

2020 AESD Legislative Request: Leverage and Expand Early Learning Systems

DESCRIPTION

The nine regional Educational Service Districts (ESDs) through the Association of ESDs (AESD) Network are uniquely positioned to build and connect PK-3rd grade delivery systems across the state and for improving school readiness and ensure success through 3rd grade. Over many years the nine ESDs have collaborated with state and regional early learning leaders on foundational work with WaKIDS, ECEAP, early mathematics, early learning fellows, and full-day kindergarten professional development; and have extensive professional development expertise and familiarity with both preschool delivery systems (developmental, Title 1, ECEAP, Head Start, childcare) and the state's K-12 ESSA priorities.

By working collaboratively and partnering with state and regional early learning organizations and stakeholders, the AESD is poised to elevate the importance of the development of young children, PK-3rd grade, and is committed to improved educational outcomes through coordinated services, family engagement, community partnerships, and high quality educator professional development.

In order to solidify a strong, equitable, and high quality statewide early learning support network, the AESD requests an investment that supports whole-child practices and closes opportunity gaps for our youngest learners. The AESD offers a statewide structure for early learning coordination that can coordinate shared early learning services and professional development for early learning practitioners, teacher leaders, and school administrators. This request is consistent with the state's investment in regional literacy, math, and science professional development coordination across the nine ESDs.

Establishing a consistent structure will allow for greater equity across the state and allow for every ESD to leverage system efficiencies and focus additional early learning efforts on supporting early learning practitioners, teacher leaders and school administrators to increase their capacity for sustainable, whole child practices to close opportunity gaps in centers, schools and communities across the state.

Early learning coordination in each region would:

- build on past AESD work with WaKIDS implementation, early mathematics, early learning fellows, and common resources for transitional and full-day kindergarten;
- expand services to more equitably meet statewide early learning priorities, including supporting “gap-closing practices” in early learning through a statewide PK-3rd grade delivery system that includes technical assistance in areas such as transitional kindergarten programs and family and community engagement/outreach;
- enable regional early learning efforts to connect with other statewide initiatives (i.e. mathematics, special education, migrant, student and school improvement);
- provide state-wide, regional and local leadership and advocacy to strengthen PK-3rd grade delivery systems alignment so that children and families experience greater continuity as they transition out of one system and set of services into the next;
- increase cross-sector coordination of resources and supports to children impacted by trauma (i.e., coordination with mental health providers, and professional development support)
- ensure access to high quality inclusive preschool programming by connecting early learning providers and school district partners to leverage existing resources and expertise;
- connect with additional statewide early learning stakeholders;
- improve equity for ALL students.

FUNDING REQUESTED

\$1.9 million per year for statewide Pk-3 early learning coordination across the 9 ESDs (~\$215k/ESD)

- This request aligns with current salary funding allocations for the math, science, and English language arts.
- In addition to salary and benefits for the coordinator positions, the request includes funding necessary for partial administrative support and office space, as well as for supplies and travel associated with the position