

Second Early Learning Pathway Update for 2017-2018

Background

In this second update of the school year, staff will share two major areas of consideration, including programming decisions for the 2018-2019 school year as well as professional development opportunities and experiences for both the current school year and the upcoming school year. While the first update was to provide a holistic view of early learning from a variety of voices, this update is to serve as an explanation for how we can run our programs in a fiscally responsible manner, while still fully providing for our students.

The first major consideration is the fiscal impact the Early Learning/Child Development Services department has on the district budget. Although CDS has worked to try and be as programmatically strong as possible, over the last 3-5 years there has been a downward trend of enrollment. Although not drastic, enrollment has decreased enough to be noticeable in some locations and programs. Interestingly, and contrary to what was previously believed, we do not have as many families seeking the extended day experience as expected. An “extended day” is an opportunity for families to drop off as early as 7:30am and pick up as late as 6:00pm. This option seems to be less enticing to families than previously expected. In addition, our preschool sites that are not directly linked to an elementary school site have diminished enrollment, as families seem to trend more towards proximity of the whole family. While not necessarily true for all, this was definitively a reason the Seaside neighborhood schools were considered a possible better option for the district.

The decision made by SMMUSD to develop the Seaside neighborhood preschools meant the district needed to make a fiscal decision to support this development. Calling on the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) workgroup, the decision was ultimately made to include early learning in both the goals of the LCAP and in the budgetary prospects of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). However, the abstract understanding of this is somewhat concerning because the reality is that our Seaside programs, while successfully engaging families in the community is also quite expensive to run. Each of our Seaside Edison and Grant programs have two full time teachers for a classroom of 24 students. Typically, a preschool class would have 1 teacher with 2 assistants, but these classes have had 2 teachers with 1 assistant. In addition, each classroom has had an extended portion of the day (to move it from a “full day” to an “extended day”). This also meant we have had one teacher and one assistant before and after school. In both classrooms we have had no more than 6 families enroll in extended care. Of those six families, typically 2-3 have been full fee paying families, which means the district has covered the entirety of the extended care costs. While we intend to have the classrooms continue with a STEAM enhanced and Reggio inspired focus, the two-teacher model is not the best use of our fiscal resources and we have decided it is important to reduce a teacher in each of these classrooms.

In our typical CDS classrooms, we have seen decreased enrollment at John Adams preschool. This is an extended day program and has three classrooms on site. We believe we will be fully enrolled with only two classrooms open, rather than three. Though we may see a change in the trend and eventually need to reopen the third class, for the coming year, the most fiscally responsible decision was to reduce one classroom at John Adams. In addition, we have determined that the afternoon class at Pine Street preschool (yet another preschool not attached to a neighborhood elementary school) has had low enrollment for the last three years. Rather than spend

the cost of a teacher and additional assistant (or two), we will be reducing that site to only one morning preschool class (half day). We believe this class will be full, but we cannot determine the afternoon class would have the same enrollment. Finally, Washington West, another site not attached to an elementary school, has a second teacher in the head start classroom. While this model means additional adult support for the children, the experience has not brought about enough support for students or families to feel as if the staffing is an appropriate use of our funds. We will reduce the teaching staff by one at this site as well. It is our hope that taking these measures will help bring us closer to a fiscally sound department.

Below is a grid that shows the programming for the 2017-2018 school year and the anticipated/proposed programming for preschools for the 2018-2019 school year:

2017-2018 School Year

Site	Program Type	Extended Hours?	Fully Enrolled?
Cabrillo (2 Teachers)	Seaside/Special Education Collaborative	Yes	No 6 + 4 Sped = 10/24
Edison (2 Teachers)	Seaside	Yes	No (22/24)
Franklin (1 Teacher)	Part Day AM and PM	No	Yes in AM (19/19) Yes in PM (19/19)
Grant (2 Teachers)	Seaside	Yes	Yes (24/24)
Adams (3.5 Teachers) (3 classes)	Full Day/Extended Day	Yes	No (52/64)
Lincoln Child Dev. Center (.5 Teacher)	Part Day AM	No	Yes 10 + 10 Sped = 20
McKinley (2 Teachers) (2 classes)	Head Start Full Day	No	Yes (40/40)
Muir (1 Teacher)	Head Start Full Day	No	Yes (16/16)
Pine Street (1 Teacher)	Part Day AM and PM	No	No in AM (22/24) No in PM (11/24)
Rogers (2 Teachers) (2 classes)	Head Start Full Day	No	Yes (36/36)
Washington West (3.5 Teachers) (3 classes)	1. Part Day AM 2. Head Start Full and 3. Extended Day *Full and Extended Day	Yes	1. No (20/24) 2. Yes (20/20) 3. Yes (24/24)
Woods	Head Start Full Day	No	Yes (20/20)
Infant/Toddler Center (ITC) (0.5 Teachers) (2 classes)	Full Day/Extended Day	Yes	Yes (28/28)

Recommended Programming for 2018-2019

Site	Program Type	Extended Hours?	Space Available
Cabrillo (2 Teachers)	Seaside/Special Education Collaborative	No	Space for 24
Edison (1 Teacher)	Seaside	No	24
Franklin (1 Teacher)	Part Day AM and PM	No	19 in AM 19 in PM
Grant (1 Teacher)	Seaside	No	24
Adams (3 Teachers) (2 classes)	Full Day/Extended Day	Yes	48
Lincoln Child Development Center (1/2 Teacher)	Part Day AM	No	10 Gen Ed 10 Special Ed
McKinley (2 Teachers) (2 classes)	Head Start Full Day	No	40
Muir (1 Teacher)	Head Start Full Day	No	16
Pine Street (1 Teacher)	Part Day AM and PM	No	24 in AM
Rogers (2 Teachers) (2 classes)	Head Start Full Day	No	36
Washington West (3 Teachers) (3 classes)	1. Part Day AM 2. Head Start Full and 3. Extended Day *Full and Extended Day	Yes	64
Woods	Head Start Full Day	No	20
Infant/Toddler Center (ITC) (2.5 Teachers) (2 classes)	Full Day/Extended Day	No	28

We believe with continued professional development, programming changes to meet the various families' needs, teacher support and appropriate public relations support we can continue to grow our programs. In addition, it is our hope to continue to grow the Seaside neighborhood preschool model at other sites so families can begin to feel connected to the school at the very beginning of their child's educational journey. We will continue to work smart and plan for appropriate and positive growth for our programs, so we continue to provide strong learning foundations for our children.

The Progress of the Early Learning Team

At our first Early Learning Pathway update, we shared the development of our Early Learning Team. We were excited because this team, though small, was comprised of all the various stakeholders in the Early Learning continuum in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. We were just in the early development stages of our team and

were hoping we would be able to set up some type of vertically aligned conversation/professional development for our preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten staffs.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Grant Opportunity with First Five LA

As a reminder, in conjunction with the city of Santa Monica and Connections for Children, SMMUSD proposes to focus on alignment of early learning with the K-12 learning system to build further momentum on existing EDI work and community engagement. Specifically, the short-term goal is to conduct a pilot program starting with SMMUSD preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten educators. In this program, educators will receive release time to participate annually in dialogues around Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and EDI results in order to make recommendations on classroom and system-wide practices related to early learning alignment.

The theory of change driving this goal is that if educators have dedicated time to review DRDP and EDI data, they will share their expertise and insights on classroom and system interventions to address concerning trends. Transitional practices between teachers would supplement existing family engagement events and materials, as well as support the development of an early warning and intervention system that addresses children's developmental progress. Under this model, preparation to support the whole child occurs on a teacher, family, community, City, and District level and a common set of measures monitoring developmental progress informs preparation efforts.

The overarching vision for this pilot program is to use families and educators' insights and recommendations to achieve the following long-term goals:

1. Implement identified family and community engagement strategies around the EDI
2. Develop an early warning indicators system for community-wide preschools to screen and link children to supports
3. Ensure children experience supported progression from early childhood education and care to kindergarten through the expansion of transitional practices between preschool teachers/early child care providers and kindergarten teachers

In the future, the intent is to expand the community EDI engagement plan to include an Early Learning Systems Alignment Tool Kit. The purpose of the tool kit will be to sustain conversations between preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, and families in private and public, informal and formal settings. Recommendations made by SMMUSD and non-SMMUSD early educators will inform the tool kit development. The tool kit could include EDI presentation templates, EDI maps, screening tools and instructions, strategies on facilitating exchanges with kindergarten teachers, as well as strategies to empower parents to ask questions, share information about their child with the new kindergarten teacher, and ultimately, feel confident in their involvement in children's learning and development.

Since our first Early Learning Team meeting we have been hard at work and have developed a professional development day set to happen in the first two weeks of May. Although we won't be able to have all staff out on the same day, we will have the opportunity to invite every staff member to participate (either on the day offered, or on a follow up after school day).

The draft agenda of the day is below:

DRAFT Agenda for Vertical Alignment Conversations
May 1st, May 2nd, May 8th

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Just Like Me Activity
- II. Building a Common Understanding of School Readiness
 - a. Yardsticks Activity - What should students know and be able to do?
- III. Why Early Learning?
 - a. "Who are we" Powerpoint
- IV. EDI and DRDP Information session
 - a. First 5LA shares?
- V. EDI and DRDP Crosswalk Activity
 - a. Focus on Social Emotional Development (SED), Cognition Including Math and Science (COG), and Language and Literacy Dev (LLD)
- VI. Let's Create Together!
 - a. The Color Monster Book (or El Monstruo de los Colores)
 - b. Consider conversation entry points at PK, TK, and K
 - c. Find the Domain that best suits your needs
 - d. Develop expectations for what to bring back in August
- VII. Next Steps and Next Year
- VIII. Process Check, Reflection and Closure

Next Steps

We continue to consider the needs of all our families, but must do so within the context of our capacity. For the 2018-2019 school year we have made some difficult decisions to streamline our program offerings. However, we are also deepening and expanding our learning opportunities. Currently we have Seaside preschool programs at three of our elementary schools. We will maintain this for the upcoming school year so we can continue to grow our programs together (the CDS state, full fee and Head Start programs with Seaside programs). However, our ultimate hope would be to create co-located programs including all forms of funded programs in the same classroom environment, and more on the campuses of our elementary school sites. In addition, conversations around developing our special education programs with general education continue to take place. It is our goal to develop in to a stronger Early Learning pathway for the 2018-2019 school year and beyond.