

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Office of the Superintendent

TO: Board of Education
FROM: David G. Title
DATE: 11/27/2012
SUBJECT: Additional Information on Pre-K at Dwight

At the October 9, 2012 Board of Education meeting, I presented a proposal to establish an additional pre-kindergarten classroom at Dwight Elementary School. This proposal would serve the dual purpose of complying with the state's mandate on racial balance and providing educational benefits to children in Fairfield. This memo provides some additional information.

The educational benefits of pre-kindergarten education are widely documented. I am attaching a two-page summary from the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child and a more extensive presentation from an unlikely source, the Minneapolis Federal Reserve. As Chair of the Governor's Early Childhood Cabinet I am deeply involved in early childhood issues statewide. I have heard a representative from Minneapolis outline not just the benefits that families derive from high quality early childhood education but also the benefits that accrue to a community as whole from this investment.

We plan to implement a tuition-based program at Dwight as we have at Burr, with projections based on a target of one-third full-tuition students, one-third half-tuition students and one-third tuition-free students. With these projections, we can cover all of the labor costs (teacher and paraprofessional) from revenue, leaving approximately \$100,000 in incremental transportation costs annually for two small buses. Transportation will be offered in geographic zones to minimize costs. For example, residents in the Riverfield area may be offered transportation to the Dwight program but not to Burr.

One-time costs include furniture costs of \$8,297, technology costs of \$11,268 and curriculum costs of \$4,000. Dwight's budget allocation for supplies will be raised by 36 students to cover other costs, just as we do at Burr.

The additional students projected at Dwight would rise by the following numbers:

2013-2014	0
2014-2015	5
2015-2016	10
2016-2017	15
2017-2018	20

According to the MGT study, this would result in a peak enrollment of 328 students at Dwight in 2017-2018. This projection will likely decline once MGT updates its projections based on actual enrollment. In any case, the school district calculates Dwight's capacity as 388 students, so there is room at the school to house this program with negligible impact on the present program.

In summary, this proposal has educational benefit for the dollars expended and is the least invasive manner for the school district to comply with the state's laws on racial imbalance.