



# KINDERGARTEN INNOVATION EVALUATION RESULTS

2021-22

## THE KINDERGARTEN INNOVATION COHORT

The PPS Research & Evaluation team partnered with the PPS Early Learning Department to conduct an evaluation of the Kindergarten Innovation Cohort. Across the 2021-22 school year, 21 kindergarten and 2 first grade educators from 8 schools received instructional guidance and stipends to pilot instructional techniques incorporating both developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous practices.

### Methods

Educators were surveyed and their classrooms were observed in the fall and spring of the 2021-22 school year. Focus groups were also conducted in spring 2022 with 3 school administrators and a caregiver.

### Key Findings

We found that incorporating rich, meaningful learning experiences within academically rigorous curriculum positively impacted students' classroom experiences, as well as educators' teaching and classroom management practices from the perspectives of students, educators, administrators, and caregivers.

#### Educators Reported:

- ★ Incorporating more playful activity centers in their classrooms
- ★ Devoting more class time to child-initiated and small-group activities
- ★ Feeling confident in their ability to implement play-based learning practices
- ★ Feeling supported by program staff

## Educators Appreciated...

Having more opportunities to collaborate with their peer educators

## Educators Requested...

More support time & direct training opportunities during PLC session

## Barriers to Implementation were...

Time, alignment with new curriculum adoptions, student behavioral issues, clarity of expectations, classroom supports, and COVID restrictions

## Observers Noticed:

- ★ Significantly more play opportunities for students
- ★ More students' engaged with learning
- ★ Increased opportunities for, and quality of, collaboration with peers
- ★ Improved relationships between students and educators

## Administrator Perspectives

## Caregiver Perspectives

"I really started to think about what the role of permission in the classroom is, giving pause to let kids discover without asking and make their own choices throughout the day."

"The structure of KIC allowed for total acceptance in the classroom, helped teachers who struggle with perfectionism to be able to welcome new options and step out of their comfort zone."

"Having a social outlet and more play-based activities really helped with their shyness."

"The hardest part is finding the happy middle, balancing out when play and learning are bridged together effectively."



"The letter writing station was a big hit, she was learning and playing in a practical manner and was able to bring her work home and share letters with friends while practicing writing skills."