

## **Regional Agreement Fact Sheet Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **1. What is the history behind the current structure of “elementary” SL programs?**

For decades, the SL Integrated Preschool Program has been offered at Kingston Elementary School. Students who reside in Halifax, Kingston, or Plympton may participate. The program services approximately 151 preschool children and employs approximately 17 staff. Since the 1980s, the program has been operating in a regionalized manner.

### **2. Why are we asking to include Preschool Programming as part of the Regional Agreement?**

In 2022, the district leadership discovered that the Integrated Preschool Program is NOT legally part of the Regional Agreement. The Regional Agreement allows for programming in grades 7 through 12, but not for preschool programming. After the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was notified, DESE reviewed the Regional Agreement and directed the district to take corrective action. DESE gave the district a deadline of December 31, 2023, to complete its corrective action.

### **3. If the Regional Agreement limits programming to students in grades 7 through 12, why was the Preschool Program structured to operate in a regionalized manner?**

Nobody who is currently employed was involved in the establishment of the Preschool. As such, it is not feasible to gather information from a person with direct involvement in the creation of this program. We do, however, know that since the program’s inception, the program has been operating as if it were “covered” under the Regional Agreement.

### **4. What actions can be taken to remedy the structure of the preschool program?**

- A. Separate programs by individual towns, and allow each town to run its own individual program.
  - This option is more costly.
  - To pursue this option, separate preschool programs would need to become based in each town.
- B. Incorporate the Preschool Program into the Regional Agreement.
  - The preschool program is a full grade level, and the Regional Agreement can be modified to incorporate a new grade level.
  - This option allows the district to continue to offer preschool programming to communities – in the same manner, the program has been operating for decades.
  - This option would make the structure of the current preschool program compliant with the terms of a new Regional Agreement.
- C. The district could become fully regionalized.

- This option would be a long-term process, which would not be feasible to complete by DESE's corrective action deadline of December 31, 2023.
- School committees would need to closely examine the costs and benefits of full regionalization, present that information to towns, and allow towns to determine whether to pursue this option.

#### **5. What process and data were used to make changes to the regional agreement?**

The agreement was completely reviewed and updated with DESE and legal counsel.

- The agreement was updated using 2020 Census data.
- The new document was updated to reflect MA regulatory changes
- The new Regional Agreement Incorporates preschool programming.

#### **6. How many teachers, aides, students, and model students do we have in the Pre-K program?**

- Students - 75, 63 pay tuition/model peers = 138 total
- Teachers - 7
- Aides - 10

#### **7. What is the salary of the Pre-K Principal? Why is this position necessary?**

In the sample provided, the cost of the PK principal was not included. The sample was the cost of last year's program. The current salary of the PK principal is \$100,000.

A PK principal was hired because the program needed an administrator on site. In the past, the KES principal and school psychologist handled team meetings, management, and student/staff support.

#### **8. What happens if the towns do not approve?**

- Integrated PK is a requirement under Massachusetts law.
- If the towns do not agree to add PK and maintain the program, this will impact Chapter 70 and grant funding.
- If the Regional Agreement is not passed by all 3 towns, we will be allowed to finish out the school year "as is" and then be faced with establishing individual Integrated Preschools in each town by the next school year. It will be more costly to run three separate programs than to run one.

#### **9. What is the total cost of the integrated PK program? (FY'23 sample)**



## TOTAL COST for PK FY'23

• Staff	\$1,012,015.46
• Benefits	90,624.58
• Supplies	10,483.60
• Contracted Services	207,561.48
• Nurse Stipend	11,480.00
• Room Rental	51,400.00
• Transportation	320,904.37
• OOD Placements PK	<u>562,328.05</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,266,797.54</b>

Sample from Presentation (This analysis is based on FY23, the last full year of expenses)

In this sample, the net additional cost to the three towns combined is \$126,127.31