

Hello again and greetings from USD 467!

This week I will begin with Why Kindergarten Readiness?

Early childhood experiences, birth to kindergarten entry, that ensure health and physical well-being and the development of cognitive, communication and social-emotional skills necessary for school success and have a direct influence on future success.

School readiness occurs within a broad context that includes the four components of community, educational environment, family the individual child. These four components function as interdependent systems of supports that have multi-directional influences.

Kindergarten Readiness data is not useful as:

A gate keeper to keep five-year-old children out of Kindergarten

An automatic referral for special education

Progress monitoring

What is the difference between a screening tool and a test?

An effective foundation for school readiness involves policy, funding and systems for children that support their ability to thrive and their success in learning environments through their lifespan.

Readiness is assessed after entry to Kindergarten.

What is a Developmental Screening Tool? A developmental screening tool reviews developmental areas of language and literacy, cognitive and problem solving, physical well-being and motor development, and social-emotional development. It is based on families'/teachers' observations of children's skills and abilities and aligns with Kansas standards and tools already used in Kindergarten settings.

A Kindergarten Readiness Screener is like a hinge:

Swings back to highlight a child's prior experiences and interventions

Swings forward to inform most effective practice for a child in elementary years

How Can Kindergarten Readiness data be useful?

Policymakers will consider targeted ways to increase Kindergarten readiness.

Families, teachers, administrators and leaders can use data-based decision making to plan strategically in the home, classroom, district and community.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice with Kindergartners

Kindergarten is a time of change, challenge, and opportunity. In many ways, kindergartners are still like preschoolers. Yet with the increasing focus on school readiness, many kindergarten classrooms unfortunately bow to pressures and begin to look more like a primary classroom than a kindergarten.

Five- and 6-year-olds make great intellectual leaps. They go through a major shift, allowing them to develop more: personal responsibility; self-direction; and, logical thinking.

This growth affects development across physical, social and emotional, cognitive, and language domains. Kindergarten can shape a child's overall outlook on and engagement in lifelong learning.

Teachers must balance kindergartners' varying abilities and needs while making sure that the curriculum fits appropriately between preschool and first grade.

A KESA update

The District Leadership Team (DLT) has had several meetings to prepare for the upcoming Outside Visiting Team visit on March 27th. The DLT has chosen two goals for

the district to work on improvement: Relationships-Student; and Responsive Culture-Leadership. The goal statement for Relationships-Student is USD 467 will provide a safe learning environment that promotes student engagement and character development. The work targeted steps are: SECD (Social, Emotional, and Character Development); Student Engagement; and, Classroom Engagement. In previous letters I have described what SECD is. Several of the action steps incorporate teacher inservice to become more familiar with and give information how to work with students on character development. A focus on this goal is to evaluate student involvement in the classroom and with extra-curricular activities and to increase participation in both areas. Again, teacher inservice will be needed to develop the ideas and strategies to attain this goal.

Next week I will discuss goal number two, Responsive Culture-Leadership.

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I won't focus on sports every time, and I hope to share the good things that are happening at USD 467! If you have specific questions or want more information about what's happening in the buildings or district, don't hesitate to contact Lori Maxwell, WCES Principal, at 375-2314, Delbert Schmidt, WCJSHS Principal, at 375-2213, or me at 375-4677. Thanks!

Educationally,

Keith Higgins, Superintendent