

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN PLAN



“Climbing Toward College & Career Readiness”

Governing Board

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INTRODUCTION

Transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two year kindergarten program. Transitional kindergarten is the program placement for TK age eligible students. Children who meet the age eligibility for kindergarten (5 years of age by November 1 in 2012-2013) may be enrolled in the TK program upon parent request when space is available at the school.

On September 30, 2010, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 1381, changing the current law requiring the kindergarten entry date to change from December 2 to September 1. The new entry date will be phased in one month at a time, over 3 years beginning in Fall 2012. The bill also creates an ongoing transitional kindergarten program for students impacted by the change of the kindergarten entry date. The bill creates transitional kindergarten to build a bridge between early learning and kindergarten. Transitional kindergarten is defined as “the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate” (Education Code Section 48000[d]).

This Transitional Kindergarten Plan focuses on the first kindergarten year, referred to as TK. California was one of only four states that had a December cutoff date for kindergarten entry. According to Preschool California, the transitional kindergarten year is intended to be an opportunity to provide the early foundations for school success for children who turn five years old between September 2nd and December 2nd. The new law is an effort to address school readiness for young five year olds upon their entry to kindergarten. During the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, the TK year will serve as a bridge between preschool and traditional kindergarten by offering a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.

A 2008 analysis by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) of fourteen recent rigorous studies on how entrance age affects student outcomes in the short and long term found that “increasing California’s entry age will likely have a number of benefits, including boosting student achievement test scores” (Cannon & Lipscomb, 2008, p. 1). Several studies in the PPIC review also suggest that changing the kindergarten cut-off date would affect student outcomes including grade retention, special education enrollment, high school completion rates, and higher wages as adults. Based on these benefits, the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the California Performance Review, and the Governor’s Committee on Education Excellence called for an earlier kindergarten cut-off date.

It is estimated that over 120,000 California children will be eligible for the TK program each year (once the September 1st cut-off date for kindergarten enrollment is fully implemented). This includes 49,000 English learners and 74,000 who will attend Title I schools. California has a unique opportunity to develop and provide quality two-year kindergarten programs that help to jumpstart successful school careers and experiences for students who begin school as young learners. The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 should be beneficial for those children who would otherwise be attending traditional kindergarten even though they were not academically, socially, emotionally, or developmentally ready.

ELIGIBILITY

TK age eligible students:

- In the 2012-13 school year, children who will have their fifth birthday between November 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.
- In the 2013-14 school year, children who will have their fifth birthday between October 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.
- In the 2014-15 school year and each school year thereafter, children who will have their fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.

RECRUITMENT

ACS will use the following resources to assist parents, staff and community:

- TK Brochure/Flier
- Site visitations to inform parents and community
- Informational meetings in the spring
- Flyers in the main office and high visibility areas
- Announcements at various school site meetings and committees
- Notices at local businesses, child care facilities, and community organizations
- Free publicity from local print and news media

ENROLLMENT

To enroll a TK age eligible student in transitional kindergarten, the parent/guardian must complete the following:

- Form1: pre-lottery form
- Standard enrollment packet
- School staff must explain to the parent of a TK age eligible child the TK program is the first year of a two year kindergarten program. The parent must sign the "Transitional Kindergarten Age Eligible Student Placement Form" (Attachment A). This form shall be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The TK program follows the requirements of SB 1381 in providing a modified kindergarten curriculum that is both age and developmentally appropriate. Emphasis is placed on developing oral language skills and providing integrated experiences in language and literacy, social-emotional development, mathematics, physical development, the arts, science, social sciences, and English language development.

Instruction in a TK/Kindergarten Combination Classroom

A school district may offer a TK/kindergarten combination class to maximize the enrollment of students who are eligible for its two-year kindergarten program. In such cases, administrators and teachers must focus on ensuring the TK and kindergarten educational programs are in fact different. Children enter school with varying abilities. Mixed-age classrooms provide opportunities to address the individual needs of each student; thus, the management of such a class is critical. Differentiated instruction must serve as a means for ensuring the educational needs of each student enrolled in the combination class are met and that appropriate measures are taken to monitor each student's progress and to modify the instruction accordingly. Combination classrooms have been implemented throughout the United States for many years. Students in mixed-age settings have demonstrated academic achievement, leadership and organizational abilities, greater complex levels of play, and longer sustained periods of peer interaction. These positive results (CDE, 1999) can occur with the modification of the curriculum, learning experiences where students work together in small mixed group settings, and where each student can contribute to the learning experience. Within this setting, students still receive the individualized support to achieve basic skills required for their level. Although schools often offer traditional mixed-age or multi-grade combination classes, they may also consider "looping" practices in which the students remain with the same teacher for a consecutive year or years. Successful implementation, as described by Bruce Miller, a researcher on multi-age education (Walser, 1998), should include great forethought by doing the research before implementation, intensive planning to determine the model to be used, and inclusion of key stakeholders in the development process. Implementation should also include dedicated teachers who have the support and teamwork from the school principal, parents, and school staff. Teachers should be knowledgeable about student abilities and their development, grade-level standards and expectations, and effective teaching strategies (CDE, 1999).

Students with Special Needs in a TK Classroom

TK is a general education program. For students who are eligible to receive special education services, TK is considered a general education placement. Any additional supports and services based upon the student's IEP will be provided accordingly.

Because of the diverse population of California, students in a TK program may include students with different cultural experiences, different cognitive needs, specific disabilities, and a variety of languages other than English. Meeting their social, emotional, and academic needs will be critical to their success as they begin their K-12 education.

Students with Disabilities

All TK students can benefit from high-quality experiences and may develop at different rates. School districts have the responsibility for utilizing the state's comprehensive child find system (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2006) to actively identify and assess students to determine their eligibility for support services and individualized education plans (IEPs). For TK students with specific disabilities, school districts need to provide the same services as they do for students in kindergarten. Students with disabilities must receive support and services within the least restrictive environment and can be included in the general education TK curriculum and classroom. It is possible that some students will require modifications and accommodations to meet their individualized needs and to support their access to curriculum, participation, and full involvement in learning opportunities. Each student's IEP should guide the teacher's plan for support as developed through a multidisciplinary team of general and special education staff.

Students who are English Learners

Local educational agencies will provide a Home Language Survey to be completed by the parent or guardian which will aid the school in determining whether or not the student should be administered the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Students who are English learners in a transitional kindergarten will have the same level of services as those in kindergarten.

California law (EC 48985) requires that “all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to the parent or guardian of any such pupil by the school or school district shall, in addition to being written in English, be written in the primary language, and maybe responded to either in English or the primary language.” This applies to parents of English learners in transitional kindergarten.

Students enter school with different degrees of knowledge and experiences. Students learn from others, including adults and other students. The environment most conducive to learning is one where students are social and engaged in activities that allow them to explore. Early reading and writing experiences should be meaningful, concrete, and connected to the experiences of students with consideration of their home language and cultural background.

While instructional materials must be provided to all pupils, the governing board of a school district determines standards-aligned instructional materials and how those materials are to be modified and age-appropriate for transitional kindergarten. Education Code 60119 states "sufficient textbooks or instructional materials' means that each pupil, including English learners, has standards-aligned textbook, instructional materials, or both, to use in class and to take home." This paragraph does not require two sets of textbooks or instructional materials for each pupil. The materials may be in a digital format as long as each pupil, at a minimum, has and can access the same materials in the class and to take home, as all other pupils in the same class or course in the district and has the ability to use and access them at home.



CURRICULUM

California law (EC 48000) defines transitional kindergarten as “the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.” While no state curriculum is mandated, local education agencies must modify the local course of study in order to provide age and developmentally appropriate curriculum for transitional kindergarten.

The TK program will use the same core curriculum and materials as the kindergarten program with curricular modifications that will allow the TK student to meet the Kindergarten Common Core State Standards over two years. They will participate in an educational experience based on the kindergarten standards with an extended opportunity to master them.

The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) released findings based on the results of more than 500 research studies that identified essential early abilities and skills that are correlated with reading achievement in later grades. Based on the findings in the report, teachers need to pay special attention to every student’s development in oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge. The report identified important variables correlated with the development of literacy skills. Similar areas of focus are identified in the California Preschool Learning Foundations and the California’s Common Core State Standards for kindergarten. These important variables include the following:

- Knowing the names of printed letters
- Knowing the sounds associated with printed letters
- Being able to manipulate the sounds of spoken language
- Being able to name a sequence of letters, numbers, objects, or colors

The goal of an effective TK language arts program is to ensure that all students have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction that enables them to be successful during the second year of kindergarten. This must be balanced against the reality that TK students vary in age and demonstrate a wide variety of skills. They will likely have different language and life experiences and develop at very different rates. TK teachers must carefully select resources with student age and development in mind, and they must use differentiated instructional approaches to make the content accessible to every student. In order to design an appropriate instructional plan for language arts, the following strategies may be useful:

- At the beginning of the year, the all incoming K & TK students will formally be assessed the literacy skills of letter naming, letter sound correspondence, segmenting and manipulating sounds, and letter writing to determine if modifications to the long-range learning plans for each student are required.
- The K/TK teacher needs to keep a strong focus on oral language development, which is critical in students’ early years. Teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions support the development of more complex language, thinking and extend students’ vocabulary knowledge.
- At the start of each lesson and at key intervals throughout the lesson, the TK teacher needs to check for student understanding and adjust instruction as needed. Teachers should utilize ongoing and frequent formative assessments.

ASSESSMENT & PROMOTION

Benchmark Assessments

For the TK year, teachers will administer the Ararat Charter School Benchmark assessments for kindergarten listed below, and follow all established procedures, schedules and timelines.

- Language Arts Benchmark Assessments
- Math Benchmark Assessments
- Science Benchmark Assessments
- Social Studies Benchmark Assessments
- CELDT-Initial Testing
- Curriculum based assessments

Progress Reporting

TK teachers are to use the same procedures and forms as kindergarten teachers to report student progress and conference with parents.

Ongoing assessment is embedded in the curriculum and informs instruction and parents as to students' progress. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through parent-teacher conferences and through a written Progress Report that is sent home at the same time as the K-5 report cards.

PROMOTION

TK is Year 1 of a two-year Kindergarten experience. TK age children will promote to traditional kindergarten but may also promote to first grade at the end of the school year.

The option to promote to first grade is based on the following requirements:

Assignment to Kindergarten will occur only after careful assessment of the student's ability, intellectual growth, emotional development, social competence, and academic achievement. Any change in a student's grade level must be in the student's best interest. The needs of each individual student are of utmost importance and must be met in the most effective manner possible; therefore, promotion will be considered when compliance with all of the following criteria is completed: the developmental readiness of the student will be confirmed by in-class observation and external testing; review of formative and summative assessments given to determine academic ability with 1st grade placement as determined by curriculum based assessments, benchmark assessments, and with teacher recommendations based on observations. The academic placement will be made by the Principal based on team's decision prior to the start of school, and formally communicated to the parents/guardians via letter to their home address. A student may be promoted if he or she meets all of the following requirements:

1. Kindergarten Reading Assessment (End of the Year): Proficient or Advanced
2. Kindergarten Math Assessment (End of the Year): Proficient or Advanced
3. Other materials such as social maturity, observation records and student work



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Attachment A

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN AGE ELIGIBLE STUDENT PLACEMENT FORM

I have been informed that my transitional kindergarten (TK) age eligible* child

_____ will be enrolled in a TK program at

Name of child

Birthdate

Ararat Charter School

Name of school

for the _____ school year. Transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two year kindergarten program as established by the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (SB 1381).

School official

Date provided to parent

Name of parent/guardian

Parent signature

Date

The Transitional Kindergarten Age Eligible Student Placement Form must be placed in student's cum folder.

*Below is the TK age eligibility:

- 2012-13 school year - children who will have their fifth birthday between November 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.
2013-14 school year - children who will have their fifth birthday between October 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.
2014-15 school year - and each school year thereafter, children who will have their fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.

Approved by: Vahé Boujekian, Principal

Si usted desea recibir esta información en español, por favor dejenos saber llamando a la oficina al numero: 818-994-2904 o 818-787-9527.

A3s ty[ykovf3ovnnnyru Ha3yrynow stanalov hamar ku lndryng zangaharyl dproxi grasyn3akin' 818-994-2904 kam 818-787-9527 hamarnyrow:



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Attachment B

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN AGE NOTIFICATION LETTER TO PARENTS

Senate Bill (SB) 1381 (Chapter 705, Statutes of 2010) amended California Education Code (Section 46300, 48000, and 48010) to change the required birthday for admission to kindergarten and first grade and established a transitional kindergarten program beginning in the 2012–2013 school year.

A transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. Pursuant to law, (EC 48000[c]), a child is eligible for transitional kindergarten if a child will have his or her fifth birthday between:

- 2012-13 school year - children who will have their fifth birthday between November 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.
• 2013-14 school year - children who will have their fifth birthday between October 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.
• 2014-15 school year - and each school year thereafter, children who will have their fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a transitional kindergarten program.

This letter is to inform you that your child has been enrolled in a transitional kindergarten (TK) age program at Ararat Charter School for the _____ school year.

Si usted desea recibir esta información en español, por favor dejenos saber llamando a la oficina al numero: 818-994-2904 o 818-787-9527.
A3s ty[ykovf3ovnnnyru Ha3yryn timer stanolov hamar ku lndryng zangaharyl dproxi grasyn3akin' 818-994-2904 kam 818-787-9527 hamarnyrow:

Approved by: Vahé Boujekian, Principal