

MEMORANDUM



To: Karen Berasi, Superintendent of Schools
From: Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Re: Full Day Kindergarten Implementation Update
Date: March 5, 2018

This memo is to provide an update on previous BoE inquiries regarding the effectiveness of Suffield's Full Day Kindergarten program. Background, implementation outcomes, and next steps regarding Full Day Kindergarten implementation are summarized below. Additionally, AWS Kindergarten faculty, Dr. Pangallo, and Erin Grasso, our K-5 ELA/SS Curriculum Leader, will be prepared to answer questions regarding implementation of Full Day Kindergarten.

Background:

Full Day Kindergarten was implemented at AWS during the 2013-2014 school year. Prior to implementation there was a comprehensive review of benefits and costs associated with Full Day Kindergarten. Additionally, support staff has consistently been assigned to Kindergarten to assist with both academic and social-emotional support. The chart below summarizes enrollment, class size and total absences since implementation.

School Year	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Total Enrollment	133	144	140	129	121
Average Class Size	19.0	17.6	20.0	18.4	20.2
Total Number of Absences	1605	1157	1365	1019	618 Year to Date
% of Students meeting end of year expectations on reading benchmark (Level C)	89%	95%	93%	90%	N/A
% of Students meeting end of year expectations on reading benchmark (Level D)	85%	84%	84%	79%	N/A (STAR Early Literacy Winter 81% At/Above)

Outcomes:

- Reading Levels - Kindergarten teachers report that the average reading level has increased from a C to a D because of Full Day K. This is correlated with additional amount of time for daily reading instruction going from 60 minutes for half-day Kindergarten to 120 minutes for full-day Kindergarten.
- Attendance - Kindergarten attendance has been inconsistent in the past few years, however, increased student attendance was reported last year .
- Qualitative feedback from teachers - In preparing this report I spoke with several teachers on the effectiveness of Full Day Kindergarten. In short, all teachers I spoke with reported on the importance of having Full Day K to meet the expectations articulated in Connecticut's Core Standards for Kindergarten.

Next Steps:

The first cohort of Full Day K is this year's fourth grade class. We will continue to watch the performance data of the current fourth grade cohort and subsequent Full Day K cohort classes as well as stay current on new research that reviews the effectiveness of Full Day K in the era of the new Core Standards. According to the research at the time of Full Day K adoption, we should begin to see increases in student performance over time because of the increased preparedness during Kindergarten (see examples below).

Sample Research

Publication: *The Common Core State Standards: Caution and Opportunity for Early Childhood Education*. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Washington, DC: 2012.

Key Points:

The NAEYC report defines how half-day Kindergarten is a mismatch with Common Core. Specifically, the report describes how in half-day programs, teachers often have to resort to whole-class direct teaching instead of using the instructional strategies that match how young children learn best. Finally, the report discusses how full day programs are in a much better position to meet the expectations of the recently adopted Core Standards.

Publication: *The Kindergarten Child: What Teachers and Administrators Need to Know to Promote Academic Success in all Children*, by Ray, Katherine and Smith, Maureen. *Early Childhood Education Journal*. Jun2010, Vol. 38 Issue 1, p5-18. 14p.

Key Points:

This article describes kindergarten from the perspective of the whole child. This article then reviews research describing three major influences on children's kindergarten adaptation and success (i.e., transition, parental involvement, retention). The article concludes with a discussion of full-day kindergarten programs and their potential for improving the chances of all kindergarten children, especially low-income and ethnic minority children, for success in school.