

The Water Cooler

Bubble Up Report

Date: January 12, 2010

FROM: LAUSD
RE: LAUSD to Pilot 2-year Kindergarten Program

For Immediate Release
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DISTRICT TO PILOT TRANSITION KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

*Intended to Boost the Academic Success of Children with Late Birthdays,
Youngest Five-Year-Olds Could Spend Two Years in Kindergarten*

(LOS ANGELES)—Though chronologically old enough to start school, some children who turn five in the second half of the year—between June 1 and December 2—need more than one year to develop the skills that will help them become successful learners.

To address their needs, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will pilot a two-year kindergarten program beginning next school year, Superintendent Ramon C. Cortines recently announced.

“Strengthening the academic foundation in the early years will lead to higher student achievement beyond the primary grades,” Cortines said.

The new classes will emphasize pre-literacy instruction to develop beginning reading and mathematics skills. In addition to building cognitive skills, the program also seeks to address the development and enhancement of social and emotional skills that are important factors in doing well in school.

“Many children can benefit from an enriched kindergarten experience. Having this transition program experience will allow students to begin their schooling with a strong skill foundation on which new learning can be built,” said Dr. Judy Elliott, Chief Academic Officer for LAUSD. “By offering this program, we can better meet the needs of all of our kindergarten-aged students and provide a solid start to first grade.”

This transition kindergarten program is scheduled to start on a voluntary basis in September 2010 with at least one in each of LAUSD’s eight local districts. No extra costs are anticipated. Funding will be based on attendance and paid for in the same way that K-12 instruction is financed by the state.

“In addition to pronounced instructional benefits,” said Whit Hayslip, Assistant Superintendent for Early Childhood Education, “this program is expected to increase overall kindergarten enrollment by attracting parents who are holding their children back a year until they are ‘ready.’ As a result, more parents will participate earlier in their child’s education. And, in the long run, more of our students will succeed.”