

Oregon School District PRESCHOOL SURVEY

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Executive SUMMARY

Oregon has committed to a vision for a P-20 education continuum, from preschool through advanced college degrees. Building this new system requires both increasing access to preschool to reach more Oregon children and ensuring that preschool is aligned with the early elementary grades.

Clearly, far too many Oregon children – almost three-quarters of children from low-income Oregon families – have no access to high-quality preschool. The evidence across decades of evaluation research clearly demonstrates that preschool programs can have a significant impact on children’s early learning and development. Positive effects have been documented across multiple domains on children’s development, including language, literacy and early math skills; social and emotional outcomes; and children’s health. High-quality early education also has long-term impacts that last well into adulthood, including increased employment, higher earnings, and improved long-term health.

Increasingly, many Oregon school districts are understanding the importance of high-quality preschool as a key strategy to close the opportunity gap and are offering preschool to young children in their community. Yet Oregon educators, parents and policymakers have limited information about how many school districts are offering preschool and how those districts are operating their programs. To fill that information gap, the Children’s Institute conducted a statewide survey of school districts in Oregon in the spring/summer of 2015. We wanted to learn and document what preschool services are being provided, and to inform policy decisions as Oregon implements the new program approved by the 2015 Oregon Legislature that will expand publicly funded preschool to more children from low-income Oregon families. Ninety-one of the state’s 188 school districts took part in the survey.

The survey findings underscore the urgent need for Oregon to build a system of support for high-quality preschool that includes professional development and guidance for K-12 school districts. Without designated funding or assistance, school districts have been building preschool programs independently in an effort to meet the needs of their children and families. What they need, and what Oregon needs, is a common understanding of preschool standards that outline the key components of quality required to improve child outcomes. Those standards can then connect schools to a system of supports to bolster quality implementation.

Here are the survey’s key findings:

- There are thousands of children attending school district-operated preschools across the state. Oregon school districts, from the most rural and remote to the largest and most urban, are providing preschool programs to at least 3,425 children statewide.
- The majority of districts offering preschool (60 percent) committed their own district resources to support the implementation of preschool, indicating a strong commitment to early learning.
- While many school districts have been providing preschool for more than five years, there is wide variation on classroom ratios, curriculum, assessment, and other key components related to implementing quality preschool.

- School districts providing preschool have a wide variety of people supervising preschool teachers. These supervisors may not have expertise or training in early childhood education, which means educators may not have access to the support they need to be effective.
- A large percentage of school districts with preschools use a self-developed curriculum and assessment tools that may not be research-based, or they don't report using any specific curriculum or assessment tools.

There are some positive steps underway to build a statewide system of supports, including an effort led by the Oregon Early Learning Division and the Oregon Department of Education to ensure the state's expectations for what children know and are able to do in preschool and kindergarten are aligned.

Looking forward, Oregon needs a comprehensive statewide picture of the preschool programs being offered in different settings across the state. To provide that, we recommend that the Oregon Department of Education regularly collect data from school districts and other providers offering preschool – to assess key components of quality and track changes over time.

With this data available, educators, school district leaders and state policymakers can effectively guide and invest in high-quality preschools across the state. And educators can then continue their vital work of preparing Oregon children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Here are other highlights of what we learned:

Key questions and findings

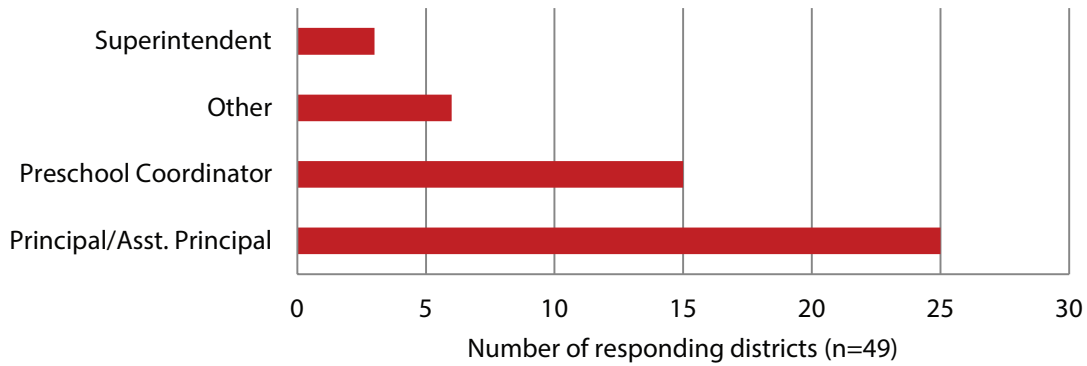
What Oregon school districts are providing preschool and how many children are being served?

- Survey results indicate that districts statewide invest in preschool, in all regions from small rural districts to the largest urban districts.
- The 91 responding school districts serve about 405,400 K-12 students, representing approximately 71 percent of all K-12 students in Oregon.
- Of the 91 school districts that responded, 49 (54 percent) indicated that they offered a school-based non-special education preschool program during the 2014-2015 school year.
- Ten of the 42 districts (24 percent) not offering preschool plan to offer preschool during the upcoming 2015-2016 school year.
- The districts offering a non-special education preschool program in 2014-2015 served 306,645 K-12 students, or 53 percent of the school-age population in Oregon.
- Respondents reported that 3,425 children were enrolled in the preschool programs in the 2014-2015 school year, with an average enrollment of sixteen children per classroom.

How long have school districts been offering preschool and how do they operate?

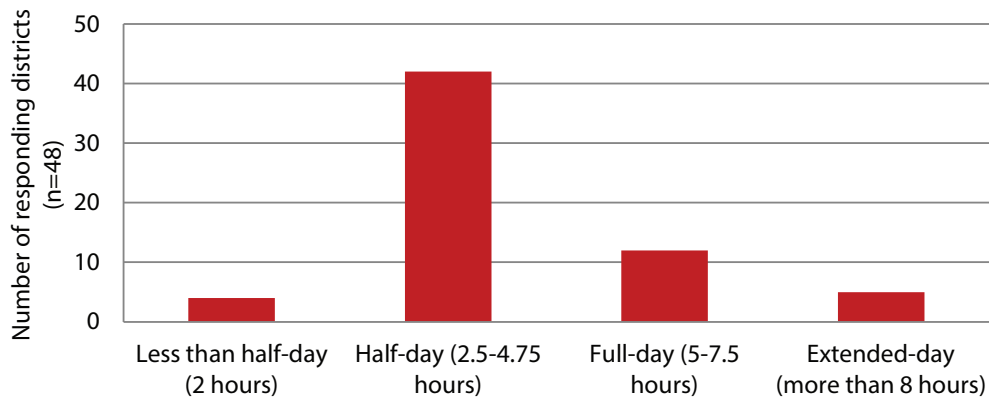
- The majority of districts offering preschool programs had been doing so for more than five years.
- About 60 percent of districts with a preschool program indicated that they had a waiting list for enrollment in their school-based preschool programs.
- Non-special education preschool program staff members (teachers, assistant teachers, and educational aides) were supervised at the school level by a variety of school and district personnel. The most common supervisor at the school level was the principal or assistant principal (25 of 49 districts, or 51 percent).

Who supervises the preschool staff at the school level?



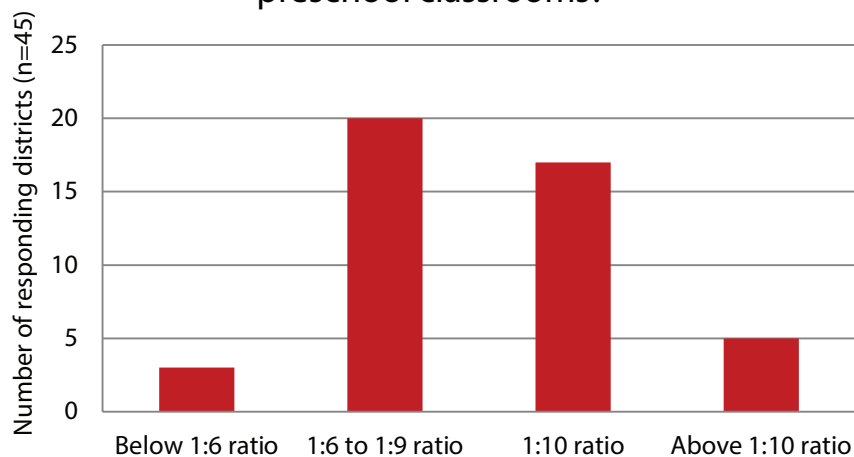
- Eighty-eight percent of the districts with preschools (42 districts) offered a half-day program defined as 2.5 to 4.75 hours per day.

How many hours per day is your preschool program?



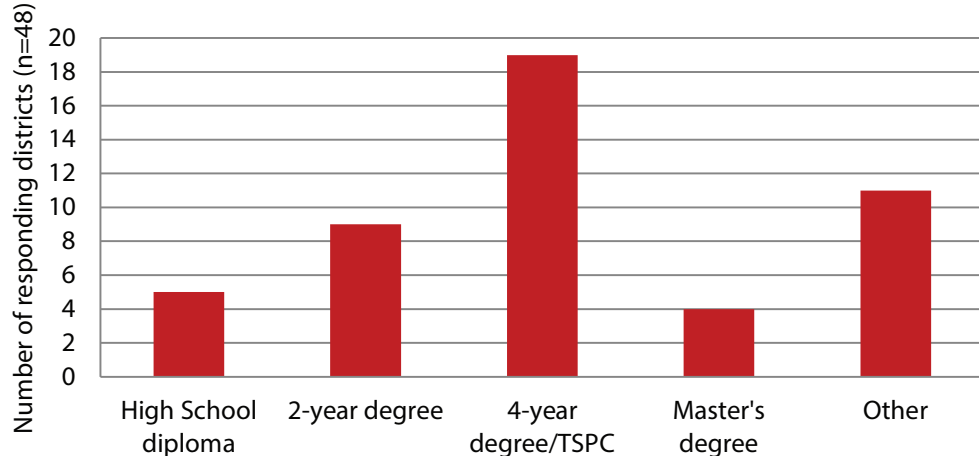
- Seventy-nine percent of the school districts that provided information on teacher/child ratios (37 of 47 districts) reported that their preschool classroom ratios fell in the 1:6 to 1:10 range.

What is the typical adult/child ratio in your preschool classrooms?



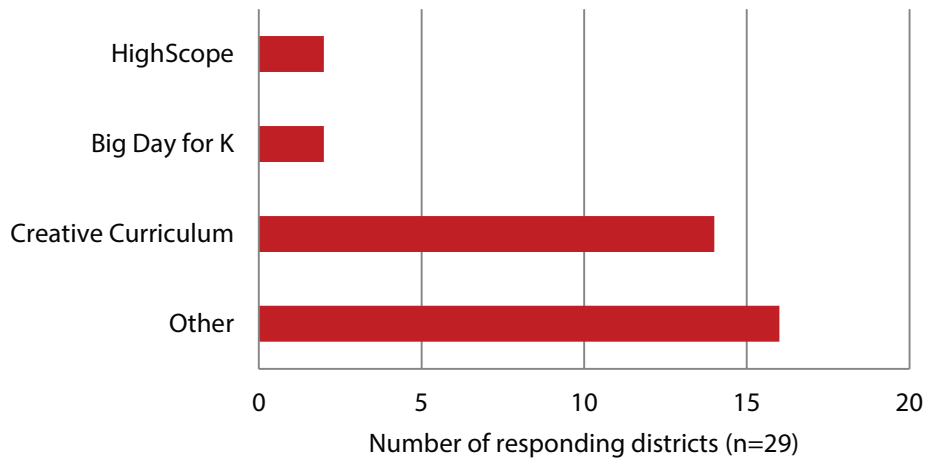
- A majority of school-based preschool programs required their lead teachers to have at least a two-year degree, with 40 percent of the programs requiring a four year-degree or a four-year degree along with a state- or nationally-recognized credential such as a Teacher Standards and Practice Commission license.

What are the minimum education requirements for lead teachers?



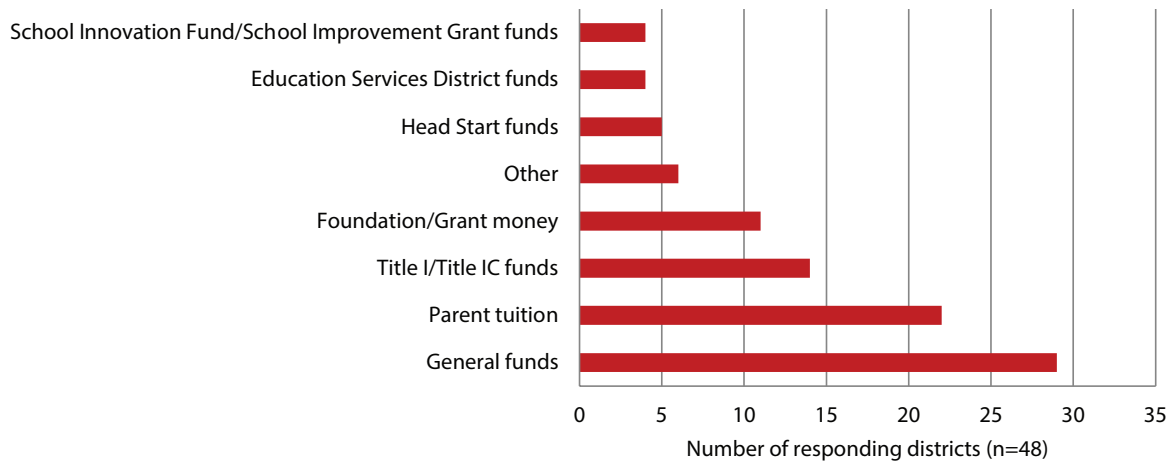
- Sixty-three percent of the districts that responded to questions about curriculum (29 of 46 districts) indicated that their district used some type of research-based curriculum.

What type of curriculum does your district use?



- The most common source of funding was school district general funds, with 60 percent of districts with preschools (29 districts) indicating that they provide at least part of the funds for the program.

What sources of funding does your district use for preschool?



What challenges do districts face in implementing preschool programs?

- Eighty percent of the districts with preschools (37 districts) indicated that funding was one of the biggest challenges in implementing their preschool program.
- Fifty-seven percent (26 districts) indicated that facilities were a challenge.
- Thirty-seven percent (17 districts) said staffing was one of the main challenges.
- Other challenges reported were curriculum and family engagement (24 percent, 11 districts each), and professional development (22 percent, 10 districts).

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Introduction

School districts in Oregon are increasingly gaining an understanding of the importance of high-quality preschool as a key strategy to close the opportunity gap. Decades of research have shown the single most cost-effective strategy to improve long-term student outcomes is to invest in early learning. Despite the evidence, Oregon children need greater access to high-quality early learning. Oregon ranks in the bottom quarter nationally for access to state-funded preschool, enrolling only eight percent of all 3- and 4-year-olds (regardless of income).¹ Further, only 55 percent of income-eligible children ages 3 to 5 are enrolled in Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start.²

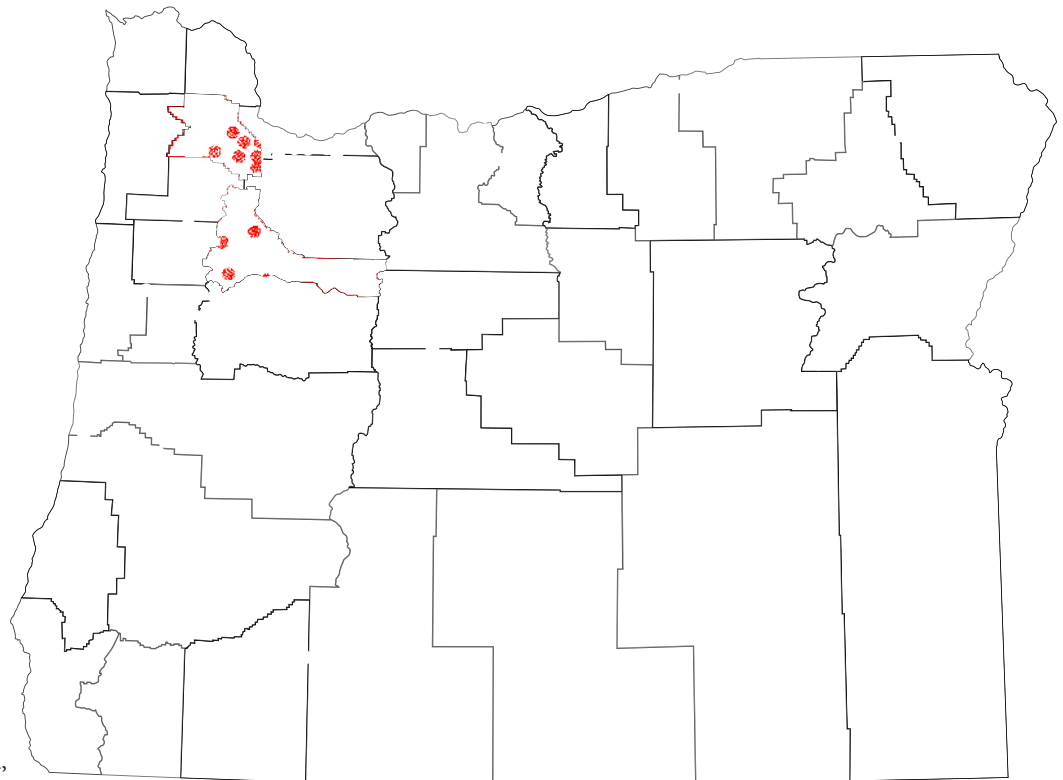
To address this unmet need, school districts across Oregon are finding ways to provide preschool to a growing number of young children. According to the Oregon Department of Education's voluntary Full-Day Kindergarten Survey conducted in the fall of 2014, 57 school districts reported that they operate a preschool program. As a follow-up to ODE's survey, the Children's Institute conducted a statewide survey in the spring/summer of 2015 to document what preschool services are being provided and to inform policy decisions as Oregon implements the new preschool program approved by the 2015 Oregon Legislature. This report presents the preschool survey's findings.

Survey Methodology

Survey Participants

The 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey was sent to over 230 individuals representing approximately 205 entities, including 188 school districts and 17 Educational Service Districts (ESDs). The survey was preceded by an introductory email and followed by at least three reminder emails to those individuals who had not completed the survey. A total of 94 responses were collected, representing 91 districts and three ESDs. Due to concern regarding the overlap of services provided by the ESDs and school districts, and the response rate for the ESDs, data from the ESDs are not included in this report. Thus, this report contains information obtained from 91 school districts, a response rate of approximately 48 percent of the school districts contacted. This level of response is consistent with similarly conducted surveys (Nelson, Roberts, Rutherford, Mathur, Aaroe, 1999; TELL Oregon, 2014; Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2014).

The 91 districts that participated in the survey serve approximately 405,400 K-12 students, according to information obtained from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE, 2015). This represents approximately 71 percent of all K-12 students in Oregon.



Note: 91 districts participated in the survey

¹Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E., Fitzgerald, J., & Squires, J.H. (2012). The state of preschool 2012: State preschool yearbook. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

²Oregon Early Learning Division (2014).

Survey Design

The 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey contained 58 multiple choice and/or open-ended questions covering eight topic areas: contact information (one question), non-special education preschool services (seven questions), enrollment (11 questions), program and staff (16 questions), curriculum and assessment (14 questions), funding (three questions), challenges (two questions), and proposed legislation feedback (four questions).

Participants who indicated that their district did not currently offer a non-special education preschool program were given a shortened version of the survey containing only 12 questions (contact information, non-special education preschool services [six questions], challenges [one question], and proposed legislation feedback).

The survey was designed with “skip logic” (also known as “conditional branching”) so as to minimize the number of questions while maximizing the data obtained from each participant. For example, question 14 asks participants to indicate if any schools in the district were prioritized over any others for a non-special education preschool program. If a survey participant answered in the affirmative they were then presented with a question asking them to indicate the nature of the prioritization (Title I school, priority school, focus school, etc.). However, if the survey participant answered in the negative, they were not presented with the follow-up question and “skipped” to the next question. Because of this skip logic, the number of responses obtained varied by question. See Appendix A for the complete survey instrument.

Many questions in the survey allowed respondents to choose more than one answer, frequently resulting in percentages totaling more than 100.

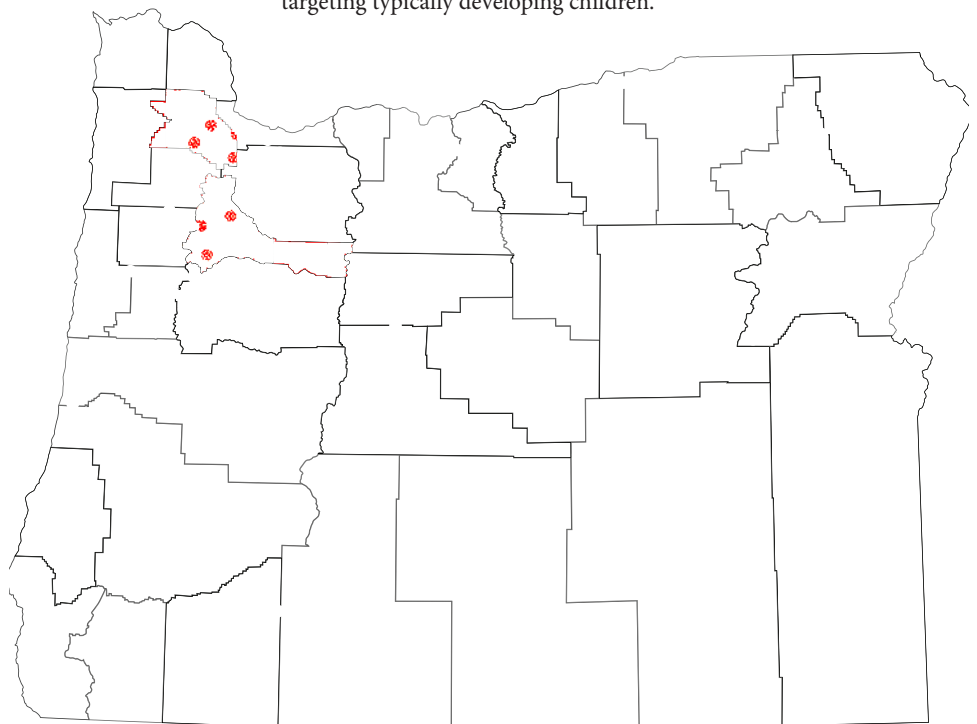
Survey Results

Survey respondents included 49 superintendents or assistant superintendents, 13 program administrators or coordinators, 11 program or department directors, seven principals or assistant principals, seven preschool teachers, and four others (administrative assistant, district clerk, or site liaison/policy advisor). Every effort was made to ensure that the district staff most knowledgeable about the district’s preschool program completed the survey.

Preschool Services

Out of the 91 responses from school districts, 49 districts (54 percent) indicated that they offered a school-based non-special education preschool program³ during the 2014-2015 school year, while 42 districts (46 percent) reported that they did not have a preschool program. The response rate from districts that offer a school-based preschool program was 86 percent of the school districts identified by ODE in its previous survey. Some districts may have changed their original response to the ODE

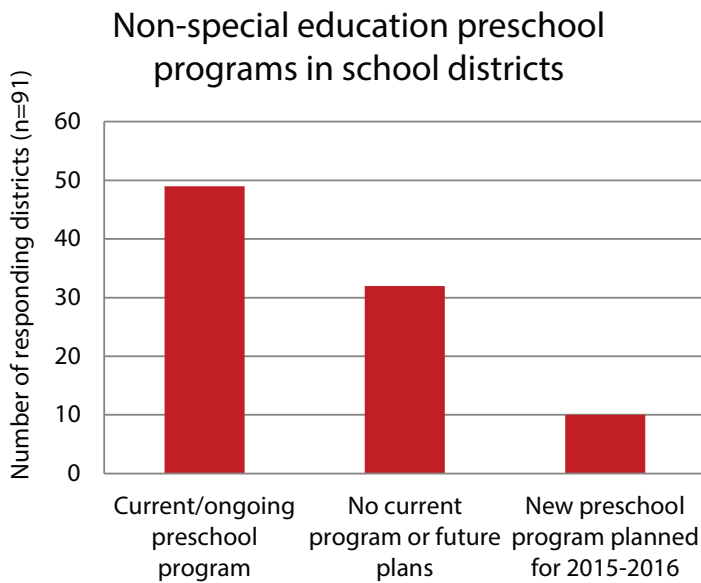
³In addition to the state’s primary K-12 education system, Oregon provides services to eligible children with disabilities through Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) services for children birth through age five and their families. Services must be provided free of charge and in a variety of settings, including preschool settings with typical peers. Due to limited state resources for state-funded preschool, ESD’s and some school districts offer special education preschool programs. This survey was specifically interested in collecting data that captures the school districts that are going beyond their legal requirements and providing preschool programs primarily targeting typically developing children.



Note: 49 districts offer preschool

survey if their preschool program was primarily designed to serve children with special needs through the Early Childhood Special Education program.

No Preschool Program Districts



The 42 districts that did not have a preschool program fell into two additional categories regarding past and future program implementation: whether they had offered a preschool program in the past and then discontinued the program for some reason (seven districts) or whether they had never offered a preschool program (35 districts). In addition, ten of the 42 districts (24 percent) indicated that they plan to offer preschool during the 2015-2016 school year, while 32 districts will continue to not operate a school-based preschool program.

No Current Preschool

	No Plans	Future Plans	Total
Never Offered	28	7	35
Discontinued	4	3	7
Total	32	10	42

Lack of funding was selected by 23 of the 30 responding districts (77 percent)⁴ as one of the main barriers to implementing a preschool program. Lack of space (nine districts, 30 percent), lack of enrollment (four districts, 13 percent), and availability of other high-quality programs (four districts, 13 percent) were also common reasons given by school districts to not implement a preschool

⁴ While 32 districts responded negatively to the question about future plans for a non-special education preschool program, only 30 of those districts answered the follow-up questions on barriers to implementing a preschool program and programs offered in lieu of a preschool program.

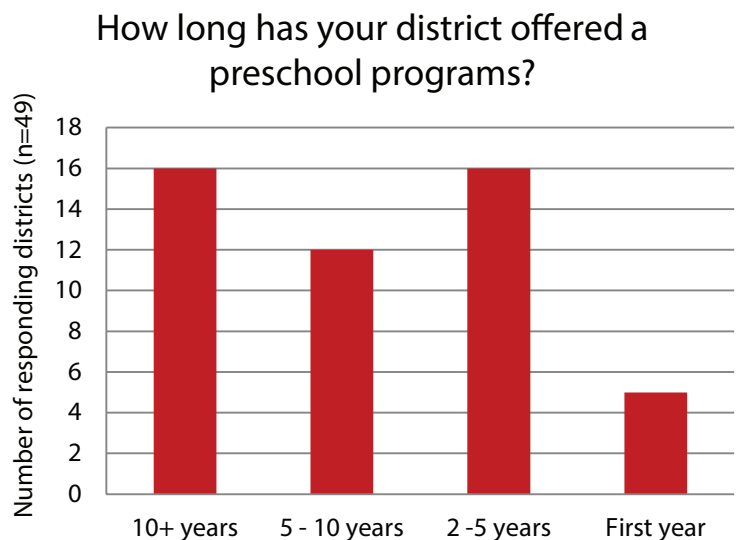
program. One district cited a lack of teachers as a reason for not implementing a preschool program.

There were varying reasons why some school districts stopped offering a preschool program, with the most commonly selected reasons being lack of funding (seven districts, 100 percent), lack of space (three districts, 43 percent), and lack of teachers (two districts, 29 percent). None of the responding districts indicated lack of enrollment as a reason for discontinuing a preschool program.

To help children and families transition to kindergarten in lieu of running a school-based preschool program, the majority of the 30 responding districts (26 districts, 87 percent) held a kindergarten open house while slightly less than half of the districts (14 districts, 47 percent) offered some type of Early Kindergarten Transition program during the summer. Only 17 percent of the districts (5 districts) reported conducting family home visits and ten percent (three districts) offered no kindergarten transition activities or program.

Preschool Program Districts

A majority (28 districts, 57 percent) of the 49 districts that offered a non-special education preschool program during the 2014-2015 school year had been doing so for more than five years: Thirty-three percent of the districts (16) had been offering preschool for more than 10 years and 24 percent of the districts (12) had been offering a preschool program for between five and 10 years. Another 33 percent of the districts (16) had been offering a preschool program for between two and five years, and 10 percent of the districts (5) were in their first year.



Within the 49 school districts, a total of 87 schools and 172 classrooms offered a non-special education preschool program during the 2014-2015 school year. Broken down by age, there were:

- 52 classrooms serving 4-year-olds,
- 18 classrooms serving 3-year-olds,
- 102 classrooms serving 3- and 4-year-olds.

A total of 3,425 children were enrolled in the preschool programs, with an average enrollment of 16 children per classroom. Actual enrollment per classroom ranged from a low of two children to a high of 29 children.

Approximately one-third of the districts (15 of 49 districts, 31 percent) with a non-special education preschool program prioritized which schools would offer these services. Slightly more than half (eight, 53 percent) of the districts that prioritized which schools would offer preschool did so based on a school's Title I designation. The remaining districts cited available space (three districts, 20 percent) and having a Career and Technical Education program (3 districts, 20 percent) as other ways of prioritizing which schools housed their preschool program.

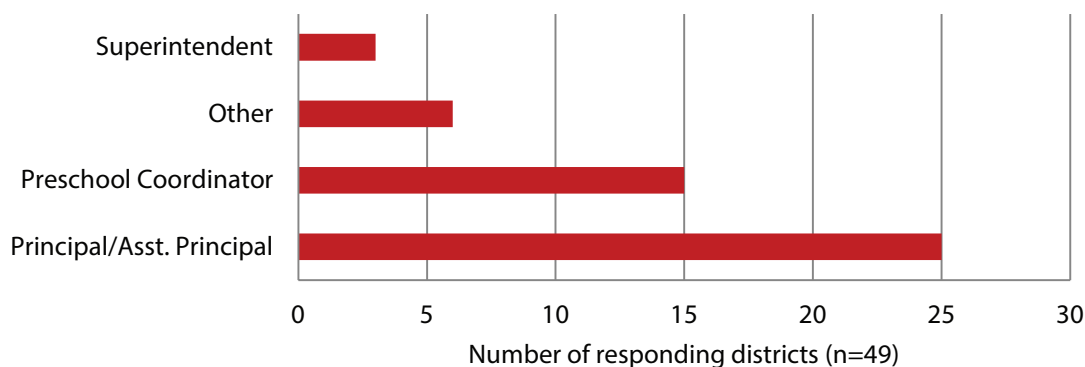
Slightly more than one-third of responding districts (18 of 49, 37 percent) prioritized which children were enrolled in non-special education classes. Of those, half of the districts that prioritized children for enrollment (nine) did so based on the family's eligibility for Head Start or Migrant Head Start services. Other reasons for prioritizing children included eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (four districts, 22 percent) and assessments of children's academic and/or behavioral needs (three districts, 17 percent).

About 60 percent of the 49 districts with preschools (29 districts) indicated that they had a waiting list for enrollment in their school-based preschool programs. The number of children on the waiting list ranged from one to over 140, with an average of 32 children waiting for a chance to enroll. Approximately 31 percent of the districts with a waiting list (eight districts) did not know how many children were on the waiting list.

Program and Staff

Non-special education preschool program staff members (teachers, assistant teachers, and educational aides) were supervised at the school level by a variety of school and district personnel. The most common supervisor at the school level was the principal or assistant principal (25 of 49 districts, 51 percent). Thirty-one percent of responding districts (15 districts) employed a preschool coordinator or director to supervise program staff members. These districts tended to be the largest in the state, including Portland Public Schools, the Beaverton School District, the Eugene School District, and the Salem-Keizer School District. In six percent of the districts (three districts), the preschool program staff members were supervised directly by the district superintendent. Other personnel in charge of supervising the program staff members included three district administrators, a contracted teacher, and members of partnership organizations such as Head Start.

Who supervises the preschool staff at the school level?



By far, the most common site for the preschool programs (32 of 49 districts, 65 percent) was in an elementary or K-8 school. The next most common location for preschool programs (12 districts, 24 percent) was in a separate building, either shared with other programs such as district offices or the local library, or dedicated specifically to the preschool. Fourteen percent of districts (seven) located their preschool classrooms in high schools as part of a Career and Technical Education program and eight percent (four districts) located their preschool classrooms in high schools but were not part of a CTE program. One district reported that all of their children from preschool through 12th grade attended school in the same building and one district housed a preschool program in a middle school.

Sixty-nine percent of the 49 districts (34) reported that they had adequate developmentally appropriate facilities for their preschoolers, as opposed to 31 percent (15

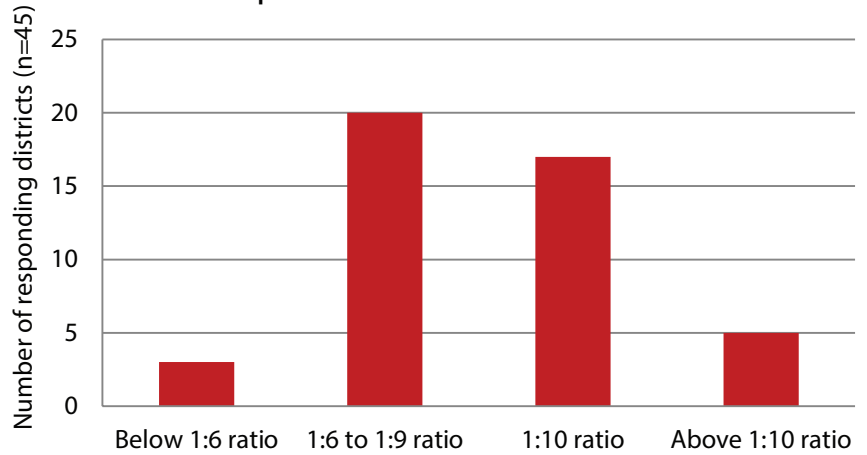
districts) who were not satisfied with the quality of their facilities.

Seventy-one percent of districts (35 of 49) reported that parents were at least in part responsible for transporting students enrolled in their district's non-special education preschool programs. Thirty-nine percent of the districts (19) reported that the school district also provided transportation, and 10 percent of the districts (five) indicated that a partner agency was responsible for transporting preschool students. One district relied on an educational services district for its preschool student transportation needs.

Only 28 of the 49 districts with preschools provided information regarding the funding sources for transporting preschool students. Of those that provided information, several reported multiple sources of funding and 46 percent (13 districts) reported that at least part of the money was provided by the district from either a general fund or a dedicated transportation fund. An additional 46 percent of districts (13 districts) had no funding specifically set aside for transporting preschool students and 32 percent (nine districts) relied on other sources of money such as partner agencies, parent tuition, and grant funding.

Forty-eight districts reported on their daily schedule options. The majority of districts (42 districts, 88 percent) offered a half-day program defined as 2.5 to 4.75 hours per day. Full-day programs, defined as between 5.0 and 7.75 hours, were administered by 25 percent of the districts (12), and 10 percent of the districts (five) reported having extended day programs (beyond eight hours per day). Only eight percent of the districts (four) offered school-based preschool programs for two hours or less per day.

What is the typical adult/child ratio in your preschool classrooms?



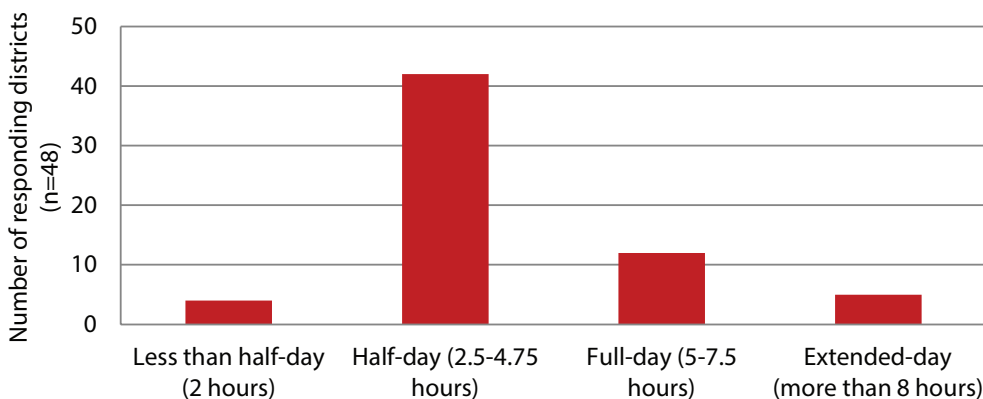
Those same districts reported that there was a variety of weekly schedule options available district-wide, with five days a week being the most often used schedule (23 districts, 48 percent) and four days per week following closely behind (20 districts, 42 percent). Three days per week and two days per week (12 districts, 25 percent, and 15 districts, 31 percent, respectively) far outpaced one day per week, with only one district reporting a one-day-per-week program.

There was little variation in the yearly schedules districts reported for their non-special education preschool programs. Eighty-seven percent of the districts (42 of 48) operated their preschools on the same 180-day schedule as the state's K-12 schools, eight percent (four districts) offered preschool between 140 and 160 days per year, and about four percent (two districts) had preschool schedules of less than 140 days per year (76 and 64 days).

The maximum student capacity of the non-special education preschool classrooms in this survey ranged from eight students to 30 students, with an average maximum capacity of 18 students per classroom. Three of the 46 responding districts did not report capacity information for their school-based preschool classrooms.

Seventy-nine percent of the 45 school districts that provided information on teacher/child ratios (37 districts) reported that their preschool classroom ratios fell in the 1:6 to 1:10 range. The lowest teacher/child ratio was 1:1 and the highest reported ratio was 1:17. Ten percent of the districts (five) reported ratios above the recommended 1:10 ratio. Information from three districts was either

How many hours per day is your preschool program?



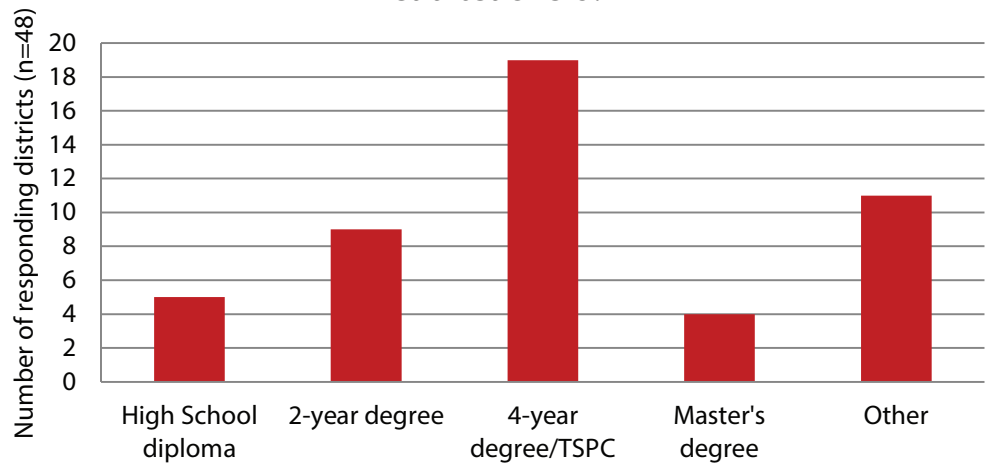
missing or unclear (for example, “one paid teacher and varying numbers of volunteers”).

Districts were almost evenly split on providing support for English Language Learners in their preschool programs. Fifty-three percent of the 47 responding districts (25) offered support for ELL preschool students while 47 percent (22 districts) reported that they did not offer support. Two districts did not provide information about ELL services. The lack of an ELL program may be based on a lack of need in some districts.

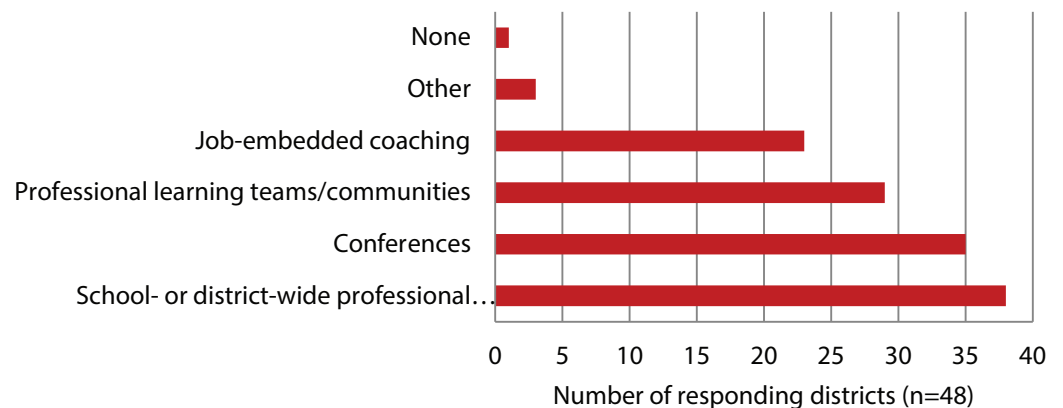
School districts had a range of minimum education requirements for lead teaching staff in their preschool programs. Forty percent of the 48 districts that responded to this set of questions (19 districts) reported a minimum education requirement of a bachelor’s degree. Nineteen percent of districts (nine districts) required a two-year college degree (AA, AS, or AAS), 10 percent (five districts) required only a high school diploma or General Education Degree certificate, and eight percent of districts (four districts) required a master’s degree or beyond. Twenty-three percent (11 districts) had other education requirements including classified staff or paraprofessional qualifications.

The districts with preschools reported offering several types of professional development opportunities for their preschool program staff. The most commonly offered professional development opportunities were district- or school-wide activities (38 of the 48 responding districts, 79 percent), followed closely by conferences (35 districts, 73 percent), and professional learning teams or communities (29 districts, 60 percent). Forty-eight percent of the districts (23) reported having job-embedded coaching as a professional development opportunity. Only six percent of the districts (three) indicated some other type of professional development, including attending a national childcare providers’ conference or childcare staff meetings. One district reported not having any professional development opportunities for their preschool program staff.

What are the minimum education requirements for lead teachers?



What types of professional development opportunities are provided for preschool program staff?



Many of the districts indicated that they utilized unpaid volunteers in their preschool classrooms during the 2014-2015 school year. All of the districts that reported using volunteers (34 of 49 responding districts, or 69 percent) included parents as classroom volunteers. High school students were also used by a majority of the 34 districts with volunteers (21 districts, 62 percent). Community members served in 47 percent of preschool program classrooms (16 districts), and college students earning credit and SMART volunteers were each present in 24 percent of classrooms (eight districts each). Other types of volunteers included college students not earning credit and middle school students (one school each).

Program and Curriculum

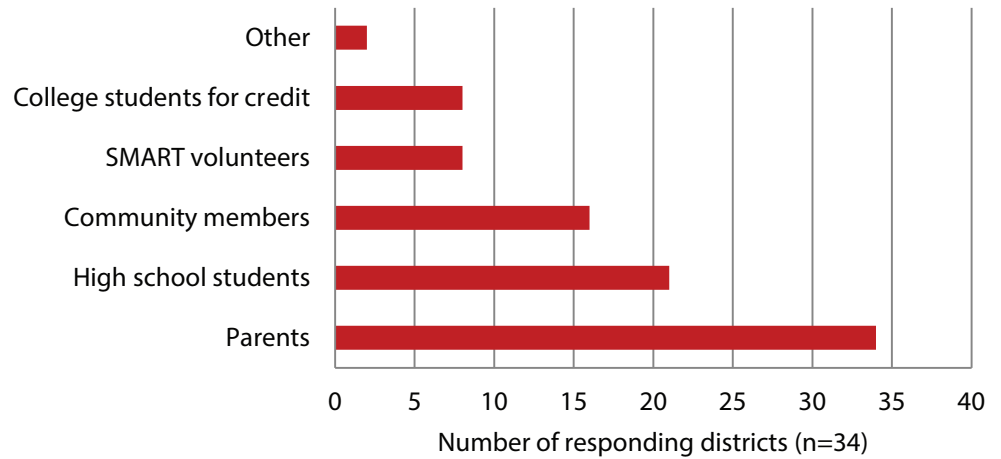
The 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey contained 12 questions pertaining to the curriculum, child assessments, and screening tools, as well as alignment between the preschool and kindergarten programs, health

screenings and referrals, quality improvement techniques, and parent involvement.

Sixty-two percent of the 29 districts that responded to questions about curriculum indicated that their district used some type of research-based curriculum (18 districts). The Creative Curriculum was used by seventy-eight percent of these districts (14 of the 18 districts). Big Day for PreK and the HighScope Preschool Curriculum were each used by 11 percent of the districts that used a research-based curriculum (two each). Thirty-eight percent of the districts (11 of 29) used another type of curriculum, including Houghton Mifflin's PREK, Handwriting Without Tears, Ready for K!, or a curriculum created by preschool program staff members.

Similar to the questions regarding curriculum, 47 districts provided information on the use of standardized student assessments in their preschool programs. Sixty-four percent of those districts (30 of the 47) reported using some type of standardized student assessment. Eighty percent of the responding districts that used standardized assessments (24 districts) indicated that they use the same assessment in all of their preschool classrooms. The most commonly used assessment tool was The Creative Curriculum (nine districts, 30 percent) followed by Teaching Strategies Gold (five districts, 17 percent). The remaining districts used an assessment tool created at the district or school level (three districts, 10 percent),

What types of volunteers does your district utilize?

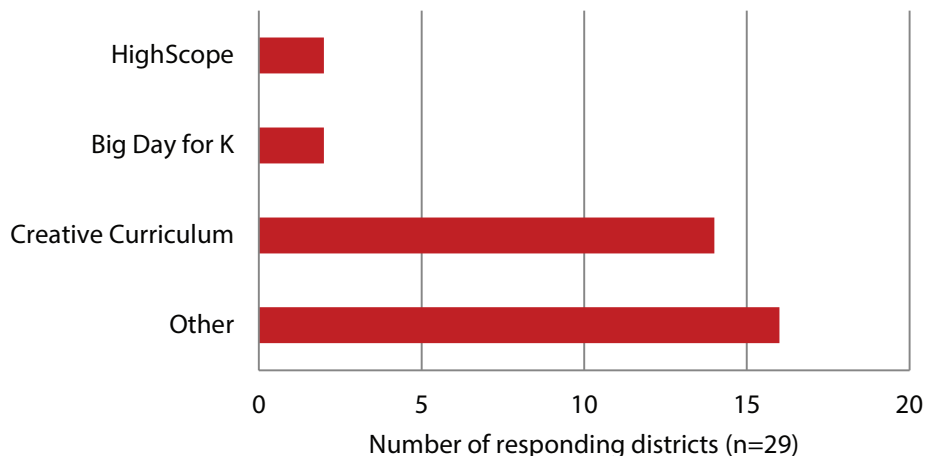


Houghton-Mifflin's assessment (two districts, 7 percent), or another type of standardized assessment (nine districts, 37 percent). Three districts were not able to provide information on what type of assessment was used.

In addition to curriculum and assessment, districts were asked to provide information about the ways in which they align their preschool and kindergarten curriculum, assessments, and instruction. Responses were provided by 47 of the districts and 66 percent of those districts (31 of the 47) indicated that they aligned their preschool and kindergarten programs in some way. Eighty-four percent of those districts (26 of the 31) indicated that they aligned their preschool and kindergarten programs through the use of shared professional development, while 77 percent (24 districts) indicated alignment through shared data between the programs. Fewer than half of the districts aligned their programs through the use of curriculum (14 districts, 45 percent), screening tools (10 districts, 32 percent), or same assessments (eight districts, 26 percent). Two districts (6 percent) indicated that their alignment was a work in progress or that their preschool aligned with the kindergarten Common Core standards.

The next series of questions focused on ways in which districts seek to ensure continued quality improvement in their preschool programs. Slightly more than half of the 48 responding districts that had preschool programs in the 2014-2015 academic year ensured continued quality improvement through the use of assessments to evaluate child progress (26 districts, 54 percent). Other means of ensuring quality improvement

What type of curriculum does your district use?



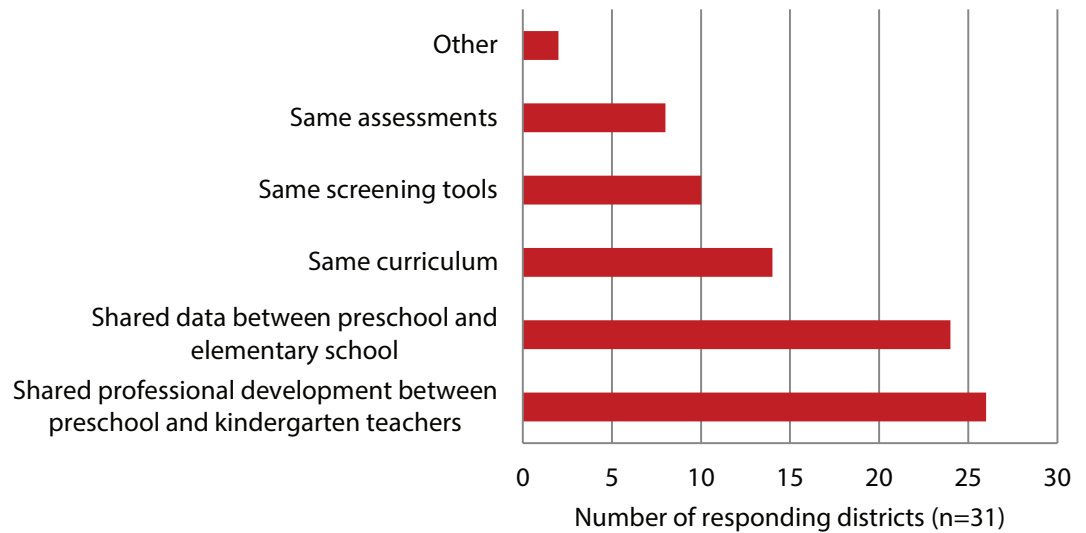
Note: HighScope, Big Day for K, and Creative Curriculum are research-based.

included the use of ongoing teacher evaluation and improvement strategies (22 districts, 46 percent), use of annual teacher evaluations (21 districts, 44 percent), use of data-based decision making to inform program implementation (25 districts, 52 percent). Only one district reported not using any means to ensure continued quality improvement.

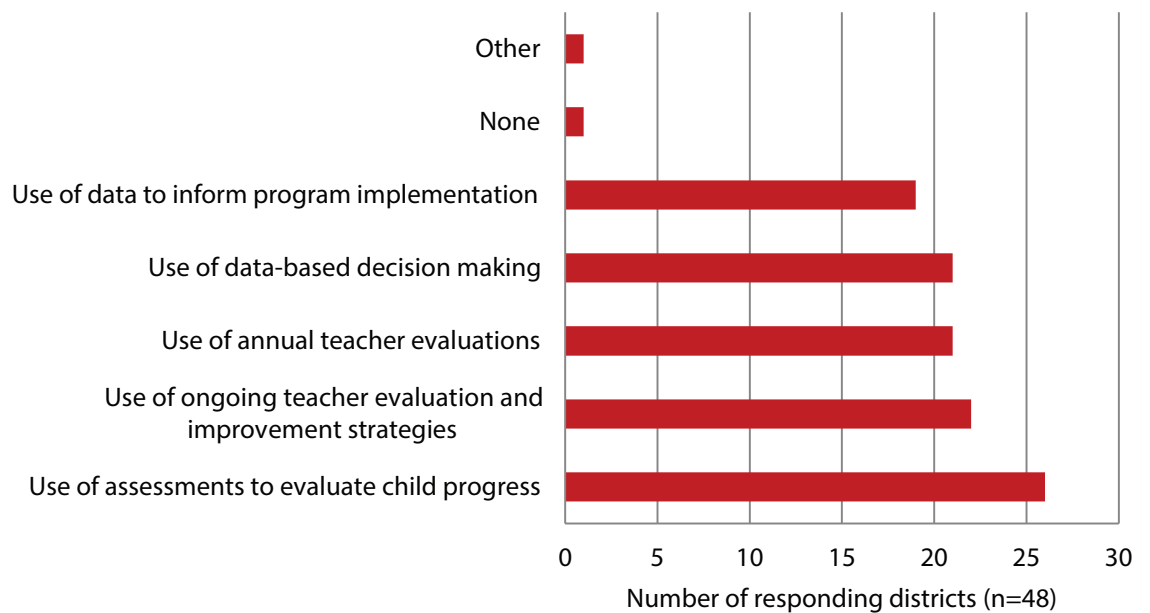
The 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey also addressed the types of health-related services provided by school districts implementing school-based preschool. Thirty districts provided information on their policies regarding health, dental, and vision screenings, referrals to health, mental health, and dental care providers, and referrals to Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education services for preschool children. Over 80 percent of the responding districts (25 districts) provided at least one health-related service and nearly half (14 districts, 47 percent) provided all three services. Eighty percent of the responding districts (24 districts) referred families to Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education services; 67 percent of the districts (20 districts) provided health, dental, or vision screenings; and 53 percent of the districts (16 districts) referred children to health, mental health, or dental care providers.

Many districts provided information on their parent engagement strategies, including that 94 percent of responding districts (43 of 46 districts) used more than one type of parent engagement strategy. The most common parent engagement strategies reported were:

How are preschool and kindergarten programs aligned?

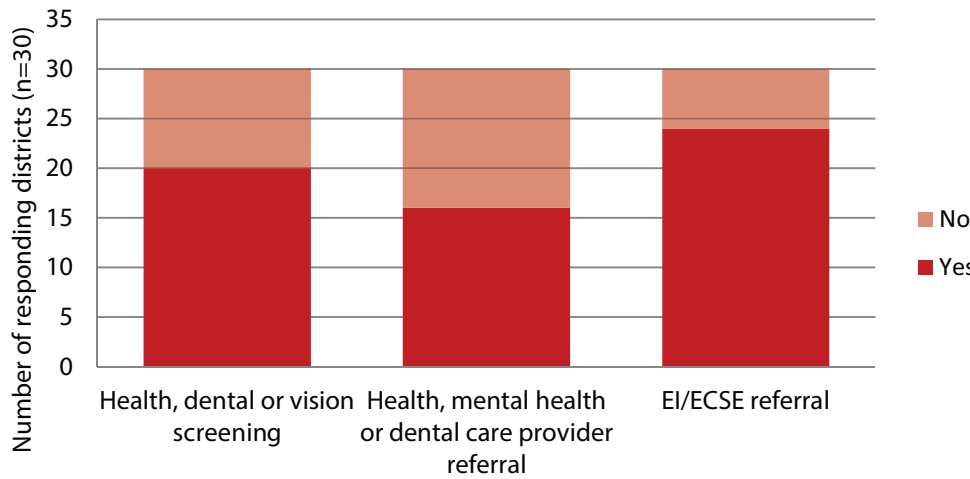


In what ways does your district's preschool program ensure quality improvement?



- Seventy-two percent of the districts (33 districts) that provided information indicated that they supported parents as volunteers in the classroom
- Seventy percent (32 districts) offered parent-teacher conferences
- Fifty-four percent (25 districts) provided daily or weekly updates to parents
- Thirty percent (14 districts) provided home visits
- Twenty-eight percent (13 districts) fostered parent leadership opportunities

What types of health-related services are provided?



and Head Start, Early Head Start, or Migrant Head Start funding was used by 10 percent of the districts (5 districts). Eight percent of programs (four districts) were supported by other sources including fundraisers or in-kind donations and another eight percent (four districts) used Education Services District funds. Local levies and Early Childhood Special Education Services funds were each used by four percent of the districts (two districts each).

Seventy-six percent of the districts (35 of 48 districts) said that they used the same source(s) of funding

for all of the preschool classrooms in their districts.

Funding

The 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey contained three closely related questions regarding funding for school-based preschool programs.

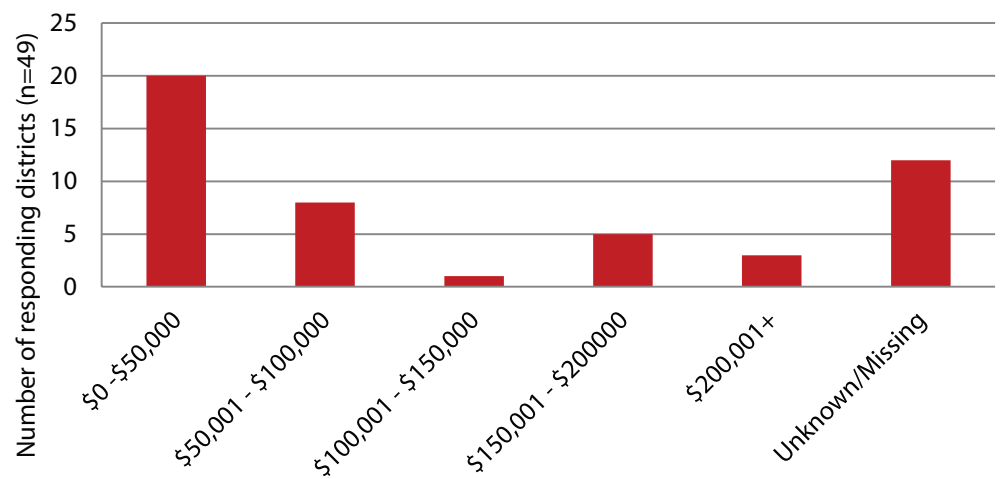
The first open-ended question asked about the estimated annual cost to each district for operating its preschool program. Thirty-seven districts provided estimates of annual budgets, with answers that indicated that some districts' preschool programs (three districts) were fully funded through parent tuition and thus cost-neutral. One district estimated its annual budget to be greater than \$900,000. The average estimated cost was approximately \$99,500. Twelve districts did not provide information about their annual budgets.

The follow-up question inquired into the sources of funding for districts' preschool programs, garnering responses from 48 of the 49 districts that offer preschool (98 percent). The most common source of funding was the districts themselves, with 60 percent of responding districts (29 districts) indicating that they provide at least part of the funds for the program. The other common source of funding was parent tuition, with 46 percent of districts (22 districts) using these funds for their preschools. Federal Title I and/or Title IC funds provided money for 29 percent of the districts (14 districts), foundations or grants provided money for 23 percent of the districts (11 districts),

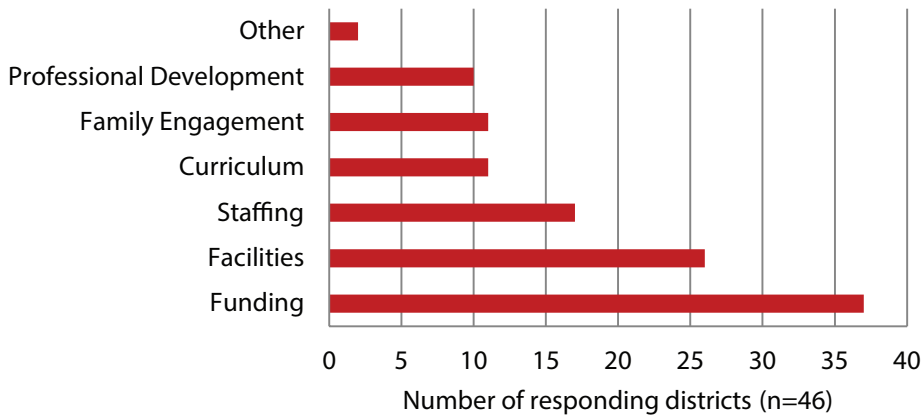
Challenges

One area of particular interest in the 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey is the perception of challenges faced by districts in implementing and sustaining a school-based preschool program. Only one out of the 47 districts that responded to this question indicated that they perceived no barriers to implementing their program. Of the other 46 districts, 37 districts (80 percent) indicated that funding was one of the biggest challenges in implementing their preschool program. In addition, 57 percent of the districts (26 districts) indicated that facilities were a challenge and 37 percent (17 districts) said staffing was one of the main issues. Other challenges reported were curriculum and family engagement (11 districts each, 24 percent), and professional development (10 districts, 22 percent).

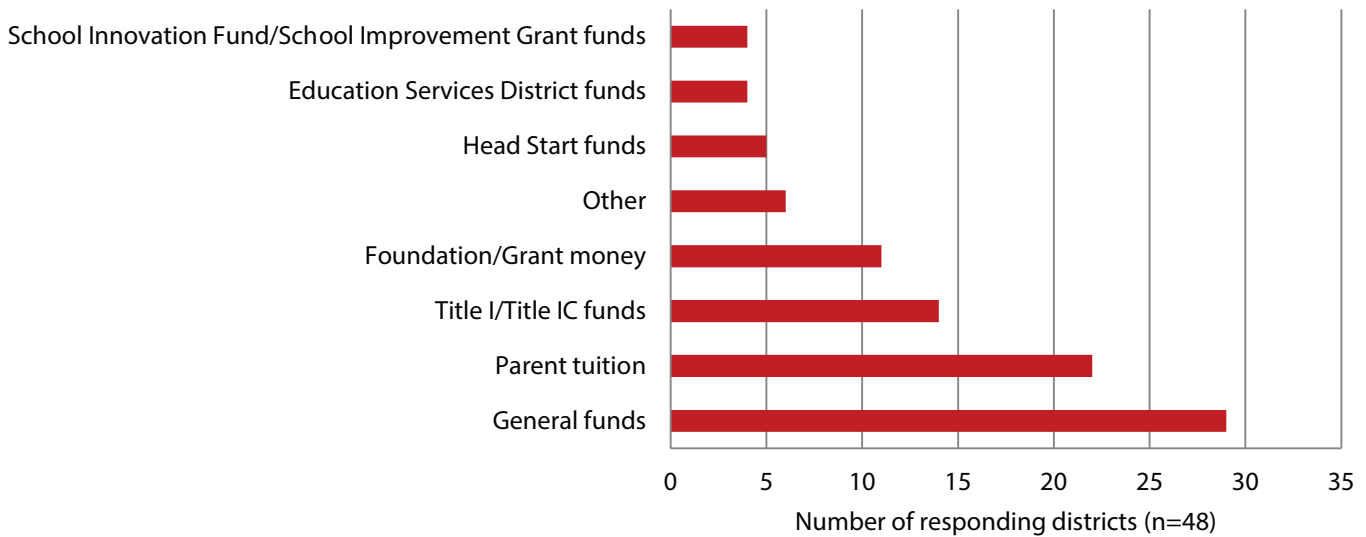
What is your estimated annual budget for preschool?



What are the biggest challenges to implementing preschool?



What sources of funding does your district use for preschool?



Survey Limitations

The 2015 Oregon School District Preschool Survey was disseminated to school district representatives over a period of several weeks in May and June 2015. The timing of this dissemination coincided with the end of the school year, a notoriously busy and chaotic time of year for district personnel, which may have negatively impacted the survey response rate. However, multiple and focused follow-up efforts resulted in responses from 15 of the 20 largest districts, including Portland Public Schools, the Salem-Keizer School District, and the Beaverton School District.

Based on the results of a previous survey conducted by the Oregon Department of Education, we believe that the participating districts are representative of the districts providing non-special education preschool in Oregon. ODE's survey reported 57 school districts offering preschool programs. This survey captured 86 percent of those school districts. The discrepancy in responses between ODE's survey and the current survey may be due in part to the fact that this survey specified non-special education preschools defined as preschool services offered to children between the ages of 3 and 5, where the primary funding and purpose of the program is to provide preschool for typically developing children (e.g. Head Start, Title I preschool, tuition-based preschool).

Conclusion

Oregon school districts are increasingly implementing early learning strategies to address the unmet need for high-quality preschool in Oregon. This survey found that out of 91 school districts that responded to the survey, 49 districts (54 percent) offered non-special education school-based preschool. The 91 participating districts serve approximately 71 percent of all K-12 students in Oregon and represent 48 percent of Oregon school districts. The districts offering a non-special education preschool program in 2014-2015 served 306,645 K-12 students, or 53 percent of the school-age population in Oregon.

Survey results indicate that district investment in preschool appears to be a statewide phenomenon. Districts all across the state, from the very rural and remote to the largest and most urban, are providing preschool programs to a total of 3,425 children statewide.

Unsurprisingly, the ability to provide district preschool is based largely on funding and need. Lack of funding was cited by 77 percent of the districts unable to provide preschool as the primary barrier. Additionally, 30 percent of districts not providing preschool also reported lack of space as another obstacle. Other barriers related to lack of enrollment/need in the community and availability of teachers.

The majority of districts offering preschool (60 percent) committed their own district resources to support the implementation of preschool, indicating a strong commitment to early learning. The majority of these districts had to creatively blend and braid different funding sources to fully fund their programs, the largest source of additional funds coming from federal Title 1/ Title 1-C funds. The next most common source of funding was parent tuition (46 percent of districts). Among the districts offering preschool, the largest reported challenge to implementing and sustaining their program was funding, followed by facilities.

The Oregon Legislature's passage of House Bill 3380 in July 2015 will allow for a mix of providers, including school districts, to apply for and receive state funding to implement high-quality preschool programs. This will undoubtedly increase the number of districts providing high-quality preschool across the state. The districts surveyed reported that they were eager for new funds to help improve, expand, and sustain their current efforts. Districts not currently offering preschool were eager

for the passage of HB 3380 to be able to offer preschool for the first time. With the mounting evidence showing the importance of high-quality preschool in closing the kindergarten readiness gap, these districts are eager for further investments in early learning to ensure all their students enter kindergarten ready to learn.

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Appendix A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey. The information you provide will be used to better understand school-based preschools in Oregon to inform the Children's Institute and partners to advocate for state funds to provide high-quality preschool and supports for preschool providers.

The survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. If you need to stop at any time you can simply exit the survey. When you return using the link in the email you received you will be brought back to the place where you left off.

We recognize you have many demands on your time, and we thank you for making this survey a priority. We ask that you complete the survey by **May 29th, 2015**. Please answer all questions to the best of your knowledge. We are also happy to share the information we gather with you when the survey data is complete.

Thanks again for completing our survey!

Contact Information

Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey. The information you provide will be used to better understand school-based preschools in Oregon to inform the Children's Institute and partners to advocate for state funds to provide high-quality preschool and supports for preschool providers.

1. Please provide your contact information:

- Name of person completing the survey
- Phone number
- Email address
- Position/Title
- School name (if applicable)
- District

Non-Special Education Preschool Services

The remainder of this survey asks about whether your district offers any non-special education preschool services. Non-special education preschool services refers to preschool services offered to children between the ages of 3 and 5, where the primary funding and purpose of the program is to provide preschool for typically developing children (e.g. Head Start, Title I preschool, tuition-based preschool).

2. Does your district currently offer non-special education preschool to any students?

49 districts: Yes

42 districts: No

3. How long has your district offered some kind of non-special education preschool program, either alone or in partnership with other agencies/groups?

5 districts: First year

16 districts: 2-5 years

12 districts: 5+ years

16 districts: 10+ years

4. Has your district offered non-special education preschool services in the past but discontinued services?

7 districts: Yes

35 districts: No

5. Why does your district no longer offer a non-special education preschool program? Select all that apply

7 districts: Lack of funding

0 districts: Lack of enrollment

3 districts: Lack of space

2 district: Lack of teachers

0 districts: Lack of need

1 district: Other (please specify) _____

6. Does your district plan to offer non-special education preschool to any students in the 2015-2016 school year?

10 districts: Yes

32 districts: No

7. What do you see as the main barriers to implementing a non-special education preschool program in your district?
Select all that apply

23 districts: Lack of funding

4 districts: Lack of enrollment

9 districts: Lack of space

1 districts: Lack of qualified teachers

4 districts: Already have ample high quality early childhood programs to serve the need in community

3 districts: Other (please specify): _____

8. How does your district help children and families in the transition to kindergarten in lieu of a non-special education preschool program? Select all that apply

26 districts: Kindergarten open house

5 districts: Family home visit

14 districts: Early Kinder Transition

3 districts: None

3 districts: Other (please specify): _____

Enrollment

9. How many schools in your district offer a non-special education preschool program?

87 schools

10. How many classrooms in your district offer a non-special education preschool program?

172 classrooms

11. How many classrooms serve
 52 classrooms: 4-year-olds?
 18 classrooms: 3-year-old?
 102 classrooms: Mixed ages (3- and 4- year olds)?
12. How many children are currently enrolled in your district's non-special education preschool program?
 3,425 students
13. What is the average enrollment per classroom in your district's non-special education preschool program?
 15.75 students average
14. Were any schools in your district prioritized over other schools to implement non-special education preschool programs?
 15 districts: Yes
 34 districts: No
15. If yes, how did this prioritization take place? Select all that apply
 8 districts: Title I Schools
 1 district: Priority Schools
 2 districts: Focus Schools
 0 districts: Parent demand
 1 district: Lack of quality preschools in the area
 8 districts: Other (please specify): _____
16. Were any children prioritized over other children for enrollment in your district's non-special education preschool program?
 18 districts: Yes
 31 districts: No
17. If yes, how did this prioritization take place? Select all that apply
 9 districts: Head Start eligibility
 4 districts: Free/Reduced lunch eligibility
 2 districts: Lottery
 10 districts: Other (please specify): _____
18. Is there a waiting list for enrollment in your district's non-special education preschool program?
 29 districts: Yes
 20 districts: No
19. About how many children are typically on your waiting list during the school year?
 32.4 students average

Program and Staff

20. Who supervises the non-special education preschool teaching staff (at the school level)?
 22 districts: Principal
 3 districts: Assistant Principal
 15 districts: Preschool Director/Coordinator
 9 districts: Other (please provide title): _____

21. Where are the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district located?
 32 districts: In an elementary or K-8 school building
 12 districts: In a school other than an elementary or K-8 school (middle school, high school)
 0 districts: In a district (administration) building
 12 districts: In a separate building
 1 district: Other
22. Do you feel your district has adequate developmentally appropriate facilities for the non-special education preschool program?
 34 districts: Yes
 15 districts: No
23. In what ways are your district's non-special education preschool program's facilities failing to meet the program's needs?

24. Who is responsible for transporting students enrolled in your district's non-special education preschool program?
 Select all that apply
 19 districts: School district
 5 districts: Partner agency (e.g., Head Start, private center)
 35 districts: Parents
 1 district: Other
25. What sources of funding does your district use for transporting students enrolled in non-special education preschool programs?
 13 districts: No funding
 13 districts: General or Transportation fund
 9 districts: District funds
26. What type of non-special education preschool program does your district offer? Select all that apply
 4 districts: Less than half day classes (2 hour program)
 42 districts: Half-day classes (2-4.75 hours)?
 12 districts: Full-day classes (5-7.5 hours)?
 5 districts: Extended-day classes (more than 8 hours)?
27. How many days per week is your district's non-special education preschool program offered? Select all that apply
 1 district: One day per week
 15 districts: Two days per week
 12 districts: Three days per week
 20 districts: Four days per week
 23 districts: Five days per week
28. How days per year is your district's non-special education preschool program offered?
 42 districts: 180 days (school year schedule)
 0 districts: 250 days (full year schedule)
 6 districts: Other
29. What is the maximum capacity in the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district? If the maximum varies, provide the size of the largest classroom.
 3 districts: 10
 12 districts: 15
 23 districts: 20
 8 districts: Other (please specify): _____

30. What is the typical adult/child ratio in the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district?

5 districts: 1:6

4 districts: 1:7

7 districts: 1:8

4 districts: 1:9

17 districts: 1:10

11 districts: Other (please specify): _____

31. Does your district's non-special education preschool program offer support for English language learners?

25 districts: Yes

22 districts: No

32. What is the minimum education qualification for the lead teaching staff in the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district? Select all that apply

5 districts: High school diploma/General Education Degree (GED) certificate

11 districts: State or nationally recognized credential (e.g. TSPC license, PreK-3, CDA)

0 districts: Teaching license

9 districts: 2-year college degree, AA/AS/AAS degree

14 districts: 4-year college degree (BA, BS)

4 districts: Master's degree or beyond

5 districts: Other (please list degree and field of study): _____

33. What type of professional development opportunities does your district provide for the non-special education preschool program staff? Select all that apply

35 districts: Conferences

29 districts: Professional learning teams/communities

23 districts: Job-embedded coaching

38 districts: School or district-wide professional development

3 districts: Other (please specify): _____

34. Does the non-special education preschool program in your district utilize unpaid volunteers in any classrooms?

34 districts: Yes

15 districts: No

35. What types of volunteers does your district utilize in the non-special education preschool classrooms? Select all that apply

34 districts: Parents

16 districts: Community members

8 districts: SMART

21 districts: High school students

8 districts: College students (for credit)

2 districts: Other (please specify): _____

Program Curriculum & Assessment

36. Do the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district use a standardized curriculum?

29 districts: Yes

17 districts: No

37. Do all of the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district use the same curriculum?

27 districts: Yes

2 districts: No

38. Which curriculum/philosophy do they use? Select all that apply

2 districts: HighScope

0 districts: Reggio Emilia

0 districts: Montessori

0 districts: Waldorf

14 districts: Creative Curriculum

2 districts: Big Day for K

16 districts: Other (please specify): _____

39. Do the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district use curriculum-based assessments to inform instruction?

30 districts: Yes

17 districts: No

40. Do all of the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district use the same curriculum-based assessments?

24 districts: Yes

6 districts: No

41. What curriculum-based assessments do they use? Select all that apply

1 district: HighScope

5 districts: Teaching Strategies GOLD

9 districts: Creative Curriculum

1 district: Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System [AEPS]

14 districts: Other (please specify): _____

42. Do the non-special education preschool classrooms in your district use a screening tool?

24 districts: Yes

23 districts: No

43. Do all of the classrooms in your district use the same screening tool?

19 districts: Yes

5 districts: No

44. What screening tool do they use? Select all that apply

12 districts: Ages & Stages Questionnaire

1 district: Battelle Developmental Inventory

1 district: Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Edition [DIAL-3]

6 districts: Other (please specify): _____

45. Does your district align the non-special education preschool and kindergarten curriculum, assessments, and instruction?

31 districts: Yes

26 districts: No

46. In what ways are the non-special education preschool and kindergarten classrooms aligned? Select all that apply

14 districts: Same curriculum

8 districts: Same assessments

10 districts: Same screening tools

24 districts: Shared data between preschool and elementary school

26 districts: Shared professional development between preschool and kindergarten teachers

2 districts: Other (please specify): _____

47. In what ways does your district's non-special education preschool program ensure continued quality improvement?

Please select all that apply

- 26 districts: Use of assessment to evaluate child progress
- 22 districts: Use of ongoing teacher evaluation and improvement strategies
- 21 districts: Use of annual teacher evaluations
- 21 districts: Use of data-based decision making
- 19 districts: Use of data to inform program implementation
- 1 district: None
- 1 district: Other

48. What types of health-related services are provided by your district's non-special education preschool program? Select all that apply

- 15 districts: Health screenings
- 15 districts: Referrals to health care providers
- 14 districts: Referrals to mental health care providers
- 15 districts: Dental screenings
- 7 districts: Referrals to dentists
- 17 districts: Vision screenings
- 23 districts: Referrals to Early Intervention services
- 22 districts: Referrals to Early Childhood Special Education services
- 3 districts: None
- 2 districts: Other

49. What are your district's preschool family engagement strategies? Select all that apply

- 14 districts: None
- 14 districts: Home visits
- 22 districts: Parent-teacher conferences
- 25 districts: Weekly updates to parents
- 13 districts: Fostering parent leadership opportunities
- 22 districts: Parent Education classes/workshops
- 33 districts: Supporting parent volunteers in the classroom
- 11 districts: Other (Specify): _____

Funding

50. What is the estimated total cost annually to your district for operating the non-special education preschool program? (Please estimate to the best of your ability.)

Average: \$99,450

51. What sources of funding do you use to support the non-special education preschool program in your district? Select all that apply

- 29 districts: District funds
- 2 districts: Local levy funds
- 11 districts: Title I funds
- 2 districts: School Innovation Fund
- 2 districts: School Improvement Grant funds
- 2 districts: Early Childhood Special Education funds
- 5 districts: Head Start funds (including Early Head Start and Migrant Head Start)
- 4 districts: Education Service District (ESD) funds
- 0 districts: Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) subsidies
- 22 districts: Parent tuition
- 11 districts: Foundation/grant money
- 10 districts: Other (please specify): _____

52. Do different non-special education preschool sites within your district use different sources of funding?
12 districts: Yes
35 districts: No

Challenges

53. What have been the biggest challenges to implementing the non-special education preschool program in your district?
Select all that apply

- 37 districts: Funding
- 17 districts: Staffing
- 11 districts: Curriculum
- 26 districts: Facilities
- 10 districts: Professional Development
- 11 districts: Family Engagement
- 2 districts: Other: (please specify)_____

54. What kind of state support and/or technical assistance would help your district better implement or expand the non-special education preschool program?

55. Would you be interested in staying informed about the proposed legislation as it moves forward?

56. What questions do you have about this proposed legislation?

57. If you have concerns about this proposed legislation, what are they?

58. What do you think is the most important thing for legislators to know about your district's non-special education preschool program?