

Captain Isaac Paine Elementary School

Preschool Program - Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 5/1/17

Some of the questions below have not been determined yet as we are in the process of creating our lottery and admissions procedures, as well as finalizing a few logistics, based upon feedback from parents and community members.

Want to give your feedback? Come to our next public planning meeting on 5/3/17 from 5:00 - 6:15 PM in the CIP library or email Principal Danusis at: kristen.danusis@paineschool.org.

WHY PRESCHOOL?:

Q: Why should the Town of Foster use public funds to offer a public preschool program?

- Research has proven that children who participate in a high quality early learning program have better outcomes in the short and long term. For instance, these children have shown improved reading and math skills, stay in school longer, are more likely to graduate from high school and attend a four-year college. By age 40, research has illustrated that students attending a high quality early education are 24% more likely to own a house, 18% are likely to be employed, more likely to make higher earning, and 53% less likely to have multiple arrests (when compared to peers who did not have a high quality early education).
- Foster & Block Island are the only two towns in RI that DON'T have a public preschool program.
- Foster presently has very limited options for preschool and these options are costly, often unavailable due to limited spots, and removed from the school.
- Hosting the program at the school provides them with this opportunity in a setting where their schooling will continue for the following six years of their life.
- Our rates of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch has gone up the last 4 years, currently at almost 30%. Research shows that growing up in poverty can negatively impact students' social, emotional, and academic growth and development.

Q: What impact will the preschool program increase the school budget?

- Preschool has been included in the budget by reallocating current funding, thus bringing a 0% increase to the taxpayers.
- CIP will receive additional per pupil funding from the state for the increase in student enrollment that will occur with the addition of preschool.

LOGISTICS:

Q: Will the preschool program be full day?

- There will be two, half-day preschool programs (a.m. and p.m.)
- Working with our current FELT program and staff to create a self-sustaining p.m. childcare session so parents have a full-day child care option (9 am - 3:30 pm) for their children, while maintaining some of the successful components of our existing FELT program.
- Exact hours of am and pm sessions TBD.

Q: Will my child be required to attend the preschool program 5 days per week?

- TBD

Q: How will the additional care for preschool students whose parents need a full-day work?

- Right now the additional care will be for PM childcare (approximately 12:00 - 3:30) for preschoolers who attend the AM preschool session.
- CIP has tried to bring in after school care in the past but has not had enough parent commitment to run the program.
- The cost of the PM childcare is TBD.

Q: Will the FELT program still be available?

- We are working with the existing FELT staff to create a program that will be self-sustaining.
- The program will begin as a PM childcare program but the staff has the ability to use the revenue available to incorporate as much of the components of the FELT program as possible.
- We view this opportunity as one that can grow and expand our existing FELT program, while still keeping the aspects of the program that have made it so successful in supporting Foster families.

Q: Do we have the proper facilities to house a preschool program? What upgrades will be required?

- Yes. We have a classroom available and money budgeted to furnish the room with all necessary preschool materials. There will be a separate space for our PM childcare program at the school.

- Preschool students will use the existing bathrooms (in and out of the room) and the smaller playground currently used by our kindergarteners.
- The space has been approved by a member of the Center for Early Learning Professionals.
- Additional upgrades are not needed unless we apply for a Bright Stars rating.

Q: Will the preschool teacher be a certified teacher?

- The posting for the preschool teacher will be for a dual-certified teacher. Thus, we will post for a certified teacher who has special education and early childhood certification.

Q: Are there substitute teachers readily available for a pre-K program in the event the dedicated teacher is sick/unavailable? Are these substitute teachers certified?

- We will use the same process we use for recruiting and utilizing substitutes for the K-5 classrooms.
- Substitute teachers will meet the state criteria to be a substitute.

Q: Will transportation be provided to/from the preschool program?

- Transportation will be available for students with an IEP who require transportation.
- We do not currently have funds budgeted for transportation for our regular education preschool students.
- We do not feel that the present buses have the supports needed to keep 3- and 4-year-olds safe on the bus.
- Due to the large size of Foster, we have not secured a separate vehicle for our preschoolers. Our preschoolers are unable to ride on school transportation for longer than one hour due to state regulations (nor would we want them to!). Without knowing where around the town students are coming from and who may need transportation, this option is on hold for the time being.

Q: If transportation is not provided to/from the preschool program how will pick-up & drop-off be handled for the morning, mid-day, and afternoon hours especially when they coincide with traditional bus drop-off & pick-up for the current students?

- Our preschoolers will likely be dropped off and picked up at a side entrance.
- We are hoping to work our preschool drop-off and pick-up around our K - 5 arrival and departure time. (Details TBD)

Q: What happens if students enter at different learning levels?

- The curriculum we are using is hands-on and allows for students at any level to engage and be active participants in their learning and exploration.
- The curriculum is based upon the R.I. Early Learning and Development Standards and fosters the whole child.

- Just like we have for our K-5 students, we will provide supports for our students if and when they need them. Our preschool students will have access to our special education staff and our preschool teacher will be able to consult with our reading and math specialists.

LOTTERY & ADMISSIONS:

Q: Will 3 year olds be secured a spot going forward?

- TBD

Q: Should priority go to kids of families already in the school?

- TBD

Q: Is enrollment in the preschool program mandatory?

- At this time, the state has not mandated preschool for children. CIP's preschool program will not be mandatory either. We view it as an opportunity for children to experience social and pre-academic experiences before beginning our kindergarten program and the research is clear that students who participate in a high quality preschool program have better short and long-term outcomes.

Q: Will every applicant to the preschool program get a spot?

- We are working on a lottery and application process.
- The number of spots available will be based upon the number of people who apply.
- Based upon preschool guidelines, there can be no more than 15 students per session.

Q: If there are more applicants to the program than there are available seats, how will students be selected?

- We are working on a lottery and application process. Detail TBD.

Q: My child is not quite potty trained. Will they be eligible for the preschool program?

- Our regular education preschoolers need to be potty trained before the begin the preschool program as we do not have the staffing or facilities to appropriately assist in the potty training process.
- Special education students who are not potty trained will be considered for the preschool program if the program is the least restrictive environment that can successfully meet their needs.