

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 25, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Kindergarten Orientation Evening Sessions (07-29-19-02-A)

During Board/Superintendent Comments, Board members requested the following:

Question

Ms. Wolff requested information regarding the possibility of holding kindergarten orientations in the evenings, as well as during the day to make the attendance easier for parents/guardians.

Response

The possibility of holding evening kindergarten orientation sessions may be a welcome option in order to increase accessibility for some parents/guardians. There are logistical and staffing considerations that may present challenges for schools in scheduling these events outside of regular school hours.

Kindergarten Orientation sessions require that a significant number of staff members participate, including classroom teachers, secretaries, paraeducators, and health technicians. Classroom teachers attend Back-to-School Night and two other activities outside of the contractually agreed upon workday each school year. An evening Kindergarten Orientation session would qualify as one of these activities, which may preclude teachers from attending other evening events such as Math Night or Reading Night later in the school year.

Support professionals work during Kindergarten Orientation to assist parents/guardians with enrollment paperwork such as residency, age verification, health history, and general information forms. By contract, these staff members may not work additional hours beyond their regularly scheduled work time without proper supervisory authorization. Support professionals also may not earn or be granted compensatory leave time. School administration may choose to recruit parent volunteers in lieu of support professionals to assist with these duties during evening Kindergarten Orientation sessions. However, parent volunteers may be limited in the assistance they can provide due to the confidential nature of student records.

In addition, school nurses and health technicians review incoming kindergartners' health and immunization records. These Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services employees are not permitted to work outside of their regularly scheduled duty day.

Another potential option for increasing accessibility for parents/guardians to attend Kindergarten Orientation is to schedule multiple shorter sessions prior to the start of the school day, but within the duty day of classroom teachers. Paraeducators may not be available to support this schedule due to the start time of their duty day.

School usage of classrooms before or after the regular school day must be reserved through the Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) for Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) to ensure proper heating/cooling and building services staff. Priority is given to school events over any other CUPF group; however it would be required that any rooms intended for use during Kindergarten Orientation sessions before or after the school day be reserved by the school using the ICB reservation system.

Alternative scheduling options for Kindergarten Orientation may be investigated by school administration individually. These staff may determine schedules that may work best for their student and family community.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kimberly A. Statham, chief of school support and improvement, Office of School Support and Improvement, at 240-740-3100.

JRS:KAS:AML:kde

Copy to:
Executive Staff
Ms. Webb