

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) Questions and Answers

(This document will be updated as additional information becomes available.)

ENROLLMENT

- 1. How will parents be informed about the details of 4K?** There is an annual 4K plan to ensure that all MMSD families are knowledgeable about their choices for 4K. The goal is to reach all families with a specific emphasis on those children not currently in quality care situations.
- 2. Is there an age cutoff for 4K?** Yes. Students must be four on or before September 1. At this time MMSD does not have a process in place for early entrance to 4K.
- 3. If a child is age eligible for 5K, but parents plan to delay their kindergarten enrollment, can the child attend 4K?** MMSD supports having students progressing with same-age peers. However, in unique situations, parents may decide enrollment in 4K is best for their child.
- 4. When will enrollment occur?** 4K and 5K enrollment will take place on February 2, 2015 at all K-5 elementary schools.
- 5. Where/how will enrollment occur?** Families can enroll online and complete the registration process at any K-5 elementary school by printing off their enrollment and bringing a copy of their child's birth certificate and proof of address to the school. Those who are not able to enroll online may choose to complete the entire enrollment process at the elementary school.
- 6. Do partnering centers have to accept any family that wishes to enroll for 4K?** Acceptance at any site will be contingent on space parameters and enrollment requirements set by individual Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centers. However, partnering ECCE centers may not discriminate based upon sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.
- 7. Will families have a choice of where their child attends 4K?** If families do not require transportation, they may choose from any partnering site that has available space. If transportation is required, then students will be placed in the school serving that attendance area.
- 8. If a partnering center is struggling with the behavior of an MMSD 4K student, can the center move them out of its program?** Centers are encouraged to use interventions to resolve behavioral issues. If unsuccessful, the next step will be to work with MMSD staff to try to address the behavior situation. MMSD support staff can work with ECCE center staff and the family to increase success at school. MMSD staff and administrators will work with the ECCE center and the family to ensure the child has access to 4K programming and the ECCE center has the

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support needed. In rare occasions, the child may need to be moved to a different program.

TRANSPORTATION

- 9. Will transportation be provided for families?** Transportation will not be provided to every 4K location in the city. Any family requiring transportation will be placed at a site where transportation will be provided. In most cases, those sites will be MMSD buildings. The [MMSD transportation policy](#) will apply, which states that to qualify for transportation, a) the distance between the pupil's residence and the school s/he attends shall exceed 1 ½ miles measured by the usual travel route or b) the routes to the school are judged unusually hazardous by the BOE.
- 10. Can a family get transportation from 4K to a child care site?** Yes, as long as the center is within the transportation area defined for that site. The [MMSD transportation policy](#) referred to in the Answer to Question 9 above will apply.
- 11. Which contracted centers will have transportation?** Through the RFP process, specific centers indicated if they would be available as a transportation site. We will be exploring with those centers the viability of providing transportation at those sites.

SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- 12. How will special needs students be served?** Students in 4K who have an individualized education program (IEP) will be served by a licensed special education teacher. In the schools, this will be similar to how all K-5 students receive special education services, but will be dependent on what is written in the student's IEP. In the community, itinerant special education teachers will teach the number of hours indicated in the IEP at the site.
- 13. Will three-year-olds with special needs be in the 4K program?** The law stipulates that three-year-olds with disabilities may be included in the 4K program if regular education three-year-olds are also included in the program. Therefore, this is a possibility in ECCE Model III programs. However, there will not be regular education three-year-olds in Model I and II programs because MMSD does not program for regular education three-year-olds (see section on Models for more information).

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14. What support is available for students who are English Language Learners?

English Language Learners are offered support in different ways depending on the site. Some sites utilize Bilingual Resource Teachers (BRTs), Bilingual Resource Specialists (BRSs), and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. Other sites have a different system of support in place. Four elementary school sites offer Bilingual 4K programs with instruction in Spanish.

15. Will 4K be the only model available to parents of students who have an identified disability? Will a home option still be available? Students with disabilities who have an IEP will have the same options that regular education four-year-olds will have. Families will be able to select from partner ECCE centers that have available space or programs in MMSD buildings. Students requiring specialized transportation will attend the site that is within the transportation boundary—the same as regular education students. It is MMSD’s responsibility to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their same-age peers. We are excited that 4K will allow us a much broader array of options to do so. Just as with our K-12 students, a home option may be available if necessary for a child to receive a free appropriate public education.

MODELS

16. What model will MMSD be using to deliver 4K? We will use a combination of DPI’s Model I (in a school building with an MMSD teacher), Model II (in an ECCE center with an MMSD teacher), and Model III (in an ECCE center with the ECCE center’s teacher).

17. How does a center decide if they should be a Model II or III? We fully expect that with the high level of quality work currently being done with four-year-olds in our community, most centers will want to continue what they are doing as a Model III program. However, Model II may be available to accredited centers that may not have a currently licensed 4K teacher in their building.

CURRICULUM

18. Will a specific curriculum be required by MMSD? No. A Curriculum/Assessment subcommittee, comprised of MMSD Preschool Resource Teachers as well as early care and education providers, has defined that the 4K curricula must be developmentally appropriate, align with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) and Accreditation criteria, be play-based, inclusive, research-based, inclusive of culture, race, social class, gender, languages and needs, and designed to promote partnerships with families. Individual centers will be able to

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design their own unique programming to meet these requirements.

19. Why isn't there a consistent curriculum? In the Model I and II programs, MMSD teachers will be using "Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 5th Edition." However, we want to value the expertise and knowledge of our community Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) center partners in their selection of curriculum. Instead of stipulating that a certain curriculum is required, all 4K programs use a common set of 4K Standards for Development and Learning.

20. How would the school district handle problems with curriculum? An MMSD administrator and MMSD Preschool Resource Teachers will be available to support and assist contracted ECCE centers in their implementation of their 4K curriculum. Additionally, professional development opportunities will be available regularly to assist with curriculum knowledge and implementation.

LOGISTICS

21. When did 4K begin? The Board of Education (BOE) voted (on 1/11/10) to begin 4K in September, 2011.

22. Is 4K required? 4K is not required. You may have heard about a new mandatory kindergarten attendance law. However, the law that took effect on October 21, 2009 (WI Act 41) requires attendance for five-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten. 4K attendance is optional and is not affected by this new law.

23. What are the days/hours of the program? The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires a minimum of 437 hours of instruction per school year. In the school buildings (Model I) or in centers using Model II, the program will be offered 4 days per week (Tuesday-Friday). At an early start school, the AM program will run from 7:30-10:43 and the PM program will run from 11:24-2:37. At a late start school, the AM program will run from 8:15-11:28 and the PM program will run from 12:09-3:22. In Model III programs, the center will have discretion, subject to MMSD's approval, around the weekly days and times of the program, as long as the DPI minimum requirement of 437 hours per year is met.

24. Can the 4K program extend during the summer in partner centers? Centers will be allowed to create their own schedule for delivering the required 437 hours of 4K programming, subject to MMSD's approval. The 437 hours must be delivered during the MMSD school year.

25. Can 4K programs be multiage? Yes. MMSD is supportive of multi-age environments. However, ECCE centers will only be reimbursed for 4K enrolled students in the program.

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- 26. What is the required teacher-to-child ratio for a 4K classroom?** [DPI](#) does not have a required child/teacher ratio for 4K. However, City and NAEYC accreditation require no more than 1:10 with no more than 20 students in any one classroom. Model I programs (those in a public school building with an MMSD teacher) are not bound by these requirements. MMSD has budgeted for a ratio of 1:18 students.
- 27. If a center has more than 10 students in a classroom, can the ratio be reduced with a 2nd teacher that is not licensed?** Yes. As long as one of the 2 teachers is licensed and the ratios are maintained.
- 28. Can the number of 4K slots offered change each year? For example, 1st year offer 10 slots, 2nd year offer 15?** Each year a center will be able to declare the number of 4K reimbursable spots that are available.
- 29. How do we handle 4K students who are picked up late?** ECCE centers will have discretion to develop their own procedures for students who are picked up late. However, the District encourages centers to work with families to avoid penalties for occasional tardy pick-ups. Within the MMSD, families are provided a 15 minute window of time after school dismisses to pick up their children. If the 15 minute window is consistently not followed, the MMSD will send a warning letter to the parent. This may be followed by a second warning letter, and in extreme situations, a call to authorities indicating that the child is being abandoned.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- 30. What types of parent involvement will be required?** The Board of Education adopted the DPI model in which the District receives a .6 reimbursement for every half-time four-year-old, provided that 87.5 hours of parent outreach is provided. Open houses, family nights, home visits, and take-home activities can be counted toward the 87.5 required hours.
- 31. In terms of 87.5 parent education hours, can we tap into other resources, or do we have to be the primary sponsors? How do we document?** According to DPI's website, "Outreach activities can occur in or outside of the school facilities and within or outside of traditional school hours. It is suggested that outreach activities be flexible and varied in order to be accessible to all potential participants and recognize the varied needs and abilities of different families. Such outreach activities should also be sensitive to cultural, racial, and religious differences among families. Districts can work with Family Centers, public libraries, YMCA's, or other programs to have appropriate outreach activities available for parents." Hours are documented on a log provided by district administrators.

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SUPPORT FOR ECCE CENTERS

32. What support will there be for contracted ECCE centers? Child Find will be available to assist with questions about early identification of students with disabilities. Professional development support will be provided to teachers in ECCE centers. Some parent outreach activities may be coordinated centrally for participation by all contracted ECCE centers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

33. What professional development opportunities will be available to partnering ECCE centers? MMSD offers professional development opportunities to all partner teachers on an ongoing basis. These opportunities include the Summer Institute, monthly professional development meetings, and on-site visits.

TEACHER REQUIREMENTS

34. What license is required for teachers of 4K classrooms? According to [DPI's 4K licensing requirements](#), teachers must hold a Wisconsin, regular education teaching license that includes kindergarten (DPI license number 080, 083, 086, 088, 090, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, or 108).

35. Can a center make its own teacher hiring decisions? In a Model III program, the ECCE center will have full discretion to hire the licensed 4K teacher they feel best meets the needs of the program. That can be a current teacher in its program, or a new hire from outside of its program. For ECCE centers with teacher vacancies, MMSD will be happy to provide a list of qualified applicants who have applied for employment with MMSD, but a center is not obligated to hire anyone from the list. In Model II programs, MMSD will be the employer and will hire staff.

36. Will substitute teachers be available? Model II program teachers will have access to the MMSD subfinder system and will have substitute teachers provided in their absence. At this time there is no system set up for Model III programs to access a substitute pool. A center may also cover from within the center, as long as the teacher is DPI licensed as a substitute and the proper teacher/student ratios are maintained.

REIMBURSEMENT

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- 37. How will contracted centers be compensated for offering 4K?** In Model III programs, ECCE centers will be reimbursed \$3,550.00 per student per year. In Model II programs, ECCE centers will be reimbursed \$2,193 per student and MMSD will provide the teacher. The reimbursement rates are projected to increase each year over the next five years, tied to the rate of inflation, defined as Consumer Pricing Index Urban (CPI-U) but will not exceed 4% in any given year. The partnering ECCE center will be expected to use the reimbursement to provide all space, materials, equipment, curriculum, furniture, snacks, and supplies necessary to carry out the 4K program.
- 38. When will reimbursement occur?** Payments to Model II and III programs will occur as follows: Payment #1 – shall be processed no later than 30 business days after the 3rd Friday in September count date. Payment #2 – shall be processed no later than the 1st business day in March. Payment #3 – shall be processed no later than 30 business days after June 30th unless appropriate end-of-year reporting has not been submitted to the District.
- 39. When are students counted for reimbursement?** MMSD counts all pupils enrolled in the District on the 3rd Friday in September and on the 2nd Friday in January, but only receives revenue for those students enrolled on the 3rd Friday in September. The calculation for reimbursement will be the number of students attending the program multiplied by the reimbursement rate for the specific year. MMSD will utilize 5 specific count dates to calculate reimbursement for each program, although no program is eligible for more funding than is calculated on the 3rd Friday in September count date. The annual count dates to be utilized are: 1) 3rd Friday in September; 2) November 1st or 1st school day in November; 3) 2nd Friday in January; 4) March 1st or 1st school day in March; 5) June 1st or 1st school day in June.
- 40. If a child doesn't make their 437 hours due to being tardy/truant, will the center be reimbursed for that child or what can we do for that child? Is there a limit to being tardy if 4K isn't mandatory?** Reimbursement is not tied to an individual child's attendance, it is tied to enrollment. You are required to offer 437 hours of instruction, and are reimbursed for the number of children enrolled in the program. MMSD administration will work with centers on best practices for increasing attendance and decreasing tardies for our students. Educating parents from the beginning on the importance of regular attendance and getting to school on time is the first step. Individual conferences with families that are having difficulty getting to school can be held to problem solve in certain cases. Support staff can also become involved.
- 41. Will there be any restrictions on how centers use the reimbursement money?** ECCE centers will have discretion for how they use the reimbursement money. MMSD suggests the funds be used to increase wages for teachers, purchase new or

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additional curricular materials, provide additional professional development for teachers, provide a tuition reduction for parents, or in other ways that increase the quality of programming for students.

42. If 4K is embedded in a full-day program, do we need to reduce the tuition rate?

The MMSD will not be involved with setting or adjusting ECCE centers' rates.

Centers will need to make their own decisions about fee schedules. However, it is essential that the period of time that 4K is in operation is free to families.

43. Parents will be expecting no fees or a reduction of fees for their child's extended care due to their participation in the 4K program. How can early ECCE providers address this expectation?

By law, all children participating in the collaborative 4K program have rights to a "free public education." Parents will be asked to complete an MMSD enrollment form, which becomes a commitment for the free services. Contracted community sites will have their own enrollment forms that indicate the fees for services provided for child care services for the remainder of the day outside of the 437 hours of 4K for those parents requesting the additional care. ECCE centers are not required to adjust their fee schedule.

44. Can ECCE centers charge fees to 4K families?

An activity fee of \$40.00 will be charged to all 4K students by the MMSD BOE. For students who have paid, the fee will be returned to the centers. Similar to K-12 programming, ECCE centers may ask parents to provide their students' school supplies, or funding for the actual field trips; however, according to BOE policy, no student shall be excluded from any activity based upon inability to pay. An ECCE center may charge additional fees to a family for a child enrolled in child care. The Board of Education is the only entity that may assess a fee of any kind. Centers may ask families to provide a reasonable list of school supplies, however participation in 4K may not be contingent on families providing supplies.

45. How does government assistance on tuition affect 4K if tuition is not lowered?

The period of time that a child is participating in 4K must be free and is not reimbursable beyond the amount being reimbursed by MMSD. If a child is participating in extended services, tuition can be charged for that period only.

Centers will need to determine whether any assistance may offset or be applied to that tuition.

IMPACT OF 4K

46. What will the impact be on non-partner ECCE centers? There is a possibility that four-year-olds may leave non-partner ECCE centers to go to an MMSD 4K program and then return for the remainder of the day. If so, non-partner programs may have to rearrange programming or increase programming for younger students

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47. How is Wisconsin Shares participation affected for partners and non-partners? Current [Department of Children and Families](#) policy states that ECCE centers will continue to be able to claim [Wisconsin Shares](#) for 4K students they are serving on site. However, a non-partner site that loses students to attend a different site for 4K cannot claim those hours for reimbursement.

For more information about 4K, try the following links:

[MMSD 4K webpages](#)
[Collaborating Partners](#)
[Department of Public Instruction 4K webpages](#)