

Details for Decision Makers

THE READY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

**Making every
school a place
where every
child can learn.**



ReadySchool

ASSESSMENT

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Questions? 734/485-2000, ext. 224

To know where you're going, you must know where you are — An Introduction to the Ready School Assessment (RSA)

In recent years there has been a great deal of important discussion on school readiness. State and federal funding has supported preschool programs to insure that children leave preschool ready for kindergarten.

What we know is that each child enters school with a completely different set of experiences and abilities. Coping effectively with diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and school readiness levels is a daunting challenge. An important factor with that challenge is that the focus of school readiness has been almost exclusively on the characteristics of the child. But, what about the schools? Are they ready for the children?

The concept of school readiness must align the best of early childhood practices and elementary education in ways that build upon the strengths of each and focus equally on child outcomes, adult behaviors, and institutional characteristics. Children should come to school ready to learn and schools should open their doors able to serve all children. These are the two sides to the readiness coin — the ready child and the ready school.



The right starting point for school improvement

High/Scope's Ready School Assessment (RSA) was consciously designed to bring together the best of early childhood and elementary

education standards and practices. Developed from a broad research base and reality-tested with researchers and practitioners, *the RSA provides schools with a step-by-step process for creating a precise, detailed performance profile in eight key dimensions —*

- Leaders and Leadership
- Transitions
- Teacher Supports
- Effective Curricula
- Engaging Environments
- Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Respecting Diversity
- Assessing Progress

These eight dimensions take the general concept of a ready school and translate it into specific, measurable traits and actions. Using the RSA profile as a starting point, schools can begin the process of planning and implementing change in a highly focused way.

In the tradition of all of the assessment tools developed by High/Scope, the RSA is first and foremost a teaching tool, designed to be completed by a team of school stakeholders (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, community representatives) working together to collect evidence and score items. It is also a planning tool that provides schools with straightforward, comprehensive information about their strengths and challenges — the kind of information that is essential in creating a supportive educational environment for children.

Features of the Ready School Assessment

- Includes assessment items at both the classroom and school levels for a comprehensive evaluation
- Is administered as a self-assessment by a team of school stakeholders
- Provides specific, easily understood quality indicators with objective rating scales that define quality along a continuum
- Reflects research-based and field-tested best practices
- Provides reliable scores
- Automatically generates reports through the Online Profiler
- Can be used to support the school improvement process and staff professional development

The most effective change is targeted change — Using the Ready School Assessment

The RSA is a self-assessment tool that can be used once but ideally should be used twice — once to take stock and set goals and again to measure progress. Here's how the Ready School Assessment works:

Step #1: Establish your RSA Team

The Ready School Assessment is a consensus tool that works best when it brings together a variety of perspectives on the school's readiness. Teachers, school administrators, parents, and staff from feeder early childhood programs can contribute important perspectives to the readiness assessment.

A group using the Ready School Assessment should try to represent as many of these perspectives as possible.

Step #2: Complete the Team Handbook and Questionnaire

Members of the school's team complete the Team Handbook, individually or in sub-groups, evaluating the school on the eight key dimensions of readiness and providing evidence to support the scoring of each item. Once each team member or sub-group has completed the Team Handbook, it is time for the group to come together and score the Questionnaire as a whole team. The team reviews the evidence and comes to a consensus score for each RSA item.

Step #3: Generate Online Profile

The team then uses a password protected RSA Online Profiler to convert their scores into a Ready School Profile. Displayed in clear, easy-to-read graphic format, the profile shows your school's relative strength on each dimension of readiness. It also provides details on 23 sub-dimensions,

all designed to provide specific focus points for school improvement plans and activities.

Step #4: Follow Up With High/Scope Training and Support

Once the profile is complete, the team can begin to locate resources and services that can help

strengthen your school's ability to promote the learning of all children. High/Scope can support you through this process by providing training on how to use the RSA tool, helping you to understand your RSA Profile, and guiding you through the development of an action plan.

Step #5: Repeat the RSA Process

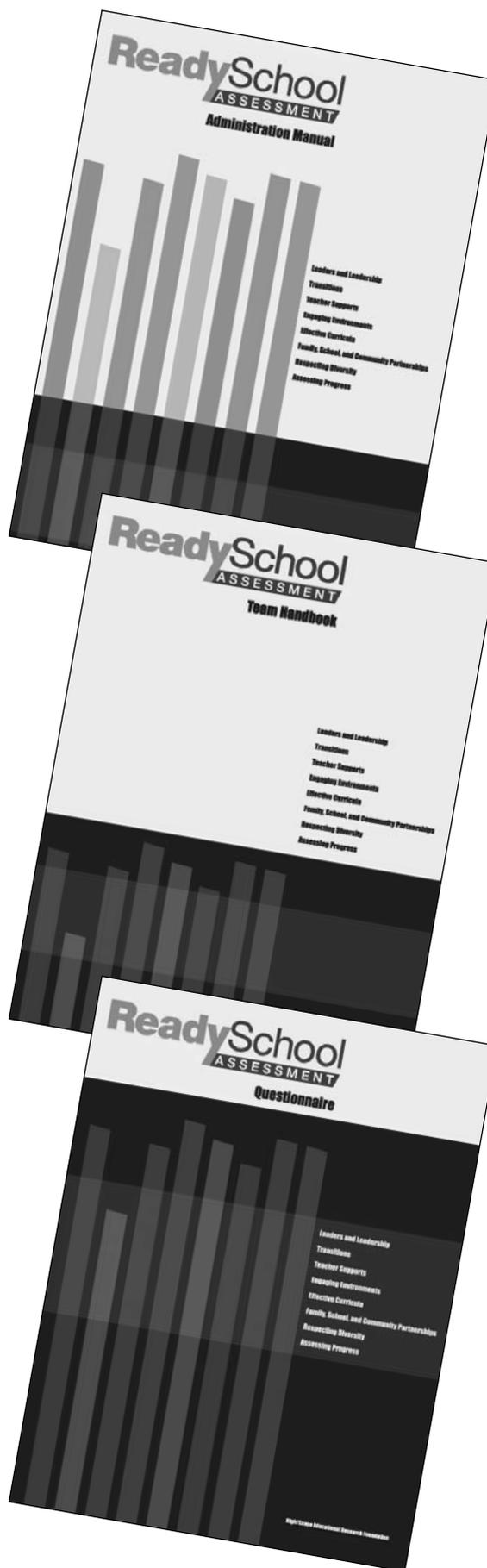
RSA is intended to be part of an ongoing cycle of evaluation and improvement. A team can use data gathered with the RSA to help set school improvement goals. After identifying available resources and implementing an improvement plan, the RSA can then be used again to assess your school's progress.



Components of the Ready School Assessment Kit

The Ready School Assessment Kit contains everything your school's assessment team will need to learn about and use the RSA. Each kit includes:

- **Ready School Assessment Administration Manual** provides an overview of the Ready School Assessment, instructions for administering it, and a description of the research validating the instrument
- **Ready School Assessment Team Handbooks (5)** defines the assessment indicators, describes the type of evidence needed for scoring them, and provides space for recording evidence
- **Ready School Assessment Questionnaires (5)** contains the assessment indicators — descriptive statements that translate aspects of a school's readiness into measurable terms
- **Ready School Online Profiler** (two years of access) Using scale ratings from the Questionnaire, the Ready School Online Profiler computes a school's Ready School Profile and generates data tables and bar graphs displaying the Ready School Assessment results.



A Ready School is many things.

It's a place where

instruction is gauged to meet the learning level of each student.

It's a place where

diversity is welcomed . . .
and where all children are able to advance academically,
develop physically and grow emotionally.

It's a place where

teachers have the support they need to do their best work for every learner.

Perhaps most important, a Ready School is

a place that builds on its strengths and addresses its challenges through a process of focused, ongoing school improvement.

It's a place where

family and community partnerships reinforce the educational process.

Are you a Ready School?

To use the Ready School Assessment, the improvement team scores each of the RSA's items based on evidence about practices and policies in their school. To get a taste of the RSA, take the ready school quiz below.

Assessment Quiz

1. Does the principal communicate a clear vision for the school — a vision that is committed to the success of every child? (Yes/No)
2. Are parents of incoming children contacted about registration and school entry 3 or more months before school starts? (Yes/No)
3. Do kindergarten teachers communicate with preschool/child care staff about children and curriculum on an ongoing basis? (Yes/No)
4. Do classrooms have a variety of manipulative materials and supplies for art, building, and hands-on learning? (Yes/No)
5. Are procedures in place for monitoring the fidelity of implementation of all instructional materials/methods? (Yes/No)
6. Does the school promote community linkages by making and following up on appropriate referrals of children and families to social service and health agencies? (Yes/No)
7. Do classroom activities provide accurate, practical, and respectful information regarding peoples' cultural backgrounds and experiences? (Yes/No)
8. Does the school employ improvement strategies that are based on an assessment of the quality of the classroom as well as children's progress? (Yes/No)

If you responded "No" to two or more items, the Ready School Assessment, along with other school improvement resources, can help improve the readiness of your school.

To find the right solutions, you need to focus on the right problems — Taking a Closer Look at the RSA Elements

Ready School Team

A minimum Ready School team might consist of a single individual gathering school readiness information from others and completing the assessment with the evidence at hand. A more representative group might consist of a team of teachers, administrators, parents and the local early childhood community working together to gather evidence and develop consensus ratings on each element of the school's readiness.



Dimensions of Measurement

The Ready School Assessment identifies eight major dimensions of what it means to be a ready school. The eight dimensions of RSA measurement include:

1. Leaders and Leadership

The principal advocates for and leads the ready school.

2. Transitions

School staff and parent groups work with families, children, and their preschool teachers and caregivers before kindergarten and with families and children during kindergarten to smooth the transition from home to school.

3. Teacher Supports

School organizes classrooms, schedules, teams, and staff activities to maximize the support for all adults to work effectively with children during the school day.

4. Engaging Environments

The school's learning environments employ elements that make them warm and inviting, and actively engage children in a variety of learning activities.

5. Effective Curricula

The school diligently employs educational methods/materials shown to be effective in helping children achieve objectives

required for grade-level proficiency.

6. Family, School, and Community Partnerships

The school takes specific steps to enhance parents' capacities to foster their children's readiness and to support children's learning in and outside of school.

7. Respecting Diversity

School helps all children succeed by interacting with children/families in ways that are compatible with individual needs and family backgrounds or life experiences.

8. Assessing Progress

School staff engage in ongoing improvement based on information that rigorously and systematically assesses classroom experiences, school practices that influence them, and children's progress toward curricular goals.

Some things are just too big to ignore — Results of Ready School Assessment: The Online Profiler

The Ready School Profile shows the school's relative strength in each of the eight dimensions and 23 sub-dimensions of school readiness as measured by the Ready School Assessment. When supplied with scale ratings from the completed Ready School Assessment (RSA), the Online Profiler will compute the user's Ready School Profile.

The profile provides a starting point for further discussions of how well the school is addressing the needs of children and families they serve and how components of the school's readiness can be improved.

Also shown in the profile graphs are comparison bars for each of the Ready School Assessment dimensions and sub-dimensions. One possible comparison a user can view shows their specific school's profile alongside the average of a sample of schools that have completed the RSA. These comparisons should be interpreted cautiously since a particular school may differ in important ways from the "average" school.

The RSA is intended to be part of an ongoing cycle of evaluation and improvement in which schools assess themselves, plan and implement school improvement strategies, and then reassess themselves. Thus, another comparison option in the Online Profiler is the ability to compare scores from the same school collected at different time periods (for example the spring of the last school year to spring of the current school year) in order to document change and growth over time.



Training & Technical Assistance

High/Scope can provide a full-day of initial assessment training to assist your RSA teams on how best to complete the assessment and action plan for improvement.

Training and technical assistance can also be provided in any of the 8 dimensions. This training would be customized to meet the needs of an individual school or district.

For more information, or to schedule Ready School Assessment training, please contact High/Scope at 734/485-2000, ext. 224, via e-mail at info@highscope.org, or visit www.readyschoolassessment.net.

Samples

2. TRANSITIONS

School staff and parent groups work with families, children, and their preschool teachers and caregivers before kindergarten and with families and children during kindergarten to smooth the transition from home to school.

2.A Before school starts, a committee (i.e., not just individual teachers) actively plans and coordinates transition activities for incoming children.	Yes	No	DK			
2.B Parents of incoming children are informed about registration, by multiple means if necessary, 3-6 months before school starts.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK
2.C Feeder early childhood programs are informed about registration before school starts.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK
2.D Incoming children are registered for school at least 1 month before school starts.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK
2.E Children registered at the last moment or after school starts receive transitional support similar to families registered earlier.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK
2.F Children registered at the last moment or after school starts are integrated quickly and smoothly.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK
2.G Kindergarten teachers have access to detailed information (e.g., parent questionnaires, home visits, interviews) about incoming children that helps them get to know the children and their family settings.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK
2.H For parents of incoming children, the school holds orientation session(s) at school prior to the first day.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK

8 Ready School Assessment: Questionnaire

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TRANSITIONS

2.A Before school starts, a committee (i.e., not just individual teachers) actively plans and coordinates transition activities for incoming children.

The transition to kindergarten is a process that starts in preschool and continues through the early months of kindergarten. The change affects not only children but parents, teachers, and schools. In order for children, families, and schools to experience the most positive and productive transition from preschool to kindergarten, the needs, expectations, and goals of all the participants should be considered. Forethought and planning enables families and schools to capitalize on the resources embodied in the relationships children have with their teachers, the relationships families and schools have with each other, and the strengths of individual families. In addition, designing transitions allows schools to provide continuity from preschool to kindergarten and to identify and respond to the individual needs of children, families, schools, and communities.

A transition committee is a central element of an effective ready school plan. The transition committee can include school staff, parents, and preschool staff. The committee may engage in the following activities: identifying the transition coordinator, facilitating regular meetings, conducting a needs assessment, generating ideas for transition activities, creating a transition timeline, anticipating barriers, revising ideas and plans, and implementing transition practices.

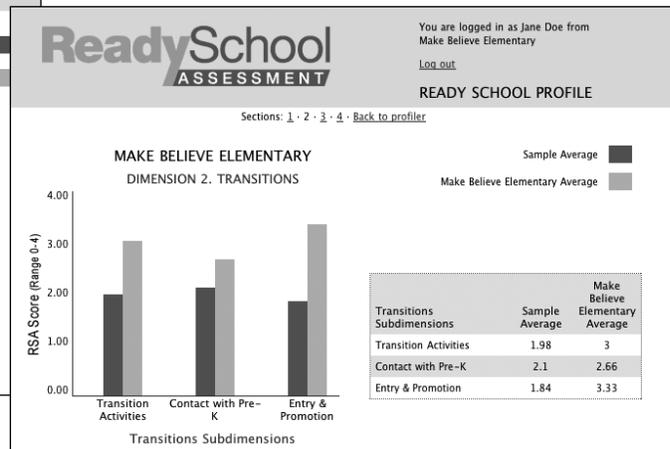
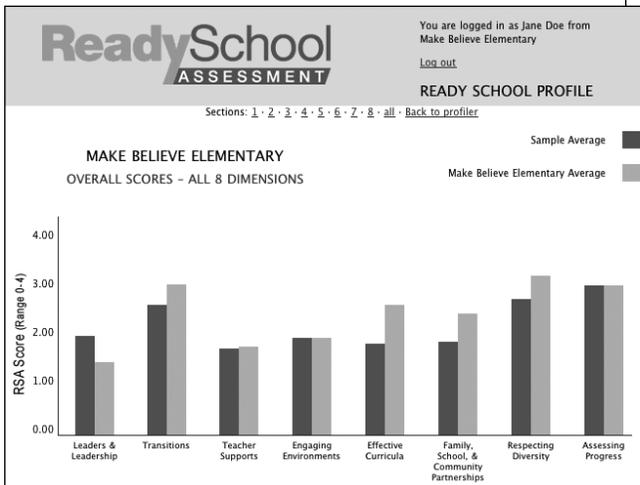
Evidence Suggested

- List of the transition committee members.
- Schedule/calendar of committee activities.
- Schedule/calendar of transition activities the committee has planned and coordinated.

Evidence Collected (record or attach evidence here)

14 Ready School Assessment: Team Handbook

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How We Know the Ready School Assessment Works — Supporting Research

Several bodies of work contribute to our understanding of how well the Ready School Assessment works. These include the feedback from focus groups and expert advisors who reviewed the RSA at multiple points in its development. They also include the results of pilot testing — feedback from elementary school teams using the RSA in their own schools — and statistical analyses of pilot data.

Pilot Testing the Ready School Assessment

In the most general sense, the pilot phase of the RSA development helped identify the practical issues of deploying the instrument across a variety of real-world elementary school settings — large and small school districts, urban and rural populations, and communities with low and high family incomes. The ready school teams from pilot sites showed that users could readily grasp the content and process of the RSA and carry out the necessary data collection in their own schools. Pilot testing of the RSA instrument was carried out during the 2004–2005 school year. For the purposes of pilot testing, we recruited a diverse sample of 71 schools from 17 states.

Out of the 71 schools that participated in pilot training, 69 schools from 16 states returned complete RSA data to High/Scope in time to be included in the data analyses presented here. Within those 69 schools, 51% identified themselves as urban, 21% as rural, and 25% as suburban (3% defined themselves as “other”). All pilot schools but one

were public schools and had an average enrollment of 480 children. Eighty-eight percent of the schools had a pre-kindergarten program in their building or on the same campus, and 86% of the schools had at least some full-day kindergarten classrooms. In addition, 72.7% of the children in the pilot schools were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Training on understanding and administering the Ready School Assessment was provided to staff at pilot sites through a series of two-day workshops. Each pilot site was asked to identify a “ready school

States in the Ready School Assessment Pilot Study

State	<i>N</i>
Arkansas	5
Connecticut	6
Florida	24
Georgia	3
Iowa	1
Indiana	1
Minnesota	4
Nebraska	5
New York	2
Ohio	2
Oklahoma	1
Oregon	4
Tennessee	4
Texas	1
Washington	3
Wisconsin	1
West Virginia	4
Total	71

team” of at least three to four persons, including (if possible) the school principal, K–2 teachers, pre-K teachers, other school staff, and parents. Teams participated in the training workshops as groups in order to foster working relationships that would lead to an evidence-based, consensus response to the RSA indicators. The workshops included an introduction to the ready schools concept and provided background for the eight dimensions of school readiness. In addition, the workshops included hands-on practice using the instrument scales as well as practice scoring sessions using school/community case studies taken from the Head Start Transitions Study (Love, Logue, Trudeau, & Thayer, 1992).

User Feedback — The Ready School Assessment User Survey

After administration of the Ready School Assessment, a survey of RSA users was conducted independently by the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University. The user survey instrument was mailed to each of the ready school team members who had participated in RSA training and in the scoring of the RSA instrument at their school. One hundred ninety-six user surveys were mailed. One hundred forty-one people from 46 schools returned their surveys, a response rate of 72%. The user survey probed areas such as the composition of the school teams, the ease or difficulty of completing the instrument, and the time spent to complete the RSA.

Overall, RSA users reported that they found the instrument easy to use. On a scale from 0 (very easy) to 10 (very difficult), the mean score was 4. RSA scoring rules were generally regarded as clear and easy to score; on a scale from 0 (clear) to 10 (vague), the average score was 3. On average, teams spent 6 hours per section completing the

RSA — that is, gathering evidence and working as a group to score each indicator. The length of time it takes a ready school team to complete the tool will vary depending on the accessibility of the evidence needed to score the tool, the team’s ability to work together, and the level of experience team members have with the self-assessment process.

Psychometric Analysis

A major goal that has shaped the development of the RSA is the absolute need to represent presumed aspects of school readiness in measurable terms — that is, in words and phrases that objectively identify real-world events and conditions. This requirement imposed a fairly harsh parsimony on the selection and wording of assessment indicators. Not every good notion of what makes schools ready for children can be directly translated into objective statements that readily identify and discriminate real-world events and conditions. However, we have sifted through many ideas of what can contribute to ready schools — selecting those that are workable, adapting others where we could, and rejecting those that appeared too broad or vague — to arrive at the content of the current RSA instrument.

Results of the psychometric analysis of RSA data from pilot sites show the instrument to possess many desirable measurement characteristics. The instrument, for example, has demonstrated its ability to capture variation in each of its eight major dimensions across pilot schools. On average, scores for the eight dimensions have a range of 2.7 points across pilot sites, or more than half of the scale’s 5-point range. RSA scores showed distinct variation across all four quartiles of the pilot sample except for Assessment, which showed variation for three of its quartiles. Where pilot results

showed a need, the content and scaling of Assessment indicators have been revised in the published version of the instrument to improve its measurement characteristics.

Validity

The research base for the RSA starts with the attributes of a ready school proposed in the National Education Goals Panel's 1998 report. In developing the RSA instrument, we carefully reviewed the ready school literature to further flesh out detailed aspects of each of the eight RSA dimensions.

An advisory panel of elementary school principals, teachers, and early childhood researchers was assembled at the beginning stages of RSA development and helped to establish the basic form of the instrument. They also guided the selection of content and its formatting into measurement indicators. The advisory panel reviewed drafts of the instrument and met twice prior to pilot testing and twice after pilot testing to review work and provide feedback and guidance. An early version of the RSA was reviewed by focus groups consisting of preschool program directors, K–2 teachers, and elementary school principals. After a subsequent revision of the instrument to address issues that were raised, a second series of focus groups provided further detailed feedback.

With the benefit of our review of the literature, a final draft instrument that incorporated the feedback of focus groups and advisors was completed and prepared for piloting. This preliminary review and revision work gave the instrument a strong footing in reality and a good measure of face

validity. It also reinforced the content validity derived from its grounding in literature and research on the ready school topic.

While we might wish for validity based on comparisons of the RSA with other ready school instruments, this possibility is severely constrained by its being essentially the first measurement tool of its kind in the ready school arena. Although the RSA is unique as a quantitative tool, a number of states and other groups have focused on the issue of schools' readiness for children and have developed checklists of ready school attributes that function as impressionistic indices of readiness.¹

Factor Analysis

Further analytic work was carried out on data from the Ready School Assessment pilot sample to guide the rescaling, deletion, or repositioning of indicators among dimensions and subdimensions of the instrument. Factor analytic techniques were employed within each of the eight RSA dimensions to determine how indicators clustered together based on factor loadings.

The factor analytic results did, in fact, largely confirm the structure of dimensions and subdimensions as originally conceived. However, the results also prompted a number of repositionings, and in a few cases a discarding or rewriting of a number of indicators that, shown in low factor loadings, did not contribute to the dimension and subdimension constructs we were striving for. The factor loadings of RSA indicators within RSA subdimensions are presented in the series of tables below. Indicators that were changed in the final

¹ You may also refer to the "National and State Initiatives" section of the Ready School Assessment Web site (www.readyschoolassessment.org) for a list of current ready school-related projects and programs.

version of the RSA are noted in the factor loading tables, though the factor loadings were computed on the basis of data collected on the indicator's original form.

The published version of the RSA, while substantially similar to the pilot instrument, addresses all of the practical, structural, and psychometric issues identified in the pilot version and is thus a highly responsive, coherent, and discriminating measurement tool. In particular, subdimension structure and the heuristic names given to them reflect not just considered conceptual categories but also the patterns revealed in the field data obtained in pilot testing of the instrument.

Tables 1–6 provide results of factor analyses completed on data from the pilot study for six of

the eight dimensions and their corresponding subdimensions. The six dimensions presented in the tables include Transitions; Teacher Supports; Engaging Environments; Effective Curricula; Family, School, and Community Partnerships; and Respecting Diversity. Factor analyses for two dimensions — Leaders and Leadership and Assessing Progress — are not reported. The content and scaling of indicators in these two dimensions was substantially changed after our experience in field trials and from our analysis of pilot data. As a result, factor tables for these indicators have not been presented. In each of the tables, the number of factors corresponds to the number of subdimensions. In all of the tables, factor loadings less than .400 have been suppressed for clearer presentation.

Table 1: Factor Loadings for Transitions Indicators

	F1	F2	F3
Contact with Pre-K			
E. Late registrants receive help	0.536	0.487	
J. Records transferred from preschool/child care programs	0.654		
K. K & Pre-K teachers communicate about children	0.796		
L. K & Pre-K teachers communicate about curriculum	0.784		
Q. Intensive intervention before retention	0.700		
R. Underperforming children identified for help	0.762		
Transition Activities			
A. Transition committee active	0.426	0.601	
B. Parents informed about registration		0.704	
D. Children registered before school starts		0.566	
F. Late registrants integrated quickly	0.445	0.514	
G. K teachers receive information on incoming children	0.492	0.518	
H. Orientation for incoming families		0.699	
O. Retention of K–2 children		0.516	
Entry & Promotion			
M. Delay or denial of entry			0.689
N. Entrants placed in extra-year programs		0.507	0.715
P. Review of retention decisions			0.581

Table 2: Factor Loadings for Teacher Supports Indicators

	F1	F2
Professional Development		
A. Professional development provides teaching strategies	0.866	0.501
B. Professional development supports student achievement	0.711	
D. Professional development includes preschool staff	0.525	
F. Hours of planning per week*	0.804	
G. Strategies maximize effectiveness	0.804	
Contact with Others		
C. Professional development follows school improvement plan	0.581	0.588
E. Professional development activities evaluated***		{ 0.724 0.751
H. Membership in professional organizations**		
I. Connection with higher educational institution(s)		0.751
J. Mentoring available***		{ 0.542 0.502

* Indicator reworded from pilot, ** New indicator added since pilot, *** Indicator combines two pilot indicators.

Table 3: Factor Loadings for Engaging Environments Indicators

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Classroom Climate				
M. Climate predominately positive	0.586	0.586		
N. Rudeness addressed by teacher	0.619	0.619		
O. Children use conflict resolution**				
P. Children can talk to one another	0.638	0.638		
U. Balance of group sizes	0.752	0.752		
Active Learning				
L. Displays balance children's and teacher's materials	0.634	0.634		
Q. Children transform materials or ideas	0.800	0.800		
R. Children communicate to others	0.714	0.714		
S. Open-ended content choices	0.687	0.687		
T. Open-ended process choices	0.755	0.755		
Safety & Health				
A. Classrooms clean and in good repair			0.726	0.411
B. Ample classroom space			0.589	
C. Classrooms free of safety and health hazards			0.690	
D. Halls clean and in good repair			0.866	
E. Halls free of safety and health hazards			0.816	
F. Cafeteria clean and in good repair			0.587	
G. Library clean and in good repair			0.753	
Materials				
H. Classrooms with 10 or more books/child				0.745
I. Classrooms includes variety of print materials				0.652
J. Variety of manipulative materials				0.707
K. Ample display of materials				0.606

Note: Even though the factor structure for this subdimension is best represented by a three-factor solution, we have retained the four subdimensions of Engaging Environments to enable teams to address these subdimensions separately in school improvement efforts.
** New indicator added since pilot.

Table 4: Factor Loadings for Effective Curricula Indicators

	F1	F2
Curriculum Training		
A. Staff trained in language arts materials	0.712	0.712
C. Staff trained in math materials	0.738	0.738
E. Staff trained in social studies materials*	0.778	0.778
G. Staff trained in science materials*		
I. Staff trained in specials materials*		
K. Staff trained in prosocial materials		
M. New hires trained in curriculum**	0.721	0.721
Monitoring Fidelity		
B. Monitor fidelity of language arts curriculum	0.786	0.786
D. Monitor fidelity of math curriculum	0.767	0.767
F. Monitor fidelity of social studies curriculum*	0.857	0.857
H. Monitor fidelity of science curriculum*		
J. Monitor fidelity of specials curriculum*		
L. Monitor fidelity of prosocial curriculum		
<p><i>Note:</i> Although a one-factor solution best fits these indicators, two subdimensions are retained to enable teams to address these subdimensions separately in school improvement efforts. ** New indicator added since pilot, * Indicators were represented by one indicator in pilot.</p>		

Table 5: Factor Loadings for Family, School, and Community Partnerships Indicators

	F1	F2	F3
Outreach			
K. Consideration for non-English speakers	0.619		
N. Referral of children and families	0.650		
O. Parent education courses	0.680		0.458
P. Promote regular doctor visits	0.760		
Q. Help parents finish school	0.627		0.475
R. Help meet health and nutrition needs	0.829		
S. Participate in community organizations	0.511		
Parent-School Communication			
C. Families involved in schoolwide activities		0.682	
D. Families involved in daily life of classroom		0.569	
E. Remove barriers to family participation	0.452	0.540	
F. Parent conferences per year*			
G. Focus on children’s strengths		0.723	
H. Ensure family participation		0.573	
I. Multiple school-to-home communication methods		0.750	
J. Multiple home-to-school communication methods		0.546	
Family Involvement in School			
A. Families involved in school decision-making			0.750
B. Families involved in school policies			0.731
L. Parent learning opportunities	0.496		0.563
M. Extended learning for children			0.550
* Indicator reworded from pilot.			

Table 6: Factor Loadings for Respecting Diversity Indicators

	F1	F2	F3
Supporting a Diverse Environment			
G. Understand anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies	0.591	0.445	0.437
H. Support anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies	0.494	0.482	
I. Policies explained to students/parents**			
J. Training on diversity issues	0.632		
M. Bilingual staff for ELL children	0.718		
O. Community resources for ELL children	0.635	0.557	
P. Diverse teaching staff	0.751		
Q. Support of staff diversity	0.686	0.401	
R. Diverse parent and community volunteers	0.730		
S. Regular dialogue on diversity	0.623		0.429
T. Community involved in school activities	0.719		
Working with Special Needs			
A. Materials refer to varied cultures		0.783	
C. Use of inclusive language		0.588	0.475
K. Training to work with special needs children		0.609	
L. Special education & classroom teachers collaborate		0.723	
N. Challenging curriculum for ELL children	0.406	0.540	
Teaching Diversity			
B. Materials provide positive images for all		0.565	0.598
D. Activities refer to varied cultures			0.799
E. Introduce unfamiliar backgrounds			0.841
F. Provide respectful information		0.484	0.646

** New indicator added since pilot.

Reliability

Internal consistency is a readily applied means of gauging the reliability of measurement scales. The standard index of internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha, was computed for each of the eight RSA dimension scales. The resulting values, from .75 to .93, indicate a high degree of internal consistency.

In addition to the RSA dimension alphas, reliabilities for those subdimensions that resulted from RSA revisions following pilot testing were also computed. These alphas are also shown in Table 7.

In this table, the reliability calculations have been based on pilot data using the revised subdimension indicator groupings suggested by factor analysis but eliminating indicators that were not retained in the revised RSA. The table notation indicates those subdimensions containing revised indicators. As with the factor analyses, changes made to the Leaders and Leadership and Assessing Progress dimensions were great enough to rule out using reliabilities for them based on pilot data.

Table 7: Cronbach Alphas for RSA Dimensions and Subdimensions

RSA Dimension and Subdimension	Alpha	<i>n</i>
Transitions	0.79	30
Transition Activities	0.54	43
Contact with Pre-K	0.79	61
Entry & Promotion*	0.35	42
Teacher Supports	0.75	46
Professional Development	0.67	63
Contact with Others*	0.69	47
Engaging Environments	0.86	61
Safety & Health	0.86	67
Materials	0.69	65
Classroom Climate*	0.72	69
Active Learning	0.82	67
Effective Curricula	0.88	63
Curriculum Training*	0.73	68
Monitoring Fidelity*	0.83	63
Family, School, and Community Partnerships	0.88	51
Family Involvement in School	0.79	66
Parent-School Communication	0.77	66
Outreach	0.84	53
Respecting Diversity	0.93	34
Teaching Diversity	0.88	37
Working with Special Needs	0.77	55
Supporting a Diverse Environment	0.85	37

* Indicates minor changes from pilot.

Conclusion

The ready school concept contributes to the fields of early childhood and elementary education by expanding the definition of school readiness to include outcomes and expectations for children, adults, and systems. The Ready School Assessment makes it possible to comprehensively measure the school policies and practices that determine whether or not a school is ready to support the learning of all of the children it serves. The RSA can be used to set school improvement goals, identify professional development and technical assistance needs, and measure progress. The self-assessment process, which includes data gathering and group consensus scoring, provides a foundation upon which school stakeholders of varying backgrounds can communi-

cate with one another in specific and meaningful ways. The RSA is a useful, valid, and reliable tool because its dimensions, subdimensions, and indicators are grounded in theory, reality-tested through practice, and supported by data.

References

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- Shore, R. (1998). *Ready schools: A report of the Goal 1 Ready Schools Resource Group*. Washington, DC: The National Education Goals Panel.

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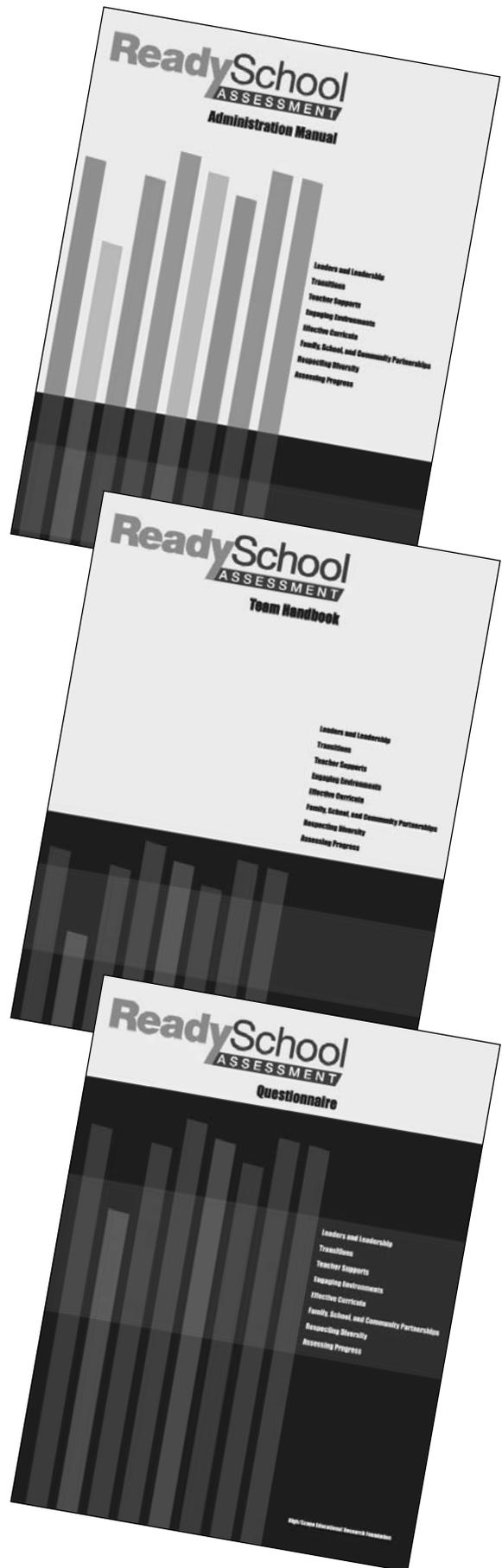
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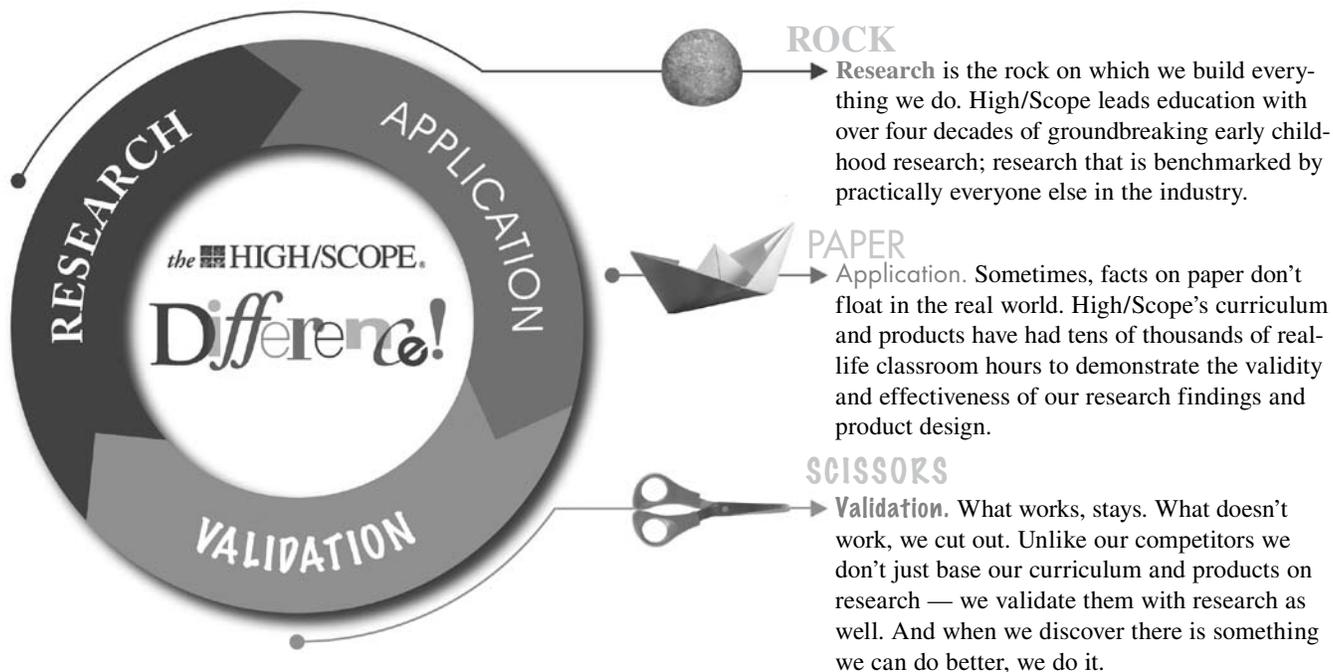


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