

# Partnership allows expansion of Harlan County preschool program

The Harlan County School District and the KCEOC Community Action Partnerships Inc. today announced the expansion of the pre-school program in the Harlan County School district from part-time to full-time four days per week.



Following a meeting between district and KCEOC administrators, the announcement was made the expansion will take place and plans are now being finalized for the fall semester.

Harlan County Schools Superintendent Brent Roark said, "We are excited to be able to offer full-time preschool to 3 and 4-year-old students. We are certain this will help improve kindergarten readiness skills. This will also provide a great opportunity for parents who struggle with finding part-time child care for their children."

Roark complimented the KCEOC leadership team he has been working with on the expansion, noting the long-standing partnership between the two agencies for many years.

“This is further development of the excellent partnership we have,” said Roark. “This is something we have wanted to see in our district for a long time. It truly is a winning situation for the preschool students, their families and our district.”

Missy Saylor, child development director for the KCEOC Community Action Partnership said her agency “is very excited about expanding the hours in the K-4 classrooms to full day. We expect the extra hours of educational experiences will have a great impact on the children's developmental levels as they enter kindergarten.”

Betty Johnson, Education Manager for KCEOC Child Development, agrees. “The longer day provides many more educational opportunities for them to learn and develop.”

Eric Bowling, the Director of Preschool Programs for Harlan County Schools, said he extremely excited about the expansion of the preschool program day.

“This will allow us to dually increase both our preschool and special education services while simultaneously improving our Kindergarten Readiness scores,” said Bowling. More service time and new curriculum initiatives mean a huge win, win for our youngest Harlan County students and their families”.

“We recognized the need and strongly advocated to expand the program and service time for several years now,” said Bowling. “The timing, resources, and collaboration were all able to be aligned. I am beyond pleased to say that full-time preschool will now be available in Harlan County Schools this August. We hope to harness this positive momentum as we strive to expand future student services even more.”

Roark noted that various departments, other than curriculum, are also involved with the expansion, noting transportation and food service will be providing services to the students.

The KCEOC preschool teaching staff will be taking part in the Striving Readers training with the district this summer. This will help them be prepared to monitor the implementation of the Creative Curriculum Edition 6.

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For more information on the preschool program or the expansion plans, contact KCEOC family/child advocates at 606-573-6543, 606-589-5522 or 606-837-3314 or the Harlan County Schools at 606-573-4330.