

Summary of Public Comments

Overview

At the October 15, 2026 Board of Education meeting, members of the public provided feedback on the district's planning to expand the District Extended Day Kindergarten Plan for the 2027-28 school year. Ten individuals issued 13 public statements supporting the expansion of access to full-day kindergarten.

The comments focused on two major points. The first is the benefit of full-day kindergarten, and the second is the challenges families will face with childcare, knowing that Mustard Seeds and Beechwood are closing their programs.

Specific Parent Questions

- Why was the delay in full-day kindergarten presented in district emails as a construction/space issue when physical classrooms appear to exist at each elementary school? Is the primary driver a budget constraint related to tuition collection?
 - *The primary reason for the delay of universal full-day kindergarten is space. The redesign of the Tatem addition has put the project behind. Contractors will not break ground until November of 2026, and substantial completion will be December of 2027. The Finance Committee requested the inclusion of budgetary information and provided information for the Board.*
- If full-day kindergarten cannot be implemented next year due to budget/tuition constraints, how will this be resolved for the 2028–2029 school year without collecting tuition? What district trade-offs are being considered to prioritize full-day kindergarten in the budget?
 - *We are planning to expand staffing to support the move to universal kindergarten. Over the next 18 months, we will explore staffing options across the district. Ultimately, we will consider increasing the tax levy by using the bank cap and any available tax levy adjustments.*
- Are there additional expanded classrooms at Central, Haddon, or Lizzie that could be repurposed to expand full-day kindergarten capacity further?
 - *The district will explore classroom options in the buildings and report back to the community on any viable options.*
- Has the district evaluated using temporary/modular classrooms to alleviate space constraints, and if so, what were the feasibility findings?
 - *The District is not considering the use of modular classrooms for the following reasons:*

- *They are difficult to get approved by the Department of Education,*
 - *They were not budgeted for in the referendum so that they would be an added annual operating cost. In kindergarten classrooms, which require toilet rooms, this would mean that another grade level would have to be moved out of the unit.*
- Could an option be presented where specials at Tatem (or other schools) are temporarily placed on carts to free up room for ~50 additional full-day kindergarten students?
 - *We will review schedules to see if there's a way to maximize space, and see what challenges this may present.*
- Is there a legal mechanism that would allow parents to voluntarily pay tuition during a transitional year to offset budget deficits while offering universal full-day kindergarten?
 - *We are investigating this possibility; however, we must first address the space issue.*
- Could the district explore coordinating with local community spaces (such as the Lutheran Church of Our Savior) to assist families impacted by local childcare closures?
 - *We have communicated with AphaBest about the potential of renting spaces.*
- Can the district open kindergarten registration or launch an early survey now to determine exact student numbers rather than estimating community demand?
 - *We will discuss the potential of moving dates in upcoming policy meetings; however, shifting policy in midyear may hurt some individuals who have already reviewed the dates and may not go back and recheck*
- How many students entered the lottery for full-day (EDKP) kindergarten in previous cycles and were not selected?
 - *2025-26: 145 entered the EDKP lottery/75 were placed in EDKP. A total of 10 students were moved from the original waiting list to accept an EDKP spot.*
 - *2026-27: 171 entered the EDKP lottery/75 were placed in EDKP. A total of 7 students were moved from the original waiting list to accept an EDKP spot.*
- Can the full-day kindergarten lottery deadline be moved earlier in the year to give families sufficient lead time to plan?
 - *The current priority registration date is February 1 (was previously March 1). An attempt to move the date up again would have to be weighed against our ability to clearly communicate the new date, particularly to families not currently enrolled and, as a result, do not receive our email communications. We would also have to consider the winter break, when our schools are closed and no staff is available to process registrations. This remains under review as we are in the process of updating Policy/Regulation 5120 to improve clarity.*
- If a child is assigned to half-day kindergarten or attends kindergarten at a non-home school section, does that guarantee or affect their placement in first grade at their home school?

- *Attending kindergarten at a school other than the home school does not guarantee a first-grade seat at the home school. The student's seat at the non-home school is guaranteed through grade 5. The student also stays on the Out-of-Zone Waitlist and is offered a home school seat, in order, if one opens*
- Can the district clarify the phrasing on page 3 of the elementary assignment policy regarding written intent notifications due by February 1st?
 - *A student who registers by February 1 will have their home school placement prioritized over those who register after. If a lottery is needed, only students who register by February 1 are eligible. Those who register later are placed on a waiting list if the home school grade level is full.*
- Will the lottery policy include sibling considerations so families with older children are kept together at the same elementary school?
 - *Yes. A student who registers by February 1 and has a sibling currently attending the home school receives Sibling Priority and is not placed in the lottery.*