

Pleasantdale Elementary School Full Day Kindergarten Questions and Answers

Has there been any discussion with regard to implementing full day kindergarten in District 107.

This topic has been discussed in-depth twice by previous Boards in the last 12 years. On both occasions, it was determined to maintain the current structure because there were no academic or financial data supporting a change to a free full day option. It was decided, however, that families eligible for free lunch would not be charged tuition for the extended day program. Families eligible for reduced lunch would be charged 25% of the full tuition price. Families with students with IEPs are enrolled in the extended day tuition free as well if they receive resource support. It has never been the recommendation of the administration to provide a free full day kindergarten for reasons stated in the following answers.

What would the school day look like if full-day kindergarten was offered?

The school day for a free full day program would be exactly the same or very similar to the fee-based extended day program. The current extended day structure has proven to be an appropriate mix of direct instruction, enrichment, free choice, and specials given the development age of students. However, the current half day structure may need to change because Illinois State Code requires that a half day option must be offered if preferred by parents. Possible options for half day kindergarten if a free full-day program were offered are as follows:

- Option 1:
 - Continue current practice of offering a choice of ½ day and full-day and have all ½ day students included in full-day classrooms during the morning.
 - The school day would look identical – those students choosing ½ day would attend in the a.m. and leave at noon.
 - New curriculum would continue to be taught during the a.m. time period. The afternoon is dedicated to enrichment, re-teaching, interventions, extra art, PE, and music classes, as well as additional social-emotional learning opportunities.
 - This option offers parents the opportunity to start their child in a.m. ½ day and then move to full-day any time during the school year. The disruption to the classroom routine is minimal because students keep the same teacher and classmates.
 - This option is advantageous to how we service our special needs students. All IEP students are included and supported in the regular a.m. classrooms. The p.m. portion of the day focuses on additional socialization, re-teaching, and specialized services per individual student needs.
- Option 2:
 - Separate ½ day and full-day students
 - This option would involve providing a free full-day program that would have a curriculum similar to the current extended day program.
 - Those families opting for a half day program would be together in a half day morning or afternoon program. However, moving to a full-day program

during the year would require a change in classrooms and teachers. Parents who prefer a half day program are typically interested in a morning program. There may be space limitations for a morning program. The space issue that may be created would be the loss of one preschool room. This would happen under the assumption of a morning half day kindergarten in addition to three rooms of full day kindergarten. It would be easier to find space for an afternoon half day kindergarten program but this would not be the preference of most parents given our history with afternoon kindergarten options.

How many students are currently in half day kindergarten and how many are in extended day kindergarten?

- Currently, 50 out of 62 students attend extended-day kindergarten.
- Currently, 10 students have IEPs and are tuition free.
- Currently, 3 students are tuition free due to free lunch eligibility

How would special needs and low income students be affected by a free full day kindergarten program?

One of the biggest advantages of the current program is that it is conducive to providing extra help to students who have remedial and/or special academic needs. This includes:

- Small class sizes that allow for more individualized academic services
- Small class sizes that allow for more targeted social emotional interventions
- Greater opportunities for specialists to work with students who have IEPs or remedial needs by providing services in the classroom or in a pull-out setting
- Greater parent support and communication for students with IEPs or remedial needs as teachers and specialists are dealing with fewer parents in the p.m. setting.

There will be a relatively large population of special needs students matriculating into kindergarten next school year. There is a concern that free full day kindergarten would increase the afternoon enrollment of kindergarten classes which would diminish the advantages described above for serving this population of students. Probably the most important reason for keeping the current kindergarten structure is our historical success in remediating students with special needs thereby decreasing the need of expensive interventions in subsequent grade levels.

How much additional state aid would the district receive for a free full-day kindergarten?

Using last year's data, the District would have received approximately \$4,000 in total state aid for full-day kindergarten.

Are salaries of the staff who teach extended day kindergarten paid by the District or is that paid primarily by the parent tuition component?

Staff members' salaries are paid by the District. Tuition collected from the extended day kindergarten program simply goes into the general fund. It is not earmarked for particular expenses.

What is the difference in academic achievement between extended day students and half day students?

Students who attend the extended day program do not perform significantly better than those who attend the half-day program. Below is a chart comparing extended day and half day students who currently are in grade 1 and grade 2.

Fall 2015 STAR Data Comparison-Average Percentile

	Math	Reading	Test of Early Literacy
1st Grade 1/2 Day	66	51	43
1st Grade Extended Day	70	65	42
2nd Grade 1/2 Day	74	65	
2nd Grade Extended Day	60	66	

Winter 2015 STAR Data Comparison-Average Percentile

	Math	Reading	Test of Early Literacy
1st Grade 1/2 Day	63	61	71
1st Grade Extended Day	73	68	51
2nd Grade 1/2 Day	81	72	
2nd Grade Extended Day	66	68	

What is the recommendation of the administration?

It is recommended that the current fee-based extended day kindergarten be maintained. Our program works well to address the needs of both half day and extended day students. The cost for the extended day program is \$19.39 per day. Special needs students do not pay tuition. Also, the extended day program is free for families qualifying for free lunch. If the current extended day program were free for everyone, the district would lose \$132,862 per year. Over a ten year period, the district would lose \$1,328,620 assuming extended day tuition remained the same. The District has already eliminated all other fees for parents.