



Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Carol A. Pilarski
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction,
and Professional Development

(781) 861-2558
email: cpilarski@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us
fax: (781) 863-5829

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

From: Carol A. Pilarski

Re: Kindergarten FY09 - Parent and Teacher Survey Summary
Kindergarten FY09 - Student Performance Comparative Data
Kindergarten FY10 - Enrollment Information

Date: June 16, 2009

I am delighted to have this opportunity to report to you on the status of the district's Kindergarten program. The information that I will be providing you in this memorandum is divided into three sections: **I.** Parent and Teacher survey results. **II.** Comparative Data on half-day and full-day student performance on DIBELS. **III.** Current enrollment registration information for the in-coming Class of 2022.

I. Parent and Teacher Survey Results

In keeping with the goals of our first year of Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) implementation and the intrinsic value of assessment procedures in determining how we can improve and refine our kindergarten program, two different surveys were designed by the Kindergarten Task Force for distribution to all parents of our FDK population, as well as to all twenty of our FDK classroom teachers.

- **Parent surveys:** As part of the district's efforts to maintain a commitment to continuous improvement, the Kindergarten Task Force was most interested in gathering feedback from parents that would help to evaluate a variety of topics, particularly, as these relate to the program's academic, social, and emotional effectiveness in the first year of FDK implementation. Consequently, a survey was designed to solicit not only this information, but also to gauge the 'levels' of concern that parents may have had "in anticipation" of a full-day program and then to determine how, in comparison, to their initial concerns, the year unfolded for them and their child/ren. The surveys were sent out in student backpacks on April 27, 2009 to all parent/guardians of FDK students. A total of 383 surveys were distributed with a return of 339. The rate of return was 88.5%. The itemized summary results of the parent survey are listed in Appendix A of this report.

Based on both the scaled results, as well as the many accompanying comments, parents, overall, reported that they were pleased with their child's FDK experience. Another component of the survey targeted current FDK parents whose older children had experienced Lexington's half-day kindergarten (HDK) program in the past. These parents were asked to make comparisons in their children's FDK or HDK experiences. The survey results indicated that the great majority of parents responding to the survey felt that the FDK program was successful and proved to be academically, socially, and emotionally enriching for their children. At the beginning of the school year, while 22% of the parents surveyed said that they had "mixed" feelings about FDK for their child, by the end of the academic year (May 2009), that number diminished to 7%. Most significantly, 93% reported that they either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they were very pleased with their child's FDK experience. I have chosen to highlight below several of the anecdotal comments that occurred with some degree of frequency in the open-response sections of the survey.

Parents:

- expressed their satisfaction with a "wonderful academic experience"
- felt their children were "very enthusiastic about school"
- remarked that children would be "better prepared for first grade"
- were "impressed with their child's growth in reading/writing"
- reported that their child was "more confident and independent"
- commented that the K team of teachers was doing a "great job"
- wanted "FDK to continue"
- reported that their child "made lots of friends"

(Parents of previous HDK students and current FDK students: Refer to survey results in Appendix A.)

There were several comments made in certain areas that parents felt needed some improvement. The frequency of remarks in these categories was quite small and often offset by "contrasting" comments from other parents; however, they do bear citing for purposes of this report.

- "need for longer rest time in the earlier part of the year" **vs.** "too much rest time" **vs.** "child was bored during rest time"
 - "not enough unstructured play" **vs.** "more structured activities"
 - "still tired, but happy"
 - "playtime is not long enough"
 - "more play, less academics" **vs.** "need to improve our curriculum and standards" and "wonderful academically"
- Teacher surveys: It was equally important to acquire data from our FDK teachers for many reasons, but particularly because they were in a unique situation, given that 18 of Lexington's current 20 FDK teachers had previously been HDK teachers within this district. These teachers are very familiar with the expectations of Lexington's curricular standards, the challenges of the daily schedule, and their own instructional practices. They were positioned to be able to draw on their previous experiences as HDK teachers and compare their personal perspectives of our kindergarten program from both points of view (HDK & FDK). The survey was administered to all 20 FDK classroom teachers. Nineteen teachers responded, hence making the rate of return 95%. The itemized summary of the teacher results are included in Appendix B of this

report. Once again, in reviewing this summary, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from teachers about the first year of FDK implementation. Nineteen (19) of the 20 teachers surveyed “agreed” that they were both nervous and excited about the implementation of FDK at the beginning of the year. Understandably, anticipating any kind of change always presents a certain level of anxiety. When asked in an open-ended question, however, how their feelings have changed from the beginning of the year to the present time, the comments confirmed that any anxiety that they may have had about going “full-day” was quickly diminished during the course of the year. Remarks like:

- “The experience of teaching FDK has been much more enjoyable and stimulating for myself and the children than I initially thought”
- “FDK has far exceeded my expectations.”
- “To be honest, FDK turned out to be better than I ever expected.” “Before, I thought that FDK would be wonderful and now I know that it is!”
- “I feel so much more connected with my students and understand their needs better.”
- “I am able to do more individual conferences with students, so I know them better and can better tailor lesson plans to their needs.”
- “There are increased opportunities for parents to volunteer for activities at different times in the.”
- “During conferences, I was able to share more information with parents about their children.”
- “The cameras for documentation (both still and video) were tremendously helpful in documenting student work. I used several video clips at conference time, sent home pictures via e-mail to parents in order to capture special moments for children to capture their success.”
- “Having a kindergarten assistant has made such a difference! I am able to focus on more small group instruction. I can’t imagine this year without her! We have a system of collaborating and working together that definitely benefits children.”
- “I feel so much more a part of my school community.”
- “The most successful part of the school year has been evident in my students’ writing abilities. I conducted the same amount and type of writing lessons as last year, but the children have had more opportunity to engage in the writing process.”
- “This year, I have been able to do math 4-5 times per week and writer’s workshop 3-4 times per week.”
- “The children had ‘choice’ time more consistently. It was less rushed/stressful, in general.”
- “The school days have a more relaxed pace, yet we have had more time for our work and for play.”

When teachers were asked what they would like to see adjusted in the program for next year, they responded with:

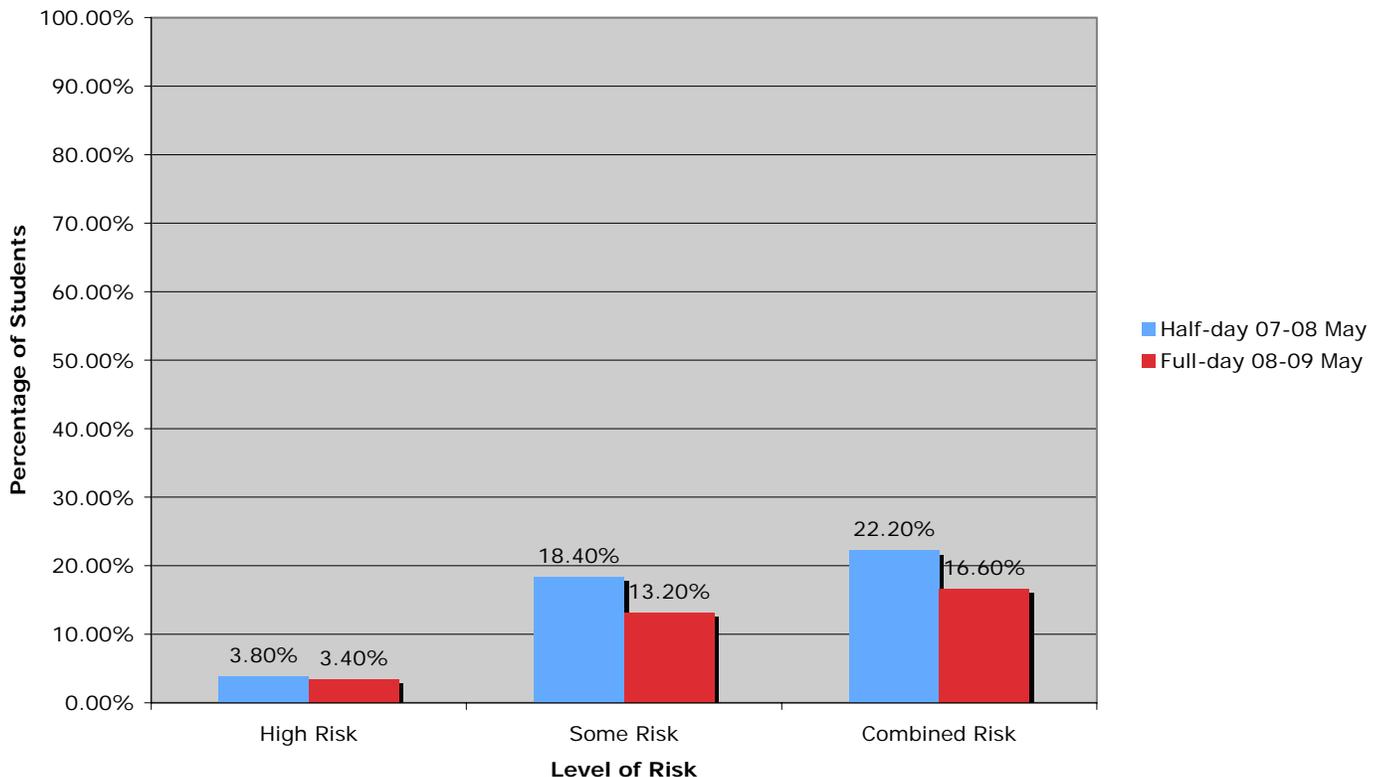
- “Would love to have more hours for kindergarten assistants.”
- “Would prefer to have all the specials scheduled at the end of the day.”
- “Nothing!”
- “Some brainstorming about scheduling that would minimize winter changes in and out of snowpants and boots.”

II. Comparative Data

As you may recall, back in February of 2009, I had given a mid-year report regarding the Full-Day kindergarten program. At that time, I had presented a graph that reported results on a literacy assessment tool known as DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). That graph compared last year's half-day students' performances on the phonemic section of the DIBELS with the current full-day students' performance on that same segment of the test. The graph below now represents the comparisons of the same two groups of students at the end of year (May). The percentages indicate the number of students "at risk." The percentage of students at "high risk" remains comparable; however, there has been a decrease in the percentage of students who are in the category of "combined risk." (22.2% in 2008; 16.6% in 2009 equaling a decline of 5.6%) This percentage represents an approximate number of 15 fewer children in the "at risk" field.. **Assuming equal sample sizes, the number of "at risk" students declined from 77 to 62 which is the equivalent of a 19% decrease in the number of students classified as "at risk."**

LPS End of Year Kindergarten DIBELS PSF Scores

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
End-of-Year '08 vs. End-of-Year '09
"At-Risk" Half-Day Students vs. "At-Risk" Full-Day Students



N=345 (HDK 2007-2008)

N=377 (FDK 2008-2009)

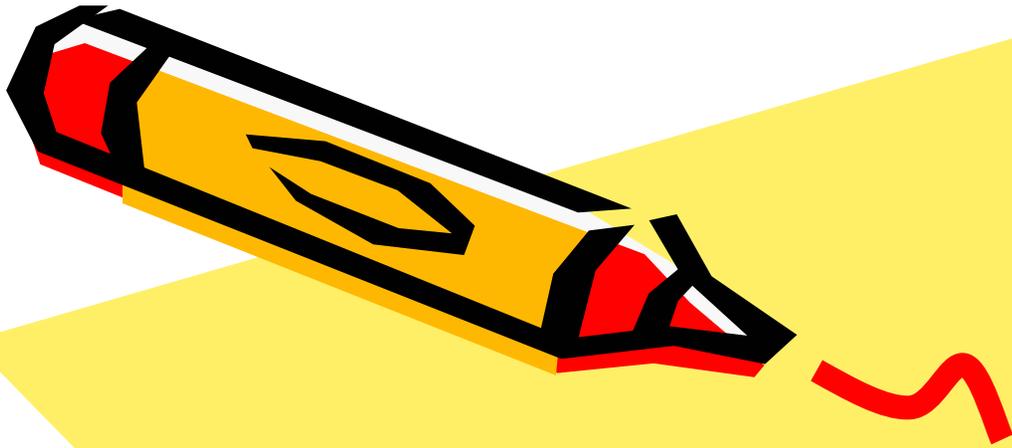
III. Enrollment Information – FY10

While one academic year is quickly coming to a close, we have been busily preparing for a new school year. Plans for welcoming our in-coming class of kindergarten students have been underway since February. Letters have gone home to parents/guardians regarding registration procedures, confirmation forms for selecting either HDK (12:15 dismissal) or FDK have been arriving in the Curriculum Office on a daily basis, deposits and payments for FDK are being collected, and most importantly, the Class of 2022 has had the opportunity to visit their schools and classrooms on June 4th. The transportation department has also been busy in sending out information to K families regarding busing. The chart below is self-explanatory, but should you have any questions about the information, I will be happy to answer any of your questions at the Tuesday, June 16th meeting.

June 9, 2009	Potential Enrollment	Number of K Classrooms	Confirmed FDK	Confirmed HDK
BO	67	4	52	6
BR	67	4	58	6
EST	58	3	50	6
FI	49	3	47	1
HAR	62	3	57	1
HAS	54	3	52	0
TOTAL	357	20	316	20

Special Thanks:

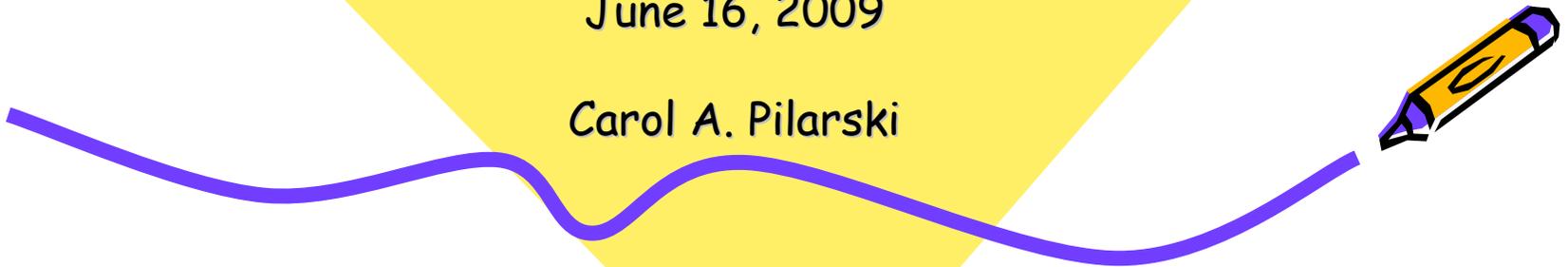
- To the Superintendent and School Committee members for their support of this initiative.
- To Jane McLaughlin, administrative assistant in the Curriculum office for her untiring work and patience in assisting with the management of all the commitment letters and correspondence.
- To all the elementary school principals and their administrative assistants for their help in keeping all the registration information clear and complete.
- To Kathy McCarthy (Literacy), Fran Ludwig (Science), Karen Tripoli (Mathematics) and all specialists for their curricular and instructional support in helping to make this program the outstanding one it is.
- To the Kindergarten Teachers for ALL their hard work, dedication, and commitment to the kindergarten children in this district.



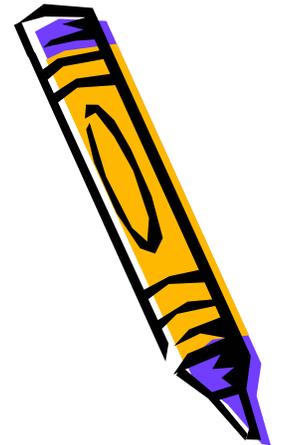
Kindergarten Status Report

Lexington School Committee
June 16, 2009

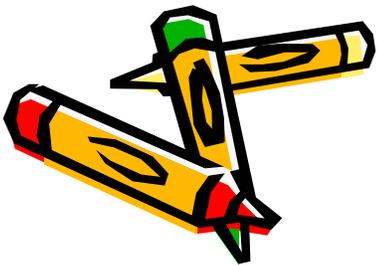
Carol A. Pilarski



Three Sections to this Report



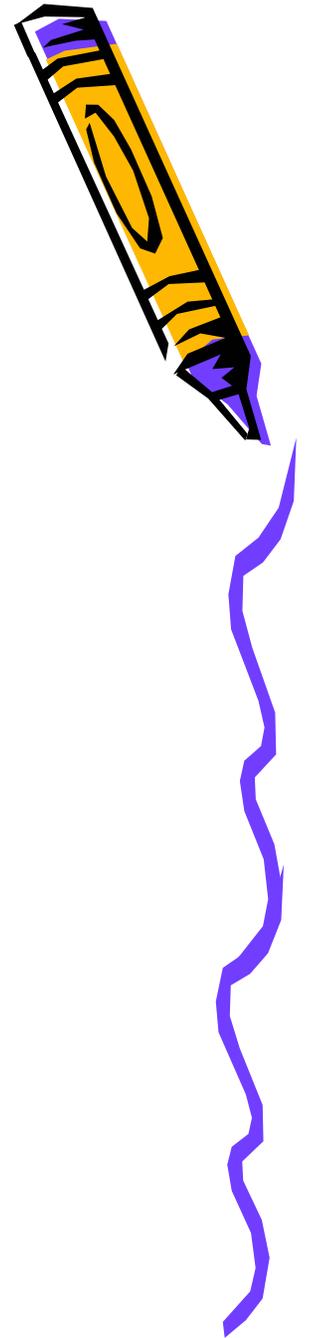
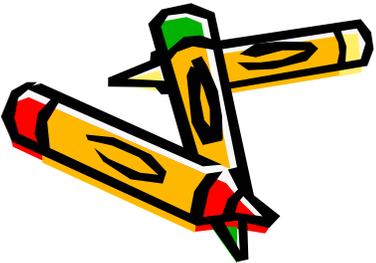
- I. Parent & Teacher Survey Results
- II. Comparative Data on HDK & FDK
- III. Enrollment Information for FY10



I. Surveys

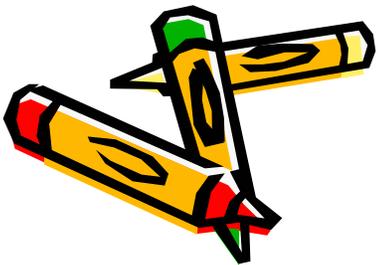
Parent Information:

- Surveys distributed on April 27th
- 383 surveys distributed
- 339 returned
- 88.5% return rate



Focus of Parent Survey

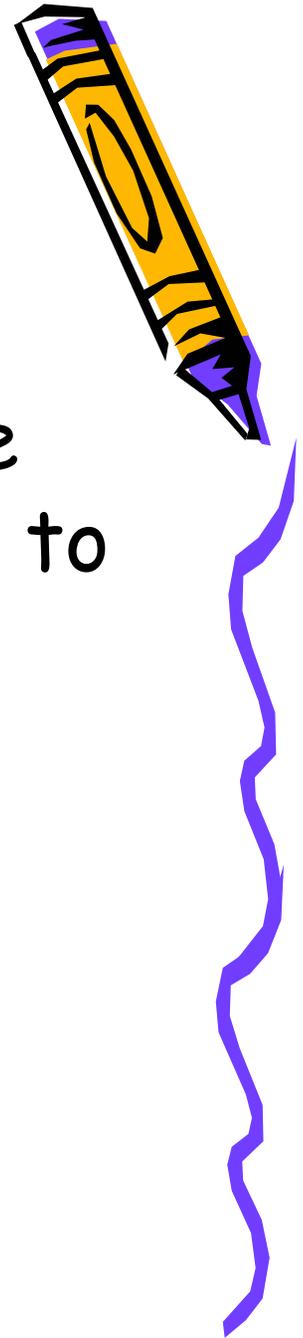
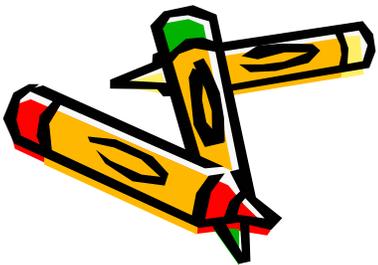
- Acquire feedback on academic, social, and emotional growth
- Acquire feedback on areas in "need of improvement"
- Compare "beginning of year" impressions with "end of year"
- Compare parental experiences/impressions of HDK vs. FDK child



Parent Survey Results . . .

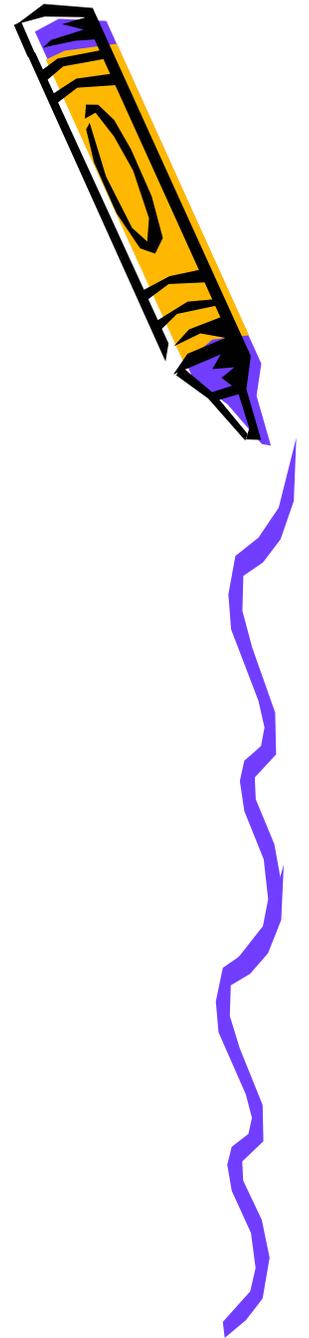
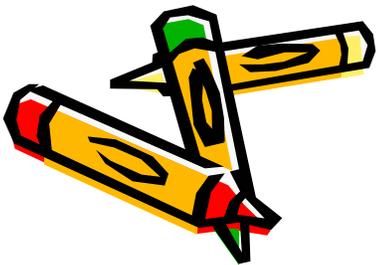
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- 22% had 'mixed feelings' about the program at the beginning; reduced to 7% by the end of the year
- 93% were very pleased with the program at year end



Parent Comments

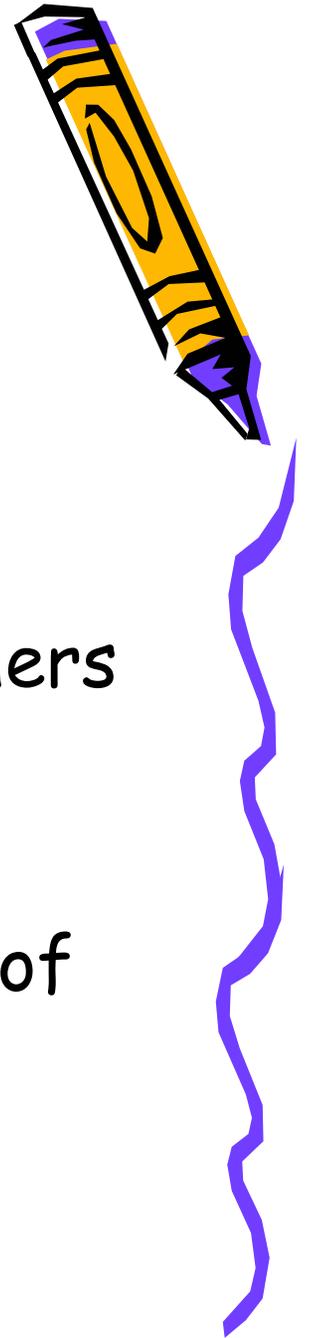
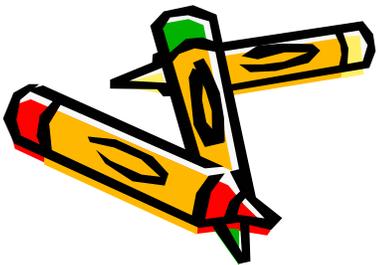
- expressed their satisfaction with a "wonderful academic experience"
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Parent Comments . . .

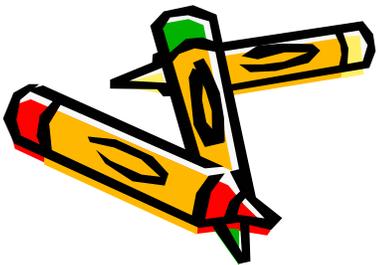
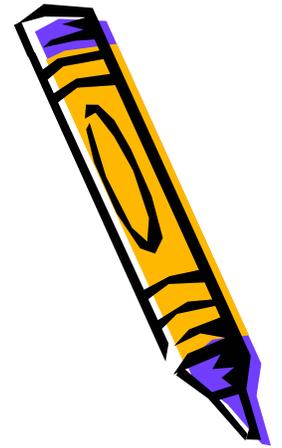
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- reported that their child was "more confident and independent"
- commented that the K team of teachers was doing a "great job"
- wanted "FDK to continue"
- reported that their child "made lots of friends"



Parent "comparative feedback" with HDK & FDK

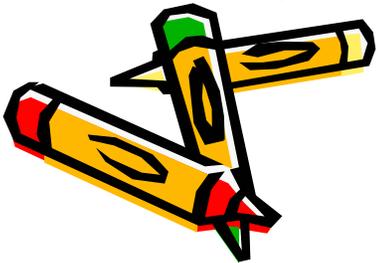
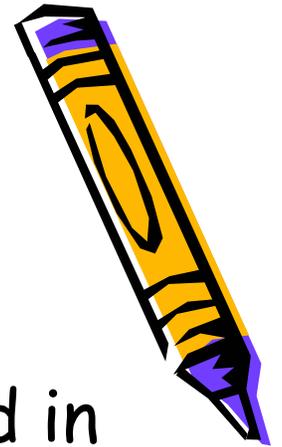
- FDK would have helped my older child transition more easily to 1st grade
- FDK is perfect for my 2nd child
- My older child would have benefited from FDK
- FDK is much 'calmer' than HDK
- FDK is 100% better
- Four hours is not adequate learning time in HDK



Comparative feedback . . .

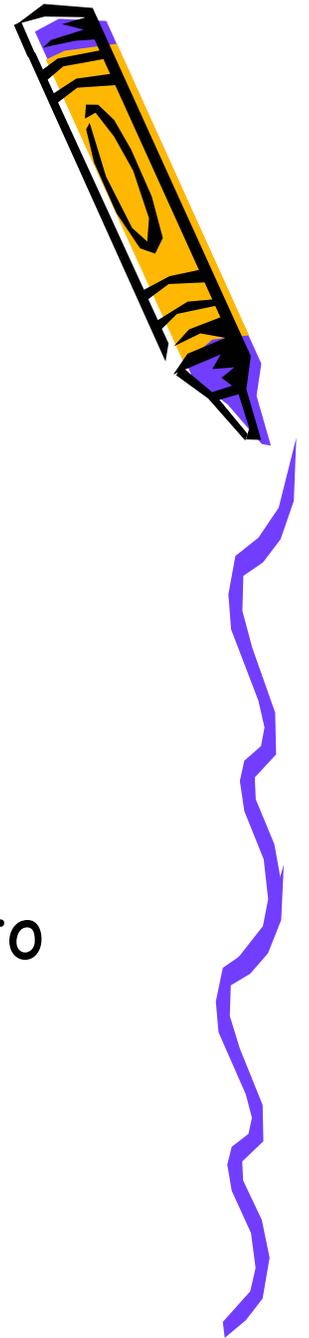
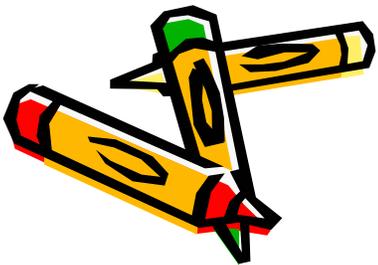
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- Older child is lacking in math; was rushed in every subject; less learning took place than is now occurring for my younger child in FDK
- Older child is "less confident"
- Experience in FDK and HDK is consistent
- Older child had more time to spend with friends; older child had more opportunities for socialization after school
- Older child is struggling and just catching up now; FDK would have been better for him



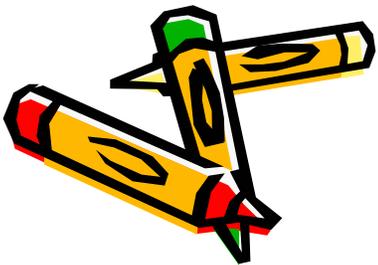
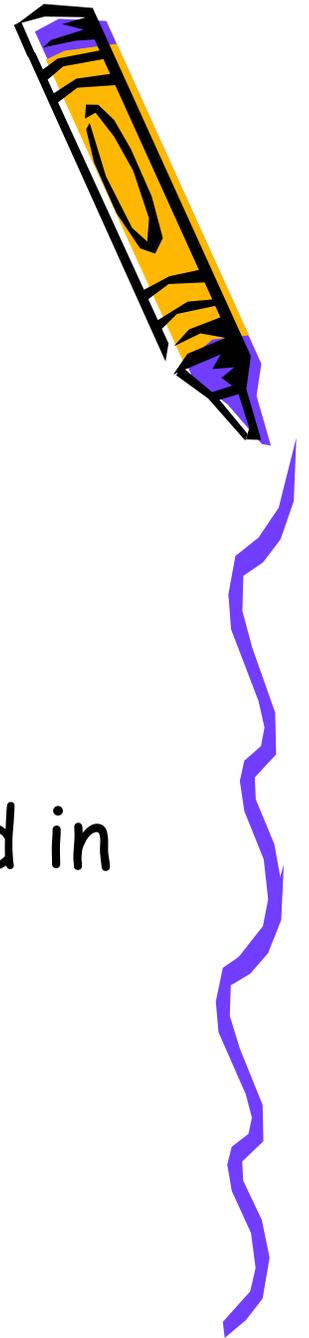
Areas in "Need of Improvement"

- NO fee for public education
- Need for longer rest time vs. too much rest time
- Not enough unstructured play vs. more structured activities
- More play and less academics vs. need to improve and expand curriculum



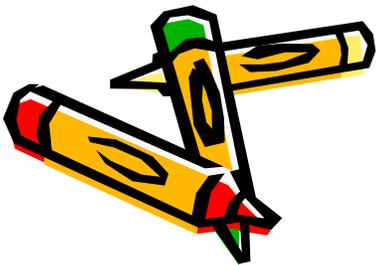
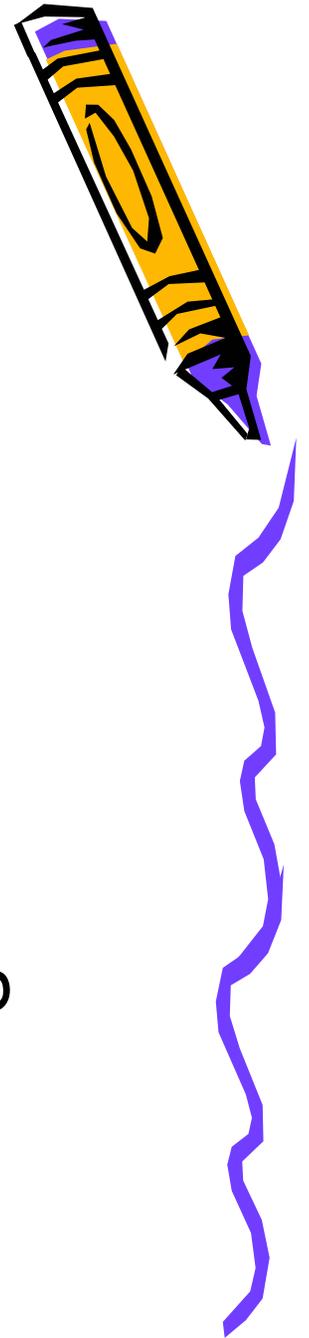
Teacher Survey Information

- 18 of 20 FDK teachers were HDK teachers within the district
- 19 out of 20 responded for 95% return rate
- Details of the results are provided in Appendix B



Teacher Survey Results

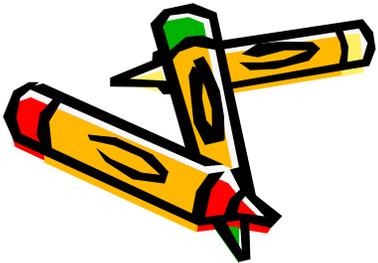
- FDK has been more enjoyable and stimulating for myself and the children than I ever anticipated.
- FDK has far exceeded my expectations
- Before, I thought that FDK would be wonderful, now I know it is!
- I feel so much more connected to my students and understand their needs so much better.



Teacher Results . . .

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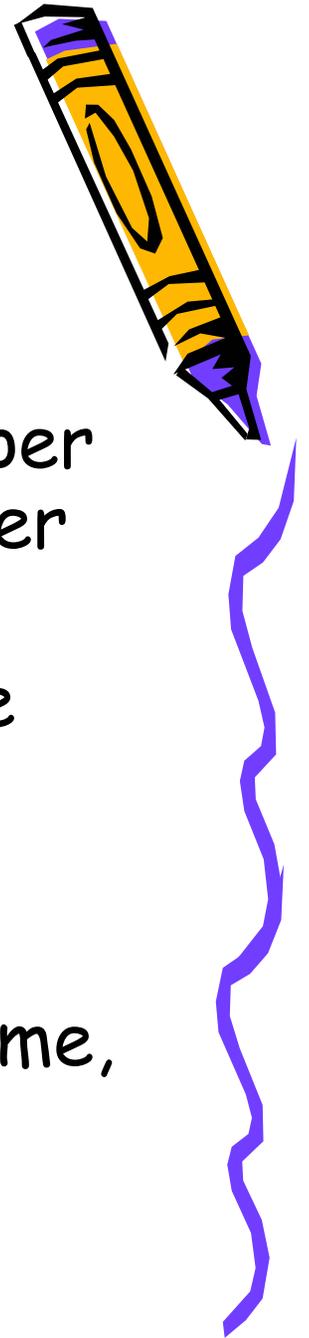
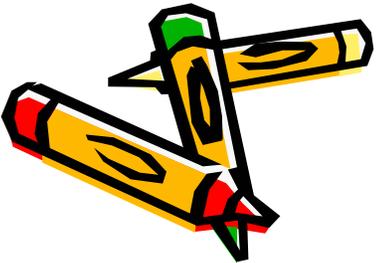
- The cameras were especially valuable in documenting and sharing student work and growth.
- Having a kindergarten assistant has made a tremendous difference.
- I feel so much more a part of the school community.
- The most successful part has been evident in students' writing abilities with more time to engage in the writing process.



Teacher Results . . .

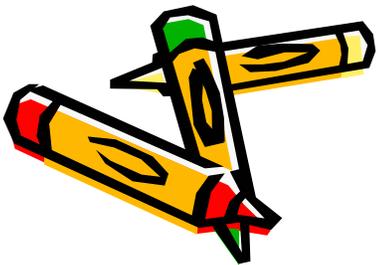
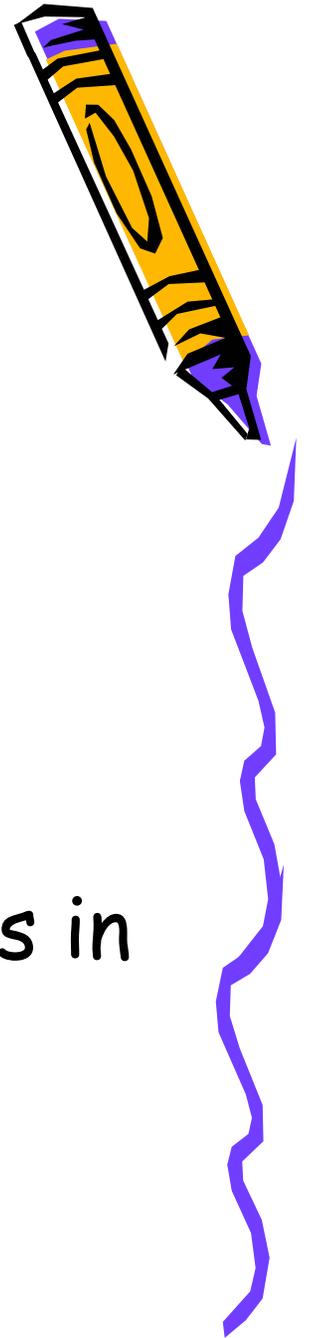
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- I have been able to do Math 4-5 times per week and writer's workshop 3-4 times per week.
- The children had more choice time more consistently. The program is less stressed/rushed, in general.
- I have so much more information that I can share with parents at conference time, as I know the children so much better!



Teacher identified areas for "improvement"

- More hours for Kindergarten assistants
- Nothing at all!
- Preference for "specialists" to be scheduled at the end of the day
- Efforts to minimize winter changes in and out of snowpants and boots

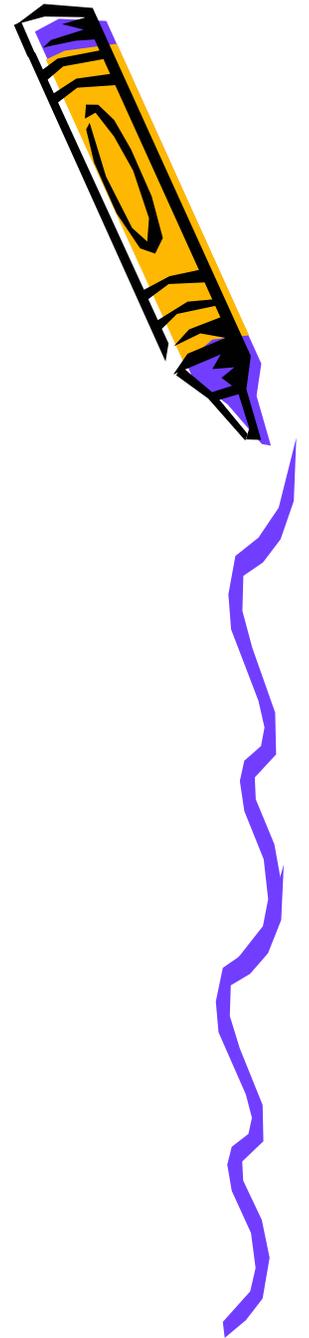
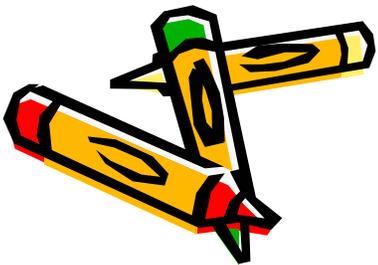


II. Comparative Data

LITERACY SKILLS

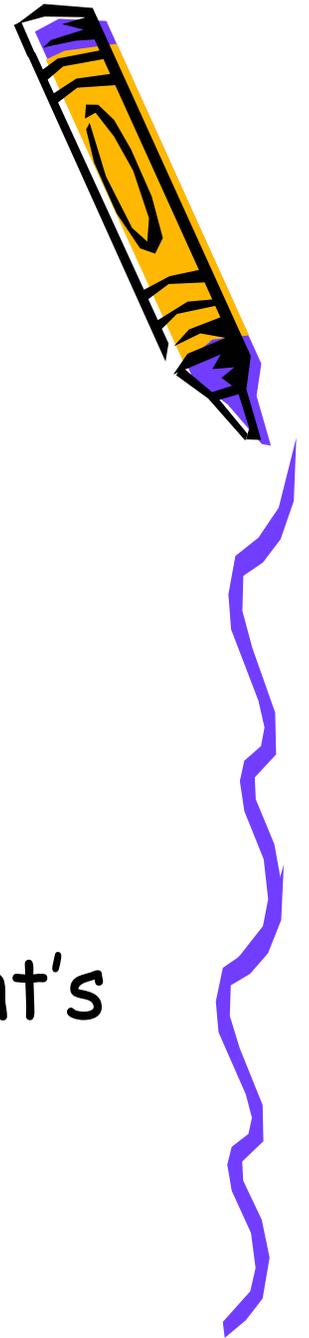
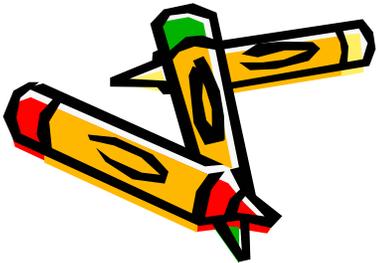
DIBELS

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early
Literacy Skills: DIBELS
- Assessment tool



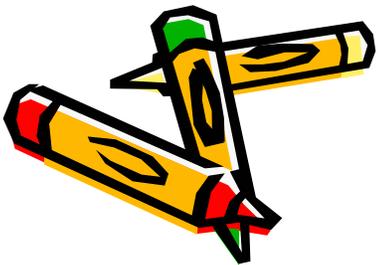
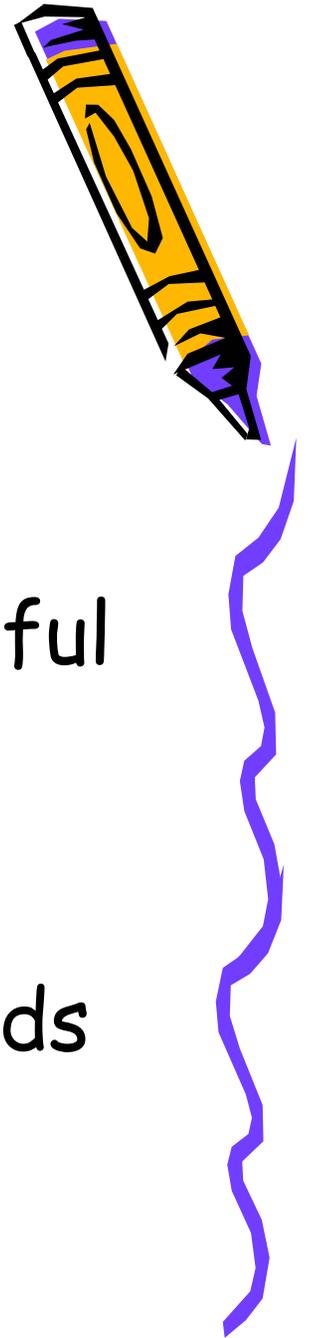
What does this assessment tool provide us with?

- It is Informative in nature
- It helps to inform a teacher's instruction and necessary interventions
- The results provide us with information on an individual student's degree of need and support

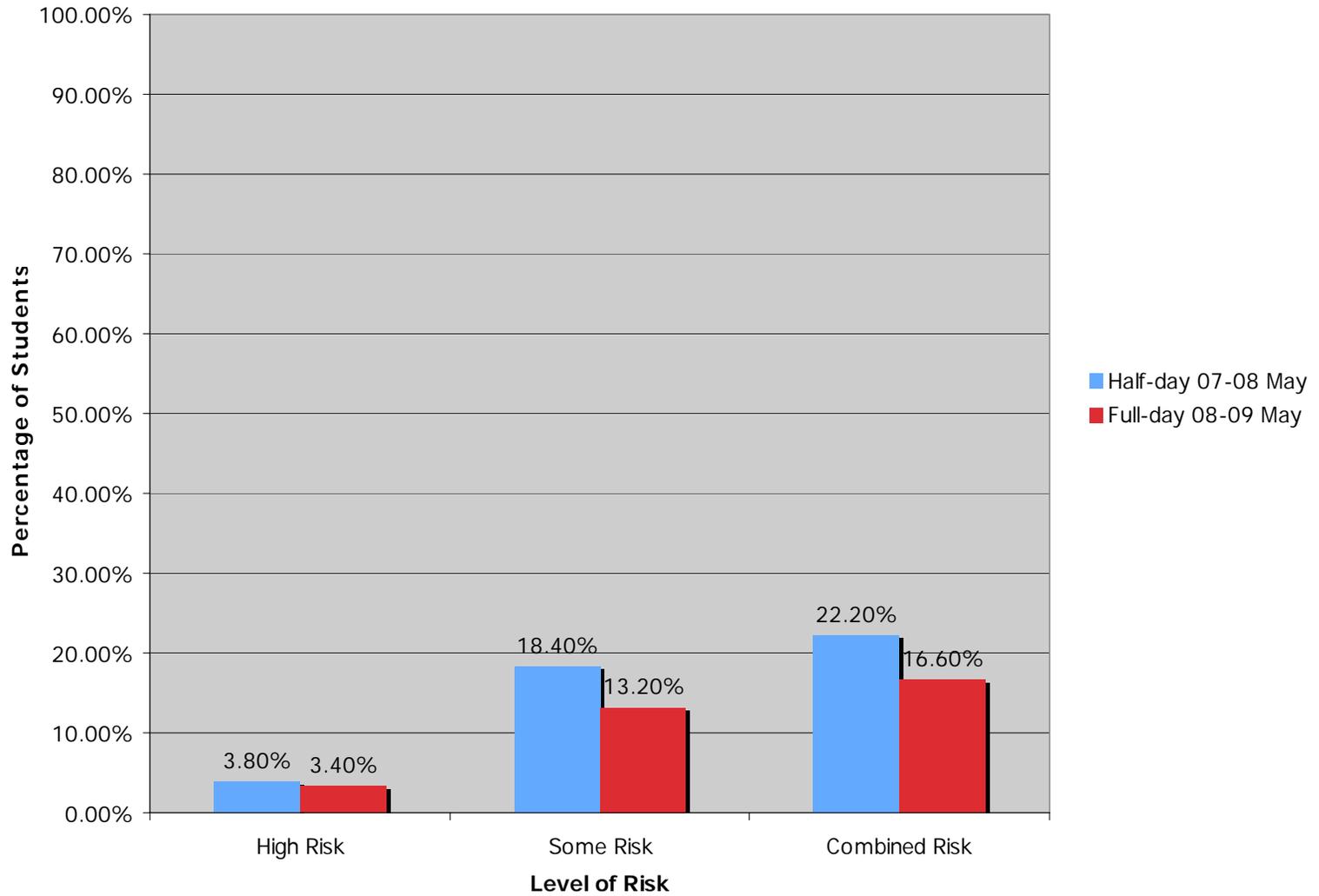


What is Phonemic Awareness?

- The awareness of the sound structure of our language
- One of the foundations of successful reading
- Understanding that the spoken language/words are made up of a sequence of individual speech sounds



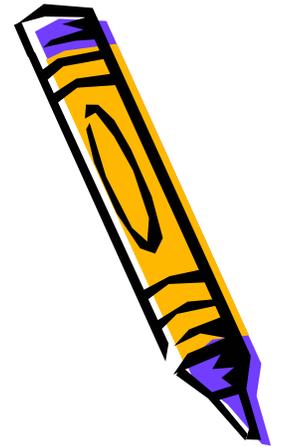
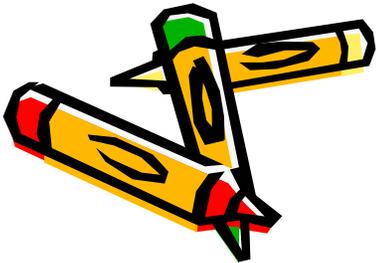
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
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"At-Risk" Half-Day Students vs. "At-Risk" Full-Day Students



N = 345 (HDK 07-08)

N = 377 (FDK 08-09)

*Assuming EQUAL sample sizes,
FDK students experienced a 19%
decrease in the number of
students classified as "at risk"
when compared to last year's
HDK class "end-of-year" results*

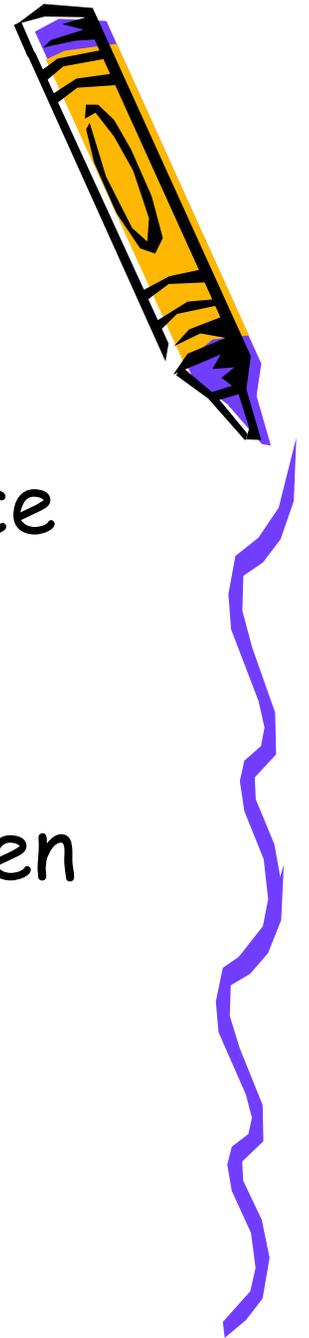
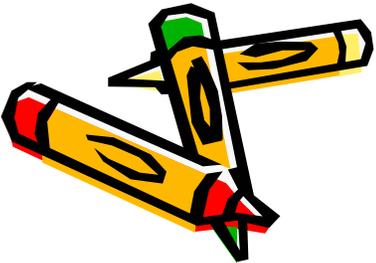


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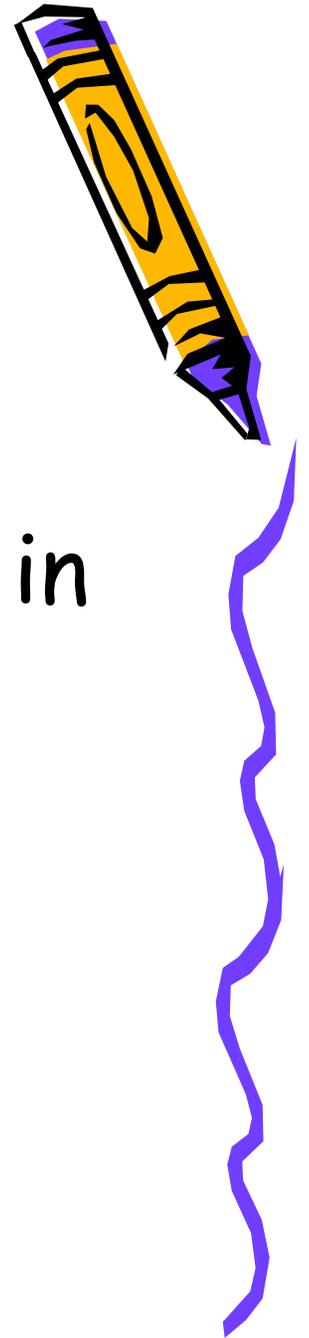
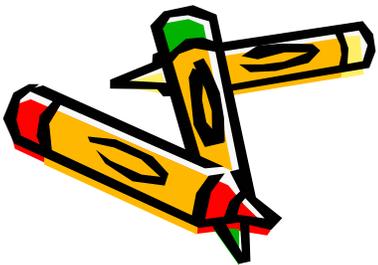
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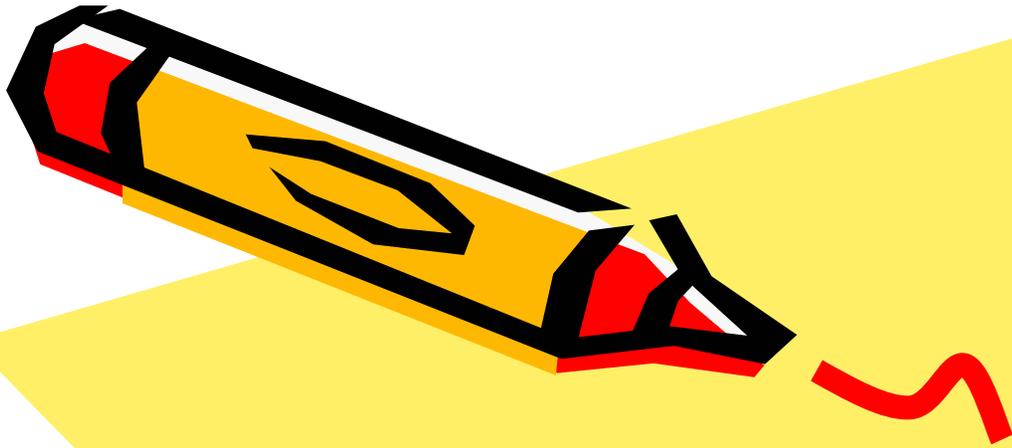
- Superintendent Ash & School Committee
- Jane McLaughlin, Curriculum Office
- All K-5 principals and their administrative assistants
- Kathy McCarthy, Fran Ludwig, Karen Tripoli and ALL K-5 specialists
- **Kindergarten teachers!**



FDK Grant Addendum

- E-mail from the DESE on 6/11/09
- Possibility of a decrease of 9% in FDK grant
- Possible reduction of \$26,820 from the full amount of \$298,000





QUESTIONS?

