



Early Childhood Education in OUSD

Moving forward to Enhance Learning and Outcomes for all Children PreK-3rd Grade

Overview of Early Childhood in Oakland Unified School District

2014-2015

There are 60 CDC classrooms across Oakland Unified School District. 16 classrooms are seated within district elementary schools. 44 classrooms are located as independent sites within the school district. Currently the total number of OUSD students served in our CDC classrooms is 1621.

15 of our OUSD elementary schools currently have TK or TK/K split classrooms. Next year we are expanding our TK offering to 24 Elementary schools.

We are excited about our expanding our TK offering to our students and families in Oakland Unified School District. It is important that our community knows how Transitional Kindergarten provides an amazing opportunity for our students. Through this opportunity our TK students begin becoming prepared to start toward mastery of Kindergarten standards in both Literacy and Math in which now they will have two years to reach mastery while still being part of a developmentally appropriate setting that focuses on the whole child.

It is important to remember that TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students born between September 2nd and December 2nd and the teachers are credentialed elementary teachers. Transitional Kindergarten curriculum is developmentally appropriate and is framed around the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Math. It has been captured that students who have the opportunity to attend Transitional Kindergarten have demonstrated improvement on social emotional development, academic performance, and self-confidence. It has also been demonstrated that there is an overall reduction in retention and Special Education placement because of early intervention during Transitional Kindergarten.

In OUSD we also have our Pre-Kindergarten programming. This program serves students who are 3 or 4 between September 1st and August 31st. It is important to remember that students who turn 5 after December 1st will not be part of TK but will be in Pre-K Classrooms. The students who turn 5 from December 2 – August 1 will transition to Kindergarten the following year with their TK counter parts. The group of students just mentioned, because of how their birthday falls will not have the two-year Kindergarten experience of TK and Kindergarten. OUSD believes that our CDC (PreK) classrooms are to prepare our students for Kindergarten. With this in mind it is important for us as a community to realize and ensure that both Transitional Kindergarten and CDC –Pre-K classrooms have equitable resources in every dimension to prepare our students for Kindergarten.



The Top 3 Priorities for Early Childhood PreK-3

1. Quality and Safety
2. Alignment and selection of resources
3. Balancing of ECE (PreK) Budget

Priority 1 –Quality and Safety

OUSD Strategic Plan Priority 3: Every student deserves the right to attend a quality community school in their neighborhood.

Quality and Improvement Rating System (QRIS)

Every CDC-PreK will have an Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) baseline score by the end of the 2014-2015 school year. This data will provide us with the areas to improve environmental quality across all district CDC PreK classrooms during the 2015-2016 school year. In the 2015-2016 school year the QRIS system will incorporate the CLASS rating system as the second level of the quality system. It is intended that prior to CDC PreK staff receiving a CLASS observation and rating there will be systematic professional development and coaching in preparation for this rating.

We are also committed to ensure that all offsite CDC's PreK sites have will have safety protocols and procedures in place. We will also examine staffing needs at these locations to ensure a safe environment for all students and staff.

Priority 2 – Alignment of Resources – Instructional and Professional Development

OUSD Strategic Plan: By 2020, the percentage of 3rd grade students who are reading on grade level will increase to 85 percent.

For our PreK classrooms during the spring of 2014-2015, we will begin the process of reviewing Early Childhood curriculum options. Through this collaborative process, a final recommendation will be presented to the OUSD Board of Education for approval and adoption. In addition specifically for PreK and TK students grade level expectations will be set that will ensure alignment to ensure that students upon completing these two grade levels will be ready to enter Kindergarten. We also want to make sure that we are increasing our capacity across the city to reach out to all children and families birth to four. We want to position ourselves as a resource to parents on how they can support their school age preschool child to be successful in school but also their non-school age children prior to entering school. Though this outreach we want to provide parents specific educational literacy and math resources.



Priority 3 – Balancing the CDC PreK Budget

Our ECE expenditures are greater than our state contract earnings and this has been the reality for several years. ECE attendance drops approximately 40% during the summer when our traditional schools are not in session. This results in a significant impact on the overall budget resulting in a loss of funds. Our full day CDC classrooms operate on a 240 day calendar of operation. Because of this calendar, the overhead exceeds the income which is directly aligned to attendance which drops over the summer while we keep paying the same number of staff members during this period of time. In addition because non-state PreK classrooms are working a 240 day calendar which has significantly more work days than the traditional district teacher/school calendar in order to insure that teachers receive their vacation days the early childhood budget must pay for substitute coverage for 30 days for each teacher during the 240 day calendar. This substitute payment has a tremendous impact on the Early Childhood Budget.

It is important to highlight the amazing support that Pre-K and TK has received from service organizations and funders. These committed partners include, but are not limited to: Blue Skies For Children, Bring Me A Book Foundation, First Five Alameda County, Jewish Family and Children Services, Lincoln Children's Center, Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, Packard Foundation, Rainin Foundation, Raising –A- Reader and Rotary Club.

OUSD is one of three school districts pending approval in April 2015 by the David & Lucile Packard Foundation for their Starting Smart and Strong Initiative. This 10 year funding and resource partnership, in collaboration with the local Kenneth Rainin Foundation will support: Professional Development, QRIS, Help Me Grow developmental screenings, scaling best practices and innovation, parent/caregiver engagement and key staff positions.

Our project plan for year one with this initiative is set to accomplish the following.

- Collaboratively review and select an ECE curriculum to be approved by the B.O.E and to be implemented the fall of 2016.
- Bring District Administration and School Leaders in alignment with new curriculum.
- Extensive teacher professional development and ongoing coaching and support.
- Implement ECERS rating for all 60 PreK classrooms by the end of the 2014-2015 school year.
- Implement CLASS Professional Development and CLASS evaluations for all 50 PreK classrooms by the end of the 2015-2016 school year.
- Research parent needs across OUSD
- Expand Help Me Grow.

In closing I would like to thank all the PreK-3rd grade teachers here in OUSD. It is through their commitment and support that our students become successful and it is my promise to provide them the support they need to improve their craft and to meet the needs of all our students. Also thank you to our executive leadership team and specifically our Superintendent, Antwan Wilson. Many times early childhood Pre-K – 3rd grade does not get much attention in the public school setting. Our Superintendent knows the importance of early learning from a proactive position and is committed to ongoing improvement and a focus on this age of students. Thank you to our Board of Education for their support and future support in assisting the alignment of Early Childhood to becoming part of the OUSD educational system. Again, thank you to our funding partners for their continued support in meeting the needs of our youngest learners here in OUSD. Finally to the parents of OUSD, thank you



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for sending us your most beautiful and prized possession, your children, on a daily basis. We are committed to you children's success.

Respectfully Submitted,

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