



Early Childhood Education Grant Program—Ages 3-5

2009-2010 STATE REPORT

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) GRANT PROGRAMS SUPPORT CHILDREN'S SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

The Nebraska Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grant Program—Ages 3-5 is designed to award state funds to public schools or Educational Service Units (ESUs) to assist in the operation of comprehensive early childhood education programs to support the learning and development of children who are three- and four-years old. The purpose of the Nebraska ECE Grant Program is to provide high quality early childhood education experiences that assist children to reach their full potential and increase the likelihood of their later success in school.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Nebraska's ECE Grant Program features:

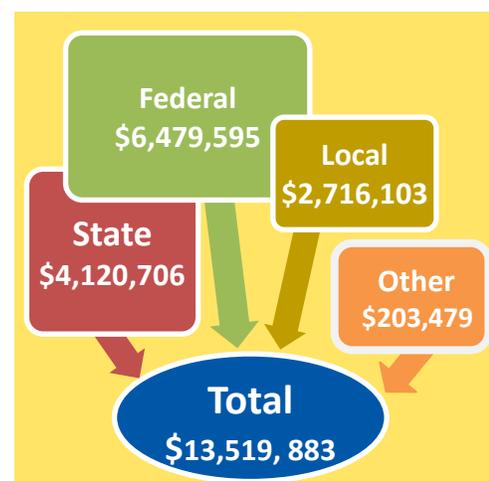
- Half-day and full-day options
- Certificated teachers with early childhood endorsements
- Adult:child ratios of 1:10
- Use of authentic assessment and developmentally appropriate curriculum

Nebraska's ECE Grant Program emphasizes:

- Inclusive programs and services
- Attention to research-based elements of effective programs
- Strong emphasis on family participation
- High quality programs
- Support for children who are "at-risk"

BRAIDED FUNDS CONTRIBUTE TO EXPANDED EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Over \$14 million of braided funds from 15 sources supports ECE grant programs in Nebraska. ECE grants and state aid account for 24.6% of the funding. Federal funds account for the largest percentage of support.



CHILDREN SERVED IN 2009-2010

Seventy-one of Nebraska's school districts and Educational Service Units used early childhood education program grant funds to serve 3,042 children. This represents an 11.7% increase in the number of children served from the 2008-2009 school year.



- 70% were 4-year-olds
- 39% represented minority populations
- 59% were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch
- 13% were English Language Learners
- 20% had teen parents
- 8 % were born prematurely

RESULTS MATTER IN NEBRASKA: A Comprehensive Accountability System

Results Matter in Nebraska is a child, family, and program outcomes measurement system designed and implemented to improve programs and supports for all young children birth to age five, served through school districts, ESUs, the Early Development Network and community partners. The system uses child, family, and program outcomes data to impact early childhood program practices and policy.

The purpose of the system is to:

- Improve experiences, learning, development and lives of young children and their families.
- Inform program practices.
- Demonstrate program effectiveness.
- Guide the development of local and state policies and procedures.
- Provide data to demonstrate results.

The central outcomes of Results Matter:

- The use of ongoing assessment becomes standard practice in programs.
- Decisions regarding intervention are impacted by data.
- Accountability reporting requirements are met through embedded everyday practices.
- Widely used assessment systems are improved and refined over time.

The benefits of Results Matter:

- Increased depth of understanding of child development
- Increased awareness of the link between instruction and child outcomes
- Improved communication with families
- Increased use of technology
- Increased quality of programs

This report provides a summary of the Early Childhood Education Grant Program related to each of these outcome areas.

At a Glance: Results Matter System Components

- **Child Outcomes**
Programs serve from a menu of approved authentic assessment systems.
- **Long Term Outcomes**
Child assessment results are analyzed over time to study the long-term benefits of participating in early care and education opportunities. This includes school achievement on Nebraska Statewide Assessment (NeSA) and the School-based, Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS) ratings.
- **Program Outcomes**
Child outcomes data is linked with existing program quality information such as NAEYC accreditation and environment rating scale results.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Quality early childhood education programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term positive academic performance (Gerber E.B., M. Whitebook, & R.S. Weinstein. 2007).

- 98% of the 44 classrooms assessed with the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scaled-Revised (ECERS-R) had a total score that met the overall state standard for quality.
- All programs met the state quality standard in Interaction and in Parents and Staff subscales.
- Programmatic strengths were in the areas of Language-Reasoning, Program Structure and Interaction.
- 43% of the classrooms did not meet the state standard in the area of Personal Care Routines, suggesting an area for continuous improvement activities.
- The majority of the classrooms achieved a score above the quality standard for the overall Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation –Pre-K (ELLCO-Pre-K) rating on both the General Classroom Environment (95%) and the Language and Literacy (93%) subscales.

Assessments for Program Outcomes:

- ECERS-R
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised
Authors: Harms, Cryer & Clifford,
- ELLCO-Pre-K
Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation –Pre-K
Authors: Smith, Brady, & Anastrasopoulos

CHILD OUTCOMES

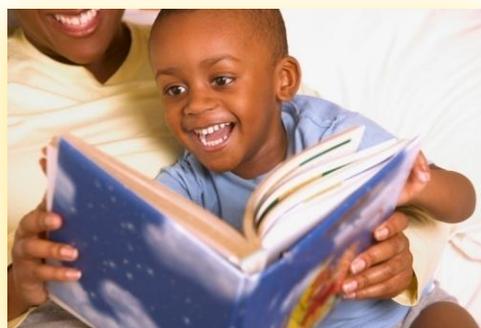
- Children were assessed using one of the three approved assessments in both the fall and spring to monitor child outcome progress.¹
- The majority of three and four-year old children met the state benchmark for child outcomes by the spring of the school year.
- By spring, the majority of the children made greater than expected change in their rate of development.
- By spring the majority of the children performed similarly to same-age peers across functional outcomes.
- Children who were English-Language Learners (ELL) made greater than expected change in their rate of development. Although, the children who were ELL had similar percentages of children that met the state bench mark in the fall, their overall scores were lower. As a result, they continued to be out-performed by their English speaking peers in the spring.

Assessments for Child Outcomes:

- CCDC
Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum
- High/Scope COR
High/Scope Child Observation Record
- AEPS
Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System

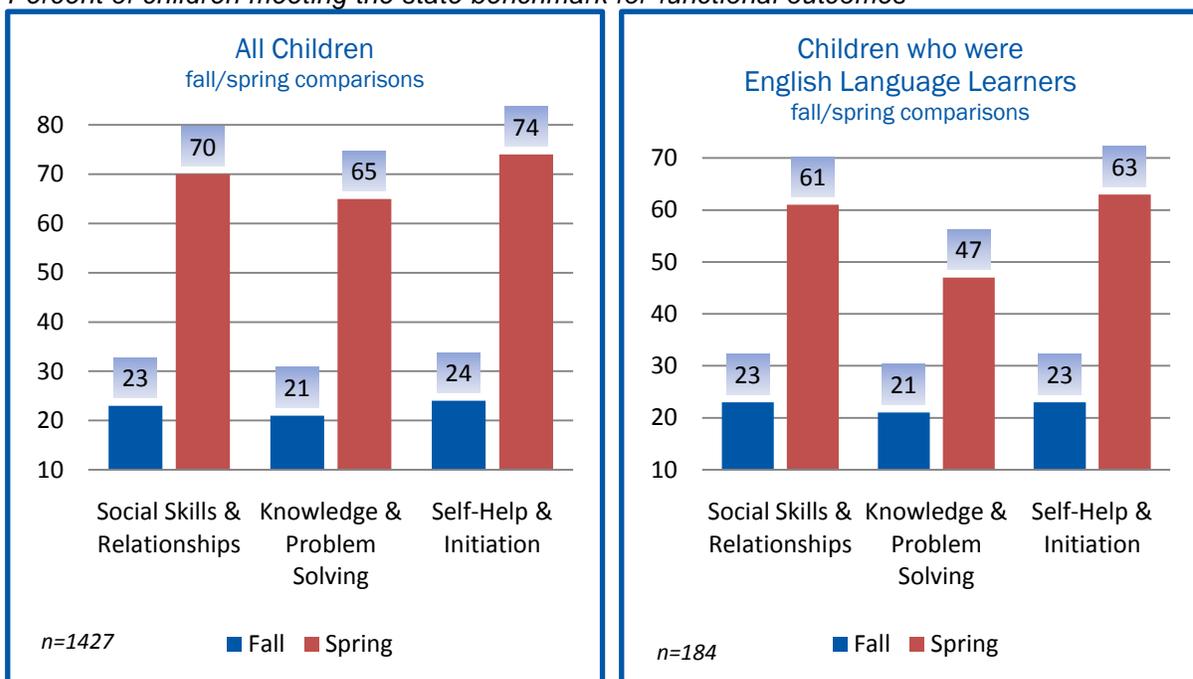
¹ *Note: The publishers completed new analyses that resulted in different cut scores. As a result comparisons cannot be made to data from previous years.*

The majority of preschool children made greater than expected change in development that helped to close the gap in skills.



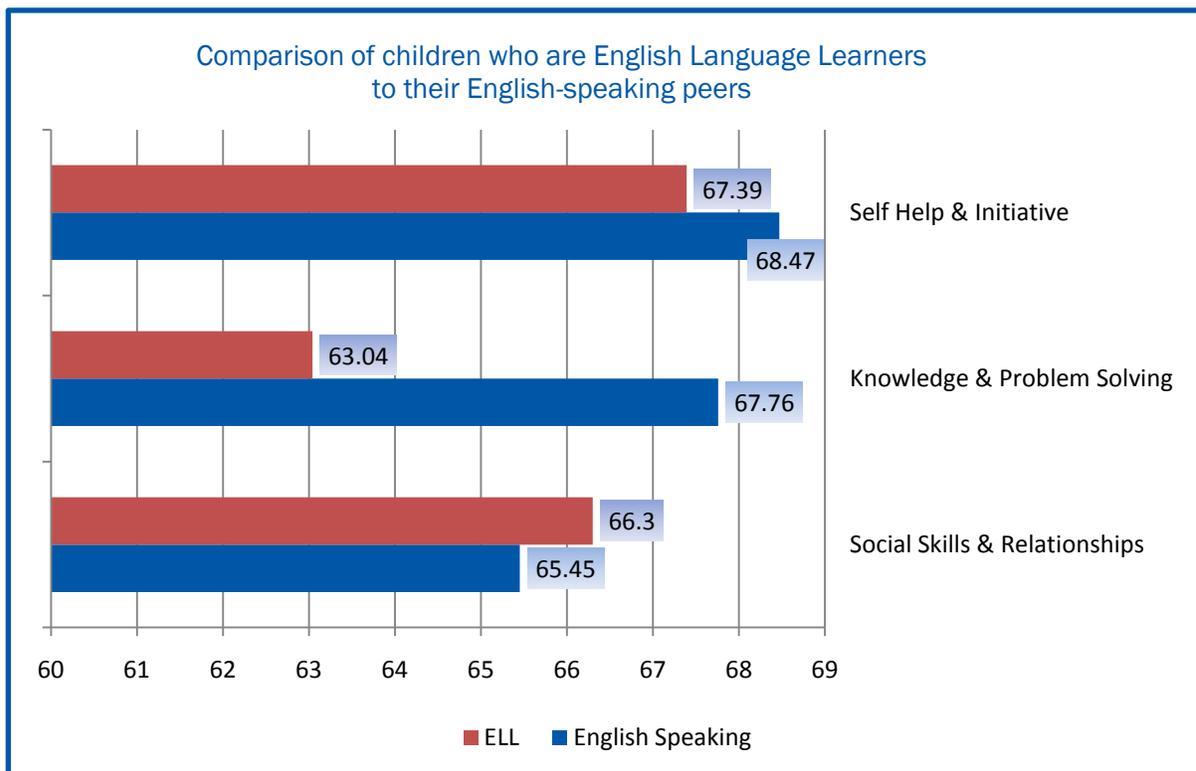
ECE GRANT PROGRAMS CHILD OUTCOMES DATA

Percent of children meeting the state benchmark for functional outcomes



CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP:

Percent of children who made greater than expected change in functional outcomes growth



STUDENT SUCCESS IN SCHOOL: A LONGITUDINAL PERSPECTIVE

The Nebraska ECE Grant Program is designed to provide high quality educational experiences in order to positively impact the long-term outcomes for young students, including continuing success in school. Based on the targeted population, which would be characterized as “at-risk”, the goal is to have the students achieve at academic levels comparable to or higher than their classroom peers. Comparisons were made to both classroom peers and children eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL) as this group was most comparable to the ECE population. The following figures show the comparisons across groups in the areas of reading, math, science and writing.

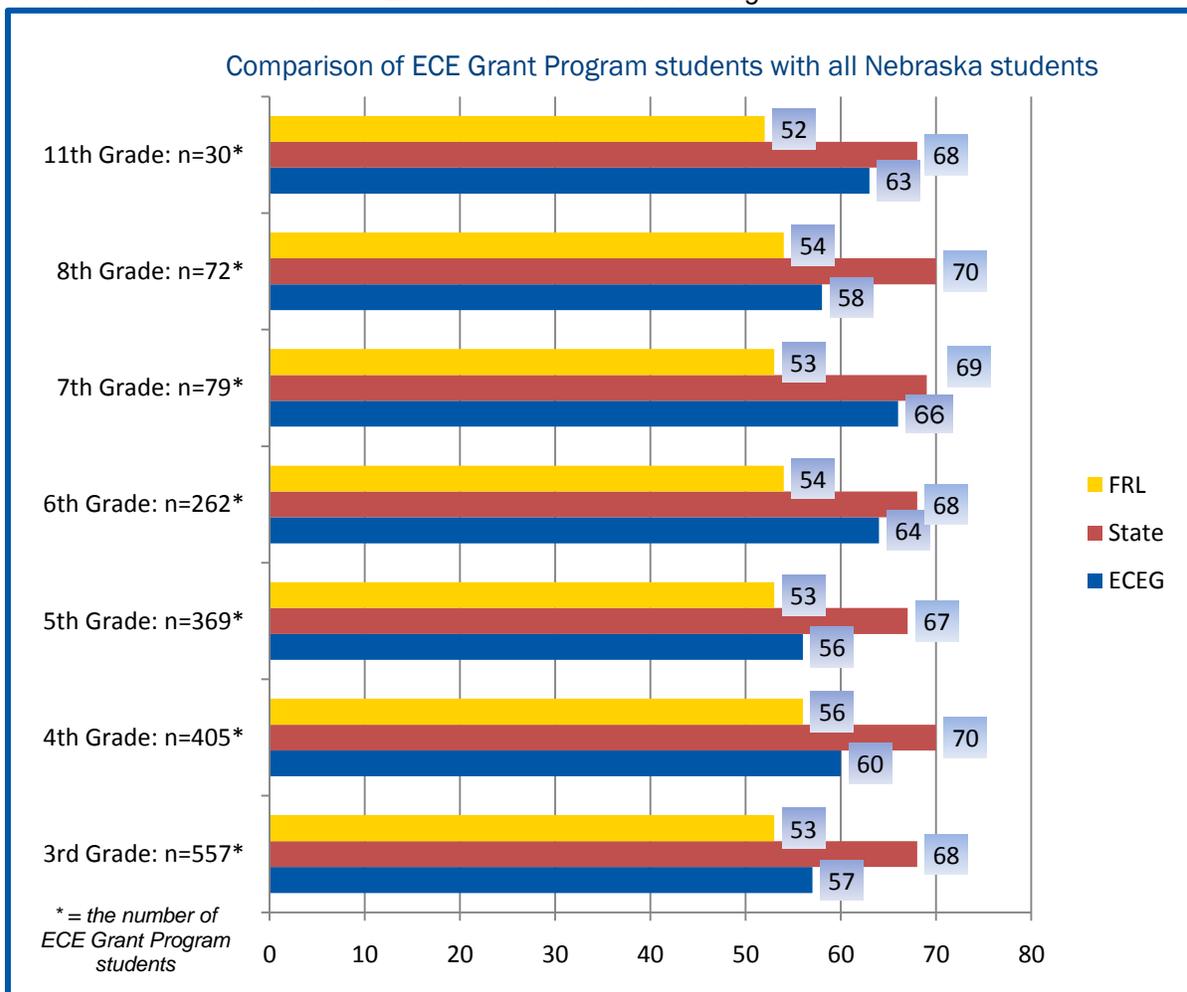
READING SCORES: COMPARISONS ACROSS GROUPS

Nebraska Statewide Assessment (NeSA) reading tests in grades 3-8 and 11 were administered for the first time in spring 2010. The tests measured the newly revised Nebraska reading standards and determined whether Nebraska students were proficient on standards. The results found:

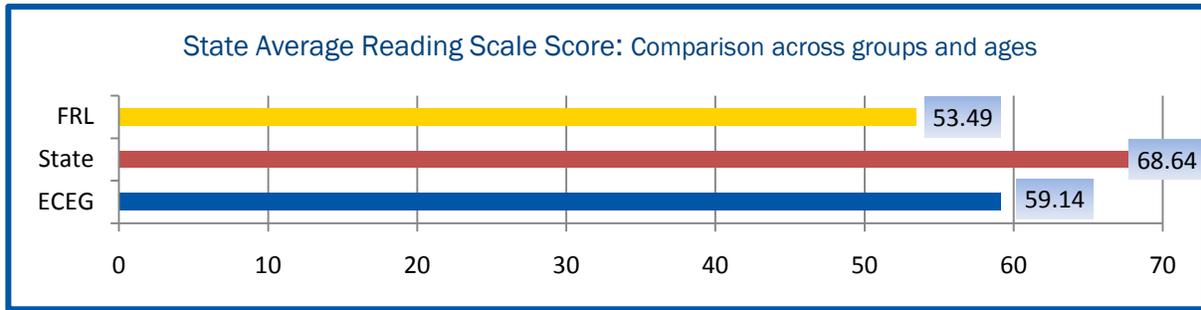
- The majority of students who were ECE grant program students were proficient in reading.
- A higher percentage of students who were ECE grant students scored proficient than students who qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL).
- The performance of ECE grant students was slightly lower than the average of all students.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES—READING

Percent of students that Met or Exceeded standards in Reading



Percent of students that were Proficient in Reading



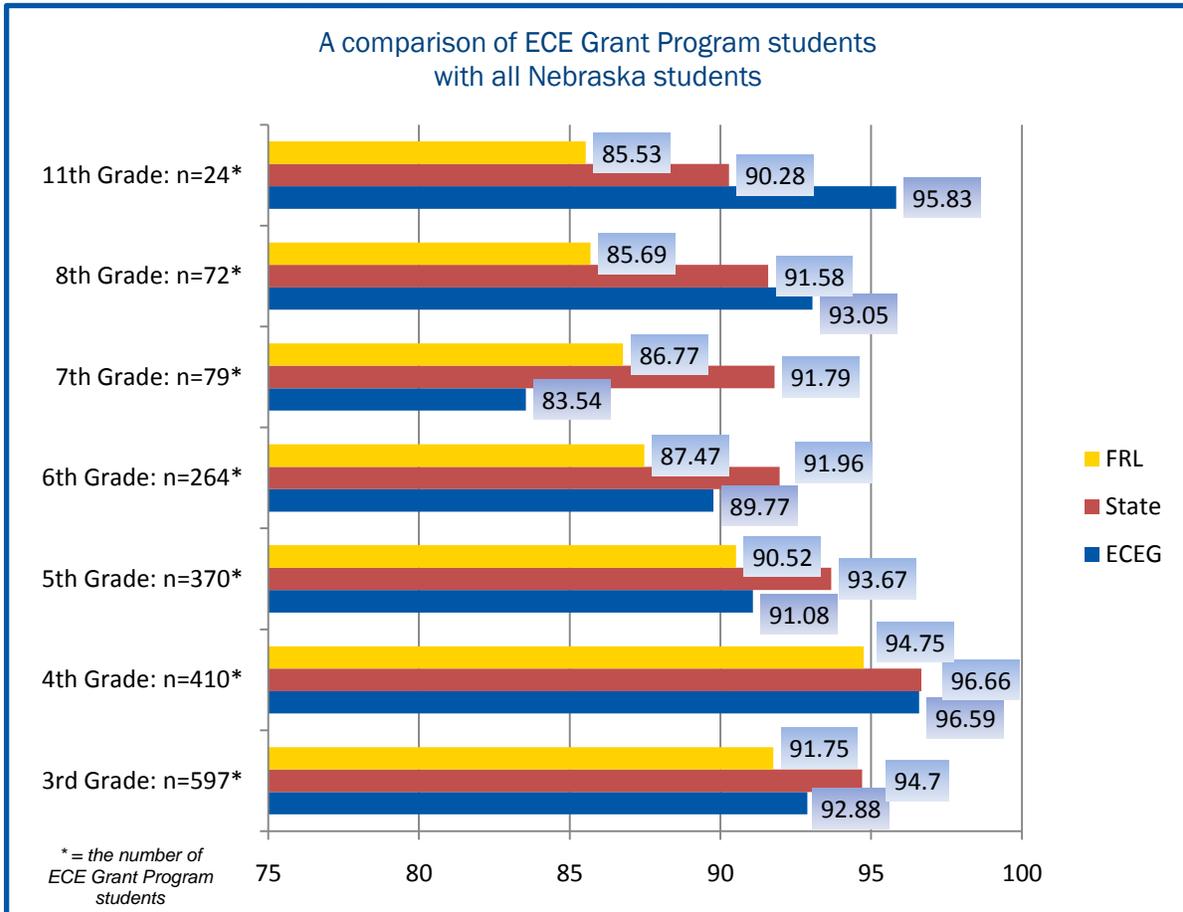
MATH SCORES: COMPARISONS ACROSS GROUPS

Students were assessed in the area of math using the *Nebraska Student-Based, Teacher-Led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS)*. The results found:

- The majority of ECE students met or exceeded district standards in math.
- Across all grade levels except 7th, the ECE students out-performed students eligible for FRL.
- ECE grant students scored similarly to, or better than, all students in 4th, 8th, and 11th grades.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES—MATH

Percent of students that Met or Exceeded standards in Math

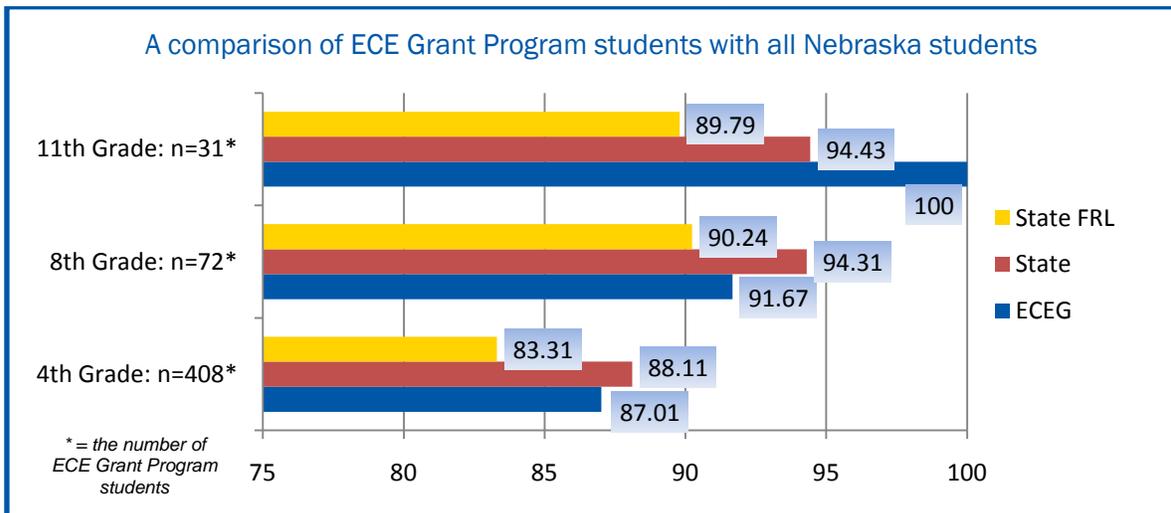


WRITING SCORES: COMPARISONS ACROSS GROUPS

Children were assessed using the NeSA statewide tests in the area of writing. The results found:

- The majority of ECE students met or exceeded the standards in writing.
- Across all grade levels, the ECE student's out-performed students eligible for FRL.
- The ECE students out-performed their peers in the 11th grade.

Percent of students that Met or Exceeded standards in Writing

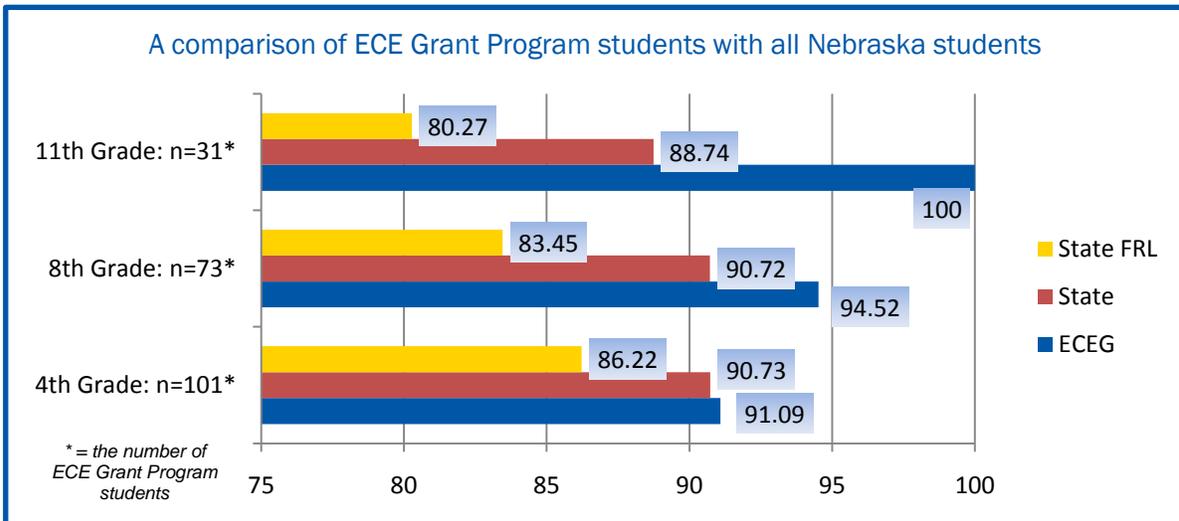


SCIENCE SCORES: COMPARISONS ACROSS GROUPS

Students were assessed using the *Nebraska Student-Based, Teacher-Led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS)* outcomes in the area of science. The results found:

- The majority of ECE students met or exceeded the standards in writing.
- Across all grade levels, the ECE students out-performed students eligible for FRL and their peers.
- The ECE students out-performed their peers in the 11th grade.

Percent of students that Met or Exceeded standards in Science



FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- The majority of the classrooms met the state standard for quality for their overall rating.
- Continued improvement in the area of Personal Care Routines is recommended.



CHILD OUTCOMES

- The majority of preschool children met the state benchmark and made greater than expected gains.
- Children who were English Language Learners (ELL) made greater than expected gains; however, fewer ELL children met the state benchmark than their English speaking peers.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

- The Early Childhood Education (ECE) grant students out-performed students who were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) on Nebraska outcomes in all content areas.
- The strengths of the ECE student were in the areas of math and science, where they were most similar to the performance of their peers.

Assessments across the school years found the gap was narrowed or eliminated between at-risk students and their more advantaged peers across all academic areas for children who participated in the Early Childhood Education Grant Program.

Evaluation Report prepared by Barbara Jackson*, Ph.D.
The University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute:
A University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities

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