

Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) Initiative Overview

The Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA), a Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge Grant initiative, is a collaborative endeavor between the Departments of Early Education and Care (EEC) and Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) that supports the use of formative assessment in kindergarten classrooms. While the national goal of Kindergarten Entry Assessments was for states to build a system of measuring school readiness, Massachusetts chose to develop a system that would provide educators with data to strengthen their understanding of children's development and learning across developmental domains in order to better individualize teaching and learning for kindergarten students.

Districts involved with the first two Cohorts of the MKEA initiative are using either the Work Sampling System (published by Pearson) or the Gold system (published by Teaching Strategies). MKEA Cohort 3 districts will all be using the Gold system (with training during 2014 and assessment implementation beginning in the 2014-15 school year). The two tools were selected to provide districts, schools and educators with the following benefits:

- Assessing children's growth and learning across all developmental domains (e.g. cognitive, physical, social, emotional);
- Informing instruction and strengthen professional development, leading to more individualized teaching and learning; and
- Providing schools with new sources of data to share with families through report cards and other forms of communication.

Ultimately, over the 4 years of the Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (2012-2016), the goal is to engage all schools that serve kindergarten students in the MKEA initiative. Participating school districts are asked to assess all kindergarten children across developmental domains, including physical development and social-emotional development, in the fall and in the spring in order to understand progress that children make in their development and learning across the school year.

The data will be used at the local level to inform instruction, engage with families, and inform other policy considerations related to working with young children. At the state level, the data will guide policy conversations related to supporting the birth to age five system of services for young children and their families as well as inform conversations related to K-2 standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.

The following plan was developed by EEC and ESE in order to implement the MKEA statewide by the 2015-2016 school year (Fiscal Year 2016):

- **Year 1 (Cohort 1):** 306 districts invited; 20 volunteered (in progress)
- **Year 2 (Cohort 2):** targeted Quality Full-Day Kindergarten (QFDK) districts; 58 volunteered (in progress)
- **Year 3 (Cohort 3):** required remaining QFDK districts to participate (90+ districts)
- **Year 4 (Cohort 4):** will encourage all remaining districts with kindergarten enrollment to participate (130+ districts)