

**Information for the Families of Incoming Kindergarten Students
2019-2020 School Year**

Dear Incoming Kindergarten Families,

On behalf of the School Committee, administration, faculty, and staff, welcome to the Wrentham Public Schools! Our mission is to work with you to help all of our students become reflective, life-long learners. We look forward to getting to know you and your child(ren).

In addition to Kindergarten Information Night, we have compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions about Kindergarten in Wrentham. We hope that the information provided will help you understand our kindergarten options and decide whether half-day or full-day kindergarten is best for your child.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Maloney
Delaney School Principal

- **Why does Wrentham offer free half-day kindergarten and charge tuition for full-day kindergarten?**

School districts may provide additional hours of kindergarten instruction beyond the 425 hours for free or at an additional cost. In Wrentham, students may attend half-day kindergarten for free or attend full-day kindergarten for \$325.00 per month. This model is used by many Massachusetts school districts.

- **I want my child to attend full-day kindergarten but I cannot afford the \$325 per month tuition. Can the district help?**

Yes. We encourage students' families to contact us if they cannot afford the monthly tuition. We review each tuition reduction or waiver request confidentially and individually. We typically waive or reduce the tuition for students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch, students who receive special education services and require an extended day as part of their IEP, and English language learners. We do not want cost to be the factor that prevents a student from participating in full-day kindergarten. We use a sliding scale based on income to determine varying levels of financial aid.

- **What are the hours of half-day kindergarten and full-day kindergarten?**

Half-day kindergarten is from 8:20 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Full-day kindergarten is from 8:20 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

- **How many students are in half-day kindergarten and full-day kindergarten?**

In the 2018-2019 school year, there are 7 students in half-day and 99 students in full-day kindergarten.

- **Are there designated half-day kindergarten classes?**

No. There are 6 kindergarten classes. All of them have a mix of full-day students and half-day students.

- **What do the students in full-day kindergarten do after the half-day students leave school?**

All kindergarten students learn the required content and skills regardless of whether they are in the half-day program or the full-day program. However, students in the full-day program spend additional time with teachers, paraprofessionals, and peers reviewing, practicing, and expanding their understanding of the academic and social skills. For example, imagine Scotty was in half-day kindergarten and Annie was in full-day kindergarten. Both students would learn to count to 100 by tens during a lesson in the morning. That afternoon, Annie would participate in a small group activity to practice counting to 100 by 10s. Scotty would not participate in that additional practice activity since he would not be in school. Full-day students also participate in lunch, recess, and special subjects like art, music, and physical education.

- **Is the extra time practicing the academic and social skills beneficial to full-day students?**

Yes. Research suggests students benefit academically and emotionally from participating in full-day kindergarten. This is an excerpt from *Child Trends*, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center focused on child development

(<http://www.childtrends.org/indicators/full-day-kindergarten/>)

Overall, children who spend time in full-day kindergarten programs are more likely than children who spend time in half-day kindergarten programs to devote time every day to reading, mathematics, and social studies. Full-day kindergarten allows teachers more time to promote formal and informal learning, reduces the number of transitions in a child's day, and allows children to get used to a schedule similar to that which they will have in first grade. In the short-term, children attending full-day kindergarten programs tend to do better in school than do children attending half-day kindergarten programs, and show stronger academic gains in kindergarten.

In sum, students who spend more time in school demonstrate better academic and social growth. Therefore, most Massachusetts school districts are increasing access to full-day kindergarten.

- **Is my child ready for full-day kindergarten? What do the students do during the day?**

Our kindergarten teachers structure the full-day kindergarten schedule to foster student success. The children are active and involved in work and play with other children, materials, and adults throughout the day. They learn in large groups, small groups, and individually with teachers. The teachers balance active time with down time so the students are not overwhelmed. Some students may be tired after school, particularly in September. However, almost all of our full-day kindergarten students enjoy school and manage the schedule well.

- **Are students allowed to transition from the half-day program to the full-day program?**

Yes. One benefit of having all kindergarten classes on a full-day schedule next year is that it will be easy for half-day kindergarten students to switch to full-day during the school year at parent request. Parents may change the enrollment of their half-day kindergarten students to full-day until October 15 by emailing the teacher. The students will switch to full-day kindergarten on November 1.

- **Why do you request notice of the request to transition from half-day to full day in mid-October if the transition happens on November 1?**

We need enough time to prepare for the transition so it is as smooth as possible.

- **Why is the school district establishing a transition start date of November 1? Isn't that too early?**

Based on our conversations with other school districts and our experience with kindergarten students, we think the November 1 transition date is optimal for students whose parents do not think they're ready for full-day kindergarten at the start of the school year. It allows students two months of half-day kindergarten to acclimate to school while allowing them to benefit from full-day kindergarten for the majority of the school year.

- **What if my child starts kindergarten and I want to change her/his program after the October 15/November 1 transition period?**

We understand that families may experience changes in circumstances during the school year. If this happens, we ask parents to meet with the principal to discuss the situation and possible solutions. Each case will be evaluated individually and confidentially.

- **What do I do if I still have questions?**

Let us know! You may contact Principal Kathleen Maloney, Business Director Beth Gilbert, or Superintendent Allan Cameron. We want to help you and your child have a great experience in kindergarten!