

PreK-3 Alignment: Challenges and Opportunities in California

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PACE's mission: *Improving education policy and practice and advancing equity through evidence*

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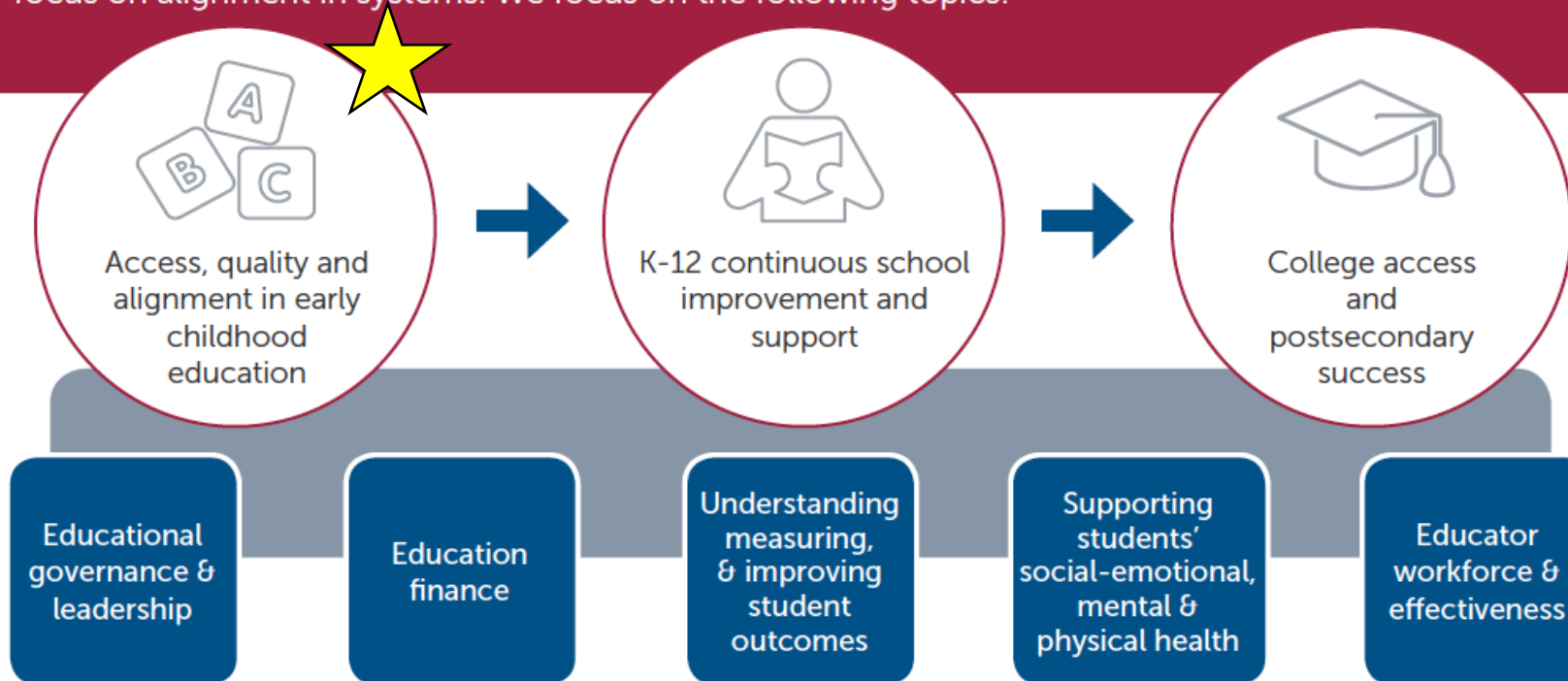
- 1 bringing evidence to bear on the most critical issues facing our state;
- 2 making research evidence accessible; and
- 3 leveraging partnership and collaboration to drive system improvement.

PACE is led by faculty directors at:



PACE's focus areas

Our goal is to produce research within all levels of California's education system, with a particular focus on alignment in systems. We focus on the following topics:



Agenda

- Julia Koppich and Deborah Stipek present:
 - PreK-3 Alignment: Challenges and Opportunities in California
- Jennifer Marroquin
 - How is the issue of ECE alignment playing out in Tulare? What are your reflections on the report through a local lens?
- Debbie Look
 - What are the implications of this report for CA policy? What policy developments are on the horizon?
- Audience Q&A

Today's speakers



Julia Koppich –
President, J. Koppich
& Associates



Debbie Look –
Principal Consultant,
California Assembly



Jennifer Marroquin –
Early Childhood
Director, Tulare City
Schools



Deborah Stipek –
Professor, Stanford
University & Faculty
Director, PACE

PreK-3 Alignment: Challenges and Opportunities in California

Julia E. Koppich, J. Koppich & Associates

Deborah Stipek, Stanford University

With assistance from Molly Ingle Michie, University of Virginia



What is PreK-3 Alignment?

Providing children with a seamless educational experience in which each grade builds on what was learned in the previous grade as children move from preschool through the early elementary grades

- Aligned curriculum, standards and assessments
- Aligned (but developmentally adjusted) teaching methods and classroom norms
- Aligned family involvement and support

Study Methodology

Phone interviews in 25 districts

- 7 superintendents
- 4 deputy or assistant superintendents
- 20 preK/early learning directors
- 1 chief administrative officer

Size and Geographic Diversity:

4 Bay Area	13 Urban
1 Central Valley	5 Rural
9 Central/South Farm	7 Suburban
3 North and Mountain	
8 Southern California	

Findings

- One-third of the study districts not engaged at all in alignment efforts; others engaged to varying degrees
- Divergent beliefs among district leaders about role and purpose of preK affects alignment efforts
- In study districts, elementary principals' formal responsibility for preK limited to administrative or operational oversight

Findings

- PreK directors who are part of the superintendent's cabinet have broader opportunities for collaborating with district decision makers and increasing acceptance of preK.
- Cooperation limited by different licensing requirements, salaries and job expectations for preK and elementary teachers
- Districts' focus on alignment attenuated by inconsistent program regulations, multiple funding streams, and competition for scarce state dollars

Approaches to Alignment

- *Organizational* — Early Learning Director involved in district decision making
- *Curriculum* — Aligned preK and K curriculum
- *Standards* — Expanding kindergarten standards to be used in preschool
- *Assessment* — Adopting a common assessment for preK and TK
- *Professional development/Collaboration* — Engaging teachers across grades in teacher PD; principal training in ECE

Policy Implications for the State

- Explicitly prioritize alignment and offer districts incentives to engage in this work.
- Add ECE training to administrative credential requirements.
- Bring ECE permit requirements more in line with elementary credential requirements.
- Streamline preK state licensing requirements.

Implications for Districts

- Offer preK directors a significant place in the district's administrative structure.
- Include preK in deliberations about fiscal priorities.
- Provide elementary principals with early childhood professional development.
- Align curricula and assessments across preK and early elementary grades.
- Ensure preK–3 teachers have regular opportunities to collaborate and participate together in PD.

Panel Discussion



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