

**NEW BOSTON SCHOOL BOARD
KINDERGARTEN REVIEW
FINAL REPORT
and
RECOMMENDATIONS**



June 8, 2011

Acknowledgements

Appreciation is extended to the following people for contributing their time and effort to complete the New Boston School Board Kindergarten Review:

2011 New Boston School Board Kindergarten Review Committee:

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June 8, 2011

Members of the New Boston School Board:

When kindergarten was established in New Boston in 2002, a program review was part of the original plan. In June of 2010 the New Boston School Board set forth a charge to complete the review during the 2010-2011 school year. The New Boston School Board Kindergarten Review Committee was formed in the fall of 2010 and is comprised of administrators, school board members, consultants, community members and teachers. The committee has met on a regular basis and has been actively involved in gathering information for this report.

The charge of the committee was to determine if the current curriculum and structure of the kindergarten meets the standards and expectations for an incoming readiness/first grade student at New Boston Central School and to identify any changes that could improve the program. The original charge asked the committee to specifically consider the following:

- Time
- Curriculum
- Structure of the program
- Transportation
- Relationship of K-R-1
- Impact of students who did not attend NBCS Kindergarten
- Parent/Community input

During the course of this review the committee used several methods to gather data:

- Current literature/research review
- Data analysis
- Site visits to area kindergarten programs
- Kindergarten, Readiness and 1st grade teacher interviews (New Boston teachers)
- Parent Survey of current K, R and 1st grade students, survey analysis
- Cost gathering

In the pages that follow this report aims to provide the New Boston School Board with a summary of the current research/literature surrounding current kindergarten issues; a variety of data resources, and analysis of other local kindergarten programs that support the committee's final recommendations.

Respectfully submitted by the Kindergarten Review Committee,

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Executive Summary

The School Board's charge to the Kindergarten Review committee was to determine if the current curriculum and structure of the program meets the standards and expectations for an incoming readiness/first grade student at New Boston Central School, and assess the need for any changes to make the program more adaptable to meet students' needs. The committee chose to address the following areas: time, curriculum, program structure, transportation, relationship of kindergarten/readiness/first-grade or "K-R-1," impact of students who did not attend NBCS Kindergarten, and parent/community input.

During the course of the review, the committee used several means to gather information: research of current literature, data analysis, site visits to area kindergarten programs, interviews with Kindergarten / Readiness / 1st grade teachers in New Boston, survey of parents of current K, R and 1st grade students, and comparison of associated costs.

Summary of Research

The committee began by reviewing current issues surrounding kindergarten. The most contested issue is the full-day vs. half-day debate. Recent research shows full-day kindergarten students do indeed outperform their half-day peers in literacy development. However, these effects fade quickly after first grade, with any advantages completely unnoticeable by third grade. Additionally, implementation of a full-day kindergarten program would have a significant impact on New Boston's school budget.

A number of recent articles encourage educators to carefully consider the ways new achievement standards affect early childhood education. Children now spend far more time being taught and tested on literacy and math skills than they do learning through play and exploration, exercising their bodies, and using their imaginations. However, while kindergarten has changed in ways that reshape curriculum and instructional practices that are more reminiscent of primary grades, the fundamental characteristics of kindergarten children have not changed.

This push for a standards-based curriculum, with a focus on measurable outcomes, has also changed the ways we evaluate even our youngest learners. Testing plays an increasing role in kindergarten classrooms, and assessment results are used to adjust instructional practice.

Effective Kindergarten Programs

Whether full-day or part-day, best practices for kindergarten programs include:

1. integration of new learning with past experiences (e.g., through projects and group

- work);
- 2. opportunity for more hands-on experiences and informal interaction with manipulatives, other children and adults (including time for child-directed free play);
- 3. an unhurried setting with time to complete and expand on activities of interest;
- 4. emphasis on language development and appropriate pre-literacy experiences;
- 5. a combination of whole group, small group and individual activities;
- 6. space for the development of children's social skills, including self-regulation and conflict resolution strategies; and
- 7. assessment of student progress through informal teacher observations.

Data Analysis

The committee examined the incoming Readiness and First Grade Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Early Literacy Screening results from 2005 to 2010. In analyzing both sets of scores we found there were no significant differences in the students attending New Boston Central School kindergarten or outside kindergartens. Longitudinal studies showed that a significant number of students that previously scored below grade level on the kindergarten assessments were at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

Other Kindergarten Programs

The committee observed kindergartens in eight surrounding towns with similar demographics. We were interested in schools with similar programs (1/2 time) as well as alternative programs. Four of the programs visited have 1/2 day schedules similar to New Boston. Four of the schools do not have dedicated full-time paraeducators in the classroom. One school has a dedicated Special Education teacher with two paraeducators just for their kindergarten program.

The majority of the schools visited had a strong literacy model including whole group and small group literacy instruction. There was between 20 and 90 minutes spent on language arts with some of the instruction being integrated with whole group learning. The majority of the schools had small group literacy instruction. In half of the schools visited there was assessment/pre-screening done before students entered kindergarten. Some districts used this information to select students for extra support through extended day programs.

Most of the programs visited use various forms of assessment throughout the school year.

Kindergarten, Readiness, and First Grade Teacher Interviews

The committee interviewed each New Boston kindergarten, readiness and first grade teacher separately for approximately one hour. Highlights of those interviews include:

curriculum, instruction and assessment: the kindergarten teachers indicated that they follow the district curriculum goals, which are based upon the state's Grade Level Expectations (GLE's) for kindergarteners; they use a variety of published instructional programs; and, they see a strong need for the implementation of formal pre-kindergarten screening.

Progress reports: the kindergarten teachers report progress to parents on trimester report cards. In preparation for completing the report cards, the teachers assess each student's general knowledge, language listening, reading, mathematics, gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional development, and self-help.

Concerns: the kindergarten, readiness and first grade teachers shared a concern that over past the several years, the expectations for kindergarten students have increased considerably with a significant emphasis on academic skills. This has resulted in a decrease in the time and attention given to students' social and emotional development.

Coordination: the kindergarten, readiness, and first grade teachers all felt that communication among them could be strengthened.

Full-day vs. extended-day kindergarten: the kindergarten teachers favored increasing the length of the kindergarten program to either extended or full day, and designed to meet the students' specific needs.

Parent involvement and communication: the kindergarten teachers communicate frequently with parents and welcome parent volunteers into their classrooms.

Results of the Parent Survey

Eighty-four parents of students currently in kindergarten, readiness and first grade completed an online survey using "Survey Monkey." In it, they ranked components of the kindergarten experience in order of importance to them:

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice	7th Choice
Love of learning	61.2%	19.4%	9.0%	1.5%	3.0%	4.5%	1.5%
Responsibility	6.0%	9.0%	17.9%	16.4%	20.9%	14.9%	14.9%
Social skills/friendship	9.0%	14.9%	22.4%	17.9%	10.4%	11.9%	13.4%
Creative expression	0.0%	7.5%	10.4%	19.4%	20.9%	16.4%	25.4%
Reading/writing skills	4.5%	13.4%	16.4%	19.4%	19.4%	26.9%	0.0%
Math/science skills	0.0%	1.5%	6.0%	14.9%	19.4%	17.9%	40.3%
Self confidence building	19.4%	34.3%	17.9%	10.4%	6.0%	7.5%	4.5%

Committee Recommendations

The committee offers the following recommendations for consideration by the Board and school administrators.

Time:

1. Investigate the possibility of creating an extended day program for at-risk kindergarten students.
2. Examine the existing programs staff, space, materials, transportation costs and progress monitoring methods.
3. We are not recommending a change to a full-day program.

Curriculum:

1. Perform a vertical analysis of kindergarten GLEs.
2. Develop an instructional approach to the standards.

Instruction:

1. After vertical analysis of kindergarten grade level expectations is completed a curriculum committee should be formed to create a “curriculum map” to sequence lesson plans and to incorporate suggestions from the parent survey rankings.
2. After the curriculum map has been implemented, there will need to be an end-of-year review to measure the success of the curriculum framework.
3. Integrate new developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning, including components such as inquiry-based learning, hands-on activities, creative expression, and personalized instruction.
4. Instruction for at-risk students should include skill-based instruction, supplemental instruction, re-teaching and pre-teaching strategies.

Assessment:

1. Investigate and implement a pre-k assessment tool.
2. Develop an integrated progress monitoring tool (to be used 2-3 times a year).
3. Consider report card revision to align with the curriculum mapping and GLE’s.
4. Maintain meaningful communication with parents on a regular basis.
5. Begin integrated monitoring of student progress - both individual and whole group progress tracking.

Transportation:

The program currently transports students one way. The committee gathered information regarding the transportation expenses for kindergarten. This information can be found in the “*cost data*” section of the report.

K-R-1 Relationships:

1. Work together (vertically) to make sure that the kindergarten standards are aligned with first grade expectations, ensuring a balanced literacy program.
2. Enhance transition planning with more opportunities for K-R-1 to be together (both K-R-1 students-teachers & K-R-1 teachers-teachers).

3. Continue analysis and monitoring of students who did not attend the NBCS kindergarten program.
4. Continue collaborating with community-based kindergarten programs (for example, transition meetings with students and more information sharing).
5. Validate the assessment process of kindergartners by creating a “feed back loop” between K-R-1 teachers, with an aim at assessing the outcome of student placements in Readiness vs. First Grade.

Parent-Community Input:

Focus on effective parent engagement and communication, working toward a proactive and shared partnership.

1. The communication should be timely, meaningful and consistent.
2. Teachers should share curriculum goals with parents to encourage extension of learning at home.
3. Teachers and administrators should develop ways to increase opportunities for parent involvement.

Summary of Current Research/Literature:

The committee began its work by reviewing research related to current issues surrounding kindergarten and discussed the key points of each article. This is a summary of the findings.

The first issue to arise in an inquiry of kindergarten is also the most contested issue regarding kindergarten today—the full-day vs. half-day debate. Full-day kindergarten is growing nationally with 65% of children in the United States currently attending full-day programs (Shin, 2005). Full-day programs are most common in economically disadvantaged communities with higher percentages of minority students. As a result, the research surrounding full-day kindergarten includes many variables like academic and nonacademic school readiness relating to socio-economic factors. Proponents of full-day programs are concerned with student achievement in an education climate increasingly focused on standards and measured outcomes. Recent research data shows full-day kindergarten students do indeed outperform their half-day peers in literacy development during their kindergarten year (Wolgemuth, Cobb and Winokur, 2006). Additional studies also found higher levels of success into the first grade school year as well (Plucker, and Zapf, 2005). However, these effects fade quickly after first grade with any advantages completely unnoticeable by third grade (Elicker, 2000). The research suggests nonacademic school readiness factors as better predictors for future academic success, such as parent involvement, attitudes toward education and learning, self-control, interpersonal skills and variation in life experiences.

Fortunately, the majority of students in New Boston are supported at home in nonacademic ways, ways that are important to academic success. Implementation of a full-day kindergarten program would have a significant impact on the school's budget and to the community's taxpayers. The New Boston Central School Board will need to decide if the long-term benefits of such a program change would warrant the necessary budget increases and impact on taxpayers, especially in a struggling economy.

There are obvious advantages to extending the hours students spend at school. The committee used the research on full-day programs to identify important aspects of a successful kindergarten program. While there is no significant difference between the

curriculum in full-day and half-day programs, instructional approaches tend to differ between the two (Hough and Byrde, 1996). Full day programs had more small-group and individual activities. Teachers (and students) felt less pressured and were able to spend more time delving deeper into captivating topics (Elicker, 2000). Recent research also highlights the importance of aligning learning standards of kindergarten with first grade, especially important in half-day programs to ensure that the primary learning objectives are being met (Li, et. al.).

A number of recent articles also encourage educators to carefully consider the ways new achievement standards affect early childhood education. “Kindergarten has changed radically in the last two decades in ways that few Americans are aware. Children now spend far more time being taught and tested on literacy and math skills than they do learning through play and exploration, exercising their bodies, and using their imaginations” (Gullo and Hughes, 2010). The Alliance for Childhood describes the current climate in kindergarten as a “crisis,” producing children who are unable to think independently, lack creativity and “under great pressure to meet inappropriate expectations” (Gullo and Hughes, 2010). It is important to remember, “while kindergarten has changed in ways that reshape curriculum and instructional practices that are more reminiscent of primary grades, the fundamental characteristics of kindergarten children have not changed” (Gullo and Hughes, 2010).

The national push for a standards-based curriculum, with a focus on measurable outcomes, has also changed the ways we evaluate even our youngest learners. Testing has an increasing role in kindergarten classrooms, “requiring days of painstaking assessment—not to inform instructional practice but to make sure that students are meeting learning targets” (Graue, 2011). It is important that testing “take place while children are engaged in the process of learning [and] should not be used as a means of excluding children from experiences” (Gullo and Hughes, 2010). It is equally important that assessment results are used to adjust instructional practice.

Kindergarten program time, curriculum and assessment are the main issues the country continues to debate widely. Like the discussions, the solutions are also varied and unique to each diverse learning community. The research outlined above is meant as a general summary of the current conversations taking place in a national context, but

they are also consistent with what our local community has shared in terms of feedback here in New Boston. It will be important as we move forward to develop a program that is just right for our school, its students and the broader community.

Effective Kindergarten Programs

Whether full-day or part-day, some **best practices** for kindergarten programs include:

1. Integration of new learning with past experiences (e.g., through projects and group work).
2. Opportunity for more hands-on experiences and informal interaction with manipulatives, other children and adults (including time for child-directed free play).
3. An unhurried setting with time to complete and expand on activities of interest.
4. Emphasis on language development and appropriate pre-literacy experiences.
5. A combination of whole group, small group, and individual activities.
6. Space for the development of children's social skills, including self-regulation and conflict-resolution strategies.
7. Assessment of student progress through informal teacher observation of individual student's work.

Data Analysis

The New Boston School Board Kindergarten Review Committee has examined the incoming Readiness and First Grade Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Early Literacy Screening results from 2005 to 2010. The Early Literacy Screening assessment includes identifying letters and letter sounds, concepts about print, writing, and text reading. The highest attainable score is 100. A score of 90-100 is the target. The DRA assesses student performance in the following areas of reading proficiency: reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. Students are expected to finish kindergarten at a level 3 or 4. They should enter second grade at a level 18 or higher and at the end of second have a 28 or better.

In analyzing both sets of scores we found there were no significant differences in the students attending New Boston Central School kindergarten and outside kindergartens. It is important to note that the sample size is larger for students attending New Boston Central School kindergarten versus outside kindergartens. Students scoring below grade level received Response to Intervention (RTI) and/or special education services. “RTI is the practice of providing high quality instruction or intervention matched to students needs and using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions.” (RTI Task Force, 2009) Longitudinal study showed that a significant number of students that previously scored below grade level on the kindergarten assessments were at or above grade level by the end of third grade. The students scoring below grade level are continuing to receive support services.

Early Literacy Screening

Grade	Year	Score of 0-49	Score of 50-69	Score of 70-79	Score of 80-89	Score of 90-100
NBCS Kindergarten	2005	0%	5%	13%	16%	66%
Not attending NBCS	2005	0%	0%	21%	43%	36%
NBCS Kindergarten	2006	2%	4%	7%	24%	63%
Not attending NBCS	2006	0%	22%	33%	44%	0%
NBCS Kindergarten	2007	1%	3%	9%	23%	64%
Not attending NBCS	2007	11%	11%	11%	56%	11%
NBCS Kindergarten	2008	1%	6%	9%	16%	68%
Not attending NBCS	2008*					
NBCS Kindergarten	2009	2%	2%	2%	14%	80%
Not attending NBCS	2009	0%	11%	0%	22%	67%
NBCS Kindergarten	2010	5%	2%	2%	9%	82%
Not attending NBCS	2010					
NBCS Kindergarten	2011	0%	2%	2%	13%	83%
Not attending NBCS	2011	6%	6%	0%	41%	47%

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)

Grade	Number of Students	Year	A and Below	1 and 2	3	4 and 6	8 and 10	12 and above
NBCS Kindergarten	19*	2005	0%	74%	5%	11%	5%	5%
Not attending NBCS		2005						
NBCS Kindergarten	35*	2006	3%	37%	17%	17%	12%	14%
Not attending NBCS	*	2006						
NBCS Kindergarten	35*	2007	14%	43%	28%	9%	3%	3%
Not attending NBCS	*	2007						
NBCS Kindergarten	67	2008	9%	28%	20%	22%	12%	9%
Not attending NBCS	*	2008						
NBCS Kindergarten	65	2009	3%	30%	30%	20%	8%	9%
Not attending NBCS	9	2009	0%	11%	45%	22%	11%	11%
NBCS Kindergarten	45	2010	11%	18%	32%	11%	13%	15%
Not attending NBCS	15	2010	7%	47%	0%	33%	13%	0%
NBCS Kindergarten	55	2011	4%	25%	40%	20%	7%	4%
Not attending NBCS	17	2011	17%	35%	6%	24%	6%	12%

**All data was not available.*

Percentages were based on a 2007 report that included 2005 and 2006.

Results from Kindergarten Observations

The committee to ensure continuity of the visits created a school observation form. The committee then looked at surrounding towns with similar demographics to find programs that would be beneficial to our research. We were interested in schools with similar programs (half-day) as well as alternative models. Members of the committee went to the 8 chosen schools to observe the kindergarten programs. Each visitor completed an observation and reported back to the committee. The observations and write-ups can be found in the appendices of this report.

Based on these visitations to various Kindergarten programs, the committee found the following results:

- Four of the programs visited have half-day schedules similar to New Boston. The private school has a 3 hour program. One public district has a 3.5 hour program. The final public district visited has 2 classes, which attend two full days and one half-day. The breakdown of hours per year added with this model can be found on page 39.
- Four of the schools do not have dedicated paraeducators in the classrooms full-time, but provide paraeducator support for literacy/RTI blocks. One school has a dedicated Special Education teacher with two paraeducators just for the kindergarten program. New Boston has a full-time paraeducator in each classroom, as well as, individual paraeducators for children with special needs, as necessary.
- The majority of the schools visited had a strong literacy model combining whole group and small group literacy instruction. There was 20-90 minutes spent on language arts with some of the instruction spent on whole group learning. The majority of the schools had small group literacy instruction. In New Boston, most literacy activities observed were whole group as part of “circle-time”. Writing activities at NBCS include worksheets, small group handwriting instruction and teacher-directed journal entries. The children are also encouraged to practice reading with “easy reader” books independently and are given the opportunity to read to an adult.

- In half of the schools visited there is a pre-assessment/pre-screening conducted with students before they enter kindergarten. The teachers in these classrooms felt it was an extremely valuable piece of information that helped them address student needs from the beginning. In some districts, they use this information to select students to receive extra learning support in an extended day program. This approach allowed students the extra support they needed using current staffing and without the children missing regular class experiences. Currently in New Boston we do not have pre-screening assessment for incoming kindergartners.
- The programs visited used a wide variety of assessment tools throughout the school year. The most commonly used assessments were the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) programs. These were in addition to the district's curriculum assessments and benchmarks. In New Boston the teachers use a collection of formal assessments three times per year. Each teacher sits down one on one with every student to fill out the multiple page assessment.
- Many of the schools had a strong focus on cooperative learning and integration of problem solving and social skills into the classroom environment. Since this is most of the students first experience in a large school setting; it is important they learn how to be good students. The culture and climate in these classrooms was nurturing and positive. The students were encouraged to interact with each other, with the adult staff members and with the environment throughout most of the lessons. In New Boston, most of the cooperative learning observed was during "center time" when the children are given free choice in their activities upon entering the classroom if all prior work is complete. During this time the children can move from activity to activity and are given the chance to interact with peers and improve social skills.
- Only one of the districts with the same half-day schedule had the kindergarten students going to integrated arts classes and out to daily recess. The two districts with longer days (0.6 full time equivalent) and one program that has two full and one half-day also had their students attending integrated arts programs and a daily recess. In New Boston, our students participate in P.E. with their classroom teacher once a week and

attend story time in the library every other week. They have outdoor recess once per week (if time/weather allows).

- One district of note had a very strong collaboration model. The kindergarten teachers have created a curriculum binder linking the state standards in meaningful ways to the adopted curriculum suggestions. This school also has an “all hands on deck” approach, where all available teachers and staff float into the kindergarten room to help out with instruction.

Kindergarten, Readiness, First Grade Teacher Interviews

As a part of the kindergarten study, the kindergarten, readiness, and first grade teachers were interviewed. An educational consultant interviewed each teacher separately for approximately one hour. Following are the results of those interviews.

Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

The kindergarten teachers indicated that they follow the district curriculum goals, which are based upon the state's Grade Level Expectations for kindergarteners and reported that in their programs they meet or exceed these goals.

In the delivery of instruction, the kindergarten teachers use a variety of published instructional programs including

- Foundations, Lindamood Bell Phonemic Sequencing (LiPS) for Reading
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Everyday Math
- Social Studies – Harcourt- Brace and district curriculum
- Science – Harcourt-Brace and district curriculum

In addition to the published materials, both teachers reported creating many materials on their own.

While they acknowledge slight variations between classrooms in their daily routines (resulting primarily from differences in their teaching styles), the kindergarten teachers indicated that they both follow a similar daily schedule as outlined below:

- Center time
- Circle time
- Activities (generally a rotation through various activities including snack)
- Circle & dismissal

The teachers explained that the transitions between each major activity included time for students to clean up/put away materials and move to the next class activity.

The kindergarten teachers explained that there is no screening done on students prior to entry into kindergarten. Both expressed frustration with not having more information about their students as they begin the school year. They indicated that in the absence of

this information, they lose initial instructional time in their efforts to ascertain students' academic and social development needs. Both teachers expressed a strong desire for the implementation of a formal pre-kindergarten screening.

The kindergarten teachers report student progress to parents on trimester report cards. In preparation for completing the report cards, the teachers assess each child on a range of skills in the following areas

- General knowledge
- Language listening
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Social-emotional development
- Self-help

The teachers indicated that completing this assessment on each child three times each year is a source of stress for them and significantly impacts the time available for them to instruct students.

Students for whom the kindergarten teachers have first grade readiness concerns are given the Gesell (a standard procedure for determining a child's current Developmental Age level) and those results are used in conjunction with other information about the child in making placement decisions. The teachers indicated that in the past, all students enrolled in the New Boston Central School kindergarten were given the Gesell prior to first grade but that practice has been revised and the assessment is given only to those about whom there are placement concerns.

The kindergarten, readiness, and first grade teachers shared a concern that over past the several years, the expectations for kindergarten students have increased considerably with a significant increase in emphasis on academic skills. All of the teachers feel that the increased academic demands have resulted in a decrease in the time and attention given to the students' social and emotional development. The kindergarten teachers shared that they feel pressured to reach more advanced levels with their students and that in their efforts to insure their students reach these levels, they have had to reduce

significantly activities which encourage creative exploration and expression, involve meaningful play, and nurture social-emotional development. Additionally, they report having less time to do “read alouds” and spending less time on reflective discussions, which help students to make sense of and solidify their learning. Both teachers report feeling stressed over all that needs to be accomplished in a kindergarten day and year. The teachers noted that some children show signs of stress in response to the heightened academic expectations.

The first grade teachers expressed concern at the changes they have observed in children entering first grade. Based upon their observations over the past few years, they see the students as being more focused on getting the right answers and less willing to take risks exploring new areas. They see the students as displaying less independence, self-initiative, and natural curiosity and hesitating to proceed without explicit instructions from their teachers. One teacher described some students as being “frozen,” wanting direction for every move. The readiness and first grade teachers see the students as lacking development in social skills as evidenced in their inability to self-organize for activities or games, form friendships, and collaborate in play and problem solving. The teachers describe the students as lacking the sense of reading as something to do for fun and missing the “joy of reading.” The first grade teachers unanimously expressed the desire for students to come to them with more developed internal strengths—risk taking, courage, curiosity, self-initiative, independence, decision making—rather than more advanced academic skills. They felt that in the past, students came to them stronger in these areas, which gave the students, the inner foundation to move forward in learning. The words of one teacher reflected the sentiment of all three, “we can teach them the academics if they have the inner foundation.”

Kindergarten, Readiness, First Grade

In describing the transition process from kindergarten to readiness and first grade, the kindergarten, readiness, and first grade teachers all felt that communication among them could be strengthened. At the end of each school year, the kindergarten teachers meet with the readiness and first grade teachers to go over each of the students. The effectiveness of these meetings is diminished to some extent by the competing demands for time inherent in the plethora of end of school year activities, which result in

inadequate time for the meetings. Additionally, student placements may not have been finalized by the time the meetings take place so the readiness and first grade teachers may not know which students will be theirs. The kindergarten teachers pass along a folder on each child, which includes work samples, DRA scores, literacy screening results, report cards, and a form with information about special education needs and services and/or other interventions. In addition to this information, the first grade teachers expressed a desire for more anecdotal information about each child. For their part, the kindergarten teachers expressed the desire to have more feedback on how each student does in readiness or first grade. Such feedback would help them to ascertain the correctness of their placement decisions as well as the efficacy of their instructional programs. The kindergarten, readiness, and first grade teachers indicated that there had been a plan for them to meet regularly throughout the year but as the school year became filled with many activities, the meetings did not happen.

Full Day or Extended Day Kindergarten

Both kindergarten teachers favored increasing the length of the kindergarten program either to an extended or full day. An extended day for all students might be accomplished by having the morning class participate in specials (art, music, physical education) at the end of their kindergarten session and afternoon students participate in specials prior to the start of their kindergarten session. Alternatively, extended programming could be provided for only those students who demonstrated a need for more instructional time and in this instance, the extended time would be designed to meet the students' needs and would be focused on kindergarten curriculum outcomes. The kindergarten teachers felt that a full day kindergarten would provide them with more time to address the areas of child development and learning which they currently have little time to address. They indicated that they would be able to give more attention to

- Utilizing themes, involving children in play, integrating arts and fostering creativity;
- Doing more interactive writing;
- Reading a better balance of fiction and non-fiction;
- Using the Second Steps Program and focusing on social emotional development in general; and

- Utilizing the new Social Studies program more effectively.

At the same time that they generally favored a longer kindergarten day, the kindergarten teachers did express concern about the developmental appropriateness of a longer day for all children. The readiness and first grade teachers shared this concern and were more favorably inclined toward extending the day for children identified with special needs or who evidence a need for more prolonged instruction.

Parent Involvement & Communication

Both kindergarten teachers indicated that they communicate frequently with parents and welcome parent volunteers in their classrooms. They talk with parents face-to-face, via e-mail and telephone, and during parent conferences. Parent volunteers assist in a variety of ways in classes. Additionally, one kindergarten teacher described the homework link on her website “Practice at Learning Skills” which she maintains to keep parents informed of what is happening in the kindergarten program.

NBCS Kindergarten Parent Survey Results

The parent survey that was conducted by the NBCS Kindergarten Committee was designed to provide additional information from parents' perspective. It was the charge of the New Boston School Board to provide a 'program review'. As such, parent input on any personnel matters is not included in this report. Parent input and comments on NBCS staff, both positive and constructive, will be reviewed and considered by administration as appropriate.

One hundred nineteen parents of students currently in kindergarten, readiness and first grade had the opportunity to complete a survey online using "*Survey Monkey*" or by completing a paper copy. Eighty-four parents completed the survey online. Of the eighty-four surveys collected, nine students did not attend New Boston Central School kindergarten. Overwhelmingly, the need for full-day program/day care was the reason given for the nine students not attending New Boston kindergarten.

For the analysis of our survey data, the following algorithm was used:

- The word 'overwhelmingly' was used when the following algorithm was satisfied:
 - $(\# \text{ of parents who strongly agreed} + \# \text{ of parents who agreed}) \div (\# \text{ of parents who strongly disagreed} + \# \text{ of parents who disagreed}) \geq 3.0$
 - This simply means that by a margin of at least 3 to 1 parents agreed with the statement
- The word 'majority' was used when the following algorithm was satisfied:
 - $(\# \text{ of parents who strongly agreed} + \# \text{ of parents who agreed}) \div (\# \text{ of parents who strongly disagreed} + \# \text{ of parents who disagreed}) \geq 1.0$
 - This simply means that more parents agreed with the statement than disagreed

Parent participation:

- Parents overwhelmingly feel welcome in the kindergarten classroom
- Parents overwhelmingly feel that parent-teacher consultations are helpful and informative
- Parents desire more communication

Classroom environment:

- The majority of parents feel that the teacher really understands the unique needs of their child
- Parents overwhelmingly feel that classroom materials are interesting, engaging, and fun
- Parents overwhelmingly report that children enjoy going to school
- Creativity is an important theme to parents

Teaching and the kindergarten program:

- The majority of parents believe that creativity is promoted and nurtured
- The majority of parents believe that instruction considers the developmental needs of their child
- The majority of parents believe that children have ample time to learn expected skills

The kindergarten program:

- Inner confidence is an important theme to parents
- Parents overwhelmingly believe their child's report card accurately reflects academic achievement and is easily understood
- Parents overwhelmingly believe their child feels like part of the NBCS community

General overview:

- The majority of parents are confident that the kindergarten program builds a strong foundation for academic success
- Kindergarten being a low-stress environment is an important theme to parents
- The majority of parents believe the kindergarten experience is/was positive and successful
- Classroom instruction that is flexible and provides a variety of experiences to meet individual student needs is an important theme to parents

NBCS Kindergarten Parent Survey Results Cont.

In the final survey question, parents were asked to rank the following components of the kindergarten experience in order of importance and here are the results:

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice	7th Choice
Love of learning	61.2%	19.4%	9.0%	1.5%	3.0%	4.5%	1.5%
Responsibility	6.0%	9.0%	17.9%	16.4%	20.9%	14.9%	14.9%
Social skills/friendship	9.0%	14.9%	22.4%	17.9%	10.4%	11.9%	13.4%
Creative expression	0.0%	7.5%	10.4%	19.4%	20.9%	16.4%	25.4%
Reading/writing skills	4.5%	13.4%	16.4%	19.4%	19.4%	26.9%	0.0%
Math/science skills	0.0%	1.5%	6.0%	14.9%	19.4%	17.9%	40.3%
Self confidence building	19.4%	34.3%	17.9%	10.4%	6.0%	7.5%	4.5%

Committee Recommendations

The committee encourages the school board and administration to use their own judgment in prioritizing and implementing the following recommendations. We've structured our recommendations in alliance with the board's charge.

Time:

1. Investigate the possibility of creating an extended day program for at-risk kindergarten students.
 2. Examine the existing programs staff, space, materials, transportation costs and progress monitoring methods.
 3. We are not recommending a change to a full-day program.
-

Curriculum:

1. Vertical analysis of kindergarten grade level expectations (GLE's).
 2. Development of instructional approach standards.
-

Instruction:

1. After vertical analysis of kindergarten grade level expectation is completed a curriculum committee should be formed to create a "curriculum map" (or year-long scope) to sequence lesson plans and to incorporate suggestions from the parent survey rankings.
2. After the curriculum map has been implemented, there will need to be an end-of-year review to measure the success of the curriculum framework after the first year of implementation.
3. Integration of developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning to include activities like:
 - a. Inquiry-Based Learning: students are encouraged to take risks and learning is self-directed and based on the students' interest. This type of

learning can align with curriculum standards when directed effectively by teachers and will promote a love of learning in students.

- b. Hands-on-Activities: incorporation of “real-world” objects vs. worksheets to teach new concepts. As often as possible, students should learn by doing. This would include trips out into the community to utilize natural and public resources (i.e., the river, the fire station, the garden, the playground, etc.).
- c. Creative Expression: students should have ample time to explore creative ways of demonstrating learning, including dramatic play, artistic demonstrations (painting, sculpting, drawing and dancing).
- d. Personalize Instructions: teachers should consider the unique needs of every learner when designing instruction and make available many varied options for reaching the learning objectives. This means being mindful of the “multiple intelligences” of children. Some students are “word smart”, or “people smart”, while others are “music/art” smart. Instruction should be *differentiated* to meet the needs of all learning styles and abilities, by offering learning opportunities that appeal to a wide variety of learners.
- e. Instruction for at-risk students should include skill based instruction, supplemental instruction, re-teaching and pre-teaching strategies.

Assessment:

- 1. Investigate and implement a pre-k assessment tool.
 - 2. Develop an integrated progress-monitoring tool (to be used 2-3 times a year).
 - 3. Consider report card revision to align with the new GLE’s.
 - 4. Maintain meaningful communication with parents on a monthly basis.
 - 5. Integrated monitoring of student progress: both individual and whole group progress tracking.
-

Transportation: The program currently transports students one way. The committee gathered information regarding the transportation expenses for kindergarten. This information can be found in the “*cost data*” section of the report.

Structure:

1. Encourage teachers to work together in developing intentional learning approaches, maximizing class time in alignment with the GLE's.
2. Administrative analysis of effective use of support staff.
3. Encourage a daily schedule that emphasizes social time for students .

K-R-1 Relationships:

1. Work together (vertically) to ensure that the kindergarten standards are aligned with first -grade expectations, resulting in a balanced literacy program.
2. Enhance transition planning with more opportunities for K-R-1 to be together (both K-R-1 students and teachers & all K-R-1 teachers).
3. Continued analysis and monitoring of students who did not attend the NBCS kindergarten program.
4. Continued collaboration with community-based Kindergarten programs (transition meetings with students, more information sharing)
5. Vertical collaborating for a balanced literacy and curriculum.
6. Validate assessment process of kindergartners by creating a “feed back loop” between K-R-1 teachers with an aim at assessing the outcome of student placements in readiness vs. first grade.

Parent-Community Input:

Focus on effective parent engagement and communication—work toward a shared partnership and proactive communication.

- a. The communication should be timely, meaningful and consistent.
- b. Teachers should share curriculum goals to invite parents to extend learning activities at home.
- c. Identify ways to increase opportunities for parent involvement.

Cost Data:

This section offers a projected cost breakdown for components relating to the current kindergarten program as well as theoretical costs related to expansion of the program.

1. What is the cost per pupil for kindergarten? \$3,871
 2. What would be the cost to provide bussing for students to go home from the morning session of kindergarten and to bring afternoon students into the program?
 - a. Cost is estimated at \$79,200
 - b. The cost model is to provide 4 busses doing two additional mid-day runs at an estimated cost of \$110 per bus per day
 3. What would be the cost to renovate the White Building if preschool was to be moved to free up an additional classroom for a full-day kindergarten model?
 - a. \$18,000 to renovate bathroom and replace flooring
 - b. \$2,500 electrical and heating costs
 4. What would be the cost to make the half-time kindergarten teacher full time?
 - a. \$48,000 – this includes the cost of a family health plan as well as retirement and all other costs
 5. What would be the cost to add an additional kindergarten teacher?
 - a. Approximately \$75,000 including all costs
 6. What would be the cost to add an additional kindergarten paraprofessional?
 - a. Approximately \$45,000 including all costs
 7. What would be the cost to equip a classroom with furniture, technology, etc?
 - a. Approximately \$25,000
-
-

Current Program Commendations

The committee would also like to acknowledge the current NBCS kindergarten program for:

1. aligning the kindergarten curriculum, by creating similar learning experiences between the two NBCS kindergarten classrooms.
 2. incorporating the use of parent volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis, which works to promote the academic success of students.
 3. comprehensive assessment tracking of kindergartners throughout the year, ensuring that no student is left behind.
-
-

Appendix

The following schools have given written permission for the Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form to be included in the final report.

Appendix 1

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 1

School District Name: Bow Elementary School

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 5 regular sessions/1 extended session (RTI)

Number of Students per Class: 12-14 (extended session 6)

Student/Teacher Ratio: (including aides): 12-14/2

Program Hours: 7:55 – 10:30 11:40-2:15

Transportation Provided: 7:55 and 2:15 (parents transport during mid-day times)

Specific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Rigby Reading/Wilson Foundations,

Everyday Math, Universal Handwriting Program, Lucy Calkins Writing Program

Assessment Methods Used: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)- PALS –Pre-K for May screening prior to entrance in Kindergarten and PALS – K, 3x/year once enrolled in Kindergarten classroom based assessments for Math and Everday Math program assessments, DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) every other week and (for RTI students DIBELS ORF (Oral Reading Fluency) for above grade level), Rigby benchmarks, Words Their Way Spelling, and Writing Prompts.

Are Integrated-Arts part of Kindergarten Program? Music _____ Art _____

PE _____ Library X

Next year 3x/month the students will receive library and 1x/month guidance support with social skills lessons

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): in class – the model they use is a special education teacher and two educational assistants are assigned to kindergarten.

Currently they are providing a 30-minute block a day (8 out of 10 days) for small group reading instruction. The other two days is a DIBELS assessments every other week.

This has been a great asset to the program. Starting next week they are going to a common instructional time in all classes for Reading and Math. This will allow the

special ed. team to group students from each classroom by need and will add math to their intervention services. Climate/Culture of Classroom:

This observer met with the Assistant Principal for one hour. She provided much information and discussed in length the new extended program, which is in its second year of existence. Two out of three classrooms were observed due to observer's time constraints. The teachers were welcoming and forthcoming. The students were engaged in the lessons and spoke comfortably with the observer.

Questions for Teacher (if possible): How much time is devoted to each subject area?

Math: varies: 35-45 minutes per day

Language Arts/Reading: 1 hour/day

Science: integrated with Literacy

Social Studies: integrated with Literacy and the Responsive Classroom Model

1:1: small group

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? Prevention and intervention support is a strength. Time constraints make it difficult to incorporate music and movement and thematic units.

How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school? Assemblies and special events

Simple Daily Schedule:

7:55 – arrival – math practice tub (10-15 minutes)

8:10 – class meeting: includes calendar and other circle activities, book box: reading activities – reading to self, if applicable

8:30 – reading groups with teacher and specialists

9:00 – activities and individual centers

9:20 – snack

9:30 – Everyday Math lesson

10:00 – story (read aloud)

10:15 – free choice (recess)

Classroom Layout Sketch: Very similar to NBCS Kindergarten

Other Observations: (use separate sheet if necessary)

Summary of one-hour conversation with Assistant Principal. School year '10-'11 is the second year of the extended program. Last year there were fourteen students enrolled. This year there are six students enrolled. Recommendations for the extended day are a result of the PALS screening, which take place in April/May preceding enrollment in the kindergarten program. The screening also includes Occupational therapy (Visual Motor Integration, Gross Motor and Fine Motor), speech/language screening, math screening (self-designed) and vision/hearing screening.

A parent information night is held and a packet is developed for each student. If the parent does not attend the information night, the packet is mailed to them. An assessment folder is developed for each student and their picture is taken. Once assessments are completed the child is designated as red, yellow or green. "Yellow" puts them on a "watch" for further services. "Red" means they are being recommended for extended program. If a student is recommended for extended program, parents are called. There is a scoring sheet that goes home so parents get results of all screenings.

Once enrolled in Kindergarten students are assessed using the PALS-K in September, January and May. January and May assessments only include those subtests that the students did not pass in a previous assessment. The "yellow" students are monitored. If growth is not what the team projects, the student may be added to the extended day.

Some special education students may extend for an hour to receive speech and/or Occupational Therapy based on individual need.

One issue that has not been reconciled: If an extended day student makes sufficient progress (test out or exit program), do they return to half-day status.

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 2

School District Name: Chestnut Christian Preschool & Kindergarten Private/New Boston

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 2 (am session and pm session)

Number of Students per Class: 7 (am session) 15 (pm session) (extended day) *also noted that many of the children attend kindergarten in outside programs then attend the Chestnut Hill program in the afternoon

Student/Teacher Ratio (including aides): 7:1 am 15:2 pm

Program Hours: 3 hours pm session runs 12 to 3 pm all day program runs 8:30-3 pm

Transportation Provided? No

Specific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Handwriting Without Tears, Spectrum, Brainquest

Assessment Methods Used: Teacher observations and formal assessments twice per year (although the method was not specified).

Are Integrated Arts part of Kindergarten Program?

Music: incorporated during group learning

Art: almost daily, being utilized individually and as a group

PE: incorporated during group and encouraged during recess

Library: available during individual time and utilized for 1:1 reading

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): formal services are accessed through NBCS

Climate/Culture of Classroom: Upon entering the school there is a strong sense of acceptance. Teachers embrace the differences of each child and strive to recognize and encourage their individually learning style. Teachers know and appreciate the "whole child" not just the academic.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? Per program director, the staff is the strength of this program. They love the children and their families. The weakness would have to be that families pay tuition and also taxes.

How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school? Chestnut teaches Bible and Spanish as part of their community, incorporating both the preschool and kindergarten. They also use the community at large, with visits to the Transfer Station, Post Office, and Police Department.

Simple Daily Schedule:

12-12:30 Free Play at Centers or Specials (Bible, Spanish, Music)

12:30-1:15 Group Learning (Circle, Classroom Reading)

1:15-2:00 Individual work (small group) also time for Individual Reading 1:1 with teacher support

2:00-2:20 Snack

2:20-2:50 Recess

2:50-3:00 Pack up

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 3

Appendix 3

School District Name: Hollis Primary School, Hollis/Brookline SAU #11

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 2.5 Number of Students per Class: 18

Student/Teacher Ratio (including aides): 18:4

Program Hours: half-day

Transportation: provided one way

Specific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Reader's Workshop Program, Envision Math, Foundations, Handwriting Without Tears

Assessment Methods Used: PALS (In May for incoming kindergarten students) and three times during kindergarten year: September--January--May: AIMSWeb (Benchmark and progress monitoring); sight word subtest and local assessments for Math

Are Integrated Arts part of Kindergarten Program? Music, Art, PE, Library: once a week

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): Literacy Coach/Reading Specialist in every day. The Kindergarten offers an extended day program, which actually runs in the morning for students in the lowest 20% determined by PALS testing. The extra program is literacy only! In February, these students are now testing as the top 20% performers in their class! After the literacy focused morning extended program, the class split up and they attended the regular afternoon session.

Climate/Culture of Classroom: Very hands on and interactive! There was time for sharing and Science; singing and dancing in integrated academic ways. A creative and collaborative program. Teachers were talented, amazing people.

Questions for Teacher (if possible): How much time is devoted to each subject area?

Math: 45 minutes/day

Language Arts/Reading: 75 minutes per day

Science & Social Studies: integrated

How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school? During specials, three times a week. Art teachers, Librarians, even the Vice-Principal--every available teacher rotates in to help with the literacy block. Students see the other adults in the building in their classroom on a regular basis.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? They've done an amazing job incorporating the Kindergarten with the rest of the school and utilizing available personnel to support students. The programs are well designed. Every minute is academically rich, yet fun and hands-on. The program is a collaborative model where specialist, teachers, administration and parents work together. A unique early intervention program. No weaknesses observed.

Simple Daily Schedule:

Circle Time

Literacy Block

Snack

Reading groups

Recess

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 4

Appendix 4

School District Name: Mont Vernon Village School, Amherst/Mont Vernon School

District

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 2 Number of Students per Class: 13 and 15Student/Teacher Ratio (including aides): 1:13, 1:15Program Hours: Two full days, one 1/2 dayTransportation: provided by bus: to and from schoolSpecific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Focus on Phonemes, Reading Street

(Pearson, Scott, Foresman), Everyday Math, Zaner-Bloser handwriting

Assessment Methods Used: Reading Assessments/Teacher-made assessments**Are Integrated-Arts part of Kindergarten Program?**

Music, Art, PE: 20 minutes weekly

Library: 20 minutes weekly

Spanish: 20 minutes weekly

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): As needed both in class and out of classClimate/Culture of Classroom: Friendly, accepting, free movement, encouraged independent thinkingQuestions for Teacher (if possible): How much time is devoted to each subject area?

Math: 40+ minutes/day

Language Arts/Reading: 60+ minutes per day

Science & Social Studies: 30 minutes per day (alternating)

1:1: Seemed to be as needed for reinforcement/understanding

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? See attached handout from teacher**How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school?** Performances, recess, lunch, sometimes all Kindergarten students come on the same day for special events.

Simple Daily Schedule:

Mont Vernon Scheduling Advantages/Schedule - provided by the teacher

Educational Advantages of 2 full days and one half day kindergarten

- ☐ more time to do activities: centers, writing
- ☐ Not always rushing
- ☐ Read a chapter book
- ☐ Assessment time
- ☐ finishing activities in the afternoon
- ☐ Having specials (art, gym, music, computer, library, and Spanish)
- ☐ Getting to know the routine as a full day student such as lunch, recess with all ages, bus back and forth
- ☐ Can do their extra activities on their off days such as ballet, gymnastics
- ☐ More time in school
- ☐ Attending enrichment programs at school

Disadvantages

- ☐ Absent for a day is hard to make up - student can make up missed day on the alternate days
- ☐ Convincing the parent it works
- ☐ Childcare can be an issue

Comparison of hours and days per week

- ☐ 2.5 hours x 5 days = 12.5 hours
- ☐ 2.5 days = 15.75 hours (This is based on 6.3 hours per full day)

Comparison of hours per year

- ☐ 12.5 hours x 36 weeks = 450 hours
- ☐ 15.75 hours x 36 weeks = 567 hours
- ☐ 117 more hours per year
- ☐ Divided 117 by 2.5 hours per day = 46.80 more 2.5 hour days per school year

Scheduling

- ☐ Mondays and Thursdays - full day, Wednesdays AM
- ☐ Tuesdays and Fridays - full day, Wednesday PM
- ☐ We did these days also based on holidays and late starts

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 5

Appendix 5

School District Name: Peterborough Elementary School, Con-Val District

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 3 Number of Students per Class: 16

Student/Teacher Ratio (including aides): 1:16 Program Hours: 8:30-12 (teachers are 0.6 Full time Equivalent))

Transportation Provided? yes, by bus both ways

Specific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Envision Math (Pearson) (mixing in some old Investigations), Reading Street (Pearson, Scott, Foresman); both Reading and Math have website access for teacher's and parents (used Smartboard projector for Math lesson), Handwriting Without Tears, do have Title 1, FCCR - Hands on Literacy

Assessment Methods Used: DIBELS Reading three times per year ("seems to target future issues"), Test of Phonological Awareness Skills (TOPAS), Reading Street has weekly progress checks and unit benchmarks, Hill initiative, * Used to do Early Prevention for School Failure (EPSF) pre-screen in the first week of school

Are Integrated-Arts part of Kindergarten Program?

Music & Art: : in class with teacher

PE: 1/2 hr per week

Library/Health: 1/2 hour per week, plus an extra 1/2 hour that alternates every other week with Health

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): 3 Title 1 sessions in class, 2 pull out per week; do serve other needs both in class and out of class as necessary (one child with cochlear implants used FM system (w/ teacher microphone) and had speech)

Climate/Culture of Classroom: So peaceful, teacher never spoke much above a whisper, school wide focus on "Stop, Look, Listen" (teacher used hand signals), kids were active but respectful, warm and inviting. Teacher used a work board to organize literature work groups.

Questions for Teacher (if possible): How much time is devoted to each subject area?

Math: 30-50 minutes/day

Language Arts/Reading: 90 minutes/day (30 min. journal writing, 45 min Literature block, 15 min story/songs/sharing)

Science: incorporated in literature time

Social Studies: incorporated in literature time

1:1: ? - seems to be as needed

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? Wishes they still did the pre-screening week

How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school? Able to attend all school wide functions. They have a “community meeting” a few times a year.

Simple Daily Schedule:

8:30 - Arrival/Journal writing/Table Work

8:50 - Morning Meeting (with movement)

9:00 - Math

9:30 - Whole group snack

9:45 - Special or Math Extension

10:20 - Recess

11:00 - Literacy block

11:45 - Stories/Songs/Sharing

12:00 - Dismissal

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 6**Appendix 6**

School District Name: Riddle Brook Elementary School, Bedford School District

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 2.5 Number of Students per Class: 20

Student/Teacher Ratio (including aides): 20:2 (other paraeducators are 1:1 with students)

Program Hours: 8-10:40 & 11:30-2:15

Transportation provided: one way

Specific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Scott Foresman Literacy Program, Everyday Math, Zaner Bloser Handwriting, Lucy Calkins Writing

Assessment Methods Used: No prescreening, DIBELS and informal teacher assessment (beginning, mid-year and end), Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA) (mid-year) and Scott-Foresman has a benchmark assessment (beginning of year) and end of unit assessments which check sounds and high frequency words use in that unit. Also, short comprehension teacher reads, students answer. Goal: 85% proficiency on DIBELS

Are Integrated Arts part of Kindergarten Program?

Music, Art: No; Physical Education: every other week with Physical Therapist who runs a movement class; Library: Weekly

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): Every grade level has a Special Education teacher and integration specialists for pull out services and in-class, when applicable--lots of Special Education support. Riddle Brook is the integration school for the district.

Climate/Culture of Classroom: The teachers were very patient, and organized. The classroom had a very academic feel for a Kindergarten classroom. There were no play areas (dramatic play, painting). There are educational games and building toys.

Questions for Teacher (if possible): How much time is devoted to each subject area?

Math: 30 minutes/day

Language Arts/Reading: 90 minutes per day

Science & Social Studies: integrated

How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school? During library time, morning recess before school and monthly all-school meetings

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

Strengths: Strong literacy program, great special education support, smaller class size.

Weaknesses: very academic for part-time kindergarten does not leave much time for “play”—no toys or dramatic play in classrooms. However, try to have recess outside or “free play” for about 15 minutes daily.

Simple Daily Schedule:

8:00-8:30 Circle Time: calendar, weather, morning message

8:30-9:30 Language Arts - Foresman lesson

9:30-9:45 Snack

9:30-10:00 Reading groups

10:00-10:30 Math

Kindergarten Classroom Observation Form 7**Appendix 7**

School District Name: New Boston Central School

Number of Kindergarten Classes: 3 Number of Students per Class: 18-19

Student/Teacher Ratio (including aides): 19:2, 1 on 1 aide in one classroom

Program Hours: 8-10:35 & 11:35-2:15

Transportation Provided? one -way

Specific Curriculum Program Used (if any): Foundations, LIPS (reading), Everyday Math, Handwriting Without Tears

Assessment Methods Used: Teacher gathered, multi page, pull children aside 1 on 1 2-3 times per year

Are Integrated-Arts part of Kindergarten Program?

PE: Teacher facilitated

Library: Every other week

Special Education Services (in class OR pull-out): One group with reading specialist in class; Speech, OT, group with reading specialist - Pull out.

Climate/Culture of Classroom:

Questions for Teacher (if possible): How much time is devoted to each subject area?

Math: average 30 minutes/day and additional time activities are part of the work rotation or circle time.

Language Arts/Reading: average 60 minutes/day with most activities part of the work rotation or circle time.

Science & Social Studies: integrated in thematic units

How is the Kindergarten integrated with the rest of the school? During library time, morning class with Community Meetings

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? See section of the Kindergarten Committee report with teacher interviews

Simple Daily Schedule:

8:00-8:25 Free Choice center time

8:30-9:15 Circle time

9:15-10:15 Work table rotations (including a snack table)

10:15-10:30 Second circle

Other Observations: (use separate sheet if necessary)

Strengths: Allow learning through play centers

Weaknesses: Teachers feel pressed for time, too many worksheets, no pre-screening

Welcome!

This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. It is divided up into five categories relating to the Kindergarten experience: parent participation, classroom environment, teaching, the Kindergarten program and a general overview. Each section includes four questions and open ended response areas. Feel free to use the back of the paper if you need more space.

Thank you for taking the time to participate!

Please Note:

1. Your responses will be kept confidential.
2. Survey responses will be summarized and incorporated into the final Kindergarten Review report presented to the school board at the June meeting and available on the NBCS website.

If you have multiple children currently in Kindergarten, Readiness or First Grade, you are encouraged to complete a separate survey reflecting each child's unique experience.

Before completing a second survey, you may need to refresh your internet browser.

Note About Format: We realize that many survey participants will be reflecting on their child's Kindergarten experience from a previous year; however, to make things easy to read, the survey is composed using the present tense.

Please complete the following statement:

My child is:

- ☐ currently in Kindergarten.
- ☐ currently in Readiness.
- ☐ currently in First Grade.
- ☐ OR My child did not attend Kindergarten at NBCS. If you chose to send your child to a private Kindergarten program, please use the space below to tell us why you chose a private program. You may end the survey here.

Parent Participation:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
I feel welcome in my child's classroom.					
Parent-teacher consultations are helpful and informative.					
Communications from teacher are frequent, proactive and helpful.					
Teachers share information on how I can help my child at home.					

Comments:

Classroom Environment:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
My child's teacher really understands the unique individual needs of my child.					
The materials used are interesting, engaging and fun for my child.					
My child enjoys going to school.					
My child is encouraged to take creative risks.					

Comments:

Teaching:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Creativity is promoted and nurtured in the Kindergarten classroom.					
Classroom instruction considers the developmental needs of my child.					
My child was given ample time to learn expected skills.					
My child's teacher is open, receptive and responsive to feedback.					

Comments:

The Kindergarten Program:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
The program promotes inner confidence and creative risk taking.					
My child's report card accurately reflects my child's academic achievement in a way I can understand.					
My child feels like a part of the NBCS community.					
The program promotes the development of academic success, social skills and friendship building.					

Comments:

General Overview:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
I am confident that the Kindergarten program builds a strong foundation for my child's academic success.					
The environment is set up to reduce stress on young learners.					
My child's Kindergarten experience was positive and successful.					
The classroom instruction is flexible and provides a variety of experiences to meet individual student needs.					

Comments:

Please rank the following components of the Kindergarten experience in order of importance to you and your child:

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice	7th Choice
Love of learning							
Responsibility							
Social skills/friendship							
Creative expression							
Reading/writing skills							
Math/science skills							
Self confidence building							

Upon review of the survey results, if the Kindergarten Review Committee sought out addition input through a parent forum, would you participate?

☐ Yes (if available) ☐ No

***On the back of this page, please share any additional inputs, concerns and/or compliments.

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