemented with a balance of whole group, small group,

and individual learning. It prioritizes child-initiated learning in which teachers creatively meet subject area and developmental area objectives. For instance, when children have choices, they may engage in dramatic play and the teacher will be attuned to the children's play themes and build on them, introducing new content and play materials to stimulate their ideas. She knows the needs and interests of individual children and helps them overcome obstacles in their lives that hinder learning. Good teachers are able to connect content to their children's lives outside the classroom.

Finally, there is an ongoing flow of communication between teachers and families about students' learning and growth. Communication occurs through structured opportunities such as parent-teacher conferences and weekly newsletters or emails in which teachers share the topics that students are investigating and provide family members with information about how they can help their children at home. It also occurs as teachers integrate families' experiences and cultures to enrich the curriculum. If a class studies their community, for example, a parent with relevant experience (e.g., cab driver, postal worker, city official) may be invited to share his or her expertise.

High-quality Early Learning Across the Birth through 3rd Grade Continuum

Clearly we need effective, rigorous practice within each grade or age grouping. To close the achievement gap, however, school leaders and teachers need to ensure children receive excellent instruction in each grade *and* attend to how learning opportunities build on one another.

Young children come to a prekindergarten or kindergarten with a wide range of experiences. Awareness of the experiences and early childhood program offerings in the school's community can help teachers and administrators understand children's interests, needs, and assets. Early childhood program leaders and elementary school leaders have the joint responsibility for ensuring children have smooth transitions as they move from one setting or grade level to the next.

Elementary school leaders can support continuity by ensuring the curricula and



assessments are aligned with the progression of learning standards. Furthermore, they can work with early childhood leaders to offer integrated professional development opportunities. And most significantly, they can establish transition practices that welcome children and families into their school. Effective transition activities build mutual trust between school staff and families and set the tone for productive and positive home-school relationships that extend throughout a child's academic career. New York's SED recently released a transitions toolkit that elementary schools can use to evaluate and guide their efforts to ensure children have a smooth transition when they begin kindergarten.⁸

Early childhood leaders also play a role in cultivating strong relationships with the elementary school leaders in their community. For example, they may invite local school principals and teachers to visit their site and have a dialogue about kindergarten expectations and the Common Core Learning Standards and then share the ways that high-quality early learning helps meet those goals. The opportunity for teachers to meet with one another, see their class environments, and build positive relationships can go a long way toward offering children a cohesive educational experience: as one administrator stated, "seeing is believing." Another way to help the transition is by sharing data about children's development. In one community, for example, each child has a portfolio of their work that they bring with them throughout the preschool and early elementary school years.⁹ Indeed, early childhood and elementary school leaders must work together to create a learning continuum across the education sectors that will benefit students and families.

Suggested Leadership Strategies for Providing High-Quality Learning

Leaders have several tools to facilitate effective early learning practices in their schools. The suggested strategies described below are based on best practices¹⁰ and they are informed by interviews with several school leaders in New York State. They emphasize both structural issues related to effective practice as well as the important interpersonal aspects of building aligned and effective early learning systems.

1. Demonstrate a commitment to high-quality developmentally appropriate instruction from prekindergarten through 3rd grade

Principals and early childhood administrators have the important role of creating a culture dedicated to excellent instruction in prekindergarten through 3rd grade. To be strong instructional leaders for effective early childhood practice, leaders need to stay abreast of research on innovations and best practices. They assign strong teachers with expertise in early childhood development and pedagogy to the early grades and they encourage their teachers to use authentic assessment data to drive instructional decisions. Finally, leaders can support sequenced learning standards and curricula to facilitate transitions and coherent instruction.

2. Set administrative policies that support high-quality early learning experiences

Numerous administrative decisions have implications for the quality of young learners' education. From a *human resources* perspective, it is critical to place teachers with specialized knowledge of early childhood development and effective pedagogy with young children in the early grades classrooms. *Budget allocations* are important as well. For instance, the environment in early grades classrooms has a great impact on children's learning: adequate materials must be available for children to engage in experiential and rigorous learning opportunities. *Data systems* and *assessment practice* are also critical so that teachers have tools to follow students'

progress over time and use authentic assessment to guide the individualized instructional practices that are so central to high-quality early learning. When school leaders implement prekindergarten, they can work with QUALITYstarsNY to ensure that prekindergarten classrooms are offering the highest quality care for young learners.

3. Develop and expand partnerships among prekindergarten through 3rd grade teachers to align curriculum, instruction, and assessments

Administrators can encourage teachers to work together to ensure their approaches are aligned and mutually supportive. Establishing dedicated time for school- and community-based teachers to work and plan together helps to build a collaborative approach to high-quality early learning with vertical (PreK-12) and horizontal alignment among teachers working at the same grade level.

4. Integrate professional development across the early grades

Elementary school staff and early childhood teachers can come together by participating in shared professional development opportunities, such as workshops and coaching. By creating a two-way street, leaders leverage resources to provide more extensive professional development. When teachers participate in professional development at one another's sites, they also gain a better understanding of where children are coming from and where they are headed. Shared professional development may enhance instruction as well as build mutual respect that will have



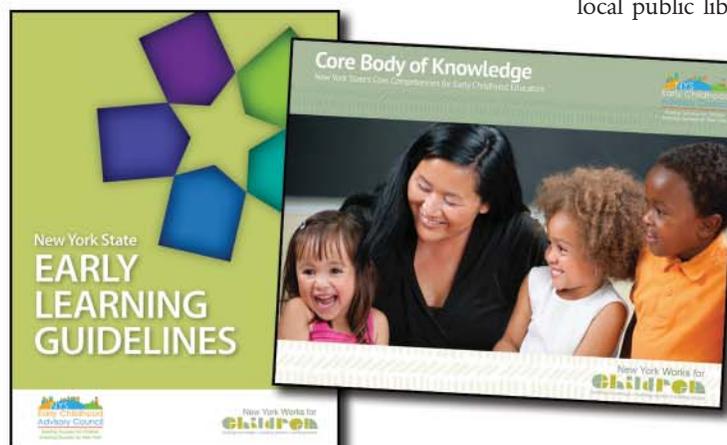
a lasting impact on the teachers who care for and educate children.

5. Engage families and communities

Children will thrive in learning environments that are welcoming and reflect their families, home communities, cultures, and languages. There are numerous ways to engage and support families. For instance, a school can house or develop a partnership with an early childhood program/child care center that supports parents as children's first teachers. This approach helps to build a positive relationship with families and demonstrates the school's commitment to children's success. At the same time, families can gain information about how to best support their children during the early years and be connected to resources in the community. A school can also have a dedicated space and resources for families to meet with other parents, teachers and access culturally inclusive resources that support their children's learning. The local public library and other community resources are critical partners in children's success in the early years of development.

Effective leaders can set the stage for strong transition practices and policies so children and their families have a positive transition into kindergarten.

State resources to support leaders in the supervision of the early grades.



One school's approach to high-quality education from prekindergarten through 3rd grade: Windermere Boulevard School's Early Childhood House¹¹

AMHERST CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Windermere is a town that neighbors the city of Buffalo. The elementary school serves over 750 students in grades PreK-5 and 46% of the student body is eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. It is an increasingly diverse school community where over 30 different languages are represented. Windermere Boulevard School adopted an innovative administrative structure to support developmentally appropriate instruction in the early grades. The school is comprised of two "houses." The Early Childhood House for grades PreK-2 and the Intermediate House for grades 3-5. Each house has its own Principal. Ms. Mary Lavin is the Principal of the Primary House and she works closely with Mrs. Julie Flanagan, the Principal of the Intermediate House, to ensure they meet the school's vision for an engaging learning environment that provides young learners with excellent developmentally informed instruction.

By devoting one administrator to the early grades, Windermere's school leaders recognized the unique characteristics of early learners. The small school approach also fostered cohesion among the teaching staff; they increasingly share similar strategies for working with their students. The results are promising. The students have consistently outperformed statewide averages ELA and Mathematics benchmarks (see Figure 1). Windermere's approach is reflected in four of the features of early childhood teaching that support young children's acquisition of new knowledge and skills: curriculum, interactions and instruction, the environment, and assessment.

and connected to students' interests so that students reach higher levels of motivation, skill mastery, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving."

Windermere adds to the *Thoughtful Classroom* and *Responsive Classroom* approaches with other content focused curricula, all of which emphasize a balance of direct teaching and children's choice. For instance, they use the *Building Blocks-Foundations for Mathematical Thinking* curriculum that relies on constructivist learning principals and is aligned with national math learning standards. Similarly, for English/Language Arts instruction, the teachers rely on Ohio State University's *Literacy Collaborative Framework*.¹⁵ The framework highlights balanced literacy and encourages reading and writing across the curriculum. Windermere's early grades teachers worked diligently to align their curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and have supplemented the curricula with teacher-designed lessons when needed.

Interactions and Instruction

Windermere's Early Childhood House encourages the staff to interact with the children and their families in a responsive and respectful way. Principal Lavin emphasized the importance of understanding the value of diversity in their school. In adopting the *Responsive Classroom* approach, the administration reinforced the importance of the quality of teacher-child interactions. *Responsive Classroom* teaching practices support the teachers to "create an environment in which every child feels safe and fully included, teacher and students share a common purpose, and a sense of joy envelops hard work, which together enable children to take the risks necessary for learning."

Environment

The early grades teachers at Windermere's Early Childhood House have arranged their classroom environments to support young learners' growth. When Principal Lavin first began working with the staff, they collectively focused on each classroom's arrangement. Lavin understood the importance of the environment for children's learning and recognized that the teaching staff could work collaboratively to ensure that they were meeting the students' needs. Specifically kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers toured several early childhood classrooms, including classrooms at a local Montessori school, and reflected on how the environment could reinforce the school's vision. Teachers then read and discussed *Classroom Spaces that Work*, which describes the *Responsive Classroom* approach to room arrangement that involves "establishing and teaching behavior expectations, handling behavior mistakes, managing the schedule, and organizing physical spaces in ways that enable students to work with autonomy and focus."¹⁶ Afterwards the whole kindergarten team worked together to set up one teacher's classroom and then each teacher arranged her own classroom similarly. According to Principal Lavin, the teachers quickly saw the value of the changes in the environment for children's behavior and engagement. Now, all the teachers have voluntarily removed the traditional teacher and student desks and



Curriculum

Windermere Early Childhood House adopted a common approach to teaching guided by two programs: *The Thoughtful Classroom*¹² and *Responsive Classroom*.¹³ Together these two instructional paradigms ensure a cohesive approach to effective teaching, student achievement and a positive school climate. These programs provide specific teaching strategies that foster supportive and stimulating instruction. They encourage teachers to offer "lessons and assignments that are active and interactive, appropriately challenging, purposeful,

instead every classroom in the early childhood house has clearly delineated learning centers (e.g., for blocks, sensorial play), materials are out and available for children to freely access, and each classroom has an open inviting space for community meetings. They also use grade appropriate pictorial schedules and other techniques to help the children work collaboratively and independently.

Assessment

Windermere’s Early Childhood House believes that student assessment is an ongoing process that includes collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information gathered from multiple sources over time. To do this, teachers implement a comprehensive and balanced assessment protocol. Teachers use a mix of informal/authentic assessment tools and formal/standardized assessments to measure their young students’ progress over time. Social workers meet with each family to help teachers understand their aspirations for their child and important family history. Teachers understand that the information gathered fulfills different purposes and together helps to compile a much more complete picture of each student. Some examples of types of assessments and the tools used at Windermere are shared below:

New Entrant Screening:

New York State Education Law requires that every new entrant to a public school have health records, dental, hearing and vision screens and a developmental screen. Windermere screens new Prekindergarten and Kindergarten entrants using the Early Screening Inventory Revised (ESI-R).¹⁷ It is a quick, standardized developmental screen that is administered only once to a child. It is used to identify students who are possibly gifted, have a possible disability, or who may be limited in their English proficiency. A child with special gifts or a delay may be referred to Committee on Preschool Special

Education. Children who are found to have Limited English Proficiency can benefit from a wide range of strategies the classroom teacher and others can employ. New entrants into first or second grade follow the same procedure except a Literacy Profile is completed using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS).¹⁸

Developmental Authentic Informal Assessments:

Teachers use a variety of curricular and subject-based developmental assessments. They use informal and formal observations, checklists, scoring rubrics, portfolios, and teacher or parent ratings. The District has developed a standards-based checklist to help teachers monitor student growth and to differentiate instruction. Teachers also measure students’ progress in relevant subject areas with subject specific curriculum assessments. For example, a Literacy Profile is completed individually on each kindergarten, first, and second grade student three times a year using components from the BAS.

Formal Standardized Assessments:

Additionally, Windermere uses a standardized, norm referenced screen in literacy and math to ensure that school wide assessment of student progress is aligned to national normative measures. The Windermere prekindergarten program utilizes the *MClass Circle in Literacy and Math*¹⁹ and students in kindergarten, first, and second grade are assessed using *AIMSweb in Literacy and Math*.²⁰ This assessment also fulfills New York State’s requirements for students to participate in a universal screen as part of a comprehensive Response to Intervention Program. Some schools also preform social and emotional screenings on new entrants to ensure all needs are addressed as soon as possible after enrollment.

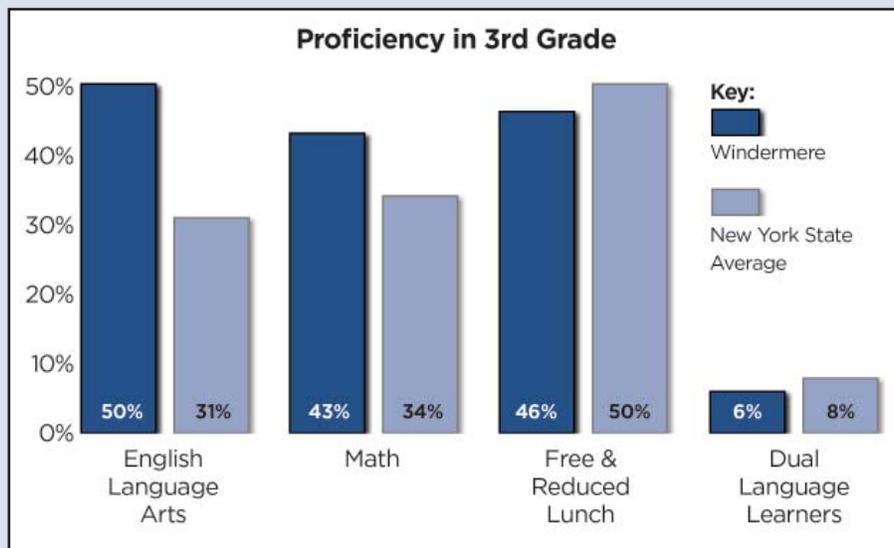


Figure 2. Windermere students’ 3rd grade proficiency compared to state averages on the New York State Assessments.

Conclusion

New York State's leaders in early childhood and elementary schools are critical partners in ensuring that young children receive top-notch instruction. With this brief, we hope to jump start a dialogue about the core features of effective early childhood practice - interactions and instruction, curriculum, environment, assessment, and family engagement - that will help prekindergarten to 3rd grade students achieve the essential skills for lifelong success described in the Common Core Learning Standards. **As the State raises the bar for children's intellectual achievement, it is especially important that we work together to provide children with intentional, experiential, and joyful learning experiences.**

Look for the other Briefs in this series:

- Curriculum
- Environment
- Interaction
- Assessment

and the webinar discussions on the NYSECAC website in 2015

To learn more and view the other briefs in this series that address curriculum, the classroom environment, instruction and interactions, and assessment, please visit the New York ECAC website at www.nysecac.org or contact Patty Persell at Patricia.persell@ccf.ny.gov



Resources

- **Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities**
National Association for Elementary School Principals
www.web.naesp.org/misc/ECLC_ExecSum.pdf
- **Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches**
Kristie Kauerz and Julie Coffman, 2013
www.depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd_Framework_Legal%20paper.pdf
- **The PreK to 3rd Grade National Work Group**
www.prek-3rdgradenationalworkgroup.org/node/1
- **The New York State Education Department's Tool to Assess the Effectiveness of Transitions from Prekindergarten to Kindergarten**
www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/documents/FinalDistrictPKKTransitionSelfAssessmentmar19FINAL_1.pdf

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- ¹¹ This case study is based on an interview with Ms. Mary Lavin who has been the principal of Windermere's Early Childhood House for 11 years. The interview was conducted on January 3, 2014.
- ¹² For more information about the Thoughtful Classroom visit www.thoughtfulclassroom.com/
- ¹³ For more information on the Responsive Classroom Approach visit www.responsiveclassroom.org/
- ¹⁴ For more information on Building Blocks visit www.gse.buffalo.edu/org/buildingblocks/
- ¹⁵ For more information on the Literacy Collaborative Framework, visit www.lcosu.org/framework.html
- ¹⁶ Clayton, M.K. & Forton, M. F (2001) *Classroom spaces that work*. Greenfield, MA Northeast Foundation for Children.
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- ¹⁸ For more information on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System visit www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/BAS2_overview.aspx
- ¹⁹ For more information on the MClass Circle visit www.amplify.com/assessment/mclass-circle
- ²⁰ For more information on the AIMSWeb assessment visit www.aimsweb.com/



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