

SCOTIA-GLENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOLS
Scotia, New York 12302

CURRICULUM REPORT

May 20, 2002

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

BACKGROUND We would like to thank the Board for the opportunity to discuss and reflect on a program that is obviously very important to us, and to the youngest students in the Scotia-Glenville school district. Transitional Kindergarten was modeled after a similar schedule in Waterford-Halfmoon, and was implemented district-wide in Scotia in September, 2001. The change in schedule was unanimously recommended by a district-wide kindergarten committee made up of parents, staff and community members after an extensive community survey. At that time the board felt that we, as a district, needed to look at increasing early intervention opportunities for our children and to find a better way to prepare children for the changing expectations of the school environment.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Children in each building are assigned to a particular teacher for their Kindergarten year. Beginning in September each class is divided into an A.M. and a P.M. class - with approximately 10 to 12 children in each section. From September to December the children attend school in a traditional half-day schedule - for 2 1/2 hours per day, either morning or afternoon. Starting in January - with the return from the Christmas break - each class begins a schedule of full class size (all 18-22 children) in attendance for an "extended day". The children all arrive in the morning and stay through a recess and lunch period followed by a brief instructional period. This gives the children an opportunity to get used to the full class size and gain experience with recess and lunch in school. In late January, the official mid point of the school year, the children make the complete transition to full day attendance.

PROGRAM EVALUATION Input was gathered from both parents and teachers to help evaluate the different parts of the program. The survey was designed to help identify advantages and disadvantages of each part of the schedule. Please refer to the attached chart for a summary of the survey results.

In addition, educational evaluation of the program was begun this year and will continue as a longitudinal study for the next several years. First graders in the district were given the *Test of Phonemic Awareness (TOPA)* last fall. This test will be administered each year in the fall of first grade. The data gathered will be used as a research study for the district to assess the effectiveness of the transitional

kindergarten program in helping to prepare students for beginning reading skills in first grade.

STRENGTHS The transitional schedule grows and develops as the children do. Each stage is carefully constructed and planned to accommodate the developmental needs of children this age and their first experience with "real" school. The program allows for increased individual contact time between teachers and students. The critical skills of communication and reasoning are developed to a greater degree than in traditional half-day kindergarten. The needs of all children can be addressed. Overall, the schedule retains the essential elements of the kindergarten curriculum while allowing for developmentally appropriate pacing and participation in instruction.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS The educational and support staff involved with Transitional Kindergarten unanimously recommend the continuation of the program as it has been done so successfully across the district this year. We would like to thank the Board of Education for their vision and commitment to putting the needs of children first, as demonstrated through the initial implementation of Transitional Kindergarten.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Adamczyk Maureen Armstrong
Beth Donovan Dawn Farone
Claire McDermott Lysle Perry
Melissa Peterson Christina Ramnes
Kathi Waters

Advantages/Disadvantages: Survey Results

		Teachers' Surveys		Parents' Surveys	
Schedule	Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages	
1 1/2 Days	<p>Small class size allows for better teacher knowledge of children's individual needs and allows for teacher to tailor instruction.</p> <p>Learning disabled students can be identified sooner; therefore, can obtain support services more quickly.</p> <p>There is more 1:1 student/teacher contact.</p> <p>The schedule allows for common planning time, which increases consistency in the kindergarten program.</p>	<p>Pace is rushed. Not enough time for relaxed instruction.</p> <p>Sometimes it is difficult to schedule support services in the half-day.</p>	<p>There is more individualized learning in the half-day sessions.</p> <p>It is good for children with no preschool experience.</p> <p>The needs of the children are met early on with small class sizes.</p>	<p>Not a lot of instructional time.</p> <p>Some difficulty in arranging child care.</p> <p>There is not enough time to complete tasks or socialize.</p>	
Extended Days	<p>Excellent time to build a new classroom community--rules, friendships and routines.</p> <p>There is a gradual adjustment to the new routines of lunch and recess.</p> <p>The formerly P.M. children adjust to an A.M. school day start.</p> <p>This is deemed to be a necessary developmental step to minimize social/emotional issues/stress that may occur with a longer day.</p> <p>It makes the program truly "transitional"!</p>	<p>The children are noticeably more tired.</p>	<p>Provides a smooth transition to a longer day.</p> <p>Children are able to adjust to lunch/recess routine.</p>	<p>There is some difficulty having to change child care arrangements for a three week period.</p> <p>The adjustment to a longer day was difficult for children used to taking naps.</p>	

Advantages/Disadvantages: Survey Results

Teachers' Surveys		Parents' Surveys		
Schedule	Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Full Days	<p>There is time to link learning- a chance to reinforce skills later the same day.</p> <p>There is increased instructional time.</p> <p>There is more time for students to actively participate in their learning.</p> <p>There are more opportunities for parent involvement.</p> <p>The schedule allows for a more relaxed, appropriate pace of instruction.</p>	NONE!	<p>There is more time for meeting special needs.</p> <p>The children are allowed to experience kindergarten at a very manageable pace.</p> <p>Kindergarten students have more involvement with the rest of the school community.</p> <p>The best schedule for child care scheduling.</p> <p>The students are more prepared for first grade – academically and socially.</p>	<p>In the beginning, the students are very tired.</p>

SUMMARY OF PARENT COMMENTS

The following comments were made in response to our request for parent input.

“Transitional Kindergarten has proven to be an asset to the Scotia Glenville school system. It has created an introduction for our children with a more personal one on one relationship with their teacher, thus giving the teacher time to recognize what areas the student may need help in before preparing them for a full time day at school. I am highly impressed with this program.”

Tracie Dunn - son, Chris

“Well structured and beneficial to my child. A better alternative to every other day and half day.”

Lorraine Marola - son, Thomas

“Our child loves the full day kindergarten. Back in the beginning months of school he would come home bored asking if he could stay longer. Now that he is full day we see some nice changes. He is more interested in learning and wanting to show us what he has learned. When he was only 1/2 day it went by so fast that he didn't get enough time with his teacher and friends to discuss what they had learned that day. We think the transitional kindergarten program is worth repeating. It prepares them for 1st grade and makes them feel a part of the school as a whole.”

Angela and Mark Reid - son, Austin

“I think the program is a very good one. My only point would be to have all of the kids attend in the morning and then lengthen the day. I think it might help those students who attended in the afternoon; the confusion of switching to a new morning routine.”

Karen Smith - daughter, Julianna

The following parents would like to address the Board of Education:

Kathleen Dwyer
Patty Hyland

The following parents have indicated that they will be in the audience the night of May 20 and that they would be willing to answer questions from the Board of Education.

Larry and Michele Pattee
Denise Rudolph
Winnie Valachovic

Anne Cardany
Suzanne Denney
Kathi Marks