

Full Day Kindergarten in the Whitehall-Coplay School District

January 2018



The Whitehall-Coplay School District is proposing to develop a high quality full day kindergarten program for all students in the district. This program would provide a strong foundation in academic, social, and emotional skills so that students are well prepared to succeed.

Q: Why is the district recommending full day kindergarten?

- A full day kindergarten (FDK) program would provide increased instructional time and learning opportunities for all students. FDK students would:
 - Build stronger early literacy skills
 - Develop an understanding of math concepts and problem-solving through hands-on activities
 - Help students develop early critical thinking and collaboration skills
 - Experience expanded learning in science, social studies, art, music, library, PE, technology, and structured play
 - Develop effective school habits and social skills
 - Provide more creativity and more varied experiences
- 2016-17 data shows that 30% of third graders are not reading at grade level, which significantly impacts the rest of their academic career.
 - The district believes that FDK will stabilize or boost test scores.
- A FDK program can provide the missing early instructional time that could help better prepare these students to succeed.

Q: How many other neighboring districts have full day kindergarten?

- All but five school districts in Lehigh and Northampton Counties offer FDK.
 - Three of those five districts have plans to implement FDK next year.
- Whitehall-Coplay would join the more than three quarters of elementary schools in the state and nation that offer FDK.
 - FDK will help retain families in the district and, hopefully, prevent increased charter school attendance, which costs the district money.

Q: What are the construction options?

1. The renovation of Gockley Elementary with the addition of at least eight classrooms
2. The construction of a new kindergarten and first-grade building

Q: Which option is the district recommending and why?

- The district believes that it is more fiscally sound to build a new elementary school.
 - While renovations will initially cost less than new construction, Gockley is already 40 years old, requiring significant maintenance and increased energy costs which cannot be addressed with renovations. There is also a lack of flexibility for classroom renovations to support the delivery of 21st century educational programs.

Q: What are the projected costs?

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| 1. New construction estimated at | \$36,000,000 |
| 2. Personnel costs | \$600,000 |

- The district is projecting an annual increase of 3.5% during the 3 year construction period which equates to an approximate annual \$100 increase to the average residential property. This would cover new construction and fund ongoing costs.

Q: When would construction be completed and FDK begin?

- If the School Board approves the project, a new building could be completed by September 2021.

Full Day Kindergarten – giving each child the time he or she deserves to learn

If you have any comments regarding the information above email your thoughts to fulldaykindergarten@whitehallcoplay.org
You should not expect a response as this email is designed to provide input to the Administration and School Board as they make decisions regarding the implementation of FDK.

