



JOHN A. KITZHABER, M.D.
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

JANUARY 31, 2014

Media Contact:

Rachel Wray, 503-559-1277

Governor Kitzhaber Releases Statewide Kindergarten Assessment Results

Reinforces Need for Early Childhood Investment and Community Participation

(Salem, OR) — Today, Governor Kitzhaber and the Oregon Department of Education released the results of Oregon’s statewide Kindergarten Assessment. The assessment was called for by Governor Kitzhaber and passed by the Legislature in 2012, and is a key aspect of the Governor’s early childhood reform efforts. With over 95% of all entering kindergarteners participating in the assessment, the results provide an unprecedented and sobering look at the readiness of Oregon’s youngest learners.

“Today’s results validate our focus on reforming Oregon’s historically scattershot approach to early learning,” said Governor Kitzhaber. “This assessment will help drive our current early learning reforms and accountability for results, and should serve as a challenge to all our communities to focus on kindergarten readiness with a true sense of urgency.”

The assessment was designed to focus on the areas that are most strongly linked to 3rd grade reading, which is one of the strongest predictors of future academic success. These results will be used by schools, districts, early learning hubs, and providers of early learning services to focus resources and proven programs on the areas of greatest need. Some results give a startling look at the state of early childhood development in Oregon. For instance, 33% of entering kindergarteners could name five or fewer letters of the

alphabet and 14% couldn't name a single letter.

“The Kindergarten Assessment information will provide us critical baseline data so that educators can ensure students are poised to read at grade level by 3rd grade,” said Chief Education Officer Nancy Golden. “We know that early education plays a profound role in a student's trajectory, and the ability to provide concrete feedback to early education providers creates tremendous system alignment and focus towards the third grade reading benchmark.”

By highlighting gaps in student knowledge and skill – and gaps between student subgroups and underserved communities – these results provide direction and urgency for early action. In addition, results provide a baseline for tracking trends over time, measuring progress and increasing accountability.

The Results

The test was comprised of three main elements: two 60 second literacy measures, an early math measure, and a teacher observation component which assessed the student's approaches to learning including interpersonal skills and self-regulation.

Early Literacy and Math

These measures were designed to assess some of the skills entering kindergarteners had in early literacy and math. Students build on these early skills as they start learning to read, write, and do simple math problems, and this early assessment provides teachers and parents with information about students' strengths and areas that could use additional focus and development.

The early literacy measures were designed to assess fluency in the identification of letter names and letter sounds. Early letter fluency is a key contributor to later reading development and academic success. Students were shown a chart with 100 letters – both lower case and upper case – and were asked to identify as many letter names as they could within 60 seconds. They were also shown a chart with 110 letters and letter combinations and were asked to produce as many letter sounds as they could within 60 seconds. The numbers below represent the average number of letter names and letter sounds students named correctly in the 60 second fluency assessments.

For the early math assessment, students were posed 16 simple math questions that addressed addition, subtraction, patterns, and number recognition and were asked to point at the correct answer. The numbers below show the average number of questions a student got correct. This assessment was not timed but generally took 5 to 9 minutes.

Student Group	Early Literacy: Letter Names	Early Literacy: Letter Sounds	Early Math: Numbers & Operations
All Students	18.5	6.7	8.0
Asian	29.9	12.3	9.4

African American	19.1	6.2	7.2
Hispanic	9.8	2.9	6.8
Native American	14.5	4.7	7.2
Multi-Ethnic	21.3	7.9	8.4
Pacific Islander	14.7	4.2	7.0
White	20.9	7.8	8.4
Female	19.2	7.1	8.0
Male	17.8	6.4	8.0

Approaches to Learning

How a student approaches learning and his or her ability to focus, persevere at a task, and work with others are also critical skills which must be developed and practiced. Teachers observed students during regular classroom activities and assessed students on 15 factors related to self-regulation and interpersonal skills using a research validated assessment tool. Students were rated on a 1 to 5 scale on these measures with 1 being never demonstrated the skill, 3 being sometimes, and 5 being always demonstrated the skill. State averages are provided below.

Student Group	Self-Regulation	Interpersonal Skills
All Students	3.5	3.9
Asian	3.8	4.1
African American	3.3	3.7
Hispanic	3.4	3.9
Native American	3.3	3.8
Multi-Ethnic	3.6	3.9
Pacific Islander	3.4	3.8
White	3.6	3.9
Female	3.7	4.1
Male	3.3	3.7

To learn more about the kindergarten assessment, please visit:

<http://oregonearlylearning.com/kindergarten-assessment/>

For kindergarten assessment results by school and district, please visit:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/go/KA>