

BUTTE COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION (F5B)

SCHOOL READINESS TARGET SCHOOL FINDINGS FROM KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY

JANUARY 2011

The School Readiness (SR) programs in Butte County were historically co-funded by First 5 California. The state program required county commissions to develop programs to serve families with young children expected to enroll in targeted low performing schools. The selected schools in Butte County for Cycle II funding were Berry Creek, Chapman, Oakdale Heights, Poplar Avenue and Rosedale Elementary Schools. These five schools had also been targeted in Cycle 1. (See Table 1.)

Scope of this Report

This report looks at Kindergarten Teacher Survey (KTS) data collected by Wyeth Consulting in the fall 2008 and fall 2010 to see what supplemental analysis of those data could be meaningful for School Readiness. It assumes the reader has familiarity with the “2010 Kindergarten Teacher Survey Results Report.” It seeks to supplement and not duplicate information already provided in Ms. Wyeth’s report, particularly “Appendix 3: Results for Target Schools Compared to Results for All Schools” (also to be released in January 2011). Wyeth Consulting supplied their entire set of raw data with corrected key to DCN on January 2, 2011. The data were reviewed to determine potential for further analysis relative to the School Readiness (SR) evaluation.

- DCN examined the KTS data for the feasibility to compare the changes in the target schools with changes in other schools with similar API scores. That proved not to be feasible given available data.
- DCN examined 2010 target school findings in several domains deemed very important to kindergarten teachers.

This report supplements the Davis Consultant Network’s (DCN) other school readiness reports prepared for F5B: *Raising a Reader Findings of 2007-2009 Report*, the *Parent Satisfaction Report*, and will be followed with a final *School Readiness Final Evaluation Report* in June 2011.

Program	Grantee	Service Delivery Site	Target Elementary	Participant Criteria
Incredible Years	Pioneer School District	Bald Rock State Preschool	Berry Creek	Likely to attend target school
	Valley Oak Children's Services	Oakdale Heights & FRC	Oakdale Heights	
Raising a Reader	Butte County Office of Education	Bald Rock State Preschool	Berry Creek	Likely to attend target school, meet state preschool eligibility requirements
		Oakdale Heights State Preschool	Oakdale Heights	
		Poplar State Preschool	Poplar Avenue	
		Oak St. State Preschool	Rosedale	
		Circles State Preschool	Chapman	
		Chico Child Care Center		
Parents as Teachers	Thermalito School District	Family home or neighborhood setting	Poplar Avenue	Likely to attend target school
	Chico Unified School District		Chapman	
			Rosedale	
Literacy Coach (van)	Butte County Library	Mobile van in various communities	Berry Creek	SR program sites
			Oakdale Heights and other SR sites	

Table 1: Butte County Children and Families Commission Cycle II School Readiness programs included in evaluation plan.

Limitations

The KTS tool (See Appendix 2, 2010 Kindergarten Survey Results) was originally developed by Duerr Evaluation Resources and revised by Wyeth Consulting and F5B staff. It has been used in Butte County to assess school readiness trends by school and by district over time. It has been used effectively to demonstrate the difference between populations with and without preschool. The survey tool has been designed for ease of use. Teachers are neither compensated nor asked to attend trainings in its usage. As to our knowledge, it has not been tested for inter-rater reliability nor is it used elsewhere. Samples were collected by only one or two volunteer teachers per target school. Inter-rater variability may compromise the validity of comparative conclusions between schools. At the target school level of analysis, the data is a fair representation of the classroom teacher's perceptions of her/his students.

While SR programs served children expected to enter the target schools, no system has been developed to track how many SR participants were enrolling in the 2008 and 2010 Kindergarten classes or were in the KTS sample. Two SR programs, Parents as Teachers and Incredible Years,

serve families with infants and toddlers as well as preschool children. Therefore, care should be taken not to infer that KTS findings relative to target schools are a consequence of SR programs.

Potential for Comparing Change to Other Low API Schools

No data were available for Berry Creek for either year. Only 2010 data were available for Poplar School. Rosedale School was converted from a neighborhood school to a Spanish immersion magnet school in 2009, with a fundamentally different school population.

This left two schools with completed surveys for both years, Chapman and Oakdale Heights. The California Department of Education had assigned these schools, respectively, 2007 Academic Performance Index (API) scores of 670 and 697.

A search of all Butte County public elementary schools with 2007 API scores below 700 identified five potential comparison schools. The remaining schools had 2007 API scores as high as 875. Only one of these schools, Biggs Elementary, had any Kindergarten Teacher Surveys returned, and only for 2008. Given the available sample, no comparison between target and comparison schools was appropriate. (See Table 2.)

	Elementary School	2007 API	# 2008 Surveys Returned	# 2010 Surveys Returned	Year to Year Similar Demographics?	Included in study
Target Schools	Berry Creek	644	0	0	yes	no
	Chapman	670	20	19	yes	YES
	Oakdale Heights	697	58	30	yes	YES
	Poplar Avenue	682	0	40	yes	1 year
	Rosedale	672	43	27	NO	no
Comparable API Schools	Biggs	641	34	0		no
	Concow	674	0	0		no
	Feather Falls	599	0	0		no
	Nord Country	691	0	0		no
	Wyandotte Avenue	653	0	0		no
All Schools		653-875	1105	771		

Table 2 Potential target schools for comparisons using Kindergarten Teacher Survey data.

Self Regulation and Overall Preparedness

Various studies have looked at kindergarten teachers perceptions of which skills are most important for children to demonstrate upon school entry. Surprising to many parents, it is not knowing numbers and letters or even taking turns. In a United States Department of Education study¹, the top ranking skills were verbal communication and positive attitude. Eighty-four percent of kindergarten teachers ranked “communicates needs, wants and thoughts verbally” and 76% considered “is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities” as either “essential” or “very important” readiness attributes. A more recent California study of San Jose kindergarten teachers², found that “self regulation” was reported as one of the most essential readiness attributes and the most difficult one for kindergarten teachers to correct.

The KTS categories which most nearly address these important readiness skills are speech, attitude, behavior and social skills. When examining these four competencies, in all but one case, SR target schools outperformed the county averages.

	County Average	Oakdale % (n=30)	Oakdale (Δ)	Chapman % (n=19)	Chapman (Δ)	Poplar % (n=40)	Poplar (Δ)
Speech	65.8	73.3	+7.5	79.5	+13.7	80	+14.2
Attitude	78.6	76.7	-1.9	87.2	+8.6	90	+11.4
Behavior	66.5	83.3	+16.8	76.9	+10.4	70	+3.5
Social	66.1	76.7	+10.6	92.3	+26.2	67.5	+1.4

Table 3: Percent kindergarten students assessed by their teachers using the KTS at School Readiness target school in 2010 as adequately prepared in speech, outlook and attitude, behavioral and social skills. Delta (Δ) column shows difference between target schools rates and the county average. In all but one category, target schools exceeded the county average. (Source: data from Oakdale Heights and Chapman came from Appendix 3 of the Wyeth report. Data from Poplar was extracted from “First 5 Butte Wyeth Raw Data”.)

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, FRSS Kindergarten Teacher Survey of Student Readiness and National Household Education Survey (parents), spring 1993.

² Applied Survey Research, San Jose Kindergarten Teacher Survey, 2008

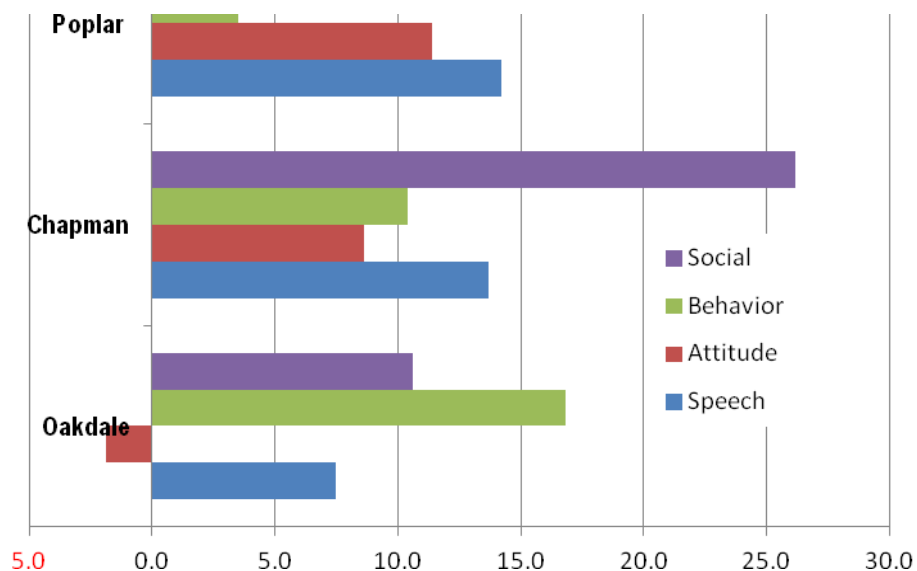


Figure 1: Difference in 2010 Target School Scores from the Butte County Average for percentage of children rated as “adequately prepared” in speech, outlook and attitude, and behavioral and social schools. The “0.0” y axis represents the Butte County average. This chart demonstrates the three target schools with available 2010 data outperformed the county average scores in the competencies which Kindergarten teachers find most critical. (Source: data from Oakdale Heights and Chapman came from Appendix 3 of the Wyeth report. Data from Poplar was extracted from “First 5 Butte Wyeth Raw Data”.)

These observations are an encouraging indicator for the responding SR target school classrooms.

What do we know about the children in these target school classroom? As the KTS Report indicated, preschool experience is a powerful predictor of school readiness. We also know that English language learner (EL) children, are often assessed as less ready. Unfortunately, preschool status was unknown for many of the Oakdale Heights and Chapman students (see Table 4).

- All (100%) of the assessed **Poplar Avenue** students had attended preschool and the percentage of EL students was 11.1%, less than the county average. Poplar Avenue students were assessed 14.2% higher in speech and 11.4% higher in attitude than the county average.
- **Chapman** students, of which 42% were EL, outperformed the county average by 26.2% in social skills 13.7% in speech, and 10.4% in behavior. These results are impressive when considering their EL ratio is a full 23.5% greater than the county average. Is there

something more supportive in this school community? Might the data be skewed by the particular population in the small (n=19) sample size? This bears further investigation.

- **Oakdale Heights** data represented 20% EL students, 1.4% higher than the county average. These students were assessed 16.8% higher in behavior and 10.6% higher in social skills than the county average.

2010 KTS Sample	County Average	Oakdale	Chapman	Poplar
English Language Learner	18.6% ³	20.0%	42.1%	7.5%
Attended Preschool	55%	46.7%	16.7%	100.0%
No Preschool	17%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Preschool Status Unknown	28%	43.3%	21.1%	0.0%

Table 4: Comparison of EL and Preschool Status between target schools and county averages. (Sources, Appendix II and excel worksheet, “First 5 Butte Wyeth Raw Data”)

Conclusion

There are clear limitations in regard to utilization of KTS findings to evaluation SR programs. Primarily, these are the result of the survey methodology and sample. In spite of these issues, in the three SR target schools for which there were data, there is positive evidence of above average competencies in the areas most valued by kindergarten teachers.

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³ Calculated from entire sample, minus records for which no value was submitted.