

For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Thomas Alexander  
610-869-2441  
[talexander@avongrove.org](mailto:talexander@avongrove.org)

## **Avon Grove School Board Approves Full Day Kindergarten for 2017-18**

After nearly a year of careful review and discussion, the Avon Grove School Board last night approved a Full Day Kindergarten program for 2017-18 school year. The change was recommended in the district's community-developed Strategic Plan, and is based on research that strongly shows that full day programs help better prepare children to succeed in the rest of their elementary school years.

"We know that a full day program provides a strong foundation in academic, social and emotional skills," said Superintendent Dr. M. Christopher Marchese. "The current two and a half hour kindergarten day gives our teachers and students less time than many of them even had during a preschool day. A full day program will allow for more dynamic, hands-on learning. It's the right thing to do for the students of this community."

Over the last year the district surveyed current parents and worked with local preschools and other community organizations to distribute interest surveys. The results show that there is strong support for and interest in a full day program, and many families that currently seek a full day program at a charter or private program instead plan to send their children to Avon Grove School District's full day kindergarten.

The projected first year enrollment is targeted to be 274 students.

For 2017-18, the district expects to add existing classroom space at Penn London Elementary School to accommodate the full time Kindergarten program, without disrupting the existing academic program in grades 1 and 2.

The district estimates the cost of providing a full day kindergarten program will be mostly offset in the reduction of expenditures realized through the return of charter school students to the Avon Grove School District, with an operational cost neutral program by the second year of implementation.

A team of administrators and teachers has been analyzing the proposed change for months. They examined full day kindergarten curriculums in other school districts and conducted site visits to other full day programs.

"Some people believe full day kindergarten is just babysitting, or on the other extreme that it is asking too much academically of our students too soon" said Director of Elementary Education Kalia Reynolds who is leading the team. "In fact, it's quite the opposite. Students will certainly have more time on task to truly learn concepts and standards, but they will also have more

time to practice the essential self regulation, social and emotional skills while they are learning. At the elementary level, those skills are critical to help them be successful in a classroom setting.”

The district will release and post a list of Frequently Asked Questions in the next two weeks, and will begin to post additional information on the Full Day Kindergarten section of the website.

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