

2015-2016 Preschool Programming Options : Waitsfield Elementary School

Background information

There are 30 children (best estimate) living in town who will be eligible for preschool programming in 2015-2016: 11 four year olds (8 currently enrolled in WES 3 year old program); and 19 three year olds (15 have indicated an interest in accessing WES-based program.)

In 2014-2015, the preschool program switched days (3 year old program now runs M/W and 4 year old program T/Th/F) allowing for students to access both a local private preschool (Spring Hill School) and Waitsfield Elementary preschool. There are a few students in our 3 year old program (aprox. 1/3) who attend both schools. For the first time since preschool programming was begun at WES, all of the eligible four year olds are in the WES program, with over half attending both Waitsfield Elementary School and Spring Hill School. Additionally, mid-day bus transportation was added this year , allowing families working full days and/or without personal transportation to access the WES program. Several of our students in both the three and four year old programs ride the bus, many of them traveling to an afternoon childcare provider.

In the past, “aftercare” was provided to preschool students through the non-profit Open Hearth: After School Kids. This program proved to not be financially sustainable and ceased a few years ago after just two years of operation. The preschool day was moved from 11:30 a.m. dismissal to 12:30 p.m. in 2012-2013, incorporating access to our lunch program. Students in the three year old program receive 10 hours of programming per week; those in the four year old program receive 15.

The current preschool license capacity is for 15 children, based upon the square footage of the preschool room. We have traditionally capped the program at 12, holding spaces for 2-3 more children should any child with special education needs move in to our community. We have accessed these additional spaces only once in my six years at Waitsfield Elementary.

The preschool is staffed by one lead teacher and one assistant teacher.

2015-2016 budget draft #1 included \$45,000 for additional preschool expenses. Further investigation revealed there were fewer students than we initially anticipated; depending upon the options selected, additional (new money) costs could range from 21,000 to 8,000.

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OPTIONS	4 year olds	3 year olds	Cost	Notes
<p>Option 1a. Continue with current practices, but increase the capped enrollment to 14.</p> <p>Option 1b. Continue with current practices for one more year, but increase the capped enrollment to 14 (holding one space).</p>	All eligible four year olds could be served; families electing to attend any private programming would be responsible for the costs.	Given that there are more students than space, a lottery would likely be held for placement in the WES program. Any child not in the program would receive funding for 10 hours in an approved program outside of the school. Children enrolled at WES could attend additional private programming, but would be responsible for costs.	<p>1a. Current program costs plus preschool partnership funds for aprox, 5 students. (est. \$15,000)</p> <p>1b. Current program costs plus preschool partnerships funds for 7 students (est. \$21,000)</p>	<p>We have not had a class of 14 preschool students before; this is close to our licensed maximum.</p> <p>We would reserve 1 space below our licensed capacity to insure our ability to meet the needs of any child requiring specialized services who might move in.</p>
Option 2: Comply with Act 166 this year. All families have access to preschool either in our school OR in a private provider	All eligible four year olds could be served; families electing to attend private programming could do so INSTEAD of attending WES and WES would be responsible for paying for 10 hours of programming.	WES could serve up to 12 (or 14) students. Any family interested in accessing private programming (including those for whom there wasn't a space at WES) eligible for funding for up to 10 hours of programming.	Current program costs, plus funding for 10 hours of programming for all students not enrolled in WES programs (estimates vary, guess at 7 students minmum) (est. \$21,000 minimum)	This places families in the position of choosing to use the school available funds for private preschool or WES.

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Option 3: Do NOT comply with Act 166 this year, but expand WES programming so that all students could be served at WES. Expand into the room next to the current preschool, increasing the overall capacity of the program. Additional staff would need to be hired for P3 program days.	All eligible four year olds could be served; families electing to attend any private programming would be responsible for the costs.	All eligible three year olds could be served; families electing to attend any private programming would be responsible for the costs.	Current program costs, plus additional staffing (rough estimate of \$8,000)	
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