

Port Angeles School District
Full Day Kindergarten Implementation
Report 2
March 10, 2008

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

In April of 2007 the board of directors voted to implement full day kindergarten in the 2008-09 school year. To facilitate the transition from half day kindergarten to full day kindergarten, the district developed a work plan that includes three professional development days for kindergarten teachers during the 2007-08 school year. The purpose of the meetings is to consider program implications as schools move from a half day model with extended day kindergarten for some students to a full-day kindergarten program for all students every day within the Port Angeles School District.

An initial meeting was held with kindergarten teachers in December to review the current adopted kindergarten curriculum, samples of full day classroom schedules, pre-school and community readiness skills, the kindergarten report card, and research on full day kindergarten programs.

The second kindergarten team meeting held in February included discussion on an alternative four day schedule, planning for parent/student first day orientation, a first draft of a full day classroom schedule, spring 2008 district orientation, and preliminary discussions on anticipated supplementary literacy materials. Staff also discussed the advantages of reading room support with a consistent district phonemic awareness program, as well as the need for classroom furniture and materials with the additional set up of three kindergarten classrooms in the district.

The third kindergarten team meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2008.

Kindergarten Curriculum

The kindergarten teachers are implementing the adopted district core curriculum and are enthusiastic about the increased instructional time that full day kindergarten provides to implement the curriculum. New adoptions including *Bridges Math* and FOSS Science Kits require more time to implement. Teachers are looking forward to the opportunity to provide in-depth instruction with hands-on opportunities for learning. Teachers are also eagerly anticipating longer blocks of time for Writers Workshop and journal writing. Small student groupings, differentiation, and additional focused time for literacy instruction using Houghton Mifflin materials will also be possible with the extended time.

The kindergarten team recognizes that the existing curriculum calendar will need to be adjusted and revisions made as we implement the full day program next year.

Full-Day Kindergarten Research

Research regarding the implementation of full day kindergarten was reviewed to surface the goals and benefits that have been identified for students and teachers. One of the research articles also included benefits as reported by parents in an end of the year survey on a full day program.

Benefits to Students

1. Full day, everyday kindergarten provides low-income, educationally disadvantaged students greater social and academic success.
2. Students who would otherwise make multiple transitions between home, childcare, and school each day is more stable, less stressful, stimulating environment in which to learn and grow (Vecchiotti, 2001).
3. Full day students significantly outperform half day students (Hough & Bryde1995).
4. Full day students attend school with more regularity than their half day counterparts (Hough 1996).
5. Full day kindergarten programs can provide children with opportunities to spend more time engaged in active, educational activities. These students are better prepared for first grade than half day students (Stofflet 1998).

Benefits to Teachers

The research also reports the benefits for teachers including:

1. Time to teach subject area more in-depth.
2. Time to teach a balanced literacy program.
3. Teachers are not rushing through curriculum in a short day of 2 hours and 40 minutes.
4. Teachers are able to offer instruction to students at their instructional level and in small groups.
5. Teachers and parents of children in a full day kindergarten believe that full day kindergarten better prepared children for first grade (Clark 2001).
6. All day kindergarten teachers report feeling less stressed by time constraints and those teachers have more time and opportunity to get to know the children and meet their needs (Elicker 1997; Clark 2001).
7. Closer relationships with students resulting in more individualized instruction.
8. Well adjusted students and positive parents.

The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CARE) reported the following about the full day program on a year-end survey (University of Minnesota, 2004):

Parents reported:

- “My child has enjoyed full day kindergarten.”
74% Strongly Agree 25% Agree

- “The length of the school day has been difficult for my child throughout the year.”
56% Strongly Disagree 30% Disagree 10% Agree 2% Strong Agree
- “I am satisfied with my child’s academic experience in full day kindergarten.”
75% Strongly Agree 19% Agree
- “Overall, I have been satisfied with this full day kindergarten program.”
78% Strongly Agree 10% Agree
- When asked the following question relating to their opinion before the full day experience; “If a choice had been given prior to this school year for kindergarten for my child, I would have chosen”, parent responded in the following way:
19% Half Day 81% Full Day
- When asked the following question relating to their opinion after the full day experience; “If a choice had been given prior to this school year for kindergarten for my child, I would have chosen”, parents responded in the following way:
7% Half Day 93% Full Day

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN COMMUNITY ORIENTATION

A Community Orientation is planned for the evening of May 22, 2008. The orientation will include a general overview of the Full Day Kindergarten Program and will be led by the elementary principals. The agenda will be modeled after the Kindergarten Round-up agenda, which was the orientation conducted in previous years for half day kindergarten orientation and was held in May during the school day or in the evening, at each elementary school. Parents will receive information on the following:

- School boundaries;
- Bus routes;
- Registration;
- After School YMCA day care;
- PTO/PTA membership information;
- Immunization requirements and individual health plans with the school nurses.

Each school will be represented at a table where parents can meet the principal and classroom teachers, sign up for spring kindergarten screening, and sign up for the Welcome Conference.

This is an opportunity for the cohort of students and parents to meet and greet each other as they begin this important journey with the Class of 2021! Additional planning will include elementary principals and the kindergarten team at the April meeting.

FIRST DAY ORIENTATION

A Kindergarten Welcome Conference is a new idea and one that the kindergarten team hopes will not only orient the parents and students to their new school, but also provide a positive and nurturing start to full day kindergarten. It is the first scheduled meeting for the parent, student

and teacher that provides a personalized two hour school orientation. On the first or second day of school, the parent, student and teacher will meet in a small group setting for the purpose of establishing the child's beginning learning experiences. This conference is designed to meet the teacher and learn about classroom expectations, goals and special plans for the school year. It is an opportunity for parents to ask questions in a small group setting with about five other parents. The student will be present and get to know five other classmates in a small, supervised setting designed to transition the student into a public school setting.

The teacher will share the classroom schedule, attendance policies and procedures and review necessary forms that ensure communication between school and home. The teacher will encourage ongoing parent participation with an invitation to the parent to consider volunteer opportunities and the teacher will be able to hear from the parent how an area of interest may support classroom needs. Student transportation and before and after school student information will be shared by the parent, so that the classroom teacher can ensure safe transitions from school to home or after school day care. The conference will include emergency forms and procedures so parents are informed and know the school's protocol. District calendars, school closure information and the early release schedules will be explained. School office notifications, student drop off and pick up procedures will be shown.

Finally, any forms that are required for registration that may not yet be completed will be finalized along with an explanation of how students participate in school lunch and recess. The conference will end with a building tour. The tour will include a visit to the cafeteria along with the opportunity to pay for lunch and/or milk so parents know the options available to their student. The student and parent will visit other instructional classrooms including music, physical education, the reading room, and the library. They will have the opportunity to meet and become familiar with the adults who work throughout the school, including office, cafeteria, and support staff in the after school and before school pick-up, and drop-off locations.

The Kindergarten Welcome Conference is designed to celebrate an important milestone in the life of a child, and represents the first step in building a trusting relationship through communication between the home and school. Parents are entrusting their children in our care. This conference and taking the time to personalize their entry into our school shows that we take this responsibility seriously and we want them to be involved in a meaningful way from the first day of school. Parents will feel secure knowing what to expect, knowing how to participate, and knowing the resources we have in place to support their child in achieving a strong education.

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

Kindergarten teachers developed a draft schedule for further work. The schedule will be reviewed and any adjustments will be made at the April meeting. Parents have expressed an interest in knowing the schedule to see what the full day program will look like. The Full Day Kindergarten Schedule will include:

- One 30 minute session of general music;
- Two 30 minute physical education sessions;
- Library visits similar to other primary classes;

- Morning recess;
- Lunch with recess.

The following is a draft example of a Full Day Kindergarten classroom schedule:

8:00 – 8:15 Table Time

This activity is independent activity time for the student to practice or reinforce skills in an identified curriculum. The teacher attends to children as they enter and takes attendance.

8:15 – 8:35 Daily Opening

Students gather on the floor with the teacher. Activities may include: morning message, class meeting, sight words, calendar, number corner, flag, Alpha friends.

8:35 – 9:15 Literacy Block

This time is used for a story or big book. Depending on the time of year, other literacy activities may be penmanship, “Mascott reading plan” with phon-graphics, Houghton Mifflin phonics center or guided reading.

9:15 – 9:45 Specialist time: physical education, music, library**9:45 – 10:00 Recess****10:00-10:50 Bridges Math**

Recess provides a time for the teacher to set up for math activities. The hand on math instructional time may include work places or math sessions.

Clean up and transition time for lunch.

10:50 – 11:35 Lunch and Recess

Teacher: 30 minute duty free time.

11:40 – 12:00 Directed Teacher Activity

This time is used for direct instruction and to focus students back on learning tasks after lunch and recess. The activity may include work with white boards.

12:00 – 1:00 Student Writing

This hour will be used for the development of student writing. The writing models and instruction may include Writers Workshop: Lucy Calkins, Darla Wood-Walters, Journal Writing.

1:00 – 1:30 Science, Social Studies, Art

The content areas listed would rotate based on science kit availability and content calendaring and planning.

1:30 – 2:00 Activity/Choice time, Social Skills, Direct Instruction and Closing

This time will be teacher choice and will vary by teacher. Early childhood practice recognizes that children benefit from engaging in self-initiated, spontaneous play and from teacher-planned

and structured activities, projects, and experiences. Teachers recognize the importance of planning for 30 minutes some time during the day for activities that include opportunities for social interaction. Play is a child's work and the social/behavioral/ emotional skills are critical to success and building relationships.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND DISTRICT CONTACT

To ensure successful implementation and communication, a series of four meetings are scheduled throughout the 2007-08 school year with community day care and pre-school providers. A report detailing the work plan and recommendations made by these community members are outlined in the Full Day Kindergarten Community Pre-School and Day Care Report.

For more information about Full Day Kindergarten, please contact Assistant Superintendent Mary Hebert at 360.457.8575.