



Responsibility of the 4 year old Kindergarten Committee

Purpose of Task Force

The Oregon School District, within the framework of the Vision Steering Committee, is convening a group of stakeholders to complete a one-year study on Four Year Old Kindergarten (4K). The task force will examine the feasibility of, and develop recommendations for implementation of 4K for students consistent with the District's Strategic Plan. We will research best practices for instruction, assessment and program requirements. Our goal will be to develop a community supported model that will meet the needs of students, parents, and community members for the successful administration of a 4K program.

This stakeholder group will submit a written report to the Vision Steering Committee/Board of Education. This report will be advisory in nature and reflect a summation of their research, methods of study, conclusions, and summary recommendations for a 4K program in the Oregon School District.

Background

Kindergarten for 4 year olds has become increasingly popular in recent years. The popularity of 4 year programs has its roots in the research on brain development and early learning experiences. Research suggests that children are born ready to learn and that 85% of their intellect, personality and skills are developed by age 5.

Brain research indicates children will develop best if provided with: positive, reliable and supportive relationships, regular routines and consistency, chances to repeat activities, opportunities to learn through hands-on interaction, exposure to rich, interactive language and novel ways to learn. Early intervention through 4K is anticipated to result in increased readiness for school learning as well as decreased gaps in achievement for economically disadvantaged and other demographic groups.

The Department of Public Instruction has awarded grant funding for school districts implementing 4 year old kindergarten programs to offset the start up costs for the first and second years of implementation. The options for implementation of 4K programs include school based, community based and a combination of school and community based programs.

The options which include community based programs, in total or in part, are preferred as services in the community can maximize resources, minimize transitions for children and families, reduce barriers to participation, promote equity and access to full day programming and reduce any negative impacts on child care providers. The community based models allow for shared responsibility for quality child care and early education.

The proposed model for the Oregon School District may include a combination of school and community based programs. Other communities have demonstrated that a combined program benefits the community and strengthens school partnerships for students and families. Space considerations in the elementary buildings are prohibitive of full implementation in a school based program as well. Although space for some sections are available in the Netherwood building, adding the sections of a full grade level to Brooklyn, Prairie View or Netherwood is not feasible at this time.

Team Member Responsibilities

- Attend scheduled meetings and be prepared to participate in discussions and decisions
- Review all literature prior to each meeting
- Gather additional relevant research on topics
- Be open-minded and willing to listen to opposing perspectives
- Respect the views of all participants
- Assist with final report and presentation of findings to the Vision Steering Committee/School Board by April 2010

Reporting and Work Product

This stakeholder group will submit a written report to the Vision Steering Committee/School Board by April 2010. This report will include the following sections:

- A summation of the task force's research, methods of study, conclusions, summary recommendations, and implementation timeline for a 4-year old kindergarten program in the Oregon School District.
- The summary recommendations will consider instructional sites, curriculum, staffing, transportation, start-up costs and policy considerations.
- The Task Force will be available for a group presentation to the Vision Steering Committee/School Board at the completion of this project.

Anticipated Meetings

To begin its work, the committee will meet in March to set future dates. A determination about the number of meetings will occur at that time with an up to two meetings per month with potential additional assignments via Moodle for

members to react to and field trips to participate in. Each meeting will be no longer than two hours beginning and ending on time. The most convenient time for all members will be determined at the March meeting.

Composition of the Team

Team membership will consist of teachers, parents, administrators, and community and home-based day care providers.

Cynthia DiCamelli & Candace Weidensee - Co-Facilitators

Carrie Janes

Raynel Klonsinski

Michelle Gard

Amy Miller

Possible Community Partner Representatives from:

YMCA

Parent Share Liaison

LaPetite

OPI

ODI

Heart of Brooklyn

Littlest Angels

Foxboro