Early Learning Inventory

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE FOR 2017-18**

To participate please contact Debra Andersen, Executive Director, Smart Start Oklahoma, 405 278-6978 or email [debra.andersen@smartstartok.org](mailto:debra.andersen@smartstartok.org)

**PURPOSE OF THE EARLY LEARNING INVENTORY** (ELI)

* Support **teachers** in gathering objective data about their students’ strengths, challenges, interests and learning styles and guide their instruction throughout the kindergarten year.
* Provide **families** a clear picture of the strengths and needs of their child and the skills expected in the kindergarten year to support appropriate learning at home.
* Support the use of enriched, engaging, and intensive learning opportunities for every **child**.

School districts will participate in a feasibility study on the costs, administrative burden, benefits and limitations in implementing an ELI to provide local school districts, the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness and sufficient data to inform expansion of a statewide ELI.

**DISTRICT REQUIRMENTS**

* The District and kindergarten teachers will commit to administering the ELI in at least two kindergarten classrooms in the District.
* The District will allow teachers time to participate in a two-day training, plan and administer the ELI.
* The District will assign an administrator to manage the online assessment program and assist other users in data entry (training will be included in the two-day professional development provided for teachers.)
* The District will agree to incorporate ELI results into the WAVE through the Student Academic Record.
* Administrators and kindergarten teachers will participate in focus groups and surveys following ELI administration to inform the feasibility study.

**TIMELINE**

Summer 2017: Selection of school sites by June 1, 2017

July/August 2017: Two-day professional development

September/October 2017: Administration of ELI to kindergarten students

November 2017 - March 2018: Follow up surveys and focus groups

**FUNDING IS PROVIDED TO SUPPORT:**

**Professional Development**

Teachers will receive training on administration of the ELI and access to online webinars and FAQ.

Teachers will be provided meals and refreshments throughout the training.

Travel will be reimbursed if the training occurs outside of the school.

**Assessment Tools**

Each classroom will receive a complete assessment kit, including a teacher instruction manual and individual scoring forms/online access.

**Classroom Support**

Stipends to schools to pay for a substitute when teachers are in training or an assistant in the classroom for teacher time to complete reports.

**TOOL SELECTION CRITERIA**

* The selected ELI will be aligned with existing Oklahoma Academic Standards, address all (5) domains of development and provide the data necessary to integrate standards and domains into instruction.
* Districts will be allowed to select from Teaching Strategies GOLD or Pearson Work Sampling System as the ELI.

**BACKGROUND**

* Since the creation of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act (OPSR) in 2003, the OPSR Board has prioritized a school readiness assessment to inform Oklahoma’s investments in early care and education.
* In 2015 OPSR received grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and George Kaiser Family Foundation to study the feasibility of implementing a kindergarten assessment.
* In 2016, Smart Start Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Department of Education surveyed 2,293 Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers from 92% of Oklahoma School districts. Focus groups were conducted with over 100 individuals in December 2016 and January 2017.
* Three common themes emerged from the survey and focus groups:
* Teachers reported that observational assessment is useful and important for informing instruction, particularly when they receive enough training/professional development to use it properly.
* Teachers expressed a need for assessments in domains of math, social-emotional, and physical development; domains not currently required by the State Department of Education but important for academic success.
* Teachers indicated that there is a significant advantage for students who attend Pre-K over those who did not, and a comprehensive assessment would allow them to tailor instruction to meet the needs of all students.
* A Steering Committee was formed to guide the implementation of a feasibility study. At the request of the State Department of Education, the kindergarten assessment process was named Early Learning Inventory (ELI). The Steering Committee reviewed the survey information, focus group feedback and examined tools available in the kindergarten year that are comprehensive, statistically reliable and valid, and have been proven effective to inform teacher instruction. The Steering Committee refined the purpose and benefits of an ELI and in summary concluded that an ELI benefits students, families and teachers when the tool is aligned with state early learning standards, covers all developmental domains, and includes access to online and face to face professional development.
* The Steering Committee strongly expressed the following guiding principle for an ELI:

***The Inventory is not to be used as a high stakes tool to prevent entry into Kindergarten, identify students for special education eligibility, and evaluate programs or teachers.***