

**EVALUATION OF THE EXTENDED-DAY
KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EXPANSION
TO NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS**

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Accountability
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EVALUATION OF THE EXTENDED-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EXPANSION TO NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Extended-day kindergarten has been offered in Virginia Beach at Title I schools since 1988. During the 2005-2006 school year, the School Board approved the expansion of the Extended-Day Kindergarten (EDK) Program to non-Title I schools. In 2006-2007, the EDK Program was implemented for the first time in 39 non-Title I schools with a total of 40 extended-day kindergarten classes. The EDK Program supplemented the traditional half-day kindergarten program with a focus on language arts and mathematics during an additional three hour and ten minute session. A total of 642 students were served by the program during the 2006-2007 school year with approximately 15 students per class at any given time. This evaluation examines the implementation of the program in the non-Title I schools, the characteristics of the students who participated, perceptions of the program, EDK students' progress in language arts and mathematics compared to other groups of students who did not participate in the EDK Program, and the cost of the program expansion in the non-Title I schools.

FINDINGS

- A total of 40 EDK classes were implemented in the 39 non-Title I schools. With the exception of one larger school that had two EDK classes, each non-Title I school had one EDK class.
- Students spent half of their day in the regular kindergarten class and the other half of the day in the EDK class with their EDK teacher. Generally, students had two different teachers during their school day.
- The EDK Program provided students with a minimum of an additional 1 hour and 15 minutes of language arts instruction and an additional 40 minutes of mathematics instruction each day. Twenty-five additional instructional minutes were spent at the teachers' discretion on either language arts or mathematics.
- Teachers indicated that the EDK Program provided students with more one-on-one, individual instruction; reinforcement, remediation, and support; and more small-group instruction when compared to the regular half-day kindergarten program.

- Kindergarten students were generally screened during the first two weeks of school to determine if they would benefit from additional instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students were ranked according to their score on the EDK screening assessment, and the lowest scoring 15 students at each school were selected for the EDK class. One larger school selected 30 students for two EDK classes.
- Parents were required to grant their permission for their child to enroll in the program. When asked if enough information about the program was available before deciding to enroll their child, a high percentage of parents (89%) agreed that there was sufficient information. However, this survey item had the lowest level of parental agreement.
- The largest percentage of parents indicated that they enrolled their child in the EDK Program for academic reasons and because it was recommended by the teacher or the school.
- A total of 38 teachers were selected for the 40 EDK classes. Of these teachers, 18 taught both an EDK class and a regular half-day kindergarten class, 2 taught two sections of extended-day kindergarten, and 18 were part-time employees who taught only one EDK class daily. Each EDK class also had a teacher assistant.
- Staff development for EDK teachers during the 2006-2007 school year focused on an overview of the EDK Program and the use of EDK instructional materials that were provided. Of the EDK teachers, 89 percent agreed that overall, they were satisfied with the staff development opportunities related to working with the EDK Program.
- A total of 642 kindergarten students were enrolled in the EDK Program at the non-Title I schools over the course of the school year. This represented approximately 18 percent of the total kindergarten population in the 39 non-Title I schools. Of these students, 538 were enrolled for the entire school year (84%).
- Consistent with the design of the EDK Program, students who were most in need of academic assistance were the students who were enrolled in the program based on the analysis of scores on the 96-point EDK screening assessment.
- For the purposes of this evaluation, kindergarten students in the 39 non-title I schools who completed the EDK screening assessment were classified into three groups. The first group included EDK students. The second group included students who did not participate in the EDK Program even though they scored within the same score range as most EDK students on the EDK screening assessment (i.e., non-EDK, borderline group). The third group included students who did not participate in the EDK Program and scored in the highest score ranges on the EDK screening assessment (i.e., non-EDK, not borderline group).
- On average, EDK students scored 22 points on the screening assessment compared to an average of 36 points for non-EDK students who were considered borderline for the purposes of this evaluation and 76 points for non-EDK students who were not considered borderline.

- The most significant difference between EDK and non-EDK students was their economic status. Of the EDK students, 35 percent received free/reduce-priced meals compared to 13 percent of the students who were not enrolled in EDK. In addition, the EDK students were somewhat more likely to be male, African American or Hispanic, limited English proficient (LEP), and receiving special education services compared to students who were not enrolled in the EDK Program.
- Based on results from anonymous surveys at the end of the school year, parents, kindergarten teachers, and administrators had extremely positive perceptions of the EDK Program. At least 80 percent of all parents, kindergarten teachers, and school administrators agreed with all survey items regarding the EDK Program, and most agreement levels were over 90 percent.
- Survey respondents noted the following benefits of the EDK Program for students: students' academic improvement or the amount that students learned; the reinforcement, extra help, or review that occurred in the program; students' preparation for first grade; the additional time for learning; the individual one-on-one attention that was provided; and improvements in students' self-confidence.
- The largest percentage of parents indicated that there was nothing about the program that could be improved, and many parents praised the EDK Program. Other parents suggested that the EDK Program should be available to more students and that additional communication would improve the program, including more information about the program and more correspondence related to their child's progress.
- The most often suggested improvements to the program from kindergarten teachers and school administrators included expanding the program to provide EDK for more students, including at least two sessions per school, with one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and screening students before the start of the school year. Extended-day kindergarten teachers also suggested instruction-related changes and the opportunity for planning time.
- Based on results of the EDK assessments given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, the largest gains were made by students in the first half of the school year from the beginning to the middle of the year.
- On the PALS assessment, EDK students demonstrated the largest gain in average scores from fall to spring and were the only group to show an increase in the percentage of students meeting the PALS benchmarks. Although the EDK students scored the lowest in the fall, by the spring the EDK students surpassed the performance of the borderline students who were not enrolled in the EDK Program and nearly met the performance of the highest performing non-EDK students.
- While the EDK students began the school year with the lowest percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations as measured by classroom grades, the percentage of EDK students meeting expectations in reading and writing were slightly higher than the non-EDK borderline students and were nearly the same in mathematics by the end of the school year. The gap between the percentage of EDK students and the highest

performing non-EDK students who met expectations decreased substantially from the beginning to the end of the year, although gaps were not completely closed.

- A lower percentage of kindergarten students in the 39 non-Title I schools were recommended for summer school after the first year of the EDK Program (14%) compared to the year prior to the EDK Program (16%), and a lower percentage enrolled in summer school after the first year of the EDK Program (11%) compared to the previous year (13%). Approximately 43 fewer students enrolled in summer school compared to what would have been expected if summer school attendance rates were the same as the year prior to the EDK Program.
- A lower percentage of kindergarten students in the 39 non-Title I schools were retained after the 2006-2007 school year (1.6%) compared to the previous year's kindergarteners in 2006 before the EDK Program was implemented (2.4%). Approximately 24 fewer kindergarten students were retained in kindergarten in 2007 compared to what would have been expected if rates were the same as the year prior to the EDK Program.
- Overall, the total cost for the first year of the EDK Program was approximately \$1.9 million dollars for 40 EDK classes which served 642 students during the school year.
- Of the total cost, 19 percent (\$364,324) was considered one-time start-up costs for instructional materials, furniture, moving portables to accommodate EDK enrollment, and an initial EDK brochure. The annual recurring operating cost, due to personnel costs, accounted for 81 percent of the total cost (\$1,579,080).
- The per pupil cost of operating the EDK Program in 2006-2007 was approximately \$2,460, not including the one-time start-up costs which could be spread over several years and several groups of incoming kindergarten students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement strategies to improve communication between the school and parents to provide parents with more information regarding the EDK Program and ongoing communication about their child's academic progress. (Schools)
- Review survey comments from parents, kindergarten teachers, and school administrators to determine if suggestions for improvement are feasible to implement divisionwide. (Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Department of School Administration)
- Continue the program as a part of the standard program of the schools designated and consider expanding the program to two EDK classes at non-Title I schools that demonstrate a sufficient need for additional services. (School Administration)
- Using baseline data from this evaluation, define measurable objectives and targets for the EDK Program at non-Title I schools. Provide an update to the School Board regarding the achievement of these objectives after the second year of the program's operation. (Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Department of School Administration, Department of Accountability)