Evaluation of the New York City *Pre-K for All* Initiative, 2014–15

Implementation Study Report: Curriculum and Instruction

Pre-K for All 2014-15 Evaluation Response Memo

Pre-K for All is New York City's historic initiative to provide every four-year-old with access to free, full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten through a two-year expansion that began in the 2014-15 school year. Before Pre-K for All, only 19,287 four-year-olds were enrolled in full-day pre-K in New York City; as of the 2015-16 school year, enrollment was 68,647.

The City implemented the rapid, at-scale universal pre-K program within a short two-year timeframe because filling the gap in access to full-day pre-K was crucial—four-year-olds eligible to enroll in September 2014 would not get another chance to attend pre-K. The City secured funding and quickly began to prepare for the 2014-15 school year. In the summer of 2014, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) and partner agencies worked closely with pre-K providers to ensure they were ready to open their doors on the first day of school. At the same time, the City launched an unprecedented grassroots campaign to recruit and enroll families. This included establishing an Outreach Team of dedicated pre-K enrollment specialists to call families and canvas local communities.

The City's comprehensive approach was grounded in creating a sustainable, high-quality, full-day pre-K model. From its inception, the expansion focused not only on ensuring access but also on investing in pre-K quality. The City built a single system of free, full-day, high-quality pre-K and developed a quality infrastructure to support long-term sustainability and quality improvements. The DOE's model provides all pre-K programs with differentiated support at the classroom- and program-level that focuses on implementing research-based instructional and family engagement practices. Some examples include: free and targeted professional learning for leaders, lead teachers, assistant teachers, and paraprofessionals; on-site support for leaders and teachers from Instructional Coordinators (ICs) and Social Workers (SWs); and guidance through online tools and other resources.

The first year of the expansion marked the beginning of a rigorous two-part research study of this work. The DOE, in conjunction with the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, collaborated with Westat, Metis Associates, and Branch Associates, with supplemental support from the New York University's Institute for Human Development and Social Change, to undertake a study to inform future years of program delivery as well as lay the foundation for long-term research in the future. The Year 1 evaluation of Pre-K for All included an evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation process and a snapshot of student learning in the first year of the Pre-K for All initiative.

This memo summarizes the findings of the Year 1 evaluation of Pre-K for All and concludes by outlining accomplishments and improvements made in the 2015-16 school year that address many of the report findings.

Year 1 Evaluation Overview

The analysis conducted over the course of the 2014-15 school year was based on surveys, focus groups, interviews, and assessment data from a variety of stakeholders including parents, teachers, principals, site directors, DOE staff, and staff from other City agencies. The evaluation covered seven areas of Pre-K for All's implementation and are captured in separate reports:

1. Family perceptions of the program
2. Family engagement and communication

3. Curriculum and instruction
4. Using data for programmatic and instructional purposes
5. Expansion rollout
6. Program supports
7. Executive functioning and academic skills

Overall, the studies found:
o 92 percent of surveyed parents rate the quality of their child's pre-K program as "good" or "excellent" and 83 percent of surveyed parents report that Pre-K for All improved their child's learning and behavior "a lot."
o Sites offering Pre-K for All report using a variety of family engagement and communication practices.
o Sites offering Pre-K for All report that they feel supported by the DOE in implementing curriculum.
o Sites offering Pre-K for All report using a wide variety of data to inform instruction and make programmatic decisions.
o Most providers that applied to offer free, full-day Pre-K for All report that the application process was clear and well-supported.
o Nearly 80 percent and 88 percent of site leaders report that staff recruitment and staff retention, respectively, did not pose significant challenges.
o A majority of site leaders and teachers report using each type of support provided by the DOE (*ex: coaching, professional development, etc.*). In general, Pre-K for All sites report that these supports are helpful.
o A positive impact on students—across income levels, race, and home language status—was seen through their gains in executive functioning skills and academic skills over the course of the study period.

Year 1 Evaluation Report Summaries

1. **Report on Family Perceptions**
- 92 percent of surveyed families rate the quality of their child's pre-K program as "good" or "excellent," and 83 percent report that Pre-K for All improved their child's learning and behavior "a lot."
- Nearly 80 percent of surveyed families report receiving resources from their Pre-K for All program to support learning at home.
- Families report that the availability of Pre-K for All affected decisions about child care and labor force participation.
    o Of the families that were surveyed, more than half (56 percent) report a decrease in spending on childcare from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Surveyed families report an average decrease of $78 per week in spending.
    o Of the families that reported that Pre-K for All affected the number of hours they worked, half report an increase in hours worked, which they attribute to the availability of full-day pre-K.

2. **Report on Family Engagement and Communication**
- Overall, sites report undertaking a variety of family engagement and communication practices as a component of Pre-K for All. These include, but are not limited to: using face-to-face communication, providing updates on students' achievements, having accessible program staff and multi-lingual staff, translating communications, using family input to make decisions, and providing opportunities for families to be involved with the program.
- Survey and interview findings also demonstrate that site leaders and instructional staff express a commitment to involving families in the education of their children.

3. **Report on Curriculum and Instruction**
- Overall, Pre-K for All sites report using a range of curricula to meet the needs of their students and that curriculum satisfaction is high among staff.
- The large majority of site staff report that their curriculum is vertically aligned to kindergarten and beyond, either to a moderate or large extent.
- Pre-K for All sites report using their curricula effectively and confidently to meet students' needs; however, program staff also report requests for continued training and support to improve quality.

4. **Report on Use of Data for Programmatic and Instructional Purposes**
- Overall, Pre-K for All sites report using a wide range of data to inform site-level programmatic decisions and classroom-level teaching practices, which include: authentic assessments of children's learning, program quality assessments, and feedback from DOE support staff and families.
- Authentic assessment data is a valuable data source for children's learning and development and 89 percent of sites report using these data for a variety of purposes. However, sites' perceived comfort with the authentic assessment systems vary by site type.
- 89 percent of site leaders report that their site uses data to engage families to a moderate or large extent.

5. **Report on Pre-K for All Expansion Rollout**
- Most providers that applied to offer full-day pre-K report that the application process was clear, easy to navigate, and well-supported. In general, sites report understanding how to be in compliance with DOE and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) expectations.
- Key stakeholders report that the engagement of a large number of key players and City agencies, increases in City agency capacity and infrastructure, and collaboration within and between City agencies, demonstrated a high-level of commitment to reach the initiative's goals and were major successes.
- Nearly 80 percent and 88 percent of site leaders report that staff recruitment and staff retention, respectively, did not pose significant challenges.
- On average, lead teachers report having five years of experience in a pre-K educational setting and almost 13 years in any educational setting. Approximately eight out of every ten lead teachers report having the NYS Early Childhood certification and almost all of those who did not have certification were currently pursuing it.
- Overall, the large majority of surveyed pre-K instructional staff report being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their pre-K teaching experience in 2014-15.

6. **Report on Program Supports**
- A majority of site leaders and teachers report receiving or using each type of support provided by the DOE *(ex: coaching, professional development, etc.)*, and a majority also report that each type of support was "moderately" or "very" helpful.
- Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) report that they or their staff participated in the DOE-sponsored training that took place four times during the year. Overall, the large majority of site leaders and instructional staff (80 percent) report finding each of these professional development opportunities to be helpful.

- Sites report using a variety of resources and materials to support implementation of their Pre-K for All program. Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) report that their site used the DOE website to access units of study, lesson plans, and guidelines for the daily schedule, among other resources. They report the website is useful.

7. **Report on Executive Functioning and Academic Skills**
- A unique feature of this study is the collection of data on children's executive functioning skills, a set of skills that includes their inhibitory control, working memory, and ability to shift between pieces of information, that together support children's self-regulation. Executive functioning skills were measured by two widely-used assessments known as the Pencil Tap task and the Hearts and Flowers task.
- Statistically significant fall-to-spring gains were observed in both measures of executive functioning. The gains in the percentage of correct responses in the Pencil Tap and Hearts and Flowers tasks were 10 percent and 18 percent, respectively.
- Children attending Pre-K for All made statistically significant gains across all academic skills (Letter Recognition, Pre-writing, and Early Math) over the course of a 5.5-month testing window. By the end of this time period, Pre-K for All children outpaced the learning of four-year-olds nationally and were classified as being in the average range across all academic skills.
- This study featured a pre-post design without a comparison group, which means that observed gains in child learning cannot be attributed solely to participation in Pre-K for All. Children naturally learn and develop over time, and the study design means that these gains are confounded with the effects of the Pre-K for All program. Therefore, we cannot estimate the extent to which Pre-K for All was responsible for the children's learning and development.

2015-16 | Year 2

Updates
The accomplishments and improvements in the second year of the expansion build on the work done in Year 1 to develop a high quality Pre-K for All system. They were informed by the results from the 2014-15 evaluation of Pre-K for All, feedback from Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) field staff, ongoing program assessments, and partnerships with early childhood education experts.

In the second year of the expansion, the DOE introduced the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards (PQS), which define the DOE's vision for high-quality Pre-K for All programs in NYC. The PQS describes the key practices of family engagement, rigorous and developmentally appropriate instruction, professional collaboration, and leadership that support children in gaining the knowledge and skills outlined in the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (NYS PKFCC). The PQS establishes a shared set of expectations for all pre-K programs; the DOE, leaders, educators, and families all use the PQS to understand and advance program quality.

EXPANSION AND POLICY
- The 2015-16 school year marked the first time that every four-year-old in New York City had access to free, full-day, pre-K. As of the 2015-16 school year, 68,647 children were enrolled across all Pre-K for All programs—a number more than triple the number of children who were enrolled before the expansion and larger than the entire school population of major cities like Boston. Enrollment is high across every community, with the highest participation among low-income families.

- The DOE introduced a streamlined pre-K enrollment process for families, which provides one application for families to apply to pre-K programs. Overall, 88 percent of families received a pre-K offer to one of their top three choices through the new streamlined application process.
- The DOE developed and shared critical policy guidance for NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) to ensure they are adequately supported as they join or continue as Pre-K for All partners.

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORTS: In 2015-16, the DOE continued to advance its differentiated supports to all programs, tailoring support to each program's needs in order to meet Pre-K for All's Program Quality Standards.

Instructional Tracks and Lanes
- The DOE launched its Pre-K for All Instructional Tracks, providing every pre-K site with differentiated professional learning through a Summer Institute for teachers and leaders and a series of four teacher sessions and three leader sessions during the school year. Based on a variety of factors such as interest, demonstrated need, recommendations from Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers, site quality, and geography, sites were selected to participate in one of the following professional learning tracks and lanes:
  - *NYC Pre-K Explore*: Pre-K sites that participated in the Explore track used the evidence-based Building Blocks math curriculum together with the Pre-K for All Interdisciplinary Units of Study. Paired together, these materials provide a comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate approach to learning in pre-K.
  - *Advancing Social Emotional Development*: Pre-K sites in this lane advanced ways to support pre-K learners in developing social emotional skills needed to build a positive sense of self, form positive relationships, self-regulate, and adapt to change.
  - *Using Data to Inform Instruction*: Pre-K sites in this lane moved each child forward by learning new strategies to identify and meet each learner's needs, using authentic assessments and other data points.
  - *Supporting Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners*: In this lane, pre-K sites built on the diverse backgrounds and languages children and families brought to the classroom, with strategies for developing learning environments in which all children can thrive and all families are strong partners.

Coaching
- The DOE expanded its cadre of staff to provide on-site support to programs, including Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers.
- To more effectively differentiate support, in the 2015-16 school year, Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers conducted over 1,800 Foundational Support Visits (FSVs) to pre-K sites. Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers used information from these initial visits, ongoing observations, and pre-K program quality assessments to tailor their supports.
- The DOE established partnerships to provide specialized coaching for programs in targeted areas such as the Building Blocks math curriculum and using data to inform instruction.

Interdisciplinary Units of Study
- The DOE created the Pre-K for All research-based Interdisciplinary Units of Study to support student learning in all domains using developmentally appropriate practice. Throughout the year, the DOE released ten interdisciplinary units grounded in the NYS PKFCC.

PROGRAM MEASUREMENT AND USE OF DATA

- Because of its commitment to consistent quality measurement through program assessments, the DOE increased its capacity to provide more frequent program assessments, the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The DOE committed to a three-year cycle for each assessment by the 2016-17 school year for ECERS-R and the 2017-18 school year for CLASS.

OTHER KEY INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- The DOE partnered with researchers at New York University to develop a system of differentiated support that utilizes data on program needs and quality levels; the purpose of this system is to make decisions about the supports each program in our system receives across various aspects of the Pre-K Quality Standards. This is part of an ongoing partnership between DECE and NYU.
- In 2015-2016, the DECE continued its partnership with the Office of Special Education to develop resources and professional learning opportunities so that Instructional Coordinators, Social Workers, teachers, and leaders further strengthen their work to ensure that all children are successfully supported in achieving high expectations for their learning and developmental progress.
- The DOE launched a historic Teacher Incentive Program to support NYCEECs in recruiting and retaining top talent. Through the Pre-K for All Lead Teacher Incentive Program, there are two types signing incentives for certified lead teachers in Pre-K for All classrooms: the Retention Incentive Program for returning certified lead teachers and the New Hire Incentive Program for newly-hired certified lead teachers.

YEAR 2 EVALUATION

The Year 2 evaluation will produce actionable findings that will inform how the DOE can support pre-K programs to advance student learning. The Year 2 evaluation seeks to inform:

- How programs can better support students of different backgrounds and needs and how differentiated supports can serve students with special needs, students whose home language is a language other than English, and students living in poverty.
- The impact of the Pre-K for All's coaching models and professional development to understand how well the DOE is targeting sites for the right kinds and dosage of support based on the areas of growth identified in Year 1 and the Foundational Support Visit.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Westat, Metis Associates, and Branch Associates are conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the *Pre-K for All* initiative in New York City to assess the implementation and outcomes of this effort. As a demonstration of its commitment to learning and quality improvement, the City—the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and the New York City Department of Education (DOE), in cooperation with the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS)—undertook this evaluation beginning in 2014 as a means of gaining actionable information to inform implementation. Work in this area is expected to continue into the future.

This report presents implementation findings on the topic of curriculum and instruction from the perspective of *Pre-K for All* site administrators and instructional staff. Sources of data include surveys of site administrators and instructional staff from a sample of 201 sites and in-depth interviews with administrators and staff at 40 of these sites, as well as a review of available documentation. The sites included in the study were sampled to be representative of all *Pre-K for All* sites and recruited to participate in the evaluation. Findings are based on self-reported data; the use of curriculum and fidelity of implementation were not directly observed. Survey response rates were 91 percent for site administrators and 69 percent for instructional staff.

> ### RESEARCH QUESTIONS
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> 1. *Selection of Curriculum.* Which curriculum are sites using? Are there differences by type of site?
>
> 2. *Satisfaction With Curriculum.* How satisfied are sites with the curriculum they use? Are there differences in satisfaction across curriculum types? Why are they satisfied or not satisfied with the curriculum?
>
> 3. *Curriculum Alignment.* What are site leaders' and instructional staff's perceptions about the extent to which their curriculum is vertically aligned? Is there consistency in instructional practices across pre-K teachers within sites? What are sites doing to ensure that the pre-K program remains play based while working toward this alignment?
>
> 4. *Collaboration.* How often do teachers collaborate with K–3 teachers? How do they collaborate (e.g., formal structures vs. informal)? What are the main challenges? How could these collaborations be strengthened?
>
> 5. *Challenges and Needed Supports.* What are the main challenges in the areas of curriculum and instruction? What additional supports do sites need?

In addition to presenting survey and interview findings across all study sites, selected data are reported for the following subgroups of programs and respondents:

- **Site type**. This includes three categories: DOE NYCEECs (New York City Early Education Centers) (i.e., programs operated by independent organizations under contract to the New York City DOE), ACS NYCEECs (i.e., programs operated by independent organizations under contract to ACS), and district schools. Because of the small sample size, results for charter schools are not presented separately, but are included in the aggregate.

- **Program length.** All *Pre-K for All* sites operate full-day programs. In this report, sites are categorized as: "existing or expanded" (full-day program that maintained their same size enrollment or

expanded the number of seats), "conversion" (programs that converted from a half- to a full-day), and "new or newly contracted" (district schools or NYCEECs operating a pre-K program for the first time as well as programs in existence for various lengths of time prior to contracting with the DOE or ACS).

- **Staff position**. This includes site leaders (i.e., principals or site directors), lead teachers, and teacher assistants (or paraprofessionals).

The report presents evaluation findings in the following areas: curriculum selection, satisfaction with curriculum materials, curriculum alignment and collaboration, and challenges and additional supports needed.

CURRICULUM SELECTION

Pre-K for All sites must select or develop a curriculum that aligns with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (NYS PKFCC) and addresses all program regulations.[1] With these regulations as a guide, sites are required to choose a curriculum that:

- Covers the **five domains of development** in the NYS PKFCC: approaches to learning; physical development and health; social and emotional development; communication, language, and literacy (including approaches to communication and English language arts and literacy); and cognition and knowledge of the world (including mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology);

- Enables children to make **meaningful connections** and affords ample opportunities for **higher order thinking and problem solving;**

- **Is responsive to children's interests**, culture, questions, and shared experiences within the natural environment;

- **Offers daily opportunities for art, music/movement, reading, writing, math, science, social studies, play with sand and water, block play, dramatic play, and outdoor play;** and

- **Allows for an extension of learning at home**.

Evaluation findings indicate that, overall, *Pre-K for All* sites reported using a range of curricula to meet the needs of their students. Most sites reported using a combination of locally developed and published curriculum packages; the curriculum package reported in use by the largest number of sites was the Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum.[2] However, **there were differences in curriculum used by site type**.

- The majority of NYCEECs reported using Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum, while only a small subset of district school sites chose this curriculum. District schools predominantly reported using a locally developed curriculum and materials and sample units of study developed by DOE.

- ACS NYCEEC sites were considerably more likely to rely on just one curriculum (often Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum) than DOE NYCEECs and district schools (75 percent compared to 31 percent and 43 percent, respectively).

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[1] Pre-K regulations and requirements may be found at: http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/upk/regulations.html.

[2] The evaluation did not address implementation fidelity; therefore it is not known how the sites used any specific curricula.

- DOE sites, both DOE NYCEECs and district schools, were much more likely than non-DOE sites (ACS NYCEECs) to report using sample units of study developed by the DOE.

SATISFACTION WITH CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Satisfaction with the various curriculum materials was high among staff, with most teachers rating the quality of these materials as *good* or *excellent* in addressing key areas from the NYS PKFCC (ranging from 73 percent to 97 percent, depending on the area and curriculum).

- In particular, teachers were largely satisfied with the quality of curriculum materials in addressing the following areas: social-emotional development; communication, language, and literacy; and promoting positive approaches to learning. The various curricula used by sites were also rated highly in terms of addressing cognition and knowledge of the world—and to a lesser extent—physical development and health.
- Lowest rated areas (although a majority of respondents still rated the quality of the curriculum as *good* or *excellent*) included meeting the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and linguistically diverse learners.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AND COLLABORATION

The large majority of site staff—97 percent of site leaders and 85 percent of teachers—reported that their curriculum aligned vertically to kindergarten and beyond to a *moderate* or *large extent*.

- Notably, respondents reported that collaboration between pre-K and K–3 teachers was an important aspect of effective alignment. It was clear that having ready access to K–3 teachers in a building encouraged collaboration between pre-K and district school teachers (e.g., common planning time). Specifically, 95 percent of district school pre-K teachers reported collaborating with K–3 teachers, compared to 33 percent of ACS NYCEEC teachers and 21 percent of DOE NYCEEC teachers.

- In sites where collaboration occurred, activities reported by respondents took a variety of formats, including meetings, informal communication, common planning time, and joint activities to prepare pre-K students for their transition into kindergarten.

Alignment among pre-K classes (within a site) was also reported to be strong, with nearly all (97 percent) of site leaders reporting that this occurs to a *moderate* or *large extent*.

- Notably, new or newly contracted sites seemed to be more consistent in implementing instructional practices across classrooms than conversion sites and existing or expanded sites.

- The benefits of collaboration among pre-K teachers were clearly perceived, with teachers expressing that they enjoyed working with others to support one another in classroom activities, address student needs, and revise the curriculum.

CHALLENGES AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS NEEDED

Although self-reported findings indicate that the *Pre-K for All* sites are confidently using their curriculum to meet students' needs, results also suggest that sites may benefit from additional training and supports. Particular areas of need include meeting the needs of high-need learners, such as students with IEPs, culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and students with behavioral challenges. Additionally, teachers would benefit from additional training in aligning instruction to the PKFCC and in behavioral management.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation findings indicate satisfaction with the various curriculum materials and confidence in using the materials effectively, several areas for further curriculum support were identified. Based on our findings, DOE should consider the following recommendations:

- **Provide additional opportunities for teachers to share materials across sites.** This could be achieved by creating an online clearinghouse of vetted, standards-aligned locally developed materials for *Pre-K for All* teachers to share and access and/or expand the information available through the DOE website.

- **Provide trainings and supports based on identified challenges and requests for additional professional development**. Topics for additional training may include:
  - Working with students with behavioral challenges;
  - Working with students with IEPs and linguistically diverse learners; and
  - How to best implement the Common Core within a play-based and content-rich environment.

  These trainings and supports may be face to face (e.g., visits by a behavioral specialist) as well as provided online via videos, including those with examples of quality lessons and activities.

- **Provide support for teachers to individualize instruction for higher achieving students.** This could include providing extension activities for students who are developmentally ready for additional enrichment or additional professional development for teachers on differentiating instruction for both higher and lower achieving students.

- **Provide opportunities for *Pre-K for All* teachers at NYCEECs to collaborate with K–3 teachers**. This could be achieved by arranging for regular meetings or visitations with K–3 teachers at district school sites to share resources and ideas and/or providing professional development that includes vertical alignment group work among teachers from various grade levels.

- **Areas of additional support**:
  - Linkages to other units of DOE to improve response time for assessment of students who may need IEP services; and
  - Translation services (including onsite bilingual staff) and translated communications for parents at sites with linguistically diverse learners.

INTRODUCTION

Westat and Metis are conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the *Pre-K for All* initiative in New York City to assess the implementation and outcomes of this effort. The implementation study consists of an ongoing assessment of New York City's *Pre-K for All* expansion efforts, both in terms of processes, structures, and policies that are in place to support and monitor the rapid expansion, as well as on-the-ground program implementation and delivery. Results from this study will help identify successful practices, challenges, and areas for growth.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *Selection of Curriculum. Which curriculum are sites using? Are there differences by type of site?*

2. *Satisfaction With Curriculum. How satisfied are sites with the curriculum they use? Are there differences in satisfaction across curriculum types? Why are they satisfied or not satisfied with the curriculum?*

3. *Curriculum Alignment. What are site leaders' and instructional staff's perceptions about the extent to which their curriculum aligns vertically? Is there consistency in instructional practices across pre-K teachers within sites (horizontal alignment)? What are sites doing to ensure that the pre-K program remains play based while working toward this alignment?*

4. *Collaboration. How often do teachers collaborate with K-3 teachers? How do they collaborate (e.g., formal structures vs. informal)? What are the main challenges? How could these collaborations be strengthened?*

5. *Challenges and Needed Supports. What are the main challenges in the areas of curriculum and instruction? What additional supports do sites need?*

The implementation study uses multiple methods and data sources, including interviews with key agency stakeholders; a survey of staff of the NYC Department of Education (DOE) Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE); surveys of site leaders, instructional staff, and families at a sample of sites and interviews with site leaders and staff at a sub-sample of these sites; and a review of documentation. The evaluation instruments were developed by Westat/Metis in collaboration with staff of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and DOE.

This report presents implementation findings on the topic of Curriculum and Instruction. Findings are based on self-reported survey and interview responses from site administrators and instructional staff, as well as a review of documentation provided by DOE. The program sites included in the study were sampled to be representative of all *Pre-K for All* sites and recruited to participate in the evaluation. A total of 201 sites agreed to participate in various aspects of the study, with 40 agreeing to site visits.

- From March through June 2015, Westat/Metis administered an **online survey[3] to site administrators and instructional staff** (teachers and teacher assistants). A total of 183 administrators responded, for a response rate of 91 percent. The response rate for instructional staff was 69 percent (*N* = 742) based on email addresses provided for 1,080 staff at the selected sites.

- **Site visits** were conducted at 40 programs from March to May 2015 in order to conduct interviews with administrators and interviews or focus groups with instructional staff.

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[3] To increase response rates, paper surveys were mailed to nonrespondents in June 2015.

In addition to presenting survey and interview findings across all study sites, selected data are reported for the following subgroups of programs and respondents:

- **Site type**. This includes three categories: DOE NYCEECs [Early Education Centers] (i.e., programs operated by independent organizations under contract to DOE), ACS NYCEECs (i.e., programs operated by independent organizations under contract to ACS), and district schools. Because of the small sample size, results for charter schools are not presented separately, but are included in the aggregate.

- **Program length.** All *Pre-K for All* sites operate full-day programs. In this report, sites are categorized as: "existing or expanded" (full-day program that maintained their same size enrollment or expanded the number of seats), "conversion" (programs that converted from a half- to a full-day), and "new or newly contracted" (district schools or NYCEECs operating a pre-K program for the first time as well as programs in existence for various lengths of time prior to contracting with the DOE or ACS).

- **Staff position**. This includes site leaders (i.e., principals or site directors), lead teachers, and teacher assistants (or paraprofessionals).

See Appendix Table A-1 for the distribution of sites that participated in the study.

Drawing from the above data sources and evaluation activities, this report presents findings concerning use of and satisfaction with the curriculum, curriculum alignment and teacher collaboration, challenges to using the curriculum, and additional supports needed to effectively implement it.

CURRICULUM SELECTION

Pre-K for All sites must select or develop a curriculum that aligns with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (NYS PKFCC) and addresses all program regulations.[4] The NYS PKFCC was designed to "ensure that all children, including children with disabilities, students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and English Language Learners (ELLs) have rich and varied early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and lay the foundation for college and career readiness." Furthermore, the document was created to help "provide an essential beginning for developing and implementing high quality curriculum, creating meaningful and appropriate learning experiences for four-year-olds across New York State, and informing other critical processes such as designing learning environments, planning standards based instruction and assessment, as well as pre-service and in-service training for site leaders and teachers, and results-oriented parent engagement."

> Most sites reported using a combination of locally developed materials and curriculum packages to meet the needs of students in classrooms.
>
> Overall, the curriculum package used by the largest number of sites was the Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum.
>
> There were large differences in the curriculum reported in use by site type. The majority of NYCEECs reported using Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum, while only a small subset of district school sites chose this curriculum. Furthermore, DOE sites, including DOE NYCEECs and district schools, were much more likely to report using sample units of study developed by the DOE than ACS NYCEECs.

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[4] Pre-K regulations and requirements are provided at: http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/upk/regulations.html.

The NYS PKFCC also provides learning standards for each of the following five domains of development: approaches to learning; physical development and health; social and emotional development; communication, language, and literacy (including approaches to communication and English Language Arts and literacy); and cognition and knowledge of the world (including mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology).[5]

With this as a guide, *Pre-K for All* sites are required to choose a curriculum that:

- Covers the five domains of development in the NYS PKFCC;

- Enables children to make meaningful connections and affords ample opportunities for higher order thinking and problem solving;

- Is responsive to children's interests, culture, questions, and shared experiences within the natural environment;

- Offers daily opportunities for art, music/movement, reading, writing, math, science, social studies, play with sand and water, block play, dramatic play, and outdoor play; and

- Allows for an extension of learning at home.

Survey results indicate that *Pre-K for All* sites reported using a variety of different curriculum to meet the needs of the students in their classrooms and address required standards. **Notably, most sites (57 percent) reported using more than one curriculum, either combined or supplemented with locally developed materials created by teaching staff.** Overall, approximately half of all sites reported using the following curricula. (Table 1 and Figure 1 provide a breakdown of the curricula by site type.)

- **Locally developed curriculum and materials** (55 percent)—Program staff developed curriculum materials to either supplement or supplant packaged curricula materials.

- **Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum** (49 percent)—Comprising "five research-based volumes that provide the knowledge base of the curriculum, and the Daily Resources." The curriculum package aligns with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and New York State early learning standards. It offers knowledge-building and daily practice resources; daily opportunities to individualize instruction; content to address all areas of learning, including social-emotional, academic, and arts; built-in opportunities for observation; support for working with English- and dual-language learners; and guidance for working with all learners, including advanced learners and children with disabilities. The curriculum package is designed to "help preschool teachers…to be their most effective, while still honoring their creativity and respecting their critical role in making learning exciting and relevant for every child."[6] The various versions of Creative Curriculum allow for a variety of levels of guidance, support, and autonomy on the part of the teacher.

- **Sample units of study developed by DOE** (47 percent)—Sample units for teachers to use as written, integrate into currently existing curriculum units, or use as a model or support for developing other units of study. Each unit contains a unit snapshot (unit topic, overarching question, enduring understandings, focus standards from the PKFCC, and unit sub-topics), and each sub-topic includes

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[5] Detailed information about the guiding principles and learning standards of the NYS PKFCC is available at: https://www.engageny.org/file/121886/download/nyslsprek.pdf?token=VGNkRG4UUfA2l4De0y0H1q4e36CZYTliIL_SYVbPBT8

[6] http://teachingstrategies.com/curriculum/

anchor texts, anchor learning experiences, formative assessment opportunities, family engagement opportunities, and a culminating task. The units align with the PKFCC and include ideas for learning centers, a book list, family engagement ideas, a culminating task with rubrics, and sample weekly plans and daily lesson plans.

Far fewer sites reported using other packaged curriculum materials, including:

- **Core Knowledge** (17 percent)—Developed to "outline a cumulative and coherent progression of knowledge and skills in all developmental areas and integrate developmentally appropriate practices for both content and instruction."[7] It includes three guiding principles: explicitly stated goals and skills are necessary; children are always ready to learn; and assessment and instruction are intertwined. It focuses on the following areas: physical well-being and motor development; social and emotional development; and approaches to learning, language, and knowledge acquisition and cognitive development (including mathematical reasoning and number sense).

- **Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K** (7 percent)—Designed to "build a community of learners…and includes all the core domains of learning including emotional, physical, cognitive and linguistic. Splash into Pre-K also integrates all of the curricular areas including reading and language arts, math, science, social studies, health, and art into the daily instruction."[8] The program includes high-interest activities and flexible lesson planning, real-world center activities, and classroom management strategies to work with large and small groups.

Data collected from site visit interviews and focus groups confirmed the differential use of these materials, indicating that most sites reported using more than one curriculum or supplemented with locally developed materials.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, survey results varied by type of site, although not by program length.

- ACS sites were considerably more likely to rely on just one curriculum than DOE NYCEECs and district schools (75 percent, compared to 31 percent and 43 percent, respectively).

- ACS NYCEECs and DOE NYCEECs were most likely to report using Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (85 percent, and 66 percent, respectively), while only 25 percent of district school sites chose this curriculum.

- District schools and DOE NYCEECs were considerably more likely to rely on and/or supplement curriculum packages with locally developed curriculum and materials than ACS NYCEECs (66 percent and 59 percent, compared to 20 percent).

- Far more DOE sites, both DOE NYCEECs and district schools, reported using sample units of study developed by the DOE than ACS NYCEECs (59 percent and 48 percent, compared to 20 percent).

Figure 1 presents data on the number of curricula used, overall and disaggregated by site type. Table 1 presents the top five curricula used, overall and disaggregated by site type.

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[7] http://www.coreknowledge.org/the-preschool-sequence

[8] http://www.edtechreview.com/products/view/651

Figure 1. Site Leaders' Reports of Number of Curricula Used, by Type of Site and Program Length
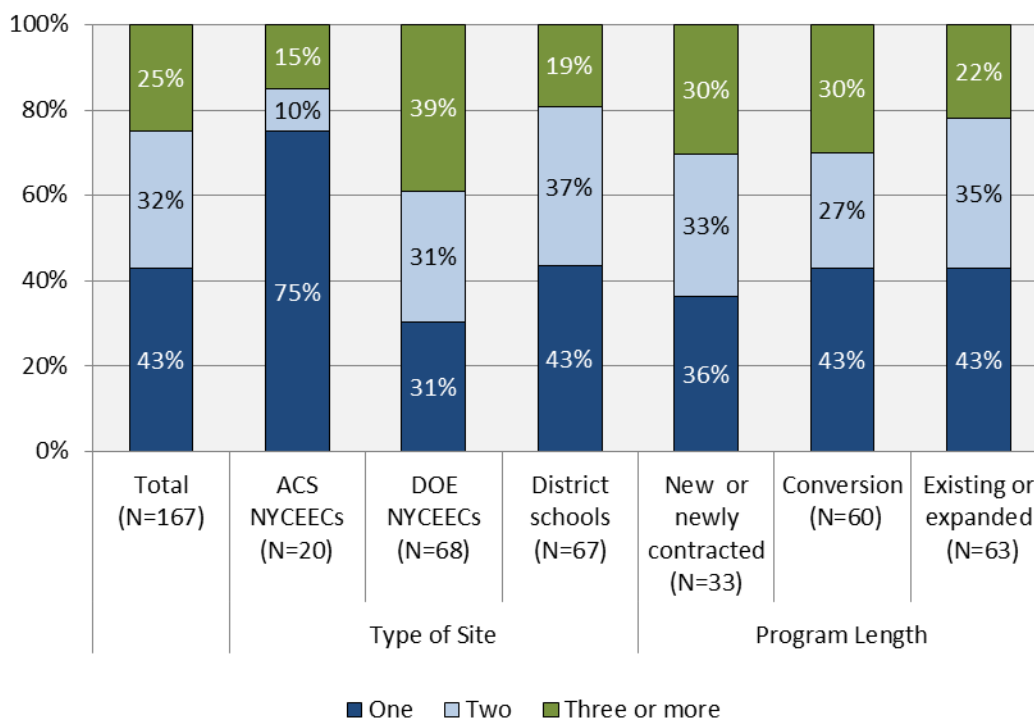

Table 1. Site Leaders' Reports of Top Five Curricula Used, Across Sites and by Site Type

All Sites	ACS NYCEECs	DOE NYCEECs	District Schools
✓ Locally developed curriculum and materials (55%)	✓ Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (85%)	✓ Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (66%)	✓ Locally developed curriculum and materials (66%)
✓ Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (49%)	✓ Locally developed curriculum and materials (20%)	✓ Locally developed curriculum and materials (59%)	✓ Sample units of study developed by DOE (48%)
✓ Sample units of study developed by DOE (47%)	✓ Sample units of study developed by DOE (20%)	✓ Sample units of study developed by DOE (59%)	✓ Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (25%)
✓ Core Knowledge (17%)	✓ Core Knowledge (10%)	✓ Core Knowledge (22%)	✓ Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K (13%)
✓ Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K (7%)	✓ Tools of the Mind/High Scope (both at 5%)	✓ High Scope (4%)	✓ Core Knowledge (12%)

Note: Based on responses not including "Other."

SATISFACTION WITH CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Across the surveyed sites, teachers were largely satisfied with the quality of the curriculum materials they used in their *Pre-K for All* classrooms. As shown in Table 2, approximately three-quarters or more teachers rated their selected curriculum as *good* or *excellent* in almost all areas aligned with the NYS PKFCC.

When comparing the various curricula that sites used, results show that:

- **Locally developed curricula and materials were the highest rated for almost all key areas**. The only exception was "addressing the needs of linguistically diverse learners" (for this area, Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K and the units of study developed by DOE received similar ratings).

- **Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum and the sample units of study developed by DOE** were the next highest rated curriculum materials in almost all key areas. One notable exception can be found in the area of "addressing the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans." In this area, the sample units of study developed by DOE received the lowest ratings (together with Core Knowledge).

> Teachers reported satisfaction with the quality of curriculum materials in addressing key areas from the NYS PKFCC.
>
> Locally developed curricula and materials, Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum, and the units of study developed by DOE were the highest rated curricula.
>
> Highest rated areas for curriculum packages were generally consistent across curricula and included social emotional development; communication, language, and literacy; and promoting positive approaches to learning.
>
> Lowest rated areas included meeting the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and linguistically diverse learners.

Notably, **there were several areas to which teachers gave top ratings across the most used curriculum packages**.

- For example, "Addressing your students' needs in social and emotional development" was one of the top three highest rated areas for locally developed curriculum (96 percent), Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (89 percent), and sample units of study developed by DOE (88 percent).

- Another area that was consistently among the highest rated was "Addressing your students' needs in communication, language and literacy" for locally developed curriculum (97 percent), sample units of study developed by DOE (91 percent), Core Knowledge (88 percent), and Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (87 percent).

- Finally, a third highly rated area was "Promoting positive approaches to learning among your students," with 94 percent of teachers who used a locally developed curriculum rating it as *good* or *excellent* in this area, followed by 89 percent of Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum users, 87 percent of teachers using the sample units of study developed by DOE, and 86 percent of Core Knowledge users.

As mentioned previously, most areas were rated by teachers as *good* or *excellent*. However, **there was one particular area in which teachers were less confident about the quality of their curriculum**.

- Notably, "Addressing the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)" was the area in which the fewest teachers rated the various curricula as *good* or *excellent* for four of the five top-used curricula, including locally developed curriculum (79 percent), Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum (76 percent), sample units of study developed by DOE (69 percent), and Core Knowledge (69 percent).

However, there were areas in which different curricula did not follow the general trends mentioned above. For example:

- **Sample units of study developed by DOE** was highly rated, with 89 percent of teachers rating the DOE-developed units as *good* or *excellent* in "Addressing your students' needs in cognition and knowledge of the world."

- **Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K** was highly rated in "Addressing the needs of linguistically diverse learners" (with 84 percent of teachers rating it as *good* or *excellent)* and in "Addressing your students' needs in cognition and knowledge of the world" (81 percent of teachers rating it as *good* or *excellent).*

- **Core Knowledge** received lower ratings than other curricula in "Addressing your students' needs in social and emotional development," although the large majority (77 percent) still rated it as *good* or *excellent*.

Table 2: Percentage of Teachers Rating Curricula as *Good* or *Excellent* in Key Areas

Key areas	Top Five Curricula Used by Sites				
	Locally developed curriculum and materials	Sample units of study developed by DOE	Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum	Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K	Core Knowledge
Promoting positive approaches to learning among students	94%	87%	89%	74%	86%
Addressing students' needs in the area of physical development and health	89%	81%	88%	73%	82%
Addressing students' needs in the area of social and emotional development	96%	88%	89%	80%	77%
Addressing students' needs in the area of communication, language, and literacy	97%	91%	87%	81%	88%
Addressing students' needs in the area of cognition and knowledge of the world	93%	89%	84%	81%	81%
Addressing the needs of linguistically diverse learners	83%	83%	79%	84%	74%
Addressing the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)	79%	69%	76%	74%	69%

Note: Based on responses not including "Other." Percentages exclude ratings of *N/A* and *Not Sure*.

Overall, results from interviews with site leaders and focus groups with instructional staff were consistent with the survey findings for each curriculum. The findings below present data from site visits on the top-used curricula.[9]

- **Locally developed curriculum and materials** were reported to be used by approximately half of sites visited by evaluators. The sites that used locally developed curriculum materials expressed a high level of satisfaction with these materials, explaining that they had developed them to ensure that they would address the needs of the students in their programs. For example, one site reported that it used a theme-based curriculum that it developed exclusively at the site, on a six-week rotation. A teacher at that site said that she prefers "to create my own, because I think we have a very unique population here with different languages and different cultures." Another teacher in the focus group agreed, saying that she would "love a curriculum that truly mimicked what we do…and I haven't found one yet."

> *The [locally developed curriculum is] great. It gives you a lot of freedom to do what the children are ready for and what their interests are and you can kind of adapt it to meet the needs of everybody so it's not so structured. You're kind of developing it based on the needs of the kids.*
>
> *Pre-K Teacher*

While some sites did exclusively use locally developed materials, most also used a published package as a base and supplemented with locally developed materials. Teachers who used locally developed curriculum materials as a supplement seemed to enjoy the combination. For example, one teacher said that, going forward she would prefer to keep creating her own curriculum with

> *a skeleton [guide], saying 'Okay these are the definite things that we need you to cover' …so having a skeleton kind of guideline of curriculum would be fantastic and then being allowed to be creative on my own. To implement that would have been great.*

Site leaders agreed. As one said,

> *It's been wonderful to see how [our teacher] has adapted the materials that she's been given to make them work in the pre-K …so that it's truly something that is—this [phrase] gets thrown around so much, "child-centered" or "child-focused" but in this case, it truly is, and it's no more evident than in a pre-K classroom where the needs and desires of the children are expressed so clearly. They're so honest in what they want to do, and so you know right away whether they're interested in it or not. It's very clear.*

- **Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum** was the most often used published package for sites visited by evaluators; slightly more than half of sites reported using this package (either exclusively or supplemented with other materials). Overall, site leaders and instructional staff were very satisfied with the materials and reported them to be well-aligned with the standards. For example, a site leader said,

> *I'm very, very comfortable and happy with the [Creative Curriculum] that we implement. It's been working for many years and we have seen the results on the children…by the time they leave.*
>
> *Pre-K Site Leader*

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[9] Only one site reported using Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Splash into Pre-K; therefore, results for that curriculum are not presented.

> *It is aligned with the Common Core Standards and with Teaching Strategies, and also with our program needs. It's based on the belief that children can learn through play. And it really, really helped support the teachers, giving them strategies on how to set up the environment in a way that would promote learning for a diverse community*.

Teachers largely agreed, saying,

> *I think this program's fabulous. I really do. I wish the rest of the school followed this program. The whole concept of having a choice is the way it should be. And it's something that I wish the older children had, more choices. It seems like as you get older you should have more choices, not less.*" The teacher continued on to say, *"[Students] choose where they want to go. And everything evolves, all their learning evolves out of their engagement with whatever they're choosing to play with. To me it's the ideal way to engage children in learning, on every level. At every grade*.

A high level of student engagement with this curriculum emerged as a theme throughout the interviews and focus groups, with respondents suggesting that the play-based and hands-on nature of the curriculum was successful in engaging students. For example, another site leader said that the, "children are learning through exploration… when you can put your hands on it, you can touch it, you can manipulate it around. That's how you're going to learn, not by sitting in a chair."

However, staff also expressed a few concerns, mostly focused on the amount of content in each lesson as well as some overall redundancy in the content. For example, one teacher indicated that it was a challenge to fit in all the content while still allowing for enough play time saying that,

> *…[students are] supposed to play twice a day…one lesson is too much for one day, it has a lot of things…sometimes I look through the day [and think], okay, this is what I have to do today–but I may change it.*

Others agreed, reporting that they have been adjusting their curriculum to "really give the children time to think about it and absorb the information and just able to think about it more and spend time on those few basic concepts.*"*

Finally, some sites also supplemented Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum with their own materials to ensure complete alignment with the standards. In the words of one site leader,

> "[*Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum]* is helpful to the point where it helps the teachers with the themes and gives them guidance as to how to approach their lessons, but there are times when they need additional suggestions and other resources." A teacher said, "*I think we use more of the concepts of Creative Curriculum–we use those ideas, the free play and stuff, but we're putting in our own spin to it to meet the standards, which you have to.*"

This was not seen as a negative, however, as respondents reported that one of the strengths of Creative Curriculum is its flexibility but that "you're still targeting those objectives and you're still targeting those standards." Even those staff members who indicated that they do a good deal of modification suggested that it was a solid base upon which to build, saying,

> "*We don't use their specific units of study, we make up our own, but by looking at the units of study that they have, it's helped the teachers to be able to implement. To put in every content area into their lessons, and all of their lessons…they give us the alignment to the*

Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core."

- **Sample units of study developed by DOE** were used by approximately half of sites that participated in interviews. Very few respondents commented on the units specifically; however, those who did were generally satisfied with them. They reported that these units were used to supplement other curriculum materials (including locally developed curriculum). As one teacher put it, "I just feel as if like each [curriculum] has information I could use that the other one doesn't. So I can always put [them] together and combine."

- **Core Knowledge** was used by approximately 10 percent of sites visited by evaluators. Very few respondents commented on this curriculum package, although those who did were generally pleased with the curriculum. As one teacher said, "I think it's pretty much aligned to Common Core standards. It's a good curriculum. It spells everything out for you. So, you really can't argue with that."

Students With Individualized Education Plans

Although not as highly rated as other areas, a majority of surveyed teachers nevertheless reported that the curriculum or curricula they use are adequate for meeting the needs of IEP students. As noted above, between 70 percent and 79 percent of teachers (depending on the type of curriculum) rated the curriculum as *good* or *excellent* in this area. According to site visit results, sites used various methods to support the needs of students with IEPs, including in-house staff and in-house resources, as well as external support for more specialized services.

- For example, many sites had additional paraprofessionals in the classroom who helped to support students. Some sites also reported using an integrated co-teaching (ICT) model, in which classes include students with and without disabilities and have two teachers, a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

- In addition, at many sites, students with special needs received referrals for a wide range of services, including occupational, physical, and speech therapy. One site leader explained,

    We have push-in services from individuals from the DOE who come in to meet the special education needs, whether it be speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy…they come into the classroom to work with the kids on a daily basis or at least three times a week.

  In contrast, the leader of a site with a large special education population described how these supports were provided by in-house staff, which included occupational, physical, and speech therapists.

- A number of sites reported that they have Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEIT) who work with the students with IEPs. As one site leader described,

    The SEITs provide a lot of support. They work with the teachers. They collaborate on the students' goals; whether the student achieved it or not and strategies of how the student can achieve those goals. [There is] a lot of collaboration between the SEITs and the teachers.

- Sites also helped families prepare for students' "turning five" meeting, which DOE facilitates to help special education students transition from pre-K to kindergarten.

- Sites that received support through visits from the DOE's Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) social workers[10] also reported that these staff have played a key role in supporting the needs of these students and working with families. As noted by one site leader,

> The social worker has been very helpful [in] having the children evaluated, helping the process and getting someone whether it's a speech pathologist or someone here who can work with the kids. We do observations a lot and take things down, and if there's anything that needs to be addressed, we address it right away. We make sure parents know what's going on, we talk to them all the time.

Linguistically Diverse Learners

Similarly, a majority of teachers were confident that the materials and curricula they use are adequate for meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students, with over 70 percent of them describing these materials as *good* or *excellent*. At sites serving a high proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, interviewed staff described the practices and strategies they found most beneficial to support these students.

- Interviewed staff at most sites reported that they have access to books and materials translated into all of the languages spoken by their linguistically diverse students. One teacher also noted how useful it is to be able to access translated materials for parents and students on the DOE website. They also reported the importance of having bilingual instructional staff, a common practice among sites with linguistically diverse students. Survey findings indicate that almost all sites (96 percent) had on staff someone who was proficient in a language other than English, with the two most prevalent languages being Spanish (91 percent of sites) and Chinese (21 percent of sites).[11]

- Site leaders and staff spoke extensively about how they used visual aids and prompts (e.g., picture books and labeled pictures and posters) provided through curricula to support students' English language development. As one site leader explained: "We're doing everything through pictures [and] visual aids because, even if we have something in writing in their language, at four years old,…it's mostly all visual." In the words of another site leader, "Everything the children are doing is very…visual learning…there are posters, pictures, books. There's a lot for them to fall back on so that they really understand the concepts."

- Teachers also noted the use of verbal strategies, including constant repetition of words and sounds as well as singing and chanting in multiple languages.

- Another effective method for supporting students' English language development, according to respondents, was facilitating verbal interaction and group work between linguistically diverse students and their English-speaking peers. Teachers described how they paired linguistically diverse students with English-speaking students for small group activities such as Turn and Talk and Center Time. As one teacher explained:

> I find that the best way for them to learn is through their classmates. They learn so much vocabulary….We've had children who didn't speak English at the beginning of the year and

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[10] DECE social workers, who worked primarily in district schools in 2014–15, provided supports as well as materials and resources to site leaders, staff, and families. During weekly site visits, their role included observations and consultations, coaching and modeling, facilitating workshops, building families' knowledge and skills, connecting families to social service resources, and collaborating on setting goals based on observations and other data.

[11] The study did not examine the alignment between languages spoken by staff and languages spoken by families.

> *by the end of the year they were speaking pretty well just because of being immersed in the classroom....They learned from each other.*

- Finally, staff from a few sites also emphasized the importance of honoring the students' native languages as well as their cultural traditions. Sites spoke about how they actively worked to promote cultural diversity in the classroom by holding cultural celebrations, teaching students about different cultures, and involving parents in classroom activities and events.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AND COLLABORATION

Vertical Alignment and Collaboration

The ultimate goal of the *Pre-K for All* initiative is to prepare children so they are ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. It is important, therefore, for curriculum materials in pre-K classrooms to align vertically with kindergarten and beyond (i.e., what is taught in pre-K is specifically designed to support student learning in the later grades).

As shown in Figure 2, **the large majority of site leaders (97 percent) and teachers (85 percent) reported on surveys that they believe that the curriculum materials used at their sites were vertically aligned to a *moderate* or *large* extent**. Notably, however, far more site leaders than teachers agreed that their curriculum was vertically aligned *to a large extent* (81 percent compared to 52 percent, respectively).

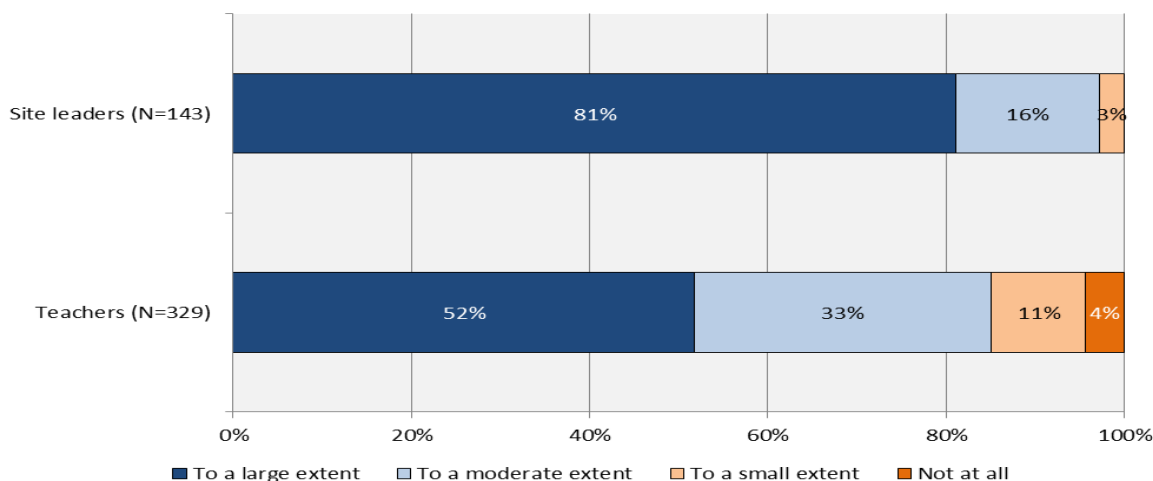> Most site leaders and teachers believe their curriculum aligns vertically to kindergarten and beyond.
>
> Having ready access to K–3 teachers in a building appears to be related to reports of collaboration between pre-K and K–3 teachers.
>
> Most pre-K teachers at district schools reported collaborating in a variety of ways with the K–3 teachers in their schools. Fewer teachers from the NYCEECs reported collaborating with K–3 teachers.

Interviews and focus groups with site leaders and instructional staff corroborated these findings, with most site leaders indicating that they were confident about the vertical alignment of the curriculum used at their sites. Site staff worked to ensure this alignment in several ways, including revising curriculum as information became available. As one site leader put it,

> *We're constantly looking at the way instruction happens, from what's happening with the teachers to what's happening with the children, so we're always looking at how to make things, to improve things. We're not afraid to make mistakes and then learn from them [to ensure alignment].*
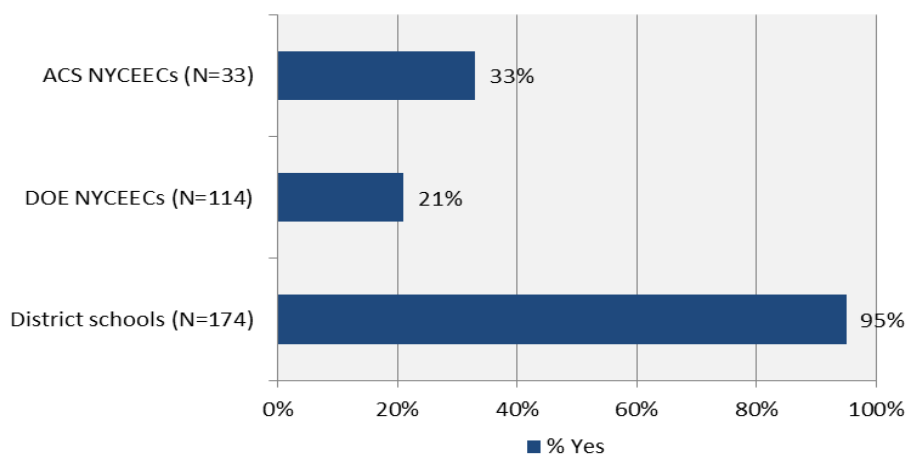
Figure 2. Site Leaders' and Teachers' Perceptions of Vertical Curriculum Alignment

Teachers were also asked to report about the extent to which they collaborate with kindergarten through third-grade teachers. Overall, 63 percent of teachers (and 42 percent of teacher assistants) responding to the survey indicated that they collaborate with their peers in the upper grades. Results were also disaggregated by type of site and are presented in Figure 3.

The large majority of pre-K teachers at district school sites (95 percent) reported collaborating with K–3 teachers. In contrast, only 33 percent of teachers from ACS NYCEECs and 21 percent of teachers from DOE NYCEECs reported collaborating with K–3 teachers from the schools that students are most likely to attend in kindergarten.

Figure 3. Pre-K Teachers' Collaboration with K–3 Teachers, by Type of Site

Teachers who did collaborate with K–3 teachers reported engaging in a variety of activities, with differing levels of frequency. As shown in Figure 4, among pre-K teachers who reported collaborating with K–3 teachers, the most frequent and intense method of collaboration was through **joint staff meetings** (87 percent reported collaborating in this way, and 63 percent reported attending these meetings at least monthly), **followed by more informal one-on-one collaboration** (81 percent

collaborated in this way, and 56 percent did so at least monthly). Less frequently used methods of collaboration were vertical team meetings or inquiry team meetings[12] (76 percent attended these, including 49 percent who did so at least monthly), and common planning time (67 percent collaborated in this way, including 47 percent who did so at least monthly).

Figure 4. Pre-K Teachers' Frequency of Collaboration with K–3 Teachers

In interviews and focus groups, many site leaders and teachers also reported collaborating with K–3 teachers. As noted previously, staff in NYCEECs reported fewer instances of collaboration with K–3 teachers, although they did not suggest that this resulted in a lack of alignment in the curriculum materials or that their students were not prepared for kindergarten. The types of activities staff reported successfully engaging in included:

[Pre-K teachers] go to the kindergarten grade conferences usually. [Sometimes] they meet alone because [the topic] is more specific to pre-K needs, but depending on what we're talking about, sometimes I ask them to come to the kindergarten meeting.

Pre-K Site Leader

- **Regular meetings.** Many staff who collaborated with K–3 teachers reported participating in regular meetings. For example, at one district school, teachers reported gathering each Monday afternoon to:

  see what kinds of things [kindergarten teachers are] doing, and we'll see what kind of skills they want the children to have for next year that maybe they didn't, and things like that….I ask them what skills are important when [students] come in September, what do they need to know in the future.

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[12] Beginning in 2007, the DOE encouraged the creation of inquiry teams in all schools as a strategy to drive school improvement efforts. These teams are tasked with "using data to identify a change in instructional practice that will accelerate learning for a specific group of underperforming students." Additional information on these teams can be found at: http://is239.schoolwires.com/cms/lib/NY18000436/Centricity/ModuleInstance/590/Inquiry_Team_Handbook.pdf.

- **Common professional development and planning time.** Staff at some sites reported working to integrate professional development and provide common planning time for pre-K and elementary grade teachers. In the words of one site leader,

   > There are a lot of times where [teachers] integrate [professional development] with the K and even the grade 1 teachers together…and also, we designed the schedules this year so that the teachers on a grade all have this common prep period…so they collaborate with each other. And one of my pre-K teachers is actually serving as a mentor for one of my brand new kindergarten teachers.

- **Planning for transition**. Teachers often reported arranging for pre-K students and parents to visit the schools that they were likely to attend. This was a method of outreach that teachers engaged in to help smooth the transition between pre-K and kindergarten.

Staff at sites who reported little or no collaboration with K–3 teachers reported that it was difficult to communicate and engage with the local schools. In addition, one administrator suggested that it would be helpful if there was a professional development session

   > to explain to pre-kindergarten teachers how what they're doing is going to support what's going to happen in the next grade. And that will happen with the pre-K teachers, not only knowing their standards but also being familiar with kindergarten standards and what's going to be expected of those students in the subsequent year when they're not in pre-K anymore.

NYCEEC sites that did report collaborating with K–3 teachers indicated that it was largely through shared professional development activities or personal relationships with teachers at their local schools.

Horizontal Alignment and Collaboration

Another element important to the success of *Pre-K for All* sites is the extent to which the program is consistent across pre-K classrooms. By aligning the program (across classrooms within a site), programs can be sure all students receive equal access to quality programming and are adequately prepared for kindergarten.
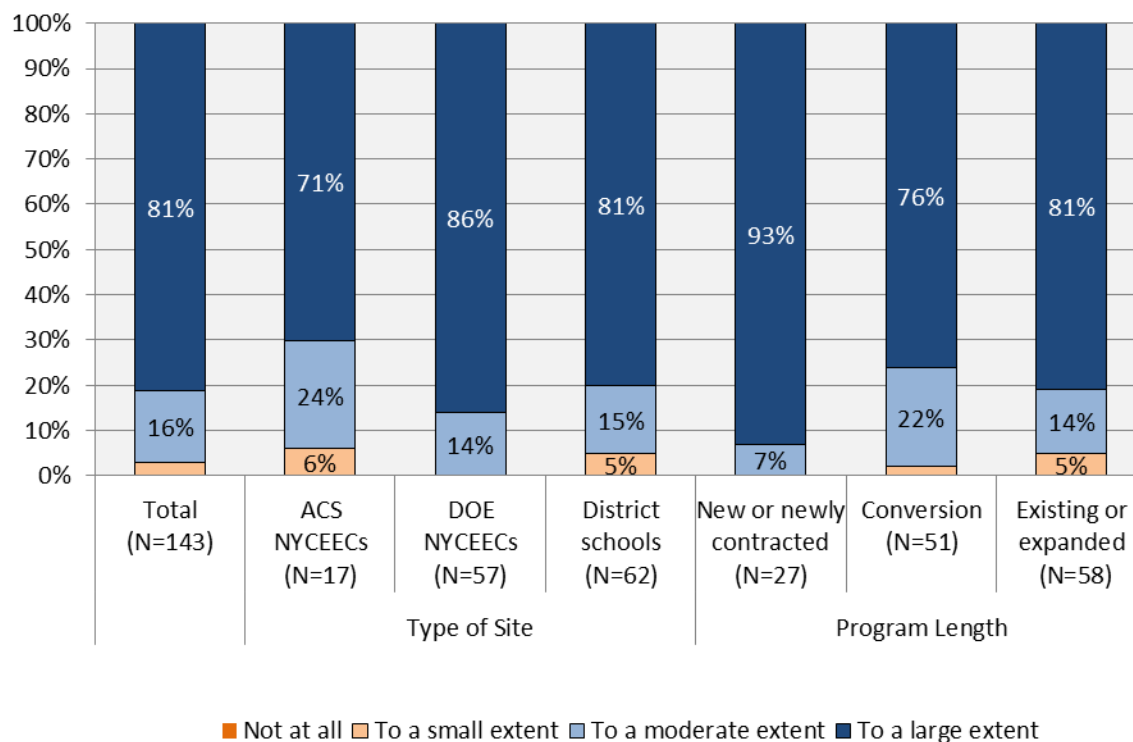
As shown in Figure 5, **almost all (97 percent) site leaders reported on surveys that the instructional practices at their site were consistent across classrooms to a *moderate* or *large extent*,** although this varied by program length. Notably, leaders of newly contracted sites seem to be the most confident about horizontal alignment, with 93 percent reporting that the practices were consistent across classrooms to a *large extent*. Site leaders also varied in their perception of the horizontal alignment of classrooms by site type. For example, more site leaders at DOE NYCEECs (86 percent) and district schools (81 percent) reported that the practices

Most site leaders reported that the instructional practices at their site were consistent across classrooms. Newer sites reported more consistency in implementing instructional practices across classrooms than conversion sites and existing or expanded sites.

Teachers noted a variety of benefits to their regular collaboration with other pre-K teachers, including supporting one another in classroom activities, planning for student needs, and revising curriculum.

were consistent across classrooms to *a large extent* than ACS NYCEECs (71 percent).

Figure 5. Site Leaders' Perceptions of Horizontal Curriculum Alignment, by Type of Site and Program Length

Note: Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

In interviews, **staff members spoke extensively about collaboration among pre-K teachers, saying that they made "*time for planning, communication, and sharing*" and that these activities were "*very important.*"** Several site leaders noted that consistency among classrooms and collaborative activities generally worked well, with one site leader saying, "between the two [teachers], they work together and plan everything, so if you go into one, the other one's doing…basically the same curriculum. They're on the same wavelength…and they plan together." Those teachers who worked together to ensure consistency among classrooms noted some additional benefits, including:

- **Planning for student needs.** Staff members reported that they often held weekly meetings during common planning time or when students were not in attendance. During these meetings, staff worked together to ensure alignment of programming and offered assistance to one another in meeting student needs. For example, one teacher said in a focus group that,

    We meet about once a week and…we sit down and we talk about every activity that we could do in every area of the classroom, how we can help those children that need the extra help, to break it down for them into smaller groups.

- **Helping one another when necessary.** By staying on top of the activities for each classroom, site leaders reported that teachers were able to work together. As one site leader put it,

    The teachers collaborate daily…so they know exactly what's going on in each classroom, they know each other's curriculum very well, they know each other's students very well, which is

> *very important. So, through their collaboration, they're always on par so that if, for example, one teacher is having difficulty in one area, the other teacher will be able to help out because they're in sync with one another*.

- **Revising curriculum materials.** Staff members reported that regular meetings and collaboration among pre-K teachers allowed for reflection on successes and challenges to implementing the curriculum when teachers can "hash out any concerns we have, and we discuss the curriculum and plan the curriculum." As one teacher put it, "we have had opportunities consistently and weekly to get together as a team and discuss what we're working on and what we want to keep and what we want to throw out."

CHALLENGES AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS NEEDED

Challenges

Survey findings show that the large majority of site leaders reported minimal or no challenges for each of the curriculum and instruction areas assessed through the survey (ranging from 79 percent to 87 percent, depending on the area).

The areas that were identified as the least challenging for site leaders were:
- Providing meaningful feedback to teachers;
- Selecting a pre-K curriculum; and
- Monitoring the quality of teaching.

The areas that seemed to present the most challenge for site leaders were:
- Training staff on the chosen pre-K curriculum;
- Providing supports for linguistically diverse students; and
- Providing supports for student with IEPs.
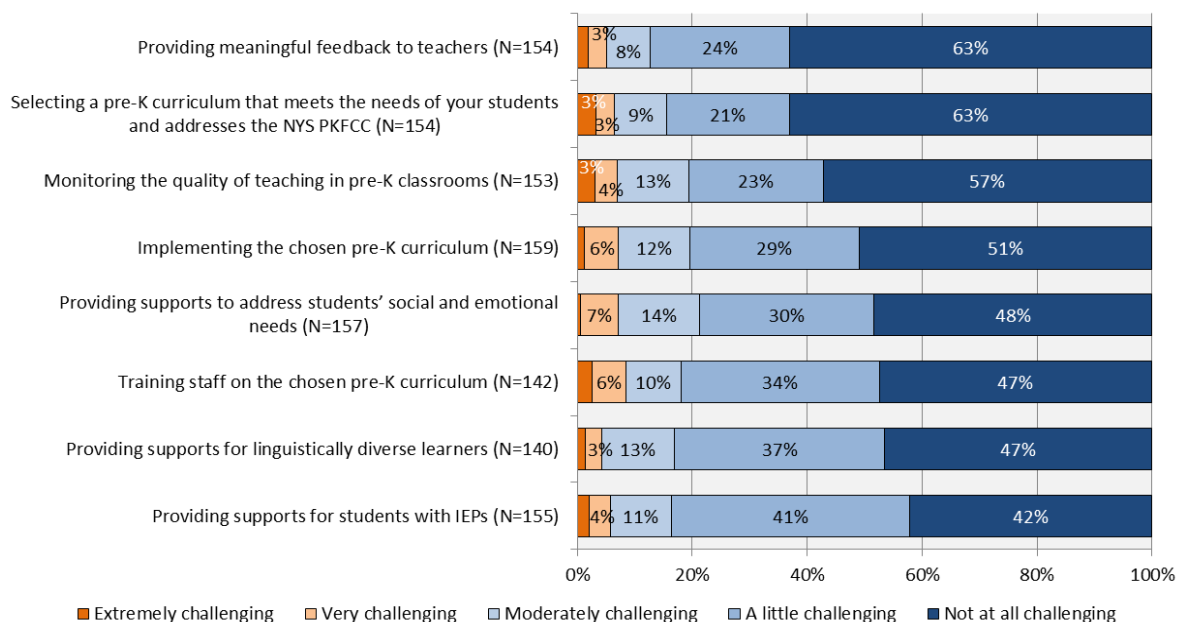
> Areas that seemed most challenging for site leaders were training staff on the pre-K curriculum and providing supports for high-need students.
>
> Challenges for instructional staff focused on providing supports for high-need students.

Figure 6. Site Leaders' Perceptions of Challenges to Curriculum Implementation and Instruction

Note: Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

Survey findings show that the majority of teachers reported minimal or no challenges for each of the curriculum and instruction areas assessed through the survey (ranging from 60 percent to 78 percent, depending on the area). These data, however, show that teachers were more likely to report challenges than site leaders (Figure 7).

Overall, the areas that teachers reported were the least challenging were:

- Implementing the pre-K curriculum;
- Accessing a pre-K curriculum that meets the needs of students and addresses the NYS PKFCC; and
- Receiving meaningful feedback on teaching from program administrators.

The areas that offered the most challenge for teachers were:

- Addressing the needs of students with behavior challenges;
- Providing supports for students with IEPs;
- Providing supports for linguistically diverse learners; and
- Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs.

Figure 7. Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges to Curriculum Implementation and Instruction

	Extremely challenging	Very challenging	Moderately challenging	A little challenging	Not at all challenging
Receiving meaningful feedback on your teaching from program administrators (N=357)	5%	4%	13%	22%	56%
Accessing a pre-K curriculum that meets the needs of your students and addresses the NYS PKFCC (N=355)	5%	9%	27%	23%	36%
Implementing the pre-K curriculum chosen by your site (N=347)	3%	7%	23%	31%	36%
Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs (N=362)	4%	10%	19%	33%	34%
Providing supports for linguistically diverse learners (N=323)		8%	23%	33%	34%
Providing supports for students with IEPs (N=286)	4%	11%	19%	34%	33%
Dealing with behavioral management issues (N=369)	7%	9%	23%	34%	27%

Note: Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

Teacher assistants were more likely than teachers to report challenges, but the most challenging areas were the same for both groups of staff:

- Addressing the needs of students with behavior challenges;
- Providing supports for students with IEPs;
- Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs; and
- Providing supports for linguistically diverse learners.

Results for teacher assistants are presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Teacher Assistants' Perceptions of Challenges to Curriculum Implementation

Note: Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

Information from site visits supported the survey findings, with few site leaders and teachers reporting challenges related to the implementation of curricula. However, a few areas of concern were raised by interviewed staff at a subset of sites.

- **The amount of paperwork and other requirements from the DOE and/or site directors** was identified as an issue at some sites; these staff indicated that various program requirements (e.g., completing forms, developing planners, administering various assessments, integrating the Common Core standards) could be overwhelming. One commented, "The biggest issue is…how to get all the things that they're requiring together. That's the biggest challenge." A teacher at a DOE site expressed,

    > we're assimilating to the expectations of what DOE wants also, so it is a little complicated, especially the amount of forms that are given to us—it seems like it's a lot of paperwork. So it's hard sometimes to teach the kids, because you're working on paperwork and getting the planners done, and then the detailed units. Trying to align everything with the Common Core…can be a little challenging. And getting the time to organize all of that and put it together…I'd rather spend the time figuring out creative ways of teaching.

- **In addition, some teachers indicated that it was difficult to fully cover all aspects of the curriculum** while also allotting enough play and outdoor time. One teacher in a focus group said that they "have to make sure that the children have enough time for play and a lot of center time [while ensuring that children] have enough time to implement writing more." This was also an issue for other

teachers who were concerned about students who needed additional learning time. One teacher said it was a challenge to keep to the required schedule "because when you differentiate your lessons…sometimes there's not enough time… [and] it's very hard to gauge when you're differentiating and make sure that you're meeting the needs of every kid." This teacher went on to say that it might be helpful to have an "open schedule" to allow teachers to "take our time and get more done. Especially with the children who need the extra help."

- **Academic "rigor"** was mentioned by several teachers who expressed a concern that some of their students were ready for more challenging content but they (as educators) were limited by their site directors and chosen curriculum as to what they were permitted to teach. For example, some teachers thought that they should be "allowed to advance the child if we feel that it's necessary" to content that might be expected of older children. This challenge was echoed by other interviewed staff who indicated that parents were concerned that their children needed more challenging content. While the DOE does permit teachers to advance children as needed, this finding points to a need for DOE to clarify expectations and provide additional supports and guidance on how to differentiate instruction for higher achieving students.

- **Educating parents on the need for a play-based curriculum was** mentioned by several respondents as an issue when it came to satisfying parental requests for more "academic" activities. For example, it was suggested that parents need more information on the developmental appropriateness of play-based learning in addressing academic content for young children. As a site leader indicated, parents

  > had that mindset of, the child needs to be sitting with a notebook, with work, writing their name, forming letters—so that's the conflict, and we still have that to a certain extent with the parents, because the parents in this community, they like to see formal…homework come home. You send home a project or a task where they're engaging in some kind of activities and you're asking them to do something—well you know the child is going to benefit from it, but [parents] tend not to respect that as much. They're knocking down my door complaining about the teacher…we're trying now to think of ways that we can really educate [parents] even better so that they understand….So it's the new parents coming in—it's catching them early and letting them know.

- **Adapting curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of students with IEPs and linguistically diverse learners.** Addressing the needs of special populations was cited by many teachers as a challenging aspect of their work. During interviews, several teachers described challenges associated with the process of evaluating students for an IEP. According to respondents, the process can be slow. In addition, parents were sometimes resistant to their child being evaluated and receiving services.
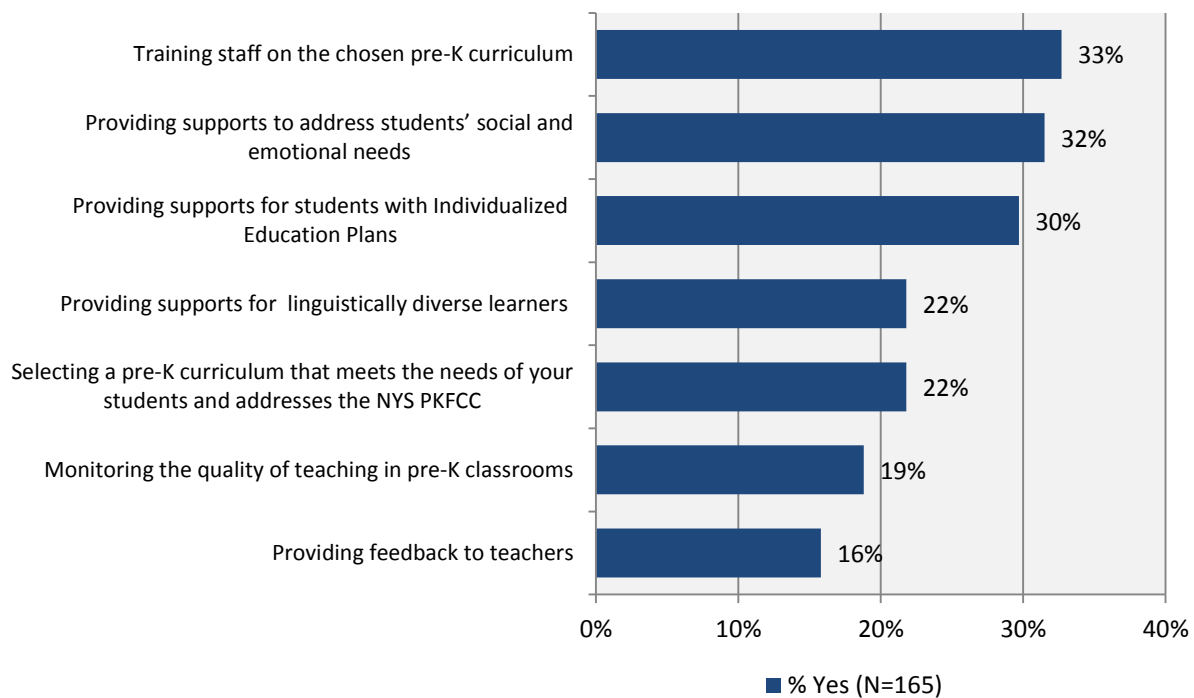
Additional Supports Needed

The majority of site leaders indicated that they do not need additional supports to fully implement the curriculum at their site. As shown in Figure 9, the areas in which site leaders would benefit most from additional support (as measured by the percentage of respondents requesting additional assistance) were:

- Training their staff on the pre-K curriculum chosen by their site (33 percent);
- Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs (32 percent); and
- Providing supports for students with IEPs (30 percent).

Most site leaders did not report a need for additional assistance in implementing their curriculum, although some would like support in training staff and providing supports to address social and emotional needs of students, as well as in supporting students with IEPs and linguistically diverse learners.

Instructional staff largely reported feeling supported and confident in their work implementing curriculum, but would benefit from additional training and support, particularly related to offering supports for high-need students.

Figure 9. Site Leaders' Views of Need for Additional Curriculum Implementation Supports

Training staff on the chosen pre-K curriculum — 33%
Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs — 32%
Providing supports for students with Individualized Education Plans — 30%
Providing supports for linguistically diverse learners — 22%
Selecting a pre-K curriculum that meets the needs of your students and addresses the NYS PKFCC — 22%
Monitoring the quality of teaching in pre-K classrooms — 19%
Providing feedback to teachers — 16%

■ % Yes (N=165)

Areas in which site leaders indicated a need for additional supports varied by site type:

- Site leaders in district schools reported the greatest need for additional assistance in training staff on the selected curriculum (44 percent) and selecting a pre-K curriculum that meets the needs of their students (36 percent).

- ACS NYCEEC site leaders reported the greatest need for support in addressing their students' social and emotional needs (40 percent) and training staff on their chosen curriculum (40 percent).

- DOE NYCEEC site leaders were less likely to request additional supports than those in ACS NYCEECs or district schools. The greatest areas of need for support at these sites were addressing students' social and emotional needs (25 percent) and providing supports for students with IEPs (24 percent).

Table 3 shows the top three needed areas of support identified by each type of site.

Table 3. Site Leaders' Top-Needed Supports for Curriculum Implementation, by Site Type

ACS NYCEECs	DOE NYCEECs	District Schools
✓ Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs (40%) ✓ Training staff on the chosen curriculum (40%) ✓ Providing supports for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (35%)	✓ Providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs (25%) ✓ Providing supports for students with IEPs (24%) ✓ Providing supports for linguistically diverse learners (22%)	✓ Training staff on the chosen curriculum (44%) ✓ Selecting a curriculum that meets the needs of your students and addresses NYS PKFCC (36%) ✓ Providing supports for students with IEPs and providing supports to address students' social and emotional needs (both 34%)

In surveys, instructional staff were also asked to report on their need for additional supports in a number of areas related to curriculum and instruction. Results suggest that teachers would benefit most from additional training or supports in the following areas:
- Addressing behavioral management issues;
- Using strategies to meet the needs of students with IEPs;
- Addressing students' needs in the area of social and emotional development; and
- Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners.

Although teacher assistants were more likely than teachers to report a *strong need* for additional support in most areas assessed, the patterns were fairly consistent with teachers' responses. Teacher assistants' areas of strongest need were:
- Addressing behavioral management issues;
- Using strategies to meet the needs of students with IEPs; and
- Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners.

Figures 10 and 11 show detailed results from the surveys of teachers and teacher assistants, respectively.

Figure 10. Teachers' Views of Need for Additional Curriculum and Instruction Supports

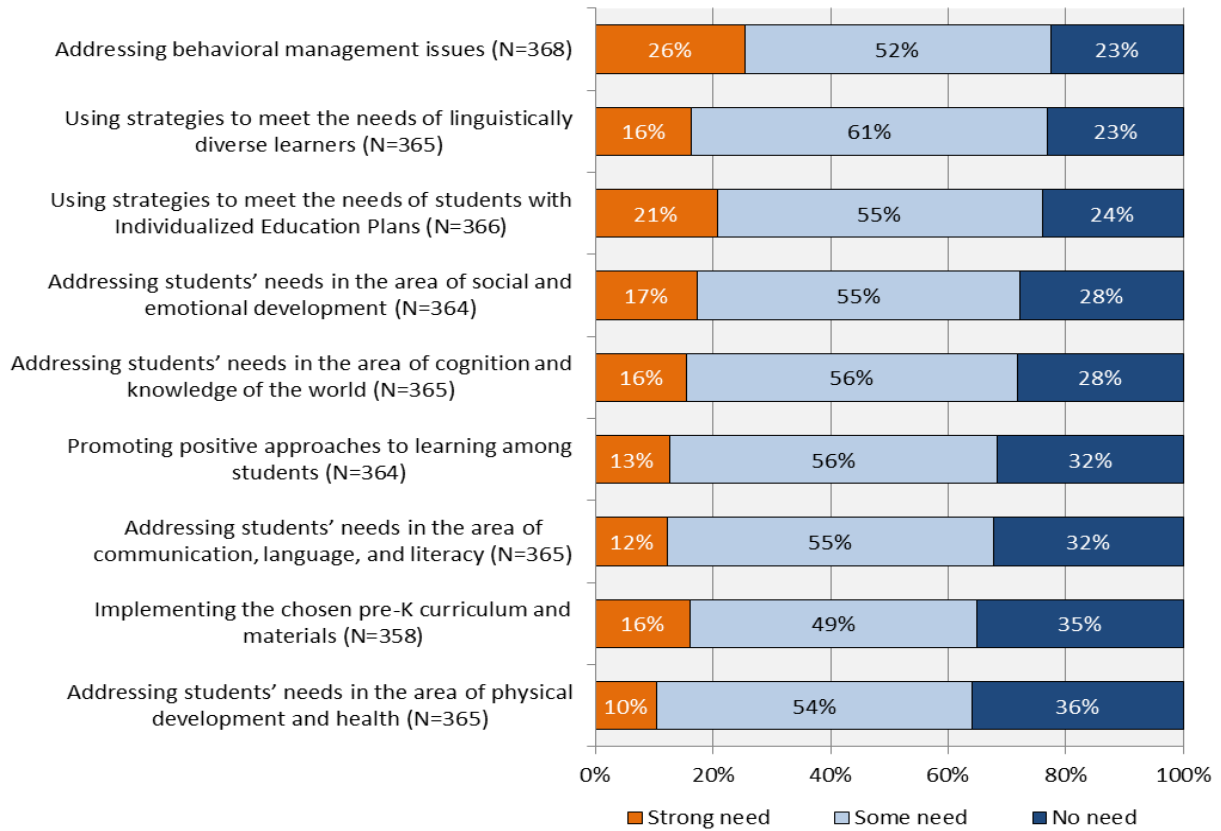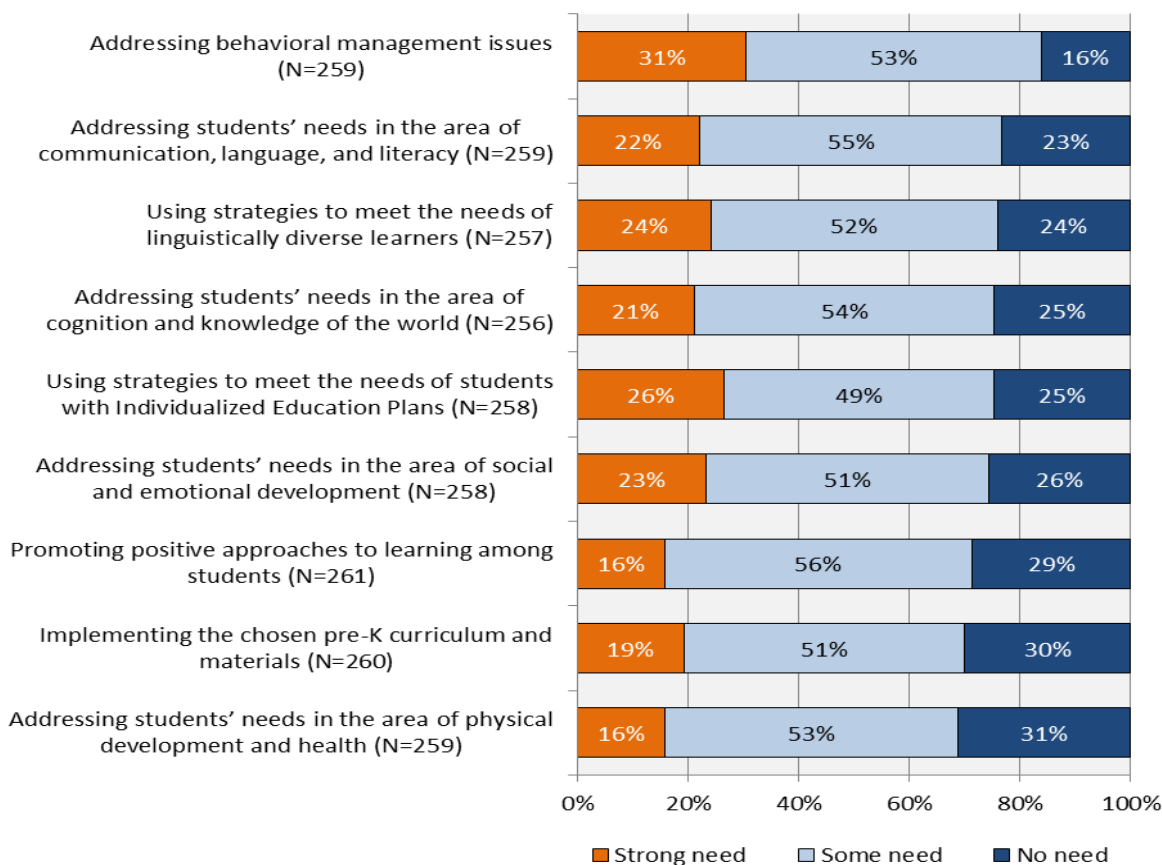| Category	Strong need	Some need	No need
Addressing behavioral management issues (N=368)	26%	52%	23%
Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners (N=365)	16%	61%	23%
Using strategies to meet the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (N=366)	21%	55%	24%
Addressing students' needs in the area of social and emotional development (N=364)	17%	55%	28%
Addressing students' needs in the area of cognition and knowledge of the world (N=365)	16%	56%	28%
Promoting positive approaches to learning among students (N=364)	13%	56%	32%
Addressing students' needs in the area of communication, language, and literacy (N=365)	12%	55%	32%
Implementing the chosen pre-K curriculum and materials (N=358)	16%	49%	35%
Addressing students' needs in the area of physical development and health (N=365)	10%	54%	36%

Figure 11. Teacher Assistants' Views of Need for Additional Curriculum and Instruction Supports

Survey results were also disaggregated by site type, showing some similarities across sites (see Table 4). For example, regardless of site type, *using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students* and *addressing behavioral management issues* were two areas in which most teachers reported needing additional support. Results also show that teachers at ACS NYCEECs were more likely to request additional support in the various topics covered in the survey than teachers in DOE NYCEECs and district schools.

In addition, when disaggregated by length of teacher experience, survey results showed that a higher proportion of teachers who are newer reported *some* or *strong* need for additional professional development, while fewer of those teachers with greater levels of experience indicated a need for such support (see Table 5).

Table 4. Teachers' Top-Needed Supports for Curriculum Implementation, by Site Type

ACS NYCEECs	DOE NYCEECs	District Schools
✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners (94%) ✓ Addressing behavioral management issues (92%) ✓ Addressing students' needs in the area of communication, language, and literacy (88%)	✓ Addressing behavioral management issues (84%) ✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (80%) ✓ Addressing students' needs in the area of cognition and knowledge of the world (80%)	✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners (72%) ✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of students with IEPs (71%) ✓ Addressing behavioral management issues (71%)

Table 5. Teachers' Top-Needed Supports for Curriculum Implementation, by Years of Experience

One or Two Years of Experience	Three to Five Years of Experience	Six or More Years of Experience
✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (80%) ✓ Addressing students' needs in the area of cognition and knowledge of the world (76%)	✓ Addressing behavioral management issues (80%) ✓ Addressing students' needs in the area of cognition and knowledge of the world (75%) ✓ Addressing students' needs in the area of social and emotional development (74%)	✓ Addressing behavioral management issues (78%) ✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners (77%) ✓ Using strategies to meet the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (76%)

During site visits, site leaders and instructional staff from several sites requested the following additional supports and resources to effectively implement their curriculum:

- Training and supports for teachers and teacher assistants in a variety of areas, including:
    - Effectively implementing Common Core;
    - Adapting and implementing the curriculum for IEP students;
    - Supporting linguistically diverse students, including adapting and implementing the curriculum as well as providing additional dual-language instructional materials and translated materials for families; and
    - Behavior management.
- More opportunities to visit teachers at other sites so they would be able to observe best practices in action and collaborate across sites;
- Online videos of good practices in Common Core or sample lessons; and

- More Common Core-aligned content and materials in academic areas, including writing and mathematics.

It is important to note that staff indicated a need for training, but also for ongoing pedagogical support in the classroom from experts, saying, "it's support [we need]. You can have all the training in the world, but if you don't have the support, it just—it doesn't matter."

CONCLUSION

Evaluation findings indicate that, overall, *Pre-K for All* sites reported using various curricula for instruction. In general, most sites reported use of a combination of locally developed and published curriculum. The most used curriculum was Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum, but there were differences by site type. For example, the majority of NYCEECs reported the use of the Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum, while this curriculum was chosen by only a small subset of district school sites. DOE sites, including DOE NYCEECs and district schools, were much more likely to report using sample units of study developed by the DOE than non-DOE sites (ACS NYCEECs). The evaluation did not focus on fidelity of implementation; therefore, it is not known how the sites used the specific curricula.

Satisfaction with the various curriculum materials was high at the sites. In particular, teachers were largely satisfied with the quality of curriculum materials in addressing key areas from the NYS PKFCC. Overall, the highest rated areas included social-emotional development; communication, language, and literacy; and promoting positive approaches to learning. Lowest rated areas included meeting the needs of students with IEPs and linguistically diverse learners.

Site staff believed that their curriculum was aligned to kindergarten and beyond. Notably, respondents reported that collaboration between pre-K and K–3 teachers was an important aspect of effective alignment. Having ready access to K–3 teachers in a building appears to be related to reports of collaboration between pre-K and district school teachers (e.g., common planning time). Fewer teachers from DOE and ACS NYCEECs reported collaborating with K–3 teachers in the school(s) that their students most commonly attend for kindergarten. In sites where collaboration occurred, activities reported by respondents took a variety of formats, including meetings, common planning, and transition activities.

Alignment among pre-K classes within a site was also reported to be strong. Notably, newer sites reported more consistency in instructional practices across classrooms than conversion sites and existing or expanded sites. The benefits of collaboration among pre-K teachers were clearly perceived, with teachers expressing that they enjoyed working to support one another in classroom activities, address student needs, and revise the curriculum.

Although self-reported findings indicate that the *Pre-K for All* sites are effectively and confidently using their curriculum to meet students' needs, results also suggest that sites may benefit from additional training and ongoing supports particularly around meeting needs of high-needs learners, including IEP students, linguistically diverse learners, and students with behavioral challenges. Additionally, teachers would benefit from additional training in aligning instruction to the Common Core and in behavioral management.

Based on our findings, DOE should consider the following recommendations for further curriculum support:

- **Provide additional opportunities for teachers to share materials across sites.** This could be achieved by creating an online clearinghouse of vetted, standards-aligned locally developed materials for *Pre-K for All* teachers to share and access and/or expand the information available through the DOE website.

- **Provide trainings and supports based on identified challenges and requests for additional professional development**. Topics for additional training may include:
    - Working with students with behavioral challenges;
    - Working with students with IEPs and linguistically diverse learners; and
    - How to best implement the Common Core within a play-based and content-rich environment.

  These trainings and supports may be face to face (e.g., visits by a behavioral specialist) as well as provided online via videos, including those with examples of quality lessons and activities.

- **Provide support for teachers to individualize instruction for higher achieving students.** This could include providing extension activities for students who are developmentally ready for additional enrichment or additional professional development for teachers on differentiating instruction for both higher and lower achieving students.

- **Provide opportunities for** *Pre-K for All* **teachers at NYCEECs to collaborate with K–3 teachers**. This could be achieved by arranging for regular meetings or visitations with K–3 teachers at district school sites to share resources and ideas and/or providing professional development that includes vertical alignment group work among teachers from various grade levels.

- **Areas of additional support**:
    - Linkages to other units of DOE to improve response time for assessment of students who may need IEP services; and
    - Translation services (including on-site bilingual staff) and translated communications for parents at sites with linguistically diverse learners.

APPENDIX

Table A-1. Participation in Evaluation Activities, by Type of Site and Program Length

Characteristic of Pre-K Sites	Number of Surveys[1]		Site Visits
	Site Leader	Staff	
ACS New York City Early Education Center	20	74	7
DOE New York City Early Education Center	68	249	19
District school	70	321	13
Charter school	1	3	1
New or newly contracted programs	33	117	11
Converted from half to full day	60	227	15
Existing or expanded full day	66	303	14

[1] Site identification was missing for 24 site leaders and 23 staff.