PRESCHOOL

The **Right** Time for Strong Language Development
Timing is Essential

- Age 4 is the peak of the neurological critical period when the brain is ripe for language acquisition.
Poor vocabulary skills is a hallmark of language, literacy, and cognitive disabilities.

Students learn vocabulary not based on age or grade-level, but based on experience.
Prevention, instead of Remediation

- Kindergarten vocabulary abilities are predictive of fourth grade reading skills. (Tannenbaum, Torgesen, & Wagner)
- First grade vocabulary skills predicted a student’s reading comprehension in his/her junior year of high school. (Wagner, Torgesen, Rashotte, Hecht, Barker, Burgess, Donahue, & Garon)
- Limited vocabulary size is a primary indicator of academic failure in schools of disadvantaged students. (Becker)
Boehm Test of Basic Concepts
-Seven year history

- Washington Elementary - % of students tested in the fall of kindergarten that fell below the national average.
- Students don't have understanding of basic concepts need to follow directions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Below Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>76%</td>
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Risk Factors

- Low-socio economic status -30 Million Word Gap (Hart and Risley) - **48% of our K student**
- Lack of Experience/Exposure (Matthew Principal)
- African American students demonstrate increased risk for vocabulary deficits and reading failure. African American students are much more likely to perform below the basic level than their non-minority peers; 63% compared to 27% on testing. (Donahue, Finnegan, Lutkus, Allen and Campbell) – **29% of our K students**
Recommendations

- Fill all school readiness spots within the five community preschool sites (279 students)
- Research increasing community sites that could qualify for school readiness funds and request more readiness slots.
- QE for readiness sites, stressing “language enriched” programming.
- Use of kindergarten registration data to track effectiveness of programs.
Recommendations

- New curriculum within WBOE preschool classes (120 students) that focuses on language development
- Ongoing progress monitoring and data analysis of pre and post-tests
- PD focusing analysis of data and implementation proven remedial strategies
Recommendations

- Continued analysis and use of kindergarten screening data
- Refinement and enhancement of kindergarten literacy stations focusing on application of skills
- Parental Education and Involvement
- Continue kindergarten/first grade summer school