

Marshall County Schools



Universal Collaborative Pre-K

A Partnership between Marshall County
Schools and Northern Panhandle Head Start

Handbook and Procedures



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Introduction

West Virginia State Board of Education Policy 2525 requires all counties to provide access to a free and appropriate public preschool program for all children turning four years of age prior to July 1st and eligible three year olds with special needs. Marshall County Schools, in collaboration with Northern Panhandle Head Start and licensed child-care centers, offers a child-centered, developmentally appropriate pre-k program in Marshall County. Pre-K students attend five days per week, Monday through Friday, times vary depending on site. The program is designed to foster independence, self-esteem, social skills, and academic foundations that will serve to support healthy growth and development for a lifetime. Using the WV Universal Pre-K Standards as our guide, we concentrate on a play-based model. Our goal is to facilitate the development of the whole child (social, cognitive, adaptive, motor, and language skills). In addition, we also explore math, science, pre-reading and writing, social studies, and art concepts.

Core and Collaborative Teams

The core team is composed of the Marshall County Schools Assistant Superintendent, Marshall County Schools Special Programs Director, a representative of licensed community child care, and a representative of Northern Panhandle Head Start. The county collaborative early childhood team includes the core team, a parent/guardian of a preschool child, a representative of WV Birth to Three, a representative of DHHR, school nurse, classroom teacher, head start members, community members and teaching assistants. This team meets at least two times per year, and more frequently when indicated. The role of the collaborative and core teams is to ensure that all policies and procedures are in place for Marshall County's Collaborative Pre-K, to update the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, and to make decisions regarding best practices.

Pre-K Enrollment Process

Eligibility

Any child, regardless of ability, turning four years old prior to July 1 of the year he/she is to enroll is eligible to attend Marshall County Collaborative Pre-K. In addition, three-year-old children with an IEP can be enrolled also. Children who are five years old prior to July 1 are enrolled in kindergarten. The IEP team of students with identified developmental delays may determine it is not in the child's best interest to enter kindergarten at age 5 based on child assessment data and parent and teacher input. A child may remain in the WV Pre-K classroom for longer than one year only if the decision is in the best interest of the child as determined by the IEP team and based on child assessment data.

Registration

In February each year, a pre-registration process is initiated. The requirements and dates are advertised via newspaper, community businesses, websites, pamphlets and flyers, and school messenger. Parents are required to call-in to pre-register, typically during early February/early March. An enrollment packet is mailed to each family that calls-in to pre-register their child if requested. In addition to registration forms, this packet details the requirements for enrollment in pre-k, such as immunizations, certified birth certificates, etc. Parents are asked to complete required forms in the registration packets and mail or drop them off at the School screening location. The registration form requires parent to identify attendance area in which the child resides. If there is a need for the child to attend school outside his/her attendance area, the parent(s) are asked to detail this information on the registration form. Parents are contacted by school staff to set up enrollment appointments. Enrollment screening occurs during the month of February or March at the schools. Priority for student school placement and enrollment is determined based on the following:

1. Date of completed packet
2. School residency district
3. Enrollment of siblings at same location
4. Child care needs (Before/After School Care)
5. Transportation needs
6. Social service needs
7. Students outside of Marshall County requesting to attend Marshall County Collaborative Pre-K will be considered in August, depending on classroom availability. All Marshall County students must be first assured enrollment and consideration must be given to eligible three-year-olds coming from WV Birth-Three prior to enrolling out-of-county transfer students.

****NOTE:** Enrollment in an out-of-attendance area school for pre-k does not guarantee enrollment in that school for kindergarten.

Screening

Screening takes place at the school during the month of February or March. Parents are contacted by school personnel to set up an appointment time. Required documents for enrollment are as follows:

1. Completed Pre-K packet
2. Record of Immunizations
3. State Issued Birth Certificate: Certificate of Live Birth (issued by Office of Vital Statistics)
4. Child's Social Security Card (*if available*)
5. WV DHHR Health Check Information (*if available*)

Upon arrival for enrollment appointment, parent(s) and student will be provided an opportunity to meet the teachers and assistants and visit classrooms. A brief screener will be administered by teachers to each student in order to obtain an understanding of individual needs, personality and potential concerns. This will assist staff in making the most appropriate classroom assignments. Parents will be provided additional

information regarding obtaining Health Check information, dental checks, and other documents, if necessary.

Prior to first day of attendance, each child must have age appropriate immunizations upon enrollment as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Children who are not fully immunized may be provisionally enrolled providing a plan has been developed to assure full immunization, but may not enter Marshall County Pre-K until they have received the first dose of each required vaccine.

In accordance with WV Code §18-5-17, a screening in the areas of vision, hearing, speech and language must be conducted annually for all students entering kindergarten or preschool; and all students entering WV public and private schools for the first time. Within 45 days of enrollment (or prior to the first day of school attendance), each student must have a record of a Health Check screening, or other comprehensive health screening on file with the Marshall County Pre-K. All screening forms shall be signed and dated by the child's licensed health care provider and completed within the past 12 calendar months. Health Check physicians conduct the required screening in the areas required by code. Parents do not need to see vision or hearing specialists to obtain the required screening information. Any student entering Marshall County Pre-K without a primary care physician or required HealthCheck form will be assisted by Head Start and Marshall County staff in obtaining the required information. Marshall County Schools will provide screenings in the areas of vision, hearing, developmental and speech and language if a HealthCheck form is not obtained 45 days after enrollment.

According to *WVBE Policy 2423-Health Promotion and Disease Prevention*, all new enterers in Pre-K and Kindergarten should have on file within 45 days of entry or prior to the first day of school attendance a record of an oral health examination.

Attendance

Enrollment in WV Pre-K is voluntary; however, once a student is enrolled in a Marshall County Collaborative Pre-K classroom, attendance requirements per WV Code apply. To ensure each child's safety, parents/guardians are asked to report any absence to their child's school by 8:30AM on the day of absence, via phone, text, email, etc. If the school has not been informed by the parent of a child's absence by 8:30AM, contact will be made with a parent/guardian or emergency contact person to ensure that the child is safe and supervised.

Meals

Breakfast and lunch are provided in accordance with nutrition guidelines set forth in the WVDE National School Lunch Program. Parents/guardians may choose to send lunch with their child. Meals are served and eaten in the school cafeteria/classroom; however, children and staff sit together and the setting

provides opportunities for socialization and improvement of self-help skills. Conversation and positive eating habits are encouraged.

Transition

Transition to Pre-K

As part of the preparation for students beginning pre-k in Marshall County, the following activities are provided. Each serves to assist families and children with a successful beginning to their public education careers.

For children transitioning from WV Birth-3, the child's Individualized Education Planning (IEP) team determine the appropriate timeframe for transition, depending on the child's birthdate and individual needs. Services are put in place according to the IEP team decisions.

For children registering for pre-k at the age of 4, the following activities are provided:

- At the time of enrollment in May, families are provided with activities, ideas, resources, etc. (Welcome to Pre-K Packet) to utilize over the summer.
- In early August, pre-k teachers send letters home to the families and children providing them with the names of the assigned teacher and teaching assistant(s). Information is provided in this letter regarding the pre-k Open House, home visit schedules and activities, and other welcoming information.
- A Pre-K Open House is held at each location before students' first day of pre-k.

Kindergarten Transition

As students prepare to exit pre-k and move to kindergarten, parents and children are provided an opportunity to visit the kindergarten setting. As all Marshall County Pre-K programs are located in the public schools, registration for kindergarten is not required (unless the student did not attend Marshall County Pre-K.) Marshall County Collaborative team will utilize a variety of resources, including the Ready, Set, Go! WV School Readiness Framework to ensure best practices are in place for successful transitions.

The transition plan for Marshall County Pre-K to Kindergarten is as follows:

- Prior to the final day of pre-k for the current school year, pre-k children visit the kindergarten classrooms. They have the opportunity to meet the teachers and teaching assistants, and to participate in classroom activities. They are provided information regarding kindergarten to share with parents.
- Pre-Kindergarten and kindergarten teachers and teaching assistants meet at the end of each school year to review individual student transition plans, WV Universal Pre-K Standards data, and other pertinent information. Tentative class lists are developed to best accommodate specific learning, social, and behavioral needs of each student.

- Prior to the first day of kindergarten, each school holds an Open House for kindergarten. This provides families an opportunity to visit specific classrooms, meet other staff members (i.e. music teacher, PE teacher, administrator), and have any questions or concerns answered.
- For new kindergarten enrollees (students who did not attend pre-k), teachers will ensure HealthCheck is completed. If HealthCheck is not available, a developmental screening will be completed by appropriate staff prior the first day of school, if possible.

Transition for Children with IEPs

Procedures for transitioning children with IEPs into and out of WV Pre-K is determined by WV Policy 2419 and federal policy, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA 04).

For children in pre-k receiving services under the eligibility area of *developmental delay*, a reevaluation is held in the spring of the final pre-k year. The eligibility team will determine, based on evaluation data, whether the student:

- a. Continues to qualify for services until age six under the eligibility criteria for developmental delay;
- b. No longer qualifies for services under the eligibility criteria for developmental delay; *or*
- c. Qualifies for services as a student with a disability under state eligibility criteria in an area other than developmental delay.

If the child qualifies for services in any area of disability, or continues to qualify under the area of developmental delay, an IEP is developed in accordance with the child's needs and implemented in the least restrictive environment.

For children transitioning from pre-k with an eligibility in an *area of disability other than developmental delay* (i.e. speech/language, visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism), the child's IEP team will determine appropriate services in the least restrictive environment in regard to the kindergarten setting.

Pre-K Classrooms

Environment

Marshall County's Collaborative Pre-K program uses the WV Universal Pre-K Standards to guide instruction. This framework guides teachers and teaching assistants in offering high quality environments that are responsive to individual children and maximize learning and skill development. The high quality learning experiences promote school readiness skills for all children. The following guiding principles inform learning and instruction in the pre-k setting:

- Opportunities for using representation and symbolic thinking (the ability to pretend and use symbols) are essential.
- Children are active learners.

- Development and learning are interrelated.
- Each child is an individual learner.
- Children with special needs and those who do not speak English develop best in inclusive early education settings.
- Family involvement is critical.
- Development and learning are embedded in culture.
- Experiencing the world is a young child's work.

Curriculum

Marshall County's Collaborative Pre-K program utilizes Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is a play-based model. This approach promotes independence, curiosity, decision-making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving. At no time are worksheets or flashcards utilized, or appropriate, for pre-k students.

Child Assessment

Assessment in pre-k is an on-going, authentic process, focusing on each child's development over time. Utilizing the Early Learning Scale, developed by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), teachers utilize the information to inform intentional teaching and communicate with parents. The scale includes ten key items:

- 1) *Number and numerical operations*
- 2) *Classification and algebraic thinking*
- 3) *Geometry and measurement*
- 4) *Scientific inquiry*
- 5) *Self-regulation*
- 6) *Play*
- 7) *Oral language*
- 8) *Phonological awareness*
- 9) *Print awareness*
- 10) *Writing*

Evidence each individual child's developmental progression in relation to the WV Universal Pre-K Standards is captured through teacher observation and reflection, collection of work samples, and anecdotal notes.

Three times per year, evidence is reviewed and assessment is completed. A parent report is developed using the ratings based upon the WV Universal Pre-K Standards twice annually. Parent conferences are held to review the report, discuss progress, and plan for next steps.

Program Assessment

Program implementation is assessed in each classroom annually utilizing the TPOT coaching model. Core team members and/or school and Head Start administrators conduct the assessment. Results are shared with individual classroom staff, administrators and the collaborative team (as appropriate.) Information derived from these assessments is considered in the annual CQI plan.

In addition to program assessment, the WV Universal Pre-K Health and Safety Checklist is utilized in each classroom annually during the month of September. The Marshall County Pre-K Core Team conducts these observations and results are reported to the classroom staff and administrators immediately following the observation, then entered into the ELRS: Pre-K site by the county pre-k coordinator. Results are reported to the county collaborative team during the next meeting and considered in the annual revision of the CQI plan. In addition, Northern Panhandle Head Start conducts the CLASS assessment twice annually in each of their collaborative classroom. The results are shared with each teacher and building administrator and then provided to the Marshall County Schools Director of Pre-K. This information is also utilized in determining revisions annually to the CQI plan.

Contact Information

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