

## **Universal PreKindergarten**

Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) is a new initiative in the State of California. It was designed to serve more children ages 3-to 4-years-old, statewide, in high-quality programs. In MVWSD UPK includes the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK). The District also runs a Special Education Preschool at Theuerkauf School. In order to meet MVWSD's Strategic Plan goal 1 of providing effective and consistent instructional practices that meet the needs to all students and goal 5 equitably distributing of resources that support student success the District is considering a variety of factors related to the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten and the District's State Preschool Program.

## **UPK in MVWSD**

On May 18, 2023 the District presented information on Kindergarten readiness. The presentation stated that policy decisions needed to be made regarding Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten as both programs have facility, staffing and fiscal impacts on the District. Staff is presenting information related to these impacts as well as seeking input from the Board of Trustees on how to mitigate them beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

## **Transitional Kindergarten**

Education Code section 48000(c) requires any school district operating a Kindergarten to also provide a TK program for all 4-year-old children by 2025–26. All children whose fourth birthday occurs by September 1 will have access to TK at a school district as a quality learning experience the year before Kindergarten. In 2023–24, children turning five between September 2 and April 2 are eligible for TK. Parents may choose to enroll their 4-year old child(ren) into TK or preschool. TK classroom teachers must have 24 Early Childhood Education units in addition to their Teaching Credential by the 2024-25 school year. Classes must keep the following ratios:

- 2023-24 & 2024-25
  - 1:12 or 1:10 if the District enrolls any students outside of the age range for the current school year
- 2025-26
  - 1:10 for all classes

TK classrooms must contain restrooms that are self-contained within the classroom or within the TK/Kindergarten complex.

## **MVWSD State Preschool**

MVWSD operates a part-day/part-year California State Preschool Program (CSPP). Preschool serves students starting at age 2 years 9 months. MVWSD offers both full day and half day programs for students. Full day slots are offered to families at below market rates which does impact the District budget. Over the past few years, the number of full day slots has increased due to parent needs. Preschool is located at two sites in the District:

- Latham
  - ½ day - 4 sessions
  - Full day - 1 class
- Theuerkauf
  - ½ day - 2 sessions
  - Full Day - 3 classes

### **MVWSD Special Education Preschool**

The District operates a Special Education preschool at Theuerkauf Elementary (moved from Graham in Summer 2023). Students are referred to the Special Education preschool when they turn three as they transition from the Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP - Part C) which serves children from birth to 2 years 11 months to Childhood Special Education - Part B which serves children starting at age 3. The District is required to assess all students who are located in our boundaries that have an IEP through IFSP to determine the need for continued eligibility for an IEP.

### **Program Staffing**

#### **TK Staffing**

The District currently employs 10 full time teachers for the TK program (8 general education teachers and 2 Education Specialists for the co-taught classrooms). Additionally, the District has 18 6-hour instructional assistants working in TK classrooms (not including SPED IAs who support students and programs).

#### **State Preschool Staffing**

MVWSD operates a part day/part year state preschool program at two sites - Latham and Theuerkauf. The District employs 1 full time Director, 7 full time preschool teachers, 13 6-hour instructional assistants and two support staff in order to run the program. It is important to note that preschool teachers are not eligible to teach TK - 5. While our preschool teachers have Bachelor's Degrees and Early Childhood Education units they do not have a multiple subject teaching credential which is required for teaching TK-5. While there is a new PK-3 credential in progress that will provide accelerated pathways for current Preschool teachers who hold a Child Development Teacher Permit (CDP) and a bachelor's degree there is no timeline for its approval and implementation.

#### **Special Education Preschool Staffing**

The SPED preschool provides classes and scheduled walk-in services and has the following staff:

- 2 Specialized Academic Instruction classroom teachers
- 4 Classroom IAs
- 5 1:1 aides (for mobility)
- 0.5 FTE Occupational Therapist

- 1.5 FTE Speech Language Therapist
- <0.2 FTE Physical Therapist
- Coordinator (60%)
- 1.5 School Psychologists
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst as needed
- Visual Impairment teacher as needed

Many of the support staff provide services at other sites as well.

## **Program Enrollment**

### **TK Enrollment**

The District currently has 165 students enrolled in TK with 23 open slots. Enrollment in TK is similar to the demographics of the District. The majority of students enrolled in TK are Hispanic Latino (39%) with 17% White and 23% Asian. Predicting enrollment can be challenging as TK is not required and parents may opt to enroll their TK eligible students in either TK or preschool.

### **State Preschool Enrollment**

Currently the District has 176 preschool spaces (96 half day and 80 full day). As of October 2023 enrollment in preschool was 100 students with 41 students pending who are eligible for free part day preschool pending enrollment depending on preference for a full or partial day program. In the 2022-23 school year, the preschool enrolled a total of 147 students and had 39 open slots with the majority in part day classes. Three students enrolled were TK eligible compared to 9 in 2023-24 to date. The majority of students enrolled in state preschool are Hispanic Latino (59%) which is higher than the percentage enrolled in MVWSD (38%) Eighty-six percent of students enrolled are dual language learners meaning that they are exposed to a language other than or in addition to English at home. Fourteen percent are English only.

### **Special Education Preschool Enrollment**

Currently the Special Education preschool serves 57 children with 34 in process of being assessed. These numbers will increase over the course of the school as children in our attendance boundaries turn 3. Students either attend ½ day preschool classes with embedded services or come for scheduled walk-in services including (Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy, Vision, Physical Therapy etc.).

## **Program Funding**

### **TK Funding**

TK is an unfunded mandate for MVWSD with the exception of a small amount of funding we receive through the UPK planning grant. The District projects costs for TK in 2023-24 to be \$1,566,555 and in 2024-25 ranging between \$2,569,537- \$2,821,201 (These costs will increase with the adoption of new curriculum as the purchase will be for 11 classrooms not only 3). Costs

will increase in 2025-26 as TK expands to include all four year old students in our attendance area and the UPK planning grant is expended. Again, predicting costs is difficult as TK is not mandatory and parents may choose to enroll in Preschool instead of TK.

### **Preschool Funding**

MVWSD receives funding from the state for part-day/part-year preschool (3 hours/175 days). Enrollment in state preschool is income based except for families residing in the Castro neighborhood, those with students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP), children in Child Protective Services, and families experiencing homelessness. Castro Neighborhood families qualify for “free-preschool for all 3 and 4 year olds regardless of income rule” (at Latham only).

While the District is not contracted with the CDE to provide full-day state preschool, due to parent demand, the District added an extended day program (8:00 am - 3:00 pm) for part-day state preschool eligible families at a reduced rate as well as some full fee spaces for families that do not meet income requirements. The fees the District collects are below market rate and the District does contribute funds to offset the cost of the full day program. The addition of the full day slots does not allow the preschool to earn its full contract as we are only contracted for half day slots. The District is projected to contribute \$420,547 in 2023-24 due to the increase in full day slots. Additionally, the District is not able to fill all slots due to difficulty hiring staff and the decrease in 4 year olds attending due to TK expansion as well as a desire for full day preschool instead of part day. In past years, the District would have lost the unfilled slots and seen a reduction in its CSPP contract but due to challenges around COVID recovery and the expansion of TK, the state has provided “Hold Harmless” years. After June 2025, we will return to the previous formula that is dependent on the number of students enrolled each contract day. Meaning, low enrollment will reduce the amount of money we earn.

### **Changes to Preschool Funding**

July's state budget, trailer bills, and a tentative agreement with the Child Care Providers United (CCPU) union has resulted in additional regulatory changes for State Preschool. One of the most impactful changes is regarding eligibility for Full-day, full-year state preschool which now will also be free for many families and at significantly reduced fees for others. Families with incomes at 75% or less of the State Median Income (SMI) will not be charged any fees for full-day, and those above 75% SMI will only pay 1% of their gross monthly income. This could mean a fee of only \$30 for a family making \$3,000 a month. The District would still have to negotiate the program calendar and staff the program if it moves to convert some or part of its CSPP contract from half day to full day.

## **Full Day Preschool Requirements**

Full Day Preschool programs require 246 program days compared to 175 (can be negotiated but not guaranteed). This makes programs difficult to staff when the schedule does not compare to the District school year. Currently preschool teachers follow the District calendar. Full Day preschool also requires at least a 6 hour school day. Part-day preschool families only need to certify “eligibility” through the child’s age and income (or one of the other categories listed in previous slides), however full-day preschool families must meet “eligibility” AND “need.” requirements which can limit the number of days or hours a child is in preschool. For example, if a single parent is not working and has college classes from 9 am - 1 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the child can only attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am - 1 pm. Exceptions or extensions of service hours are given for homework/study time or travel time from work/school to the preschool site that may increase student attendance hours.

## **Special Education Preschool Funding**

For the 2023-24 school year, the District received \$57,616 from the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). This amount does not cover the costs associated with the SPED preschool. It is estimated that in 2023-24 the District will contribute \$548,000 in salaries and benefits for preschool staff.

## **Facilities**

### **TK Facilities**

The District expanded to eight classes in 2023-24 at five different sites in order to offer more choice for parents and support consistency in instruction at sites that are struggling with emerging readers:

- Theuerkauf - 2 (no bathrooms in classrooms)
- Monta Loma - 2
- Castro - 1
- Mistral - 1 (no bathroom in classroom)
- Imai - 2 co-taught classes

Classes at Mistral and Theuerkauf have 2 instructional assistants to accommodate the lack of bathrooms in the classroom.

### **State Preschool Facilities**

Preschool is located at two sites in the District. The Latham Preschool houses the preschool office and workroom, and 3 classrooms with bathrooms. They have one full day class and 4 half day sessions. Theuerkauf has four preschool classrooms with bathrooms. They have 3 full day classes and two half day sessions.

### **Special Education Preschool**

In Summer 2023 the District moved the Special Education Preschool from Graham to

Theuerkauf. The Special Education preschool uses 4 classrooms and two smaller rooms on the Theuerkauf campus. The Special Education workroom, work space for Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Vision Specialist are located at the District Office in portables.

### **General Facilities Information**

Preschool rooms are required by licensing to have bathrooms in the classroom. TK classrooms should have bathrooms in classrooms although there is some flexibility. Currently, the TK classrooms at Mistral and Theuerkauf have no bathrooms in the room. All elementary schools have dedicated STEAM rooms. Students go to STEAM rooms for instruction. The STEAM rooms house curricula for 3-6 grade levels so space is a necessity. The YMCA rents space from the District for its' programs thus YMCA rooms are not shared spaces at sites during the school day. Right at School and Beyond the Bell utilize rooms afterschool and most times these rooms serve as classrooms during the day. Many programs needed dedicated spaces at sites including the early literacy teachers/newcomer teachers, CHAC, etc. In general classroom space is limited at most sites across the District.

### **Program Data**

#### **Preschool Data**

The District analyzed a variety of academic data for students in preschool and TK and comparing their achievement in Kindergarten and lower elementary grades. Results indicate that students who attended full day preschool in 2019-20, specifically Socio-economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities and Hispanic Latino students outperformed their peers that only attended half day in grades K, 1 and 2.

Additionally, for students who attended full day preschool in 2021-22 Students had higher levels of proficiency on i-Ready reading at the end of Kindergarten than those in half day. Fewer Hispanic/Latino and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged students in full day preschool met Annual Typical Growth at the end of kindergarten compared to those in half day. Overall, on i-Ready math, full day and half day students performed at the same level at the end of Kindergarten. Hispanic/Latino students in full day preschool had lower levels of proficiency in math than those in half day. More students in half day preschool met their annual typical growth at the end of kindergarten on i-Ready math.

#### **TK Data**

In reading, SED students who attended MVWSD TK had higher levels of proficiency than those that did not. A higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino and SED students that attended the MVWSD TK met their Annual Typical Growth in Reading. In math, all students that attended MVWSD TK, out performed their peers that did not.

### **Preschool Staff Survey Results**

Considering that the District has expanded full day preschool slots and that full day preschool

will be more affordable for families, preschool staff was surveyed to understand staffing needs/concerns. Preschool employs 8 teachers and 14 instructional assistants. All teachers and 11 IAs participated in the survey.

Only 15% of staff are interested in working in a program with 246 school days and 65% would consider ending their employment with the District if this was implemented. Seventy-four percent of staff indicated that they would be willing to increase their work year by 4 weeks. The concern about transitioning from a half day program to a full day lies in the 246 day calendar *not in* having a full day program. Staff already work longer than the minimum required day for full day preschool (8am - 2pm). Staffing will be difficult unless the District can negotiate a full day, full year program that mirrors the District calendar including summer programming (i.e. 195 days vs. 246) which is not guaranteed

### **UPK 2024-25**

The District anticipates needing to add 3 classrooms to accommodate TK enrollment for the 2024-25 school year (3 teachers and 3-6 instructional assistants pending the location of available bathrooms).

Based on projections the District's enrollment is anticipated to grow incrementally over the next two years. The special education preschool was relocated to Theuerkauf in summer of 2023 thus eliminating extra classroom space at that site. Castro could expand although TK would need to be located on the ground level impacting STEAM and Reading Intervention due to the age of the students. Landels and Monta Loma could add TK classes without in classroom bathrooms. The YMCA could be relocated at Imai to room 10 to add a TK with a bathroom and they would need an additional room to accommodate their YMCA enrollment. Mistral, Bubb, Stevenson, Theuerkauf and Vargas do not have classrooms available for TK expansion.

### **General Considerations**

There are many things to consider as the District works to expand Transitional Kindergarten by at least 6 classrooms over the next 2 years. In general the expansion of TK has a large impact on both the District's budget and facilities. TK is a mandate while preschool is not. Changing policies at the state level impact the District in planning for and staffing TK. It is difficult to predict enrollment in TK as parents have a choice to enroll in either PreK or TK when their child is 4. As TK expands to include all 4 year old students the program has become more like preschool rather than Kindergarten. Staff are facing challenges with toileting as many students are not potty trained. Staff are not comfortable with toileting and diapering. New furniture, curriculum, instructional materials and bathroom accessories are needed to support the younger students.

## Facilities Considerations

In order to expand over the next two years the District can consider the following:

- Take rooms currently used by afterschool providers and teachers/providers share space in afternoons
  - This is happening now due to the implementation of MVWSD+ although it can be difficult for teachers to plan and prepare when their classrooms are being used for afterschool
  - Currently the District receives revenue from facilities the YMCA rents
    - 2023-24 - \$385,000
- Utilize STEAM classrooms, teachers store materials in central space, use a cart to move classroom to classroom
  - Not optimal as STEAM teachers manage 3-6 grade levels of curricula at a time
  - May discourage teachers from taking STEAM positions
- Reduce/eliminate preschool and use current preschool rooms for TK although that could require teacher layoffs in the PreK program. PreK instructional aides could transition to become SPED aides or TK aides.
- Transitioning to full day preschool would also decrease available slots due to facilities (134 projected)

## Preschool Considerations

Over the past few years, the District has added more full day classes at Preschool to accommodate parents' needs at below market rates. Since the District's PreK program is not funded for full-day, the contribution from the general fund has increased. If the District opted to reduce or eliminate preschool it could use the estimated \$420,547 that it contributes to preschool to offset the cost of TK. There is an option to transition the CSPP contract to add full day slots although that will require negotiations with the California Department of Education (CDE) regarding the number of program days and most PreK staff are not interested in the full day PreK as outlined by the state (246 days). PreK classrooms are required to have bathrooms which are also needed for TK classrooms. Staffing for PreK has proven challenging over the past few years and due to staffing ratio requirements at times has delayed enrollment for eligible students. Data indicates that students who attend full day preschool have higher levels of proficiency in reading at the end of Kindergarten but not math.

Currently none of the District's PreK teachers are credentialed to teach TK so if PreK is reduced the PreK teaching workforce would need to also be reduced. PreK teachers could choose to go back to college to get a multiple subject credential until the new PK-3 credential is available although the timeline and costs for this new credential are unknown at time. Credential programs usually take at least 1 year to complete at a cost of approximately \$14,000 - \$17,000. Credential programs require student teaching which can inhibit candidates from working which also increases the cost. Some candidates could potentially qualify as an intern and teach while getting their credential although it depends on each individual and what units they have.



### **Direction from the Board of Trustees**

As the District prepares to expand TK for the 2024-25 school year, decisions that impact finances, facilities, staffing and programs need to be made. TK and PreK programs are essentially competing for the same resources (funding, facilities and staffing). The District is asking the Board to provide direction so that work and planning can continue. Final decisions need to be made in January.

### **Direction Needed**

- What is the Board's expectation for TK expansion (TKs at each site, TKs at sites where facilities are available, TKs with bathrooms etc)?
- What things or questions should the District consider regarding eliminating or reducing preschool in order to accommodate TK expansion and offset the costs of the TK program?
- Should the District eliminate or reduce preschool, does the board envision the District supporting the displaced teachers and/or supporting them to be credentialed to teach TK if they choose?
- Are there other solutions the District should consider?

### **Next Steps**

Staff will come back to the board for final decisions on January 11, 2024. In the interim, staff will gather additional data as requested by the Board, communicate with stakeholders and continue work on the PreK/TK curriculum adoption.

