

WS/FCS Power of K

Kindergarten Teacher Leader Initiative (2015-2017)

Selected kindergarten teachers are participating in a long-term, comprehensive professional development initiative that is being funded through a grant from the Kate B Reynolds Charitable Trust to develop a network of kindergarten teacher leaders for the district.

As a result of this work, teachers will receive specialized professional development related to how to balance what is known about how kindergarten children develop and learn best with state and local learning standards, curricula, and assessment expectations.

What is it?

It is a philosophy/framework for working with kindergarten age children...it is not a specific program that someone does with fidelity.

It is about balancing what we know about how young children grow, develop and learn (*the how*) with standards and other expectations of teachers and children (*the what*). There is not one POK way...it is individual...it is based not only on children's needs and interests, but also reflects each teacher's unique style...it is about implementing the ideals behind developmentally appropriate practices...it is about keeping children at the forefront of teaching and making sure that each and every child's needs are met in the most effective and appropriate ways.

It is utilizing a variety of effective instructional tools and contexts, including but not limited to play-based experiences and learning centers, to scaffold and support children's learning and development. It is about taking children from where they are to where they can go...all the while deeply knowing the learning standards and other curricular goals and embedding them into meaningful experiences in engaging ways for the particular children in the kindergarten classroom.



The WS/FCS Power of K Kindergarten Teacher Leader Initiative is phase II of WS/FCS Ready Schools / Ready Classrooms work and is one effort toward strengthening, broadening and sustaining appropriate kindergarten practices across the district. The WS/FCS Power of K (WS/FCS POK) initiative is long-term professional development to address the identified need for a strong focus on kindergarten instructional practices and is modeled after the state-wide initiative of the same name. The overall purpose of WS/FCS POK will be to identify and provide professional development and support for a selected group of up to 30 kindergarten teachers to become leaders in the district and in time, to serve as district-level model kindergarten classrooms. Over a 2 year process, and potentially longer, the kindergarten teachers selected for this project will be provided with comprehensive professional development related to translating research into practice, including but not limited to the following topics:

- Teacher leadership development
- Child development and brain research and their implications for classroom instruction with young children
- Creating appropriate and engaging environments for active learning
- A **balanced** approach to instruction including
 - teacher-directed learning experiences and child-initiated experiences;
 - active learning times and listening times;
 - a variety of learning contexts and strategies to support all learners through challenging (rigorous) and achievable experiences;
 - intentional play-based, playful learning experiences that address learning standards;
 - appropriate and effective curriculum and assessment practices for working with kindergarten age children and how to use data gathered for instructional decision-making
- The effective use of learning centers with intentional play-based learning experiences and how this supports children's self-regulation, oral language and vocabulary development
- Kindergarten practices that support the development of the whole child with clear connections to the WS/FCS goals and priorities and WS/FCS Ready Schools strategies
- Building and strengthening intentional and meaningful partnerships with families and the community
- Building and strengthening meaningful connections between 0-3, prek-3rd grade programs across the district
- Implementation of the state-wide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) process.

Main Components of the Initiative:

- District-wide application process (Spring 2015)
- 3 days Summer Professional Development each year (1 day @ WS/FCS Collaborative Learning Conference)
- 2 Guided NC Demonstration Classroom visits per year
- 4 quarterly professional development days throughout each school year
- Reflection and sharing through Professional Teacher Leader Learning Teams between PD days
- Data collection through *EduSnap* administered in each participant's classroom
- Sharing with school and district level colleagues
- Yearly Final Projects to document learning, growth and change