

EXTENDED-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS:

AN UPDATE REGARDING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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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 the additional instructional time. During the 2007-2008 school year, a total of 700 students were served by the program with approximately 15 students per class at any given time. The additional cost of the EDK Program during 2007-2008 totaled approximately \$1,759,208. An evaluation of the EDK Program's expansion to non-Title I schools was provided to the School Board in September 2007. One recommendation from the program evaluation was that an update regarding the achievement of program objectives and performance targets be provided to the School Board after the second year of the program's operation. This report serves as an update and focuses on the following: actions that were taken regarding the School Board-approved recommendations from the September 2007 evaluation, data regarding the extent to which the EDK Program's goal and objectives were met during the second year of operation, kindergarten performance of EDK students in relation to other groups of students who were not enrolled in the program, and former EDK students' academic performance when they were in first grade during 2007-2008 relative to other first graders.

FINDINGS

- Kindergarten 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.
- On average, EDK students scored 20 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 report and 77 points for non-EDK students who were not considered borderline.
- The most significant differences between all EDK and non-EDK students were their economic status and prior preschool experience. Of the EDK students, 34 percent received free/reduced-priced meals compared to 14 percent of the students who were not enrolled in

EDK. Furthermore, 37 percent of the EDK students and 29 percent of the non-EDK borderline students had no preschool experience compared to 16 percent of non-EDK students who were not borderline. The EDK students were somewhat more likely to be male, African American or Hispanic, and limited English proficient (LEP) compared to students who were not enrolled in the EDK Program.

- A total of 700 kindergarten students were enrolled in the EDK Program at the non-Title I schools over the course of the school year. This represented approximately 20 percent of the kindergarten population in the non-Title I schools. Of these students, 510 were enrolled for the entire school year (73%). This was a lower percentage than during the 2006-2007 school year when 84 percent of the EDK students were enrolled for the entire school year.
- All School Board-approved recommendations from the September 2007 EDK Program evaluation process were addressed with meaningful actions at the school and central office levels. Strategies were implemented to improve communication between the school and parents, survey comments were reviewed and several suggestions for improvement were implemented, the EDK Program was expanded in September 2008 to include seven additional EDK classes, and a committee met to define the overall goal for the EDK Program along with five measurable objectives and performance targets.
- The overall goal of the EDK Program was to improve kindergarten students' performance in reading, mathematics, and work habits to meet end-of-year kindergarten standards in preparation for successful entry into first grade. Five objectives with performance targets focused on performance on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2), classroom grades in mathematics, classroom grades in work habits, and promotion status to first grade as of the end of the school year. Based on an analysis of academic outcome data for EDK students who had been enrolled in the program for the entire school year, all five performance targets for the EDK Program were met.
- Based on results of the EDK assessments given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, the largest gains were made by EDK students during the first half of the school year.
- For the purposes of this report, kindergarten students in the non-Title I schools were classified into four groups to determine how EDK students performed throughout kindergarten relative to other students. The first group included EDK students who were enrolled in the EDK Program for the entire school year (i.e., full-year EDK group). The second group included EDK students who were enrolled in the EDK Program only for part of the school year (i.e., partial-year EDK group). The third 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 fourth 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 the PALS assessment, full-year EDK students demonstrated the largest gain in average scores from fall to spring. Both groups of EDK students showed an increase in the percentage of students meeting the PALS benchmarks from fall to spring, with the full-year

EDK students demonstrating a larger increase. Although the full-year EDK students scored the lowest in the fall, by spring, the full-year EDK students surpassed the performance of the partial-year EDK students and the borderline students who were not enrolled in the EDK Program. The gap between the full-year EDK students and the highest performing non-EDK students also decreased substantially.

- While the full-year EDK students began the school year with the lowest percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations as measured by classroom grades, the percentages of full-year EDK students meeting expectations in reading, writing, and mathematics were higher than the partial-year EDK and non-EDK borderline students by the end of the school year. The gap between the percentage of full-year 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.
- The percentages of full-year EDK students who were recommended for summer school in 2008 (28%) and who attended summer school (23%) were noticeably lower than the percentages of partial-year EDK students who were recommended for (43%) or attended summer school (35%). Summer school results for full-year EDK students were similar to the non-EDK borderline students.
- Overall, the percentage of kindergarten students in the non-Title I schools who were recommended for summer school after the second year of the EDK Program (12%) continued to decline compared to the percentage of kindergarteners at the end of the first year of the program (14%) and the year prior to the EDK Program (16%). A lower percentage enrolled in summer school after the second year of the EDK Program (10%) compared to after the first year (11%) and the year prior to the EDK Program (13%).
- The percentage of full-year EDK students who were retained in kindergarten at the end of the 2007-2008 school year (4.3%) was lower than the retention rate for students who were only enrolled in the EDK Program for part of the school year (9.2%) and was more similar to the rate for non-EDK borderline students (3.0%).
- Overall, a lower percentage of kindergarten students in the non-Title I schools were retained at the end of the 2007-2008 school year (1.7%) compared to the kindergarten students in 2006 prior to the implementation of the EDK Program (2.4%).
- The academic performance of former EDK students while they were in first grade during 2007-2008 was assessed and examined in relation to other first-grade students. This provided a longitudinal measure of performance. However, it was not considered as a measure of the EDK Program's effectiveness because the extent to which EDK students are successful beyond kindergarten is impacted by the instruction and services received in subsequent grade levels.
- During 2006-2007, EDK students began kindergarten at substantially lower academic levels compared to non-EDK students. During kindergarten, academic data indicated that the EDK students who were enrolled in the program for the entire school year narrowed the

performance gap with the non-EDK students. In addition, the EDK students closed the gap or outperformed the non-EDK borderline students by the end of kindergarten.

- Classroom report card data in first grade showed that former EDK students completed the first quarter of first grade in 2007-2008 at levels relatively similar to the former non-EDK borderline students. However, academic data from the PALS, classroom grades, summer school status, and retention status generally showed that the gap between the former EDK students and non-EDK borderline students widened after the first quarter of grade one and persisted throughout the first grade year. At the end of first grade, a greater percentage of former EDK students were recommended for summer school, enrolled in summer school, and retained in first grade compared to the non-EDK students who were considered to be borderline in kindergarten.
- The one exception to this pattern occurred in classroom writing grades, where the performance of former EDK students and non-EDK borderline students remained similar throughout first grade.