

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

General

The Board recognizes the many positive, long-term benefits of quality pre-kindergarten programs, including reduced early school failure and special education placement, early identification of students' needs, successful transition to the school environment, and increased academic achievement of students throughout elementary and high school. The Board and the Superintendent of Schools recognize the value of pre-kindergarten programs as demonstrated by the success of students participating in existing District preschool programs.

The Board of Education supports preschool/early childhood education programs that incorporate the following:

1. A family's informed commitment to and active partnership in the educational experiences of their children;
2. Resources directed to preschool and child care as essential services required by low-income, disadvantaged families with children ages 4 and under;
3. Preschool programs that give priority to low-income families, but are also capable of encouraging the participation of the whole community, including families of English Language Learners (ELL); Multi-Lingual Learners (MLL); and students with special needs who have been classified with a disability and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP);
4. Quality preschool/child care education programs that maintain high standards through the certification of personnel, state licensing of programs and low staff – student ratios;
5. Governmental agencies and community-based organizations that cooperatively coordinate and support the health, welfare and emotional needs of high-risk families with preschool children;
6. Continued government support for all elementary students, including those with identified educational deficiencies, by ensuring successful transition to kindergarten and reinforcing the gains achieved in preschool;
7. Preschool/child care education programs that reflect the community's cultural diversity (e.g. African American, Hispanic and Asian);
8. A variety of program options with respect to length of day, staffing and parent involvement; and
9. Programs and partners that support the District's values as stated in the Civic Education policy (4311.2).

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Annual Evaluation Report

The Superintendent (or designee) shall provide the annual evaluation report of the Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP) to the Board to enable monitoring of program quality and continuous improvement. RECAP shall remain available to the Superintendent (or designee) to provide supplemental reports, as needed.

Pre-Kindergarten Programs

The Board reaffirms its commitment to educate all students to their highest levels of performance by seeking to provide quality programs for all 4-year-old preschoolers and for 3-year-old children, as funding allows. The Board encourages legislators at all levels of government to maintain the funding of preschool programs as a priority.

The Board approves the Universal Pre-K Program Plan dated February 5, 1998, submitted by the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Policy Advisory Board and recommended by the Superintendent. This plan calls for maximizing efficiency and minimizing capital outlay by outsourcing some services, with oversight by the District.

The Board also approves the plan for Expanded Pre-Kindergarten for Three- and Four-Year-Old Students in High Needs Districts dated August 10, 2015, submitted to the New York State Education Department.

This policy shall be reviewed by the Board of Education whenever revisions have been proposed to either the Universal Pre-K Program Plan or the Expanded Pre-Kindergarten Plan for Three- and Four-Year-Old Students in High Needs Districts, prior to submission to the New York State Education Department.

Community service providers' applications to provide pre-kindergarten education programs to children in the Rochester City School District will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Program Quality [including accommodations for English Language Learners (ELL); Multiple Language Learners (MLL); and students with special needs who have been classified with a disability and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)];
- Student Attendance and Achievement;
- Family Engagement (i.e. a plan for family participation that is responsive to the diverse cultures of families and children in the District);
- Compliance with all federal and state regulations, including those of the New York State Commissioner of Education and the Office of Child and Family Services;
- Adherence to state and fiscal guidelines for grant budgets, including proof of fiscal responsibility; and
- Adherence to Learning Standard Guidelines: the *New York State Foundation for Prekindergarten Common Core Standards* (for four-year-old children); the *New York State Early Learning Guidelines* (for three-year-old children).

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All pre-kindergarten programs must comply with the following New York State standards:

1. Each school or community organization operating a pre-kindergarten program shall adopt and implement the curriculum developed by the Rochester City School District.

Each pre-kindergarten program shall provide early literacy and emergent reading, based on effective, evidence-based practices, including:

- a. Background knowledge;
 - b. Phonological awareness;
 - c. Expressive and receptive language;
 - d. Vocabulary development;
 - e. Phonemic awareness;
 - f. Fluency; and
 - g. Comprehension.
2. All pre-kindergarten programs must be based on the ages, interests, strengths and needs of children, and must include:
 - a. Differentiated instruction to support the acquisition of new concepts and skills;
 - b. Materials and equipment that allow for active and quiet play in indoor and outdoor environments;
 - c. Instruction in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts – including dance, music, theater, and visual arts;
 - d. Opportunities for inquiry-based activities and projects;
 - e. Opportunities to use a wide variety of information in print and electronic media;
 - f. Fine and gross motor activities;
 - g. Instruction in health and nutrition; and
 - h. Instruction in the development of social-emotional skills.
 3. Each school or community-based organization operating a pre-kindergarten program shall develop procedures to ensure the active involvement of parents and/or guardians in their children's education. These procedures must include support for families and children for a successful transition into pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

The Board and Superintendent are also mindful of their responsibility to practice fiscal prudence and recognize the need to remain vigilant to ensure that the District is not unduly harmed by the uncertainties of future program funding, reserving the right to modify program offerings through the budget process to reflect changes in levels of funding.

Cross-ref: Civic Education policy (4311.2)

Note: Prior Policy, Policy Manual, Pre-School Programs (November 3, 1988); Universal Pre-Kindergarten (February 5, 1998); Amended December 21, 2017 pursuant to Resolution No. 2017-18: 482.