

## **Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District Washington School Transitional Kindergarten Program**

### **Goal:**

Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District (KECSD) has a Transitional Kindergarten program to provide the youngest kindergarteners with a kindergarten readiness year that is developmentally appropriate and will better prepare these children for success once they enter kindergarten.

### **Background:**

California Education Code § 8970 states, *“Kindergarten programs have become more academically oriented with an emphasis on paper and pencil “seat work” and a decreased emphasis on other essential age appropriate curricular elements such as language development; familiarity with stories, music, and oral language experiences; artistic exploration; social interaction; and large muscle development. It is recommended that an appropriate, integrated experiential curriculum should be provided for children in preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1-3, inclusive.”*

In keeping with the intent of the Education Code, Transitional Kindergarten will serve as a bridge for children who need the gift of time, essential to gaining confidence in their social and academic lives. To help the youngest kindergarteners be successful, the KECSD has a two-year program and is intended for children whose birthdays fall between September 3<sup>rd</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Transitional Kindergarten will be available on a voluntary basis. No additional cost will be incurred by the District since funding will be based on student attendance and paid for in the same manner that K-12 instruction is financed, through Average Daily Attendance (ADA). By redefining kindergarten this way, the District will ensure that four year old children who are eligible for kindergarten will receive a year of high-quality, developmentally appropriate kindergarten readiness.

The class emphasizes language, pre-literacy and early math instruction to build appropriate pre-academic skills. In addition, the program seeks to address the development and enhancement of social and emotional skills that are important factors for children’s success in school. In fact, teachers report that it is easiest to help students develop their academic skills and hardest to make an impact in developing self-regulation skills. (Lisa Guernsey, *The Early Ed Watch*, New America Foundation, November 2, 2009)

### **Structure:**

Before voluntary enrollment in the Transitional Kindergarten program, parents will be clearly informed that most participating children will receive two years of kindergarten instruction (Transitional Kindergarten and Traditional Kindergarten). Some children, however, may move directly from Transitional Kindergarten to first grade if parents and staff agree that they have met kindergarten standards and are ready for first grade curriculum. School districts with existing Transitional Kindergarten programs report that the percentage of children jumping to first grade is low.

### **Data:**

Students will receive a student identification number to track academic progress. An effective data system is a fundamental component for tracking student progress and to help the District evaluate if program changes have to be made in the future.

**Staffing:**

California state law stipulates that kindergarten teachers use developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction unique to the individual child's pattern of growth. The Transitional Kindergarten is taught by elementary credentialed teachers and is based on the kindergarten curriculum, adding a strong developmental focus that will offer children the opportunity to access the rigorous California kindergarten standards over a two year period.

**Assistants/Volunteers:**

The support of additional adults in the classroom is an important program component to ensure appropriate implementation of the Transitional Kindergarten curriculum and the differentiation of instruction to meet individual needs. The additional adults in the classroom may include both paid staff and volunteers.

A volunteer plan will be developed and will include the following:

- Parents' integration into the classroom program
- Higher education collaboration with local community colleges and universities to recruit students interested in becoming teachers to assist in the Transitional Kindergarten classroom.

**Professional Development:**

Professional Development for Transitional Kindergarten will be provided in a professional Learning Community (PLC) setting, focusing on areas such as assessment, curriculum development, family engagement and program quality.

**Student Enrollment:**

Enrollment in Transitional Kindergarten is parent driven. This is a voluntary program focusing on support for children with birthdays that fall between September 3<sup>rd</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>. All students will be assessed prior to enrollment in Transitional Kindergarten.

**Communication and Parent Outreach Plan:**

It is important to build a strong foundation of parent engagement by developing a clear communications and outreach plan. This plan will outline the purpose and benefits of Transitional Kindergarten and address diverse cultures and languages.