



WRENTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
120 Taunton Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

Allan W. Cameron, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Information for the Families of Incoming Kindergarten Students 2017-2018 School Year

Dear Incoming Kindergarten Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Wrentham Public Schools on behalf of the School Committee and faculty and staff members. 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 children!

We want to make the transition to kindergarten as easy as possible. To that end, Delaney School Principal Colleen Wagstaff will host [Kindergarten Information Night](#) on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, in the Vogel auditorium. At Kindergarten Information Night, administrators and teachers will share details about the kindergarten program and answer your questions. As the father of three former kindergarten students (my youngest is in first grade now), I can attest to the benefits of attending Kindergarten Information Night. I hope to see you there.

In addition to Kindergarten Information Night, we have compiled a list of [Frequently Asked Questions about Kindergarten in Wrentham, 2017-2018](#). 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.

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Core Values

Respect • Communication • Collaboration • Responsibility • Continuous Growth and Learning

- [How will it work if all 6 kindergarten classes are full-day and the half-day students are integrated among them?](#)
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- [I want my child to attend full-day kindergarten but I cannot afford the \\$325 per month tuition. Can the district help?](#)
- [Is there going to be an opportunity for me to learn more about kindergarten?](#)
- [What do I do if I still have questions?](#)

I hope the FAQs and the information provided at Kindergarten Information Night will answer your questions and help you prepare for the 2017-2018 school year. Please contact Mrs. Wagstaff at wagstaffc@wrenthamschools.org or 508-384-5430 extension 1 if you have questions.

Yours truly,

Allan Cameron
 Superintendent of Wrentham Public Schools
camerona@wrenthamschools.org
 508-384-5430 extension 3

Frequently Asked Questions about Kindergarten in Wrentham, 2017-2018

How many instructional hours does Massachusetts law require for kindergarten? What about the other elementary school grades?

Massachusetts law requires a minimum of 425 annual hours of learning time in kindergarten and 900 annual hours of learning time for the other elementary grades.

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 for free or for 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.

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

In the 2016-2017 school year, half-day kindergarten is from 8:20 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. and full-day kindergarten is from 8:20 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. In 2017-2018, we plan to extend the half-day kindergarten day by ten minutes, 8:20 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Full-day kindergarten will remain 8:20 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

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

In the 2016-2017 school year, there are 21 students in half-day and 96 students in full-day kindergarten.

How many designated half-day kindergarten classes are there this school year? Will it be the same in 2017-2018?

In the 2016-2017 school year, there is 1 designated class for half-day students and 5 designated classes of full-day students. In 2017-2018, we plan to make all 6 classes full-day and integrate the half-day students among the full-day classes.

How will it work if all 6 kindergarten classes are full-day and the half-day students are integrated among them?

All of the students will participate in academic and prosocial learning activities from 8:20 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. At 11:20, the half-day students will be dismissed to go home and the full-day students will go to lunch.

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.

Norfolk and Plainville offer free full-day kindergarten. Why not Wrentham?

Cost. Norfolk and Plainville receive and spend more money per pupil than Wrentham. In 2015, Norfolk spent \$14,898 per pupil, Plainville spent \$15,129 per pupil, and Wrentham spent \$13,385. We receive about \$300,000 in full-day kindergarten tuition each school year, which is about 2.5% of our total operating budget. We cannot absorb that 2.5% without making cuts to other parts of the budget. Our goal is to provide free full-day kindergarten in Wrentham. It will take us a few years to reach that goal. Making all of our kindergarten classes full-day is the first step.

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.

Is there a transition program where students are half-day for part of the year and full-day for the rest of the year?

Wrentham discontinued the transitional classroom, where students followed a half-day schedule for part of the year and a full-day schedule for the rest of the year, due to lack of enrollment. 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. 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 them 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 Principal Wagstaff to discuss the situation and possible solutions. Each case will be evaluated individually and confidentially.

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.

Is there going to be an opportunity for me to learn more about kindergarten?

Yes. Kindergarten Information Night is scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, 2017, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Vogel auditorium. Parents will learn all about kindergarten in Wrentham at the meeting. The administrators and teachers will be there to answer your questions.

What do I do if I still have questions?

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