

**Nevada Ready! B-3
Policy Analysis and Recommendations**

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B-3 Alignment for Nevada: An Analysis of Four Policy Documents

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Nevada Ready! B-3¹
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Introduction

B-3 refers to the continuum of learning from birth through 3rd grade. This includes all educational settings and services that children experience prior to entering public school (e.g., Pre-K, child care, Head Start, Early Head Start) and throughout the primary grades of elementary school. B-3 efforts require the birth-to-five (0-5) and K-12 systems to coordinate and align their efforts in order to create seamless, coherent learning opportunities for young children and their families.

B-3 has been a focus in Nevada since 2011, when a state-level team attended a *PreK-3rd Grade Institute* at Harvard Graduate School of Education and began to increase awareness and activities to foster coordination among systems serving young children. In 2014, a group of key stakeholders worked with National Governors Association (NGA) to host a high-profile event with then-Governor Brian Sandoval – *Governor’s Symposium: Building a Strong P-3rd Grade Foundation in Nevada*.² In 2016, the Nevada Department of Education received a federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and, as part of their overall workplan, created *Nevada Ready! B-3*, a three-year project intended to dig deeper into the challenges and opportunities for expanding the state’s efforts to create aligned and coherent learning opportunities for children, birth through 3rd grade. One central aspect of the project was to move from

¹ The research and analysis presented in this report were conducted by members of the Nevada Ready! B-3 leadership team. This project was carried out under a contract from the Nevada Department of Education to Turning Point, Inc. through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Preschool Development Grant, Award #S419A150004.

² Since 2014, the state has adopted the term “B-3” -- instead of PreK-3rd Grade, P-3rd, or P-3 -- to connote birth through 3rd grade, thereby emphasizing the intentional inclusion of infants and toddlers in the B-3 work.

conceptual discussion of terms such as “alignment,” “coherence,” and “continuity” toward more specific, practical, and tangible examination of state policies. To accomplish this, a small working group was established to conduct a policy analysis that could inform the state’s emergent B-3 efforts. Collectively, members of the policy working group have decades of experience in practice, research, and policy on behalf of young children in the state of Nevada.

Context

“I still don’t really understand what B-3 actually *looks* like,” is a common refrain. In concept, “alignment” sounds promising; however, in practice and in policy, it can be difficult to operationalize. To this end, one of the primary goals of the workgroup was to begin to shift B-3 policy discussions away from the conceptual and into the discrete, practical realm. Three key observations provided additional context for the workgroup:

1. First, from a state policy standpoint, we know that each agency, department, division, office, and initiative is guided by explicit policy that exists in statute, rule, regulation, and/or widely accepted operating procedures. While many in the field describe the separation of agencies and policies as “siloes,” we prefer to think of them as “cylinders of excellence,”³ because this term better connotes the good intentions and evidence-based practices embedded in state-led efforts. However, despite these positive characteristics, the agencies and policies still operate in isolation from one another.
2. Second, from a practitioner’s standpoint, we know that teachers, families, and children often experience profound, frustrating disconnects and misalignment as they encounter different programs, services, and initiatives. To illustrate this, Appendix A provides vignettes that tell the stories of children and their experiences with Nevada’s system of services for young children. Names of children and their families have been altered; their stories are real and unaltered.
3. Third, we believe there is a connection between these two perspectives – the cylinders of excellence that exist in policy and the lived experiences of families and practitioners. When cylinders of excellence begin to intentionally coordinate and align their policy statements and their efforts, it benefits children, families, and practitioners.

Our Approach

The premise of this policy analysis was to review publicly available state-level policy documents in Nevada and to compare and contrast how different key topics are addressed within and across the documents. Our goal was to identify specific and explicit examples of the “cylinders of excellence” phenomenon -- where policy documents that are intended to guide the

³ A term adopted from Kristie Kauerz, director of the National P-3 Center, a key partner in this Nevada Ready! B-3 project and a co-author of this report.

programs/services for the same population of children and families (i.e., children, birth through age eight, and their families in Nevada) put forward different, if not conflicting, statements about young children’s learning and development, and the necessary supports for families, 0-5 programs, and K-12 schools.

To accomplish this, we selected four current state policy documents from the State of Nevada:⁴

- The Early Learning and Family sections of the [Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council \(ECAC\) Strategic Plan 2018-2021](#)
- Nevada Department of Education’s Guidance Document for Nevada K.I.D.S. Read - Nevada’s Read by Grade 3 Program ([Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document](#))
- [Nevada Department of Education’s State Improvement Plan \(STIP\) 2018](#)
- [Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\) Plan](#) for Nevada FY 2019-2021

We chose these documents for our sample because, together, they provide an expansive picture of the B-3 policy landscape in the state of Nevada. Two of them are key policy statements from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) and primarily frame K-12 policy efforts; one is a key policy document from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and primarily frames key services for the 0-5 age range and child care programs; and one document comes from an inter-agency council that works to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among and across agencies, sectors, and programs that serve children, birth through age eight.

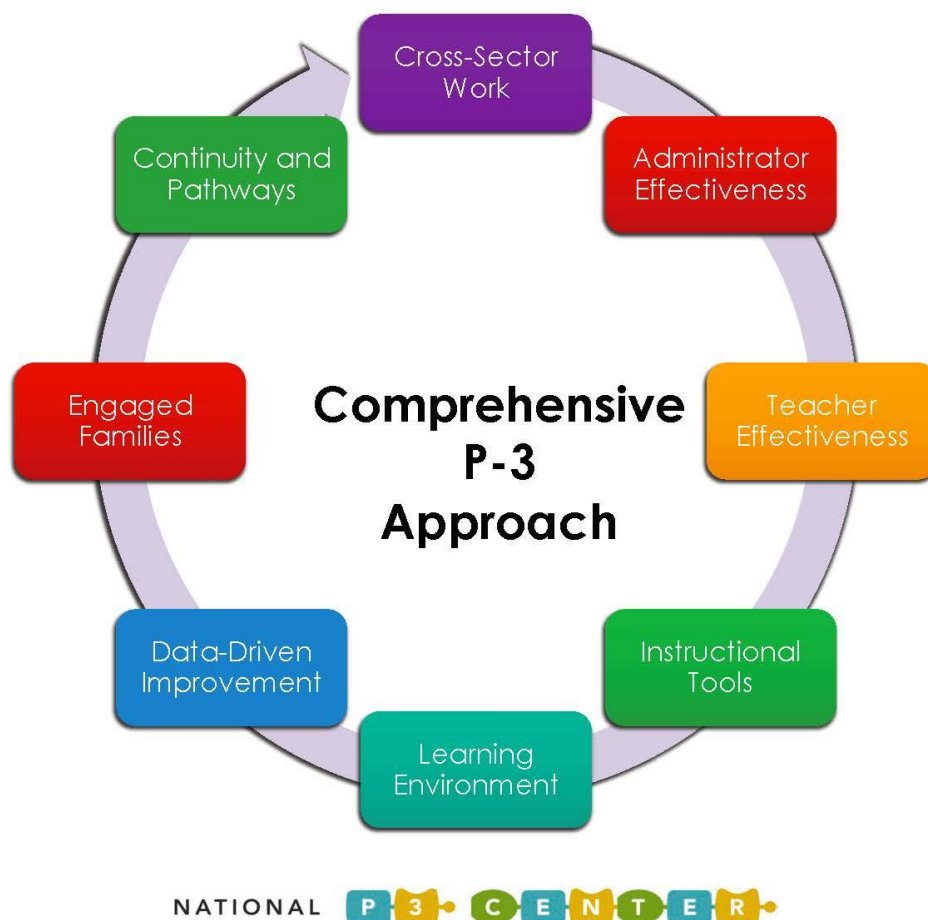
Our Methodology

To structure our document review, we used the *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating P-3 Approaches*⁵ to identify key concepts and issues that are shared by the 0-5 and K-12 systems (see Figure 1 below). We used the Framework’s eight buckets as a way to sort and categorize text in the four state policy plans. Once we established this coding scheme, we created tables, with the sorting code on the vertical axis, and the state policy reports along the horizontal axis. Working together as a team, we read through every line of the policy reports and populated the table with key phrases and term definitions that aligned with the code. By conducting this document review as a group, we were able to openly discuss and triangulate different perspectives and interpretations of the text. After the completion of the document review, we had a structured way to compare differences and similarities in the report’s attention to key issues.

⁴ The color-coding provided here is carried throughout the body of this report, providing a visual reminder for when different policy documents are being referenced.

⁵ Kauerz, K., & Coffman, J. (2013). *Framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating PreK-3rd grade approaches*. Seattle: University of Washington.

Figure 1.



As a second step in our work, we took an analytic approach to the comparison and identified overarching themes. Again, these decisions were made collectively, as a team. We then spent time crafting suggestions for how the language in the four policy documents could be re-stated and/or reframed in ways that would create stronger alignment and cohesiveness *across* the documents. It is the summary of key points and suggestions emerging from the document analysis, framed by Framework “bucket,” that is presented in this report. The summary and conclusion sections present the themes that emerged from this analysis, along with overarching suggestions as Nevada moves toward its goal of becoming the fastest improving state in the nation.

It is important to note that our analysis and this report are based entirely on a review of policy documents. We did not examine the relationships, collaborations, or networks that exist among/between agencies, initiatives, or their staff.

Intended Purposes

So why do we think this kind of document review and analysis matters? How can key stakeholders use this information to strengthen and extend Nevada's commitment to B-3? We offer several options for use of the analysis presented in this report:

- *Raise Awareness:* This report highlights specific examples of how cylinders of excellence (individual/independent policy documents) inadvertently create and perpetuate conditions for mis-alignment in practice.
- *Engage Agency Leadership:* The specificity provided by this document creates concrete examples that can be shared with key leadership within NDE and DHHS, school district superintendents, boards of education, and others. Based on our collective personal experiences and discussions with key leaders across Nevada, we know that B-3 conversations often feel vague and conceptual, without clear, practical action strategies or ways to change the system. This document creates opportunity to make B-3 more tangible, practical, and do-able.
- *Generate Intra- and Inter-Agency Discussion:* Leadership in the agencies/entities who put forth each of the reports may choose to use the suggestions presented here and engage in conversations with program leads within their departments about how agencies can present a more unified voice/vision for B-3 in Nevada.
- *Inform Future State Policy Guidance and Plans:* Policy is never static. Each of the policy documents we reviewed will be revised in the future, as policy is reauthorized and updated. The suggested revisions outlined here can be used by agency staff, providing common language that could be written into future iterations of policy guidance. We are confident that state agencies could revise some of their statements without compromising the purpose or integrity of their services; these revisions, though, would present greater coherence *across* state entities. We are also confident that inclusion of some of the common language suggested herein would not compromise or otherwise detract from federally required reports (such as the [CCDF](#) plan).
- *Infuse B-3 into Agency and Public Discourse:* Often, B-3 is seen to be a stand-alone initiative, rather than a goal and intention *across* agencies and initiatives. If the four state policy documents analyzed in this report were to include some of the changes suggested below, the true intention of B-3 as a framework rather than a separate initiative would be realized.
- *Expand Nevada's B-3 Resources:* There is a small, but growing, list of Nevada-specific resources related to B-3 reforms. This document can be used in conjunction with [Nevada's NGA B-3 briefs \(2014\)](#) to continue to build the understanding of both the opportunities and the challenges that exist in Nevada to build and sustain an aligned approach to children's learning, birth through 3rd grade.

What follows is a presentation of the document analysis, organized by the *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches* “buckets” (see Figure 1, above). We provide a definition of each “bucket”; examples from the plans; and specific, targeted suggestions for improved B-3 alignment in Nevada.

Cross-Sector Work

Goal of the *Cross-Sector Work* bucket: “Mechanisms, resources, and structures exist that reflect, support, and sustain shared vision, collaborative relationships, and mutual accountabilities between 0-5 and K-12” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 9).

One of the core premises of B-3 efforts is that no single entity, organization, or agency can “do it alone.” Children age birth through age eight and their families, especially those from historically marginalized communities, are influenced by the work of multiple entities. However, coordination and alignment do not occur by happenstance or good intentions. They, along with collaboration and coherence, require strategic, meaningful, and sustained leadership. During the review of the four policy documents, we found varying acknowledgement of the need to work across and among sectors. For example:

- The **ECAC** plan promotes a unified governance system for all programs serving young children, birth to age 5 (0-5), addressing the need to increase alignment and coordination between DHHS and NDE. As part of this, it recommends exploring moving Part C of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and child care licensing from DHHS to NDE. It also recommends creating a taskforce to seek county, municipal, and private investment for wage/incentive programs for the 0-5 workforce.
- The **Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document** focuses on supporting school districts to improve students’ reading achievement during the K-3 grades. While there was little mention of coordination with other initiatives or agencies, the document mentions that applicants can earn extra innovation points by integrating arts into literacy instruction.
- The **STIP** addresses alignment and integration of certain practices within the agency. For example, it recommends applying Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) across NDE departments to improve internal functioning and communication. It also mentions identifying and replicating “effective practices in braiding and blending funds.”

- Throughout the [CCDF Plan](#) are various references to coordination and collaboration. For example, the agency is working with both NDE and the Children’s Cabinet to launch a consumer education website for families that provides a single point of entry for families into different programs and services. The plan also discusses the integration of data collected in child care centers (e.g., Brigrance data) into the Infinite Campus (K-12) data system.

Across the reviewed plans, we see recognition of the importance of collaboration and coherence to positively impact children and their families. As written, much of the alignment is either internal to just one agency, or focused on a narrower age range than birth through age eight. There is some evidence of cross-sector work happening, but strategies are not explicitly shared across multiple agencies or initiatives.

Recommendations for Increasing B-3 Alignment -- Cross-Sector Work:

Collaboration and sharing of policies, practices, and definitions across sectors would align efforts and create a more seamless system for the families of young children. Specifically, we recommend:

- Despite the multitude of meetings and committees that key leaders attend, there is not a focused table at which a B-3 leadership team regularly meets to discuss vision and strategies to align work across sectors. The [ECAC](#) is too broad, as those meetings engage stakeholders not just from 0-5 and K-3, but also from health, mental health, workforce supports, and other family-focused services.⁶ We recommend creating at least quarterly meetings when key leaders from multiple divisions within NDE, the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services in DHHS, and the ECAC convene to discuss and align vision, strategies, and governance structures explicitly related to increasing children’s access to, and the quality of instruction provided in, learning and development programs and services (e.g., Pre-K, Special Education, child care, family child care, the K-3 grades of K-12 education, out-of-school time) for young children, birth through age eight.
- Given what is known from neuroscience and child development, the years prior to Kindergarten are essential for the pre-reading, social-emotional, and executive function skills that contribute to children’s later success in school. [Read by Grade 3](#) and [STIP](#) could explicitly recognize the importance of Pre-K and other high-quality early learning

⁶ As a policy working group, we enthusiastically endorse the current structure of the ECAC. Its mission to engage a comprehensive circle of state systems and services that support young children and their families is essential. Our recommendation is intended to bring tighter focus to the domain of early learning/education, across the B-3 continuum.

opportunities (e.g., child care and Head Start), and CCDF and ECAC could explicitly recognize the importance of providing early academic and social-emotional skills to young children as a contribution to Read by Grade 3 goals.

- In many respects, B-3 work requires streamlining and aligning cross-cutting or duplicative efforts. In this spirit, leaders in Nevada should undertake a more comprehensive review of the objectives of various grants and activities that impact B-3 settings in both 0-5 and K-3, then identify and promote effective strategies that braid and blend private and public funds across projects and initiatives.
- In order to build the high-level buy-in needed to instantiate this work and to ensure that fiscal and staff capacity are in place within and across state agencies, recommendations identified in this report need to be elevated to the governor and the Nevada legislature.

Administrator Effectiveness

Goal of the *Administrator Effectiveness* bucket: “Administrators (district superintendents, school principals, early childhood directors) actively create a culture and organizational structures that ensure the quality of [B-3] learning” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 11).

While teachers, educators, caregivers, and providers are the adults who interact most often and most directly with children enrolled in 0-5 early care and education programs and elementary schools, there is increased awareness that the administrators who supervise teachers and who have administrative responsibilities to establish a program’s culture/climate and influence budget priorities are key. No matter if one is the director of a community-based child care center or the principal of an elementary school, research tells us that these B-3 administrators are most effective when they share common knowledge and skills. For example, all administrators of programs across the B-3 continuum need to have a deep understanding of child development; recognition of high-quality, effective learning environments; understanding of instructional practices based on developmental science regarding how young children learn; and the skills and dispositions to engage and support teams of teachers and families.

However, across the B-3 continuum, school and program administrators have different professional preparation pathways, in-service professional learning requirements, affiliations with membership organizations, and the like. Despite the increased attention to administrators in the research literature, the plans reviewed for this analysis differ in the degree to which they include administrators. For example:

- The **ECAC plan** includes an objective to create aligned professional development opportunities for the 0-5 and K-3 workforces. The plan also explicitly mentions providing credit-bearing professional development for administrators related to family partnerships.
- The **Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document** acknowledges the leadership role of school principals (e.g., by requiring them to identify a learning strategist and to be interviewed during monitoring visits); however, there is no explicit mention of the skills or knowledge that principals need to be effective in these roles.
- The **STIP** provides the most robust recognition of the key roles played by administrators (i.e., school principals), recognizing them as a “key lever to change school outcomes and close opportunity gaps.” The plan further identifies the necessity of supporting principals to “become great school leaders” and to be able to identify and support high quality instruction that is aligned to standards and curriculum.
- The **CCDF Plan** does not mention administrator effectiveness.

Across the reviewed plans, we see varying recognition of the roles and responsibilities of administrators. Where it does appear, it is bounded by specific topics and is confined to a tightly defined group of people. In order to build a more robust B-3 perspective on the important roles of administrators, we put forward a few recommendations.

Recommendations for Increasing B-3 Alignment - Administrator Effectiveness:

- We recommend ensuring that all policy documents explicitly embrace the importance of site administrators to influence the quality and coherence of learning opportunities provided to young children, birth through 3rd grade. Specifically, the roles and responsibilities of administrators could be strengthened and aligned in both the **Read by Grade 3** and **CCDF** plans.
- The skills and knowledge needed by administrators to effectively support care and education across the entire B-3 continuum are not entirely different. The policy documents could be better aligned by suggesting similar sets of skills/behaviors for administrators, regardless of sector affiliation. For example, the **STIP**, in its current form, only addresses K-3 administrators and the need for them to support instruction and build capacity as school leaders. We recommend the **STIP** explicitly include Pre-K

administrators and add the essential skills of knowledge of child development and the ability to recognize and support effective learning strategies for young children.

- No plan mentions the need for administrators to support teaching teams across the B-3 continuum (e.g., for elementary principals to intentionally do outreach to nearby Pre-K programs). We recommend that all of the plans we reviewed expand their attention to administrators by highlighting the importance of 0-5 and K-12 administrators working together to support shared professional learning for their teachers.
- Some key methods of closing opportunity gaps (a goal mentioned in [STIP](#)) would be to focus more on the alignment of instruction across the B-3 continuum, use engaging strategies for learning, and support relationships between teachers and children. No plans specifically mention these strategies, but the STIP could list promising strategies for administrators to meet the opportunity gap goal.
- Nevada should consider creating state-level and statewide aligned professional learning opportunities targeted to administrators across the B-3 continuum, supporting 0-5 and K-12 administrators to learn and grow their skills together.

The *Nevada Ready! B-3* leadership team found these issues of administrator effectiveness so compelling that another of their key deliverables is a design plan for a Professional Leadership Program for B-3 administrators, thereby initiating an in-depth, shared learning opportunity for administrators from both the 0-5 and K-12 systems.

Teacher Effectiveness

Goal of the *Teacher Effectiveness* bucket: “Teachers are actively dedicated to providing high-quality instruction and effective learning experiences for all children, [birth through] 3rd grade” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 13).

An increasing body of research evidence highlights the interconnected nature of young children’s learning and development -- academic, social, and emotional skills cannot be separated. Because of this, teachers, educators, caregivers, and providers across the B-3 continuum should have a shared understanding of pedagogy and instructional practices that support developmental science and “whole child” learning. At the same time, teachers -- in both 0-5 and K-12 systems -- have big jobs. Much is asked of them and they need to be given meaningful support and resources from their administrators in order to be effective in their professions and to provide high-quality instruction and learning experiences to their students.

Across the plans reviewed, we identified a variety of approaches to supporting teachers. For example:

- The **ECAC** plan mentions teacher effectiveness many times. For example, it recommends aligning licensure and credential standards for B-3 (community & school-based) educators, creation of a taskforce to align continuing education units, training hours, and college credit among all B-3 educators, and creation of aligned professional development opportunities for B-3 teachers. These are only a few of the recommendations mentioned.
- The **Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document** notes specific requirements of learning strategists in its discussion of teacher effectiveness. For example, each school in Nevada must have a designated learning strategist who is required to attend specialized training. The content of the professional learning provided by the learning strategists is prescribed by the Nevada State Board of Education. In addition, the document mentions the need for learning strategists to collaborate with building teachers in providing literacy instruction.
- The **STIP** mentions one specific, overarching goal -- that all students in Nevada are served by effective educators. Educator effectiveness in the K-12 sector is defined by a standardized instrument, the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). On this instrument, teachers are observed and rated on a 4-point scale, with a score of 3 or 4 considered “effective”.
- The **CCDF Plan** notes that both Pre-K teachers and child care providers are offered combined training on the Brigance assessment. It also includes a goal to recruit and retain a qualified and effective child care workforce.

Across these four policy documents, there are multiple strategies, yet there is not a prominent shared understanding of how to define or measure teacher effectiveness. We recognize the diversity of the workforce both within the 0-5 system and across the 0-5 and K-12 systems. We honor the differences and, simultaneously, propose changes to the plans that could establish more aligned and coherent efforts to ensure that every child, from birth to 3rd grade, who is enrolled in a publicly funded program or elementary school has effective teachers.

Recommendations for Increasing B-3 Alignment -- Teacher Effectiveness:

- Across the four plans, greater intentionality to define effective teachers and caregivers could include: [a] having skills and knowledge based on a current understanding of child development; [b] demonstrating ability to support multiple domains of development (i.e., academic, social, emotional, and physical); and [c] demonstrating ability to differentiate learning opportunities and instruction for children. In other words, the definition of “effective educator” across both 0-5 and K-12 systems should be more similar than not.
- Ensuring that the four plans address the full range of teachers who work with children, birth through age 8, could be improved. For example, the [CCDF plan](#) could include out-of-school providers for before and after-school care for children in the early elementary grades, in its attention to the workforce. Similarly, the [Read by Grade 3](#) and [STIP](#) plans could include Pre-K teachers in their attention to the teacher workforce.
- Implement the “B-3 Licensure Matters” (see Appendix B) memo that was written in July 2018 and shared with the former state superintendent of NDE, the director of the Office of Early Learning and Development, and the director of Teacher Licensure. This plan outlines the rationale for creating a B-3 license that could be attained by both 0-5 and K-12 teachers, reducing both gaps and duplications that exist with the current licensing categories.
- Convene consistent discussions between leadership of NDE’s Office of Early Learning and Development and Division of Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement to ensure that Pre-K as a program and the broader 0-5 sector (e.g., child care, Head Start, other early learning programs) are integrated throughout the work of NDE’s major divisions.
- Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) could open professional learning opportunities to both 0-5 and K-3 teachers, focusing on effective instruction and support of young learners. Establishing a stand-alone 0-5 RPDP would, in effect, create another cylinder of excellence and pose a whole new set of alignment challenges.
- Align coaching support across the continuum with the same training and “whole child” instructional practices supporting teachers (i.e., Learning Strategists, QRIS coaches).

- Align evidence-based strategies for teachers to promote literacy across the state with a “whole child” focus. While there is a compelling growing body of evidence about the science of how children learn to read, scholars and practitioners alike recognize that reading acquisition does not occur in isolation from the development of executive function and social-emotional skills. An approach to unifying learning to read with a developmentally informed, whole child focus could be integrated into a reading endorsement. We recommend that learning strategists for **Read by Grade 3** have such a reading endorsement.

The workforce is a timely and prominent issue with currency for both 0-5 and K-12 systems. Given the momentum, it is an exciting time for the Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division and the Office of Early Learning and Development in NDE, ECAC, and CCDF administrators to work together to create shared language about what makes teachers of young children most effective.

Instructional Tools

Goal of the *Instructional Tools* bucket: “Standards, curricula, and assessments focus on both academic and social-emotional skills, and are aligned to create instructional coherence, [birth through] 3rd grade” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 15).

Across 0-5 and K-12 systems, the past 20 years have seen increased attention to the standards that are used to guide what children should know and be able to do; the curricula that guide the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly learning in classrooms; and the assessments used to understand how each child is progressing. One particular challenge in the B-3 space is ensuring that the standards, curricula, and assessments are aligned across a developmental continuum *and* are aligned with one another, both at a single age/grade level and across age/grade levels. Not surprisingly, these tools of instruction received attention in each of the four policy documents we reviewed. For example:

- **The ECAC** plan has an objective to revise and align child, program, and workforce standards for all programs and personnel in the B-3 field. The ECAC plan states that, “the foundation of high-performing child learning/development programs begins with state-of-the-art standards for all home-based, private, and school-based ECE programs. These standards lead to model programs, training and personnel in the B-3 arena. Unified standards, clear communication, funding, policy and oversight will help to guide the work carried out in the remaining Early Learning objectives.” The plan calls for the

current child learning standards to be revised and that comprehensive, evidence-based learning and development standards for children birth through 3rd grade be adopted (the plan recognizes four different sets of standards that are currently used across the B-3 continuum: 0-3 Early Learning Guidelines, Pre-K Standards, the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) for students in K-3, and Social Emotional Competencies for K-3).

- **Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document** specifies that all local literacy plans must include, and both public and charter programs are required to assess all children in, Brigance at Kindergarten entry and MAP reading assessments across K-3. MAP is required in winter and spring in Kindergarten; and fall, winter, and spring in 1st through 3rd grades. In Read by Grade 3, all assessments, standards, and instruction are focused solely on early reading. Progress monitoring of all K-3 students struggling in reading includes intensive instruction required for students “deficient” in reading. This includes regularly scheduled sessions focusing on phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. There are also specific program requirements to improve skills for students with limited English proficiency. All Read by Grade 3 programs, services, and curriculum materials must demonstrate they are supported by ESSA evidence.
- The **STIP** outlines goals for improving effective literacy instruction while also establishing an aligned system of screening and assessment across early childhood programs. The STIP also focuses on high quality standards, curriculum, instruction, and support for high quality content standards. It includes annual administration of aligned assessment and accountability systems that is valid and reliable and aligned to NVACS. It also requires all school districts to adopt Social-Emotional Learning/Social-Emotional and Academic Development (SEL/SEAD) standards and to implement equitable Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.
- The **CCDF Plan** mentions that local sites who are implementing TACSEI⁷ use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ and ASQ-SE), whereas Pre-K sites use the Brigance for developmental screening. The CCDF plan only addresses families who receive subsidy. The birth to age 3 Early Learning Guidelines and Pre-K standards are discussed and noted to continue up to Kindergarten.

⁷ Nevada TACSEI is a statewide initiative designed to create a sustainable, statewide system that promotes social and emotional development in young children, using the Pyramid Model. The label “TACSEI” (pronounced taxi) is a holdover from a 2010 partnership with the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI).

The specificity of recommendations related to standards and assessments across the four plans is not surprising, given that this is an area in which vendors and particular instruments are prolific. However, we believe there is opportunity to build greater alignment among the plans. For example, programs guided by both [CCDF](#) and [Read by Grade 3](#) use the Brigance as a common screener. Using the same screener that has been informed by child development is promising, and we encourage all stakeholders to consider what it would take to support an aligned system of screening and assessments, high quality instruction, and social emotional and academic development.

Recommendations for Increasing B-3 Alignment -- Instructional Tools:

- While the [STIP](#) mentions establishing an aligned system of screening and assessment across early childhood programs, it would establish greater coherence if the plan provided more specificity about which early childhood programs to engage with (e.g., state-funded Pre-K; TACSEI). In addition, we strongly encourage the next iteration of the STIP plan to explicitly highlight the importance of increasing alignment between 0-5 and K-3 systems of screening and assessment.
- The [CCDF plan](#) could highlight how 0-3 Early Learning Guidelines and Pre-K standards are precursors to and supportive of the NVACS and Social-Emotional Competencies in K-12.
- The [ECAC plan](#) could be more inclusive of K-3 as being part of their vision for state-of-the-art standards. For example, the plan could be revised to recognize the "importance of having state-of-the-art standards for all home-based, private, and school-based ECE programs, **as well as for the K-3 grades**. These standards lead to model programs, **classrooms, schools, training and personnel in both 0-5 and K-3 systems**" [emphasis added to show the new language needed].
- Across the plans, it would create more coherence if there were explicit statements about the primary purposes and intentions of standards, curricula, and assessments. Our stance is that these tools should all be used in service of continuous improvement -- supporting student learning, informing daily instruction, and making schools/programs more responsive to the varying developmental levels of students and teachers. To this point, and to bring greater intentionality to strengths-based perspective, we would like to see [Read by Grade 3](#)'s focus on "deficiency" to be reframed to "meeting the needs of students who require additional supports".

- Create shared definitions across 0-5 and K-3 systems --then embed these throughout the plans -- of instructional strategies, uses of assessments, and developmentally aligned standards that support not just academic learning, but also social, emotional, and physical development.
- Consider creating and/or adopting a common integrated curriculum from Pre-K through 3rd grade that is both project-based and integrated with a strong focus on literacy (e.g., similar to Boston Public Schools).
- Adopt B-3 implementation guidelines in partnership with the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning and aligned with K-12 SEL competencies. These guidelines have been created by other State Education Agencies and proven useful in articulating and disseminating strategies for aligning instructional practices and learning environments across the B-3 continuum to guide teacher practices and related professional learning. For example, New Jersey Department of Education has published implementation guidelines for [Full-Day Kindergarten](#), and [First through Third Grades](#).

Aligned instructional tools and practices are key to high quality learning opportunities across the B-3 continuum. These tools pave the way for meaningful, rigorous, and aligned standards, curriculum and assessments that are comprehensive and developmental across all domains of learning to guide instructional practices. Aligned instructional tools also directly impact teacher effectiveness, learning environments, and data-driven improvements that are whole child focused.

Learning Environment

Goal of the *Learning Environment* bucket: “The physical space and emotional environment (campuses, buildings, schools, and classrooms) 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” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 17).

While the adults who interact and engage with young children (e.g., teachers, administrators, families) often receive prominent attention in policy, research tells us that the learning environments and climate have strong influence on children’s learning and development, as well as on the interactions and relationships between children and adults. For example, a teacher is most effective when she teaches in a classroom that is organized with appropriate materials for hands-on, experiential learning that supports a balance of large group, small

group, cooperative exploration, and individual learning. From a state policy perspective, learning environments are often only addressed in program standards and facility licensing requirements. Throughout our policy document review, we identified the following:

- The [ECAC](#) plan recognizes both facility licensing and the quality program standards established by the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (Silver State Stars) for 0-5 programs (different models are used to rate district Pre-K, private child care centers, and licensed family child care homes). QRIS is currently only required for private programs receiving subsidy dollars and Nevada Ready! State Pre-K programs due to lack of funding and coaching support. The plan also notes the need for common messages, since licensing and QRIS are housed in different state agencies. Given this, the ECAC plan recommends exploring moving child care licensing to NDE, removing conflicting standards and/or establishing shared statewide licensure standards for not just 0-5 programs, but also out-of-school time programs.
- The [Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document](#) has limited focus on learning environments and is primarily centered on the instructional supports provided to teachers and students. However, the document notes that NDE will identify a set of Read by Grade 3 school sites for on-site monitoring visits. These visits will be conducted by NDE staff and utilize a specific on-site monitoring tool that is aligned to SB 391⁸ requirements.
- The [STIP](#) includes a focus on improving the quality of 0-5 programs through the QRIS as well as high-quality, evidence-based materials that build capacity of educators. The plan also emphasizes safe and respectful learning environments that actively promote social, emotional, and academic development. This is also highlighted in the STIP’s focus on supporting staff and students to learn, work, and develop positive relationships in a safe, respectful, healthy environment; and safe school environments for all that actively promote equitable social, emotional and academic development while decreasing expulsions and suspensions, bullying, and chronic absenteeism.
- The [CCDF Plan](#) includes a focus on licensing standards for teacher:child ratios and group sizes in child care programs. The Plan also discusses a self-assessment tool based on Out-of-School-Time standards that can be used to understand basic health and safety in programs.

⁸ SB 391 was the 2017 authorizing legislation for Read by Grade 3.

As evidenced in this brief overview, there is more emphasis on high-quality learning environments in 0-5 settings than in K-3 classrooms. There is not currently a common definition of a high-quality learning environment for children across the B-3 continuum and teacher:child ratios across B-3 settings are variable. Although not mentioned specifically in the reviewed policy documents, multiple tools exist to assess the quality of 0-5 learning environments (e.g., Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales), but few tools exist to assess K-3 classrooms. While child care programs must follow licensing standards for basic health and safety, state Pre-K classrooms do not.

Recommendations for Increasing B-3 Alignment -- Learning Environments:

- Create a shared NDE/DHHS “integrity walkthrough” document that can be used to assess the quality of the learning environment across all initiatives that support young children (i.e., [Read by Grade 3](#), state-funded Pre-K, programs licensed by [CCDF](#), and others). Both the physical and social-emotional environments should be included in this instrument.
- Because the group size and teacher:child ratios are different in [CCDF](#) child care licensing, State Pre-K, and K-3, we recommend aligning program standards across the various agencies, initiatives, and funding streams to meet national recommendations.
- Create a common description of an “ideal” learning environment across the B-3 continuum to have a consistent way of discussing and understanding quality learning environments. This description should emphasize rigorous, center-based, exploration and hands-on learning that focuses on all domains of learning with a balance of child- and teacher-directed strategies.
- Establish and fund a B-3 position in the Nevada Department of Education that straddles the Office of Student and School Supports, the Office of Early Learning and Development, and the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environments and focuses on learning environments and quality improvements in B-3 settings.
- Adopt a “ready school” definition and framework that outlines the essential characteristics of elementary schools that are structured, staffed, and supported to provide high-quality learning environments and whole child instructional strategies for young children, B-3. The “ready schools” framework would provide a balance to the current press for children to be “ready for school.”

Quality learning environments are a critical ingredient in B-3 approaches, setting the stage for effective teacher-child interactions and engagement in learning by students. A more intentional, aligned focus on learning environments across state policy documents and initiatives would create continuity for children as they progress from year to year.

Data-Driven Improvement

Goal of the *Data-driven Improvement* bucket: “Current, relevant, and high-quality data from multiple sources are used to improve schools, programs, classrooms, instruction, professional development, and other systems” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 19).

Both child-based and school- or program-based data are essential components of aligned systems of support for young children, birth through age 8. One inherent challenge, not exclusive to B-3 work, is that what gets measured becomes what matters. Because of this, it is important to understand if, across agencies and initiatives, there are shared understandings of what matters for young children’s learning and development. While a lot of data are being collected, their purposeful alignment and use are less clear. Each of the plans mentions data collection in some form or fashion:

- Throughout the [STIP](#), data use performs several important functions including: (a) to inform decisions impacting schools; (b) to identify and improve the lowest-performing schools; and (c) as a key lever to improve instruction, change school outcomes, and close opportunity gaps. The STIP also notes the intention to “provide analytic support and actionable data to internal and external stakeholders and assist in the interpretation of the accountability model and data” (p. 26).
- The [Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document](#) mandates collection of child-based reading development data (Measures of Academic Progress-Reading for K-3 and the Brigance Screening Tool at Kindergarten entry). It is unclear how, or if, these two sources of data are integrated to support children’s learning. The Guidance Document also notes that an evaluation plan is in place for the program as a whole, evidencing the use of program-based data to identify areas for improvement.
- The [CCDF Plan](#) mentions data more than 75 times. In general, the plan outlines the need for data collection to track data on families’ access to programs and key indicators related to the 0-5 workforce. Data are used to improve the quality and continuous improvement of licensed 0-5 settings and the Plan also refers to the use of the Brigance

Screening Tool in child care programs that accept subsidies as an option to fulfill the licensing requirement of two child assessments per year.

- The [ECAC Strategic Plan](#) calls to allocate personnel and financial resources to integrate data from the Registry, NDE, school districts, TEACH, and child care licensing; these data would then be used by both parents and providers to advocate for increased economic development related to B-3. The ECAC strategic plan also notes a goal to bridge data sources and to improve transparency in data collection and sharing.

Data-driven improvement was a clear focus in each of the plans examined. It is clear that data are being collected. Some of the plans mention *alignment* of data. What is not consistent is if data are defined similarly across plans, the focus of data on the child versus program level, and how data are being shared across systems (e.g., DHHS and NDE). One challenge is that the same child may be served by multiple publicly-funded initiatives, each with its own data collection strategy. Without stronger coordination between agencies about what data are collected, and how they are used, there is the chance that children are being over-assessed (when stronger data sharing agreements could be in place) OR things that matter are not being assessed at all. Collaboration in the sharing of both child- and school/program-based data across agencies, as well as among 0-5 and K-3 initiatives, would strengthen Nevada’s focus on improvements that are driven and informed by data.

Recommendations for Improving B-3 Alignment -- Data-Driven Improvement:

- In the [STIP](#), it is not clear if “analytic support and actionable data” is inclusive of state-funded Pre-K programs. Because data use is important to the full Pre-K-12th grade continuum, we recommend clarifying the language in the STIP, making explicit the intention to include Pre-K in its supports for and investments in data-informed continuous improvement.
- Although the [Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document](#) is necessarily specifically focused on the collection of data about children’s reading achievement, developmental science tells us that children’s skill development is integrated across domains. Thus, collection of data that focus on other developmental domains (e.g., social/emotional) may be informative to the overarching goal.
- We were encouraged to see that both [Read by Grade 3](#) and the [CCDF](#) plans require the use of the Brigance. Though not identified through our document review, we know that state-funded Pre-K programs are also required to use the Brigance twice a year;

however, state-funded Pre-K programs are not mentioned in either the Read By Grade 3 or CCDF plans. The alignment of the use of the Brigance screening tool is heartening and provides an outstanding opportunity for sharing Brigance data from 0-5 programs into Kindergarten. At a minimum these plans should cross-reference one another to create shared vision, language, and understanding about the purposes of Brigance -- and embedding those in future iterations of the reports -- would increase alignment of data-driven strategies.

- It would be informative to identify desired outcomes first and then identify appropriate, high quality data sources that can be used across agencies, programs, and initiatives. Having an integrated 0-5 and K-3 data system would allow Nevada to examine its data markers at the program, classroom, educator, and child levels for the improvements we want to see.

Data are abundant and the technicalities involved in aligning data use are complicated by issues of privacy and technical capabilities. Despite this, the creation of an integrated data system, birth through post-secondary education, would provide unprecedented opportunity to understand children’s progress throughout publicly funded programs and schools. Beyond providing a means to better understand how to support children and their families, data also are essential for organizations and systems to adopt and enact continuous improvement efforts.

Engaged Families

Goal of the *Engaged Families* bucket: “Families are actively and systematically involved with [B-3] teachers and administrators as full partners in helping their children develop, learn, and achieve” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 21).

Across the Nevada state plans, families are recognized as important in their children’s learning and development. Some plans, however, provide specific examples of how government-funded services can work together with families; other plans are more vague. As background, the State of Nevada has invested substantial energy and resources outlining policy and identifying standards for best practices in family engagement. Specifically, the Nevada State Board of Education’s (SBE) has established a [Policy on Parental Involvement and Family Engagement](#) that includes standards. In addition, an initiative is currently underway by the Nevada Department of Education’s Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division to develop a [Birth through Grade 12 Family Engagement Framework](#). We identified the following attention to engaged families in our review of the four policy documents:

- The [CCDF Plan](#) outlines the importance of and strategies for supporting “the role of parents as child care consumers.” Among the information provided, the CCDF plan outlines how to inform families about finding licensed child care providers and understanding the quality of care provided. The plan also addresses ensuring families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities receive information about the availability and quality of child care.
- In the NDE’s [State Improvement Plan](#), best practices for working with families are noted. Six standards from the SBE’s Nevada Policy on Parental Involvement and Family Engagement are referred to in the plan:
 - Welcoming all families into the school community
 - Communicating effectively
 - Supporting student well-being and academic success
 - Speaking up for every child
 - Sharing power
 - Collaborating with community
- The [ECAC Strategic Plan](#) mentions family engagement in several sections. For example, there is a focused strategy on dissemination of information to parents about the quality of 0-5 programs as defined by the Silver State Stars Quality Improvement and Rating System. It also includes a strategy to disseminate information online related to the development of children from birth to age 5. These strategies are specifically focused on families of young children before Kindergarten and do not mention family engagement at the K-3 level, nor do they note the existence of the Nevada Department of Education’s initiatives to support family engagement at the K-3 level.
- In the [Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document](#), mention of family engagement includes the parent notification requirement for K-3 children who are identified as struggling readers. In addition, strategic innovations in family engagement are incentivized with more points to applicants who apply for grant funding for Read by Grade 3 efforts. Assembly Bill 289, passed and signed in the 2019 legislative session, creates several changes in the Read by Grade 3 program, but still mandates parent notification of a pupil’s “deficiency” in reading identified in grades K-3. Instead of focusing on the threat of grade 3 retention if the student does not improve, however, the revised language focuses more strongly on the interventions and supports that will be provided throughout elementary school. It is anticipated that, should this bill pass and be signed into law, a new Guidance Document will be written.

As illustrated in these examples, Nevada has established a commitment to family engagement in both the 0-5 and K-3 sectors. We noted, however, that the plans did not share common language about why families are important or how to most effectively support and engage them. Collaboration and sharing of policies, practices, and definitions across sectors would align efforts and create a more seamless system for the families of young children.

Recommendations for Increasing Alignment across B-3 -- Engaged Families:

- As noted above, an initiative is currently underway by the NDE's Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division to develop a [Birth through Grade 12 Family Engagement Framework](#). This plan explicitly endorses a shared approach to engaging families that spans both the 0-5 and K-12 sectors and aims to construct a common language and framework for engaging families. Because the initiative is being led by NDE, it is unclear if agencies working in the 0-5 sector are aware of or have been meaningfully involved. We encourage all stakeholders to actively engage in the development of this Framework as it provides a valuable opportunity to create a truly unified B-3 family engagement plan for the state of Nevada.
- Given the legislation related to [Read by Grade 3](#) that was signed by the Governor on June 14, 2019, and the subsequent need to release a new guidance document, responsible staff at NDE are encouraged to specifically mention the State Board of Education's Policy and Standards on Family Engagement, consider the guidance provided in the Nevada State Literacy Plan,⁹ and to carefully craft family-friendly language on how families should be notified of children's reading test scores.
- The [ECAC](#) can extend its explicit focus on family engagement in 0-5 and endorse similar objectives that extend through 3rd grade. NDE's Director of the Office of Parent Involvement and Family Engagement sits on the ECAC's family-focused strategic plan subcommittee, which is an excellent starting point.

Families are children's first and most important teachers, and are often the ones left to navigate confusing, mis-aligned policies and programs. Working together, NDE, DHHS, and ECAC could provide a unified vision and voice for engaging families in culturally relevant, meaningful ways across the B-3 continuum.

⁹ The Nevada State Literacy Plan, which was not reviewed in depth for this project, outlines six types of family involvement/engagement.

Continuity and Pathways

Goal of the *Continuity and Pathways* bucket: “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” (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013, p. 23).

We know that high quality experiences are essential for young children’s successful outcomes. Unfortunately, the continuity of high quality experiences is not assured across the birth through 3rd grade continuum. Indeed, the system of care and education in Nevada does not guarantee a stable pathway of high-quality learning opportunities for every child. Infants and toddlers receive care and education from several different sources (e.g., family members, Early Head Start, family home care providers, private child care centers, etc.). Similarly, preschool-aged children receive care and education from just as wide of a swath of options, with a dearth of funded care opportunities available for 3-year-olds (i.e., Head Start and state-funded Pre-K programs only have the capacity to serve 3-year-olds if they braid funding; thus, many do not).

The source of care and education for children from Kindergarten through 3rd grade stabilizes as publicly funded school becomes a guarantee. The *quality* of these experiences for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and young school-aged children is highly variable, both within and across care and education settings, including within public schools. And, the number of hours available to children for care and education varies greatly between settings. Thus, anything that can be done to improve the quality of education experiences across these settings, to minimize transitions, and to assist children in navigating transitions between systems and grades would be supportive. As we reviewed the four policy plans, we identified:

- The **ECAC Strategic Plan** has an objective that establishes expectations to support transitions from private child care or state-funded Pre-K programs to Kindergarten. The ECAC plan also includes an objective to identify Pre-K to K transition activities for children and families and to promote these activities in school districts throughout the state. There are also strategies and activities identified in this plan to support Pre-K and K implementation guidelines to better align the quality of these settings to support developmental science and how children learn.
- The **Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document** discusses several strategies to support 3rd graders who are held back due to low reading assessment scores. However, because AB 289 eliminates the retention mandate, we will not provide specific suggestions related to retention.

- The [STIP](#) does not specifically call out Continuity and Pathways, but it certainly could, by including specific objectives related to assuring a smooth transition for children from Pre-K into kindergarten and for children between grades within public schools.
- The [CCDF Plan](#) notes several initiatives related to continuity and pathways. For example, CCDF quality dollars can be used by child care providers to offer extended care for children so that employed parents can be supported with a schedule that supports their work obligations and supports parents to achieve self-sufficiency.

Recommendations for Increasing B-3 Alignment -- Continuity and Pathways:

- We agree with the [ECAC Strategic Plan's](#) recommendation regarding the development of specific implementation guidelines. Once such guidelines are created, it is recommended that they be shared across sectors to further support quality, developmentally-informed implementation of care and education across the B-3 continuum.
- The next iteration of the [Read by Grade 3 Guidance Document](#) may consider ways to encourage schools to provide high quality care and education experiences informed by developmental science to children as they transition from Pre-K through 3rd grade.
- The authors of the next iteration of Nevada's [STIP](#) should consider ways to underscore the importance of smooth transitions and pathways for children across the B-3 continuum and to remove barriers to facilitating such transitions.
- In the next iteration of the [CCDF Plan](#), the authors should consider ways to support adequate funding for care and education subsidies so they are available for the entire range of children from birth through grade 3. Working parents of *all* children (including those with disabilities) should have access to *real* full-day child care, Pre-K, Head Start, and before- and after-school quality wrap-around options.

Continuity and Pathways are mentioned in most of these plans, but there are only a few specific strategies regarding the smoothing of pathways for children from birth through 3rd grade. All plans could be much more intentional about how to better align the different programs and supports provided across the continuum.

Summary

The above analysis of four policy documents shows that Nevada is clearly devoted to providing high quality learning opportunities across the B-3 continuum. At the same time, however, Nevada’s policy -- much like other states’ -- operates in cylinders of excellence, with mis-alignment and lack of shared vision and vocabulary between state agencies, initiatives, programs, and policy documents. The analysis we’ve presented here takes one small, albeit important, step toward identifying the disconnects and offering suggested solutions.

This document has presented an in-depth analysis of four policy documents that are just a fraction of the policies, laws, rules, regulations, procedures, and guidance that influence the B-3 ecosystem in Nevada. The analysis was conducted to provide concrete examples of how “cylinders of excellence” could better align, while still maintaining their own identity and initiatives. This analysis barely scratches the surface of the possibilities that exist for intentionally creating stronger alignment within and among Nevada’s agencies, departments, divisions, and policy statements.

As a policy-focused working group of the *Nevada Ready! B-3* Leadership team, we have spent the past three years deeply engaged in identifying and making sense of both the opportunities and challenges for strengthening B-3 in the state. During our time working together, including during the preparation of this report, we accumulated a broad and deep perspective on key issues that influence the state’s progress. Below, we outline several cross-cutting themes that emerged from our work.

Theme #1: The Words We Use Create the World We See

As has been written about extensively elsewhere, the 0-5 and K-12 sectors have their own history, vocabulary, and government infrastructure. Further, the professionals – teachers, administrators, policy analysts, policymakers, advocates, faculty in higher education – who work in and on behalf of the two systems have almost entirely different preparation pathways, in-service professional learning opportunities, professional associations, and professional norms. Indeed, it is these variables that have been built and instantiated over decades and that make each system a “cylinder of excellence.” As a result, it is no surprise that the documents that anchor 0-5 and K-12 policy, such as those reviewed in this project, reflect these differences.

These differences are neither inherently bad nor intentionally exclusive. However, they have unintended consequences when policymakers, agency staff, field-based practitioners, teachers, families, and others see/hear/read the differences and interpret them to mean different things. The challenge is when each system strives to positively influence *the same or similar* things, but use entirely different words to do so. For example, the 0-5 system usually refers to “children,” while the K-12 system usually refers to “students.” The 0-5 system refers to “caregivers,” while the K-12 system refers to “teachers.” The 0-5 system refers to “developmentally appropriate practice,” while the K-12 system refers to “differentiated instruction and experiential learning.” At their core, each of these dichotomies are more similar than different in their intent. But the words used can be off-putting at worst, or meaningless at best, to stakeholders.

To address this, we recognize the need for stakeholders within and across the 0-5 and K-12 systems to engage in intentional efforts to establish shared vision, and shared vocabulary, for their efforts to improve the learning continuum from birth through 3rd grade. We believe that the words we use create the world we see and that more shared language -- from an agreement that project-based, experiential learning is critical across the age/grade levels; to scrubbing deficiency-focused language and replacing it with strengths-based language; to agreeing on what terms best define a high-quality learning environment -- would represent a symbolic, yet meaningful, step toward alignment across systems.

Theme #2: Effective Professionals/Practitioners are a Shared Priority

Research tells us that, of all in-school factors, teachers have the most influence on the education outcomes of children, and administrators’ influence is second. Despite the importance of these professionals, disparities between the 0-5 and K-12 systems in how teachers and administrators are “held” is concerning.

As just described, the 0-5 and K-12 systems sometimes use different words to signify the professionals who work in them. Across the K-3 grades, every teacher must hold a bachelor’s degree and be licensed by the state. Across programs in 0-5, however, there is much greater variation. Teachers in state-funded Pre-K must hold bachelor’s degrees and be licensed, but this is not true in Head Start or child care programs. Depending on the program or policy guidance, those adults who hold primary responsibility for delivering instruction to young children are called “teachers,” “educators,” “caregivers,” or “providers.” Similarly, site-based administrators in the K-12 system are uniformly referred to as principals but, in the 0-5 system, can be “directors,” “program managers,” or “principals.”

Beyond the variability in job titles, there are more substantive differences in how teachers and administrators are prepared pre-service, supported in-service, and held accountable for their own effectiveness. For example, there are no annual requirements for evaluating the quality of the teacher or teaching in 0-5 settings, with the exception of public Pre-K, while there are annual requirements for the evaluation of educators in K-3 settings. Further, the quality of the teacher and teaching is defined differently between sectors.

Given the growing body of evidence that *consecutive* years of high-quality teaching are essential for closing achievement gaps, when considering the B-3 workforce, we believe it is essential for Nevada to establish greater coherence in the definitions, preparation, support, and evaluation of birth through 3rd grade educators and administrators. As qualifications, certifications, and performance accountabilities are considered, we recommend that there be:

- greater alignment and similarity within the 0-5 system (i.e., state-funded Pre-K, child care, Head Start);
- greater differentiation within the K-12 system for the specific, unique needs of teachers/administrators who work in the primary grades (K-3); and
- greater alignment between the 0-5 and K-3 sectors.

As an example of how recommendations like this might be enacted, Appendix B is a memo shared with the former state superintendent of the NDE related to a unified B-3 certificate.

Theme #3: Variability Around How to Define and Assess “Effectiveness”

How the 0-5 and K-12 systems define and, therefore, measure quality differ. For example, as discussed above, the 0-5 system focuses primarily on the quality of learning environments, using the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (Silver State Stars) and/or Environment Rating Scales to assess the quality of programs. From the 0-5 perspective, the quality of programs and classrooms is a crucial variable and, by measuring and focusing improvement efforts on it, the locus of accountability is placed on programs. In contrast, the K-12 system focuses less attention on school and classroom environments and places more emphasis on the effectiveness of teachers, the use of learning standards, and grade-level assessments in academic content areas to evaluate the system’s collective efforts. From this perspective, the locus of accountability is on teachers and children. We endorse the need to understand *both* how well children are doing *and* how well the system is supporting children.

Striking a balance is challenging. Elementary school settings often have more structural barriers when it comes to meeting quality learning environment indicators (e.g., outdoor playground; hands-on centers and materials for experiential learning), whereas 0-5 programs often are unable to hire and retain qualified teachers with comparable wages. Further, the false dichotomy between “academic” and “whole child” measures and outcomes must be addressed. As developmental science informs us, children’s domains of development are integrated and dependent on each other (e.g., physical development provides the foundation necessary for early writing skills; cognitive gains are dependent on the establishment of an emotionally safe environment and in the context of strong relationships with peers and teachers). Measuring just one or two domains of development to assess “outcomes” or “progress” is both short-sighted and incongruous with developmental science.

At core, we recognize the importance and value of: [a] improved quality and increased capacities of organizations (e.g., 0-5 programs, elementary schools, school district central offices, state agencies); [b] the improved quality and effectiveness of teachers and administrators; [c] *and* the improvement of children’s test scores. To clearly articulate the interrelatedness of these, Nevada could benefit from a shared, statewide theory of change and common understandings about the integrated nature of learning environments, professionals who work with young children, and child/student outcomes. Such a shared understanding could influence the professional learning opportunities provided to teachers and administrators across B-3, and the metrics used in Silver State Stars and School Performance Frameworks.

Theme #4: Lack of Equity in How Resources are Targeted and Experienced by Families

There are many opportunities for improvement with regard to equity in access to high-quality supports for families and classrooms for young children. In the 0-5 sector, access is dependent on families’ socio-economic status, with qualifying levels dependent on the age of the child and the particular program in question. For example, Early Head Start (a program for infants and toddlers, age birth to 3) and Head Start (a program for 4-year-olds with some 3-year-olds served) require families to be at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in order to qualify for free center-based and home-based programs. Some Early Head Start and Head Start programs provide full-day programs while others serve children for a half-day, which is not helpful to full-time working families. Nevada’s state-funded Pre-K (a program for 4-year olds) requires families to be at 200% of the federal poverty level. Although state-funded Pre-K officially offers “full-day” programs, the definition of “full-day” is five hours per day (25 hours per week). In general, this is an insufficient number of hours to offset full-time parental

employment. For a full-time working parent, this means that at least 15 hours of additional care per week need to be secured and afforded, without transportation or on-site options for their children to receive these wraparound hours in the same location where the Pre-K program was provided. Further, care for 3-year-old children, regardless of family income, remains completely inadequate, with most Nevada Head Start and state-funded Pre-K programs targeting and serving predominantly 4-year-old children.

Subsidies to offset the cost of child care require family income to be at or below 140% of the federal poverty level in Nevada. Thus, a family of four with three children under the age of 5 living in a household at 210% of the federal poverty limit (i.e., who makes \$54,075 per year in 2019) will not have access to Early Head Start, Head Start, state-funded Pre-K, or subsidy dollars to offset the cost of early care and education before entry into Kindergarten. If the family are non-native speakers of English, they may have access to a Zoom Pre-K program in a nearby elementary school once the child reaches age 4, if the school has a high enough percentage of English learners in the school as a whole and if the school is in a district that chose to use state Zoom funding for Pre-K. Further, no specific child care or language supports would be available to this family before the child reached the age of 4. In all likelihood, this family would need to pay out-of-pocket for child care, which would cost an average of \$11,137 per year for one child as an infant and toddler, then \$8,835 per year for each child as a preschooler. In other words, 20% of the parent's salary would go toward paying for infant/toddler care for just one child and 32% of the salary would go toward paying for Pre-K for two children. This leaves very little cushion in the family budget for rent/mortgage and all other living expenses.

Once the child reaches the age of Kindergarten eligibility (age 5 by September 30), the situation is slightly less dire. The child is now eligible for six hours per day of school. Presuming the parent works eight hours per day, the parent still needs to secure wrap-around (before and/or after-school) care. Such care is often provided by child care centers near elementary schools or providers who have a contract to provide before/after school care on site; in most cases, parents must pay out-of-pocket for these programs and services. In both cases, the parent will need to pay the fees charged by the provider and remain ineligible for subsidy.

The equity issues illustrated by these brief examples are clear. Parents with moderate incomes often suffer the most in finding adequate care for their children before the age of 5. Further, if parents do qualify for subsidy, they must choose a child care provider who is participating in the state's Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS). Currently, only a fraction of private child care centers are actively participating in the QRIS.

Within the K-3 school system, the amount of funding provided to an individual school is dependent on the school's total population of children eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) and other populations of students who have traditionally been underserved. Free lunch requires families to be at 130% of the federal poverty limit while reduced price lunch requires families to be at 185% of the federal poverty limit. Schools not meeting the appropriate percentage of FRL-eligible families will not receive Title I funding. In other words, schools serving a majority of low- to moderate-income families will not receive extra resources. This creates another inequity for families who, arguably, may need supports similar to their lower-income counterparts.

To improve equitable targeting of and access to resources for Nevada's families, we make the following general recommendations:

- Adequate funding for CCDF subsidies needs to be available for the entire range of children from birth through 3rd grade, so working parents of *all* children (including those with disabilities) can access *real* full-day child care, Pre-K, Head Start, and before- and after-school quality wrap-around options that match usual family work schedules (i.e., 8-10 hours/day).
- Schools that are just above the Title I eligibility guidelines should receive more Nevada Department of Education funding to support children and families. By doing so, communities with a large proportion of families who earn more than the federal poverty level, but less than a living wage, will have greater access to better-resourced elementary schools.
- State funding for programs serving 3-year-old children should be initiated to bridge the gap between infant/toddler and Pre-K programs.

Theme #5: Human and Financial Capital Barriers Must be Addressed

In Nevada, there is a “perfect storm” with regard to human, financial, and space capacity to support young children from birth through 3rd grade. On the human capital front, there is a shortage of professionals who can ably bridge 0-5 and elementary education -- teachers (both in districts and community-based settings), coaches, trainers, administrators, and policymakers at both district and state levels. In addition, Nevada has a limited number of stakeholders and decision-makers (including policy makers) with the B-3 expertise needed to collectively engage and invest in systems-level change.

The shortage of K-12 teachers in Nevada is a known concern, exacerbated by an increasing population of school-aged children and a high teacher turnover rate.¹⁰ In community child care, data on the workforce are less available. However, the Children’s Cabinet completes an annual survey of private child care providers and reports a yearly teacher turnover rate of 23%, which is much greater than the K-12 turnover rate. A full 79% of private child care teachers have been at their current location five years or fewer. The turnover rate is exacerbated by the low salaries received by teachers in private child care settings. According to the Children’s Cabinet, the average starting wage for private center-based teachers is \$10.90/hour (\$22,672/year). This lack of a living wage makes it difficult to attract and retain a qualified workforce. In contrast, the entry-level wage for a state-funded Pre-K teacher is around \$40,000/year in Nevada.

Funding across the B-3 continuum is a pervasive concern. Funding impacts teacher compensation, the existence of facilities that expand access and provide learning environments supportive of young children’s development, and accessibility and affordability for families. Although state funding for Pre-K has increased in the past two legislative sessions, there is still limited funding to increase the availability of high quality B-3 classrooms and limited funding to address the shortage of qualified personnel to lead these classrooms. Despite the increased Pre-K funding, Nevada currently serves only 15% of 4-year-olds in these settings.

Although state funding for classrooms serving 4-year-olds has increased in recent years, elementary schools struggle to provide the space necessary to add these classrooms to their buildings. Some community child care providers have stepped up to offer space for state-funded Pre-K. However, this creates an inequity within that center, when one classroom must meet state-funded Pre-K requirements (most notably a licensed teacher) and other classrooms in the same building abide by state child care licensing standards. This means that a community child care center may have one classroom serving 4-year-olds with a licensed teacher, serving parents at 200% of the poverty level, and mandated participation in the state-funded Pre-K version of Silver State Stars. Other classrooms in the same building serving 4-year-olds could have a teacher with a high school diploma (or less), serving parents who pay out-of-pocket for their child’s participation, and participating in the child care version of Silver State Stars. So, although the number of 4-year-olds served has increased, alignment and equity issues have been compounded by enacting this short-term solution. Space for serving young children across the 0-5 continuum must be prioritized.

¹⁰ Nevada Teacher Workforce Report. Second edition, 2018 Published by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas College of Education. Link: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/co_educ_fac_articles/25/

Theme #6: Expectations for Collaboration are Essential and Governance Divides Impede It

Throughout the plans reviewed, and in our experiences working deeply within Nevada for the past three years, we have noticed differing commitments to and expectations for collaboration. In some cases, collaboration is one-sided. For instance, there may be an expressed desire for Pre-K and child care providers to receive common professional learning, but rarely have we seen an expectation that Pre-K, child care, and K-3 teachers collaborate. Or, we may see a desire on the part of Pre-K to be a collaborative partner with K-3, but this desire is not reciprocated. At the same time, there is a tendency for collaborations established in the 0-5 sphere to omit K-3 teachers and administrators, and vice versa. The “cylinders of excellence” are perhaps most pronounced in the individual efforts of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education (see Appendix C for an illustration). It is important to note that these exclusions are not intentional, but they are ubiquitous and reflect the need for a shared understanding and vision of B-3 work in Nevada.

Collaboration is impeded by the structural and governance divides that exist in Nevada. These divides are certainly not unique to Nevada, as the K-3 and 0-5 spheres have developed in largely independent contexts and histories. The result is that different agencies, with different authority structures and different regulatory masters, are charged with developing policies and actions that support the learning and development of young children and their families from birth through 3rd grade. Without collaboration and a clear, integrated vision, these policies and actions may compete or conflict with one another. For example, different entities in Nevada have made a clear commitment to children’s social and emotional well-being. Indeed, children’s social and emotional well-being is addressed by the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, the Division of Child and Family Services, and the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services in the Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environments and Office of Early Learning and Development in the Department of Education. With separate divisions and departments involved, there is no one decision-maker or collaborative team to establish priorities and to make sure that all of the proverbial ships are sailing in the same direction.

In short, we have been making do with our cylindered systems, instead of envisioning a more aligned system and building the human and financial capacity needed to achieve it. Envisioning a new, integrated system will not be easy or fast, but establishing expectations for collaboration among all entities working on behalf of young children from birth through age 8 is a worthy goal. The young children of Nevada deserve it.

To that end, we close this report in the same place in which we began, recommending intentionality to increase alignment within and among state agencies and their policy efforts.

To begin to address the human capital, financial, and governance constraints, Nevada should convene a high-level leadership council or commission including representatives from the Governor's Office, the state legislature, NDE, DHHS, school districts, and others to establish a shared vision of learning and development across the B-3 continuum. Key Nevada experts who have deep experience in B-3 should also be represented. While there have been efforts to do this in the past, including the current project in which we have been involved, they have lacked engagement from stakeholders with authority to enact meaningful change. Our efforts, and those that came before, have been supported by dedicated, smart professionals and practitioners who will work with and support a Cabinet-level team. We know that B-3 requires deep commitment to children's learning and development, as well as effective leadership, at every level of the system -- from the classroom to the Senate floor.

Conclusion

The six overarching themes derived from our work in Nevada and our deep dive into four key policy documents illuminate specific levers for change. This work is a starting point, not merely a final deliverable. It is our plan to share these analyses and recommendations with key decision-makers in order to effectualize these levers. Without a continuing drumbeat and momentum toward improved alignment across the B-3 continuum, the children and families of Nevada will continue to experience our well-intentioned efforts as piecemeal services from cylinders of excellence.

As engaged stakeholders, we invite you, the readers, to join us in the determination to unify, streamline, and engage in the challenging work to build a B-3 system that truly works for the children and families of Nevada.

Reference and Resources

Kauerz, K., & Coffman, J. (2013). *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches*. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington.

Plans reviewed can be found at the following links:

1. Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Strategic Plan: <http://nvecac.com/ecac-reports-documents/>
2. Nevada Department of Education Read by Grade Three Guidance Document: http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Read_by_Three/RBG3GuidanceDocument.pdf
3. Nevada Department of Education State Improvement Plan: <http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/home/Docs/Stip2018%20.pdf>
4. Division of Welfare and Supportive Services Child Care and Development Fund State Plan 2019-2021: https://dwss.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dwssnvgov/content/Care/CC_StatePlan-2019.pdf

B-3 Vignettes

Vignette 1

Destiny is a single mom with 3 boys who qualifies for Early Head Start for her youngest child. She works at a minimum wage job. The youngest child, Nicholas, was in a full-day, full-year Early Head Start program until the summer after he turned 3. The older boys were in 1st and 3rd grades in her zoned elementary school. A transition plan was created for Nicholas and Destiny when they completed an application for Head Start. However, the family did not qualify because Destiny had successfully held a job and made about \$2,000 over the federal poverty level, which is about \$25,000 for a family of 4. Even if they had been eligible for Head Start, the local program serves a minimal number of 3-year-olds in a 6-hour day. Destiny did qualify for child care subsidy but was unable to afford the required copayment for private child care. Because she couldn't find someone to care for Nicholas, she missed several days from work and was dismissed. Now unemployed, Destiny no longer qualified for child care subsidy, couldn't pay her rent, and the family started living in the car. When the car was repossessed, the family went to live in a shelter.

Vignette 2

Michael is a 6-month-old in a 2-parent, dual income professional family. He goes to a private, accredited child care center full time. Michael was identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder at age 2 and a half. Part C services with a developmental specialist were provided in the childcare center once he qualified. The parents supplemented these services at a private clinic with additional speech, occupational therapy, social groups for pragmatics, and he was enrolled in several extracurricular activities. Once Michael turned age 3, he was transitioned to Part B but the parents declined the ½ day program with 20 minutes of speech per week and quarterly OT check-ins that was offered. To assure continuity of services for Michael, the parents paid for all private services he was previously receiving as supplemental to provide services in the childcare center in which he was enrolled. He was able to stay at the same childcare center for Kindergarten, so continuity of services was available. In 1st grade, Michael transitioned to his zoned school and needed to start receiving the services on his Individualized Education Plan through the school district (which meant he transitioned from 4 hours of speech therapy per week to 20 minutes per week). He was placed in a regular classroom with no supplementary aid. He had 3 different Special Education teachers in his first year of 1st grade. Michael's IEP expired at the end of 1st grade and was not renewed until October of his 2nd grade year. His 2nd grade teacher was not aware of Michael's specific characteristics when she received him.

Once the IEP was convened, Michael's private providers participated and were able to assist the teacher with appropriate strategies.

Vignette 3

Samantha has found out there is a free spot for state-funded preschool for her 4-year-old, Justin. Unfortunately, the site is across town and the county doesn't provide transportation for Pre-K. It is a "full-day" program, but she has learned "full-day" means 25 hours per week. Samantha would need to take 2 busses to get Justin to pre-K, which is in the opposite direction of her job. Samantha works full-time at a grocery store and will not be able to work a full shift if she accepts the spot for Justin in Pre-K. She needs a full-time paycheck to pay her rent, so has decided not to take the spot.

Vignette 4

Alexis has 3 children: a kindergartner named Sequoia, a 3-year-old named Joseph, and an infant named Jesse. Joseph and Jesse have been diagnosed with special needs. Alexis works full-time, as does her boyfriend. Sequoia's kindergarten starts at 9:30 and goes until 3:30. Joseph is being served in an integrated Pre-K setting that starts at 9 and ends at 11:30. Jesse is eligible for in-home services through Early Intervention and is watched by a neighbor most days. After her night shift job, Alexis has a short nap before waking to get all 3 children ready and drive Joseph to Pre-K. After dropping off Joseph at his school, Alexis drops Sequoia off at kindergarten at her zoned school nearby. She drops off Jesse with her neighbor when she gets home so she can sleep a bit more. She wakes up at 11 to pick up Joseph, then the two eat lunch and Alexis tries to get Joseph to lay down with her until 3. At 3 they pick up Sequoia and Jesse, then start homework and dinner. Alexis sees her boyfriend briefly when he gets home at 5:30, but then needs to start getting ready for work, which starts at 7pm.

Vignette 5

When funding became available from the recent Preschool Development Grant for quality improvement for kindergarten classrooms, many administrators and teachers quickly jumped on board staying late after contract hours to submit their request for funds. It quickly became apparent that kindergarten teachers seldom to never have a budget to purchase classroom materials. In recent years, there has been a push for kindergarteners to acquire skills in isolation causing the elimination of rich, play-based learning opportunities. And many Kindergarten classrooms today are structured like those of later grades: focusing on academic competencies over foundational social-emotional, cognitive, and motor skills. If we are serious

about improving outcomes across the K-12 continuum, we need to recommit to developmentally appropriate instruction, to guided, play-based, whole-child learning. And that is what this PDG Quality Improvement Supplemental grant was focused on doing to better align PreK and Kindergarten learning environments.

Through these grants, teachers continue to express their appreciation for validating their expertise and knowledge by being able to provide high-quality materials and center-based, child-centered experiences that are often discouraged by district administrators that solely focus on academics and may not understand the research or have child development background. We have known for years that the classroom environment is the “second teacher” in the classroom. With these significant upgrades, we can now take advantage of that “second teacher”. Additionally, these grants reduce equity barriers for all children, including language learners and children in poverty who learn best through discovery, contextual experience, and application. Research also states that application of high-quality choice activities develops self-regulation and other imperative social emotional skills. Unfortunately, due to a last minute change in funding decisions, these funds were not approved.

**B-3 Licensure Matters:
A Memo Prepared for Leadership at the Nevada Department of
Education**

Prepared by Melissa Burnham, Ph.D.
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July 13, 2018

- Requirements for licensure are disjointed across the Birth-3rd Grade continuum. Teacher licensure is a job requirement for teachers of young children in state-funded Pre-K and the K-3 grades in public schools, but not for teachers of young children in community center-based or family child care, Head Start, or Early Head Start.
- There are overlapping licenses in Nevada: 1) An Early Childhood License, which spans Birth through 2nd grade, and 2) An Elementary Education License, which spans Kindergarten through 8th grade (and soon will change to Kindergarten through 5th grade, as outlined in Nevada’s ESSA Plan).
- Many principals choose flexibility of teachers over an in-depth knowledge base in the early grades, so they hire the Elementary licensed teacher over the Early Childhood licensed teacher. In some cases, especially in rural Nevada, this flexibility is essential.
- The vast age/grade span for each license means that preparation programs must be selective in what topics can be covered in depth, and which are only covered in a limited manner. According to Jackson et al.¹¹ “Because they have to cover so much ground, elementary teacher training programs...too often fail to offer in-depth coursework in early childhood development or in instructional strategies specific to young children” (p. 4).
- Developmental science informs us that birth to age 8 is a unique period in development; thus, a licensure structure with requirements that equip teachers with sufficient knowledge of this age range is essential.
- While a birth through age 8 license is best aligned with developmental science, it does not align with practice settings. While a solid understanding of the foundations of development is essential for all educators, those who work in public school settings will (most likely) not need specialized knowledge about infants/toddlers.

¹¹ Jackson, S., Orenstein, N., & Bornfreund, L. (2017). *One size does not fit all: The need for specialized teacher licenses in the early grades*. Washington, DC: New America.

National Context

- Several states are grappling with the issue of licensure for teachers of young children. According to a recent report from New America¹¹, All four states we examined face a push and pull between designing a system that trains teachers in ways that science shows are best for young children and responding to the needs of a large bureaucratic system that demands flexibility in hiring and classroom demands. We find that in too many cases, the needs of the bureaucracy win out over children’s developmental needs (p. 3).
- A seminal, comprehensive report collaboratively commissioned by the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) and the National Research Council¹² examined the workforce needs for young children, birth to age 8, and made recommendations on building a qualified workforce. Eight state and regional teams are currently working together on implementation of this report’s recommendations (California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Virginia, Washington, and a regional team made up of Maryland, Northern Virginia, and Washington, DC).
- The IOM/NRC report notes, “For too long, the nation has been making do with the systems and policies that *are* rather than envisioning the systems and policies that are *needed*, and committing to the strategies necessary to achieve them” (p. 15).
- The New America report makes the following recommendations for states:
 - Establish an early childhood educator license—Pre-K-3 or a variation—if one does not already exist.
 - Review early childhood and elementary teaching licenses and consider reducing the overlap across these licenses.
 - Provide professional learning opportunities (both pre-service and in-service) for principals and other district leaders to prepare them as stronger Pre-K, K, and early grade leaders.... States can use, and encourage districts to use, ESSA and Title II dollars to support such training and internship programs for principals and district leaders (p. 11).

¹² Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC). (2015). *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Solutions for Consideration in the Nevada Context

- To ensure better alignment with developmental science and to assure that preparation programs can focus on specialized knowledge for teachers of young children, convert the current licensing structure (Birth-2nd grade and K-8) to the following:
 - Pre-K-3rd grade license (covering children aged 3 through 8)
 - Upper Elementary license (covering children in grades 3-6)
- Conversion to this proposed structure would mean eliminating the existing K-8/K-5 license and the Birth to 2nd Grade license, opting for a more developmentally sound structure to the licensure system and less overlap between licenses.
- Converting to this licensing structure also would need to carefully consider rural districts and others that may need flexibility. One possibility would be to simultaneously create an endorsement for the Upper Elementary license, which would allow for teachers to show mastery of advanced content and teaching methods (either through additional coursework or passage of an exam) to obtain this endorsement to their Pre-K-3 license.
- Consider creating a Birth through Age 3 license, endorsement, and/or credential, which would allow for teachers to demonstrate specialized knowledge and skills for working with infants and toddlers and their families. Because of the current context, which does not require a Bachelor's degree and licensure for teachers of children in this age span, a credential may be a necessary first step, and would acknowledge the importance of specialized training for this group of teachers. Specific suggestions for consideration of this credential:
 - The Nevada Department of Education should collaborate with the Early Childhood Advisory Council, Nevada Registry, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nevada, Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children, NSHE early childhood faculty, the Nevada Head Start Association, and the Office of Child Care Licensing to assure that the skills, competencies, and requirements of this credential are aligned with current research and existing policies. (Collaboration to change policy, where needed, should be anticipated.)
 - Acknowledging the importance of specialized knowledge and skills for this age group would also align the NDE with what research tells us about the importance of the early years in establishing the foundation for all later learning, and would more strongly align the NDE with the larger early childhood care and education community.

This effort will reflect the recognition that a healthy, well-educated population is important to the economic and social prosperity of [Nevada], which in turn requires successful investments in getting and keeping the care and education of young children on the right track¹² (p. 561).

B-3 Cylinders of Excellence in Nevada

