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Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**  
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

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( ) Action Required  
(X) Informational

## BULLETIN NO. 036-23 Elementary, Early Learning, and Federal Programs

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents  
School District Superintendents  
School District Business Managers  
School District Teaching and Learning Directors  
School District Early Learning Directors  
School Building Principals

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Transition to Kindergarten Rulemaking (House Bill 1550)

CONTACT: Samantha Bowen, Executive Director of Early Learning  
[samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us](mailto:samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us), 360-725-6161

## PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

[House Bill 1550](#) (HB 1550) as passed by the Legislature in 2023, codified the existing Transitional Kindergarten as Transition to Kindergarten (TK). The bill directs the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to administer the TK program and specifies that initial rules must be adopted in time for the 2023–24 school year and permanent rules must be adopted by the beginning of the 2024–25 school year.

This bulletin is intended to provide information about the upcoming rulemaking process and guidance for local education agencies implementing a TK program. Guiding documents will be posted to the OSPI website.

## 2023–24 School Year

Beginning with the 2023–24 school year, eligible entities operating a Transition to Kindergarten (TK) program must adopt policies regarding eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment for this program that, at a minimum, meet the requirements outlined in rules adopted by OSPI.

OSPI will adopt emergency rules for the 2023–24 school year consistent with the criteria identified in HB 1550. As prescribed in the legislation, the emergency rules will focus on:

- Specifying that the immediate authority to operate a TK program is limited to school districts, charter schools authorized under RCW 28A.710.080(2), and state-tribal education compact schools.
  - Beginning with the 2025–26 school year, any charter school authorized under RCW 28A.710.080 (1) or (2) is permitted to operate a TK program.
- High level program administration (i.e., instructional hours, intent to offer TK, and staff qualifications).
- Limiting enrollment to eligible children, defined as a child who:
  - Has been determined to benefit from additional preparation for kindergarten through a screening process; and
  - Is at least four years old by August 31 of the school year they enroll in TK.
- Requirement to prioritize families with the lowest income, as practicable.
- Requirement to implement the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) transition process within 10 weeks of the program start date **and** a recommendation to administer the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment at least one more time during the school year.
- Requirement to connect with local child care and early learning partners notifying them of program operation.

## 2024–25 School Year

OSPI will adopt permanent rules, effective in the 2024–25 school year, that will expand on:

- Requirements to adhere to OSPI guidelines.
- Requirement to administer the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment twice, once at the start and again at the end of the school year.
- Requirement to conduct a local child care and early learning needs assessment before beginning or expanding a transition to kindergarten program.

OSPI will develop guidelines related to best practices for site readiness, adoption of developmentally appropriate curricula, and professional development opportunities.

OSPI will work together with DCYF to develop statewide coordinated eligibility, recruitment, enrollment, and selection best practices and provide technical assistance to those implementing a transition to kindergarten program to support connections with local early learning providers.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Early Entry in Kindergarten

The 2023–25 Biennial Operating Budget (SB 5187 Sec. 504(12)) states that beginning in the 2023–24 school year, funding for students admitted early to kindergarten under exceptions to the uniform entry qualifications under RCW 28A.225.160 must be limited to children deemed to be likely to be "successful in kindergarten."

## Funding

TK students will continue to be funded through apportionment, in a similar manner as they are funded currently, though they will be reported separate from kindergarten students. TK students will generate funding through specific categories in the prototypical school funding model, as a kindergarten student would, including class size/educators; school staff; district-wide supports (technology, facilities, warehouse); transportation; maintenance, supplies, and operating costs (MSOC); Learning Assistance Program (LAP); and Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP). Funds generated for TK must be expended only for the support of operating the program.

Special education funding will continue to operate as it does now as part of the K–12 Special Education Multiplier calculation. This decision will be revisited for the permanent rulemaking to go into effect in the 2024–25 school year.

## INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Samantha Bowen, Executive Director of Early Learning at email [samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us](mailto:samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us) or 360-725-6161. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

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