
Ridgewood Public Schools



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SHIFTING TO A FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN RIDGEWOOD

Why is the District considering a full-day program after years of a successful half-day program?

- The definition of success has shifted with the times, and although Ridgewood has a high-quality Kindergarten program, it is rushed and lacks adequate time for structured socialization and free play. Students who encounter more structured play around learning will better internalize that learning because at this age, play is how children learn. Additionally, social skills such as executive functioning and self-regulation of behavior are learned through play, often which is unstructured. A half-day program does not allow time for these essential learning opportunities for our students.

How will the curriculum of a full-day program differ from that of the half-day program?

- A full-time program will include more time for learning centers, which are essentially structured play experiences designed to reinforce conceptual learning. Additionally, more time will be dedicated to free-play centers, in which students make up rules to self-created games and make-believe. This free-play socialization will be supervised by, not structured by, adults. Another change to the day is that students will remain in school for lunch and will have snack and extended time for key content such as shared reading and writing.

What would be the daily schedule and hours of a full-day program?

- Kindergarten will run on the same schedule as the other grades in the school (8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.). A daily schedule for the full-day program was shared with the Board of Education and the public at the June 28, 2016 Board meeting. That presentation can be found in the Board of Education Presentations folder on the Curriculum page of the district website at www.ridgewood.k12.nj.us.

How many other districts still have half-day Kindergarten programs?

- Ridgewood is the only half-day program left in Bergen County. There are very few districts left in the state with a half-day program. The most common Kindergarten programs offer five full-days of school.
 - Those districts which were half-day have mostly moved to full-day programs in the last five years.
 - In 2014, 73% of programs statewide were full-day. The percentage was even higher in Bergen County, where 65 out of 72 districts (about 90%) offered full day programs. Since 2014, Glen Rock, Fairlawn, Rutherford, Mahwah, Waldwick and Midland Park have moved to full-day Kindergarten.
 - The Ramsey Kindergarten program consists of an optional, fee-based program, which lacks the features of a true full-day program; however, the majority of students do attend. Allendale, Franklin Lakes and Wyckoff have programs consisting of two half-days / three full days, a model that is not very popular and the implementation cost is equal to that of a traditional full-day program.

Would parents be required to enroll their children for the entire day if Ridgewood moved to full-day Kindergarten?

- Yes, if the Ridgewood Public School district shifts to a full-day Kindergarten program, all enrolled students will be registered for five full days each week.
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FAQ: SHIFTING TO A FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN RIDGEWOOD

Where will Kindergarten children eat lunch?

- This will be a building-by-building decision, based on space and what the principal deems best for the program in their building.

Will Kindergarten students have recess with all other students and how will their recess be supervised?

- Kindergarten students would have more than one “recess” play time in their schedule. The schedule, location, and supervision of that recess would depend on individual building schedules. However, in all buildings the recess/lunch period of 45 minutes would be extended to one hour for Kindergarten students. Classroom teachers would supervise the additional 15 minutes at the end of recess to settle students down and prepare them for afternoon learning sessions.

What are the anticipated class sizes for a full-day program?

- Kindergarten class sizes would follow the Ridgewood Board of Education guidelines of 18 to 22 children per classroom.

Can the district facilities / physical spaces accommodate full-day Kindergarten?

- In November 2015 demographic consultant Ross Haber presented to the Board of Education the results of an enrollment and facility utilization study in which all of the Ridgewood elementary principals participated by discussing their buildings and classroom space. The report shows that over the last three years the district has seen a decrease in enrollment and indicates that our elementary schools can accommodate full-day Kindergarten. The demographer’s report is available for reading in the Full-day Kindergarten Exploratory Committee folder on the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment page of the district website at www.ridgewood.k12.nj.us.

How will the decision be made to move to full-day Kindergarten in Ridgewood?

- On General Election Day, Tuesday, November 8, Ridgewood voters will be asked to approve full-day Kindergarten in the District. This vote will be done in the form of a “second question” on the ballot. All residents who are registered voters may participate. Voter registration forms may be found at on the Bergen County website at <http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/DocumentCenter/View/1224>.

What is the purpose of a second question on a ballot?

- A second question can only be placed on the ballot when a school district is asking for something new, such as full-day Kindergarten or a new program. Since the costs of these additional services and associated personnel can exceed the state-imposed two percent cap on budget increases, the public must vote on them.

What would be the tax impact on a “yes” vote for the second question on full-day Kindergarten?

- If full-day Kindergarten is passed by the voters, the average Village assessed home of \$693,904 would have taxes increased by approximately \$111 per year.

Is there any possibility that the State will require districts to provide full-day Kindergarten?

- This is not known at this time.

Where can I go for more information on full-day Kindergarten in Ridgewood?

- The Full-day Kindergarten Exploratory folder may be found on the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment page of the district website at www.ridgewood.k12.nj.us. Questions can be emailed to FulldayKNov8@ridgewood.k12.nj.us.

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