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BUILDING A BRIDGE FROM PRENATAL TO GRADE THREE

We are very excited to introduce a new initiative in Vista Unified called the prenatal to grade three (P-3) bridge. For us a “Bridge” means a seamless learning pathway starting before a child is born to the all-important learn-to-read/read-to-learn passage in 3rd grade. This approach is designed to close the achievement gap before it opens, through a collaborative community outreach program aimed to maximize learning opportunities for students at the youngest age possible.

Did you know that a child’s brain develops fastest between birth and age three? In fact, by the time a child enters kindergarten their brain is more than 90% formed. This research tells us that supporting families before birth to setup a home environment that stimulates learning, and providing outreach activities and support when a child is an infant, toddler and preschooler can make a tremendous difference in their future success in literacy, mathematics and social emotional skills. Another piece of research by Nobel laureate economist Dr. James Heckman reveals that when communities invest in students at the earliest ages, the financial benefits to the community and the students are more powerful in a child’s future earning success than any investments made in high school and beyond - up to \$13 returned for every dollar invested. As in other realms, early

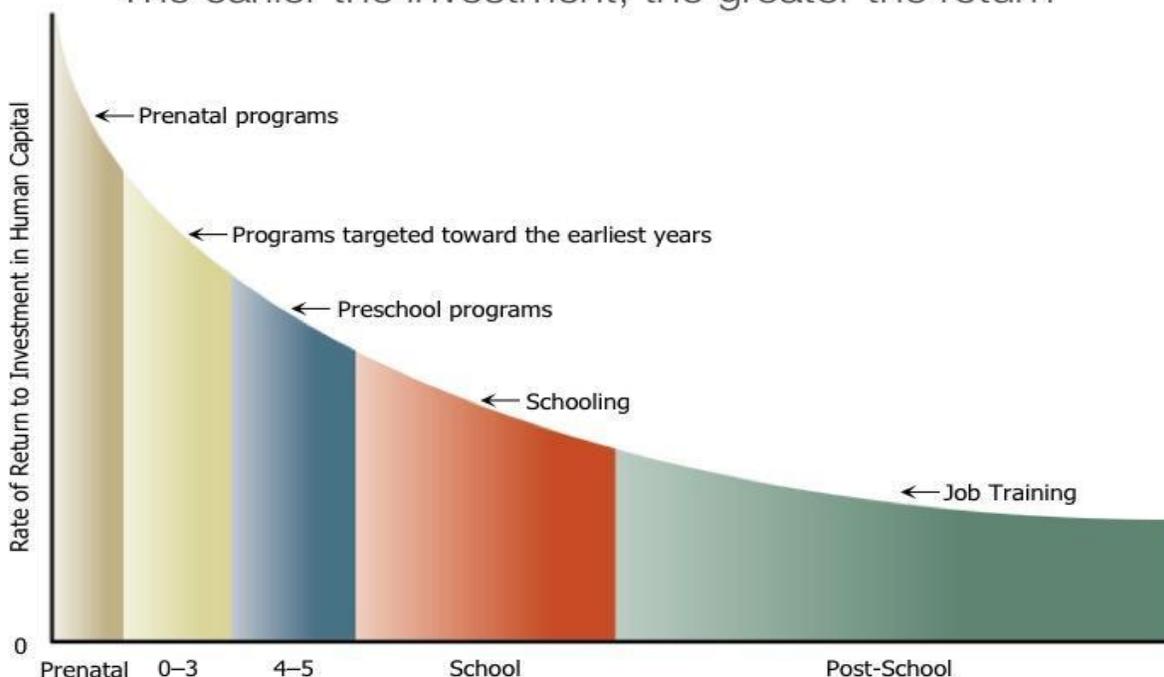
investment for children is like yeast: it grows, multiplies and nurtures.

Vista Unified has been working for an entire year to design the new P-3 Bridge. We held regular meetings with parents, early educators, family liaisons, pedagogy experts, kindergarten teachers and elementary school principals. We teamed up with the Vista Partnership for Children and local early education providers to expand our capacity for outreach into the community, including through our Early Education Fair, attended by 1,300 Vista family and community members on May 6 this year! We have visited communities where P-3 bridges are already in place. The P-3 transformative approach requires a true community-wide effort aimed at building the capacity of parents to become a child’s first teacher, building the strength of Vista’s early education system and continuing to create outstanding early elementary experiences in our schools.

At Vista Unified, this is just one way in which our school district is seeking to realize our vision to become the model for educational excellence and innovation. Information about the P-3 Bridge will be available on a regular basis as we get ready to launch this exciting option during the 2017-18 school year.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS A SMART INVESTMENT

The earlier the investment, the greater the return



Source: James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics