

Minnesota's Kindergarten Entry Profile: Frequently Asked Questions for Administrators



What happened to the old *School Readiness Study* and why did it need revision?

With no systematic process in place to assess children's school readiness, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in 2002 initiated a series of three yearly studies focused on obtaining a picture of the school readiness of Minnesota's kindergartners. The studies were well-received by the public, and during the 2006 Minnesota state legislative session, funding was appropriated for the study to be continued on an annual basis (School Readiness Report, 2010).

Since 2006, the *School Readiness Study* has gathered data from a voluntary 10 percent sample of schools using the Minnesota adapted version of the Work Sampling System. Based on feedback from administrators and teachers, the study was revised to provide districts with a choice of tools that are developmentally appropriate and align to the *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress* (ECIPs) and the *Minnesota Academic Standards* for kindergarten and allow for teachers and administrators to use real time data to inform practice and program planning.

This new process is called the Kindergarten Entry Profile.

What does this mean for World's Best Workforce?

World's Best Workforce legislation requires all districts to plan for five overarching goals in measuring student performance. The first goal is that "all children are ready for school". The tools in the *Kindergarten Entry Profile* (KEP) provide a way to measure progress toward this goal and link early learning and kindergarten programs using data that relates to the standards.

What is the benefit to schools for participating in the *Kindergarten Entry Profile*?

Schools and teachers receive support in implementing a tool that can be used to inform instruction, individualize instruction for students, and inform professional development decisions. Schools who volunteer to be a part of the *KEP* receive free use of the chosen tool's online system for the entirety of the school year. This allows schools to have immediate access to their data through the online system with supports to guide instruction throughout the year.

Teachers receive training on the chosen tool, use of the online data system, and ongoing technical assistance. School and teacher feedback also help MDE identify future modifications needed in the implementation of the *KEP*.

What tools are being piloted?

- Desired Results Developmental Profile- Kindergarten
- Formative Assessment System for Teachers

- Teaching Strategies Gold
- Work Sampling System-Minnesota Version

For more information about the four tools, go to the bottom of this document.

Why were these tools chosen?

The tools listed in the KEP menu have been tested for their evidence of validity and reliability as well as alignment to the ECIPS and Minnesota Academic Standards. The menu of tools listed above is those that had the best ratings among the top 20 tools tested for the KEP.

Are schools required to participate?

Schools are not required to participate. Each year MDE pulls a random sample based on the previous year's kindergarten student demographics. All schools that are selected in the random sample receive an invitation to take part in the opportunity and can accept or deny the invitation.

What is the time commitment for training and implementation?

Depending on the tool each school chooses, the training time is different. MDE now has regional certified trainers in order to provide training in your region. The training consists of; (1) Gold = 2 days, (2) DRDP = 2 days, (3) FAST = 1 day, (4) WSS = 1 day. All scheduled trainings will be listed on the MDE website.

All teachers are required to attend training. MDE will work with teachers whose schedule does not permit them to attend in-person. Within the first 8 weeks of school, teachers are responsible for collecting evidence and finalizing scores to MDE. The only additional role is for teachers to be involved in focus groups to share their experience in the KEP. This is also voluntary.

When is data collected by teachers?

Data is collected according to the administration guidelines given by the publisher of each individual tool. Most data collection is required within the first eight weeks of kindergarten. There are no additional requirements or surveys. Continued use of the tool is up to teachers and administrators.

What will it cost us?

The only cost to districts is to provide teacher time so that they can attend the training. A free online subscription for all of your students for one year will be provided each year your program participates in the KEP. MDE will pay for the tool of your choice from the menu. If you currently have a license with the publisher, MDE will reimburse you for the cost of kindergarten slots. MDE will provide training from a certified trainer in your region, and provide continued technical assistance for the KEP and online data throughout the process.

Are there other district staff (administrators, principals) that should be included in the training?

It is highly recommended that administrators, principals, and data support staff also attend the training for ease of implementation and support. Administrators are integral in the fidelity and reliability of implementation.

Is the KEP for early learning/preschool programs, just kindergarten classes or both?

The KEP is designed to be collected when children start kindergarten, but administrators and principals are encouraged to work with administrators in School Readiness and other early learning programs to encourage participation in using one of the tools since all are highly vetted for high-quality standards in both pre-K and Kindergarten. Additionally, KEP assessment tools can provide rich information to help teachers as children transition from an early learning environment to kindergarten.

How do I know which assessment is the best choice for my school or district?

All tools are empirically aligned to the ECIPS and kindergarten academic standards and each tool has a slightly different emphasis on specific domains. Administrators are encouraged to examine their program's outcomes, what tools are already being used in early learning programs and what teachers prefer.

What if our early learning program already uses one of the KEP assessment tools but Kindergarten settings are not, or vice versa? How does this impact registration and training on the tool?

There are multiple routes to participation in the KEP. If your early learning program or kindergarten classes use one of the four tools, you already have a license with the publisher. MDE and an administrator from your district or school would work together so that MDE and your district are able to share data for the study. Kindergarten teachers will be trained on the tool and pre-K teachers can also attend the training if your program is planning on using the same tool. If pre-K teachers would be attending, MDE would need to know ahead of time in order to include them in planning PD opportunities.

When is the deadline to register?

Registration for the KEP begins in January each year in order to accommodate district planning. Registration for the KEP will close each August. As much as possible, MDE will work to plan PD based on district schedules. Districts that complete registration early in January have the opportunity to select dates for training that best match with their PD dates.

If our school doesn't sign up this year, will there be an opportunity to sign up next year?

The annual budget for the KEP is \$281,000. MDE is working to create as much efficiency in the process to ensure districts that elect to participate are able to each year. Because the KEP is helpful for measuring and reporting goals for other required programs such as World's Best Workforce and Read Well by Third Grade, we try to maintain the supports from year to year; so if your district does not feel it can participate this year, there may be other opportunities in the future that will be based on our sampling design.

If I have a question, comment, or want my school to be involved in the KEP, who should I contact?

For further inquiries about the KEP, please email MDE.KEP@state.mn.us.

Additional resources for the KEP:

In order to learn more about the KEP or register to participate in the KEP, visit the MDE KEP webpage:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/Kindergarten/KEP/index.htm>

In order to learn more about what assessments may work for your program, visit the MDE Early Learning Tool Finder:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/EarlyChildRes/ELONA/>

In order to sign up for a future KEP Interest Webinar to learn more about the background of the KEP and next steps, visit:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EarlyLearn/index.html>

For more information about the menu of tools:

- [Desired Results Developmental Profile](#)
- [Formative Assessment System for Teachers](#)
- [Teaching Strategies Gold](#)
- [Minnesota Work Sampling System](#)