

# Every Student, Every Day – A Success

## *Superintendent's Initiative: Ready for School*

### **Full-Day and Extended-Day Kindergarten Programs**

The goal of full-day and extended-day kindergarten programs is to increase quality learning time for young students. Extended-day and full-day kindergarten programs lengthen the time that students attend school, in comparison to the traditional half-day or all-day-every-other-day kindergarten models. Schools extend time in various ways:

- Extend learning time by a desired increment each day for identified students attending a half-day program.
- Extend learning time by increasing days for identified students attending an all-day-every-other-day model.
- Extend the school day for all or some kindergarten students to a length consistent with other primary grades.

### **Funding Full-Day and Extended-Day Kindergarten Programs With Title I**

Closing the achievement gap, targeting resources where needs are greatest, and increasing the amount and quality of instructional time are some of the stated purposes of Title I-A. The use of Title I-A funds must be purposeful and focused on the needs of students at academic risk. Districts pursuing full-day or extended-day kindergarten programs may want to study and prioritize their use of existing state and federal funds. Please be advised that federal funds are to be used to supplement not supplant state funding. Programs required by state law or by district mandate usually do not qualify to be funded fully or in part with federal funds.

The following NCLB federal Title program funds are also options to be considered by districts and schools that are studying the possibility of implementing full-day or extended-day kindergarten.

#### **Title VI-B – Small and Rural Schools Achievement Initiative (SRSA)**

These funds are allocated directly to qualifying schools from the USDE and can be used to support any activity that is authorized by other Title programs. Since Title I-A and Title V both promote extended learning strategies, Title VI-B funds may be used to support full-day or extended-day kindergarten programs.

#### **Title VI B – Rural and Low Income Schools Initiative (RLIS)**

These funds can support activities authorized by Title I-A and may be used to support full-day or extended-day kindergarten programs. Eight districts qualified for RLIS funds in 2003-04.

#### **REAP-Flex Authority**

Under NCLB, small and rural school districts that qualify for SRSA funds also have REAP-Flex authority to use their allocations for Title II-A, II-D, IV-A, V, and VI-B to support any activity authorized by any of the Title programs. Consequently, SRSA districts can also use these “flexed” funds to support full-day or extended-day kindergarten programs.

### **Title I-A – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged**

Title I-A is the largest federal fund allocated to districts to “improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged”, and has always promoted extended learning opportunities for students. There are requirements and regulations for the use of Title I-A funds that are specific to the type of Title I-A programs offered in a school or district. These requirements, which are specific to Targeted Assistance Programs (TAS) and School-wide Programs (SWP), are outlined below.

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### **Title I-A Program Options**

A decision to support extended-day or full-day kindergarten with Title I-A funds could be made at the district level with set-asides of Title I-A, or by individual schools with allocated Title I-A funds from the district. Districts that received increased allocations from the USDE, as a result of updated census data, have an advantage when opting to extend kindergarten programs because there would be little or no impact on existing Title I-A programs.

Another option for districts is to reduce the number and/or grade span of schools being served with Title I-A funds and shift the funds to help support an extended kindergarten program in the remaining schools served by Title I-A. For example, a district could decide not to fund secondary schools in order to provide funds to support full-day or extended-day kindergarten in elementary schools served by Title I-A.

Districts allocate Title I-A funds to high poverty schools. Those schools operate either a Targeted Assistance Program or a School-wide Program. Guidance for extending kindergarten with Title I-A funds is specific to the service delivery model that exists in each school. Title I-A funds may **not** be used to extend kindergarten in non-Title I-A funded schools.

### **Targeted Assistance Programs**

In a Targeted Assistance Program a local education agency may use Title I-A funds “only for programs that provide services to eligible children identified as having the greatest need for special assistance.” Therefore, the primary focus of an extended-day kindergarten in a Targeted Assistance Program would be a subset of the kindergarten population that is most at risk of failing to meet state standards.

Targeted Assistance Schools are encouraged to evaluate their current use of Title I-A funds and consider an extended-day kindergarten strategy as a way to provide a focused academic intervention for targeted students outside the regular kindergarten instructional day, but within the regular elementary school day.

With a targeted approach, more kindergarten time is not the goal. More specialized instructional time to address unique student learning needs is the goal. Within the additional time, students could be provided reading and math skills development.

In identifying students with the greatest academic needs, it is possible to determine that the funding focus should be on an entire grade level if that identification of needs is based on data from a thorough needs assessment. For example, if a school conducts a needs assessment and determines that the learning readiness of entering first graders is a significant concern, then the grade level of kindergarten could be “targeted” as part of the Title I-A targeting process. Specific criteria can then be determined for identifying students for services that are specific to each student. This would allow the use of Title I-A funds to support extended-day for all kindergarten students, as a strategy to support the needs of the grade level targeted for assistance.

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The list of served Title I-A students, which the school keeps on file, would indicate the grade level of kindergarten, plus any identified students needing support in other grades.

Targeted Assistance schools, with a percent of poverty greater than 40%, are encouraged to engage in the Title I-A School-wide planning process to become a School-wide Program. This requires a year of comprehensive planning that ensures a well-articulated program and eliminates the need to follow the specific targeting guidelines of a Targeted Assistance School.

### **School-wide Programs**

In a Title I-A School-wide Program, the local education agency has the fiscal authority to co-mingle funds to support the identified goals and strategies of each school's school-wide plan. A major focus of the School-wide Program is to upgrade and improve the entire educational program of the school, and particularly, the instruction in the regular classrooms where disadvantaged students spend most of their day.

If a school leadership team identifies kindergarten readiness as a need, and determines that a focused kindergarten intervention is the key strategy to improve the regular education program, then Title I-A funds could be part of the overall funding for extending the kindergarten program to a full day. In a School-wide Program, Title I-A could fund an extended-day kindergarten program for all students; if that is what the local school and district planning team determines is the priority and the key strategy for improving achievement.

A decision to extend the kindergarten program, using Title I-A funds in a School-wide Program, should be made as part of thoughtful planning and should be based on local data. New or initial Title I-A School-wide Plans are to be developed through a defined yearlong planning process that is outlined in NCLB. This process provides the district and school with the opportunity to study the research and explore the strategy of implementing full-day kindergarten.

Existing School-wide Plans are reviewed, evaluated, and revised annually. A program change which requires the reallocation of a school's existing Title I-A funds to support an extended-day kindergarten program will need to be studied carefully. A shift of funding of this magnitude requires changes in staffing, facilities use, schedules, and instruction in the grade levels currently served with Title I-A funds.

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### Considerations to Include in Planning

#### Program Design

The research is clear that extended time needs to be *quality* time in order to impact student achievement. Articulated curriculum, schedules, and instructional approaches will make effective use of any additional time.

- **Curriculum.** Decisions about curriculum and curriculum models should be based on the goals of the existing district kindergarten programs and any additional goals identified for an extended-day or full-day program.
- **Scheduling.** Frequently the reason for implementing a full-day kindergarten is to provide more in-depth instruction in content areas, most commonly language development, literacy, and math. Another reason is to allow time for a broadened curriculum, incorporating other content areas such as science, social science, and the arts, all of which can further support language development, literacy, and math learning goals. The longer day allows the teacher to plan more intentionally for teaching children social skills such as problem solving and group process. In addition, other specialists within the school may be available to the kindergarten class.
- **Guidelines for Student Participation.** If an extended-day program is designed exclusively for a selected group of students identified as being in the greatest need, as in Targeted Assistance schools, it will be important to define to the community the student selection and participation criteria. All parents of kindergarten students will need to understand the philosophy of the extended-day program and why it is not available for all students. In addition it will be important to clarify that the district's current attendance policy for kindergarten will be consistent with the policy for the rest of the school.

#### Staff Considerations

- **Staffing.** Changing the focus of current Title I-A programs to extended-day or full-day kindergarten may require additional teacher training, reassignments, and additional staffing.
- **Staff Development.** Kindergarten teachers may need support in transitioning to an extended-day or a full-day program. Planning time, scheduling, grouping, use of instructional assistants or volunteers, and time for specialists are all examples of program elements that will significantly change when implementing a new program. Offering professional development and opportunities to visit existing programs might be considerations in supporting the kindergarten staff.
- **Time to Plan.** A change in program design to use Title I-A funding for extending kindergarten would warrant a significant amount of time to study, plan, and implement changes with stakeholder input.
- **Communication.** The purpose of exploring full-day kindergarten may need to be addressed to the general public. The expected outcomes may need to be clarified. Parents, who hear about the initiative and live in school attendance areas served by Title I-A, may assume that the school will offer the program. Communication about school

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and district needs assessments, data, and planning will help the community understand the scope of the issues and the decisions made at the local level.

- **Parent Involvement.** Parent involvement continues to be a cornerstone of Title I-A programs. Schools are encouraged to engage parents in program and service delivery planning. Parents will need to be involved in the planning of full day or extended-day kindergarten, especially if it involves a significant change in the services the school currently provides.

### **Facilities Considerations**

- **Space.** Adding full-day kindergarten for all students may increase the number of classrooms needed for the program. Providing extended-day kindergarten may also require additional instructional space.
- **Transportation.** Schools will need to address transportation requirements. A full-day kindergarten program may allow use of the existing elementary bus schedules to transport students. An extended-day program for a targeted group of students might involve an additional bus run or a commitment from parents for transportation.
- **Food Services.** Full-day or extended-day kindergarten students will need to be included in the scheduling for the school lunch program.

### **Program Evaluation**

A program model with clearly stated desired outcomes assures program focus and direction. The determination of elements to measure may include such things as:

- Student performance (test scores, work samples, readiness benchmarks)
- Student behavior (socialization skills, attendance)
- Program impact (referrals to special education and other support programs)

The impact of a full-day or extended-day kindergarten program on statewide assessment results will not be apparent for several years. Schools and districts may want to take this into consideration and review data, plan strategically, and apply research to any funding and program decisions as a way to balance long-range and short-term goals and strategies.

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### Resources

#### Overview

*Full Day Kindergarten: Exploring an Option for Extended Learning.* Jennifer Railsback and Cori Brewster. Northwest Region Educational Laboratory, December 2002.

<http://www.nwrel.org/nwreport/jan03/kind>

This booklet is an introduction for those wanting to learn more about full-day kindergarten. It summarizes the major issues surrounding the full-day kindergarten program. It lists the benefits reported by students, parents, and teachers. Included are the characteristics of effective kindergarten programs, tips for successfully implementing the program, and considerations for parents and policymakers. The book profiles four Pacific Northwest programs, describing the design and what teachers have learned about successful implementation. It also presents a sampling of recent research, a list of resources, a sampling of kindergarten literacy and school readiness resources; and a list of the references used to develop the booklet.

#### Planning and Schedules

Information about sample full-day kindergarten schedules is available at the links listed below.

- <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/2221/fdk.html>  
Two versions of a seven-hour schedule with links to sample descriptions of the listed activities, benefits, and/or challenges.
- [http://users.stargate.net/~cokids/Classroom\\_Schedules.html](http://users.stargate.net/~cokids/Classroom_Schedules.html)  
Two teachers provide samples of their seven-hour schedules.
- <http://www.brownsburg.k12.in.us/LRTFR2002/Full-day.pdf>  
A sample report of a study done by an Indiana school considering full-day kindergarten.

