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***MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159***  
**Board Curriculum Committee**

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**Meeting Notes**  
January 26, 2012  
7:00 pm – MES S126

**MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE:**

John Troy - Chair, Kathy Moore, Chuck Vitton, Sandy Wayne, Susan Stratton

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

John Troy – Chair, Chuck Vitton, Sandy Wayne, Susan Stratton

Also Present: Michelle Matt (ES Teacher), Kathy Sutor (ES Aide), Nadia Abuata, Megan Wagner, Roxanne Massoglia, Scott Massoglia, Suzanne Shanahan (Parents)

**PURPOSE OF MEETING:**

Purpose:

Approve meeting notes from December 15, 2011  
Review information from Early Start presentation and have discussion related to cost/benefit of program

**WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED:**

1. Meeting notes from December 15, 2011 were approved.
2. Dr. Vitton reviewed information presented at the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and asked the committee to engage in discussion related to the future of the Early Start program.

**Discussion Points:**

It was asked what options these students have if Early Start did not exist. The students would have the option of 1) going to Pre-K at a private facility, 2) attend Pre-K privately and, if qualified, receive walk-in speech services, 3) attend special education programs, if severe disabilities are present, 4) not attend Pre-K and wait for Kindergarten. It was discussed that the level of service provided in an At-Risk program (certified teachers and aides, speech/language therapy, OT, PT, social work) are not typically a part of regular Pre-K programs.

Approximately 30% of the students attending Early Start are considered “low income” by federal income guidelines.

DCFS guidelines limit the adult-student ratio in preschool classrooms to be 1 to 10.

It was presented that the State early intervention services covers children from birth to 3 years of age, but that these services are discontinued on the third birthday. Programs like Early Start pick up where early intervention services leave off, and bridge the early learning experiences between 3 years of age and Kindergarten.

It was suggested that the community might have issue with the amount being charged (\$168) for this program, in light of the services being provided (perhaps the parents should pay more for the program). It was further discussed that if the district charges “tuition” for Early Start that it could have programmatic ramifications related to staffing (this would look like a private preschool run by the district, and not a district program).

We currently have a waiting list for the morning Early Start class (3 students). It was discussed how we can have a waiting list, and turn away kids, if the taxpayers are funding the program. Students currently earn points on a matrix (must accumulate at least 10 points to be considered for the program) and the students with the most need (highest point totals) are invited to the program first. If we discontinued the waiting list, and the numbers of students qualifying for the program exceeds 20 in each class, we would need to hire an additional classroom aide to meet DCFS ratio guidelines.

It was discussed that the costs related to Early Start need to be prioritized in relation to other needs in the district (extra-curriculars, transportation, technology, curriculum, reduction in class sizes, etc.).

It was noted that early intervention services provide the educational foundation for all other learning that takes place with children who are at-risk.

3. Dr. Vitton will present information discussed through the Committee to the Board of Education on February 9, 2012.

### **NEXT MEETING GOALS:**

Approve meeting notes from January 26, 2012

Discuss outcomes related to the Board presentation on February 9, 2012

Discuss next steps related to the Committee’s scope and initial assignments

### **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

Wednesday, February 29, 2012 – 7:00 pm at MES (Room S126)