



Sixteenth Annual RECAP Report, 2012-2013 - Abstract

The *Sixteenth Annual RECAP Report, 2012-13*, summarizes the condition of Rochester City School District's Universal Pre-K students, classrooms, programs, and parents. Composed of 68 pages of data, tables, and summaries, this report gives us a clear picture of the state of our UPK classrooms, programs, and two-thirds of Rochester's four year-olds – approximately 2,000 of our youngest students.

We are conclusively observing tremendous growth of UPK four year-olds. In nine months of primarily half-day (2.5 hours per day) pre-k, these pupils grew, on average, almost two years (140%) more than what is normally expected of a Rochester child's growth at this age in the area of *Mathematics and Science*. We also saw areas of high growth in *Language and Literacy, Initiative and Social Relations, and Movement and Music*; although, growth was not quite as spectacular as in *Mathematics and Science*.

The general trend of how ready incoming four year-olds are for pre-k has been one of continuing deterioration. Four year old pre-k students arrive with greater needs than ever documented before. Approximately three students in five (nearly 60%) arrived at the lowest developmental levels in the initial Brigance screening - Level 1: student "needs monitoring and possible formal evaluation." Moreover, although we observe high rates of growth, by June, our pre-k students' performance levels are still so low that many are not "ready" for the rigors of the kindergarten curricula. High-quality half-day UPK experiences are not enough for a majority of Rochester's four year olds.

This year, comparisons were made between those students who had half-day and full-day programs. Although relatively few students (~250) received a full day of pre-k programming, those that did showed 8.5% more academic growth than students who attended part-day programs. Full-day programming, which is now being expanded dramatically, will likely be part of the answer.

After three years of High Scope curriculum implementation, significant and meaningful improvements are observed in pre-k students' language and literacy skills. RCSD and community providers' early childhood administrators, teachers, and staff should be commended for their "Plan-Do-Review" cycle implementation and the successful roll-out of this evidenced-based curriculum; it is making a difference in the lives of our UPK students.

Among our most important community assets, UPK classroom quality continues to be exceptional. Measured by independent observers on two of the most nationally and internationally recognized and adopted instruments of classroom quality – the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) – Rochester's UPK teachers and classrooms scored among

the top in the nation. Where national and international scores on the ECERS-R have remained in the 4.0 – 4.3 range (in a 1 – 7 metric), Rochester teachers now score an average of 6.20 – with 47% of teachers scoring 6.20 or higher. CLASS scores are lower, in the 5.1 range, but this is still higher than the scores observed elsewhere in the U.S.

The areas of greatest concern, at this time, include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Over 10 weeks of summer, students lose between 20% and 30% over of what they had gained during the 40 weeks of the school year. We have seen this trend for many years and the reality of “summer drop-off,” the time that children are without meaningful educational programming, is disturbing and calls for immediate action. Universal high-quality summer programming for students entering kindergarten is likely to be another part of the answer.
- ❖ While children are arriving with overall greater social-emotional assets than in previous years, we now see lower rates of growth than we had in previous years, especially in the all-important area of Behavior Control. This has been a growing trend we have now observed for seven years. Adoption and implementation of programs that facilitate pre-k children’s development of self-regulation skills are necessary if we want our youngest students to succeed in school and life.
- ❖ Within the classroom, we need to focus more on concept development, which is the weakest area in otherwise exceptionally robust performances among prekindergarten classrooms. Additional professional development in this area is warranted.
- ❖ Parent participation has remained stubbornly low since the inception of Universal Pre-K. While a variety of approaches have been deployed over the years, none seem to have produced the level of parental participation necessary for sustained involvement over the course of their children’s schooling. Different approaches to parent participation must be considered, implemented, and tested (Plan-Do-Review).

These areas of need should not distract us from a program that has demonstrated academic excellence for over 13 years. Most importantly, the *Sixteenth Annual RECAP Report* provides a detailed, accurate road map in continuing to improve on an already arguably excellent program. Lastly, it is recommended that the quality improvement processes used by RECAP and found within UPK should be implemented for kindergarten through grade 3.

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