Policy 6170.1: Transitional Kindergarten **Status:** ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 10/01/2015 | **Last Revised Date:** 12/01/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 12/01/2024

CSBA NOTE: The following policy is for use by districts that maintain kindergarten and may be revised to reflect district practice. Education Code 33050 prohibits the waiver of specified provisions related to transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten provided for in Education Code 48000-48003. For more information on waivers, see BP 1431 - Waivers.

The California Department of Education's (CDE), "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs" and "Transitional Kindergarten FAQs," available on its website, provide guidance to districts on the implementation of universal prekindergarten and TK programs. Additionally, CDE has developed a universal prekindergarten resources website, "Universal PreKindergarten, California's Great Start," designed for use by districts that operate a California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and/or TK program.

Education Code 48000 defines TK as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. Many of the requirements applicable to kindergarten, such as class size, minimum school day, and facilities, are also applicable to TK. The district will receive funding based on average daily attendance (ADA) for students in a TK program that meets the requirements specified in Education Code 48000.

Education Code 8281.5 established the California Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Program as an early learning initiative with the goal of expanding access to classroom-based prekindergarten programs. Grant funds may be used for costs associated with creating or expanding preschool programs through the CSPP or TK programs, or to establish or strengthen partnerships with other providers of prekindergarten education within the district, including Head Start programs, to ensure that high-quality options for prekindergarten education are available for four-year-old children.

Pursuant to the California Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program (Education Code 17375), districts may be awarded grants for the construction of new preschool classrooms, the modernization of existing preschool classrooms, or the modernization of existing kindergarten-grade 12 classrooms that will be converted to provide CSPPs operated by districts on a public school site.

The Governing Board desires to offer a high-quality transitional kindergarten (TK) program for eligible children who do not yet meet the minimum age criterion for kindergarten. The TK program shall assist students in developing the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

The district's TK program shall be the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. (Education Code 48000)

The Board encourages ongoing collaboration among district preschool staff, other preschool providers, elementary teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the district's TK program.

Eligibility

CSBA NOTE: While children are not required to attend kindergarten or TK, all school districts are required to provide TK to age-eligible children pursuant to Education Code 48000. According to CDE's, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs," no age-eligible child may be denied access to TK by being placed on a waiting list.

The district's TK program shall admit children as follows: (Education Code 48000)

1. For the 2024-25 school year, children whose fifth birthday is between September 2 and June 2

2. For the 2025-26 school year, and in each school year thereafter, children who turn four by September 1

A child's eligibility for TK enrollment shall not impact family eligibility for a preschool or child care program, including, but not limited to, a Head Start program, a child care center serving children through an alternative payment program, a general child care and development program, a California State Preschool Program (CSPP), a migrant child care and development program, child care and development services for children with special needs, or a program serving children through a CalWORKs Stage 1, Stage 2, or Stage 3 program. (Education Code 48000)

CSBA NOTE: CDE's, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs," clarify that children are required to have documentation of required immunizations or a valid exemption prior to admission to TK. For information about required immunizations and exemptions, see BP/AR 5141.31 - Immunizations.

Parents/guardians of eligible children shall be notified of the availability of the TK program and of the age, residency, immunization, and any other enrollment requirements. Enrollment in the TK program shall be voluntary.

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph is optional. If the district chooses to allow kindergarten-eligible children to enroll in the TK program, CDE recommends in its, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs," that the district establish criteria to determine selection requirements. The parent/guardian of a kindergarten-eligible child who is enrolled in TK must, at the end of the year, sign a Kindergarten Continuance Form verifying agreement with the child enrolling in kindergarten the following year; see "Continuation to Kindergarten" below.

On a case-by-case basis, a child whose fifth birthday is on or before September 1 may be admitted into the district's TK program upon request of a child's parents/guardians, if the Superintendent or designee, determines that it is in the child's best interest.

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph is optional. Pursuant to Education Code 48000, the district may, at its discretion, determine whether to allow admittance of children whose fifth birthday is after the date specified for admittance for the applicable year as described above. Such students may be admitted at any time during the school year, including at the beginning of the year. Education Code 48000 provides that districts will not receive ADA apportionment for a child whose birthday is after the date specified for the applicable year until the child's fifth birthday.

At any time during the school year, the district may admit into the TK program a child whose fifth birthday is after the date specified for admittance for the applicable year as described above, provided that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, the Board determines that enrollment in a TK program is in the child's best interest and the child's parents/guardians approve. Prior to such enrollment, the child's parents/guardians shall be provided information regarding the advantages and disadvantages and any other explanatory information about the effect of early admittance. (Education Code 48000)

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph is optional and may be deleted by districts that do not allow early enrollment children in TK. Pursuant to Education Code 48000.15, as amended by SB 141 (Ch. 194, Statutes of 2023), for the 2024-25 school year, a district that offers TK to early enrollment children must concurrently offer enrollment in a CSPP program, if offered by the district, space permitting. The district may enroll an early enrollment child in a CSPP program operated by the district regardless of income, after all other eligible children have been enrolled. Districts will not receive ADA apportionment for an early enrollment child admitted to TK until the child's fifth birthday. For more information on district preschool programs, see BP/AR 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education.

~~Additionally, the district may enroll an early enrollment child in TK whose fourth birthday is between June 3 and September 1, inclusive, preceding the school year during which they are enrolled in TK. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain any classroom that includes an early enrollment child with a classroom enrollment that does not exceed 20 students and an adult-to-student ratio of at least one adult to every 10 students. Additionally, if an early enrollment child is enrolled in TK, the district shall concurrently offer enrollment to the child in the district's CSPP, subject to available space. (Education Code 48000.15)~~

Curriculum and Instruction

The district's TK program shall be based on a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. (Education Code 48000)

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48000 states the Legislature's intent that the TK curriculum be aligned to the California Preschool Learning Foundations developed by CDE. These standards address essential knowledge and skills in the subject areas listed below. The standards and companion preschool curriculum frameworks are available on CDE's website.

Pursuant to Education Code 8203.3, CDE in consultation with the California Department of Social Services, is responsible for establishing and updating prekindergarten learning development guidelines that focus on preparing children for kindergarten, including developmental milestones, assessment, and suggested methods for achievement.

The program shall be aligned with the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum frameworks developed by the California Department of Education (CDE). It shall be designed to facilitate students' development in essential knowledge and skills related to language and literacy, mathematics, physical development, health, visual and performing arts, science, history-social science, English language development, and social-emotional development.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 313, as amended by AB 2268 (Ch. 15, Statutes of 2024), students in TK are not required to be assessed in English listening and speaking for purposes of initial identification as an English learner. However, CDE's "Interim Guidance on Transitional Kindergarten Students and English Language Proficiency Testing," provides that districts should continue to conduct the Home Language Survey during TK enrollment to identify whether the primary or native language of a student is a language other than English. Since there may be implications with other state and federal laws, it is recommended that districts consult CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel, as necessary.

Students in TK are not required to be assessed in English listening and speaking for purposes of initial identification as an English learner. However the district shall conduct the Home Language Survey during enrollment to identify whether the primary or native language of a student is other than English.

CSBA NOTE: The following optional paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice.

Education Code 37202 permits districts to maintain TK and kindergarten classes for different lengths of time during the school day, either at the same or a different school site. Districts offering TK classes for different lengths of time are still required to meet the minimum and maximum length of school day provided in law. Pursuant to Education Code 46111, 46115, and 46117, at the kindergarten and TK level the minimum school day is three hours (180 minutes), including recess but excluding noon intermission, and the maximum school day is four hours (240 minutes), excluding recess, except for students in expanded learning opportunity programs intended to supplement instructional time provided by a district pursuant to Education Code 46120, or if the district has adopted an extended-day kindergarten pursuant to Education Code 8973. However, pursuant to Education Code 46119, if the district has fewer than 40 kindergarten students, the Governing Board may apply to the Superintendent of Public Instruction to maintain two kindergarten classes of 150 minutes each, including recesses, taught on the same day by the same teacher. Also see BP/AR 5148.2 - Before/After School Programs and AR 6112 - School Day.

Pursuant to Education Code 48003, districts are required to provide an annual report to CDE regarding the type of kindergarten program offered by the district, including part-day, full-day, or both. The California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) School Information Form, located on CDE's website, requires a report on the type of TK program offered.

The Board shall establish the length of the school day in the district's TK program, which shall be at least three hours but no more than four hours long, including recess but excluding noon intermission, except for TK students enrolled in expanded learning opportunity programs provided by the district pursuant to Education Code 46120. If the district has adopted an extended-day kindergarten, the length of the school day for the TK program may be different than the length of the school day for the kindergarten program either at the same or different school sites. The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to CDE as to whether the district's TK programs are offered full-day, part-day, or both. (Education Code 8973, 37202, 46111, 46115, 46117, 48003)

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with parents/guardians and relevant community groups, in accordance with the plan developed for how all children in the attendance area of the district will have access to full-day learning programs the year before kindergarten that meet the needs of parents/guardians, including through partnerships with the district's expanded learning opportunities, the After School Education and Safety Program, CSPP, Head Start programs, and other community-based early learning and care programs.

CSBA NOTE: The following optional paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice. According to CDE's, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs," it is the intent of the law to provide separate and unique experiences for TK and kindergarten students. However, districts have flexibility to determine how best to meet the curricular needs of each child and whether TK and kindergarten students may be enrolled in the same classrooms.

Education Code 48000, as amended by SB 153 (Ch. 38, Statutes of 2024), requires districts that commingle TK students and CSPP children in the same classroom to complete an observation using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool and CLASS environment tool, rather than the formerly required Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale.

TK students may be placed in the same classrooms as kindergarten students when necessary, provided that the instructional program is differentiated to meet student needs.

TK students may be commingled in the same classroom with four-year-old students from a CSPP program as long as the commingled program meets all of the requirements of each program as well as the following requirements: (Education Code 8207, 48000)

1. The classroom does not include students enrolled in TK for a second year or students enrolled in a regular kindergarten

2. An observation using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool and CLASS Environmental tool are completed for the classroom

3. All children enrolled for 10 or more hours per week are evaluated using the Desired Results Developmental Profile, as specified in 5 CCR 18272

4. The classroom is taught by a teacher that holds a credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) in accordance with Education Code 44065 and 44256

5. The classroom is in compliance with the adult-child ratio specified in Education Code 8241

6. Contractors of the district report the services, revenues, and expenditures for children in the preschool program in accordance with 5 CCR 18068 except for contractors of the TK program

The district shall maintain an average TK class enrollment of not more than 24 students for each school site, not including students who are continuously enrolled in and meet the minimum day requirement for independent study for more than 14 school days in a school year. (Education Code 48000)

Staffing

CSBA NOTE: To be qualified to teach a TK class, the teacher must possess an appropriate multiple subjects or early childhood education credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) authorizing instruction in TK. Education Code 48000 establishes additional requirements for credentialed teachers who are first assigned to a TK class after July 1, 2015, as provided below. CTC may issue a one-year emergency specialist teaching permit in early childhood education that authorizes teaching all subjects in a self-contained TK general education classroom, provided that certain conditions are met as specified in Education Code 44300.

Additionally, 5 CCR 80067, 80067.1, 80067.2, and 80067.3, pertaining to the prekindergarten-grade 3 (PK-3) early childhood education specialist credential, include requirements, and accelerated pathways to meet the requirements, in an effort to increase the number of early childhood education teachers. The PK-3 credential is designed to provide individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree and have gained experience in early childhood education through their work, to have an expedited pathway to earning the credential to teach in the PK-3 environment; see CTC Coded Correspondence 24-03 for more information. For more information about the Early Childhood Education Emergency Specialist Permit/Emergency Transitional Kindergarten Permit, see AR 4112.2 -- Certification.

TK assignments are subject to assignment monitoring and reporting by the County Superintendent of Schools in accordance with Education Code 44258.9.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that teachers assigned to teach in TK classes possess a teaching credential or permit from CTC that authorizes such instruction.

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48000 extends until August 1, 2025, the requirement for credentialed teachers who are first assigned to a TK class to meet additional qualifications, as described below.

A credentialed teacher who is first assigned to a TK class after July 1, 2015, shall, by August 1, 2025, have at least 24 units in early childhood education and/or child development, comparable

professional experience in a preschool setting, and/or a child development teacher permit or an early childhood specialist credential issued by CTC. (Education Code 48000)

The Superintendent or designee may provide professional development as needed to ensure that TK teachers are knowledgeable about the standards and effective instructional methods for teaching young children, including, but not limited to, developing competencies in serving inclusive classrooms and dual language learners.

The district shall maintain an average of at least one adult for every 12 students for TK classrooms and, contingent upon an appropriation of funding, maintain an average of at least one adult for every 10 students commencing with the 2025-26 school year. (Education Code 48000)

Continuation to Kindergarten

CSBA NOTE: The following section is consistent with guidance in CDE's, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs."

There is no requirement that an age-eligible student complete a year of TK or kindergarten before enrolling in first grade. Pursuant to Education Code 48010, a student must be six years old on or before September 1 to be eligible for first grade. However, if a student is not six years old by September 1, the student may be admitted to first grade in accordance with Education Code 48011, if the child has completed one year of kindergarten or, in some cases, has attended some kindergarten. CDE's, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs," note that a year of TK is not equivalent to a year of kindergarten, for purposes of enrolling a 5-year-old student in first grade pursuant to Education Code 48011.

Students who complete the TK program shall be eligible to continue in kindergarten the following school year. Parents/guardians of such students shall not be required to submit a signed Kindergarten Continuance Form for kindergarten attendance.

CSBA NOTE: The following optional paragraph is for use by districts that allow kindergarten-eligible children to enroll in TK; see "Eligibility" above. When such students are subsequently enrolled in kindergarten, the district is required to obtain a signed Kindergarten Continuance Form in order to receive kindergarten ADA for those children since they would otherwise be age-eligible for first grade. A sample Kindergarten Continuance Form is available on CDE's, "Universal Prekindergarten FAQs," website. CDE recommends that approval for a student to continue in kindergarten not be sought until near the end of the year of TK, since permission obtained unreasonably far in advance could be found invalid.

However, whenever children who would otherwise be age-eligible for kindergarten are enrolled in TK, the Superintendent or designee shall obtain a Kindergarten Continuance Form signed by the parent/guardian near the end of the TK year consenting to the child's enrollment in kindergarten the following year.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 46300, the district may not include for ADA purposes the attendance of any student for more than two years in kindergarten or for more than two years in a combination of TK and kindergarten.

A student shall not attend more than two years in kindergarten or a combination of TK and kindergarten. (Education Code 46300)

Assessment

CSBA NOTE: The following section regarding assessment of TK students' development and

progress may be revised to reflect district practice. One assessment resource for TK students is CDE's Desired Results Developmental Profile, which is designed to assess the developmental progression of all children from early infancy to kindergarten entry. Additionally, CDE's report, "Proposed Tools and Process for the Early identification of Developmental Delays and Learning Disabilities," provides tools and a process for the early identification of children between two and six at risk for developmental delays or learning disabilities.

The Superintendent or designee may develop or identify appropriate formal and/or informal assessments of TK students' development and progress. The Superintendent or designee shall monitor and regularly report to the Board regarding program implementation, the progress of students in meeting related academic standards, and student preparedness for future education.