

PRAIRIE GROVE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 46

3223 IL Route 176, Crystal Lake IL 60014-2199
Phone 815.459.3023 Fax 815.356.0519 www.dist46.org

To: Dr. John Bute, Superintendent and the Board of Education

From: Angela Anderson, Director of Student Services

Date: September 30, 2025

RE: Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

For the 2025-2026 school year, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program comprises 3.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers, two of whom hold English Language Learner (ELL) endorsements. The team is supported by 5.0 FTE paraprofessionals and two paraprofessionals who share a 1.0 FTE position. Additional support includes a 1.0 FTE Speech-Language Pathologist, a 1.0 FTE Social Worker (shared with the Elementary school), a part-time Occupational Therapist, a part-time Physical Therapist, and a School Psychologist (shared with the Junior High). Currently, a 0.67 FTE position is open for an ECE-designated School Psychologist to assist with screenings and evaluations. A breakdown for the 2025-2026 school year is below.

	PGTA	PGESP	Non-Union Contractors	Totals
Dedicated to ECE	4	6	0	10.0
Shared w/ JH &/or Elementary	2	0	2.4 (.8 OT, .6 PT)	4.4
Open Positions	.67		0	.67

Most recent Child Count:

There are currently 19 students in the AM program and 40 students in the PM program. Of these students, one is served 100% in the self-contained special education classroom. Three more students are being evaluated for special education eligibility, who are anticipated to join our program or receive itinerant services before the end of October.

ECE
59

Number of Screenings Conducted:

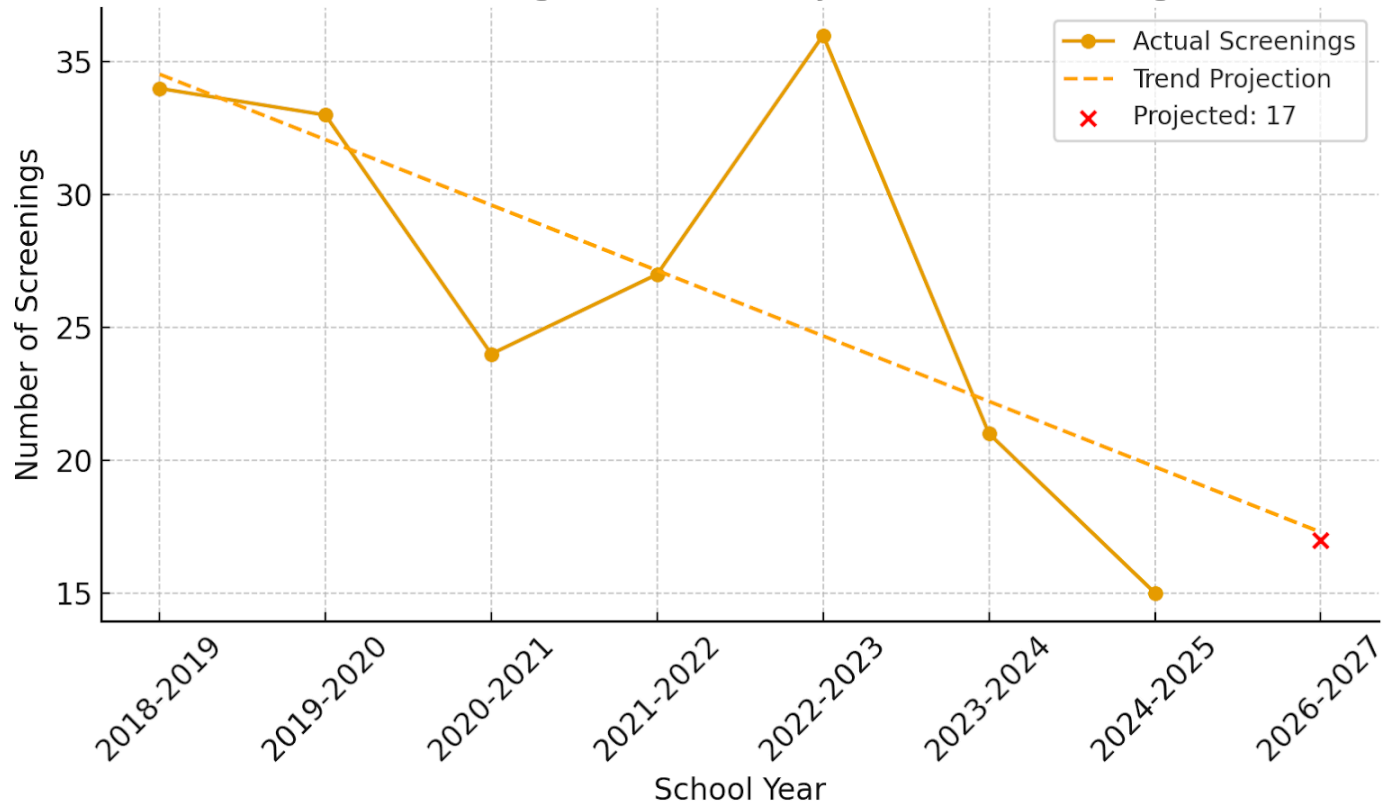
Projected 2026-2027	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
17	4 - as of 9/8/25	15	21	36	27	24	33	34



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ECE/Preschool Screenings Trend & Projection (Excluding 2025-2026)



Number of Students Served in ECE/Preschool:

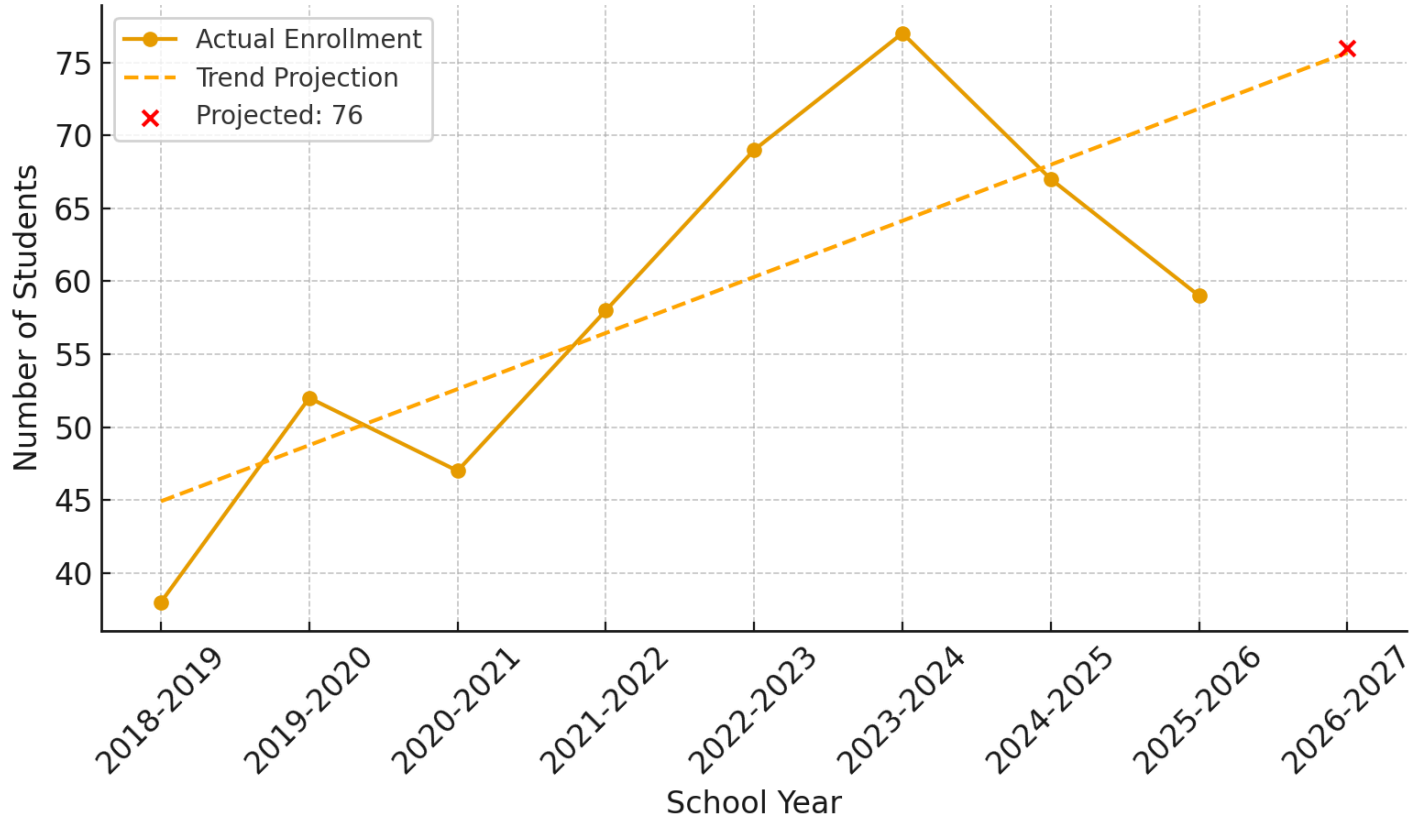
Projected 2026-2027	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
76	59 started 8/25	67	77	69	58	47	52	38



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ECE/Preschool Enrollment Trend & Projection



In 2024-2025, out of the 15 children screened/re-screened, we are serving one student with itinerant speech services, and 12 are current ECE (10) or Kindergarten (2) students. One child moved to D47, and one student did not receive services or attend.

STAFFING COST 2025-2026

Teacher salaries contract cost: \$161,919

Teacher staffing cost with benefits: \$226,874.34

Teacher plus Paraprofessional contract cost: \$316,344.43

Teacher plus Paraprofessional staffing cost with benefits: \$447,238.89

Tuition income: We currently have 36 tuition students being charged \$230/month for 9 months (\$74,520), plus the one-time \$25 snack fee (\$900).

We have an additional 23 non-tuition students who were only charged the one-time \$25 snack fee (\$575).

Staffing cost (\$447,238.89) minus Tuition & Fees (\$84,095) equals a \$363,143.89 cost to the district to run our ECE program. The IDEA Preschool grant provides \$6,885 of support for providing needed curriculum, supplies and manipulatives, and professional development for our ECE program.

[2024-2025 SWOT analysis of the ECE program](#)



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Preschool Program Structure and Overview

Prairie Grove CSD 46 offers a preschool program for children ages 3 to 5 years old. Students are placed into sessions based on their date of birth, with younger children attending the morning session and older children attending the afternoon session. This allows our older students a Pre-K type experience during the Spring Trimester.

Session Times

- Morning Session (ages 3–4): 9:00–11:30 a.m.
- Afternoon Session (ages 4–5): 12:30–3:00 p.m.

Both blended and self-contained preschool sections run four days a week (Tuesday–Friday). Beginning in FY27, the program is expected to transition to a five-day-per-week schedule.

Transportation is provided at no cost to all preschool students, although this service is subject to review annually based on enrollment and bus availability. Children who are three years old on or before the first day of school (August 21, 2025) are eligible to enroll in the 2025–2026 program.

Enrollment and Capacity

At the conclusion of the 2024–2025 school year, the preschool served 67 students. While the district does not fill all available seats at the start of the year, enrollment remains open as students turn three and become eligible during the school year. This practice ensures compliance with state requirements to serve students identified as at-risk.

- Maximum Capacity (current staffing levels): 76 students
- 2024–2025 End-of-Year Enrollment: 67 students

Tuition and Fees

Preschool tuition is structured as follows:

- Tuition: \$230 per month (no additional registration fees)
- Snack Fee: \$25 per year, for all students

Tuition-paying students are required to be toilet trained. Students identified as at-risk or those with special education needs are not required to be toilet trained.

Preschool tuition is waived for students identified as at-risk or for students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires an Early Childhood Education (ECE) or preschool placement. These students attend at no cost. There is no reduced tuition rate; students either attend tuition-free (for at-risk or special education students) or pay full tuition.



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Comparison of Prairie Grove CSD 46 Preschool Program to Other Area Preschools

Prairie Grove's preschool program provides a strong, balanced option that combines affordability, transportation access, research-based curriculum, and integration of general education and special education students. With the upcoming transition to five days per week, the district will be even more competitive with peer public programs.

[Comparison Spreadsheet](#)

Prairie Grove CSD 46

- **Cost:** \$230/month + \$25 snack fee
- **Schedule:** Tuesday–Friday, half-day AM/PM sessions
- **Hours:** 9:00–11:30 a.m. (AM); 12:30–3:00 p.m. (PM)
- **Ages Served:** 3–5 years old
- **Placement:** AM (ages 3–4), PM (ages 4–5)
- **Transportation:** Provided at no cost (subject to enrollment and availability)
- **Capacity:** Up to 18 students per classroom, staffed by 1 teacher and 2 paraprofessionals
- **Toilet Training:** Required for tuition-paying students; not required for IEP placements
- **Curriculum:** Creative Curriculum with Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment

Cary SD 26 (Oak Knoll Early Childhood Center)

- **Cost:** \$165–\$190/month for blended; \$80–\$120 for ECE
- **Schedule:** Options for 3- or 4-day blended, self-contained ECE, and PFA
- **Hours:** Similar half-day sessions (AM/PM)
- **Placement:** By age group, but with multiple program models available
- **Transportation:** Information not detailed
- **Comparison:** Lower tuition costs and broader program models, but fewer staff.

Crystal Lake D47 (Glacier Ridge)

- **Cost:** Free, but only serves at-risk and IEP students
- **Schedule:** 5 days/week (AM/PM)
- **Capacity:** Large-scale program (240 students)
- **Transportation:** Yes, for IEP or if living >1.5 miles away
- **Comparison:** Broader capacity and free for qualifying students; Prairie Grove offers greater access for tuition-paying families.

CUSD 300 (deLacey Family Education Center + sites)

- **Cost:** Free, state-funded (eligibility required)
- **Schedule:** Half-day and full-day PFA/SPED options
- **Hours:** Half-day AM/PM; expanded full-day options
- **Placement:** Younger in AM, older in PM, but flexible based on family needs
- **Comparison:** Offers full-day preschool for eligible students; Prairie Grove is tuition-based and half-day only.

Fox River Grove SD 3

- **Cost:** \$2,550/year (\$300 deposit, three payments)
- **Schedule:** 5-day blended, no self-contained SPED
- **Hours:** Half-day AM/PM
- **Placement:** AM for 3-year-olds, PM for 4-year-olds; lottery-based placement
- **Comparison:** Similar cost to Prairie Grove, but less access for students with IEPs.



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Wauconda CUSD 118

- **Cost:** No cost (eligibility-based, priority for special needs/at-risk)
- **Schedule:** 4–5 days/week with blended and specialized sections
- **Hours:** AM/PM sessions, plus Friday shortened hours
- **Curriculum:** Creative Curriculum, STAR (Autism), Second Step (SEL)
- **Comparison:** Broader program offerings and targeted interventions; Prairie Grove is smaller-scale but more accessible for tuition-paying families.

McHenry SD 15

- **Cost:** Free (PFA + district funded)
- **Schedule:** 12 blended sections + 4 self-contained classrooms, M–F
- **Hours:** Half-day AM/PM
- **Placement:** AM younger; PM kindergarten-bound
- **Comparison:** Larger capacity and broader program variety; Prairie Grove has smaller class sizes and a tuition option.

Comparison to Private/Non-Profit Programs

Thunderbird Preschool (Crystal Lake)

- **Cost:** \$230–\$405/month + fees
- **Schedule:** 2, 3, or 5-day options
- **Hours:** AM/PM sessions
- **Ages:** 2–5 years old
- **Curriculum:** Teacher-designed curriculum
- **Comparison:** Similar cost structure; Prairie Grove offers transportation and a research-based Creative Curriculum.

Purple Moose Enrichment Preschool (Crystal Lake)

- **Cost:** \$225–\$390/month + \$65 application fee
- **Schedule:** 2–5 day options, enrichment add-ons
- **Hours:** Flexible AM/PM, full-day enrichment available
- **Ages:** 2–5 years old
- **Curriculum:** Custom-designed, evolving curriculum
- **Comparison:** More flexible scheduling and full-day enrichment, but Prairie Grove integrates special education services and district-supported staff.



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Notable Findings

1. Accessibility & Cost:

- Prairie Grove provides an affordable tuition model (\$230/month) compared to other private options and is more accessible to tuition-paying families than nearby public programs that are restricted to at-risk/IEP eligibility.

2. Program Days:

- Prairie Grove operates **4 days/week**, while many surrounding districts offer **5-day programs**. The planned transition to 5 days/week in FY27 will bring Prairie Grove in line with its peers.

3. Curriculum & Staffing:

- Use of **Creative Curriculum with Teaching Strategies Gold** aligns Prairie Grove with best practices seen in McHenry 15, Wauconda 118, and CUSD 300.
- Student-staff ratio is favorable (1 teacher + 2 paras for 18 students), ensuring individualized attention.

4. Transportation:

- Prairie Grove offers free bus transportation for all students (subject to availability), an advantage over private programs and some public peers that limit busing.

5. Capacity & Growth:

- With a maximum of 76 students, Prairie Grove is smaller in scale compared to D47 and McHenry 15, but comparable to Fox River Grove and Cary.