Introduction of Full Day Kindergarten in the Whitehall-Coplay School District

FEBRUARY 2018
Current Status in Whitehall-Coplay School District

- 240 Kindergarten students
- ½ Day Kindergarten program offered to all students
- Full-day program offered to 29 at-risk students

Maximum capacity is 30 students due to space constraints
Goal: Implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) for all WCSD Students

- Currently, there are 6 Kindergarten classrooms.
  - Each holds one AM and one PM session per day.

- To accommodate FDK for all students, the District would need to add:
  - 6 regular classrooms
  - At least 2 classrooms for students with special needs
Why Full-Day Kindergarten?

Comprehensive School Planning Goals:

- Establish a district system that fully ensures the **consistent implementation of effective instructional practices** across all classrooms in each school.

- Establish a district system that fully ensures **students, who are academically at risk, are identified early** and are supported by a process that provides interventions, based upon student needs. This would include procedures for monitoring effectiveness.
Why Full-Day Kindergarten?

More time is needed to:

- Deeper dive into the rigorous PA Core Standards and help students achieve greater literacy and mathematics achievement gains
- Support students’ social and emotional skills
- Prepare students fully for 1st grade
- Provide more creative and varied experiences
3rd-Grade Reading Proficiency: The Key to Academic Success

- The primary grades (K-2) focus on building literacy skills.
- In grades 3-5, the focus shifts from *Learning to Read* to *Reading to Learn*.
- Students who have not mastered reading by 3rd grade struggle in all other academic areas (math, science, social studies, etc.).
- The gap widens as students progress through the curriculum.
- Students who are not reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade have a **75% higher likelihood of not graduating.**

*KINDERGARTEN FOUNDATION IS CRITICAL*
Pennsylvania Kindergarten Standards

- **Approaches to Learning through Play**
  - Focus: Constructing, Organizing, and Applying Knowledge

- **Language & Literacy Development**
  - Focus: Foundational ELA Skills of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

- **Mathematical Thinking and Expression**
  - Focus: Numbers and Operations, Problem Solving, Algebraic and Geometric Concepts, Measurement, Data, Probability, Principles of Mathematical Practice
Pennsylvania Kindergarten Standards continued...

- **Scientific Thinking and Technology**
  - Focus: Exploring, Scientific Inquiry, and Discovery

- **Social Studies Thinking**
  - Focus: Connecting to Communities

- **Creative Thinking and Expression**
  - Focus: Communicating through the Arts

- **Health, Wellness and Physical Development**
  - Focus: Learning about my Body
Pennsylvania Kindergarten Standards continued...

- Currently, these standards are “covered” but are often rushed to fit into a ½ day program.
- Many preschool programs are longer than our ½ day program.
- FDK would allow the time needed to go deeper, fully meet the Kindergarten PA Core standards, and prepare students for 1st grade.
- FDK would provide time needed to address the needs of individual students in small group settings to “fill in the gaps” prior to entering 1st grade.
Full Day Kindergarten is Becoming the Norm

- Only 5 districts in Lehigh and Northampton counties do not offer Full Day Kindergarten.
  - Three of those five have plans to implement FDK next year.

- About 75% of schools in the nation offer FDK.

- 462 out of 500 districts in Pennsylvania offer Full Day Kindergarten.  
  2015 Kids Count Data Center

- Students are given the gift of time.

- They can slow down and learn more deeply and meaningfully.
Academic Concerns

2017-18 Kindergarten and 1st Grade Classes

- 33% of Kindergarten students receive Reading interventions
- 29% of 1st Grade Students receive Reading interventions

- 40% of Kindergarten students receive Math interventions
- 32% of 1st grade students receive Math interventions

2016-17 data shows that 30% of 3rd graders in WCSD are not reading at grade level.
Social and Emotional Aspects

- Research indicates:
  - FDK offers social, emotional, and intellectual benefits to students.
  - 5 year olds are more than ready for a longer school day and do better in a setting that allows them time to learn and explore activities in depth.
  - Play is how children learn, and learning through play requires time.
  - Teachers can provide structured play scenarios that help children understand concepts by doing, instead of simply watching.
Early Social Skills Impact Success in Adulthood

FOR EVERY ONE-POINT **INCREASE** ON THE 5-POINT SCALE IN A CHILD’S SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCORE IN KINDERGARTEN HE/SHE WAS:

- Twice as likely to attain a college degree in early adulthood
- 54% more likely to earn a high school diploma
- 46% more likely to have a full-time job at the age of 25

FOR EVERY ONE-POINT **DECREASE** ON THE 5-POINT SCALE IN A CHILD’S SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCORE IN KINDERGARTEN HE/SHE HAD:

- 67% higher chance of having been arrested by early adulthood
- 82% higher rate of recent marijuana usage
- 82% higher chance of being in or on a waiting list for public housing

*(Citation: Robert Wood Johnson Study)*
Common Misconception

“Full Day Kindergarten is nothing more than a babysitting service for parents.”

In addition to addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of Kindergarten students, FDK provides students with an opportunity for “Purposeful Play.”

Shapes to fill with blocks estimating; special reasoning

Cotton Swab Letter Writing
Purposeful “Educational” Play

- Purposeful play provides children opportunities for inquiry-based learning:
  - Explore answers to their questions through hands-on interaction with materials
  - Build their questioning skills
  - Enhance their understanding of key academic concepts

- Play impacts the 4 domains of development:
  - Physical
  - Cognitive
  - Language and Literacy
  - Social and Emotional
An Integrated Approach

- Our active FDK standards-based classroom will be student centered and stimulate each Kindergartener’s curiosity and desire to learn.

- It will be organized and structured around developmentally appropriate standards, which support all areas of the curriculum through integration.

London Bridge STEM Challenge
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>HALF DAY SCHEDULE</th>
<th>FULL DAY SCHEDULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:35-8:55</td>
<td>Arrival/Attendance</td>
<td>Arrival/Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warm-Up/Calendar Activities</td>
<td>Warm-Up/Calendar Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Whole Group ELA/Literacy and Read Aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00</td>
<td>Intervention and Enrichment Centers/Writing</td>
<td>Differentiated Small Group Literacy (ELA) Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:45</td>
<td>Whole Group ELA/Literacy</td>
<td>Purposeful Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:30</td>
<td>Special Subjects/Content: Art/P.E./Library or ELA 2/5 days</td>
<td>Lav./ Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Prepare for Dismissal</td>
<td>Whole Group Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:40</td>
<td>Guided and Small Group Math</td>
<td>Intervention and Enrichment/ Centers- ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:40-1:15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-2:00</td>
<td>Special Subjects: Art/P.E./Library/Music/Computer Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:05-2:20</td>
<td>Read Aloud/Snack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20-2:40</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:40-3:05</td>
<td>Science/Hands On Learning/ STEM/Purposeful Play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05</td>
<td>Prepare for Dismissal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Shifts in WCSD

- 53.14% of Gockley students are from low socio-economic families.
- In 2015, (just 2 years ago) the percent was 42.07%
- The national average is 22% children living in poverty

(2016 Kids Count Data Center)

Research shows:

- Low-income parents are less likely to provide a home environment that fully supports literacy development.
- When students from lower SES groups start school, they have on average spoken about 2.5 million words, whereas students from higher groups have spoken 4.5 million words.
Profile of 2017-2018 Kindergarten Class

- **53.14 % of Gockley students are from low socio-economic families.**

- **Preschool Learning Experience**
  - 30% have no formal experience outside of the home

- **ELL**
  - 5.9 % of current Kindergarten students receive ESL support

- Children from less affluent households typically show greater gains in a FDK program.

- Students who have not experienced a formal preschool program typically enter kindergarten academically and socially behind.

- ELL students are learning English, while also trying to gain the essential foundation of literacy skills and mathematical concepts.
Benefits Reported By Local School Districts

Northampton, Allentown and Bethlehem

- The growth of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) students is accelerated, as evidenced by the students’ writing, reading, math, and problem solving.
- FDK students have time in the day for developmentally appropriate activities that encourage social skills, behavioral regulation, play and movement.
- Student writing skills in January are the quality of previous levels exhibited in June under the ½ day program.

*Parkland and Salisbury concur with these findings.*
Potential Risks to Remaining the Only District Without a FDK Program in the Area

- Possible decline in property values
- Decline in student performance on standardized tests
  - Factor in deciding where to raise a family
- Increased Charter School attendance because of availability of FDK
  - District taxpayers pay for students to attend Charter/Cyber Schools at a much higher cost of education than attending WCSD
- Once students begin attending a Charter/Cyber school, they often remain there throughout their school career.
  - Results in a much higher cost to taxpayers
- Decrease the probability that families with young children, senior’s grandchildren, will remain in Whitehall
Recent Survey of District Parents

“Do you believe the district should provide a Full Day Kindergarten program?”

YES  80.9%
NO   19.1%
Recommendation

Based on the Previously Presented Information
Whitehall-Coplay School District Administration
Is Recommending **Full Day Kindergarten**.

Implementation for **2021 School Year**
Full Day Kindergarten

Based on the recommendation of FDK and the need to review all of the District Facilities, the WCSD engaged the Breslin, Ridyard, and Fadero Architectural Firm to complete a Districtwide Feasibility Study.

Findings for Gockley Elementary and the ability to accommodate FDK are as follows:
GOCKLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Numerous Accessibility (ADA) issues for students and staff with disabilities
• Moveable partitions create acoustic and security concerns
• Pod areas limit flexibility and do not support current educational program
• Technology integration is difficult
• Fixtures and Casework at end of life
• Administration, Guidance and Nurse areas are undersized and decentralized

...all negatively impacts delivery of 21st Century educational programs
Based on the Addition of Full Day Kindergarten

Two options:

- **OPTION 1 – Full Day Kindergarten**
  - Renovate Gockley Elementary and construct an 8-classroom addition

- **OPTION 2 – Full Day Kindergarten**
  - Build a new Full Day K-1 Elementary School
Preferred Option: New Construction

Cost Comparison:
- Renovation Adding 8 Classrooms: Approx $27,300,000
- New Construction: Approx $36,000,000
- Personnel Cost: Approx $600,000 (Both Options)

Disadvantages of Renovation:
- Inherent increased maintenance and energy costs of a 40-year-old building
- Limited ability to correct educational program deficiencies
- Complex phased construction that will be disruptive to education
- Cost of temporary classrooms for a multi-year construction project
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Approval</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin planning process and design (PlanCon)</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Construction</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish Construction</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>August 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Financial Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Annual % Increase</th>
<th>Average Residential Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>$2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>$25,000,000</td>
<td>2.49%</td>
<td>$71.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>$10,000,000</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>$28.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
<td>$43.63</td>
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The above estimated tax increases are included in a 3.5% projected annual increase. This 3.5% increase equates to an annual $100 increase to the average resident.
### Whitehall- Coplay Historical Act 1 Index and Millage Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>WCSD %</th>
<th>Millage Rate</th>
<th>Millage Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>15.41</td>
<td>.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.81%</td>
<td>15.85</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.02%</td>
<td>16.17</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>16.59</td>
<td>.42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 2017 - 18 Lehigh County School Districts Millage Rate Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Millage (Lowest to Highest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>15.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Lehigh</td>
<td>15.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Lehigh</td>
<td>15.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitehall-Coplay</td>
<td>16.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catasauqua Area</td>
<td>17.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Area</td>
<td>18.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Penn</td>
<td>18.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury Township</td>
<td>18.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allentown City</td>
<td>19.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Lehigh</td>
<td>21.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lehigh County School Districts - Total Expenditures

General Fund Expenditure Trends

2016 General Fund Expenditures per Student
In Conclusion

- Full-day kindergarten boosts children’s cognitive learning, creative problem-solving, and social competence.
- Research comparing ½ day and full-day Kindergarten suggests that children benefit more from a developmentally appropriate Full Day Kindergarten, as part of an early learning continuum.

All I really need to know... I learned in Kindergarten

Share everything. Play fair. Don’t hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don’t take things that are not yours. Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup? The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup— they all die. So do we. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned—the biggest word of all—LOOK.