

30 September 2004

To: Board of Education

From: Art Rainwater

Subject: Four Year Old Kindergarten (4K)

Attached is an issue paper with no administrative recommendations. We present it to you for discussion and direction.

FOUR YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN IN THE MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Providing four year old kindergarten (4K) may be the district's next best tool to continue the trend of improving academic achievement for all students and continuing to close the racial achievement gap.

The quality of care and education that children receive in the early years of their lives is a critical factor in their development. Empirical and anecdotal evidence clearly shows that nurturing environments with appropriate challenging activities have large and lasting effects on our children's school success, their ability to get along with others, and their emotional health. Such evidence also indicates that inadequate early childhood care and education can multiply the danger that at-risk children will experience academic failure and/or grow up with problem behaviors that can lead to later crime and violence.

Why this issue is before you at this time

The MMSD, the Waisman Center and Headstart have begun the second year of a pilot 4K program at Glendale Elementary School and the Lake Point Drive Head start. The evaluation of the pilot has provided the district with components of a model for service delivery and curriculum implementation which could be used to implement universal 4K in the MMSD.

The Department of Public Instruction is recommending new funding for 4K in their proposed budget for the next biennium. If start up funding becomes available during this next year either through DPI or grant dollars, the District needs to have ample time to do the planning necessary for implementation in the fall of 2005.

Service Delivery Models

- A. The 4K pilot model, cited above, is based on a ratio of 17 students to one full time teacher and one assistant. In addition a social worker is assigned to the program. The program is held five days a week for 2 and ½ hours per day.
- B. Universal 4K in the MMSD could be provided in a variety of settings including elementary schools and cooperating private and public child care programs that serve four year olds.
- C. Based on current contract language, MMSD would have to employ 4K teachers to either teach at the child care center or in MMSD elementary school 4K site.

Major Issues

Labor contracts

The Collective Bargaining Agreement between Madison Teachers Incorporated and the Board of Education of the Madison Metropolitan School District states.

“The Board of Education recognizes Madison Teachers Incorporated as the exclusive collective bargaining representative for all regular full-time and regular part-time certificated teaching.....

The parties recognizing the value of a qualified teaching staff as it relates to the instructional process hereby agree that instructional duties where the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction requires that such be performed by a certificated teacher shall be performed only by ‘teachers.’

The term ‘teacher’ refers to anyone in the collective bargaining unit.

Teachers in four-year old kindergarten must hold a kindergarten license (e.g. #090, PK-K, #083, PK-3, #106, K-6, etc.)

Funding

See attached Memo from Roger Price – 4K Cost Impact/Funding

Universality and inclusiveness

By state law, enrollment in 4K, if offered by the district, must be open to all children who are four years old on or before September 1 and who reside within the boundaries of the MMSD. Establishing classrooms that can meet the educational needs of all four year olds that are fully integrated and representative of the student body will be a challenge.

Maintaining the community's current quality child care programs

Many of the child care and education programs in the City of Madison provide four year old programming. Attention must be given to the fact that revenue streams for preschool care and education centers could be affected by the MMSD implementing 4K, thus potentially reducing their capacity to serve children zero to five. Madison has a history of providing many quality preschool programs and keeping those programs viable is important to the success of children when they reach school age. Some child care centers have indicated a strong interest in providing 4K in their sites, by their staff who are licensed teachers under a contracted service agreement with the MMSD; they have expressed concerns about MMSD teachers coming into their sites to provide 4K programming.

Background and History

The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) (Appendix A)

MMSD and Waisman Center Early Learning Initiative (ELI) 4 K Program Pilot
(See first board agenda item)

State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction Policy and Information Advisory
02.1, February 2002. Subject: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (Appendix B)

Department of Public Instruction Budget Communications Memo Early
Learning/Strengthening 4K (Appendix C)