



Informational Memo - Kindergarten Day Study Update

To: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

From: Beth Martin, *Director of Student Services*

October 20, 2015

Overview

This informational memo is designed to bring the School Board up-to-date regarding the progress of the Kindergarten day study. The study committee, as well as District administration, has been completing necessary tasks in order to formulate feasible options/proposals to bring the the Board for consideration in December.

Recent Updates

Committee Tasks

The Kindergarten Study Committee has completed multiple focus groups. These focus groups were held in each of the elementary buildings and in most of the area preschools (5). Participants in the focus groups have included parents, community members, and teachers. Over 100 people have participated in the focus groups. A sample of focus group questions can be found at the end of this memo.

Information gathered from the focus groups is being reviewed and will be utilized to inform development of questions for a community wide survey that will be made available to all Winnetka residents. The survey will enable the committee to review objective feedback in addition to the subjective feedback that has been gained through the focus groups. It is anticipated that the survey will be available on the District website by the end of October. Survey results will be shared with the School Board in November.

The Kindergarten Study Committee is collecting and synthesizing research regarding kindergarten programs and the effect of longer kindergarten days on student performance. A synopsis of information gathered will be shared with the School Board as part of an informational memo in November.

Members of the Kindergarten Study Committee will be completing site visits of three local programs that currently offer full day or extended day kindergarten programs. Site visits are scheduled for Avoca, Sunset Ridge and Baker Demonstration School at the end of October. Information gained from these site visits will be utilized when determining what options for extended day programming may be most appropriate for Winnetka students.

Administrative Tasks

District Administration has completed a facilities review of all 5 school buildings as a means to determine what space is available in each of our school buildings, and how addition of an extended day Kindergarten program could impact each of our elementary school buildings. This information is being utilized to help determine how an extended day or full day kindergarten program could be implemented within the District, and whether additional space may be warranted.

Cost analysis has also begun with initial anticipation that the District will require at least twice as many kindergarten classrooms as we have currently. Each classroom added will result in an additional teacher and an additional classroom associate. The number of classrooms needed may require adjustment as parents begin to complete the Kindergarten registration.

It should be noted that Kindergarten registration will begin prior to any final determination from the Board regarding possible extension of the Kindergarten Day for 2016-2017 school year. It is highly likely that overall enrollment will increase as compared to previous years if a longer kindergarten day is made available within Winnetka Public Schools.

Capital Expenditure Possibilities

The administrative team has met to discuss options for consideration if expanding our Kindergarten program in all three elementary schools. Expansion in all buildings will require some means of additional space at Crow Island. One option for consideration is the addition of mobile classroom space. Preliminary

steps will include a site survey of Crow Island prior to this winter as a means to best prepare for costs associated with possible addition of mobile classrooms.

Next Steps

Committee work and administrative work will continue. Committee members will complete survey analysis and research findings. Administration will refine cost analysis. Information from committee work and administrative analysis will be utilized to develop extended day Kindergarten options for Board consideration.

Timeline for Board Reporting

- November - Informational Memo regarding committee progress
 - Research synopsis
 - Survey Results
- December - Board presentation regarding most recent progress and feasible extended day Kindergarten options for consideration
- January - informational memo with refined data on feasible options based on feedback from the School Board
- February/March - presentation for final options to consider for the 2016-2017 school year and Board determination for the 2016-2017 school year

Sample Focus Group Questions:

1. What aspect(s), if any, of a half-day kindergarten appeals most to you?
2. What aspect(s), if any, of a half-day kindergarten causes you the most concern?
3. What aspect(s), if any, of an extended day appeals most to you?
4. What aspect(s), if any, of an extended day causes you the most concern?
5. In a half-day schedule, how has your child spent the other half of the day (outside the kindergarten program?) Why did you make those choices?
6. Which of your child's needs would be met by additional time in kindergarten? (i.e., additional time for socialization, creative play, enrichment, academics, rest, lunch, deeper thematic learning)

7. Which of your child's needs would not be able to be met, if s/he were in extended-day kindergarten? (i.e., additional time for socialization, creative play, enrichment, academics, rest, lunch, deeper thematic learning).
8. (Refer to the list of extended day models at area schools). What thoughts do you have about these (or other) options for extended day kindergarten?
9. How would you feel about a lottery system for extended kindergarten admittance?
10. How would you feel about paying tuition for extended day kindergarten?
11. Do you have anything further you would like to expand upon or share that we may not have discussed related to this topic today?