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**Coventry Grammar School**  
3453 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238

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**DATE:** January 3, 2012  
**TO:** David Petrone, Superintendent  
**FROM:** Marybeth Moyer, C.G.S. Principal  
**RE:** Report on All-Day Kindergarten

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### **Introduction**

As early as September 2009, the subject of the length of the kindergarten day was a topic of discussion between the administration and members of the teaching staff at Coventry Grammar School. This program change was first suggested as an item for review at the preview of the budget in November 2009 and has been an on-going discussion point since that time. During my tenure at C.G.S. and during goal discussions, I have expressed my firm conviction that an all-day kindergarten program would be a sound educational improvement for the children of Coventry. Last year during budget discussions, the suggestion was to do further research on the topic and devise a plan with the goal of implementation in August 2012.

### **Why an All Day Kindergarten Program?**

The goal of the Coventry Public Schools is to provide kindergarten children with a learning environment that nurtures the whole child; where there is balanced stimulation of their intellectual/academic, social/emotional, and physical/behavioral characteristics. There are a number of reasons that moving to a full-day kindergarten program will support the achievement of that goal.

### **Educational Factors**

- From an educational perspective, an all-day kindergarten school day will provide a more balanced program for the education of the whole child. Over the past few years, children have proven more ready for academic tasks and the standards have assumed a major focus in the kindergarten day. An all-day program will relax the tension between academic standards and developmentally appropriate instruction, allowing a reasonable amount of time for each pursuit.
- Our kindergarten teachers have expressed interest in an all-day program, have researched this topic and support this change. They believe that the majority of the children come to school prepared physically, socially, and academically for an all-day program. They also believe that they can accomplish a more balanced program with the extra instructional time. An all-day program will allow them the time:
  - to explore, in depth, topics of interest to their students
  - for daily lessons in each area of the kindergarten curriculum along with periods for social skills development
  - to achieve an appropriate balance of whole class, small group, and individual activities
  - to include daily periods for developmentally appropriate self-selected choice activities
  - to provide needed intervention and enrichment to meet the needs of all children

- As the leaders of public schools in Connecticut, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) suggests that the education system, which has served children well in the past, must be transformed so that it is able to meet the needs of all students in the future. Within this new model, CAPSS recommends that school districts *provide a challenging all-day kindergarten program to all children.* (November 2011)
- The Connecticut Education Association also supports universal access to high-quality preschool, upgraded certification for preschool teachers as well as all-day kindergarten. (January 2012)
- The Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) at the University of Illinois provides a comprehensive review of research on full-day kindergarten (Clark, 2001). Researchers report positive results for academic achievement as well as for social and behavioral effects in studies of full day vs. half-day kindergarten. Research indicates that “children in full-day classrooms spend more time engaged in child-initiated activities, more time in teacher-directed individual work, and relatively less time in teacher-directed large groups.” Benefits are derived when all-day programs provide children with opportunities “to spend more time engaged in active, child- initiated, small-group activities”. The Coventry full-day kindergarten program would be designed in accordance with sound research and best practices.
- Coventry’s move to an all-day program will assure that our students are exposed to programming that compares favorably to many of the districts in our neighboring towns.

**Economic Factors**

Expanding to an all-day kindergarten program in Coventry at this time can be accomplished at a reasonable expense to the community.

- There are presently **2 full-time teachers** and **three half day teachers** in our kindergarten program. The following chart illustrates the all-day option that could be made available at Coventry Grammar School for the 2012 -2013 school year.

Option 1

<b>Program</b>	<b>Class size</b>	<b>Staffing</b>
6 full day classes	21 students	6.0 FTE

**Option 1 Facts**

- Staffing for this program would require 2.5 FTE staff members. If current staff were to fill the positions benefits would be required for 1.0 teacher only.
- This all-day program would be available for **all** students. Adaptations would be made in the current kindergarten schedule and the present curriculum would be realigned. It would not be necessary to add any new curriculum components because the Connecticut State standards for kindergarten are written for a full-day program.

- Parent survey results (December 2011) indicate that recent changes in the economy (daycare costs) and expanded kindergarten expectations have increased the parent support of an all-day program.
- A review of the projected enrollment indicates that C.G.S. has the space to absorb up to 126 students.
- Classroom space is available within the school to house six full-day kindergarten classrooms. The cost for equipping one additional classroom with furniture and curricular materials would be \$8000.00.
- A review of the specials schedule (art, music, library and P.E.) indicates that the kindergarten classes can receive the full range of specials during an all-day program without the need for additional staff.
- An all-day program will produce a significant savings to the district because mid-day buses can be cancelled. (Savings: \$67,321.80)

### **Other Concerns**

- ***What impact will the full day program have on the C.G.S. community?***

We are accustomed to the enthusiasm and curiosity our youngest students bring to C.G.S. The biggest change that we anticipate is that the kindergarten students will now be scheduled into a rotation for lunch. This change will cause us to re-examine our lunch schedule and make some minor changes in the assigned times for all grade levels. On a practical note, the addition of up to six teachers will give us greater coverage during this additional lunch wave. Lunch buying options will also produce revenue for the Coventry district.

The challenge of providing academic support for double sessions of kindergarten students cannot be understated. When kindergarten students are in school all day we will be better able to schedule all areas of support and programming to work within the classrooms.

- ***Will all-day kindergarten classes receive more support from other instructional staff?***

At the present time two para-educators are assigned to the kindergarten classes to support the instructional needs of the students. I would propose hiring an additional para-educator so that ideally we would have one support person for every two kindergarten classes.

At this time, all support staff (reading and SRBI intervention teachers) have been assigned to classes based upon student need rather than by section or number of students. In half-day program planning this support has been difficult because support has to be available for both a.m. and p.m. classes and intervention groups have needed to be held before or after the start of a session. With the implementation of an all-day program, support can be provided during reading or math instruction to provide intervention. This practice will assure that all classes have an adequate level of academic support. The administration will also take a close look at the data collected during the course of the 2011-2012 school year to determine where additional support may be necessary in the classrooms. Any

additional support will be used to further tailor instruction to the needs of the children. Early intervention to address young children's learning needs is a best practice for assuring academic success in school.

• **What about parents who prefer the current half-day program for their children?**

When we implement a six class full-day program we will be mindful of the needs of individual students and will work with the teachers and the parents if a different schedule needs to be devised for a student.

• **What types of assessments will be used in the full-day kindergarten to determine the effectiveness of the program?**

Presently the kindergarten teachers use a variety of assessment tools and benchmark assessments to track the learning of their students. (Phonemic Awareness Skills Test (PAST), Guided Reading and Running Records, DRA, Writing Prompts, Math Skill Reviews and Informal Observations.

Certainly the full-time kindergarten teachers who are currently responsible for up to 42 students will have half that many students when teaching a full-day kindergarten class. They will have more time to access children and individualize instruction to their specific needs and interests. With the current practice of grade-level and data review meetings, we will be able to monitor the effectiveness of instruction as well as target focused areas of instruction.

• **How would the Kindergarten schedule change in an all-day model?**

A sample schedule of both a half day and a full day schedule are displayed below for information purposes only. This schedule illustrates the amount of time devoted to specific curriculum areas and activities.

**Sample Half Day (extended day) Kindergarten Schedule** (actual schedules will differ based on 2012-2013 special schedules)

8:20 – 8:45	Arrival Routines	Arrival Routines	Arrival Routines	Arrival Routines	Arrival Routines
8:45 – 9:15	Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials
9:20 – 10:15	Literacy Centers	Literacy Centers	Literacy Centers	Literacy Centers	Literacy Centers
10:15 – 10:45	Math/ Snack/ Choice Rotations	Math/ Snack/ Choice Rotations	Math/ Snack/ Choice Rotations	Math/ Snack/ Choice Rotations	Math/ Snack/ Choice Rotations
10:45 - 11:10	Read Aloud/ Large Motor Activity	Read Aloud/ Large Motor Activity	Read Aloud/ Large Motor Activity	Read Aloud/ Large Motor Activity	Read Aloud/ Large Motor Activity
11:10 - 11:20	Closing Routines	Closing Routines	Closing Routines	Closing Routines	Closing Routines

\*During **Learning Centers** the teacher meets with small groups for Guided Reading instruction. Students must work independently at the other Literacy centers. Para-educator support is divided among classes and varies daily.

**Sample Full Day Kindergarten Schedule** (actual schedules will differ based on 2012-2013 special schedules)

<b>Time</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
8:10-8:40	Morning Routines	Morning Routines	Morning Routines	Morning Routines	Morning Routines
8:40 – 9:40	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop
9:40 – 9:55	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
9:55 – 10:55	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:00 – 11:50	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess
11:55 – 12:45	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop
12:45 – 1:15	Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials
1:20 – 1:50	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies
1:55 – 2:30	Learning Centers	Learning Centers	Learning Centers	Learning Centers	Learning Centers
2:30 – 3:00	Outside Play/Specials	Outside Play/Specials	Outside Play/Specials	Outside Play/Specials	Outside Play/Specials
3:00 – 3:10	Closing Routines	Closing Routines	Closing Routines	Closing Routines	Closing Routines

**Conclusion**

As the administrator of Coventry Grammar School, it is my recommendation that we adopt an all-day kindergarten program for the educational, social, and physical benefits it offers to the children of Coventry. Current research, the recommendation of Connecticut superintendents, the Connecticut Education Association, enrollment projections, and parent and community involvement simply strengthen the decision to implement full-day kindergarten for the 2012-2013 school year.