



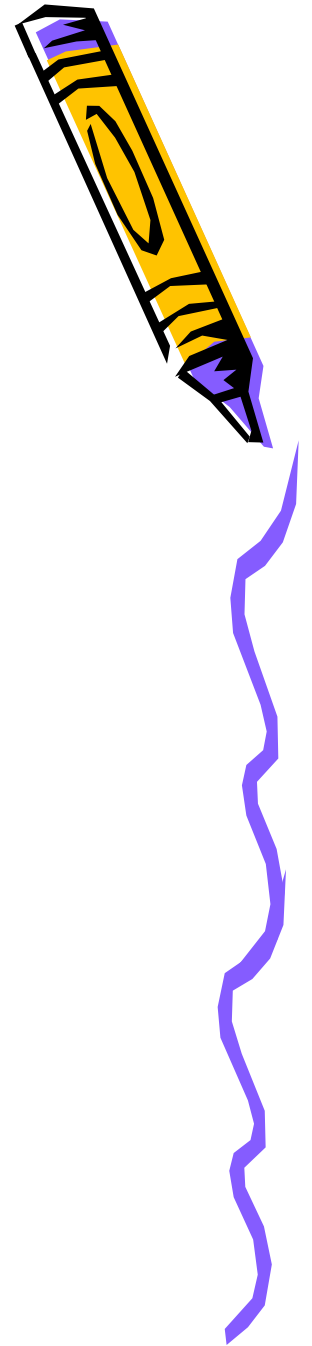
Transitional Kindergarten Program

Rescue Union School District
David Swart, Asst. Superintendent



Why Rescue Union Started the "Junior K" Program

- State and National Studies and Research on Pre K programs:
 - » Pre [K] Now "ABCs of Pre K"
 - » San Mateo County/Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness
 - » Rand Corporation "California Preschool Study"
 - » Resources on Rescue Union S.D.
Website: www.rescue.k12.ca.us



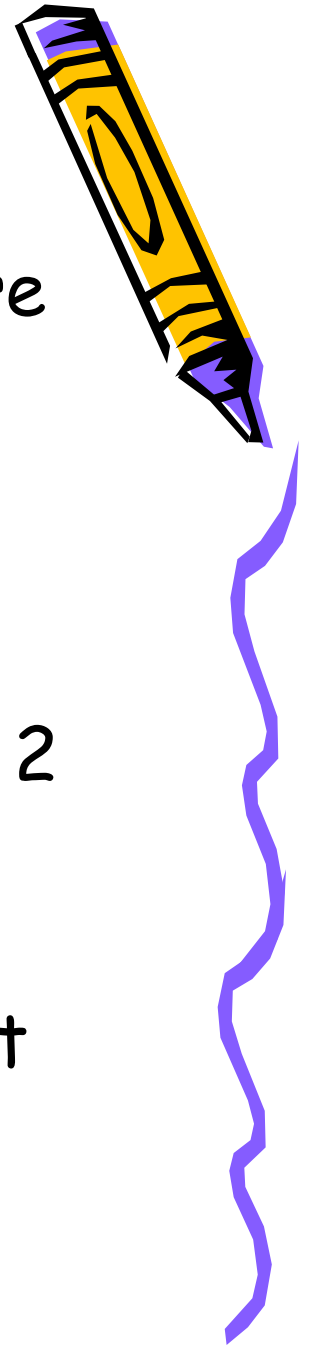
Local Needs:

- Not all students are ready for kindergarten at age four and State Preschool programs exit students when they turn five
- Some parents don't enroll their children in kindergarten (even if they are five) because they feel they are "not ready" (late birthdays, maturity, developmental readiness issues)
- By increasing K Readiness we reduce the number of students who might be recommended for retention in regular Kindergarten programs
- To provide students with a solid foundation for regular Kindergarten if they turn five after December 2
- We know that children who start behind tend to stay behind
- Some students can benefit greatly from having two years to master rigorous K standards
- We were doing Montessori (District) and State Preschool Programs (ED County Office) and wanted a full range of options
- Increase ADA when enrollment is flattening out



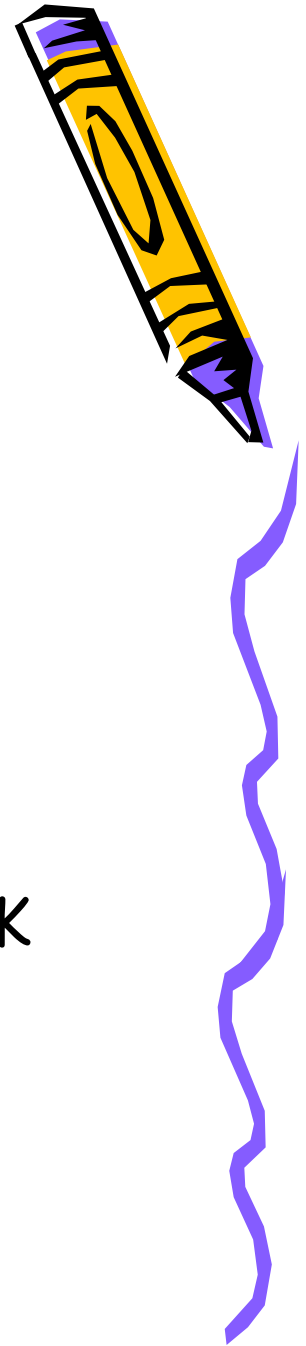
Junior K Eligibility

- Students must be five years old on or before December 2 (legal k age) who are "not quite ready" for our full academic kindergarten program and who would benefit from a two-year kindergarten experience
- Children who turn five *after* December 2 may also enroll *as they turn five* on a space available basis until March 1.
- Parents must sign a two-year enrollment agreement / agree to transport



Program Design

- Half-day, morning program, extended day programs provided at each site for working parents
- Located on two elementary school sites, geographically at each end of our District
- Small class size (18-22)
- Transportation only provided on existing bus routes (at home schools), otherwise parents transport
- Students evaluated for readiness on District K assessments prior to enrollment
- "Report Card" is a progress report/Parent Conferences



Curriculum Design:

- More developmental approach/no time pressures, but also focused on the skills needed to be successful the next year in K
- Certificated, experienced Kindergarten teachers
- Based on California Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Standards
- ELA - focused on reading and writing skills
- Math - focused on Number Sense and Problem Solving
- Physical - Large and Fine Motor Skills
- Social/Emotional Development in a supportive environment



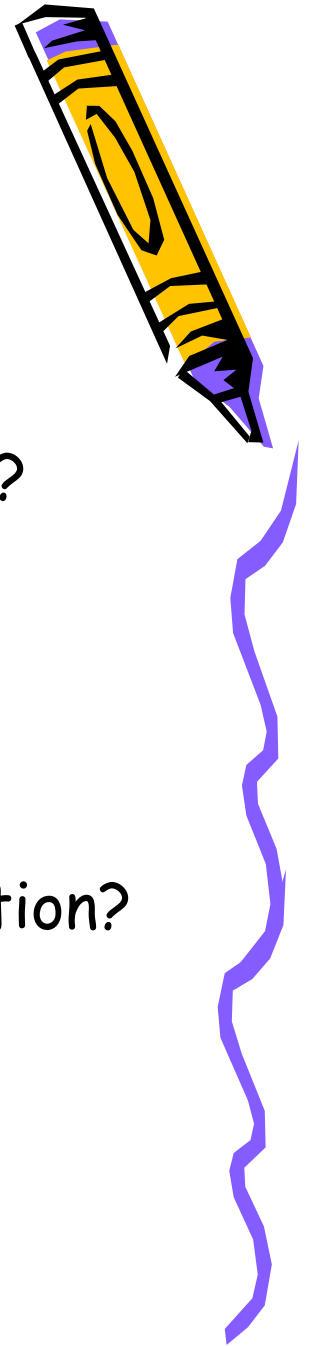
Curriculum Materials:

- Wright Group - Growing with Math
- Imagine It (aligned to adopted District Reading program - Open Court) - same terminology, approach etc.
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Some hands on science



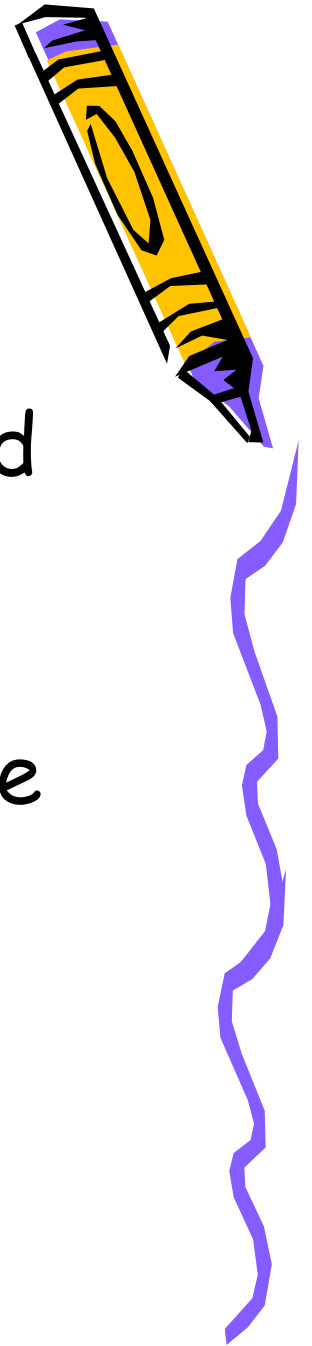
Program Startup: Initial Challenges

- What can we call it?
- How many programs can we support?
- How can we notify parents about the program?
(Letters, All Call, Signs, Newspapers, Parent Meetings)
- How/when will we know how many students we have so we can plan and staff appropriately?
- Location, location, location?
- What is a reasonable timeline for implementation?
- What will the curriculum be?
- How large will class sizes be?
- What about transportation?



Feedback from the Teachers (Yesterday)

- Growth of students individually and as a class - "incredible"
- Many students could walk into a K class and do well because they have come so far (but would have struggled for five months in Kindergarten)



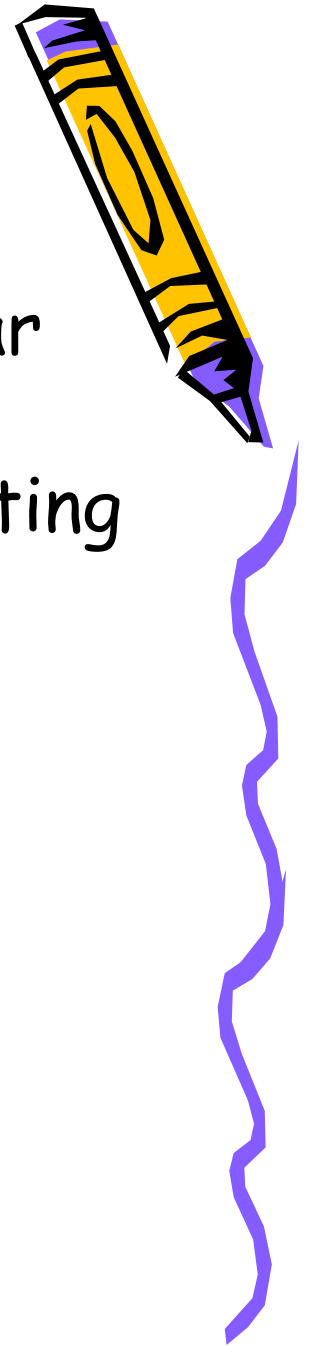
Feedback from the Teachers (continued)

- Every parent is happy and thanks us daily! (Only question they have is why didn't we do this years ago? Older sibs etc.)
- Students "blossoming" and can do so much more than at the beginning of the year!
- Socialization one of the best outcomes: Students have learned to accept each other (even one of the most difficult in the beginning has developed many friendships)
- Great to have two teachers in the program so they can share and collaborate (even if by email)
- Still working on how to put the scissors away properly! (But most classroom "procedures" mastered)
- One teacher said she had to remind herself to backup and not push.



Current Challenges:

- Time - Starting a third program midyear (after Winter Break)
- Trying to project enrollment (12 on waiting list, 6 in January, 6 in February)
- Staffing midyear
- Parents want a guaranteed spot
- Birthdays after March 1
- Location
- Budget!



Thank you!

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