



A DIVERSE DELIVERY SYSTEM for Pre-K in Louisiana

Across the country, states are building and expanding early education systems to make pre-k available to more children and to give parents more high quality choices in their local communities. Nationally, over 30% of all publicly funded pre-k children are in private child care settings. In Louisiana, less than 1% of Louisiana's LA 4 program is located on non-public school sites.

Options for families are critical: some families may prefer to enroll their four year old in the local elementary school; others may be attracted to private child care settings which provide both pre-k and wraparound child care for working parents; and yet other families may prefer Head Start, which provides comprehensive health services to low-income families. Since most public school systems do not have the facilities to provide additional pre-k classrooms, a mixed delivery system is crucial for states phasing in voluntary pre-k for all children.

Diverse Delivery of Pre-K, through which public Pre-K is offered in community settings including child care and Head Start, provides parents more high quality choices in their local communities, avoids the costs of new school buildings as the number of Pre-K classrooms expands, and promotes quality and accountability across early childhood settings.

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Advantages of a Diverse Delivery System

SCHOOL SYSTEMS

- Use existing facilities, saving capital and start-up expenses.
- Increased options for parents.
- Expansion of available preschool slots.
- Creates inclusive preschool classrooms.
- Provides smooth transitions to kindergarten.
- Quality in child care leads to realizing the Louisiana Department of Education's Critical Goal 1 of every child entering kindergarten ready to learn.

CHILD CARE SYSTEMS

- Higher teacher qualifications can be required at centers with teachers earning the same salaries as kindergarten teachers.
- Strengthens the network of child care in the community.
- Stabilizes enrollment during the school year.
- Customer retention.
- Increases before/after care business.
- Offers mentoring/coaching relationships with child care staff by certified teachers.
- Establish linkages between child care providers and special education resources.

COMMUNITY

- Efficient and wise use of resources: space, equipment, personnel and services.
- Additional profitable business opportunities.
- Provide comprehensive services to more children.
- Unites communities around the needs of young children and their families through a broad public/private partnership and creates community ownership and accountability of education.

FAMILIES

- Reduces transitions for children.
- Possibility of keeping siblings together.
- Less transportation of children.
- Children are housed in a more developmentally appropriate setting.
- Higher quality family education and comprehensive support services.
- Expand the program time to full-day and/or full-year.

Diverse Delivery Systems in Other States

A mixed delivery system has been central to building strong pre-k systems in many states.

Successful systems:

- ***Expand overall pre-k access;***
- ***Allow parents to choose an appropriate environment for their children;***
- ***Work collaboratively with established providers in their own communities;***
- ***Promote quality and accountability across settings.***

Policymakers and community leaders in many states have developed innovative partnerships between state-funded pre-k, child care and Head Start, addressing issues that include inconsistent teacher-qualification requirements, teacher-child ratios, different eligibility standards and child assessments, the wide range in of comprehensive services, and challenges of securing adequate program space.

Most states have tried to use the highest standard for the diverse delivery classroom -- such as the bachelor's degree requirement from schools and the class size requirement from Head Start. Successful collaboration between state pre-k, child care and Head Start benefits all the programs and is critical to expanding pre-k.

Diverse Delivery in Louisiana

There are many collaboration configurations throughout Louisiana. This is not a “one size fits all” endeavor, but rather one that seeks to meet the individual needs of school systems, communities and families in the very different areas of our state.

In one promising model in Louisiana, the LA 4 pre-k program can be offered in Class A licensed centers that have a four star rating and are working toward 5 stars. (For more information on the star ratings of the Louisiana Quality Start program for child care centers go to www.qrslouisiana.org.) However, very few school systems have LA 4 classrooms outside of their school buildings.

In the 2010-2011 school year, the Department of Children and Family Services partnered with the Department of Education and BrightStart in a unique, pilot program to develop a system of policies and supports related to the diverse delivery of pre-k services.



Children's World

As a result of this pilot, two diverse delivery classrooms were



Wilcox Academy

created using federal one-time funds, one in Livingston Parish and one in Ouachita Parish. In addition, through facilitation by BrightStart, the Recovery School District in Orleans Parish



Sheila's Kiddie Cottage

instituted two diverse delivery classrooms funded by LA 4 funding. These classrooms meet all the requirements of an LA 4 classroom, as well as all the requirements of a licensed, four star child care center.



Mini Scholars



Fundamentals Early Learning Center

As hoped, these four diverse delivery pilot classrooms served as examples of the potential for success of this model and the many benefits of expanding LA 4 to community settings. Hence, in

the 2011-12 school year, all four of the original sites continued, with the two sites originally funded by the pilot now supported by their respective school districts.

The Livingston Parish School Board chose to fund the LA 4 classroom in the child care center in order to continue its operation in the 2011-2012 school year, and the Ouachita Parish School Board moved a LA 4 class from an elementary school to the child care

center to continue its operation. The two collaborations with the Recovery School District in New Orleans also continued from the 2010-2011 school year, and two new collaborations were added in two additional private child care centers.

In the current 2012-13 school year, diverse delivery has expanded to 8 sites serving 160 children.



Gilda's PreSchool Academy

Both of the original sites are in operation. Livingston Parish School Board chose to fund the LA4 classroom in the child care center with LA4 and EEF funds, and Ouachita Parish School Board uses LA4 funds for its collaboration with a child care center. The Recovery School district added two additional child care center collaborations and an additional LA4 class to Wilcox Academy.

The Diverse Delivery Coordinator continues to learn about and support collaborations with Head Start and other models operating within Louisiana.

For more information, please contact:

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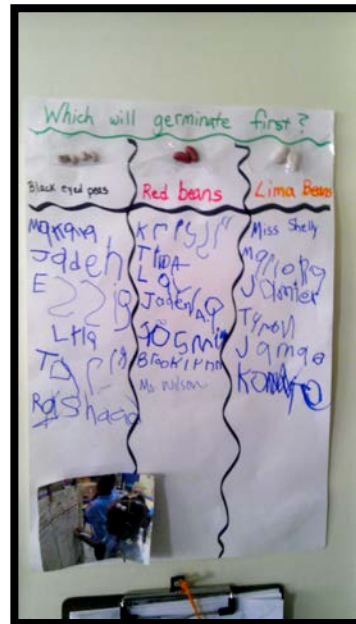
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Slime experiment about weight and speed of gravity.
Wilcox Academy of Early Learning.



Prediction of seed germination graph.
Wilcox Academy of Early Learning.