

Call to Action Series | Expanded School Readiness

State and Local Leaders Need Integrated Data Tools to Inform Efforts to Improve School Readiness

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States Lack Comprehensive Early Childhood Data to Inform How They Support Children Before and After Transitions to Kindergarten

School readiness is important to a variety of stakeholders invested in young children's success in school and beyond. Schools, programs, and communities lack information to provide a holistic understanding of readiness to support children's success. Increasingly, states rely solely on kindergarten entry assessment data to measure and understand readiness. This narrow focus puts the onus on the children to succeed, failing to identify how schools and communities could better support children and families before kindergarten entry, throughout the transition, and in the long term.

ECDataWorks developed the Expanded School Readiness Framework to help states explore the preparedness of schools, communities, and children. Expanded school readiness reports allow for tracking progress toward state school readiness goals and inform decisions such as: identifying needs for teachers, programs, and classrooms; identifying best practices and improve instruction in specific domains; developing strategies for collaborating across schools and community providers to prepare for incoming kindergartners; allocating funding for early childhood programs and school districts; and establishing strategies to engage parents.

TXR3: A Comprehensive and Consistent Approach to School Readiness Reporting in Texas

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) uses statewide data on kindergarten entry assessments to report on school readiness. The reports are visually appealing, with filters and downloadable data sets. However, the agency received feedback from stakeholders that the beginning-of-year kindergarten scores provided a limited view of school readiness without



Why a Call to Action?

State agencies are being charged to create tools and reports that better leverage integrated data to support program and policy decisions. ECDataWorks, in partnership with state agencies, identified the need for analytic tools in four critical policy areas: school readiness, community assessment, data stories, and data governance.

The Call to Action Series examines common challenges and highlights states' successes in using topical frameworks to build tools to address these policy issues. These briefs charge other states to develop similar analytic tools to guide evidence-based program and policy decisions.

the community, program, or school context. Responding to the need for a new approach to school readiness reporting, TEA and the Texas Workforce Commission partnered with ECDataWorks to design an interactive tool, TXR3. TXR3 includes more robust data from a variety of sources and allows school decision-makers (e.g. administrators, principals, educators) and early childhood program staff to use these data as part of systems improvement efforts to make informed decisions about professional development and collaborations needed to support school readiness.

TEA developed TXR3 using the Expanded School Readiness Framework to ensure that all three areas of the framework (ready students, ready schools, and ready communities) are addressed. As a result, TXR3 includes the following data:

Ready Students

TXR3 uses the following data to help identify the needs of students entering kindergarten:

- Demographics data
- Prekindergarten assessment data
- Kindergarten assessment data

Ready Schools

TXR3 uses the following data to identify the capacity of schools and early childhood programs to provide high-quality early learning opportunities and meet the needs of children and families:

- Class size/ratios
- Staff workforce data (demographics, credentials)
- Training and professional development data (Prekindergarten Guidelines, Infant and Toddler Guidelines, Core Competencies)
- Family engagement information

Ready Communities

TXR3 uses the following data to help school and program decision-makers and community leaders establish a network and improve collaboration efforts.

- Early childhood program data (public prekindergarten, kindergarten, and Texas Rising Star)
- location, types of services provided, number of children served, contact information of program leaders
- Student enrollment data

To synthesize data across all three areas of the framework, TXR3 includes a Systems Alignment section. This section presents comparisons across the three areas about how the early childhood system is preparing to support early learners. For example, the alignment section allows for comparison between trends in student readiness by developmental domains compared to hours of staff training in the same developmental domains. TEA plans to focus on communicating about

the intended uses of TXR3, training users, continuing to engage stakeholders, and developing additional use cases. TEA also plans to coordinate with the governor-appointed Texas Early Learning Council to inform them of the TXR3 work and ensure these data are used inform quality improvement efforts. TEA anticipates that using TXR3 as part of their school readiness planning and processes will yield the following benefits.

1. Informed school leadership conversations to develop a shared understanding about the status of school readiness and professional development needs
2. Increased efficiencies across communities as data are no longer siloed
3. More effective allocation of resources to address needs
4. Improved systems alignment focused on ready students, ready schools, and ready communities

Are You Ready to Take Action?

If you are interested in using the Expanded School Readiness Framework to build integrated data tools to inform efforts to improve school readiness, ECDataWorks and their state partners recommend four steps. First, engage your state/community partners to determine their interest in developing a tool or report using the framework. When engaging your partners, consider using the following prompts.

- Does your school readiness reporting include only child-level data on kindergarten entry assessment performance measures?
- Do state and local staff in your state lack a holistic understanding of the needs of children families across communities to develop better professional development opportunities?
- Do school districts, early childhood programs, and community-based organizations express a need for new tools to support their decision-making around school readiness initiatives?

Second, review the [School Readiness Reporting Guide: Guidelines and Tools for Creating and Using School Readiness Reports](#) developed by ECDataWorks, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data System program. This guide will inform your efforts and includes a set of questions that you will be able to answer and take action from using an expanded school readiness tool. Third, to determine the feasibility of developing and implementing a tool or report using the Expanded School Readiness Framework in your state/community. Fourth and final, visit the ecdaworks.org to access more resources on this topic.