

Geneva Community School District 304

Kindergarten Study

Final Report

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District Mission Statement

The Mission of School District 304 is to educate students within an environment that encourages the desire to learn and enhances the teaching of skills necessary to meet the unique academic, personal, physical and social needs of each individual. The school program will reflect the values and ambitions of the community, and every student will be challenged to develop intellectual and learning skills to his/her fullest potential, preparing them to become contributing members of society.

District-Level Goals for Students

Geneva students will face increasing and challenging responsibilities in their roles as workers, citizens, and family members. Students' learning during the school years must now include both an understanding of traditional subject matter and the ability to develop and utilize knowledge in preparation for a future world requiring new skills and abilities.

The district-level goals for students, shown below, supported through specific, measurable outcomes, identify what should be the result of a student's schooling. The common purpose of all members of Geneva School District 304 is to assist every student, every day, to become:

- Self-directed, life-long learners who enjoy the challenge of learning; gain self-confidence and set goals accordingly; and demonstrate physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being.
- Effective communicators who access, interpret, and respond to information by reading, listening, and questioning; convey meaning in a variety of ways including written, oral, visual, numeric, and artistic means; and use appropriate technology.
- Complex, creative, and adaptive thinkers who apply academic knowledge, skills, and strategies to gather and interpret information to solve problems; create intellectual, artistic, and practical products which reflect quality and originality; and analyze the effectiveness of their decisions and solutions.
- Collaborative workers/citizens who recognize the advantages of diversity and cooperation; show concern, tolerance, and respect; demonstrate leadership and/or group skills; demonstrate actions which mutually benefit self and others; and assume responsibility for the results of their actions, locally and globally.

Introduction

At the request of the Board of Education, the Geneva School District commissioned a study to determine the best instructional model for the kindergarten program. A committee comprised of a kindergarten and first grade teacher and administrator from each of the five elementary buildings, a pre-school teacher from Friendship Station, a Student Services administrator, and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction was organized to conduct the study and provide recommendations for future programming. The committee convened in September 2006.

The committee reviewed the current kindergarten program in Geneva. The review included an analysis of curriculum taught and time spent each week on each subject or skill. The entire kindergarten team compared the current curriculum to the newly-published draft of the *Illinois Early Learning Standards*.

The committee compiled a list of schools in Kane, DuPage, Will, DeKalb, and Lake counties that offer half-day kindergarten, all-day kindergarten, and a combination of half-day and all-day kindergarten. Schools within the study were contacted to collect information on their programs including schedules and curriculum.

The committee reviewed literature that focused on developmentally appropriate programming and brain research, pre-school programming, and all-day kindergarten programs. Literature and research studies were analyzed and discussed by the committee. A review of the literature was compiled and will be included in this report.

Based on the review of best practices, information from data collected, interviews and/or visits to outside districts, and the professional consensus of the group, a potential schedule for an all-day kindergarten program was drafted. The purpose of the draft was to compare our half-day program with an all-day program.

After completing the initial review of literature and the *Illinois Early Learning Standards*, analyzing and comparing programs outside Geneva, and taking an in-depth look at the current kindergarten program in Geneva, the committee agreed that an all-day program would provide time to:

- Prepare students for the more rigorous curriculum and the increased expectations within our new math and language arts curriculum
- Spend more time on developing good learner characteristics
- Provide interventions and additional services to those children who need them, which research shows to be critical in those early years of school
- Improve students' ability to perform well on high-stakes tests

Using an all-day model, the committee began collecting information to determine the impact of implementing all-day kindergarten both instructionally and fiscally. The following text describes the rationale and impact of such an implementation.

Purpose of All-Day Kindergarten

- To implement the new Illinois Kindergarten Learning Standards including not only Language Arts and Math but also Science, Social Studies, and Social Emotional goals
- To be able to teach the curriculum in depth rather than just touching the surface due to lack of time
- To observe and assess the characteristics and abilities of each student in order to individualize the instruction to meet each child's needs
- To interrelate instruction to facilitate connections across the curriculum
- To use best practice techniques to facilitate problem solving, collaboration, team building, responsibility and leadership skills
- To teach, practice, review/re-teach the curriculum as recommended by best practices
- To expand on the educational experiences that many Geneva children have completed in preschool programs for one or two years and to bring educational continuity to those children who attend day care facilities either before or after the current kindergarten
- To provide developmentally appropriate activities to help the children acclimate to a longer day
- To facilitate life-long learners by having time to take advantage of the teachable moments
- To create a smoother transition to first grade with the exposure to a longer day, the lunch room experience, and the additional time to be better prepared academically

Description of Current Program:

- Half-day program available to all Geneva kindergarten-age children.
- Children attend for a total of 12.5 hours per week.
- 1.5 hours per week, students participate in P.E., Music, and Library.
- Other services (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech, Resource, Social Work, and English Language Learners) when needed also draw from the remaining classroom instructional time. Due to the length of the day, students must receive services during reading and mathematics instruction.
- Approximately 10.5 hours per week used for instruction
 - Reading 5.0
 - Mathematics 2.5
 - Science50
 - Social Studies50
 - Social Emotional Development50
 - Music50
 - Library/Technology..... .50
 - Physical Education50
 - Arrival, Dismissal, Opening..... 2.0
- Approximately 8.5 hours per week (1.7 hours per day) are spent on academic instruction (Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies).

Review of Literature

Committee members divided the current research into sections and summarized the information for the committee. What follows is a brief description of the findings of the group, broken down by general topic area.

Developmentally Appropriate Programming and Brain Research

There seem to be two basic schools of thought regarding Kindergarten (early elementary) programming today. There are those who subscribe to an academic approach and those who prefer to address the social/emotional development of the child. Many believe the two are mutually exclusive. Fortunately, they are not, and some schools are opting for a developmentally appropriate approach which also emphasizes academic learning. Developmentally Appropriate Practices focus on creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's learning and development, and establishing mutually beneficial relationships with families.

While there does not appear to be solid research verifying the success of Developmentally Appropriate Practices in enhancing student achievement or emotional growth (which is extremely difficult to measure), these practices make sense to educators concerned about educating the whole child.

Pre-School Programming

Until recently, pre-schools have been in the domain of the private sector, with day-care providers and others developing programs to enhance the experiences of the children in their care. Except for Head Start, a pre-school program which targeted impoverished or disadvantaged children, few formalized programs have existed. Much information has come to light about students' "readiness" to learn. More and more children begin kindergarten without these "readiness" skills, and socio-economic status seems to play a vital role in the disparity between these children and their "ready-to-learn" peers. As we learn more about the nature of early learning, however, more and more states are venturing into the pre-kindergarten arena, trying to develop these readiness skills in children viewed as "at-risk." Evidence is accumulating that a high-quality pre-school experience can have long-term positive effects on the participants, their families, and society as a whole. The key here is "high-quality."

Full-Day Kindergarten Programs

Studies of full-day kindergarten programs yield the following results. There is an increase in the number of available full-day programs, perhaps as a result of more single-parent families and/or more dual-income families. While the relative percentage of time devoted to instructional concepts is similar between half and full-day programs, educators believe the full-day programs allow for greater depth of experience and the ability to focus more on the interests and needs of each child. A full-day program allows for more frequent progress monitoring to assess student learning and to plan instruction accordingly. Full-day programs allow for the instruction in reading and math to continue being at the fore, while instruction in other areas (science, social studies, etc.) can be explored more fully as well. Not surprisingly, full-day kindergarten programs seem to demonstrate the greatest benefits for students who lack readiness skills.

Full-Day versus Half-Day Programs

According to the available information, when investigating full-day versus half-day programs, educators need to focus on the following:

- Full-day programs are on the rise across the country.
- Often, rationale for developing full-day programs includes a response to the concerns of working parents.
- Costs of developing full-day programs need to be taken into consideration; will the benefits to children offset the financial costs of adding facilities and teachers.
- Benefits are most profound to children from low-income backgrounds.
- Positive relationships are evident between participation in full-day programs and later school performance in independent learning and classroom involvement.
- Full-day programs allow for a relaxed instructional pace and greater time to devote to student interests and needs.
- Children exhibit greater readiness for first grade, including greater progress on standardized tests, fewer reading intervention referrals, fewer instances of grade retention, and greater progress in literacy, math, and general learning skills.
- Few, if any, detrimental effects result from participation in full-day versus half-day programs.
- All benefits to a full-day program are contingent upon developmentally appropriate programming.

What is the Background of Full-Day Kindergarten?

The first Froebelian kindergarten in this country, opened in Wisconsin by Margarete Schurz in 1857, was a full-day program. It was not until the 1950's, that most kindergartens changed to half-day, two-session programs. This was due, primarily, to financial and space considerations, rather than educational or academic reasons. However, full-day kindergarten programs are making a comeback. According to the U.S. Census figures in 1970, only about 13% of the five-year-olds in the United States went to full-day kindergarten. By 1993, that number had grown to 45% (Elicker & Mathur, 1997).

Why Full-Day Kindergarten?

Reasons for the trend toward full-day kindergarten include advantages for two-income or single-parent families, both in convenience and financial matters. Advantages to school districts include greater state aid for full-time students and financial savings from eliminating noon busing and crossing guards, although these savings do not always balance out the increased costs in administering a full-day program. Most importantly, research seems to indicate that full-day kindergarten benefits children academically and socially (Elicker & Mathur, 1997; Puleo, 1988; Cryan, Sheehan, Wiechel, & Bandy-Hedden, 1992).

Where is Full-Day Kindergarten Being Implemented?

According to *The Education Digest* (Chmelynski, Sept. 1998) the states of Arkansas, Florida, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia require full-day programs. Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Vermont require school districts to offer a choice of half-day and full-day programs. Virginia requires students to attend full-day kindergarten in districts that offer it. Many other states, although not requiring full-day programs, offer them in many of their school districts. In Missouri, 92% of the districts offer full-day

kindergarten. In New York, 57.9% of kindergarten students were enrolled in full-day programs in 1986 (Puleo, 1988). It should be noted that Illinois does not require full-day kindergarten.

What are the Educational Advantages of Full-Day Kindergarten?

Research studies show a clear advantage, academically and socially, for students enrolled in a full-day kindergarten. Cryan et al. (1992), studying full-day programs in 27 schools in Ohio found a broad range of academic and behavioral benefits, which lasted well into second grade. Children from full-day programs scored higher on standardized tests, and were seen by their teachers to be more independent, original thinkers and more productive learners who were more involved in what they were doing.

Elicker and Mathur (1997) undertook a two-year Purdue University study of a Wisconsin program involving 179 randomly selected kindergartners placed in either full or half-day classrooms. They, also, found that “the full-day program resulted in more child-initiated learning activity, more teacher-directed individual activity, higher levels of active engagement, and higher levels of positive affect, in both absolute and proportional terms. Teachers saw children in full-day classrooms as better able to initiate and engage flexibly in a variety of classroom activities, and to explore deeply and respond to challenges that were well matched to individual interests and abilities.”

Vincent Puleo analyzed data from studies done between 1974 and 1985. Twenty-two of the thirty studies reported better scores for the full-day students on basic skills tests taken at the end of kindergarten. A number of the studies he examined also showed long-term advantages to full-day programs. A study by Winter and Klein (1970), for instance, showed significant results at the end of grade one. Humphrey’s study also reported significant results at the end of grade one (1980) as well as at the end of grades 3 and 4 (1983). He cites the Nieman and Gastright study (1981) as showing the longest-lasting gains. “Their follow-up involved reading and math achievement at the end of grades 4 and 8. Both fourth and eighth grade follow-up project students scored statistically higher than did controls.” He concluded that, “The preceding review is encouraging regarding the effects of full- and extended-day kindergarten. Particularly impressive is the fact that rarely are differences found in favor of half-day classes. Rather, the consistent trend is either full-day program confirmation or no difference.”

What are the Disadvantages to Full-Day Kindergarten?

One of the problems cited with full-day programs was the additional cost to the school district. Additional teachers and aides would significantly raise costs, which may or may not be offset by increases in state aid and transportation savings. Additional classroom space would also be needed which could be a problem for districts with growing enrollments and limited space (Rothenberg, 1984).

Other concerns regard the readiness of kindergarten children to handle the time and rigors of a full-day program. According to Finkelstein (1983), given the 5-year-old’s attention span, level of interest, and home ties, a half-day program offers ample time in school and allows more time for the young child to play and interact with adults and other children in less-structured home or child care settings (Rothenberg, 1984). Teachers in Elicker and Mathur’s study (1997) mentioned the fatigue of some children at the beginning of the year as the only significant drawback to full-day kindergarten. In

later interviews, the teachers noted that, “virtually all children seemed free of this fatigue by the middle of the school year.” Opponents of full-day programs have also argued that these programs may become too academic, concentrating on the basic skills before the children are ready (Rothenberg, 1984). However, research has shown the opposite to be true. Full-day programs devote more time to child-initiated, developmentally appropriate activities than half-day programs (Elicker & Mathur, 1997).

Do the Advantages Outweigh the Disadvantages?

The research seems to indicate, overwhelmingly, that the advantages of having an all-day kindergarten program outweigh the disadvantages. However, each state and each individual school district must, ultimately, make that decision for its own schools and students.

Illinois Early Learning Standards * KINDERGARTEN



Introduction

The Illinois Early Learning Standards Kindergarten, developed by the Illinois State Board of Education with the assistance of hundreds of educators, were first introduced in draft form in September 2004. Among those playing a major role in formulating the draft standards were the Chicago Public Schools, Dallas City School District, Decatur Public Schools, Regional Office of Education #27, Indian Prairie School District, and Rockford Public School District.

“Standards are an essential first step for designing effective curricula since they represent an agreed upon agenda for teaching and learning. The Illinois Early Learning Standards Kindergarten are excellent because they recognize the interconnectedness of emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development and learning—the whole child. Like all good standards, they should be used as the base for reflective teachers as they create learning experiences that build on what children already know and capture their interest in learning.”

Barbara Bowman
President Emeritus
Erikson Institute

Since publication of the draft, hundreds of educators and parents, and a wide array of national, state and local experts, have commented on the standards. This final draft of the Illinois Early Learning Standards Kindergarten is a synthesis of their many views.

The standards are organized to parallel in content the Illinois Learning Standards. Included are benchmarks for learning in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Physical Development and Health, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, and Social/Emotional Development.

The goal of the standards is to provide teachers and caregivers useful information that is directly needed as part of their daily classroom work. For those who are interested, the complete Illinois Learning Standards may be found on the Illinois State Board of Education web site, www.isbe.net.

ISBE acknowledges, with great thanks, the very thoughtful and knowledgeable comments that have helped shape these standards. A list of contributing school districts and early childhood programs appears on the back of this document. There is no doubt that without this assistance, the standards would not exist today.

Kay Henderson

*Division Administrator
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* Illinois State Board of Education: *Division of Early Childhood Education*
Draft – September 2006



Guiding Principles

Early learning and development are multi-dimensional; developmental domains are highly interrelated.

Development in one domain influences development in other domains. For example, children's language skills affect their ability to engage in social interactions. Therefore, developmental domains cannot be considered in isolation from each other. The dynamic interaction of all areas of development must be considered. Standards and benchmarks listed for each domain could also be cited in different domains.

Young children are capable and competent.

All children are capable of positive developmental outcomes. Therefore, there should be high expectations for all young children, regardless of their backgrounds and experience.

Children are individuals who develop at different rates.

Each child is unique in the rate of growth and the development of skills and competencies. Some children may have a developmental delay or disability that may require program staff members to adapt expectations for individual children or adapt experiences so that children can be successful in achieving a particular benchmark.

Children will exhibit a range of skills and competencies in any domain of development.

All children within an age group should not be expected to arrive at each benchmark at the same time or to show mastery to the same degree of proficiency.

Knowledge of how children grow and develop, together with expectations that are consistent with growth patterns, are essential to develop, implement and maximize the benefits of educational experiences for children.

Kindergarten teachers must agree on what they expect children to know and be able to do within the context of child growth and development. With this knowledge, kindergarten staff can make sound decisions about appropriate curriculum for the group and for individual children.

Young children learn through active exploration of their environment in child-initiated and teacher-selected activities.

Kindergarten educators recognize that children's play is a highly supportive context for development and learning. The early childhood environment should provide opportunities for children to explore materials, engage in activities, and interact with peers and adults to construct their own understanding of the world around them. There should, therefore, be a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities to maximize learning.

Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children.

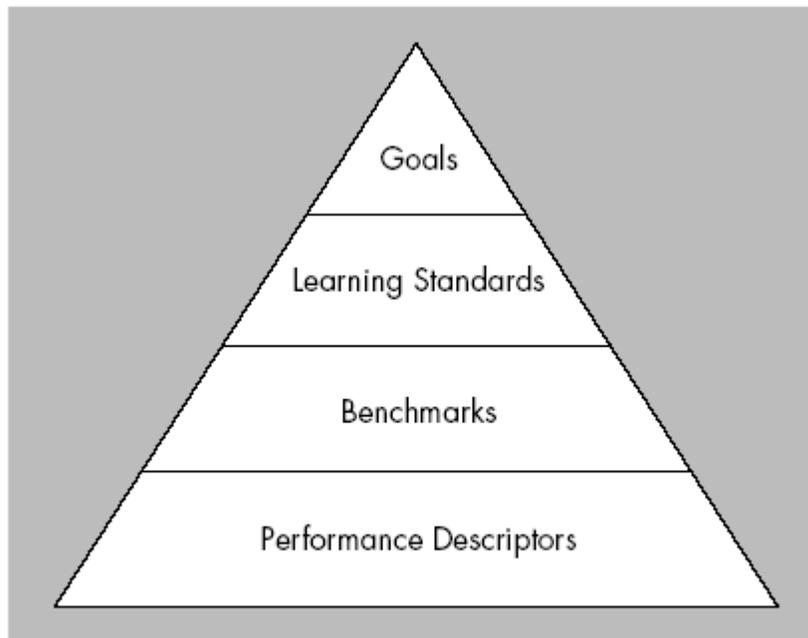
Families should be aware of programmatic goals, experiences that should be provided for children and expectations for their performance by the end of the kindergarten year. Program staff members and families should work collaboratively to ensure that children are provided optimal learning experiences.

*Adapted from *Preschool Curriculum Framework and Benchmarks for Children in Preschool Programs**



Design for Performance Standards

The performance standards are classroom resources for voluntary use at the local level. They are not intended to replace the Illinois Learning Standards. Instead, they supplement them by providing sufficient detail and examples to enable teachers to establish appropriate grade-level performance expectations for students. The performance descriptors are a direct outgrowth of the state goals for learning and provide additional detail at each grade level.



New Standards. Performance Standards. (1997) Washington, DC: The National Center on Education and the Economy.

Goal ——— 1

Illinois Learning Standards Structure

Learning Standards

Learning Benchmarks for Grade-Level Clusters

	Early Elem	Late Elem	Middle/JH	Early HS	Late HS
A					
B					
C					

Goals are broad statements of knowledge and/or skills that organize the subject matter of the learning area. Each goal has an explanation of why it is important and how it relates to life beyond school.

Learning Standards are specific statements of knowledge and/or skills within a goal. Taken together, the standards clearly define the learning needed to reach that goal. They represent the results of schooling and thus may be considered exit standards.

Learning Benchmarks are progress indicators for gauging students' achievement of each exit standard. They form the basis for measuring student achievement over time. In general, benchmarks for the early grades represent basic skills. Later benchmarks build in complexity and rigor from one level to the next, culminating in deep understandings demonstrated through complex performances.

The grade-level clusters for learning benchmarks are early elementary school, late elementary school, middle/junior high school, early high school and late high school. Specific grade levels are not used to allow schools flexibility in how they structure their education programs. The focus is on results, not on how the results are achieved or on a fixed amount of time.

STATE GOAL 1: Read with understanding and fluency.

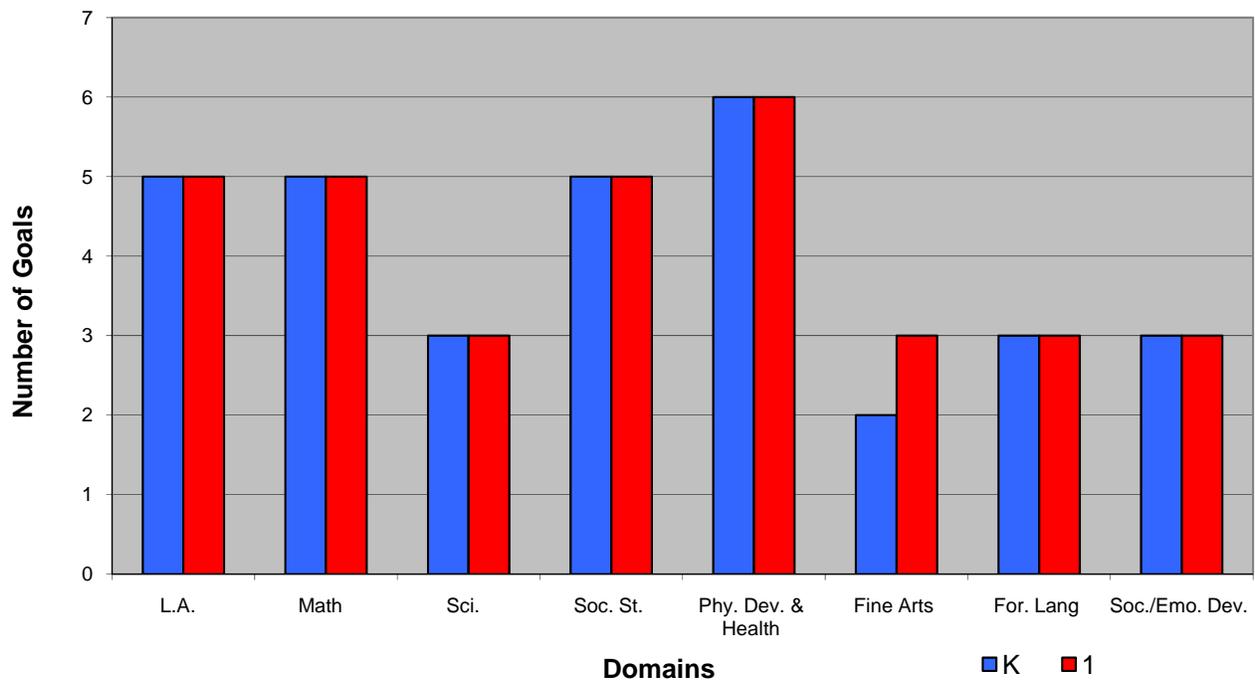
A. Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.

EARLY ELEMENTARY	LATE ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	EARLY HIGH SCHOOL	LATE HIGH SCHOOL
1.A.1a Apply word analysis skills (e.g., phonics, word patterns) to recognize new words.	1.A.2a Read and comprehend unfamiliar words using root words, synonyms, antonyms, word origins and derivations.	1.A.3a Apply knowledge of word origins and derivations to comprehend words used in specific content areas (e.g., scientific, political, literary, mathematical).	1.A.4a Expand knowledge of word origins and derivations and use idioms, analogies, metaphors and similes to extend vocabulary development.	1.A.5a Identify and analyze new terminology applying knowledge of word origins and derivations in a variety of practical settings.
1.A.1b Comprehend unfamiliar words using context clues and prior knowledge; verify meanings with resource materials.	1.A.2b Clarify word meaning using context clues and a variety of resources including glossaries, dictionaries and thesauruses.	1.A.3b Analyze the meaning of words and phrases in their context.	1.A.4b Compare the meaning of words and phrases and use analogies to explain the relationships among them.	1.A.5b Analyze the meaning of abstract concepts and the effects of particular word and phrase choices.

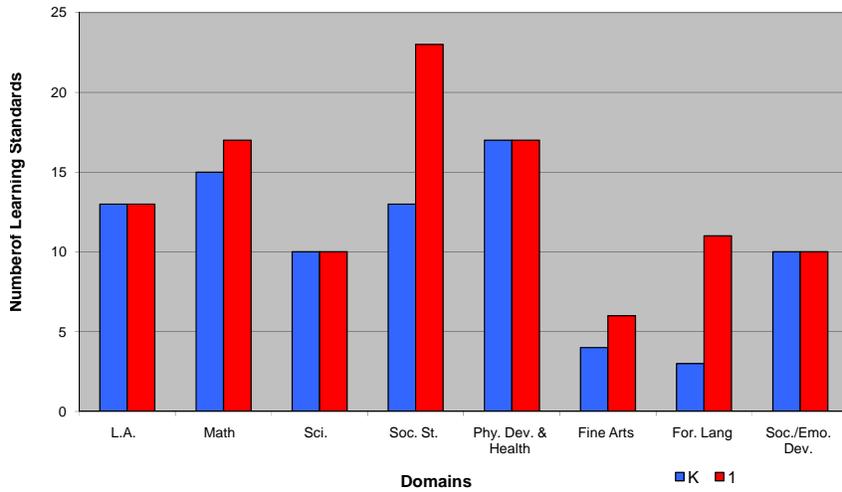
Comparison of the total number of components of the Kindergarten and First Grade Illinois Learning Standards

The following charts and graphs illustrate the comparison of goals and expectations for kindergarten and first grade students. With the exception of fine arts, kindergarten has the same number of goals as first grade. Learning standards and benchmarks for Language Arts, science, physical education, and social/emotional skills are also equal. Differences do appear for mathematics, social studies, foreign language (not taught in elementary levels in Geneva), and fine arts. The comparison is significant when compared to the number of hours of instruction available to kindergarten (12.5) vs. first grade (30).

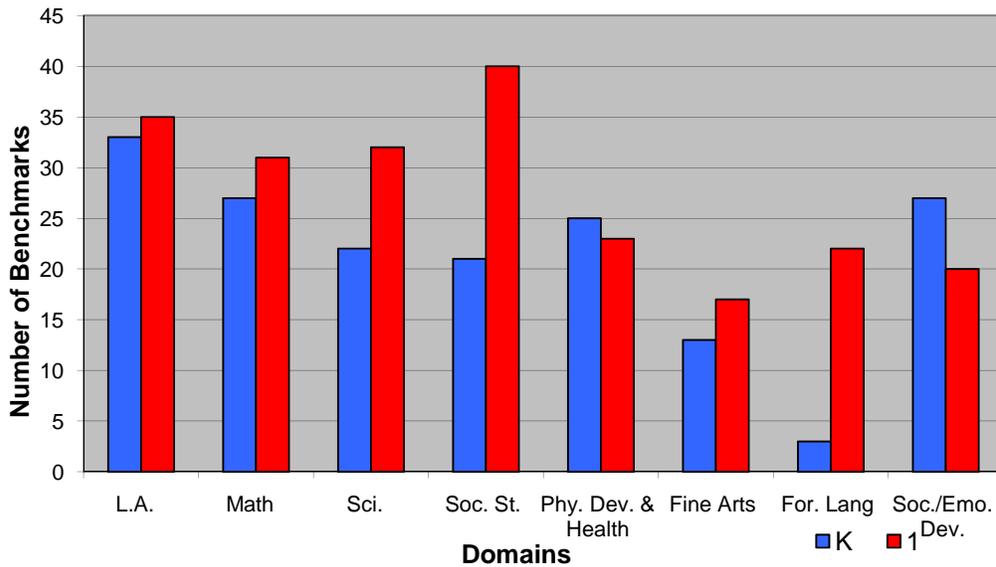
Number of Goals for Grades K and 1



Number of Learning Standards for Grades K and 1



Number of Benchmarks for Grades K and 1



Summary of Conducted Interviews

As the 2007-2008 school year began committee members determined that an appropriate course of action would be to delve deeper into the experiences of other districts that have made the positive move to full-day kindergarten. The committee created a survey that would effectively help to determine the attitudes, policies, procedures, road blocks, and outcomes of implementing a full-day kindergarten program. It was the intent of the group to gain a more complete understanding of the undertaking that it believed would ultimately provide the best possible education for Geneva students. The committee was fortunate to receive valuable information from several educators in diverse communities that have undertaken the implementation of a full-day kindergarten program for their students. The following information has been compiled from these numerous interviews.

The committee began the interview process by reviewing a comprehensive spreadsheet of the elementary and unit school districts in northern Illinois. After analyzing the list to determine the schools/districts that could provide the most valuable information, committee members took individual responsibility for various portions of the list. At that point, the committee created a detailed survey that members believed would provide them with the most relevant and useful information throughout this process. The key portions of the survey that committee members found most poignant and insightful referenced: schools' and districts' reasons for moving to a full-day kindergarten program, the length of time they have been conducting full-day kindergarten, which students (if not all) attend the full-day program, and any conclusions, in the form of short or long-term effects (either positive or negative) that respondents have noted. Surveys were then distributed, collected, and reviewed by the committee, ultimately providing a framework for the group's decision making process.

Reasons for consideration of a full-day kindergarten program

Survey respondents shared multiple reasons for implementing a full-day kindergarten program in their communities. Most notably, educators from many schools and districts identified the short amount of instructional time that a half-day kindergarten program provides for students as a key factor in their decision making process. The increased demands of students in the form of standardized tests, the superior knowledge that we, as educators have gained, not only about sound pedagogy and instructional practices, but also about developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children, and their teachers' intuitive sense that students were simply not allowed to work to their potential in a half-day program, all contributed to the move towards a full-day program. Furthermore, primary teachers across the state have certainly noted that all grades have become more academically rigorous and this rigor has *trickled down* to first grade. While first grade teachers, do a tremendous job working with students at their instructional levels and meeting their needs with developmentally appropriate instruction, the fact that students enter their classrooms having spent only two and a half hours a day in school the previous year was noted, time and again, as rationale for the consideration of full-day kindergarten.

Survey respondents also noted that these increased demands, combined with a short, half-day program, removed many opportunities for students to build social and communication skills. Teachers work tremendously hard to ensure that their students

meet the more challenging academic goals that primary teachers across the state (and according to literature, across the country) have noted, yet this determined effort requires tremendous exertion from the five-year-olds in kindergarten programs without providing them with the opportunity to *decompress* and learn developmentally appropriate skills such as sharing, relating with others, and developing their creativity. The implementation of full-day kindergarten in many districts was a direct result of this time crunch.

Finally, it is important to note that nearly every respondent to the survey indicated a strong desire by their communities to see a full-day kindergarten program implemented within their school district. Many school districts found that the increasingly hectic schedules of single parent households and households with two working parents had put a burden on working families who struggle with childcare for their children who spend only a few hours at school every day. Parents in numerous communities indicated that if they were going to have their children in the care of someone else, they would prefer that it be at school, where they trust their children's academic and social needs could most appropriately be met. Respondents also referred to the above mentioned increased academic demands on students as a factor that parents considered when seeking full-day kindergarten in their communities. Schools and districts also noted that half-day programs can hinder curricular continuity for their first graders, as parents in their communities often sent their children to private, full-day kindergarten programs so that they were in the same academic setting all day, only to send them back to the public school for first grade.

Length of time a full-day kindergarten program has been implemented

The districts and schools that responded to the committee's survey have been conducting full-day kindergarten programs for a wide variety of timelines. This breadth of experience provided the committee with valuable insight into the possible implementation of a full-day program. Hinkley/Big Rock has been providing full-day kindergarten for the shortest time of any respondent, two years. On the other end of the spectrum is Hiawatha Elementary School in Kirkland, which has had students in its full-day kindergarten program for the last twelve years. The majority of respondents, however, were massed somewhere in the middle, with the preponderance responding that full-day kindergarten has been in implementation for somewhere between four and six years. Many survey respondents indicated that they began their implementation of full-day kindergarten with some form of a pilot or test program. Whether the pilot was offering full-day kindergarten at a single site, offering kindergarten in both full-day and half-day formats, or simply switching to a full-day program with an option for students to leave at the half-day mark, everyone indicated that the vast majority of families within their communities not only embraced full-day kindergarten, but also actively sought full-day kindergarten for their children.

Which students attend full-day kindergarten?

For the majority of respondents to the committee's survey, most, if not all of their students currently attend a full-day kindergarten program. As stated previously, many districts began the implementation of a full-day kindergarten program with some sort of pilot program. Respondents shared that after implementation, many parents actively pursued a full-day option for their children. This desire from the community, coupled

with positive outcomes that school district officials felt had been achieved, led, in many of these districts, to an increase in full-day kindergarten offerings. Some districts (District 93, and District 159 for example) expanded from programs consisting of one site of full-day kindergarten, or programs with one full-day class at each of their schools, to programs that provided multiple offerings of full-day kindergarten at every school. Ultimately, all communities that replied to the survey indicated that their district eventually moved from programs with a preponderance of half-day kindergarten classes to programs with a preponderance of full-day classes; if any half-day programs remain at all. Some schools like James Wood Elementary in Somonauk even offer half-day programs to their families and still have every kindergarten child in a full day program.

Conclusions about full-day kindergarten implementation

Committee members found that surveying educators that have familiarity with half-day and full-day programs and full-day program implementation provided a tremendously valuable perspective. This perspective allowed committee members to make some valuable determinations and ultimately greatly contributed to the belief that full-day kindergarten is the best possible scenario for our students. One of the most overwhelmingly clear lessons that the committee learned from the survey respondents was the benefit that their communities felt full-day kindergarten provided for their children. Parents felt their children's attendance in a full-day kindergarten program not only benefited them academically, but also socially. In addition, parents truly appreciated the opportunity to keep their children in a stimulating environment for the entire length of the school day; knowing full well that highly trained educators can provide the best possible educational environment for their children. It was also noted, that schools and districts that implemented full-day kindergarten had more consistent first grade numbers, most likely due to the fact that fewer parents were sending their children elsewhere for full-day kindergarten opportunities.

It was also noted through the surveys that both kindergarten and first grade teachers saw both social and academic improvement for students. Time after time, respondents indicated that kindergarteners in full-day programs not only had an opportunity to receive more appropriate and diagnostic academic instruction, but that they were also more likely to have developmentally relevant social experiences that simply cannot occur during a short, two-and-a-half-hour school day. First grade teachers responded that they saw definite growth with their students, not only socially and academically, but also with routines, thus allowing them to *hit the ground running* at the beginning of first grade. Even districts that did not initially see great improvement in achievement for their students found that the implementation of a full-day kindergarten program was valuable. One respondent candidly indicated that after initial implementation of the program they saw little in the way of results. This begged the question *why* which then led to a frank evaluation of their curriculum based upon data. The evaluation led to enhanced instructional practices in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and mathematics that ultimately led to "dramatic results" for their students. It is important to note, however, that responses such as this were definitely in the minority. As a whole, the bulk of respondents who indicated positive results had very little hard evidence to support such a claim. Many districts relied on the experience of their knowledgeable teachers and candid parents to determine the eventual success of their full-day kindergarten implementation.

In conclusion, the committee found that the considerable time and effort put into the development, administration, and compilation of the survey proved remarkably valuable. The committee's conclusion that full-day kindergarten is the most appropriate education environment for kindergarten students was greatly aided by these actions.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that the Board of Education consider a long-term goal of implementing all-day kindergarten for all students. The committee unanimously agrees that the final instructional model should be all inclusive. Whether the District chooses to continue offering a half-day program or decides to offer an all-day program, all students should have the same opportunity. This would result in providing classroom space, instructional materials, and certified staff to meet the needs of all kindergarten students, should their parents enroll them in an all-day program. This would have the potential to double the number of classrooms and FTE needed.

Staffing

District-wide all-day kindergarten would require an increase of up to twelve (12) certified kindergarten teachers by the time Fabyan Elementary School opens in the fall of 2009. If we maintain our current level of classroom support additional teacher assistants would also be required.

Kindergarten Teachers @ \$55,000 X 12 = \$660,000 (*Education Fund expense*)

Kindergarten Assistants @ \$15,000 X 12 = \$180,000 (*Education Fund expense*)

Facilities Planning

Additional classroom space would need to be allocated in each elementary building in order to accommodate up to four (4) sections of kindergarten per building. Once Williamsburg and Fabyan Elementary Schools open, additional classroom spaces within the District should be available for kindergarten programming. Other options for classroom space include:

- Reconfiguring two existing classrooms in each of the elementary buildings to house kindergarten classes
- Building additional classrooms as additions to existing buildings
Classroom Space – Based on an estimate of 1,200 sq. ft. @ \$230 dollars per sq. ft. \$276,000 per class room (*O&M Expense*)

Furnishings

Each new classroom would need to be furnished and equipped at an estimate of \$144,000 based on \$12,000 per classroom (*O&M Expense*)

Description of Program

- All-day program available to all Geneva kindergarten age children.
- Children attend for a total of 31.6 hours per week.
- 3.3 hours per week students participate in lunch/recess.
- Social Emotional Development skills are taught during the regular instructional time as well as during lunch, recess, and opening activities.
- 3 hours per week, students participate in P.E., Music, and Library, and Technology.
- Other services (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech, Resource, Social Work, and English Language Learners), when needed, also draw from the remaining classroom instructional time. These services could take place at times that would not take children out of reading instruction.

Full Day Kindergarten Schedule

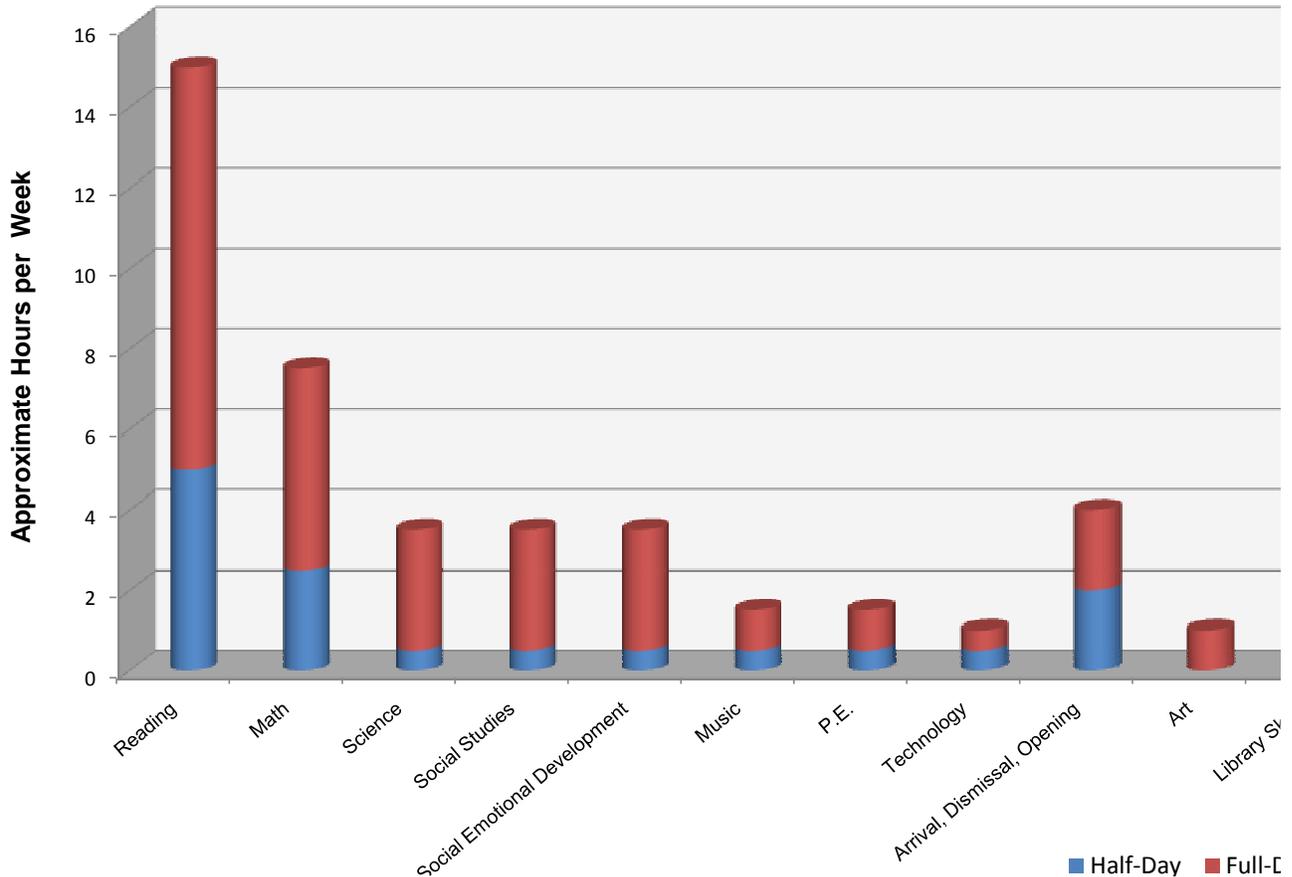
- Approximately 30.0 hours per week used for instruction
 - Reading 10.0
 - Mathematics 5.0
 - Science 3.0
 - Social Studies 3.0
 - Social Emotional Development* 3.0
 - Music 1.0
 - Physical Education 1.0
 - Technology 0.5
 - Art 1.0
 - Library Skills 0.5
 - Arrival, Dismissal, Opening* 2.0
 - Lunch/recess* 3.3
- Approximately 21 hours per week (4.2 hours per day) are spent on academic instruction (Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies).

*This overlap accounts for approximately 1.7 hours per week.

Instructional Time Comparing Full-Day with Half-Day Kindergarten

Subject	Full-Day	Half-Day
Reading	10.0	5.0
Math	5.0	2.5
Science	3.0	0.5
Social Studies	3.0	0.5
Social Emotional Development	3.0	0.5
Music	1.0	0.5
P.E.	1.0	0.5
Technology	0.5	0.5
Arrival, Dismissal, Opening	2.0	2.0
Art	1.0	0.0
Library Skills	0.5	0.0
Total	30 hours	12.5

Instructional Hours - Full-day vs. Half-Day



All-Day Kindergarten Implementation Recommendation

The committee recognizes that the design and implementation of an all-day kindergarten program will require a significant amount of planning and funding. While from the standpoint of the staff and parents it would be ideal to be able to start the program within a year, it is not a realistic expectation. **The committee recommends that the Board of Education consider a long-term goal of implementing all-day kindergarten for all students.** While working toward that goal, the committee recommends offering expanded kindergarten services for students who may need extra programming prior to entering first grade. The following solutions are listed for consideration.

Recommended Transitional/Interim Proposal

- Implement a Foundations Program to serve students who are identified as “at risk” (IEP as well as other students in need). The Foundations program would:
 - Include a morning and afternoon program in addition to the regular half-day kindergarten session.
 - Provide services to students to four days per week (AM/PM)
 - Provide one day per week for the Foundation’s teacher to work with students in their regular kindergarten classroom and meet with kindergarten teachers
 - Estimated increase of 2.0 FTE = \$110,000
 - Estimated increase of two (2) classrooms at two buildings
 - Students from three buildings will require District provided transportation
- Expand the regular half-day Kindergarten program to allow students in need to remain for both sessions (in essence a “double dose”). This would need to be limited depending on available seats in each building
- Develop a full-day, site-based program for students in need (explore/develop a screening mechanism and set criteria), housed at one or more elementary sites if facilities allow
 - Estimated increase of 5.0 FTE = \$275,000
 - Estimated increase of five (5) classrooms of the program were housed in each school

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