Transitional Kindergarten
2016 -2017

General Information

The Kindergarten Readiness Act gives California an opportunity to ensure that children are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The new law created Transitional Kindergarten (TK), the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students whose fifth birthday falls between September 2nd and December 2nd.

Beginning the 2012-13 school year, the San Juan Unified School District provides a full academic year of TK instruction to eligible children, building a stronger bridge between early learning and kindergarten and preparing students for success in the years ahead. The intent behind providing children an extra year of kindergarten is to give students two years to develop the important skills that will help them excel academically and socially in elementary school. Research suggests that starting kindergarten at an older age can boost children’s test scores, and such students are less likely to be retained or placed in special education. This became especially important and helpful during the 2014-15 school year, when the new, more rigorous Common Core State Standards were fully implemented in California.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

1. **What is the overall goal of the TK instructional program?**

   The goal is to prepare students to be successful in kindergarten including knowing and doing all that is called out in the kindergarten Common Core State Standards (CCSS). By the end of the TK school year, the goal is for TK students to know and be able to do all of the Preschool Learning Foundations (PLF) at or around 60 months of age, and to be fully prepared for success with the kindergarten CCSS. The PLF (or state standards for preschool) can be found at this link: [http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp).

2. **What is the instructional focus of the TK program?**

   Instruction is based on the Preschool Learning Foundations (PLF) with an emphasis on social/emotional development and developmentally appropriate practices. To ensure preparation for a successful kindergarten experience, the focus is comprehensive literacy integrated across the content areas and aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

3. **What instructional resources are used in TK?**

   The kindergarten Houghton Mifflin English Language Arts Program and the kindergarten Pearson Math Program are the State Board and SJUSD Board adopted core curriculum...
accessible by all TK students, and adapted by the teacher to meet students’ individual learning needs. The Houghton Mifflin Pre-K Program materials are also provided to ensure a different experience for TK students. Use of supplemental materials to ensure implementation of the CCSS are encouraged; such materials include Linda Hoyt’s Interactive Read Aloud materials (provided), big books for shared reading and leveled materials (as appropriate for personalized learning), Fountas and Pinnell Phonics (provided), etc.

4. **What are the recommended assessment tools for TK?**
   Assessment of student progress for TK students mirrors the assessment process in kindergarten classrooms and will follow the Assessment Plan provided by the Division of Teaching and Learning. Assessment tools include the Houghton Mifflin Emerging Literacy Survey, the Mondo Oral Language Assessment, emerging writing rubrics, etc. For students who are beginning to decode and read with understanding, a text level assessment may be used to assess growth and areas for instruction.

5. **Is there a science and social studies program for TK?**
   The Houghton Mifflin resources provide an integrated approach including science and social studies units with listening, speaking, reading and writing work interwoven.

6. **What supports are planned for TK teachers?**
   Professional learning and collaborative planning opportunities are scheduled to support TK teachers. The focus of this work is on strategies to support quality first instruction through comprehensive literacy in alignment with the PLF and CCSS.

7. **Is there a TK report card?**
   Full implementation of the Common Core aligned report card began in 2015-16 including and TK specific report card. Through the 2014-15 pilot process, feedback was received about the possible need for a more developmental approach in reporting student progress in grades TK-1. A joint committee will be convened in the 2015-2016 school year to engage in deeper dialogue to address this feedback. In addition to the aforementioned assessment tools, teachers are encouraged to use observation records, check lists, and anecdotal notes to support their marks on the report card. All assessment information is used to inform and support report card marks.

8. **How many minutes does the TK program offer?**
   The minimum number of required instructional minutes is 36,000 minutes per year.

**Grade Adjustments**

9. **What is the process for accelerating a student from TK to grade one?**
   TK is part of a two-year kindergarten program; therefore, very few students will be approved for acceleration from TK to grade one. If a school team (teacher, principal, parent, etc.) believes a student is ready for first grade after completing TK, a thorough
Student Study Team process must be followed with supporting data submitted to the Director of Early Elementary Education for approval.

10. **Can a student change grade levels midyear?**
Students are not promoted or demoted during the school year. Teachers are responsible to provide differentiated instruction and personalized learning experiences for students in order to ensure all students’ learning needs are addressed.

11. **What is the Kindergarten Continuance Form?**
The kindergarten continuance form is used when a parent, with the school’s Student Study Team, decides that a student would benefit from additional time in kindergarten; usually this means a second year in kindergarten.

**Enrollment**

12. **How do families enroll a child in TK?**
Families should contact the San Juan Central enrollment facility at (916) SAN-JUAN or (916) 726-5826, and select the option for “enrollment information and appointments.”

13. **What is the process for enrolling a child upon his/her 5th birthday?**
The law provides for local school districts to enroll children in TK or kindergarten on or after their fifth birthday, on a case by case basis: EC 48000(b), “The governing board of a school district maintaining one or more kindergartens may, on a case-by-case basis, admit to kindergarten a child having attained the age of five years at any time during the school year with the approval of the parent or guardian, subject to the following conditions: (1) The governing board determines that the admittance is in the best interests of the child. (2) The parent or guardian is given information regarding the advantages and disadvantages and any other explanatory information about the effect of this early admittance.”

The process in SJUSD is as follows:
- The parent of a child turning 5 years old after the kindergarten cut-off date or after the TK cut-off date makes contact with San Juan Central.
- The Director, Admissions and Family Services, at San Juan Central meets with the parent(s) to understand their interests and desires for their child, determines space availability, and places the child in a TK class where space is available.
- If the parent(s) requests placement in kindergarten, the Director, Admissions and Family Services, refers the family to the Director of Early Elementary Education.
- The Director of Early Elementary Education, with support from a Teacher on Special Assignment, assesses the child’s school readiness strengths and areas for growth, and makes a recommendation to the parent(s) regarding placement in TK or kindergarten. The child is enrolled in the most appropriate class based on what is in the best interests of the child, according to law.
14. **Is TK mandatory?**
   No, like kindergarten, it is voluntary for parents to enroll their child in TK. Compulsory education begins with first grade. However, when parents bring their child to enroll him/her in TK, school districts must enroll and serve eligible students.

15. **What if a child’s birthday falls after December 2nd but prior to the end of the school year?**
   As of the student’s 5th birthday, the student may be enrolled in TK if space is available. If space is not available, the parent may have the student placed on an interest list for the requested TK school site and SJC will contact them if space becomes available.

16. **Can TK and kindergarten students be enrolled in the same classroom?**
   Although the intent of the law is to provide separate and unique experiences for TK students, districts have the flexibility to determine how best to meet the curricular needs of each student. TK/K combination classes may be formed in order to meet the needs of all students considering enrollment numbers, facility usage, staffing, and regional needs.

**General Questions**

17. **How is TK funded?**
   Districts receive the same California average daily attendance (ADA) rate of funding that is provided for kindergarten, because TK is considered the first year of a two-year kindergarten program.

18. **Is the length of the TK school day different than kindergarten?**
   In most cases, the length of the TK day mirrors the length of the kindergarten day at a site. This may be the traditional three hour and 20 minute day, or an extended day of approximately four hours, or a full day.

19. **Do TK teachers need to meet different credential requirements?**
   TK teachers must meet the same credential requirements as kindergarten teachers. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing provides a Credential Information Alert that specifies the credentials that authorize instruction in a TK classroom. TK teachers who are hired or assigned to a TK class on or after July 1, 2015 are required to have at least one credential by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and by August 2020 have one of the following:
   - 24 units in early childhood education or child development or both
   - Professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool-aged children that is comparable to the 24 units of education (as determined by the school district)
   - A child development permit issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

   Teachers assigned to TK prior to July 1, 2015 are grandfathered in with regard to the aforementioned requirements, and TK teachers assigned to TK after July 1, 2015 will have five years to meet the education requirements.
20. Which schools offer Transitional Kindergarten?
Parents may choose from the following sites: Arlington Heights, Cameron Ranch, Carmichael, Cottage, Coyle, Del Dayo, Thomas Edison Language Academy, Howe Avenue, LeGette, Oakview, Ottomon, Pasadena, Skycrest, Thomas Kelly, Twin Lakes, and Whitney Elementary Schools.

21. Where can I get more information?
- [http://www.sanjuan.edu/departments.cfm?subpage=116597](http://www.sanjuan.edu/departments.cfm?subpage=116597)
- California Department of Education

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