

## Celebrating our Accomplishments in the UPK Program

*submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

***Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.***  
***-Leo Buscaglia***



***Last day of school for students is Thursday, June 21***

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***Summer Institute August 20-21 or August 22-23 at Strong Museum***

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***Superintendent's Day September 4***

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***See details inside. Registration will be required and is available on avatar.***

As we move toward the end of the school year this month we have many accomplishments to share and celebrate with our families, staff and our community. Most importantly, we celebrate the learning that has taken place during the year for our UPK students and the relationships we have developed with our families. We are looking forward to seeing our students finish the school year and transition into kindergarten.

During May we held a district-wide Transition to Kindergarten Family Event at School # 33/Ryan Center for our UPK students and families. It was wonderful to see so many families at the event engaged in a variety of learning activities and workshops. During the four hour event 656 students and their family members participated in activities designed to assist parents in preparing their children for kindergarten. I am very grateful for the work of the many volunteers from our UPK program that made this event possible. Our strong collaborations with parents, staff and community organizations have created a strong positive culture that supports student achievement.

We enjoyed a very special visit from Commissioner King from the NYS Education Department and members of the Board of Regents to the Florence Brown Prekindergarten Program at the end of May. Our visitors spent time in a variety of prekindergarten classrooms during the visit including general education classrooms, an integrated classroom consisting of students with special needs and typically developing peers and a bilingual classroom serving students who are dominant in Spanish. They had an opportunity to observe our students using technology and to visit the school-based health center providing health care services to students in prekindergarten through grade six. It was particularly important that our UPK program was included in the Board of Regents schedule of visits under the theme of "College and Career Readiness." This visit validated the role of our Universal Prekindergarten Program in preparing students for their future educational and career paths.

In closing I would like to remind our Pre-K families that we will be continuing our ROC Reads initiative over the summer. Each four-year-old student will be receiving four new books to add to their home libraries. Parents are encouraged to read and reread the books with their children asking questions about the story and the pictures. If your child memorizes a book or parts of a book, encourage them to "read" the page or the book to you. This "practice reading" is a first step toward learning to read and children should be encouraged to do this. Lastly, I would like to say thank you to all our families for allowing us to be their children's second teachers as we know parents are their children's first teachers.



*"First Teacher" and child at Transition event*

## Summer Institute—choose 2 days: August 20-21 or August 22-23

The Early Childhood Department will once again conduct our “Summer Institute” at the Strong National Museum of Play. All UPK staff will choose to attend either Monday-Tuesday (8/20-21) or Wednesday-Thursday (8/22-23). There are three different full day workshops, from 8:30—3:30, each offered all 4 days. All will register for one session on **Working with Children with Challenging Behavior** on one day and either one of the other two sessions on the other day. See descriptions below. Registration is required and available on avatar. This will be on a first come, first served basis. If one session is filled, please select another. All will select one session of:

- **Working with Children with Challenging Behavior**

*Some Children arrive in Pre-K with a history of trauma and challenges: physical abuse, neglect, psychological problems, autism, or developmental delays. Conflict arises in the classroom because children have particular needs. In this workshop, we'll address specific strategies to reach all children, defuse behavior problems when they occur, and promote harmony among children through encouragement and by providing choices.*

All will select one session of either one of these:

- **Promoting Academic Content in Pre-K Classrooms**

*In constructivist programs, children are provided with opportunities to have input into the learning process by making choices during all parts of the day. During group times, teachers often introduce concepts in mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies. HighScope recognizes and promotes learning academic content through its Key Developmental Indicators (KDI). There are KDI in Mathematics, Language and Communication, Science and Technology, Physical Development and Health, Creative Arts, Social Studies, Approaches to Learning and, Social and Emotional Development. In this workshop, we'll address how to plan small-group-time using HighScope's Key Developmental Indicators (KDI), common resources available in the classroom, and more to help children reach the academic benchmarks required by Federal, State, and Local stakeholders.*

- **How HighScope supports (improves) performance as documented by CLASS**

*HighScope staff will address how successful implementation of the HighScope Curriculum meets the standards of the domains of the CLASS - Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.*

*CLASS assesses effective teacher-child interactions. CLASS evaluates the dimensions of positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives. Those teachers who implement the HighScope Curriculum promote the richest adult/child interaction strategies. All of the work that children and teachers perform in the classroom are based on children's interests, children's strengths, and children's needs.*

*CLASS considers behavior management, productivity, and instructional learning formats. The HighScope Curriculum promotes a six-step process to help children identify “problems” and solve them on their own. In classrooms where HighScope's principles of Classroom Arrangement and HighScope's Problem-Solving Approach to Conflict are utilized, teachers report fewer disagreements and classroom management issues with young students.*

*CLASS focuses on the roles of concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. HighScope's Plan-Do-Review Process and Small-Group-Time promotes students' learning from the point of view of using concrete experiences (hands-on exploration) to abstract (concepts).*

## Superintendent's Conference Day: September 4

All UPK teachers will be administering the Brigance Early Childhood Screen to their students as part of mandated new entrance screening, required to be finished by December 1st. The 2-hour Brigance training will be at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, 597 East Avenue. Space is limited and one teacher from each classroom should register by June 22. The time will be announced and it will be posted on avatar within a week. This will be the only training offered to the RCSD Early Childhood Department, by the assessment developer, Curriculum Associates.

# Transition to Kindergarten Event, Saturday, May 19

**What an incredibly successful event!** 222 Pre-K students attended and including their family members, there was a total of **656** participants. Adults and children sang, played and learned together. They all left with a bag full of learning materials and strategies to support learning at home. Thank you to all the UPK staff from community and school sites who volunteered their time and encouraged their families to attend!



*A community treasure for all to enjoy-  
The Rochester Toy Library!*



*Musical learning with books to sing at home*



*The Talking School Bus - such fun!*



*Learning about the natural world*



*Math is everywhere—including in many wonderful children's books*



*Learning letters*

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*Gross motor development*



*Sensory (play dough and shaving cream) experiences support children's fine motor development*





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## Check out our Website: [www.rcsdk12.org/prek](http://www.rcsdk12.org/prek)

Visit the RCSD Prekindergarten website for a wealth of resources. You can view or print many useful documents, including the Prekindergarten School Choice Booklet in either English or Spanish. It lists each program with hours and other specific details. The **Prekindergarten Registration** page also includes directions for parents including what is needed and where they go to register.

Other resources there include:

- **HighScope Curriculum** information and links to pages and documents (see **Prekindergarten Program** page and then the link to HighScope Curriculum)
- **Music Building Blocks** and **Moving Minds** resources, including many printable activity cards for use in the classroom (under **Embedded Professional Development**)
- **Prekindergarten Newsletter** with current and back issues available to read and/or print
- **Preschool Special Education** includes information, explaining services offered and documents to assist parents with the CPSE referral process.
- **Prekindergarten Parents** page includes many photos in our galleries from our Transition to Kindergarten event and the Science Saturday event, as well as other information for families.
- **Pre-K News**—You will find a link at the bottom of our home page, with links to news items and flyers, including visits to Pre-K classes by the Superintendent and the State Education commissioner as well as flyers for new UPK classes at #46 and #30 Schools opening in September.

The site is updated frequently. Keep checking back and send us ideas for inclusion in this site.

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