

Full-Day Prekindergarten

The goal of the Full-Day Prekindergarten (PreK) initiative is to increase the opportunity for more four-year-old children who are attending half-day or no PreK programs to benefit from full-day PreK services. The full-day program will extend learning time for the children and will better meet the needs of working parents.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a free half-day (three hours) program designed to prepare every four-year-old in Florida for kindergarten and to build a strong foundation for their educational success. The state provides funding for high-quality, half-day VPK in any school where at least 20 students are enrolled in the PreK classroom. Currently, 63 of the 127 elementary schools in Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) offer VPK services.

The majority of Title I schools split fund full-day PreK using VPK and Title I funds. However, non-Title I schools do not have a funding source to pay for afternoon services. Thus many children do not participate since their parents/guardians often work and need day care in both mornings and afternoons. Twelve of the district's 76 non-Title I elementary schools offer the half-day VPK program. Through this proposal, OCPS is seeking funds to pay for afternoon PreK services in these schools.

The proposed full-day PreK program model for the participating schools includes: (1) a teacher certified in early childhood education in each PreK classroom; (2) another PreK teacher certified in early childhood education to coach and support staff in neighboring private day care centers to ensure that their two, three and four-year-old children are being adequately prepared for kindergarten; (3) a paraprofessional to support the PreK teachers and students; and (4) materials, supplies and technology. In addition, the Early Childhood office plans to implement the Nemours BrightStart! small-group intervention program to identify and support prekindergarten students at risk for future reading failure.

Budget: 12 Schools = \$1,331,040 per year

1 School = \$110,920 per year

Return on Investment: All participating prekindergarten students will be ready to enter kindergarten.

Young children—especially those who are disadvantaged—who participate in full-day, high-quality prekindergarten programs are better prepared to enter kindergarten.





Targeted Population

Prekindergarten/Early Childhood Students

Needs Statement

Currently Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) Early Childhood Education programs for prekindergarten (PreK) students include the following services:

- **Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)** funds a teacher and a paraprofessional for a half-day VPK in schools that have at least 20 PreK four-year-olds per classroom. Funding is based on seat time. If days are missed, funding may be reduced, creating a budget shortfall. Student academic achievement suffered when VPK went from full-day to half-day. Also, participation dropped since many working parents needed full-day child care. VPK program providers are assessed annually, ranked and graded based on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) and earn a readiness rate. The minimum rate is 70 percent. If performance is below this rate for two years in a row, schools may be sanctioned. If they fall below this threshold for three years in a row and have not provided proper documentation for a Good Cause Exemption, they will lose VPK funding.
- **45 Title I elementary schools offer full-day PreK programs (50 classrooms)**, split funded between VPK and OCPS Title I funds. To be identified as a Title I school, at least 75 percent of the students must be eligible for the free-or-reduced-price meal program. Some of these sites serve multiple classes.
- **18 additional elementary schools (6 Title I and 12 Non-Title I schools) offer VPK-funded, half-day PreK programs.** These programs need supplemental funding to provide full-day PreK services. In addition, 16 Title I schools have no VPK programs.
- **Philanthropic support for PreK programs can have a substantial impact on student achievement.** For example, the Tangelo Park Elementary PreK program is a model program which serves two-three-and four-year olds. The school offers two full-day VPK classrooms for four year olds which are split funded with VPK, one with Title I funds and the other by Harris Rosen, a generous local philanthropist who is a strong advocate for education. Mr. Rosen also pays for a paraprofessional and a PreK teacher to support a program for two-three-and four year olds in ten private day care centers in the Tangelo Park community. The day care center program curriculum is aligned with the Tangelo Park Elementary PreK program.
- **OCPS houses 17 Head Start centers** for three- and four-year-olds in Aloma, Engelwood, Lake Weston, Maxey and Tangelo Park elementary schools and Grand Avenue Primary Learning Center (K-2 school). In addition, a permanent unit is housed at Orlando Tech. Head Start programs do not use certified teachers and also compete with VPK for PreK students. However, Head Start offers services to both three- and four-year-olds. Students attending those centers do not have to be zoned for the school.

- **The Early Learning Coalition** funds what used to be known as the Tiny Tots program. The focus is now on children birth to five years old. The program is now known as the Early Learning Literacy Team. The literacy team will provide services to four child care providers in Orange County. They will become high quality, sustainable, literacy demonstration sites. The instructional focus will involve both teachers and directors of the child care centers and will include working with all center classrooms, birth through PreK. There will be two district resource teachers and two program assistants supporting the program.

- **The strongest PreK model** provides a full-day PreK teacher certified in Early Childhood Education, a paraprofessional, and another certified PreK teacher to work with neighboring private day care centers to ensure that two-, three- and four-year-old children are being effectively prepared for kindergarten. This model is being successfully used by Tangelo Park Elementary School, which also has a Head Start center on campus. (This model is referred to as the Enhancement Model in this proposal and is considered particularly effective in high poverty communities.)

Challenges associated with full-day PreK include:

- Need for full-day PreK programs in the 12 non-Title I schools with half-day PreK. These schools do not have a funding source to pay for afternoon PreK services. The district currently has 102 Title I schools of which 67 are traditional elementary schools. Thirty-one of the Title I elementary schools have a poverty rate of 90 percent or above. Of these, only 20 have full-day PreK programs. Next year Title I has the option to split fund these programs with VPK funding to provide full-day PreK services.
- Lack of after school programs to accommodate four-year-olds, especially in high poverty neighborhoods.
- Lack of transportation for four-year-olds.
- Difficulties in maintaining a full VPK program all year. VPK programs are full when they open, but enrollment tends to decline as the year progresses. VPK funding drops when students are not attending, which creates budget challenges where staff must be sustained throughout the year.
- Educating parents on the importance of early childhood education programs so they recognize the value of daily attendance.
- Title I “supplement, not supplant” requirements. In order to use Title I funds for PreK, state and local dollars must be first used to cover the costs associated with opening one PreK unit in each school, including Title I schools. Then Title I dollars may be used to fund an additional unit.
- Teachers and/or paraprofessionals hired through Title I must be Highly Qualified. To maintain consistency, positions funded by local and state resources should meet the same standard.



- Lack of space on campuses for PreK programs due to class size reduction requirements.

Additional challenges for migrant PreK children and families are that:

- Mobility is an issue along with the lack of understanding of the importance of early learning.
- Parents are reluctant to release their youngest child out of their reach due to separation anxiety.
- Language barriers are an issue since Migrant Education serves students whose primary home language is Spanish.
- Flexibility should be embedded to allow for different delivery models: school-based, home-based, year-round, etc.
- Wrap Around Services, developed through collaborative partnerships among agencies that already provide needed services, should include networking between the Migrant Education Program and other providers.

Proposal

The goal of the **Full-Day Prekindergarten** initiative is to increase the opportunity for more four-year-old children to attend a full-day, full-year PreK program with highly effective teachers supported by paraprofessionals who offer appropriate early learning environments. The Orange County school district emphasizes the importance of support for PreK programs, particularly in the highest need elementary schools with outreach to neighborhood private day care centers. Thus this enhanced model, successfully demonstrated through the Tangelo Park Elementary School PreK program, also includes a certified PreK teacher who supports early childhood programs for two-, three- and four-year-old children in private day care centers within the school community, ensuring that their students are being prepared to enter kindergarten. PreK students in all of the district's 122 elementary schools would benefit from full-day PreK services.

Section 1(b), Article IX of the Florida Constitution states the mission of the Florida Early Learning and Development Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011): Every four-year-old child in Florida shall be provided by the State a high quality prekindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. An early childhood development and education program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child's ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings in the development of language and cognitive capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory and moral capabilities through education in basic skills and such other skills as the Legislature may determine to be appropriate.

In order to meet the higher standards for four-year-old children in PreK programs, rigor must be increased in the classrooms and the resources to support early learning must be in place. Full-day PreK services offered by effective, certified early childhood educators, will help ensure that these young children are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond. High quality, effective early childhood education services are critical along the cradle-to-career continuum of support, especially for the most underserved children.

The VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, and Oral Language/Vocabulary that are aligned with the Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds. The Florida VPK Assessment was designed to:

- Reflect current research on emergent literacy and numeracy.
- Align with the Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds.
- Provide teachers with valid and reliable feedback regarding children's progress in attaining these specific skills so that teachers may use this information to customize instruction to meet the needs of each child.

The VPK Assessment scores are suggestive of how children will score on the FLKRS but have not yet been linked to that measure. Final scores will depend on the collection of additional data and ongoing benchmarking studies.

The Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)

The FLKRS is designed to provide for the screening of each child's readiness for kindergarten. The FLKRS includes a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and the Broad Screen/Progress Monitoring Tool and Broad Diagnostic Inventory of the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading – Kindergarten (FAIR-K). Data from both of the FLKRS measures, ECHOS and FAIR-K, should be used by the classroom teacher to inform instruction and should be shared with parents. These data will also be used to annually calculate a kindergarten readiness rate for private and public school providers of the VPK Education Program.

The State Board of Education finalized the Kindergarten Readiness Rate, which reflects how prepared children are for kindergarten. The calculation for identifying "Low Performing Providers" (LPP) has changed. The minimum 2010-2011 VPK Provider Readiness Rate is now set at 70 percent. This means that 70 percent of students must screen "ready" on both assessment components: ECHOS and FAIR-K. Also, this year the scoring for every center has changed – from 200 to 100.



To be eligible for VPK funding, at least 20 students must be enrolled in each PreK classroom. Among the 67 OCPS Title I elementary schools, there are 45 full-day PreK programs, split funded by VPK and Title I, leaving 22 Title I schools with half-day or no VPK programming. There are 12 non-Title I elementary schools with half-day VPK programs.

Most working parents need full-day PreK services for their children. It is anticipated that more parents would enroll their four-year-olds if they had access to a full-day PreK program. *This early investment in children offers many dividends as they progress through school.*

This proposal requests the *sustained support* of philanthropists to fund the following PreK services:

- Expand the PreK program in the 12 non-Title I schools that offer half-day VPK in the morning. Funding is needed to cover the cost of a PreK teacher certified in Early Childhood Education and a paraprofessional to cover afternoons, leading to full-day PreK services. Also needed is a second full-day PreK teacher to work with two-three-and four year olds in surrounding private day care centers to better prepare these children to enter kindergarten.
- Nemours BrightStart! creates programs to support early identification and treatment for young children at risk for reading failure and dyslexia, a major child health issue that affects many American children. The work begins with prekindergarteners, when preventive action can help the most. It was designed to be used as a small-group intervention program for prekindergarteners at risk for future reading failure.
- New technologies, such as the interactive white board table or other resources appropriate for early childhood education, to enrich the classroom.
- Each classroom needs \$500 in supplies per year for the supplemental afternoon sessions. VPK funding provides this for the morning sessions.

Current Partners

Early Learning Coalition of Orange County
Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

Return on Investment

All targeted elementary schools that offer full-day PreK classes will experience the following result:

- Ninety-five percent of all participating students who complete a full-year of full-day PreK and who missed no more than 20 days of school will be ready for entering kindergarten by age five as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and attendance records.
- No OCPS elementary schools with VPK programs will score below the 70 minimum VPK Provider Readiness Rate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As demonstrated in a study performed by the Economic Policy Institute, providing the nation's three- and four-year-old children who live in poverty with a high-quality Early Childhood Development program would have a substantial payoff for governments and taxpayers in the future. As those children grow up, costs for remedial and special education, criminal justice, and welfare benefits would decline. Once in the labor force, their incomes would be higher, along with the taxes they would pay back to society.
Evaluation Plan	<p>Formative Evaluation/Progress Monitoring: Teachers will monitor the progress of each PreK student throughout each school year. Diagnostic assessments will be used by qualified teachers who will determine appropriate interventions, as needed. Assessments will include the new assessment aligned with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011) and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. District support from the Early Childhood Education office and other units will further individualize services for each student. Data will inform decision-making in regard to needed support for students who are English Language Learners, served by Exceptional Student Education, in need of vision and hearing screenings, and other needed resources.</p> <p>Summative Evaluation: Attendance records and the Kindergarten Readiness assessment will be used to measure the annual student outcomes of each full-day PreK to determine if the target was reached: Ninety-five percent of all participating students who complete a full year of full-day PreK and who missed no more than 20 days of school will be ready for entering kindergarten by age five as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and attendance records.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Area superintendents will ensure that new principals are aware of the district's commitment to the initiative.</p> <p>Area superintendents – Responsible to ensure that all full-day PreK programs are supported by their principals.</p>
Key Personnel	<p>Principals - Help promote the PreK program within their school community and continue to acknowledge the contribution of the philanthropic organization(s) adopting the programs.</p> <p>PreK teachers – Certified in Early Childhood Education, PreK teachers will effectively prepare students for kindergarten.</p> <p>Paraprofessionals – Support the PreK teachers and students</p>



Budget

Personnel And Fringe Benefits:

To replicate the Tangelo Park Model in 12 non-Title I elementary schools that currently offer only VPK-AM funding, the average salary and fringe benefits cost for each classroom is as follows:

- Prekindergarten teacher of four-year-old children - salary and benefits
 - VPK Funds the Morning
 - Need Funding for the Afternoon in Targeted Schools = \$30,485
- Prekindergarten paraprofessional to support PreK teacher salary and benefits
 - VPK Funds the Morning
 - Need Funding for the Afternoon in Targeted Schools = \$11,965
- Enhancement: Full-day PreK teacher to work with the school's neighboring private day care centers to ensure two-, three- and four-year-olds are being prepared for kindergarten and to align the curriculum. = \$60,970 (Note: Only one PreK teacher for the private schools is needed per elementary school, regardless of the number of VPK classrooms.)

Total: Salary and Fringe Benefits to Replicate the Tangelo Park Model in one VPK-AM Only school = \$103,420

Total: Salary and Fringe Benefits to Replicate the Tangelo Park Model in 12 VPK-AM Only schools = \$103,420 X 12 non-Title I schools in need of Full-Day PreK = \$1,241,040

Purchased Services: N/A

Materials And Supplies:

Prekindergarten supply budget per school AM or PM session = \$500 per school
Nemours BrightStart! - 12 schools X \$1,000 = \$12,000

Equipment:

Optional enhanced budget per school for new technologies for Early Childhood Education = \$6,000 X 12 schools = \$72,000

Other: N/A

Total:

12 Schools = \$1,331,040
1 School = \$110,920

OCPS Strategic Objective(s)

Intense Focus on Student Achievement
Meeting State Standards (FCAT)
High-Performing and Dedicated Team
Fully Staffed Schools (Vacancies)
Sustained Community Engagement
Partnerships

Contact(s)

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