



A Community of Learners

Information Memo: Extended Day Kindergarten Year End Report

TO: School Board

FROM: D36 Administrative Team

May 22, 2018

Background

The Extended Day Kindergarten (EDK) program was grounded in the desire to offer sustained time to support deeper learning and growth in all aspects of a child's development. A major component of the Extended Day Kindergarten is the belief in the importance of play for our younger students. The additional time in EDK supports that belief and provides increased opportunities to address the four developmental areas of emotion, socialization, intellect and physical growth.

EDK fosters close relationships with parents, students and colleagues. Students have the opportunity to interact with other classes at lunch and on the playground. Having more time for observation of students and one class load rather than two, the Kindergarten teacher enjoys additional time to observe, instruct, and communicate with both student and parents. In addition, Kindergarten teachers now have the support of a grade level team for planning, discussion, and problem-solving.

Parents were given an option of EDK or Half-Day attendance. At Greeley, three students began the year in the Half-Day Program, and at Hubbard Woods, seven students were enrolled in half-day. Parents were given the opportunity to opt into the EDK program at the end of October and again in February. This option was provided to families who preferred an acclimation period. During the course of the school year, all three students at Greeley opted into EDK. HW continues to provide the half-day experience for 6 students. Curricular extensions continue throughout the day but no new concepts are introduced after half-day students are dismissed.

Greeley began the year with 4 classes of 20 students each. Hubbard Woods began the year with four classrooms, at 20, 20, 19, 19. Attention was given to the gradual introduction of EDK to our students.

EDK At-A-Glance (as of 5/1/18)

School	Number of Students	Number of Sections	Number of Half-day Students	Bus Riders	Extended Play Students
Greeley	82	4	0	39 (24 CI)	22-25
Hubbard Woods	78	4	6	34 (15 CI)	18-22

This Report is organized by the following sections:

- **Teaching and Learning**
 - Curriculum & Instruction
 - Special Education
 - Response to Intervention
 - Extended Play
- **Logistics**
 - Transportation
 - Supervision
 - Scheduling/Related Arts
 - Lunch
 - Start/End Times
- **Calendar Coordination & Communication**

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Curriculum & Instruction

A deeply held belief among staff is that the success of the EDK program is dependent upon the experiences that are crafted for the students. The teachers' commitment to develop a state of the art program that considered the development needs of young

children above all has been the driving force of curricular and pedagogical decisions. At a recent grade level meeting, kindergarten teachers, administrators and other support staff had an opportunity to reflect on the inaugural year to outline successes and next steps. Overwhelmingly, the staff felt that the added value of an extended day and its intended goals (as outlined in the background information) are being fully realized. Two themes emerged from the conversation. First, the impact that EDK had on students, and second, the impact it had on teachers.

The following are highlights on how the EDK has positively impacted students:

- The Units of Study were intentionally designed to be relatable and connected to the everyday lives of the students knowing that growth of knowledge is enhanced by prior knowledge and personal connection. This child-centered design opened up opportunities for students to integrate their own thinking and understanding of the topics.
- The extended time during choice and outdoor play permitted more student-generated ideas to emerge. In turn, teachers had more flexibility to follow the lead of students and expand upon their ideas.
- The increase of sections provided more class-to-class and student-to-student connections.
- The number of “common” experiences among all kindergarten students increased. One example is that the Monarch Migration was established as a part of all classrooms. Also, two common field trips were planned district-wide.
- Students’ ability to navigate social situations has increased. Teachers have more time to attend to both individual and group social emotional needs, modeling appropriate strategies. Teachers reported an increased use of interpersonal social strategies among the children.
- Parent feedback also supports the notion that children have benefitted both emotionally and cognitively from EDK.

The following are highlights on how the EDK program positively impacted teachers:

- The kindergarten team was strengthened in size and proximity. The team doubled in size from 4 to 8 and there are now 4 teachers per building (versus 1 or 2 per building). The kindergarten team was also broadened with an increase of support services teachers.
- The kindergarten team was appreciative of all the materials and resources that were funded by the district and that having them enhanced their ability to bring rich experiences to students.

- The amount of collaboration time among the team increased with the EDK program. In addition to the established grade level release days, the entire team met approximately twice a month during the early-release time on Monday afternoons. Internally, each building team met once or twice a week.
- Teachers noted the following were positive outcomes of the additional collaboration:
 - Common Units of Study were reviewed and further developed
 - Increased reflection of teaching practices with a focus on the essential elements of a play-based curriculum
 - Problem-solving conversations regarding both student and programmatic needs
 - Development of collegial relationships both personally and professionally

Recommendations for 2018-2019

- Maintain the same level of collaboration among the building teams and the district team.
- Establish periodic meetings with the first grade team to enhance the bridge between the grade levels.
- In keeping with the importance of play and its integral role in all aspects of development, the team will gather resources and research regarding the developmental stages of play. The goal is to establish a district play continuum that will provide guidance of a student's development to both teachers and parents.
- Review current assessments and the established progress report used by teachers.
- Gather materials and resources regarding self-regulation. This would include information about the biological aspects of self-regulation, effective strategies for classroom interventions and any possible equipment options.
- Establish more common parent communications that explore important ideas in the emotional, social, cognitive and physical development of young children.
- Increase the collaboration with math, literacy and science facilitators.

Special Education

The District employed one full time special education teacher to support all of the Kindergarten students. This included kindergarten students who entered the District with an IEP from their Early Childhood special education classrooms. The special education teacher provided direct service to these students and also supported the general education teachers through consultation and by modifying the curriculum when warranted. The special education teacher:

- Provided push in and pull out special education services to identified students (by the end of the year, this included students in all but one kindergarten classroom).
- Consulted with NSSED staff (OT, PT, and NSSED consultants) to help design cohesive programs for identified special education students.
- Consulted with general education kindergarten teachers in the problem solving process for students who were experiencing learning and/or behavioral challenges.
- Provided consultation and training for associates assigned to special education students and programs.
- Supported entire kindergarten teams in both buildings with designing and implementing a district/grade wide phonemic awareness and letter identification screener to help identify students who may benefit from RTI support in this area.

The District also employed a 0.5 FTE speech pathologist for Greeley school for provision of services to PreK and Kindergarten aged students at Greeley. The speech pathologist was in the building three days per week. The District contracted 0.4 FTE speech pathologist from NSSED to provide services to PreK and Kindergarten students at Hubbard Woods. This speech pathologist was in the building two days per week.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- Realign the FTE for special education teachers at Hubbard Woods and Greeley. Instead of having one special education teacher for kindergarten needs across two buildings, we have provided 4.0 FTE total special education teachers at each building who will cover all grade levels, inclusive of kindergarten.
- This will provide more continuity of services as the special education teacher covering kindergarten is dedicated to the school building.

- This will also provide greater opportunity for collaboration with kindergarten teachers within the school building.
- The District has employed one speech pathologist full time to provide services to PreK and some kindergarten students at both Greeley and Hubbard Woods. The existing full time speech pathologist in GR and HW will assist with provision of services to identified Kindergarten students and will also participate in enrichment activities for phonemic awareness in all kindergarten classrooms.
 - Having one District employed speech pathologist full time will increase continuity of services and flexibility of service delivery as opposed to having two individuals working on a part time basis.
 - Utilizing more than one speech pathologist in each building to support Kindergarten students will increase cohesiveness of service delivery and balance the speech and language needs of the students more effectively within each building.

Response to Intervention

As indicated above, the special education teacher and kindergarten teachers worked to established a screening tool for phonemic awareness and letter identification. Kindergarten teachers, associates and speech pathologists have previously been involved with delivery of extra supports for early literacy skills. The District has curriculum that supports phonemic awareness, and enrichment opportunities have been included as a part of the extended day kindergarten program.

In January, the Kindergarten teachers, with the support of the Math Interventionists and Math Facilitators, screened all Kindergarten students using the NFA (Number Fluency Assessment). Using benchmarks agreed upon by the Math Committee Task Force on K-2 Math Intervention, staff identified the students who were not demonstrating early numeracy at those benchmarks. For early numeracy the NFA looks at counting (number line, patterns, sequencing), numeration (place value), adding and subtracting.

Math interventionists, for the first time, offered intervention later in the school year for a 6 week period for early numeracy skills. Students were afforded an extra opportunity for re-teaching/applying early numeracy skills. Highlights from the math interventionists are included below.

This year, outcomes from school based data meetings indicated that many students who need support in early numeracy also need support in phonemic awareness, and

some of these students were already receiving speech therapy. This presented an opportunity for the school teams to determine how best to intervene, such that students are not doubled up and receiving two interventions at the same time. A 6-week intervention approach was adopted where students first received either early numeracy intervention or phonemic awareness intervention followed by a 6 week intervention in the other area (3 times a week for 15 minutes). Currently, the interventionists are in the second cycle of this approach and continue to collect data regarding the effectiveness of this approach.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- We are in the process of collecting information through a survey regarding when it may be most appropriate to offer intervention for kindergarten students.
 - Intervening later in the school year may be best, as this offers students opportunity to develop further prior to determining whether intervention may be warranted.
 - A six week interval as outlined above will continue to be implemented for early literacy and early numeracy support.
 - Teachers, associates, interventionists and speech pathologists will help with delivery of any intervention deemed appropriate.

Extended Play

The Extended Play opportunity is a supervised play time at the school for the one hour time period following the Extended Day Kindergarten dismissal at 2:10 p.m. and the regular end of the school day at 3:15 p.m. (2:45 p.m. on Mondays). This is a fee-based program selected by parents at the time of registration. Supervision is provided by the Kindergarten Associates with a staff to student ratio of 1 to 14.

At Greeley, the enrollment has varied between 22-25 students (27-30%). Some students attend every day while many attend on a variety of schedules. Activities provided for the students include board games, Legos, puzzles, arts and crafts, etc.. Outside play is available, weather permitting. At Greeley, the Extended Play option is housed in the Kindergarten lunch room.

Extended Play at Hubbard Woods services an average of 22 students (28%), dependent on the day. Extended Play takes place in the Kindergarten classrooms, and the students are able to access the resources found in those rooms, including books, blocks, games, arts & crafts, as well as outdoor play.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- Establish a small budget to purchase games, equipment, and art & craft supplies throughout the year.

LOGISTICS

Transportation

The District experienced transportation issues upon the start of the Extended Day Kindergarten program. This was primarily due to some logistical issues encountered during the first few weeks of the school year. The Administration worked with North Shore Transit to look at what was causing the issues, and determined that they were primarily related to the transfer of students from our kindergarten classes at Greeley and Hubbard Woods to busses at Crow Island. We determined that it was best to make adjustments to this process by eliminating the transfer of students, and adding a route to accommodate these students. We found that this did eliminate the issues that we were seeing.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

For the 2018-19 school year

- Partner with North Shore Transit to provide our District with more dry runs of our routes, to ensure that their drivers are familiar with the individual stops and route timing.
- Institute a “bus freeze”, where no changes to a student’s designated drop-off & pick-up plan will be accommodated during the weeks leading up to, and including the first two weeks of school. This will enable the drivers to familiarize themselves with their routes prior to instituting any changes, or adding any new students. The Administration believes that this will allow for a smoother start to the transportation of students at the beginning of the school year.
- Coordinate deployment of staff on routes that we find running inefficiently, and provide input to the Business Office on issues that need to be addressed. The Business Office will ensure these issues are communicated to North Shore Transit so that we can ensure a smooth start to the school year for our kindergarten families.
- We have added internal tracking in the Business Office so that the District now has the ability to see where busses are, and can communicate more quickly with schools and parents as to the status of our busses.

- District 36 is investigating a GPS system for kindergarten busses which would enable parents to track the location of the bus during the route. This would assist parents to determine pick-up and drop-off times more accurately on any particular day.

Supervision

A full-time Associate is assigned to each Kindergarten classroom. The Associates provide supervision before school, beginning at 8:20 a.m. They meet the buses and cars, and they supervise the playground. They provide supervision during lunch/recess, and at the end of the day for the Extended Play Program. When not directly supervising students, Associates supplement the activities in the classroom, working in conjunction with the teacher in direct assistance to students. They are responsible for the multiple dismissal options at the end of the day.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- No changes needed

Scheduling/Related Arts

The daily schedule for Extended Day Kindergartners includes:

- two 60 minute periods for Choice Time/Project Time
- two 30-45 minute periods for Outdoor/Nature Play
- two whole class activities
- one game time period with teacher direction
- one quiet time period (after lunch)

Children also participate in 4 Related Arts classes per week:

- 30 minutes per week for KW, Music,
- 45 minutes for Art and Resource Center

The Related Arts classes were phased in at the beginning of the year; as the children settled in and became comfortable with the classroom schedule, the teachers added a related arts class each week as planned with the staff until the full schedule was in effect.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- No changes needed

Lunch

Lunch at school is a great added benefit for students enrolled in the Extended Day Kindergarten program. The students enjoy this special time, and they have become very independent since school began. A limited number of students (1-4) continue to go home for lunch. While most students bring lunch from home, they may access the school lunch programs offered by the PTOs at both schools. Milk/juice are also provided if parents choose to participate.

During the months of September and October, teachers joined their students during lunch to support their needs and to develop the lunchroom procedures. As the transition to lunch at school became routine, typically--teachers moved out of the lunchtime hour and the Associates continued to supervise. Parent volunteers are also utilized. Lunch takes place in the classrooms at Hubbard Woods, and the staff has created a delightful Cafe style experience for their students. Greeley uses a separate room for lunch, with two classes eating at a time. They follow a rotating schedule to ensure that students have an opportunity to experience lunch with each section.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- Teachers will determine the amount of time needed to acclimate students to the lunch procedure and will work with the Associates for a timely transition.
- Continue parent volunteer support.
- Continue to pursue additional staffing for lunchtime supervision (ex. Partnering with Park District)

Start/End Times

The Kindergarten day begins at 8:45 a.m. Associates meet the students arriving on buses, as well as those arriving via car in the drop-off lane. Supervised play is available on the playground from 8:20 a.m. until students enter the building. The morning session ends at 11:25 a.m. at which time those students who attend for the half-day program are escorted out for pickup by parent/guardians. There is no bus service at mid-day.

Students enjoy a 30 minutes lunch period with a 30 minute recess. This time is supervised by the Kindergarten Associates.

The afternoon session begins at 12:25 p.m. and ends at 2:10 p.m. Students are escorted to the buses, the drop-off lane for pick-up, and/or Extended Play. Extended Play, supervised by the Associates, continues until the end of the regular school day at 3:15 p.m. Students in Extended Play are then escorted to the buses or to the drop-off area for pick-up.

Recommendation for 2018-2019:

- No changes needed

CALENDAR COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

A critical component to the success of Extended Day Kindergarten at Hubbard Woods and Greeley was the alignment of the school calendar to coordinate activities between both schools and Crow Island. Staff and the PTOs at each school worked to avoid potential conflicts and to ensure the kindergarten experience was similar for all students.

The District Kindergarten Parent Committee served as a planning and oversight group for this purpose. This committee, facilitated by Dr. Kocanda, included PTO presidents, kindergarten parents from each school, and district personnel. The committee organized a Kindergarten Open House in May, 2017, welcoming events before the beginning of the year and provided t-shirts for all kindergarten students. A district-wide phone directory was organized for parents.

In addition to the efforts of the Kindergarten Committee, the principals and PTOs coordinated informational packets which included beginning of the year routines, calendars, traffic flow, maps, and other pertinent details. These were sent home before the start of the school year. Principals hosted parent information sessions, school tours, and the Alliance for Early Childhood information session held in the spring.

The Kindergarten teachers met regularly to ensure the consistency of curricular alignment and communication to parents. Currently, meetings have been scheduled in June with first grade teachers to provide information concerning transition and student information.

An open-ended response form was shared with parents at the spring conference. Feedback was very positive. Several parents commented that they are seeing more

cognitive and emotional growth in their current kindergarteners as compared to older children who were in the previous half-day program. Growth in confidence, curiosity, and independence in their student (s) was also noted.

Parents also appreciated the integration of common themes at both schools, integrating Crow Island traditions as well as Greeley and Hubbard Wood activities. Several commented on the positive impact of lunch at school. One parent commented that the program has run “beyond smoothly”, and one would not have known it was a first year program. All reported great satisfaction with the kindergarten staff. A first-time family noted, “EDK is a necessary and important change in the WPS curriculum.”

Recommendations for 2018-2019

- Plan an August (before school) welcome for Kindergartners and their parents at each school
- Continue the Kindergarten Parent Committee; invite parents of 2018-2019 students
- Send August informational packet to parents with logistics and dates
- Continue to coordinate school events and monitor calendars to avoid conflicts of scheduled events between schools

SUMMARY COMMENTS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN STAFF

The Extended Day Kindergarten program has allowed for more integration of all aspects of curricula in deeper and more meaningful ways. The increased use of play time has provided opportunities to engage in math concepts, language development, and social thinking. Students are presenting themselves as more sophisticated listeners and learners, and there is more time for conversation and problem-solving. Having more time to play has fostered the development of executive functioning skills children need for academic success.

WHAT DO KINDERGARTENERS THINK?

Our kindergarteners also had plenty to say about the Extended Day Kindergarten program. When asked, students were eager to have their voices heard!

“What do you like best about Kindergarten?”

- Everything!

- Really long choice time
- Recess
- Friends
- Learning how to read
- Art, music, gym, and the library
- Getting to learn about birds, fish, and trains
- My teachers
- My teachers know how to teach
- Meeting new friends

If we could make it better, what could we do?

- Let us come on weekends
- Stay longer
- Have more sand
- Have more recess

And the best comment?

“Whenever I need help, someone is always right next to me.”