

**Swampscott Public Schools
Kindergarten Task Force**

Full Day Kindergarten Proposal

2007-2008

In the spring of 2006, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Matthew Malone formed a Kindergarten Task Force to explore the possible implementation of a full day kindergarten program. The Kindergarten Task Force was composed of teachers and administrators. Their responsibilities included researching the pros and cons of existing full day kindergarten programs and providing recommendations. Parental participation was obtained through a town-wide survey. (See appendix.) Incoming kindergarten parents, present kindergarten parents, and current first grade parents completed the survey. After careful review of the Full Day Kindergarten Survey results and best practice research, the Kindergarten Task Force recommends adoption of a full day kindergarten at each of the district's three elementary schools beginning in the fall of 2008.

Presently, kindergartners in the Swampscott Public Schools attend school for approximately three and a half hours each day. Beginning next fall, the Swampscott Public Schools are proposing that kindergarten classes follow the regular full day elementary schedule of a six-hour school day.

Results of the Full Day Kindergarten Survey support this proposal. (See appendix.) The overwhelming majority of kindergarten and first grade teachers, parents, and administrators support a full day kindergarten. The rationale for full day kindergarten is based on state policy, research, and teacher experience. (See appendix.) The task force also contacted numerous school districts throughout the Commonwealth for further information. These include: Hull, Mashpee, Duxbury, Sudbury, Andover, Bedford, Concord, Ipswich, Peabody, and Salem. (See appendix for list of full day kindergarten programs.) The results were as follows:

- Children who attend full day kindergarten are better prepared to succeed in first grade.
- There were positive effects on academic achievement for children identified as being “at risk.”
- Additional “time on task” is viewed as the single best strategy for “closing the achievement gap” between high achievers and “at risk “ students.

- Full day kindergarten does reduce the need for some special education interventions.
- A longer school day will allow teachers more time to fully address the entire curriculum.
- With a full day program, differentiated instructional strategies can be implemented to better meet the needs of all students.
- A full day kindergarten will support a developmentally appropriate program for young students.
- Additional time will provide more opportunities for language development and appropriate pre-reading experiences.

Most research studies that examined full day kindergarten programs indicated the following:

- Better academic progress, especially in reading and math
- More opportunities for social skills development
- Lower grade retention rates and less likelihood of receiving special education instruction
- A balance of small group, large group, and individual activities
- More time to assess students' progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students' work
- Increased time for language development and pre-literacy experiences
- A developmentally appropriate school experience where children learn from hands-on activities and play
- Stronger parent-teacher partnerships

Recommendations:

- **Proposal:** The Kindergarten Task Force proposes a district-wide full day kindergarten program. Students will attend school three full days and 2 half days from September to December. All students will attend kindergarten for five full days from January to June.
- **Funding:** Swampscott Public Schools will fund the full day kindergarten program. This funding represents an increase for seven teachers from .66 FTE to 1.0 FTE at the cost \$149,693. No additional teachers will be required. A full day kindergarten program will provide the opportunity for kindergarten teachers to attend early release professional development programs at no additional cost to the school system. The district will no longer pay kindergarten staff from noon to 2:30 P.M.

to attend these workshops. To the greatest extent possible, existing materials and furniture will be used to minimize costs.

- **Paraprofessionals:** The Kindergarten Task Force recommends one shared Educational Support Professional (ESP) per school to facilitate the full day kindergarten program.
- **Curriculum:** The core curriculum will include, but will not be limited to, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, library/media, fitness/health and the fine arts. The developmental level of students as well as their varying abilities and interests will be taken into account when designing and implementing instruction.

- **Full day kindergarten format:**

8:15- 8:45 Early Bird Work, math journals, books
8:45-9:15 Morning meeting-pledge, morning message, schedule, calendar, weather, songs, graphing, counting, math, sharing, art projects
9:15-9:30 Movement- songs, poetry
9:30-9:45 Snack
9:45-10:45 Foundations/ELA
10:45-11:20 Special (physical education 2x, music, library, art)
11:20-11:40 Lunch
11:40-12:00 Recess
12:00-12:15 Story/Rest time
12:15-1:15 Math centers
1:15-2:00 Science, Social Studies centers
2:00-2:15 Dismissal
(computer lab twice a week and health twice a month)

A developmentally appropriate kindergarten paradigm will address the skills and content of the state and local kindergarten curricula. The longer school day will provide students more opportunities to practice and learn both the academic and social skills important at this level. As delineated in the Swampscott Public Schools' mission statement, "Each child can strive to achieve his/her personal best in all areas: social, emotional, physical, moral, and academic in order to attain balance". Furthermore, all kindergarten teachers will continue to provide differentiated instruction to best meet the needs of all students.

In conclusion, the Kindergarten Task Force endorses without reservation, the implementation of a full day kindergarten program in Swampscott Public Schools beginning the 2008-2009 school year.

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Appendix

- I. Full Day Kindergarten Survey**
- II. Full Day Kindergarten Survey Results**
- III. Massachusetts Full Day Kindergarten Report**
- IV. Sample Research Articles**