

Kindergarten Program

January 26, 2009

Decision Making Strategy:

- Review of literature regarding half-day, full-day, and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)
- Measure of local (Capital Region) and statewide practice
- Review of district information (including documents related to the inception of Scotia-Glenville's Transitional Kindergarten Program)
- Review of general scheduling considerations
- Review of characteristics and guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in kindergarten programs
- Meetings with:
 - Kindergarten teachers
 - Elementary principals and Director of Curriculum & Instruction
 - Parent Forum

Three guiding questions.....

- What do we want for our children?
- How can we best achieve it?
- How will we know we have been successful?

Superintendent's Recommendation

- Recommendation: The district should offer a full-day kindergarten program in September 2009 which employs developmentally appropriate practices that meet the needs of all learners.
 - Recognizing the needs of some children, the program should include time for transitioning students during the first few days of school

Definition

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)
 - Developmentally appropriate practice takes students from where they are developmentally and provides experiences to challenge each of them. The classroom provides a balance of whole group, small group, and individual activity for students. There are quiet times and times of active exploration. Learning materials are used based on the child's prior knowledge, interests, and by teacher determination. In a developmentally appropriate environment, materials, methodology, and activities are aligned with a child's level of development.

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Guidelines for DAP

- Create a caring community of learners
- Teach to enhance development and learning
- Construct appropriate curriculum
- Assess children's learning and development
- Establish mutually beneficial relationships with families

National Association for the Education of Young Children 1998

Definitions

- Transitional Kindergarten – Students attend for a half-day, a.m. or p.m., for the first four and one-half months of the school year, then transition to a full-day program for the remainder of the school year
- Half-Day Kindergarten – Students attend for a half-day, a.m. or p.m., for the entire school year
- Full-Day Kindergarten – Students attend for a full-day for the entire school year. Some full-day programs also offer an opportunity for a brief transition period at the start of the year.

What do our kindergarten teachers think?

- The majority of our kindergarten teachers like the Transitional Kindergarten program (they would prefer the original Transitional Kindergarten schedule)
- None of the teachers would support a half-day program...Transitional Kindergarten or full-day are the preferred choices
- Some staff would like to get to the full-day portion of the Transitional Kindergarten program earlier in the year
- Some students are ready for full day before others are ready....but some students are not ready for full day at the same time as their peers

What do our kindergarten teachers think? (continued)

- The district's demographics are changing and we are seeing students entering kindergarten with more significant needs
- Research on half-day versus full-day kindergarten programs doesn't really apply to our program due to its transitional nature
- The split classes in the fall / early winter enable you to spend more time with students and plan for their individual needs
- Some students have full-day experiences prior to kindergarten but some do not
- If full-day is planned, teachers will need summer curriculum days to plan for the change to full day instruction beginning in September

What do the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the elementary principals think?

- The Transitional Kindergarten program is good but a full-day program would enable us to provide a more robust developmentally appropriate program
- We would not support a half-day program.....a full-day program would be the preference
- We would support having some sort of transition plan for the start of school that would be developed by our kindergarten teachers, principals, and DCI
- The half-day portion of the program does not provide enough time for activities
- Snow days, conference days, and report card days further shorten the first part of the school year for kindergartners

What do the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the elementary principals think? (continued)

- Kindergarten students with special needs attend full days beginning in September, adjust and are successful
- We are seeing students with more diverse needs entering kindergarten
- Some students don't respond well to the transition in January which can disrupt their learning and adjustment to school
- Having kindergarten students at school for the full day will enable us to allocate existing staff to work with students; we would not support hiring additional staff for one year
- We would not support moving to the current transition model earlier in the school year

What do parents think?

- Transitional Kindergarten
 - More 1:1 time with teachers
 - Smaller class size for four months
 - Good for students with various academic and social needs
 - Helps ease parents into school and the school day
 - Perfect for kids who are tired and shy
 - Perfect compromise between half-day and full-day
- Full-Day Kindergarten
 - Students with special needs have done well in full-day programs
 - Many students have been exposed to full-day pre-k
 - Would provide more academic information about a child
 - Would allow more time for specials
 - Slower pace of instruction with more time and richer activities
 - First grade is demanding and this gives kids more time on task

What do parents of kindergartners entering in 2009 think?

- Electronic survey will be sent to parents of incoming kindergartners asking for their preference.
- Information will be shared with BOE, staff, and community as soon as it is received.

How many of Scotia-Glenville's 2008-2009 kindergarten students had some pre-school experience?

- Total District: 179 students*
 - 142 students or 79.5% with preschool experience
 - 33 students or 18.5% without preschool experience
 - 4 students or 2% not designated

* Does not include 9 kindergarten students in KIDS program and 2 kindergarten students in First Beginnings program because they began the year in a full-day program

What does the literature say?

- Full-day programs must not be didactic but rather intellectually engaging
- Developmentally appropriate practice will:
 - integrate new learning with past experiences in an unhurried setting (Drew & Law 1990, Katz, 1995)
 - involve children in experiences with objects, other children and adults (Housden & Kam, 1992)
 - emphasize language development and preliteracy experiences
 - offer a balance of large group, small group, and individual learning opportunities (Katz, 1995)
 - assess students' progress through observation and the systematic collection and analysis of work
 - develop children's social skills including conflict resolution skills
 - encourage close ties and information sharing between parents and teachers

What does the literature say? (continued)

- There is no evidence for detrimental effects of full-day kindergarten. The full-day curriculum, if developmentally appropriate for five and six year olds, does not seem to overly stress or pressure kindergarten children.
- Students participating in a full-day kindergarten consistently progress further academically during the kindergarten year, as assessed by achievement tests, than students in either half-day or alternate day programs.
- There is tentative evidence that full-day kindergarten has stronger, longer-lasting academic benefits for children from low-income families or others with fewer educational resources prior to kindergarten.
- There is not current, strong evidence that the academic achievement gains of full-day kindergarten persist beyond first grade for all students.
- Kindergarten teachers and parents strongly value the increased flexibility and opportunities to communicate and individualize instruction for children offered by a full-day schedule. (Elicker, 2000)

What else does the literature say?

- WestEd, April 2005 Policy Brief on Early Education states full-day kindergarten benefits children by:
 - Contributing to increased school readiness
 - Leading to higher academic achievement
 - Improving student attendance
 - Supporting literacy and language development
 - Benefiting children socially and emotionally
 - Decreasing costs by reducing remediation and retention rates

How many New York State Public Schools currently offer full-day kindergarten?

- Regents 2006 – 2007 Proposal on State Aid to School Districts stated:
 - Six hundred twenty-three of 680 school districts (92%) have full-day kindergarten or offer full-day kindergarten.
SED Memo from J. Kadamus/ June 8,2005
 - To encourage schools to convert to full-day kindergarten, the governor's budget includes Kindergarten Conversion Aid. For Scotia-Glenville, that is approximately \$801,000 for one year.

What does practice in the Capital Region look like?

Half-Day Kindergarten

Burnt Hills
Guilderland
Mohonasen
Niskayuna
North Colonie
Schalmont
Shenendehowa

Full-Day Kindergarten

Averill Park
Ballston Spa
Berne-Knox-Westerlo
Bethlehem (*Sept. 09*)
Brittonkill
Chatham
Duanesburg
East Greenbush
Glens Falls
Hudson
Hudson Falls
Ichabod Crane

Lansingburgh
Menands
Queensbury
Saratoga Springs
Schenectady
Schodack
South Colonie
(*Sept. 09*)
South Glens Falls
Taconic Hills
Watervliet

What *could* a full-day kindergarten program schedule look like?

- 8:15 Coming in Activities
- 8:45 Morning Announcements
- 8:55 Cleanup
- 9:10 Morning Meeting
 - Song / greeting
 - Calendar
 - Share items in mystery bag
- 9:25 Music and Movement
- 9:40 Read-Aloud
 - Big books for shared reading
- 9:55 Center Time/Choice Time/
Snack Time
- 11:30 Lunch and Outside Play
- 12:30 Relax and Read
- 1:00 Writers Workshop, Science Activity, Small-Group Work
- 1:45 Special Area Classes
 - Art, music, physical education, library
- 2:15 Choice Time
 - Puzzles, clay, water table
- 2:45 Class meeting
 - Read aloud
 - Share children's art or writing
 - Draw closure to the day
- 3:00 Pack Up and Dismissal

Welcome to Kindergarten (2004)
Walmsley & Wing

Could the District offer a choice of Transitional Kindergarten or Full-Day Kindergarten?

- Two concerns:
 - Between September and early January, students in a full-day program would have 505.5 hours of instruction available; students in Transitional Kindergarten would have 192.5 hours of instruction in that same time period. This would create two unequal kindergarten programs in the district.
 - In order to provide parents with a choice, we would need to move children between schools for kindergarten which could dramatically increase transportation costs

What's Next?

- Board discussion.....