

Expansion of Universal Preschool

Universal Preschool ([UPK](#)) is a mixed delivery system that meets children's and families' early learning and care needs. It includes the following programs:

- Transitional Kindergarten (TK)
- State Preschool
- Other State and Federal Programs

UPK in MVWSD:

Currently, MVWSD's UPK program is located at three locations. Theuerkauf, Castro / Mistral, and Graham Middle School. Except for the special education preschool site currently located on the Graham's campus, the preschool program has remained unchanged over the past decade: Castro / Mistral & Theuerkauf elementaries. Meanwhile, depending on school enrollment needs, the TK program has moved from site to site.

UPK and the State of California

During the 2022-23 legislative year, the State of California introduced its goal to address early childhood education by mandating that school districts now offer UPK to families with a goal to offer every four year old with Universal Access by the 2025-2026 school year. Although this remains an unfunded mandate for school districts like MVWSD, we are required to continue to expand this program. It is worth noting that this program comes at the expense of the MVWSD preschool program, as it initially targeted four-year-olds.

Decline in Student performance (Nationwide, State, and Local)

The [2022 NAEP's Nation's Report](#) card indicated a decrease in student achievement in reading at both the fourth- and eighth-grade levels. According to NAEP, the State of California did not demonstrate a significant decline in student performance as measured by the [Smarter Balanced summative assessment \(CAASPP\)](#). This decline was reflected in MVWSD's own data. In addition to the CAASPP results, MVWSD administers an internal benchmark assessment (i-Ready) highlighting similar declines.

Concern about Emerging readers at four sites:

In a recent report to the Board of Trustees (Jan 2023), MVWSD highlighted not only the correlation between i-Ready and CAASPP but also the current performance of our students. In the report, four sites continue to demonstrate lower student achievement for emerging readers (K-2). These sites are Monta Loma, Theuerkauf, Castro and Mistral. Although Mistral is a dual immersion program, it has similar characteristics to the other three sites; higher than average unduplicated count, free and reduced lunch population, and English Language Learners (ELs). This suggests that additional resources may be needed to support those sites.

Using TK and Preschool to address this issue

MVWSD has, for a considerable amount of time, run a preschool program at the Castro / Mistral site. While preschool students have performed admirably on the state mandated preschool assessments, a cursory look at the longitudinal data suggests that preschool students need to perform on par with their peers. MVWSD is using its research arm (Hanover) to conduct a thorough statistical analysis of the data. Regardless of the current data, it is clear that the Board of Trustees has overwhelmingly been in favor of programs that assist early childhood education. This support includes the strategic placement of resources at sites.

In a Superintendent's Cafecito, a parent asked the question of whether Castro or Mistral would get a TK program. This mother cited the desire to send her child to TK but noted that she needed a location closer to her home. This concern may also be reflected in the recent drop in Castro students enrolled in the MVWSD TK program. Although the placement of TK does not equate to success, it does highlight the need to take action to address several ongoing issues.

1. State mandated expansion of TK
2. Assist under enrolled school sites with creating a stronger community with families of young children
3. Provide an additional resource to sites that are struggling with emerging readers
4. Address parent concerns about the adequacy of a preschool program on a Middle School campus with no elementary-aged students.
5. Provide children who are enrolled in MVWSD special education preschool the opportunity to enroll with their peers in a co-taught learning environment

Phased approach

MVWSD staff recognizes the importance of a holistic approach to addressing the needs of emerging readers; curriculum, staff, professional development, strategic placement of programs, and assessments. Staff has determined we will begin a phased approach to addressing the concern.

- Phase 1: Movement of TK and Preschool Classes (Spring/Summer 2023)
- Phase 2: Adoption of new PK/TK curriculum (Fall 2023)
- Phase 3: Determine the Future of Preschool
 - including District supplemented full day classrooms and location of additional TK classrooms (Spring/Summer 2024)

Phase 1: Movement of TK and Preschool Classes (Spring/Summer 2023)

- Move the preschool program currently located at Graham to Theuerkauf
 - 2 SPED classrooms, one State preschool classroom, plus some additional space for office
 - Theuerkauf is an existing preschool location that also has the most appropriate facilities to house preschool
 - many of the classrooms open onto the playground, which is fenced, and the rooms have bathrooms inside, which is needed for preschool aged children
 - With preschool moving to Theuerkauf, the District will need to relocate 3 TK classrooms and expand from five classrooms to eight
 - Theuerkauf: retains 2 TK classes
 - Monta Loma: add 2 TK classes
 - Relocate the Moderate Severe SAI classes to different rooms on the ML campus to improve safety
 - Add a sensory room to meet the needs of students
 - Castro: Add one TK classroom
 - Mistral: Add one TK classroom
 - Imai: Add two TK classrooms that will be co-taught



Phase 2: Adoption of new PK/TK curriculum (Fall 2023)

Currently, there is a seismic shift in early literacy education; one that is starting to highlight the science of reading for emerging readers. MVWSD will leverage an upcoming curriculum adoption to explore the possibility of adopting a new curriculum for early literacy. The goal is to have a curriculum that not only connects Preschool, TK, and early elementary grade levels (K-2) but also balances the educational and exploratory needs of early childhood education but also supports a strong reading foundation by third grade.

Phase 3: Determine the Future of Preschool

It is clear that the state's UPK push, coupled with harder to attain qualification requirements (more families are exceeding the state maximum) and part day programs, is having an adverse impact on MVWSD's preschool program. To maintain viability, MVWSD's program will likely need to undergo substantive changes to survive. Thus, staff will develop a plan of action to determine what comes next.