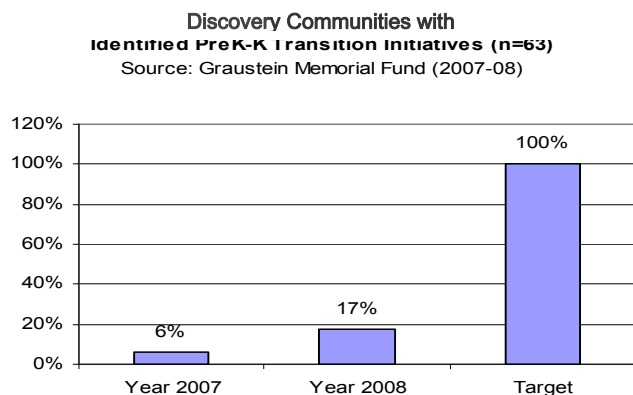


System Report Card: Early Childhood Cabinet

System Purpose: Improve coordination within and across agencies serving children over the kindergarten through third grade years, expand interagency access to essential information, and increase public accountability for existing expenditures and new investment.

Contributes to Population Quality of Life Result #2: Fine by Nine: All Children Healthy and Achieving School Success by Age 9

Performance Measure 1: PreK-3rd Grade Transitions and Alignment



Story behind the baseline:

The desired performance measure is the number of preschools and elementary schools in School Readiness Program districts with formal prekindergarten (PreK-K) transition activities. Since this is not available, the proxy measure here is communities with formal publications/activities to aid parents in the transition for their children from preschool to kindergarten.

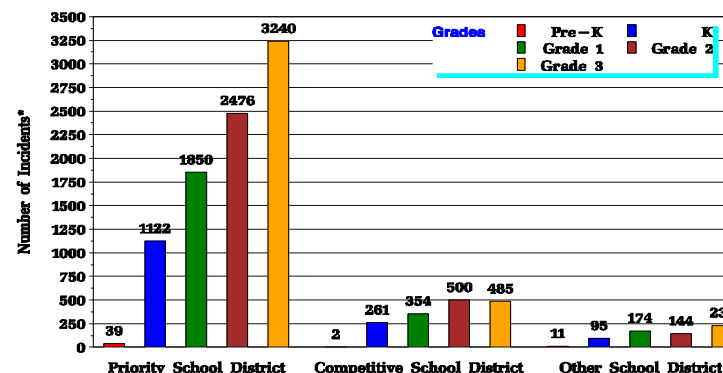
The transition between preschool and kindergarten requires specific and careful attention of educators and families. For the purpose of curriculum alignment and inclusion of parents in the school lives of their children, each district needs a PreK-K transition plan and program.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- The State Department of Education (SDE) will develop a strategy to collect and review PreK-K transition plans from all school readiness programs in order to improve the alignment of preschool and kindergarten curriculum and performance outcomes.
- The SDE will develop for adoption by the State Board of Education, a Position Statement on Early Childhood, Preschool and Kindergarten. This position statement will address issues of transition and will provide direction to the field. The goal is to maximize children's learning from preschool through the kindergarten years.

Performance Measure 2: School Climate

Figure 1. Comparison of the Number of Incidents for school year 2007-08 by grade across type of District



* Duplicated Student Count

Story behind the baseline:

Young children must be connected to and engaged in their initial years of schooling as a precondition for any level of academic and social success. The climate in which they go to school determines their level of attention and participation. Children who are not physically or emotionally present cannot learn. We cannot yet report a meaningful measure for school climate. The best proxy measure is the number of disciplinary incidents committed by students in kindergarten through Grade 3 that resulted in an in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or expulsion. Incidences reported range from minor school policy violations to serious infractions such as possession of weapons.

In the 2007-08 school year, 39,889 kindergarteners were enrolled in Connecticut's public schools. SDE data on disciplinary offenses reveal 1,478 incidents (duplicated count) of inappropriate behavior by kindergarten students. When the data are disaggregated by Priority School Districts (PSD), Competitive Grant Municipalities and Other Districts, it is evident that there are many more disciplinary incidents in PSDs than in the rest of the state. The kindergarten incident rate for PSDs was 7.7 percent, compared to 2.8 percent in the competitive grant districts, and 0.5 percent in all other districts. These differences may in part be a result of varying school discipline policies. Given the high incidence rate at the kindergarten level and the evident increases through Grade 3, it is clear that if not addressed, these behaviors escalate. Early intervention is critical.

System Report Card: Early Childhood Cabinet

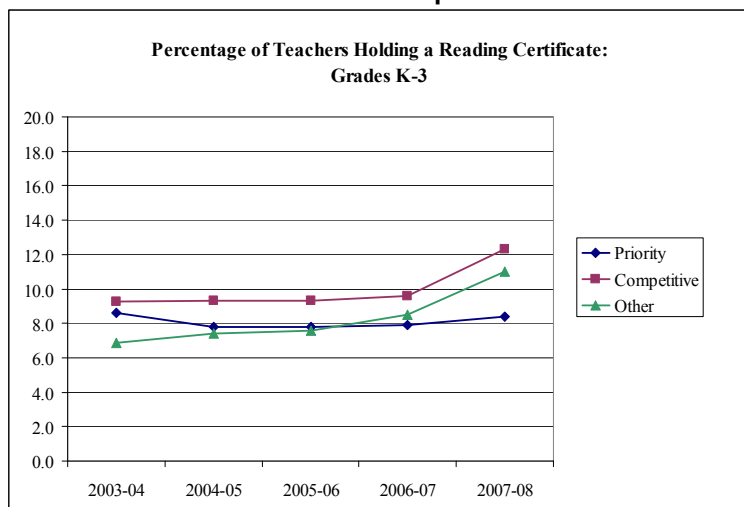
System Purpose: Improve coordination within and across agencies serving children over the kindergarten through third grade years, expand interagency access to essential information, and increase public accountability for existing expenditures and new investment.

Contributes to Population Quality of Life Result #2: Fine by Nine: All Children Healthy and Achieving School Success by Age 9

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- The SDE will include expectations for positive school climate in districts and school improvement plans through statewide assessments of the quality of the school climate.
- Within available resources, the SDE will work with schools in the implementation of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222d, *An Act Concerning School Learning Environments*. Activities required by the Public Act include implementation of strategies that improve school climate by providing intervention and prevention strategies for the wider school community including staff, parents and students, and utilization of school surveys for determining school site safety, as well as student, parent and staff perceptions to assess the quality of the school climate.
- Within available resources, the SDE will work to widen the reach of existing school climate improvement professional development opportunities in evidence-based models for safe school climate under the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) currently targeting Title I schools and districts not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Performance Measure 3: Teacher Competence



Story behind the baseline:

These data reflect the percentage of teachers in kindergarten through Grade 3 elementary classrooms and reading specialists who hold a reading certificate. This certificate indicates that the individual has obtained additional skills to teach reading.

The graph shows an increase during 2007-08 in the percentage of teachers holding a reading certificate in each category (200 more teachers obtained an additional reading certificate). In addition, just over eight percent of teachers in the PSDs hold a reading certificate compared to just over 12 percent in the competitive school districts.

While there is no ready explanation for the 200 additional kindergarten through Grade 3 teachers obtaining a reading certificate, content knowledge alone does not ensure quality instruction. SDE continues to address the continuing gap in reading through its accountability plan detailed in the RBA template for the Early Reading Success Program. Note that a more appropriate measure of teacher competence will be developed.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

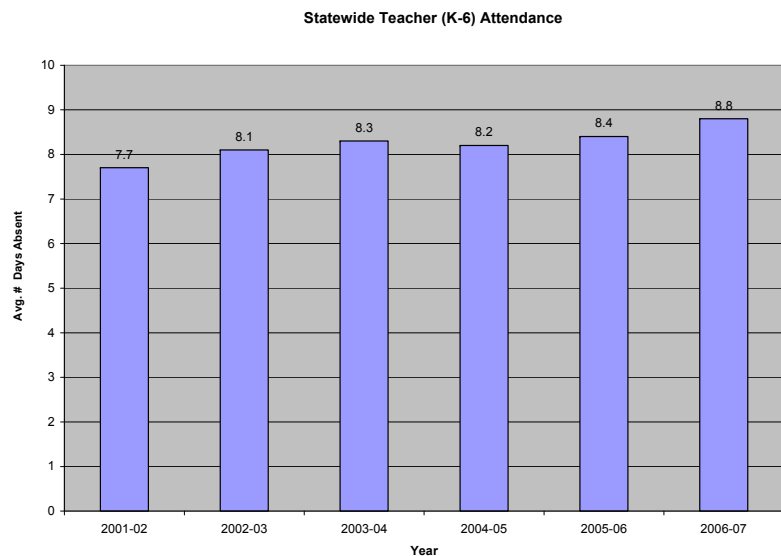
- The SDE will implement a comprehensive reading test for new elementary school teachers as a condition of certification. The test will become a condition of certification in the summer of 2009.
- The SDE will include expectations and indicators of early literacy achievement in the District Improvement Plans and School Improvement Plans.

System Report Card: Early Childhood Cabinet

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Performance Measure 4: Principal Leadership



Story behind the baseline:

The best single measure of leadership in creating a professional learning community is whether principals have the autonomy they need in a variety of areas that have been proven to enhance student performance, including hiring and assignment of staff and control over resources. The best proxy measure we can currently report is the average number of days absent per teacher. A more appropriate measure will be developed to better address principal leadership. Effective leadership creates teachers who are empowered, engaged and rarely absent.

Ensuring academic success for all students by the fourth grade will require schools to embrace a new and powerful role as professional learning communities that can deliver results for all children, regardless of the challenges they bring with them to school.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- The SDE will in partnership with Connecticut Association of Schools continue to facilitate the Principals' Institute which serves to focus on leadership tools needed by principals in today's climate of accountability and reform.
- Within available resources, the SDE will continue to promote and advance training opportunities for school principals and other leaders through the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI). The training modules include: "Classroom Data: Feedback, Follow-up and Follow Through;" "Leading Change and Getting Everyone on Board;" and "School Climate."
- The SDE will in partnership with Connecticut Association of Schools, continue the annual fall conference addressing current trends around effective schools.
- The SDE will conduct training for Higher Education on incorporating CALI modules in pre-service and education leadership coursework.
- The SDE will collaborate with Connecticut Association of Boards of Education in providing training on roles and responsibilities of boards in an era of accountability.
- The SDE will partner with Connecticut Association of Schools to place additional executive coaches in schools. Currently there are 61 coaches working with principals in 61 Connecticut schools.