

**For Immediate Release**

February 20, 2023

Contact: Dr. Tanya Sanderfoot, Principal

sanderfoott@ripon.k12.wi.us

(920) 748-1550

**Full Day 4K for 2023-2024**

RIPON, Wis. — At its February 20, 2023, meeting, the Ripon Area School District Board of Education reviewed a proposal to shift four-year-old kindergarten (4K) to a full-day program. Currently, the District's 4K students attend a 2.75-hour program 5 days a week. As of the January 2023 count date, the Ripon Area School District had 64 students enrolled in its half-day 4K program. An additional 19 students are enrolled in 4K through ADVOCAP Head Start, a full-day program for low-income students. Both of the District's 4K teachers lead instruction for two half-day sections while the Head Start program has a full-day program four days per week.

The proposal calls for increasing the 4K school day from half days every day to four full days per week, and supporting Head Start as it transitions to offering only a 3-year-old program. All four sections of 4K would be located at the Barlow Park/Journey Elementary School building. The additional time at school will better prepare young learners, imitating the school day of elite schools, such as Boston Public Schools' Universal Pre-Kindergarten program. Additionally, the full-day program will better meet the child care needs of families in the Ripon area.

Over time, additional valuable curriculum areas have been added for the four-year-old program. The short length of the school day for the District half-day program makes it challenging to cover all of the material required by the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. Play is an essential part of learning so Ripon's 4K teachers will continue to incorporate plenty of time for students to learn through play. Districts in the larger Fox Valley Area have moved to 3-hour programs or full-day programs - which are four days a week (similar to ADVOCAP Head Start's 4-year-old program.)

A full-day 4K program provided four days per week would increase students' weekly time at school by approximately 797 minutes (13 hours, 17 minutes). The additional learning time should

allow students to develop more knowledge and skills related to early math, reading, and social-emotional development and be better prepared for five-year-old kindergarten

Further, the additional time at school for 4K students would meet the needs of working parents, who must currently find child care for half days. A full-day 4K program would alleviate shortages of child care opportunities in our community by opening spots for younger children. Additionally, families would have the opportunity to enroll 4K students for only the morning if they chose. Students could change enrollment to full days at any point during the year. This model puts parents in the driver seat to meet their child's needs based on where they are at developmentally.

The proposal recommends creating two District teaching positions and three part-time instructional assistant positions. Adding two more classrooms to the District budget will increase spending and reduce revenue in the short-term (due to a complicated Revenue Limit formula). However, there will be financial savings in certain areas and some additional revenue (especially long-term) to counterbalance the increased costs.

Any comments or questions, please contact Principal Dr. Tanya Sanderfoot at (920) 748-1550 or sanderfoott@ripon.k12.wi.us.

###