



Informational Memo - Kindergarten Day Study Classroom Options for 2017-2018

To: School Board
Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent of Schools

From: Beth Martin, *Director of Student Services*

March 15, 2016

Overview

This informational memo provides further background, as well as operational issues, regarding the option to provide an extended day kindergarten program beginning in the 2017-2018 school year should the Board approve the program at its May 2016 meeting. The Kindergarten Committee continues to research the value of this option and has gathered additional information regarding the importance of play in child development. Highlights of this continued research are also included in this memo.

Study Updates

To date, the Board has been updated regularly regarding the progress of the kindergarten day study. In December 2015, the Board provided direction to focus the committee's study on an Extended Day option, based on administrative recommendation. The Board also directed administration to focus on District-funded options versus fee-based programming.

Program Offering - Location Consideration

Background

Throughout the kindergarten day study, the community has been engaged around multiple topics related to extending the kindergarten day. This has included input regarding location of Kindergarten classrooms if the kindergarten day is extended. Survey results from October, 2015 support attendance at home/neighborhood schools, where 45% of those surveyed indicated they

would not attend extended day if not offered at their neighborhood school. However, 27% of those surveyed indicated they would attend a different neighborhood school if needed, and 27% of those surveyed were unsure. With this in mind, a variety of options for possible classroom locations are being considered.

Enrollment Trends and Projections

As a means to make appropriate estimates for possible class size for extended day kindergarten, information regarding enrollment trends has been reviewed. On average, the District experiences a 22% increase in enrollment from kindergarten to first grade. Data regarding enrollment projections has also been reviewed. Enrollment projections reported here for Kindergarten are inclusive of a 15% anticipated increase as parents consider Winnetka Public Schools for extended day Kindergarten as opposed to local private schools. Current projections are available through 2019.

School Year	Project Enrollment	Classrooms required
2017-2018	153	8
2018-2019	168	9

Although an extended day kindergarten program will result in increases in enrollment, it is not expected that all students will enroll in extended day. Some parents will choose a half-day option for their children. However, it is anticipated that some students who do enroll in half-day may choose to move to an extended day at some point during the school year. This hypothesis is based upon information gathered from neighboring districts who have had this experience within their own kindergarten programs.

Classroom Location

A primary consideration for classroom location is whether a temporary classroom addition at Crow Island will be required to allow for expansion of the kindergarten program. Enrollment decline has resulted in increases in available classroom space at Greeley and Hubbard Woods. Consideration of shared spaces at Hubbard Woods and Greeley may also increase classroom availability

for additional kindergarten space. Below is a brief comparison regarding consideration of installing a temporary classroom at Crow Island.

Temporary Classrooms at Crow Island
(All 3 elementary schools offer Kindergarten)

<i>Reasons for consideration</i>	<i>Reasons against consideration</i>
All students attend home school	Available classroom space at other schools
Allows time to consider long-term solutions	Installation and annual costs (~\$200,000)

No Temporary Classrooms at Crow Island
(Kindergarten offered at other schools across District)

<i>Reasons for consideration</i>	<i>Reasons against consideration</i>
Utilization of available space at other elementary buildings	Not all students will attend their home school
Cost Savings to District (~\$200,000)	Transportation needs/routes
	Long-term sustainability (once we reach 10 sections of kinder, no longer feasible)

Classroom Availability/Options for Kindergarten Sections
2017 & 2018

	Crow Island	Greeley	Hubbard Woods	Skokie	Total Sections
MINIMUM	2	3	3	2	up to 10
MAXIMUM	4 (with temporary c/r)	4	4	Not needed	up to 12

Notes:

- CI - Current capacity at Crow Island remains at **two** kindergarten classrooms. This is the maximum number of kindergarten classrooms this building can maintain without the addition of temporary classrooms.
- GR - With the reduction of one section of 1st grade and one section of 4th grade, classroom availability at Greeley is four classrooms. This will require relocation of an NSSED Early Childhood classroom that currently occupies a space otherwise used for kindergarten. If a third section of first grade is required, interventionists and special education teachers may be required to share space to accommodate four classrooms for kindergarten at Greeley.
- HW - Classroom availability at Hubbard Woods is four classrooms. This will require the relocation of some project spaces and use of shared space for special education teachers. Addition of a fourth classroom at Hubbard Woods is a consideration, but will require thoughtful planning regarding reorganization of how some spaces are currently utilized.
- SK - reduction in enrollment at SK will allow for consideration of kindergarten classrooms in that building.

Kindergarten Day Study Committee Recommendation

The consensus of the Kindergarten Day Study Committee is that every kindergarten student should have the opportunity to attend an extended day kindergarten program at their home school. Classroom size should be maintained at no more than 20 students. An associate should also be assigned to each kindergarten class.

Implementing this model will require installation of temporary classrooms for 2017-2018 at Crow Island School. This model will provide time to monitor enrollment for the next few years, allowing the Board to explore other options for when the temporary classrooms need to be removed.

Primary Factors to Consider - Overarching Questions

- Half Day Attendance Center - *What are the pros and cons of establishing a half day attendance center for those families who choose half day Kindergarten?*
- Managing enrollment - *How will school assignments be determined if Crow Island has limited classroom space for kindergarten?*
 - *Voluntary selection*
 - *Lottery*

- *By Address*
- *By Corridor*
- *Voluntary School Selection - Will the District allow parents the option to have students remain at the Kindergarten location for grades 1-4?*
- *Long term attendance - Will the selected classroom location plan be sustainable if enrollment increases over time?*
- *Staffing - How much additional FTE may be required for specials and interventions as more classroom spaces are considered for GR and HW?*

Other Factors for Consideration

Transitions

The survey completed in October included a question regarding the number of days parents would seek enrichment opportunities for their children if extended kindergarten was not offered at The Winnetka Public Schools. Of those surveyed, 75% indicated they would seek additional enrichment options for their children at least 3 days a week. This data could be considered, as offering an extended day within the District would lessen the number of transitions within a day for a child.

Cost Updates

The addition of a temporary classroom specifically to accommodate increases in Kindergarten enrollment for an extended day program will enable each student to attend their neighborhood school. However, if parents within the community are willing to have their children attend a different neighborhood school for an extended day experience, the additional temporary classroom may not be warranted. This could result in cost savings to the District. Preliminary estimates for cost savings associated with installation and leasing are approximately \$200,000. Annual temporary classroom costs are estimated at \$30,000.

School Policy

Current school policy 7:30, *Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer*, addresses school attendance areas. This policy indicates that students are expected to attend the school that lies within the attendance area in which they legally reside, with one exception:

“A student may be assigned to a school outside his/her normal attendance area at the request of the parents and approval of the School Board, provided the assignment is in the best interest of the student and/or District.”

As classroom locations for kindergarten are considered, it may be necessary to modify language within this policy to allow for voluntary selection of schools for Kindergarten and/or grades 1-4 and to address the possibility of a lottery system or assignment of Kindergarten placement based on residents' addresses.

Community Outreach

Throughout the process of this kindergarten day study, parents and community members have had opportunity for input on multiple occasions. Since completion of initial outreach efforts, new information has been collected that may affect parents and their decisions around kindergarten within Winnetka Public Schools if an extended day kindergarten program is approved. This includes:

- delayed implementation of extended day kindergarten to the 2017-2018 school year.
- Board direction for consideration of an extended day format as opposed to a full day format.
- Board direction for a District-funded extended day program as opposed to a fee-based program.
- updates on building capacity regarding possible classroom locations.

As the Board discusses the most feasible options for extended day kindergarten classroom locations, it may be beneficial to engage the community through a final survey. This may provide updated information regarding parents' intent regarding Kindergarten enrollment, and may allow the Board and District to make better predictions regarding feasible enrollment if the program is approved in May.

Updates on Research

Gesell Institute

Dr. Marcy Guddemi, national consultant and former executive director for the Gesell Institute, recently presented at the Alliance for Early Childhood's 26th Annual Networking Dinner. Her presentation included data from a study she

completed which updated norms on the Gesell Developmental Observation, a performance-based, criterion referenced assessment system for children ages 2.5 - 9. Her presentation also included information on the 10 principles of child development and the importance of incorporating socio-dramatic play into a child's day.

- deep engagement
- two or more players
- planned in advance
- roles with rules
- scenarios change and adapt
- symbolic props
- interactions using language
- voluntary self regulation and "rules" of the role

"During socio-dramatic play, children must be creative and problem solve; they must be flexible; they will strengthen their language by using language"

Dr. Guddemi's summary:

- Play must be the primary instructional strategy in the classroom
- Make time for pretend play in classroom and outdoors - nothing is more important
- Children learn things outdoors that they can't learn indoors.
- Play takes on a role - 30-45 minutes inside and outside daily

"Children need playful, hands-on experiential learning activities based on principles of child development in order to build the foundation for future academic success"

Dr. Guddemi's research reinforces our current kindergarten program and highlights opportunities that can be provided to our children if we extend our kindergarten day; more time for dramatic play that will benefit the whole child.

Next Steps

- Recommend a Board working session in April for thoughtful discussion about options outlined for classroom locations
- Determine the impact of classroom locations on transportation needs/bussing routes

- Identify additional information needed for Board determination in May
- Prepare final summary/presentation for Board determination in May

Kindergarten Committee Members:

Teachers: Allison Greer, Katarina Jaksic, Missy Parks, Veronica Petrillo, Jennifer Fiegen

Community Members: Paige Goettel, Blakely Bundy, Kathy Hardy, Christine Morse, Sandy Carlson, Rob Daniels, Susan Whitcomb

Administrators: Julie Pfeffer, Beth Martin