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**To:** Jack Barshinger, Superintendent  
**From:** Brad Newkirk, Chief Academic Officer  
**Date:** September 13, 2011  
**Subject:** **Kindergarten Program (Revised)**

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**Agenda Item:**

**Item Type:** Action

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**Recommendation/Abstract:**

I recommend the Board of Education maintain the current kindergarten programming for the 2011-2012 school year. The Board of Education should consider changes for 2012-2013 by November 15, 2011.

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**Background Information:**

At the August 23, 2011 Batavia Board of Education meeting, the BOE directed administration to provide additional information about two alternatives for changes to the kindergarten program. In addition, BOE members added an additional suggestion of using the LRC for kindergarten specials. BOE members also were interested in considering the option of maintaining the current program designed for the 2011-2012 school year.

Attached is the information requested from the administration.

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**Budget Information:**

Attached is the budgetary information requested from the administration.

## **Introduction**

Current Program: The changes to the kindergarten program for the 2011-2012 school year were initiated by the elimination of the elementary Spanish program; however, the changes were made to strengthen our existing program and provide our kindergarten students with solid academic skills in a developmentally appropriate environment.

The changes to the kindergarten program extend time for core instruction from 690 to 720 minutes and utilize an integrated approach to instruction that is developmentally appropriate for early elementary students.

Below you will find the information requested about alternative to the current program, the criteria used to assess the alternatives, information from elementary school principals, and feedback from kindergarten teachers.

## **Alternatives to the Current Program**

**Alternative 3:** return to 9:00-11:45 a.m. and 12:45-3:30 p.m. Part-time certified staff would be hired to travel between buildings to provide art, music and physical education using specialists. Budget Information: \$51,000

Further analysis and planning for alternative three reveals that a minimum of two, part-time staff for each special would be needed to service each of the elementary schools. Teaching time, travel, and proportional planning time would require approximately 1.24FTE. Using the average teacher salary, this option would include a \$71,000 expenditure for the district. Kindergarten time would need to be readjusted back to 9:00 to 11:45am and 12:45 to 3:30pm as not to provide disproportional plan time to kindergarten teachers. Buildings without a multi-purpose room may not have enough teaching stations to accommodate all of these additional specials. Given 40 minute specials, this change would reduce core instructional time from 720 minutes to 660 minutes.

**Alternative 3A:** An option within alternative three would be to use existing staff instead of hiring part-time staff. This would mean a complete adjustment to the current building schedules and would decrease or eliminate grade-level common plan time and result in the loss on intervention time. Specialists would have a 20 minute co-teaching period to provide instruction in art, music and physical education. This would not result in the need to change the current

times for the kindergarten program. Alternative 3A would not add additional personnel costs.

**Alternative 5:** keep our current kindergarten time and program, and eliminate specialists teaching art, music, and physical education from After School Enrichment Program (ASEP). Non-certified staff would be used to provide additional supervision to ASEP students during break between am and pm kindergarten. Budget Information: \$10,200  
Further budget information was request about the financial impact of alternative five. Additional non-certified personnel would be needed to supervise students to provide plan time to teachers. This would result in \$10,200 worth of cost. This cost would be included in the ASEP costs and would be incurred by those families that access this program. However, with the elimination of specials from the ASEP program, the district would incur an additional \$61,000 worth of personnel expenses because this would no longer be paid by ASEP participants.

**Alternative 5A:** An option within alternative five also includes the suggestion of using the LRC as a designated special only for kindergarten. In this option, one forty minute block of specials time in art, music, and physical education each week is removed from the ASEP program and used to provide time to specials teachers to co-teach and support kindergarten teachers in providing integration of the fine arts and physical education in the kindergarten class. Kindergarten programming would not have pull-out specials and would continue to work on integrated model with support from the specialists in art, music, and physical education. ASEP participant would have 40 minutes of pull-out specials as a part of their program. In addition, the ASEP participants would receive LRC as a special for 120 minutes to provide plan time for teachers. There would be some impacts to the ability of the LRC to collaborate with classroom teachers and some impacts to the building schedules and common plan time. Option 5A is most consistent with the administrations belief that an integrated instructional model matches the learning needs of children at this developmental level. This option would be cost neutral and would not change kindergarten start or end times.

**Alternative 5B:** An option within alternative five would be to remove one forty minute art, music, physical education block from the ASEP program each week. This time would be used to provide pull-out specials experiences to students in the kindergarten program. This would allow us to provide specials to afternoon kindergarten sections. The specials blocks removed from ASEP would need to be replaced with LRC time. In order to provide pull-out specials for the morning kindergarten, time would need to be taken away from the teachers' common intervention block, resulting in a significant decrease in the

ability to provide intervention and enrichment experiences. Making this plan work would require adjustments to all building schedules and decreases core instructional time from 720 to 600 minutes per week. This option is cost neutral and would not change kindergarten start or end times.

**Alternative 5C:** An option within alternative five would be to provide one special for the kindergarten program on a rotational basis. Each week kindergarten students would go to one pull-out special. Specialist time would be taken from the intervention block and existing plan time in the schedule. No specials blocks would be removed from the ASEP program. By not removing specials time from ASEP, we are able to meet our contractual obligations for plan time for these teachers. Making this plan work would require adjustments to all building schedules and decrease instructional time from 720 to 680 minutes per week. This option would have a smaller impact on the intervention block than in Alternative 5B. This option is cost neutral and would not change kindergarten start or end times.

**Criteria**

Alternative were evaluated using the criteria below:

Promotes Academic Achievement	An alternative to the current program would maximize the potential for student academic achievement and minimize impacts to core instruction (aligns to Goal 1).
Provides Teacher Support	An alternative to the current program would provide the necessary supports to classroom teachers and build capacity for teachers to integrate the fine arts and physical education in the curriculum (aligns with Goal 3).
Maintains Fiscal Responsibility	An alternative to the current program would maintain fiscal responsibility and minimize financial impacts to the district and families (aligns with Goal 5).
Curricular Integrity	An alternative to the current program would need to continue to provide consistency within the kindergarten program and maintain access to the learning standards (aligns with Core Values).
Minimizes impacts to existing schedules	An alternative to the current program would minimize impacts to the current schedules which are designed to meet contractual obligations and to support school improvement planning and interventions (aligns with Goal 4).

**Evaluation of Alternatives**

The alternatives were discussed by administration using the criteria above. The assessment below compares the alternatives to the current kindergarten programming.

Red= significant negative impact compared to the current plan

Yellow=some negative impacts compared to the current plan

Green=minimal negative impacts

	Promotes Academic Achievement	Provides Teacher Support	Maintains Fiscal Responsibility	Curricular Integrity	Minimizes impacts to existing schedules
Alternative 3	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow
Alternative 3A	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red
Alternative 5	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow
Alternative 5A	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Alternative 5B	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Red
Alternative 5C	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Current Program	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

**Elementary Principal Feedback**

Elementary school principals have been a part of any of the changes to modify or enhance kindergarten programming. Feedback was formally requested on the following questions:

- 1) Principals' input as to which schedule they feel provides the best educational opportunities for the children & why.

In discussing the current program and the alternatives, the elementary principals reached consensus that the current program provides the best educational opportunities for students. While this group did not recommend an alternative, they concurred with the analysis of the alternatives above.

- 2) What the music, art & PE specialists will be doing to provide kindergarten classroom teachers with curriculum guidelines for these subjects. Are they going to provide weekly curriculum so that the classroom teachers are covering the same topics as the specialists? What resources will be available to classroom teachers with regard to curriculum, instruments, art supplies, etc.

Kindergarten teachers have access to the Illinois state standards for fine art and for physical education. Teachers can also access the curriculum guides for art, music, and physical education. The specialist teachers have provided resources for kindergarten teachers on ways to integrate some of the "big ideas" from the specialist curriculum. Kindergarten teachers would not be providing the same activities as the specialists but would be teaching to the same standards. The standards for fine art (music and art) and physical education are defined by the State of Illinois as K-3 standards. Kindergarten teachers would continue to integrate these subjects into their teaching and would be provided access to the school and district resources to teach to these standards.

3) The specialists teachers' input about levels of knowledge gained by ASEP students relative to 1/2 day students and how they will integrate the 1/2K students with the ASEP students when they reach first grade. Will they be divided by ability/knowledge level? Will they be intermixed?

According to elementary principals, students who did not have ASEP programming from specialists in art, music, and physical education would be addressed in the same way that they have students who are at different levels in any skill. Teachers in first grade would assess a student's skill level and use this information in their instructional plan. Reteaching and remediation would be used as appropriate.

4) How will 1/2 day students and ASEP students be able to participate in the winter musical, art show, etc.

As a result of the changes to kindergarten programming for the 2011-2012 school year, there have been no reported changes to kindergarten student access the art show. Most principals report that kindergarten students will have a separate opportunity for a musical experience.

### **Kindergarten Teacher Feedback**

Feedback about kindergarten programming and the proposed alternatives was obtained from kindergarten teachers at feedback sessions on Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> and Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. Below is the feedback about each alternative and a synopsis of the themes from these conversations:

#### Alternative 3:

- Concerns about space to provide programs
- Concerns that the person working with the children would not be the same person the students would work with in grades 1-5
- Concerns about cost to the district (\$71,000+additional supplies)

- Concerns about changing the times, as this impacts transportation and family plans

#### Alternative 3A:

- Concerns about the loss of instructional time
- Concerns about the disruption of establish routines
- Concerns about the impacts of the alternative to the building schedule
- Concerns about the loss of building-wide intervention/enrichment time
- Questions about availability of plan time to effectively co-teach

#### Alternative 5:

- Concerns about space and content of the supervised time
- Concerns about transitioning students from supervised time to instructional time
- Concerns about the perception of kindergarten being “baby-sitting”
- Concerns about the cost to the district
- Concerns about causing new problems with ASEP families
- Concerns that changes would result in families leaving the ASEP program, thereby causing class size imbalances/issues
- Concerns about the negative impact on the students who are currently receiving the specialist services as a part of ASEP

#### Alternative 5A:

- Concerns about the impact of the LRC directors and the loss of collaboration time
- Concerns about the impacts on existing LRC schedules
- Concerns about the impacts on the building schedule for all students
- Concerns about the impact to intervention/enrichment time
- Questions about what would be taught in the LRC time

#### Themes

- 1) Impacts on the intervention time
- 2) Impacts on the students/families
- 3) Impacts on the schedules for students/families/teachers
- 4) Changes take resources to implement, both financial, human, and time