

# Teacher-Child Interactions, Teacher Beliefs, and Student Outcomes in MMUSD 4K Classrooms

Maribeth Gettinger and Katie Ostrander

# What did we do?

- We asked ...

1. What is the nature of teacher-child interactions (type, frequency)?
2. What are beliefs among 4K teachers regarding early childhood development and education?
3. What is the relationship among teach-child interactions, teacher beliefs, and student outcomes?

- Who and What?

- 23 4K teachers in MMSD and a random sample of 110 4K students
- Direct observations in classrooms to examine **teacher-child interactions** (*Classroom Assessment Scoring System*)
- *Teacher Beliefs Scale* and focus-group interviews to assess **teachers' beliefs** about early childhood education
- *PALS* and *Child Behavior Rating Scale* to measure **student outcomes**

# What did we learn?

- Interactive quality in MMSD 4K classrooms is similar to or higher than other national samples

## Child-Centered Beliefs > Teacher-Directed Beliefs

- Teacher responsiveness
  - Student independence
  - Authentic learning experiences
  - Social-emotional focus
- Structured teaching activities
  - Authoritarian management style
  - Skill orientation

Associated with behavior ratings

Associated with PALS scores

# What does it mean for early learning?

- 4K teachers in MMSD may benefit from professional development related to strengthening their interactions to support children's concept development, higher-order thinking, and language learning
- Growth in literacy and social-emotional skills may require a balanced model of teachers' beliefs and practices that merges a child-centered, play-based approach with a teacher-directed focus on literacy skills
- MMSD may need to consider ways to establish a stronger and more consistent alignment between 4K and Kindergarten