



Lexington Public Schools

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To: Dr. Paul B. Ash
Members of the Lexington School Committee

From: Carol A. Pilarski

Re: Kindergarten FY09 – Status Report

Date: May 5, 2008

I am delighted to report to you that tremendous progress has been made in the past few months as the district plans to move forward with a full-day kindergarten option in the fall of 2008. Much of our work has been centered on gathering information from parents and guardians as to what their preferences are with regard to sending their children to either full- or half-day programs. The thorough collection of this data has assisted us in making informed decisions about the number of full- or half-day classrooms and their locations. I will share those results with you a little further into this report; however, what I would like to commence with is a description of some of the exciting work of the 20+ member Kindergarten Task Force.

Much impressive work and planning is currently underway to ensure that we are ready to welcome students and their families to the 1st year of Lexington's FDK implementation. Everyone on the committee is eager, excited, and committed to offering and preparing for the best program possible for all our students . . . full-day and half-day alike.

Task Force Activities:

- The Committee has met or is scheduled to meet as an entire group on the following dates: March 26, April 17, May 14, May 28, June 4, and June 11. Each of our meetings is scheduled for 3 hours, but often goes to 4 hours.
- There are currently 3 sub-committees at work addressing these topics: Materials & Supplies, Professional Development, and "Logistics."
- A Summer Institute addressing professional development and training for all K teachers is being planned for June 23, 24, 25, 26. Three (3) days of the institute are being led by consultants from the Tufts University Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development. The fourth day will be conducted by in-district specialists.
- Visits to school districts already implementing full-day programs are in progress.

- Representatives from the Task Force have attended the BER (Bureau of Educational Research) Kindergarten conference on April 28 & 29 where workshops addressing a variety of Kindergarten issues were addressed by key specialists from across the country.
- Our two (2) Kindergarten co-coordinators: Dr. Carol Berenson and Mary Yardley are attending the state's Kindergarten networking conference on May 5th. This event is organized by the Massachusetts Department of Education and represents an opportunity for all districts moving forward in the implementation of FDK to meet and discuss their work.
- An additional Kindergarten Forum was held on April 14th for all parents/guardians of incoming K students. The event was specifically designed to address recurring questions from parents regarding the essential differences between a FDK and an HDK program. Approximately 35 parents were in attendance.
- The deadline for application to the Department of Education's FDK Implementation Grant is due June 4, 2008. The RFP was issued last week and I will begin to work on this as soon as all decisions have been made regarding the number of FDK classes to be implemented.

Full-Day and Half-Day preferences:

Now for the information regarding the numbers . . . I have attached two (2) appendices to this report, but before you refer to those, I would like to point out the following significant information:

- Out of a total of 380 letters that were mailed to families of potential in-coming K students, we had a return rate of 95%. Please keep in mind that of the 95%, 42 families have either moved out of the district, were sending their children to private school, or have elected not to send their children to kindergarten this year.
- Initially 25 parents (8%) expressed an interest in HDK, but when they found out that the numbers in their home school would not support a half-day program, 11 families chose the full-day option. Phone calls were made to these parents last week asking what their decision would be if an HDK class was unavailable in their home school: "Would they choose to transport their child to the half-day program cross district OR remain at the home school's FDK program?" The remaining 14 families remain undecided.
- Of the 322 families of K student, 95% of the families opted for FDK. This percentage includes 11 families who would have preferred HDK, but who opted to select FDK in order to stay in their "home" district.

Logistical Matters Remaining to be Addressed:

- The application process for METCO students will begin as soon as the number of FDK classrooms is determined.
- Confirming letters will be sent out to all families who have selected the FDK option, confirming their choice and also reminding them that the balance of \$675 will be due August 1, 2008
- Confirming letters will be sent out to those parents/guardians who have, by phone, opted to stay in their home school's FDK program in lieu of traveling cross district for the HDK.
- The HDK classroom will be located at the Bowman School if 12 or more students are registered for this class. Currently, 6 Bowman families have requested HDK.

Special Thanks:

- To the Superintendent and School Committee members for their support of this initiative.
- To Jane McLaughlin, administrative assistant in the Curriculum office for her untiring work and patience in assisting with the management of all the commitment letters and correspondence.
- To all the elementary school principals and their administrative assistants for their help in keeping all the registration information clear and complete.
- To the Kindergarten Task Force for ALL their work and commitment to this exciting effort.

APPENDIX II

19 Full-Day Kindergarten Classrooms and 1 Half-Day Classroom							
Revenue				Staff			
	Dept. of Education Grant			19	\$ 14,900		\$ 283,100
	Fees (293 x \$1025)						\$ 300,325
	METCO Grant						\$ 60,742
							\$ 644,167
Expenses				Classrooms	FTE	S&W	
	Possible HDK			1	0.7	0	0 Funds in operating budget
	FDK teachers (16 x \$18,000 for a 0.3 FTE increase)			16	0.3	\$ 18,000	\$ 288,000
	FDK teacher (1 x \$6,000 for a 0.1 FTE increase)			1	0.1	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
	FDK 2 additional teachers due to in-migration			2	1	\$ 60,000	\$ 120,000
	Additional Specialists			13	0.05	\$ 52,236	\$ 52,236
	I.A.s			19	0.4	\$ 25,309	\$ 192,348
							\$ 658,584
Difference							\$ (14,417)
√ If 10% cannot afford to pay, then the cost of 34 students would be = \$34,850.00 (tax levy expense)							
√ Currently 13 families have applied for financial assistance @ \$1025 = \$13,325. (\$19,000 budgeted for this expense in FY09)							
* Does not include 12 Special Education students who will not be charged tuition, as their IEP's require FDK							
cp 5.6.08							