



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

House Education Committee

March 16, 2016

Testimony on:

Kansas Reading Roadmap

Presented by:

Dan Klucas

Director of Grants and Contracts

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Andrew Wiens, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs

DCF Administration Building, 555 S. Kansas Ave.

785-291-3629 www.dcf.ks.gov

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Chair Highland, Vice Chair Lunn, Ranking Member Winn and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present a brief overview of the Kansas Reading Roadmap (KRR). My name is Dan Klucas, I serve as the manager of the KRR contract, on behalf of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

KRR was initiated in the spring of 2014, and seeks to promote school-wide, third grade reading proficiency in schools serving low-income students across the state of Kansas. KRR focuses on third grade reading, because research shows that early literacy is critical to academic success. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, graduation rates are “dramatically impacted” by how a child reads at the end of third grade. This is because, as a student enters the fourth grade, he/she transitions from learning to read to reading to learn. Reading deficiencies create lasting effects. A longitudinal study commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation showed that children not reading at grade level at the end of third grade were four times less likely to graduate from high school than proficient readers.

The KRR program uses traditional social service funds to provide services to low-income families but in a way that also improves early literacy outcomes. It provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-funded services after school hours and in the summer, targeting struggling readers from low-income families with early literacy interventions. KRR has demonstrated success improving early literacy skills of struggling readers and promoting positive outcomes among youth. With a breadth of research supporting a direct connection between early literacy and academic performance and teen pregnancy, TANF Purposes 3 and 4 are achieved through funding these out-of-school interventions. None of these programs are part of the free public education system and are therefore not prohibited as a “general State expenditure.” Finally, this program falls outside the category of “assistance” and is accurately described as “non-assistance.” While income eligibility is not required, in alignment with the recommendation of the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), these programs are targeted at schools and communities with high percentages of low-income students as measured by Free-and-Reduce Meal rates.

KRR funds the afterschool, summer programs and family engagement at each partner site. In turn, each KRR school agrees to use its teachers and school resources, with the support of the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE), to implement in-school reforms around leadership, instruction, data and interventions.

All four strategies—instruction, afterschool, summer programs and family engagement—are aligned together through the use of a system of measurements and data provided by KSDE, called the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). MTSS is a Kansas-based model, proven over eight years, that helps all schools use their existing teachers, school time and curriculum to provide effective, individualized, educational experiences for all children. MTSS is like management consulting for schools, training teachers and administrators to utilize data and target interventions to meet individual needs and get the biggest return for their investment.

Here are some key statistics about KRR:

- There were 30 evaluated programs in the school year of 2014-2015; 41 programs in 2015-2016; and there will be 53 programs as of summer 2016. A list of those schools and a map are attached.
- During the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, the program served statewide 7,720 children. As of this spring and summer of 2016, the program will serve an additional 2,290 children, totaling 10,010.
 - Of those children, 1,600 students received afterschool programming in the fall and an additional 630 are being added to the afterschool through new programs, bringing the total up to 2,230.
- 2,620 children are targeted to participate in the summer program, a six week, six-hour a day program that includes reading, math and science.
- KRR is funded for the 2015-2016 calendar year at \$8.9 million, at an approximate cost of \$873 per child. In the 2014-2015 calendar year, it was funded at \$9.2 million, at an approximate cost of \$1,300 per child.
- Fulfilling the mission of TANF, in the past year, the KRR targeted low-income Kansas communities and:
 - Provided approximately 525,000 hours of free child care for low-income families
 - Served 220,000 meals and snacks year round for children in low-income communities
 - Supported 330 Kansas full and part time jobs in the actual communities where services are delivered
- According to an independent University of Kansas evaluation, the 22 traditional model schools evaluated demonstrated a 19 percent improvement in children reading at benchmark (grade level) and a 37 percent reduction in children at-risk for special education.