

# Coordinated Funding for Three- and Four- Year Olds in New Mexico: An Update on Senate Memorial 23

Early Learning Advisory Council

NEVER TOO YOUNG



TO SUCCEED!

ELAC

# Overview of SM23, 2017

**The problem:** “New Mexico pre-kindergarten state funds and programs have displaced and supplanted federal funding, resulting in the reversion of substantial funding back to the federal government.”

**Reason for the study:** “Collaboration and coordination has the potential to maximize state resources and to prevent duplication of efforts.”

# Research Questions

1. How are federal and state early childhood funds allocated and coordinated?
2. What are exemplary states that are effectively and efficiently coordinating and integrating state and federal early childhood funding?

# ELAC's Process

- Developed Scope of Work and Work Group
- Issued Request for Proposals
- Contracted with EduDream to conduct research and issue report
- Will incorporate findings and recommendations into ELAC's Annual Report

# Study Methodology

- Systematic study
- Secondary research
  - Scan of New Mexico early childhood (PED and CYFD) funding policies and processes
  - Scan of early childhood reports from local and national agencies, research institutions, foundations and national organizations.
  - Scanned 40+ reports and documents



# Study Methodology (Cont'd)

- Primary research
  - Conducted 10 interviews
    - Staff at state agencies
    - Head Start directors
    - Center-run PreK directors
    - School-run PreK directors
    - Head Start with a CYFD PreK classroom
    - Head Start housed in a school district
    - Respondents spanned across the state



# Findings

- **Finding 1:** New Mexico PreK provider eligibility is clearly defined by state legislation, and the criteria used to evaluate applications for PreK funding is described in requests for proposals.
- **Finding 2:** CYFD and PED develop and publish separate RFP applications with differing timelines, making it challenging for providers to coordinate.
- **Finding 3:** PreK funding allocation is determined during the RFP review process and the RFP evaluation criteria places great weight on whether applicants demonstrate need for services and assert communication with other early learning providers in the community.



# Findings (cont'd)

- **Finding 4:** Providers revealed concerns about the data sources state agencies use to verify unmet need, the accuracy and completeness of data used in the needs assessment, and the lack of transparency in the state agency data verification process.
- **Finding 5:** While many providers confirmed they are expected to communicate with other early learning programs, collaboration is inconsistent and fragmented between PreK and Head start.



**EDUDREAM**  
CHAMPIONS OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY



# Findings (cont'd)

- **Finding 6:** Maintaining head start enrollment is governed by federal rules and regulation in addition to external factors. Converting head start slots is a lengthy and intensive process.
- **Finding 7:** While state agencies and some providers reported combining funding streams – referred to as “blending” and “braiding” to maximize– the number of children served and the amount of time children can receive services, providers are running separate classrooms for each funded program.



# Exemplary States: Governance Structures & Policy Alignment

- **Georgia, Oregon, DC, Oklahoma**
  - State-mandated use of Head Start performance standards for determining eligibility for state PreK
  - Head Start and PreK programs merged into single program for three-and four-year olds
  - Data sharing agreements
  - Requiring other Head Start and state PreK programs operating within an applicant's service area to approve applicant's request for additional funds



# ELAC's Next Steps

- Expect full report from EduDream by 11/30
- Expect recommendations ranging from procedural changes to statutory revision
- ELAC will incorporate consensus recommendations into annual report
- ELAC likely to continue to develop longer-term recommendations

# Thank you!

Erica Stubbs

[erica.stubbs@pmsnm.com](mailto:erica.stubbs@pmsnm.com)

Michael Weinberg

[michael@thornburgfoundation.org](mailto:michael@thornburgfoundation.org)