

Age 3 to Grade 3 Institute

Overview

The years between pre-kindergarten and third grade are vital to creating the foundation for later school success. Despite the growing efforts of the state and communities to expand pre-kindergarten opportunities for 3- and 4-year olds and to close early achievement gaps, many young children in Connecticut still lack access to a high-quality continuum of learning that could make a difference in positive, long term achievement outcomes. Gaps and disparities in learning exist even as children enter pre-kindergarten and these persist and grow larger throughout early elementary school. By third grade, children's school paths diverge dramatically.

There is compelling evidence that high- quality curricula and instruction, focused data-driven decision making, and instructional leadership create and sustains supportive environment for young learners that are central to effective reform. When these efforts are connected and aligned to create continuity between prek and elementary schools, they help to narrow achievement gaps and provide children with a solid foundation for lifelong learning. (Harvard Graduate School of Education, *Making it Work: Implementing a Comprehensive PreK-3rd Grade Approach*).

Given this research, the Statewide 3 to 3 Leadership Team, in collaboraton with the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund is pleased to announce an opportunity for schools districts and communities to participate in the 2013 Age 3 to Grade 3 Institute. The goals of the institute are to:

1. Increase alignment within and across community and school district early childhood programs;
2. Improve effective instructional practice, instructional coherence, and meaningful learning in community and school district programs and grades, *prek - 3rd* grade;
3. Build capacity and sustainability by creating partnerships between the community and school district in order to develop common language and goals *prek - 3rd* grade; and
4. Assist in leveraging resources to build a continuum of high-quality early learning environments.

In January 2013, six to eight communities will be selected through a competitive application process to participate in this initiative. The Institute is comprised of a total of three (3) full-day sessions between February through June, 2013, interspersed with on-site facilitation and technical assistance.

What Institute Participants Will Receive

The cost of the Institute is \$4000 per team. Through the generosity of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial fund, scholarships will be awarded for the participation of up to eight teams. The Institute will include presentations by national experts and time for teams to work with a trained facilitator. The assistance of a trained external facilitator has been determined to be a key factor in the successful completion of a self-assessment and actionable plan that each team will develop as result of participation in the Institute. In addition to tuition assistance, teams will receive a stipend of up to \$2500 for facilitation support for the duration of the Institute.

Technical assistance and facilitation support is to be provided from a list of qualified, trained facilitators that will be made available during the Institute. The facilitator will assist the leadership and community based teams to use self-assessment information and analyses of community and school district data to develop a plan that is time-framed and designed to achieve measureable outcomes.

Role of the Participating Community

Each community will commit to:

- Attendance of Leadership Team members at three full-days of training;
- Completion of a self-assessment using *the Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches* (Kauerz and Coffman, 2012);
- Convening a 7 to 9 member “3 to 3 leadership team” that includes representation from the school district and the community. Team members must serve in leadership roles and be authorized to commit resources to this project. Examples of appropriate team members include: assistant superintendent, curriculum director, P-3 Council chair, Head Start director, public/private early care and education program director, parents, teachers. **The Discovery coordinator and a high-level central office administrator that has district-wide decision-making authority are required participants.**
- Convening of a “community-based team” that has balanced school district and community representation to work with the leadership team in completing the self-assessment and developing an action plan; and
- Engaging a trained facilitator to work with the leadership and community-based team for a minimum of 4 days to be scheduled in addition to the three full-day training.

Selection Criteria and Timeline

Up to eight communities will be selected to participate in the Age 3 to Grade 3 Institute. Each will receive a tuition waiver for up to 9 participants to attend the three-day Institute. Each community will receive a stipend to engage a trained 3 to 3 facilitator to provide guidance and assist with self-assessment and action planning. While all communities will be eligible to apply, only those communities that demonstrate the capacity to succeed in this effort will be selected.

The selection committee will use the following criteria to evaluate applications:

Selection Criteria

<p>Overall support for a 3 to 3 approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evidence of a strong commitment to strengthening the prek - 3rd grade continuum</i> • <i>Evidence of a strong commitment to improving prek - 3rd grade classroom instruction</i>
<p>Plan and rationale for 3 to 3 teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evidence of a strong rationale for selecting participants for both the “leadership team” and “community-based team”</i>
<p>Capacity to Execute a PreK – 3rd Grade Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The school district and community view prek - 3rd grade as a priority as evidenced by commitment of staff and resources to support the planning process</i> • <i>Stable and effective school and community leadership</i> • <i>School district and local leaders have shown a commitment to a prek - 3rd grade continuum and alignment</i>
<p>Relationships to Improve Student Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear linkages between the prek - 3rd grade initiative and other prek and k-3 improvement efforts</i> • <i>Meaningful engagement and agreements between community early care and education and the school district regarding improved outcomes for young children</i>

Timeline (Subject to revision):

- **January 11, 2013:** Application Deadline
- **Week of January 14, 2013:** Selection of teams
- **January 18, 2013:** Final Selection notification
- **February 26, 2013:** Institute begins day 1 with Dr. Kristie Kauerz, University of Washington and Program Director for PreK-3rd Education, a collaborative initiative of UW and Harvard Graduate School of Education. (Note-all Institute sessions will be in CT. Locations will be announced in January.)
- **April, 2013 (Date to be determined):** Day 2 of Institute
- **June , 2013 (Date to be determined):** Day 3 of Institute

Note: 4 days of facilitation to be scheduled between institute convening's (dates/times to be determined by community)

AGE 3 TO GRADE 3 INSTITUTE Application

DUE: January 11, 2013

Contact Name: _____

Contact Title: _____

Contact Phone and Email
Address _____

ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST

- Letters of support demonstrating a commitment to a preK – 3rd grade initiative from key stakeholders, such as the superintendent, chief elected official, union, early childhood council/collaborative, school board, community groups, and other groups representing parents, teachers and families
- Description of the individuals comprising the “*leadership team*” members that will attend the institute. Provide information about their roles, backgrounds and why are they important to the team composition?
- Description of the “*community-based team*” that will work with the leadership team. Communities are encouraged to use existing groups for this work. If not using an existing group provide information about why an existing group cannot fill this role

Please answer the following questions:

1. SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR PREK - 3RD GRADE SYSTEMS

Describe recent efforts to improve preK - 3rd grade systems and alignment. Please describe achievements and challenges. (300 words)

2. RATIONALE FOR PREK - 3RD GRADE IMPROVEMENT

Why is your community particularly well-suited to successfully implement this initiative, in terms of leadership, capacity to implement change, use of data to inform instruction and systems development? (600 words)

3. CAPACITY TO EXECUTE A PREK - 3RD GRADE PLAN

Describe the leadership team that will engage with national and state experts at the preK - 3rd grade Institute. What are their roles and qualifications? Describe the community-team that will assist the leadership team to conduct a self-assessment and develop a plan. How the leadership team engage with the community-based team. Describe how the leadership and community-based teams will make effective use of a trained facilitator? (600 words)

4. RELATIONSHIPS to Improve Student Outcomes

Describe the linkages and relationships the community and school district have developed to support preK - 3rd grade initiatives aimed at improving student outcomes. How have these efforts resulted in strong, meaningful relationships between the community and the school district?
(300 words)

Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. on January 11, 2013. Please submit electronically to: Malwin Davila, Program Associate at the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund at mdavila@wcmf.org. For questions, contact Andrea Brinnel at andrea.brinnel@ct.gov.