

# Principals: Crucial Leaders in Transforming Primary Education

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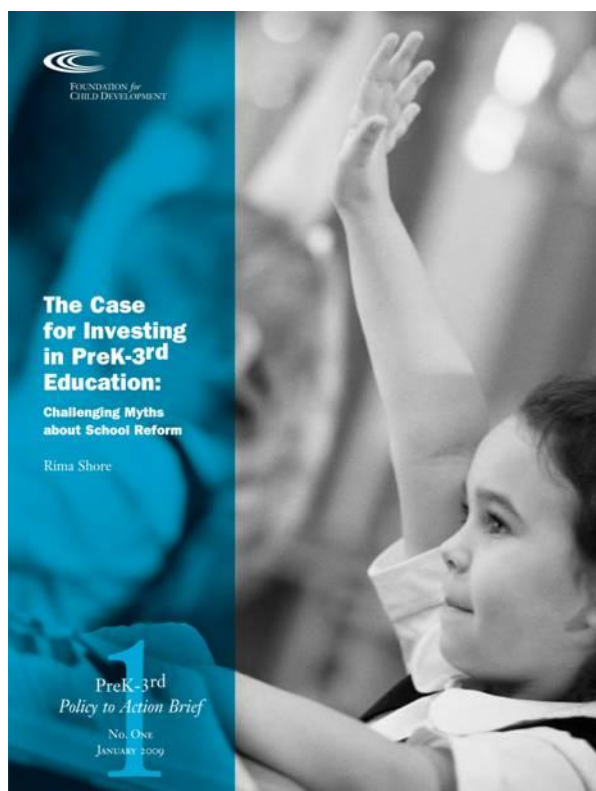
National Association of Elementary  
School Principals Foundation  
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# SETTING THE STAGE: WHY PRINCIPALS MATTER



**Elementary school principals are crucial in creating effective schools and improving student achievement.**

**Principals alone account for 25 percent of a school's impact on student learning.**

**Principal and teacher quality together account for nearly 60 percent of a school's impact.**

Source: R.J. Marzano, T. Waters, & B. McNulty, *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005.

# PRINCIPALS: LEADERS IN TRANSFORMING AMERICA'S PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

**Principals play a crucial role in transforming our primary education system. No meaningful change can occur without elementary school principals.**

- **Our current primary education system (K-Grade 4) is not aligned with scientific advances about the conditions that affect children's learning.**
- **Both PreK/early learning programs and the K-12 grades must now be linked to create a cradle-to-career (P-16) educational system.**
- **PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> is the first building block of a transformed P-16 public education system for this century.**



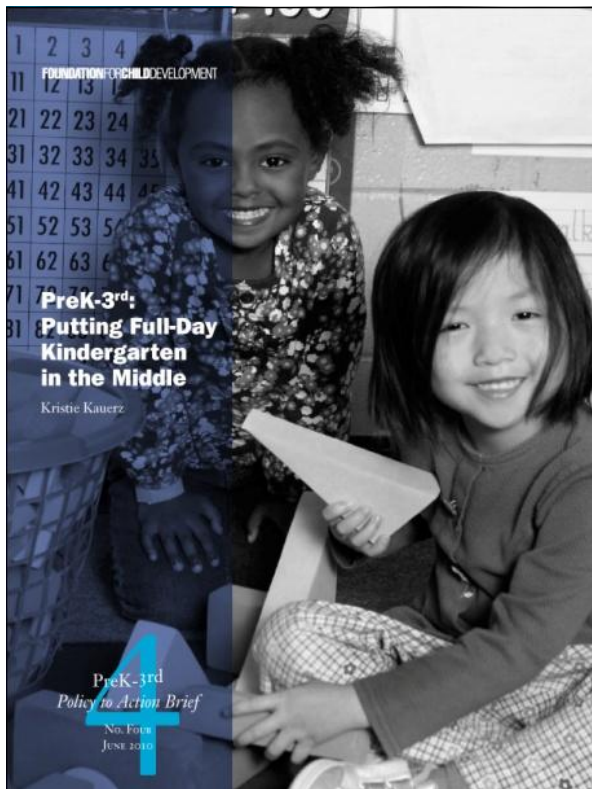
# WHY PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>: A NATION AT LONG-TERM RISK

## Why we must transform America's primary education starting with PreK:

- Many children come to Kindergarten unprepared to learn.
- The education pipeline between PreK and Third Grade is sprouting huge leaks.
- The majority of American children are not being well-educated from PreK to Third Grade:
  - Sixty-six (66) percent of all children are not reading at or above grade level when they are first tested for NAEP at the beginning of Fourth Grade.
  - For children of color living in low-income households, the overwhelming majority – about 80 percent nationally – are not reading at grade level when they are first tested for NAEP.

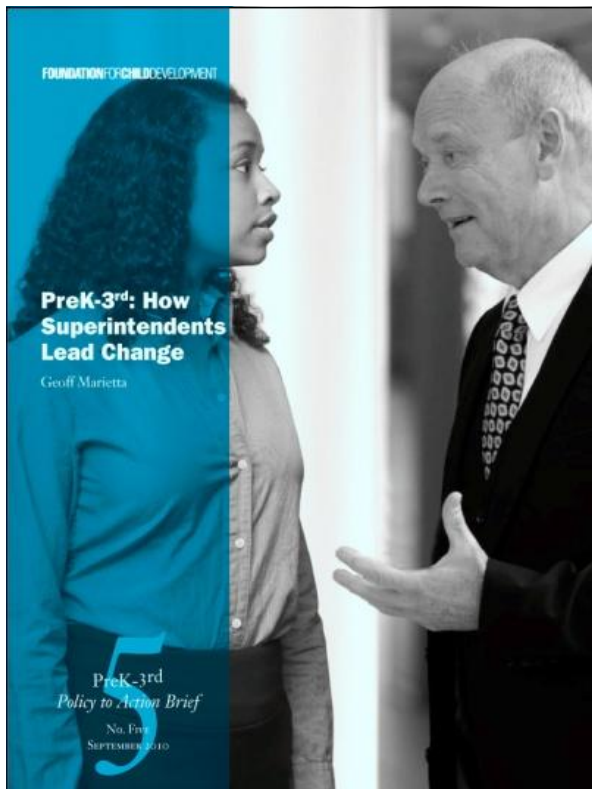


# WHY PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>: A NATION AT LONG-TERM RISK



- **To describe these long-standing facts as constituting a crisis is a vast understatement.**
- **In 1982, America was labeled “A Nation at Risk.”**
- **In 2012, America is a nation at serious long-term risk.**

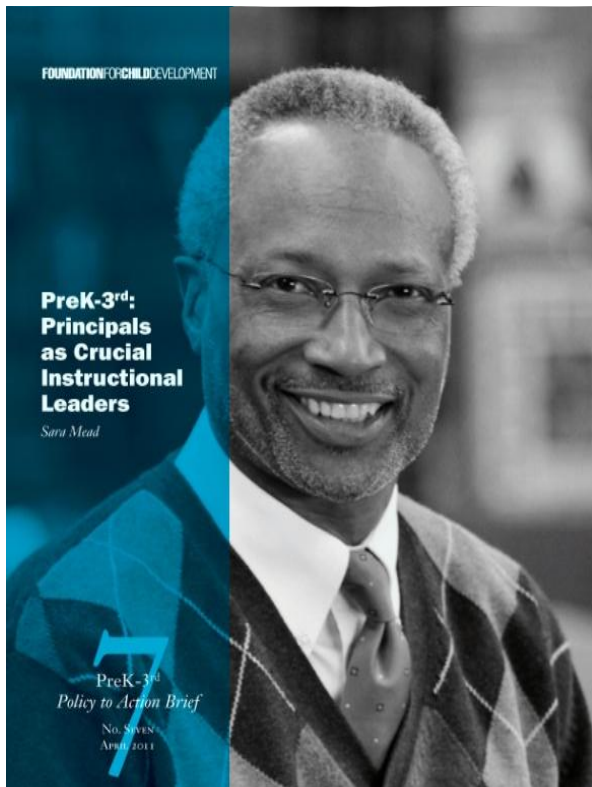
# WHAT IS PREK-3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE? CREATING A CONTINUUM OF EARLY LEARNING FROM AGES THREE TO EIGHT



- **Shared understanding among educators of the economic and cultural conditions of children's daily lives, and their significant influences on children's health and learning.**
- **Full-Day, Voluntary PreK programs beginning at least by age three, preferably age two for vulnerable children.**
- **Full-Day, Required Kindergarten.**
- **Superintendent leadership for district-wide change.**

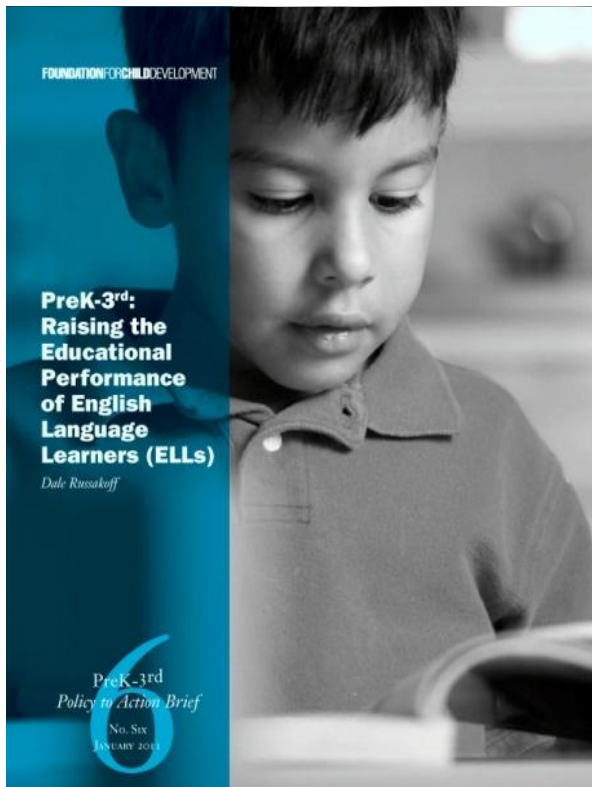


# WHAT IS PREK-3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE? CREATING A CONTINUUM OF EARLY LEARNING FROM AGES THREE TO EIGHT



- **Principal leadership at the school level that provides time and resources for teacher teams centered on PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.**
- **Family engagement focused on what children are learning in classrooms.**
- **Increasing learning time for close alignment of instruction in before- and after-school programs, including weekends and summer programs.**

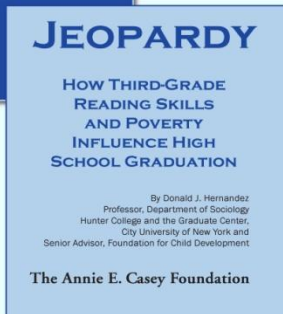
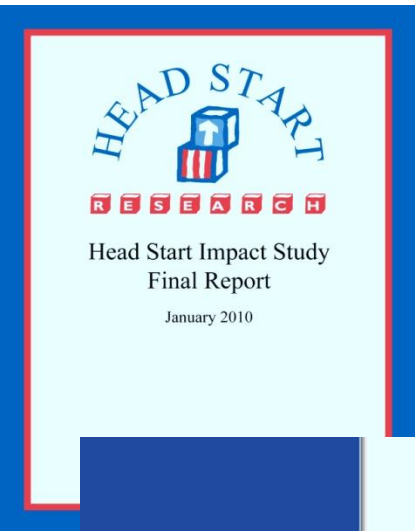
# WHY PREK-3<sup>RD</sup> IS IMPORTANT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS



- All children require sustained, aligned instruction from PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, especially in oral language and in academic English.
- Dual Language Learners have the major task of acquiring another language.
- More learning time – before, during and after school, including summer programs, is required. All must be tightly aligned with what happens in classrooms.



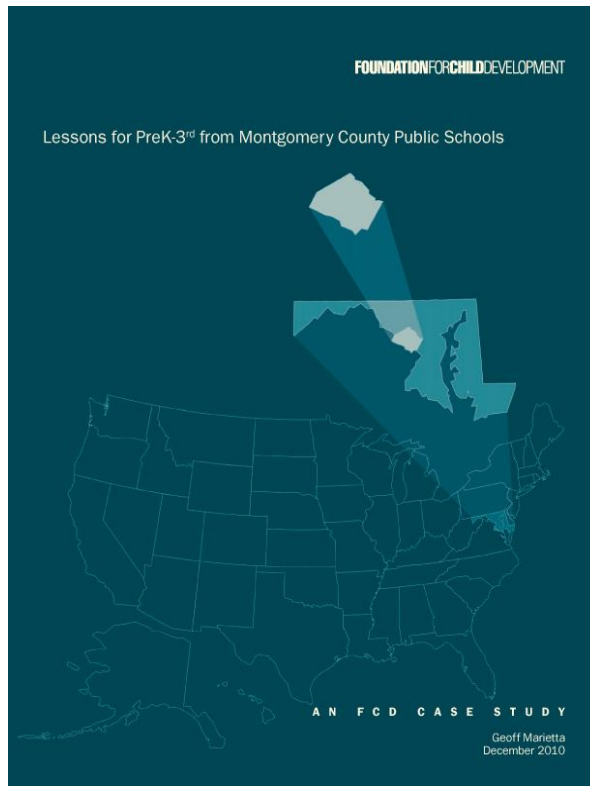
# PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>: AN EVIDENCE-DRIVEN STRATEGY



- Quality early learning programs must be sustained by a quality K-12 education system: National Head Start Impact Study.
- Third Grade outcomes are crucial for future educational success in schools: *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation.*
- Programs that are well-connected and integrated in learning opportunities from PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade have positive outcomes: Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools, Bremerton (WA) and Chicago Child-Parent Center Education Program (IL).

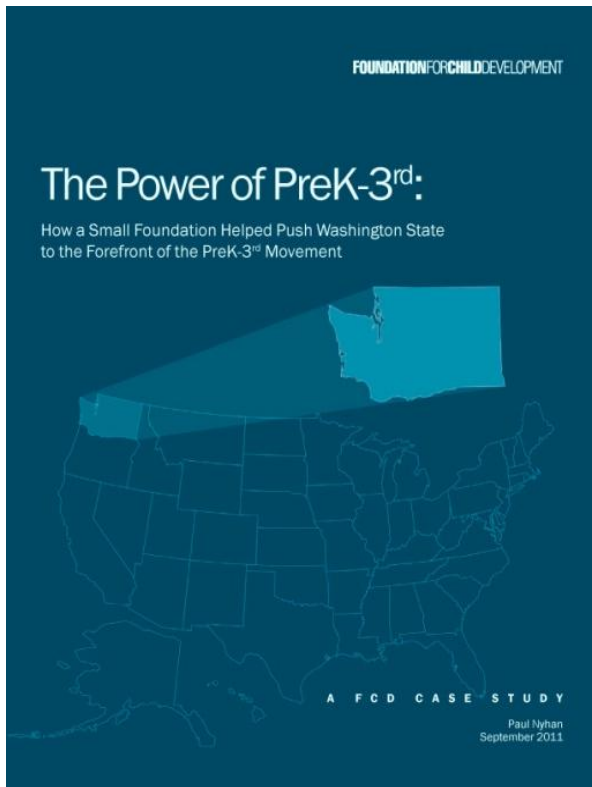
# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>'S EFFECTIVENESS?

## Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland)



- Ninety percent of Third Graders in MCPS are proficient readers, including almost 75 percent of students in the Limited English Proficient (LEP) sub-group.
- The reading gap between the LEP sub-group and all Third Grade students has narrowed by 36 percentage points since 2003.
- Student learning in PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> does not fade out in middle and high school.
- Eighty-six percent of of MCPS students go to college, including nearly 80 percent of African American students and over 75 percent of Latino students.
- Nearly 50 percent of all former MCPS students earn a college degree within six years of graduation (a rate nearly double that of the nation as a whole).

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>'S EFFECTIVENESS?



## Bremerton Public Schools (Washington)

- The percentage of Fourth Graders meeting state reading standards rises every year – up from 59 percent in 2003, to 74 percent in 2009.
- Sixty-six percent of entering Kindergarteners in 2009, knew their letters, an increase of 62 percent in eight years.

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>'S EFFECTIVENESS?

Chicago Child-Parent Center Education Program (Illinois, and expanding to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan)

The Chicago Longitudinal Study focused on participants in the Child-Parent Center Education Program (CPCEP), a Title I-funded effort that provides up to six years of continuous learning experiences from PreK, starting at age three, through Third Grade.

Now in its 26th year, findings show that the impact of the CPCEPs can endure through the third decade of life, and that the benefit-costs of the CPCEPs are an 18 percent annual return on investment for society.

The data show that high-quality early education programs that begin in PreK and continue through Third Grade lead to higher school graduation rates and socioeconomic status; lower drug and alcohol abuse; and lower arrests and incarcerations.

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>'S EFFECTIVENESS?

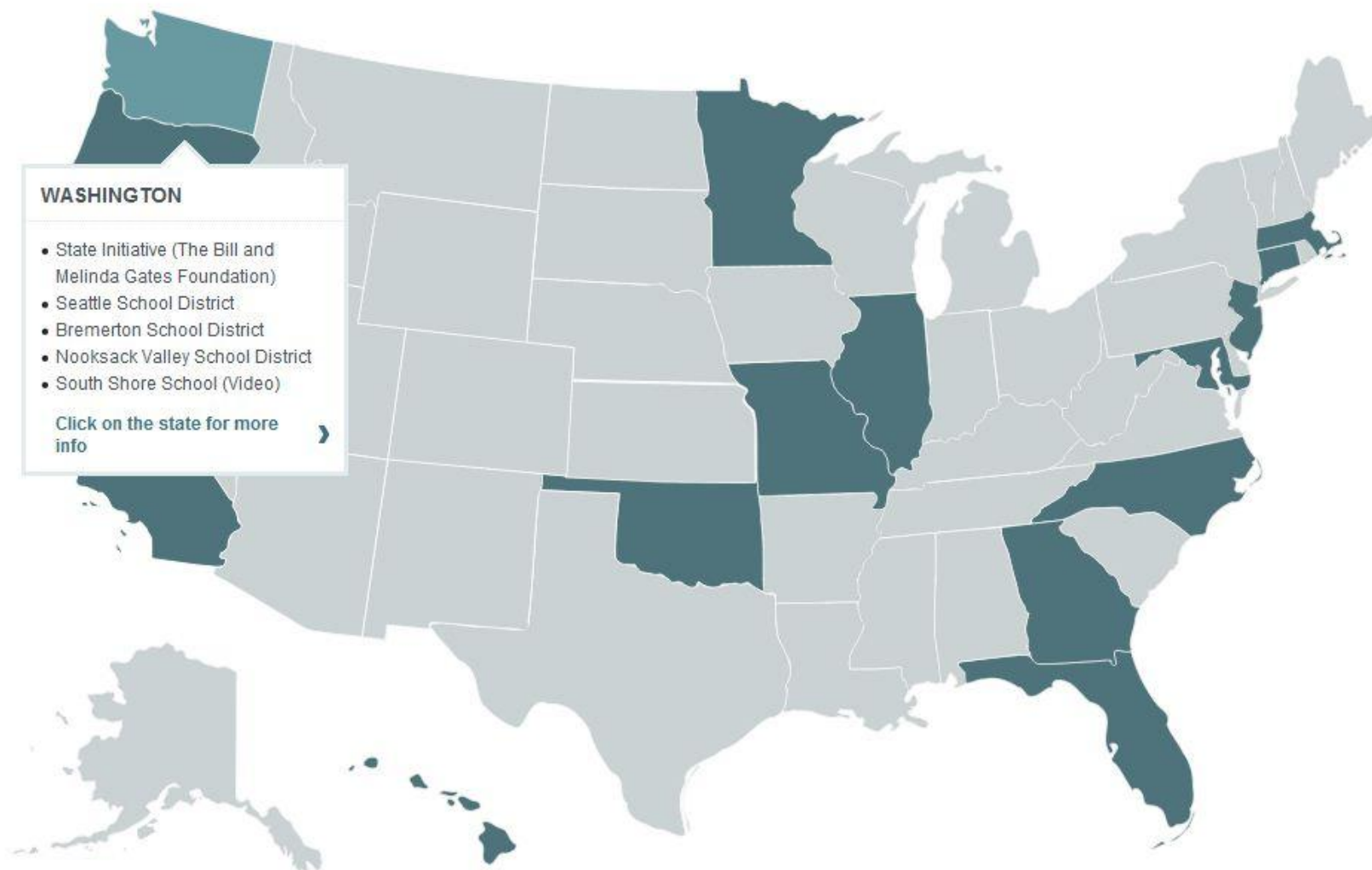
## Chicago Child-Parent Center Education Program (CPCEP)

For participants at age 28, the positive outcomes among the 957 individuals who began the program in PreK, compared to a comparison group of 529 individuals of similar backgrounds but did not experience the program, included:

- Nine percent more of the CPCEP children completed high school.
- Twenty percent more achieved moderate or higher socioeconomic status.
- Nineteen percent more had health insurance coverage as an employment benefit.
- Twenty-eight percent fewer abused drugs and alcohol.
- Twenty-two percent fewer had a felony arrest.
- Twenty-eight percent fewer experienced incarceration.

Source: “School-Based Early Childhood Education and Age-28 Well-Being: Effects by Timing, Dosage, and Subgroups.” *Science*, 9 June 2011, doi:10.1126/science.1203618.

# WHERE IS PREK-3<sup>RD</sup> HAPPENING? THE FCD PREK-3<sup>RD</sup> MAP

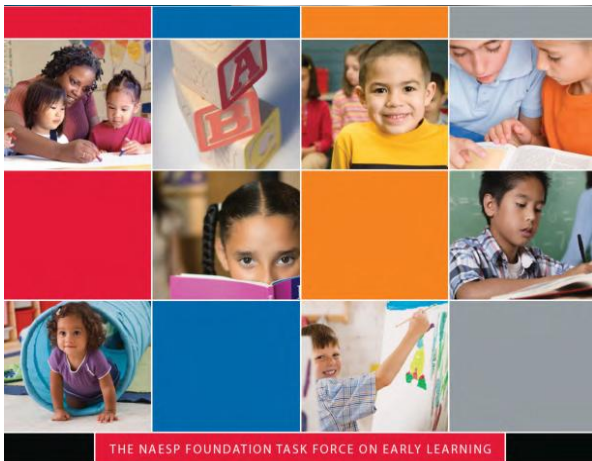




# THREE CRUCIAL ROLES FOR PRINCIPALS IN SUPPORT OF PREK-3RD

**PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> cannot be implemented in schools without principal leadership.**

- Principals are essential to create a culture of collaboration among teachers that is necessary for PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> implementation.**
- Principals themselves or with others can foster a culture of effective teaching and continuous improvement of instruction.**
- Principals can reach out and build relationships with community partners.**



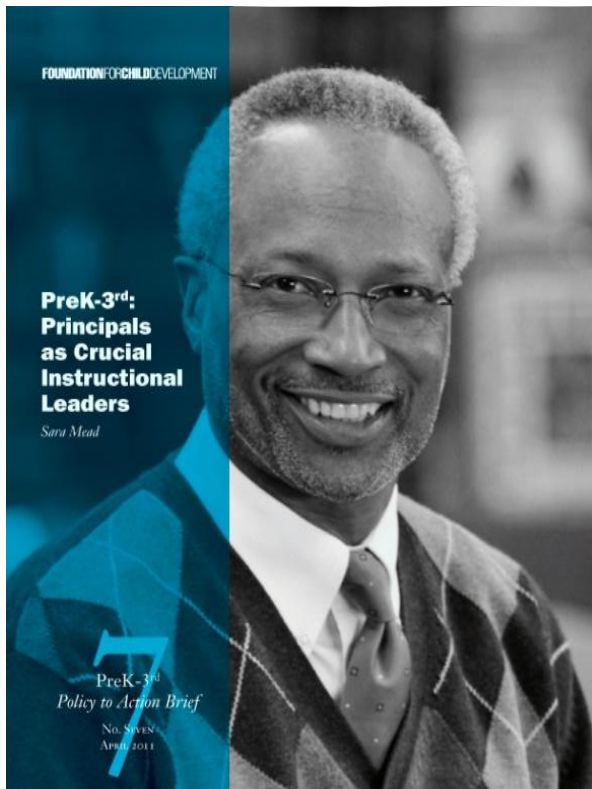
Building & Supporting an Aligned System:  
**A Vision for Transforming  
Education Across the  
Pre-K-Grade Three Years**

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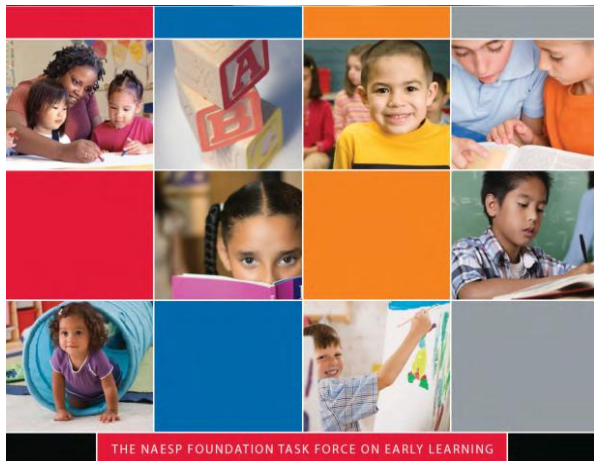


# CREATING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION IN SCHOOLS



- **The most important role that a principal can play in building strong PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> learning environments is to create a culture of collaboration among teachers and staff in a school.**
- **S/he views PreK and Kindergarten as fundamental parts of a school's mission, not add-ons, and integral to a PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> learning continuum. Every grade is an opportunity for learning.**
- **Principals send a clear message that PreK and Kindergarten students and teachers are not second-class citizens, but equal partners with the other grades, and take steps to integrate them fully into all aspects of the school community.**
- **Principals reallocate resources – time, money, people – to support frequent joint professional development activities for PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> teachers to work as teams focused on effective instruction.**

# FOSTERING A CULTURE OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING



THE NAESP FOUNDATION TASK FORCE ON EARLY LEARNING

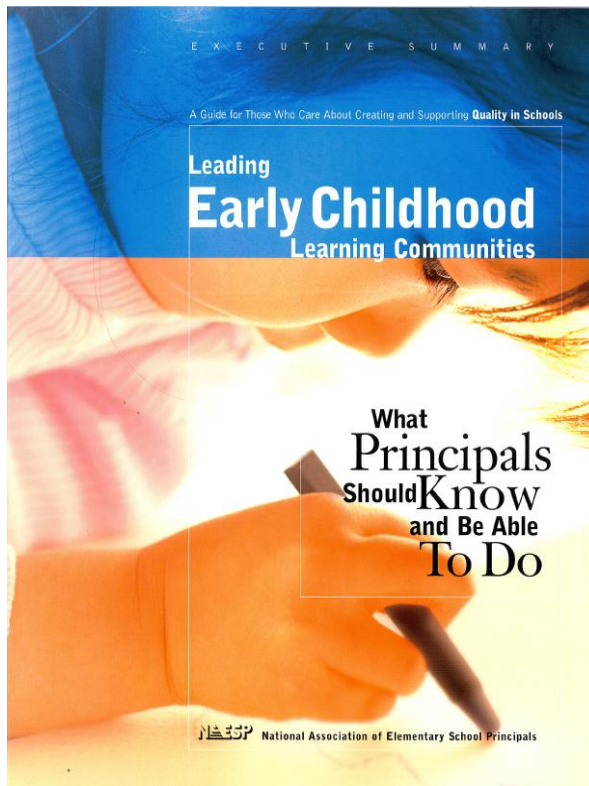
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- **Effective PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> principals foster a culture that focuses relentlessly on quality instruction for every child.**
- **Working in collaborative teams, teachers together align standards, sequenced curriculum, instruction and assessments from PreK through Third Grade. Every year matters. Each year builds on the previous one, and is informed by what happens next.**
- **Principals or other staff observe teachers frequently, provide support and feedback for improvement, and work to ensure effective teaching in all classrooms.**
- **Professional development is focused on improving instruction and developing higher skills.**

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS: WIN-WIN FOR ALL



**Children's education begins long before Kindergarten entry.**

- **NAESP's earlier initiative – Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities – provided detailed guidance on how principals can reach out to early learning programs in and outside their schools.**
- **Principals can work to co-locate Head Start and other private programs in their schools, e.g., Naval Avenue Learning Academy in Bremerton, Washington. Win-win situation for all.**
- **Principals can create partnerships with community programs through regular joint professional development involving school-based teachers and those in community programs.**
- **Principals can work with before and after school programs to reinforce learning in schools, thus extending learning time for those at risk for poor achievement.**

# SO WHAT IS NEW ABOUT PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>?

- Many of the principles of effective schools are reflected in PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> approaches.
- What is new is starting earlier with PreK/early learning and Kindergarten as important years or grades for learning that are equal to Grades 1-12.
- What is new is the focus on aligned instruction, not only from PreK-3<sup>rd</sup>, but all the way up to postsecondary education. Learning accumulates from year to year.
- What is new is the recognition of teacher leadership, teaming, and collaboration in contrast to the heroic solo teacher making the difference.



## PRINCIPALS LEAD THE WAY FOR PK-3: Early Investment Strong Alignment Better Results

APRIL 2006

We've heard it over and over: Children need more and better support early on to be able to come to school ready to learn and succeed in the elementary grades. Educators, researchers and policymakers acknowledge the importance of early childhood education for all children. The first five years of life are critical to the development of emotional competence, as well as linguistic, cognitive, social and motor skills. Without adequate early education, statistics show a dramatic decline in later academic performance.

*"Children who do not recognize the letters of the alphabet when they enter kindergarten demonstrate significantly lower reading skills at the end of first grade, and statistically, by then, the damage is done. Eighty-eight percent of children who are poor readers in first grade will still be poor readers in fourth grade. Seventy-four percent of children who are poor readers in third grade will still be poor readers when they start high school. High-quality PK programs give children the tools they need to keep pace in school and become able readers." – Pre-K Now*

Research indicates that PK programs reduce the likelihood of teen crime, delinquency and pregnancy. Strong PK programs are also linked to greater employment rates and higher adult wages.

But early learning success should not stop at the kindergarten door. To build a strong platform for children's academic and social success, learning each year from PK through third grade must build in deliberate ways on the previous year's experience. Only then will children be adequately prepared for fourth grade, when academic standards and expectations become considerably tougher, and children's educational skills must be applied to a wide range of subject areas. Without consistent support in the primary years, many children do not master basic reading skills in third grade. Poor readers often fall behind and are more likely to drop out of school.

In order to ensure that every child receives a high-quality PK-3 education, there must be the will and capability to implement it. While many principals across the country want to add and align PK programs, their districts or schools often don't have the resources or capacity. Many communities are faced with budget cuts, disjointed early education systems and lack of knowledge about how to make PK-3 work.

Understanding lessons learned from principals who are leading efforts to align PK-3 and improve results for children across the country can help more principals build similar systems in their schools. Close analysis of successful PK-3 programs reveals that school reform is not accomplished by a one-size-fits-all approach. Because communities, schools and students have varied strengths, challenges and resources, successful PK-3



# KEY TAKEAWAYS: KEEP OUR EYES ON THE PRIZE



- The prize: Raising the achievement levels of all children, and narrowing the achievement gaps between groups of children.
- PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> is not ‘just another thing to do’ in a district: the ambition is turnaround of districts, not just schools.
- PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> is not ‘the silver bullet’: PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> is the first building block of a cradle-to-career public education system for this century.
- PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> must be a dual-generation strategy: Engaging families in increasing their own education is necessary to leverage their children’s learning.



## PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>:

# BUILDING BLOCK FOR A LIFELONG EDUCATION



PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> is not the panacea for all our educational woes. It is just the first important stage of a lifelong educational experience that provides the fundamentals and fosters a disposition for lifelong learning.

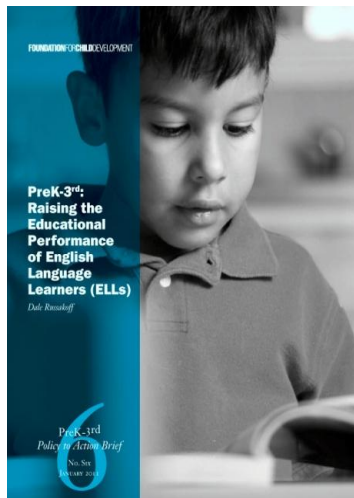
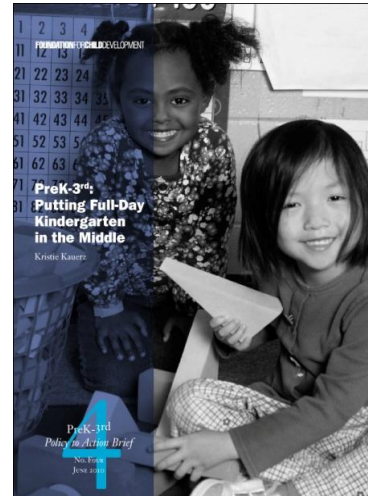
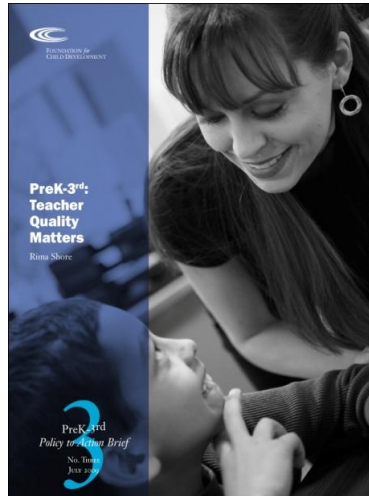
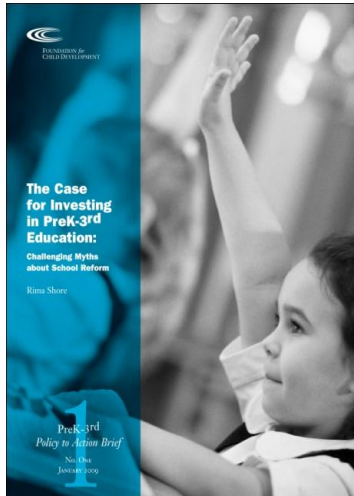
When children are well-educated, they are healthier and more likely to live happier lives than those who are left behind in prisons and in poverty.

They flourish.

Our communities and the nation benefit.

# FOR INDEPTH RESOURCES ON PREK-3<sup>RD</sup>

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