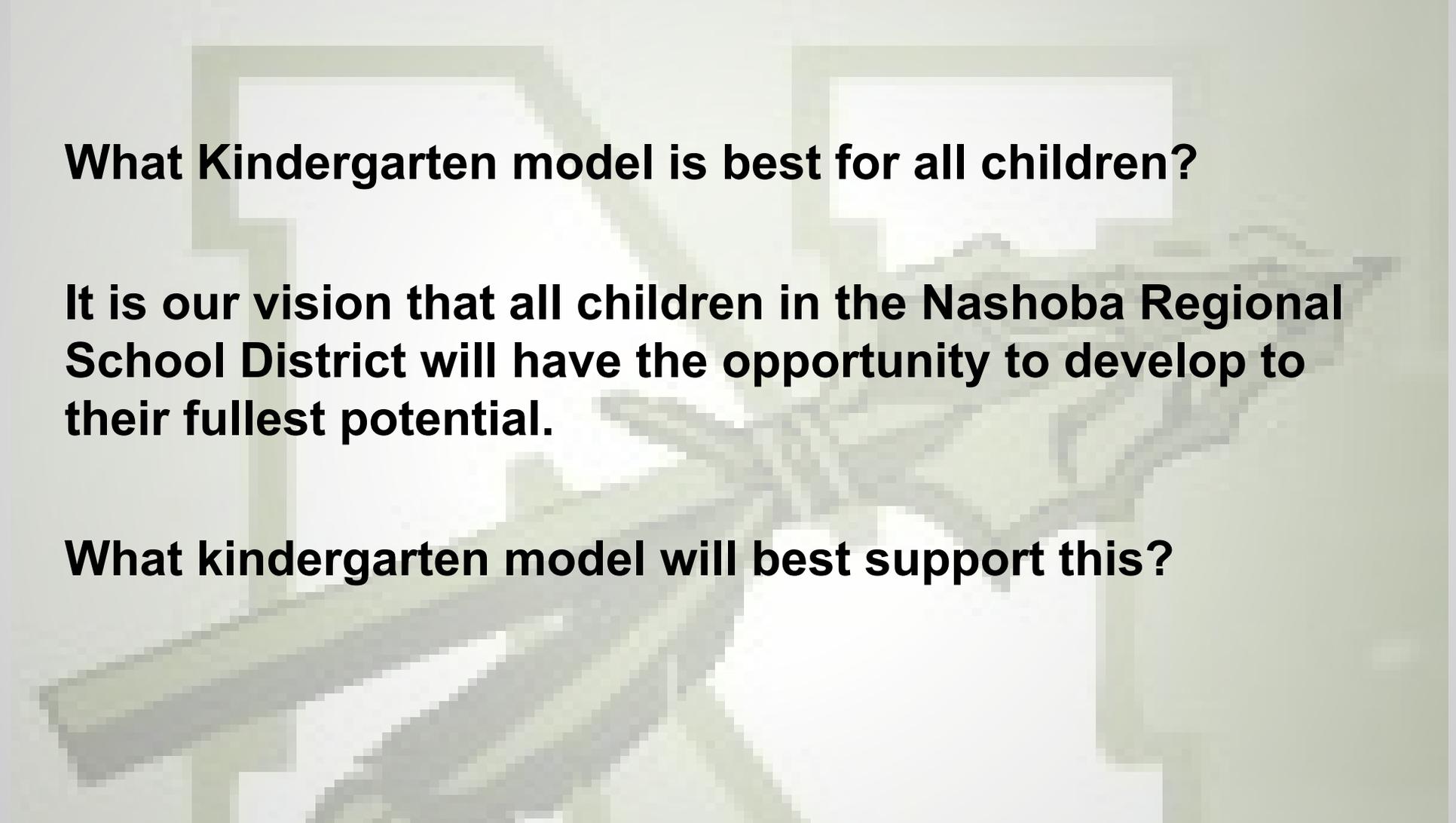




**Nashoba
Full Day/Half Day
Kindergarten**



What Kindergarten model is best for all children?

It is our vision that all children in the Nashoba Regional School District will have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

What kindergarten model will best support this?

Brief Background/Overview

Prior to FY15 the Nashoba District offered 2 options for kindergarten:

full day - 8:35 - 3:05 (6 1/2 hours)

Half day (a separate class) - 8:35 - 11:35 (3 hours).

A lottery was necessary because of the large demand for full day.

While the administration did all possible to accommodate all families requesting full day, it sometimes was impossible. Therefore some families wanting a full day class did not have their needs met.

After some research and visits to similar models in surrounding towns, a hybrid model was put in place in FY15, in which all classes were full day and children had the option of going home at 12pm or staying the full day.

What's working?

Teachers report the following.

- **Full day children go to lunch and half day children get on the bus at noon. This has been a seamless transition.**
- **There is no longer a discrepancy between half day, and full day children. All are included with full day classes in the majority of school activities. Teachers report that this provides a more socially inclusive environment.**
- **Extra time in the morning (3 1/2 hours) has allowed more time to deliver instruction.**
- **Smaller numbers in the afternoon is helpful for enriching/remediating. Similar activities can be sent home with half day students.**

What are the challenges?

- **The expectations for kindergarten mastery skills have increased as the Common Core Standards have become incorporated into the Massachusetts State Standards.**
- **It has been difficult to compress all current curriculum requirements into the morning session of a full day in a developmentally appropriate manner.**
- **Current research tells us that young children learn best through active learning and time to process information. The full day model allows more opportunity for curriculum to be delivered in this manner.**
- **With the half day as part of a full day classroom and it is required that teachers not introduce any new learning in the afternoon it is difficult to implement best practices.**

What does the data tell us?

National research supports full day kindergarten is best for all children, given the current educational demands. It also notes there are many other factors that affect a student's success, not just full day vs. ½ day (See NCES Report.).

However, we do have families in our district that would prefer not to send their children to full day. District data shows children who attend ½ day have done just as well on MCAS as children who attended full day. (See MCAS Trends 2013, TSG Comparative Report 2014)

We will continue to monitor MCAS Trends and Teaching Strategies Gold data to determine if there are any major discrepancies in half day vs. full day students. We will continue to monitor research on best practices.

We will also continue to survey parents of incoming kindergartners as to their preference for full day or half day.

Budget Implications

- **The budget will not be impacted until we go to all full day.**
- **We should evaluate the amount we receive from tuition and the amount we would receive from DESE funding for each child if we went all full day.**

How will this initiative improve student achievement/student engagement?

Research tells us children of kindergarten age learn best through active learning. Research also demonstrated that full-day kindergarten programs tend to foster long-term engagement.

We need to provide developmentally appropriate instruction throughout the day. This includes a balance of direct instruction with time to process and purposeful engagement with ideas, materials and peers.

Blocks



I am playing.

I am developing motor skills, math and science concepts, oral language, social skills, self-regulation, and my imagination.

I may be a builder, an architect, or an engineer when I grow up.

This is how I learn.

STEM



I am playing.

I am developing sensory skills, problem solving skills, language skills.

I am exploring and experimenting, learning the scientific process, and building curiosity about the world.

I may be a doctor, lab technician, pharmacist or farmer when I grow up.

This is how I learn.

Technology



I am playing.

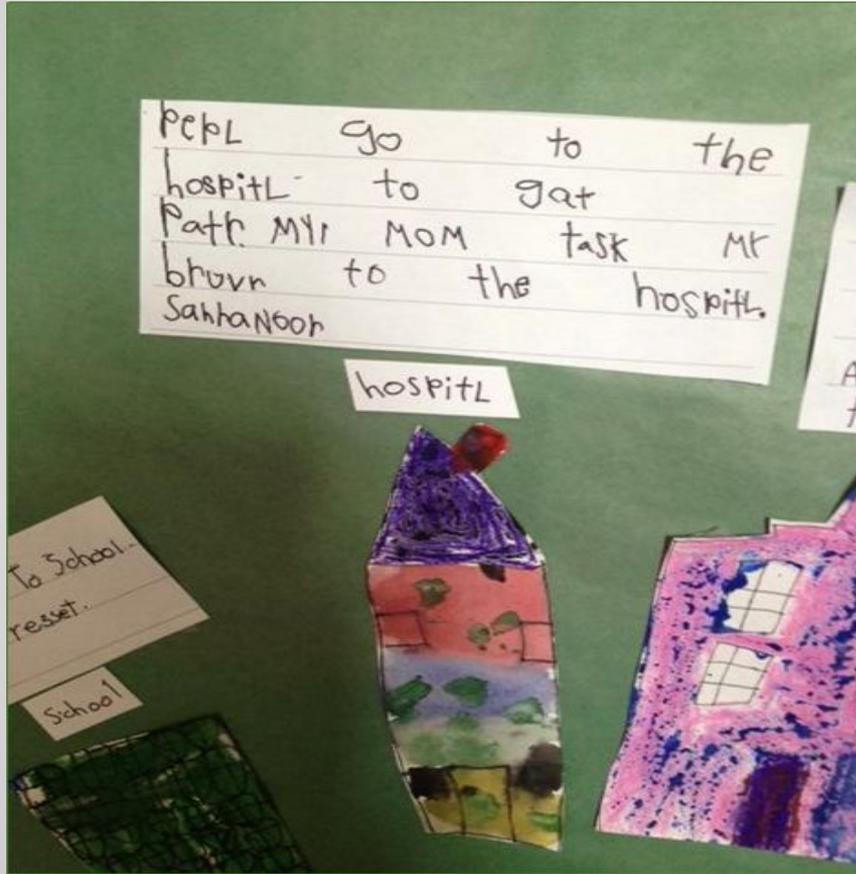
I am working with others.

I am using technology to learn about things and as a tool to express and communicate my ideas.

I may be a computer software engineer, a web developer, or a computer systems analyst.

I will use computers in everything I do when I grow up.

Writing & Drawing



I am playing with lines and symbols.

I am practicing literacy skills, thinking about composition, working with others, and communicating my ideas about things that are important to me.

I will use writing skills in everything I do when I grow up.

This is how I learn.

How will it help us achieve our goals?

“To educate all students to their fullest potential.”

- **We have to be able to implement instruction based on children’s individual developmental levels, needs and learning styles at a developmentally appropriate pace.**
- **We have to trust that our teachers are highly qualified, and experienced in their field. We need to trust them to implement curriculum based on their knowledge and expertise.**

Proposed Kindergarten Model

Continue with the current blended model, eventually moving to all full day.

To implement best practices we need to have fewer morning specials, by reducing those that do not occur naturally in a kindergarten setting. The majority of specials in the afternoon will allow more time for academic instruction balanced with intentional play, in the morning.

In closing

It is undisputed that full day affords teachers more time and opportunity to get to know children and families, engage in more individualized instruction and spend more time extending the curriculum.

However, there are many more factors than the length of a kindergarten day that influence improved outcomes for children. Our district data shows that children who go home to an attentive adult, spending quality time with their child, focusing on their developmental and educational needs, also have positive outcomes.

This should not mean we deny the benefits of a developmentally appropriate full day experience for children not choosing that option: by reducing instruction time for them as well, and not allowing instruction to be delivered in a developmentally appropriate manner, throughout a balanced day.