

Nashoba Regional School District
Integrated Pre-K
Informational Session
December 20, 2017
Mary Rowlandson School, Lancaster



Overview

- Review of Integrated Pre-K
- Submitted questions
- Break-out into communities
/ SPED

Why the review of the Integrated Pre-K Program?

- Program Reviews
- Forensic Audit
 - Suggested Program Improvements
- District Wide Purposeful Planning
- NRSD School Committee Directive

What was the process?

- Examined current model
- Reviewed DESE Guidelines
- Examined 3 years of NRSD Trends
- Charted data

Definition of Integrated Preschool

- Integrated Preschool classrooms are developed to provide learning experiences for children ages three to five whose special education needs cannot be served at home, preschool programs or daycare centers. Children are educated with typically developing peers who do not have special needs and who serve as role models for learning.

Realignment of Community Programs

- Little Links → Links (Lancaster)
- Sunrise (Bolton)
- Beginning Connections (Stow)

*All IEP decisions are made by the TEAM, including the child's parents.

FAQ

Preschool Program Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:

Question: What is a description of the NRSD Integrated Preschool Program?

Answer: *Integrated Preschool classrooms are developed to provide learning experiences for children ages three to five whose special education needs cannot be served at home, preschool programs or daycare centers. Children are educated with typically developing peers who do not have special needs and who serve as role models for learning. See the attached brochure for further information.*

Question: What is the tuition expected to be?

Answer: *See the attached chart for the draft recommendations that will be going before the school committee for approval.*

Question: Why are some preschool programs moving to different (NRSD) schools?

Answer: *The district has worked diligently to align preschool programs with the existing elementary programs that they connect with. There are two new programs that were created this year (Early Risers at FSS and Class Connections at Center School). This move will help to align the appropriate preK programs with the corresponding elementary programs.*

Question: How does the current SPED ratio to peer models work?

Answer: *The district has always started with a ratio of 7 special education and 8 role models when scheduling preschool classes. As the year progresses and spots are not filled, the district fills additional spots with role models.*

Question: What are Inclusionary Programs? What are their corresponding student ratios?

Answer: *According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education "Inclusionary programs for young children shall be located in a setting that includes children with and without disabilities and shall meet the following standards:*

- 1. Services in such programs may be provided in the home, the public school, Head Start, or a licensed childcare setting.*
- 2. For public school programs that integrate children with and without disabilities, the class size shall not exceed 20 with one teacher and one aide and no more than five students with disabilities. If the number of students with disabilities is six or seven then the class size may not exceed 15 students with one teacher and one aide."*

FAQ (continued)

Question: What is a substantially separate classroom?

Answer: *As defined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education "Substantially separate programs for young children shall be those programs for three and four year olds that are located in a public school classroom or facility that serves primarily or solely children with disabilities.*

Substantially separate programs shall adhere to the following standards:

- 1. Substantially separate programs shall be programs in which more than 50% of the children have disabilities.**
- 2. Substantially separate programs operated by public schools shall limit class sizes to nine students with one teacher and one aide.**

Question: Can you explain why the services for students have been reduced?

Answer: *The district has actually increased services for students, in that previously we were provided 2 (1/2 days) and 4 (1/2) days, and we have increased these to reflect 3 (1/2 days) and 5 (1/2) day programs as we feel this will better meet the needs of our students.*

Question: Will my child, currently a role model in the program, be guaranteed a slot next year?

Answer: *Our goal is to welcome back all of the students currently in the preschool. We have sent out letters to parents to inquire about interest for next year.*

Question: Can my child remain in the class he is currently in?

Answer: *We will do our best, as we have done in the past, to place students based upon what is requested by the parent. Some programs will continue to exist; however, they may be moved to a different school in light of the program that they feed into.*

FAQ (continued)

Question: Will this model limit students who cannot afford preschool? Without tuition assistance, students may not attend preschool.

Answer: *No. If students require tuition assistance, they will be afforded this opportunity within the NRSD.*

Question: Can this model be phased in?

Answer: *No. This is not necessary given the anticipated numbers and slots. This program is designed for students with disabilities, as mandated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

Question: Will this limit students who are 3 years old from entering, therefore reducing the program because parents will not start in one preschool and move to another?

Answer: *Given that students turn three throughout the year, they would be placed on a wait list if a spot is not available.*

Question: Is there any opportunity to explore the offering of a preschool program exclusively for typically developing students, so that it does not interfere with the established ratios of the integrated program?

Answer: *This is not currently under consideration for NRSD.*

Question: Should there be a blend of 3 and 4 year old role model students in each integrated classroom?

Answer: *We have typically had a blended model of three and four year olds.*