KINDERGARTEN ENTRY INVENTORY (KEI)

What is KEI?

A developmentally appropriate, strength-based assessment tool, aligned to Maine's P-MELDS, administered for the first several weeks of kindergarten, so that teachers may evaluate each students development across multiple domains of school readiness, including:

Language and Literacy Development ~ Cognition and General Knowledge ~ Approaches to Learning
Physical Well-Being & Motor Development ~ Social and Emotional Development

What We Did

The pilot has been conducted over a 2-year period.

- **Year 1** - 30 Kindergarten teachers sampled 3 KEI tools with small numbers of kindergarten students.
- **Year 2** -informed by previous year, the KEI Advisory Team in designing a larger pilot with 80 teachers, in which 3 KEI tools were utilized with all students during the fall of 2025.

The 3 KEI tools utilized in the 2025 pilot were

- **Teaching Strategies Gold**—Observation Only
- **Teaching Strategies Gold Finch** (mixture of direct assessment and observation)
- **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)** which is also a mixture of direct assessment and observation.

Your paragraph text

Supporting Players

- **Maine DOE staff**
- **Tech Assistance from West Ed**
- **Advisory Team** - from state staff, school staff and parents, containing multiple perspectives
- **Implementation Team** - 80 kindergarten teachers across 43 schools

Maine's KEI Vision

By utilizing a manageable KEI tool aligned to Maine's P-MELDS, data will be collected at the beginning of the kindergarten year to:

·Provide educators and families information about whole child development at the start of kindergarten

·Inform instructional decision making in the beginning of kindergarten

·Provide information about the potential strengths and areas of growth in Maine's early care and education system (birth-entry to Kindergarten)

What We Learned:

·Teachers see value in a strengths-based, whole student assessment approach in the beginning of kindergarten

·Teachers prefer a tool that combines direct assessment with observation

·Training in the use of the selected KEI tool will need to be responsive to teacher needs, including initial training, certification for reliability, and ongoing support

·Contracting for a tool will require sufficient lead time to meet Maine's procurement and technology guidelines

·The data sharing process will need to be carefully structured to ensure confidentiality of student information while balancing the state's need for aggregate data to inform policy and programming supports

Continuing the Momentum

Findings from surveys and focus groups conducted with the Implementation teachers will be analyzed to inform recommendations for moving the KEI work forward