

Early Learning Task Force

Key Recommendations & Big Ideas and Outcomes

April 2023



April 2023

Overview

The Early Learning Task Force organized their exploration and examination of early learning around the National P-3 Center for Early Learning's Framework. For each "bucket" of the P-3 Framework the task force generated "Big Ideas and Outcomes" for the Ferndale School District.

1. Cross Sector Work
2. Administrator Effectiveness
3. Teacher Effectiveness
4. Instructional Tools
5. Learning Environment
6. Data Drive Improvement
7. Engaged Families
8. Continuity and Pathways

These big ideas and outcomes were used to form the Key Recommendations for FSD Early Learning improvements to guide the work of the district over the next 3-5 years. A 5 year plan will be developed from these recommendations, big ideas, and outcomes.



National P-3 Center, 2019

Cross Sector Work

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies:: Mechanisms, resources and structures exist that reflect, support and sustain shared vision, collaborative relationships, and mutual accountabilities between ECE/0-5 and K-12.

- Governance/Leadership team
- Strategic Plans
- Funding

Task Force Key Recommendations

- 1. Create a vision and mission for early learning in Ferndale Schools**
- 2. Elevate early learning as a key strategy in FSD**
- 3. Create a 5 year plan for early learning improvement in FSD**
- 4. Increase community awareness around high-quality early childhood programs**
- 5. Partnering with agencies to support birth to five programs, including Opportunity Council, NWESD 189, Head Start, ECEAP, Early Achievers, community preschools, and more.**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

- A. Integrate P-3 goal into building school improvement plan
- B. Develop shared language around P-3
- C. Continue with a P-3 leadership group
- D. Continue to connect with ECE programs in the area
- E. Regularly assess community-based needs to identify family demographics and mobility patterns for the district

Administrator Effectiveness

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: Administrators (district superintendents, school principals, ECE directors) actively create a culture and organizational structures that ensure the quality of P-3 learning.

- Visible Leadership
- Foster Teamwork
- Instructional Leadership

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Ongoing professional development for administrators**
- 2. Early learning specialist position created and hired**
- 3. Master schedules to support early learners**
- 4. Staff collaboration and PD schedules and structures to support early learning initiative**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

- A. Professional development and collaboration for administrators on P-3
 - a. National P-3 learning
 - b. Regular collaboration of principals and T&L focused on components of recommendation (child development, early learning environments, early intervention, play as an instructional strategy, family and community engagement, and structures that elevate early learning to support our youngest learners)
- B. Professional development facilitated for P-3 staff:
 - a. Social Emotional Learning Pathways (Top 10 traits of SEL in schools)
 - b. Grade levels standards and/or curricula
 - c. Child development and developmentally appropriate practices
 - d. Play as an instructional strategy
 - e. Connecting common core standards, learning pathways, and developmentally appropriate practices
 - f. TSGold
 - a. For all teachers that support students P-3
 - b. How to use TSGold to drive instruction and create supports for students
 - c. How to use TSGold to inform SST process and IEP goals

-
- C. Focus on alignment of P-3
 - D. Master schedules that aligns with P-3 work
 - E. Support administrators in providing professional development and collaboration time for staff on early learning
 - a. Provide relevant, cyclical professional learning based on grade levels needs
 - b. Dedicated time for teachers to collaborate as a team
 - c. Specialists teachers are included in professional development on early learning
 - d. P-3 teachers have time to collaborate around alignment / vertical teams
 - F. Early Learning Director and/or TOSA position established
 - G. Ensure staff who work with in P-3 receive professional learning aligned to teacher PD
 - H. Administrators meet regularly with grade level teams
 - I. Learning walks in buildings for colleagues to mentor one another
 - J. Establish coaching roles for early learning to support administrators and teachers

Teacher Effectiveness

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: Teachers are actively dedicated to providing high-quality instruction and effective learning experiences for all children, P-3.


- Focus on Instruction
- Visible Practice
- Work as Teams

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Ongoing professional development for teachers through varied approaches, including specialists, paras, itinerants, etc.**
- 2. Early learning specialist position created and hired**
- 3. Collaboration time built into schedules and structures**
- 4. Staff collaboration and PD schedules and structures to support early learning initiative**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

- A. Establish relevant, cyclical professional learning focused on components of early learning recommendation (child development, early learning environments, early intervention, play as an instructional strategy, family and community engagement)
- B. Early learning director position and/or TOSA and/or teacher leaders
- C. Provide various forms of teacher professional development
 - a. Establish teacher leaders around early learning
 - b. Systems for teachers to self reflect (e.g. video, peer review)
 - c. Peer observations, and time to observe other classrooms.
 - d. Peer coaching model
 - e. Play-based learning as an instructional strategy
 - f. Planning for learner variability
 - g. Seminars, workshops, job embedded learning
 - h. collaboration within and across grade levels
 - i. self reflection
- D. Establish and support intentional and regular teacher collaboration
 - a. Regular times for grade level PLCs
 - b. Planning time with colleagues
 - c. Collaboration between P-3 around students and standards (e.g. vertical teams)
- E. Develop shared understanding around
 - a. District early learning programs
 - b. How standards can be met during play

- 
- c. Developmentally appropriate practices and child development
 - d. Family engagement and partnerships
 - e. Culturally relevant teaching
 - f. Project based learning themes across grades
- F. Cultivate sense of belonging within classrooms by intentionally building relationships with students

Draft

Instructional Tools

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: Standards, curricula, and assessments focus on both academic and social-emotional skills, and are aligned to create instructional coherence, P-3

- Standards
- Curricula
- Assessments

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Professional development on child development, early learning standards**
- 2. Identify and support P-3 as a child centered approach to teaching and learning, supporting learner variability and giving students voice and choice in their learning**
- 3. Support play as an instructional strategy, including professional development for preschool through 3rd grade on play based learning**
- 4. Conscious Discipline training implementation plan**
- 5. Examine curricula and map out P-3 curricular expectations that support early learners**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

Standards

- B. Child development as basis for standards
- C. Washington Early Learning Standards, [add key standard documents here]

Curricula

- D. Child initiated/directed learning, geared around student curiosities and interests
- E. Expand Conscious Discipline training and implementation
- F. Align ARC to early literacy skills in TK
- G. Align SEL Pathways and TSGold to support SEL Instruction

Additional Ideas:

- H. Ensuring play-based learning is incorporated into math curriculum
- I. Time for planning increased
- J. Tools and resources to support data collection and analysis

Learning Environment

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: The physical space and school/program culture promote collaborative relationships, actively engage all children in a variety of learning experiences and settings, and support the health and wellness of children and adults.

- Culturally Inclusive
- Promote Relationships
- Structured to Support Diverse Learners

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Classroom “kits” for preschool, TK, K, and 1st grade for learning materials and furniture aligned to state K guide, in support of early learning tennents**
- 2. Classroom “work time kits” for 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms to support instructional play and inquiry**
- 3. Examine and make improvement plan for physical accessibility of schools, including playgrounds**
- 4. Ensure students are in inclusive settings within their neighborhood schools and diverse learners' needs are met through the least restrictive environment.**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

Inclusion/Belonging

- A. Accessibility and access all areas of the school for all students
- B. Student and family voice represented in all classrooms
- C. Invest in facilities at elementary schools
- D. Diverse leadership and staff the reflects the Ferndale community
- E. Classrooms for specific grade levels
- F. Inclusive playgrounds for all students

Curriculum/Materials

- G. Consistent materials and furniture in P-3 classrooms
- H. Alignment of curriculum within P-3
- I. Student directed learning, focusing on who the students are
- J. Open ended materials
- K. Diversity in learning materials, "mirrors and windows" for all student with learning and materials in multiple languages
- L. Read aloud books for social emotional learning

-
- M. Appropriate/adaptive tools in all classrooms

Professional Development

- N. Developmentally appropriate learning environments based on developmental continuum
- O. Inclusionary practices
- P. Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching
- Q. Authentic assessments
- R. Parent understanding around appropriate learning environments

Draft

Data-Driven Improvement

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: Current, relevant, and high quality data from multiple sources are used to improve schools, programs, classrooms, instruction, professional learning, and other systems.

- Child Data
- School/Program Based Data

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Families are a key component in collecting data and data should be shared in a way that is accessible for all families.**
- 2. Classroom use of data recommendation**
 - a. All teachers that support students P-3 use data to drive decisions and instruction**
 - b. Use TSGold to drive instruction and create supports for students**
 - c. Use TSGold to inform SST process and IEP goals**
- 3. Expand effective use of WaKIDS and GOLD by Teaching Strategies**
 - a. WaKIDS training for all TK, K teachers**
 - b. Additional checkpoint for all TK and K students**
 - c. Roll use of GOLD up to grade 1**
 - d. Support data collection through observation and provide time for teachers for data entry and analysis**
 - e. Create reports for families based on GOLD results**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

- A. A data system to that support sharing information on students efficiently and informatively**
- B. District data provided to all members of the community and families**
- C. Use data for strength-based learning and data**
- D. Include families in gathering data**
- E. Make room within teachers school days to allow for meaningful use of data**
- F. GOLD by Teaching Strategies**
 - a. Increase number of times TSGold is used**
 - b. Expand TSGold to third grade**
 - c. TSGold reflected on report cards**
 - d. TSGold to inform SST and MTSS**
 - e. Align Common Core Standards and TSGold**
- G. Assessment and reporting improvements**
 - a. Observational data used more often**



- b. Assessment of students SEL skills
 - c. Report social emotional learning to families
 - d. Strengths based assessments and reporting that are accessible for families
- K. Evaluate developmentally appropriate screen time for iReady assessments to increase interactions with teachers and peers
- L. Expand universal screenings

Draft

Engaged Families

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: Families are actively and systemically involved with P-3 teachers and administrators as full partners in helping their children develop, learn, and achieve.

- Core Priority
- Two-Way Communication
- Shared Leadership/Decision-making

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Launch a family engagement task force to examine best practices and create an implementation plan for a high leverage system**
- 2. Adjust family conferencing for early learning to center family as first teacher**
- 3. Adjust family communication regarding student progress to include strength based reporting and ongoing opportunities for dialogue**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

Overarching big idea:

- A. Launch a family engagement task force to examine best practices and create an implementation plan for a high leverage system

Possible Outcomes for Spring and Fall of 2023:

- B. Kindergarten "welcome" night in Spring
- C. Ferndale family fair before school starts

Family/Community Engagement Big Ideas:

- D. Increase community awareness around high-quality early childhood programs, including birth to three supports within the district
- E. Expand use of home visits as a strategy for family engagement
- F. Elevate partnership with the Family Resource Center
- G. Expand collaboration with community medical partners for birth to three services
- H. Expand connection and partnership with Lummi Nation
- I. Provide access to support in all languages spoken within the district
- J. Provide family education around developmentally appropriate practices and play based learning
- K. Support family connections at classroom level and establish expectations and structures
 - a. Family connection meetings
 - b. Regular parent teacher conferences with ALL families



- c. Increase time to meet with families
- d. Increase family involvement in classrooms
- e. Timely and consistent communication with families

Draft

Continuity and Pathways

P-3 Framework Goal and Strategies: Every child, especially those most at risk for school failure, has access to a continuity of services and a clear pathway of high-quality education from birth through 3rd grade.

- Access and Continuity of Services
- P-3 Pathways

Task Force Key Recommendations:

- 1. Inclusive learning environments**
 - a. Move transitional kindergarten into home schools**
 - b. Move developmental preschool to a model with peer models**
 - c. Continue to serve students with IEPs in community preschools**
- 2. Examine and formalize district wide transition protocols, processes, and activities**
- 3. Work towards alignment in P-3 curriculum, assessments, teaching and learning**
- 4. Expand and strengthen partnerships with birth to three partners, and ECE partners.**

Task Force Big Ideas and Outcomes:

- A. Create a system of early interventions for students that need them
- B. Create and coordinate continuum of learning goals and experiences from P-3
- C. Inclusive learning environments at student's home schools
 - a. Serving students with IEPs in their community preschool
 - b. Moving developmental preschool to an inclusive setting
 - c. Transitional Kindergarten (Jump Start) in home schools
- D. Formal policies for placement
- E. Transition activities to support continuity and placement
 - a. A data system that supports sharing information on students efficiently and informatively
 - b. System to gather and access behavioral, academic, and other student data from Jump Start and developmental preschool
 - c. District event for Jump Start, Head Start, and community partners to come together to learn about students entering kindergarten
 - d. System to review cumulative folder and transitions reports regularly for P-3
 - e. Class lists for next year have input from both teachers and admin together, so all understand the dynamics of students/teacher/families
 - f. Roll up meetings for each grade level
- F. Transition activities to support students and families:
 - a. Design effective transition activities for supporting incoming kindergarteners new

- to the school (school visit in the Spring, etc.)
- b. Host family nights that highlight each grade level
- G. Increase understanding of P-3 scope and sequence centered on child development
 - a. TK-3: show and tell for each grade level, thru peer observation or videos - showing what different aspects of the day look like across grade levels
 - b. Scope & sequence for play based learning TK-3 what does “play” look like
- H. Explore dual language early learning magnet classes
- I. Vertical team meetings – subject meetings for each grade level
- J. Looping with students (same teacher over a two year period) for continuity of learning, pilot a 3-year looping class (same teacher with students TK, K, and 1)
- K. Learning celebrations
- L. Align learning with birth to three partners

Draft