



Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District

10 River Road Jericho, VT 05465
P:802-434-2128 F:802-899-4001
districtoffice@mmuusd.org
www.mmuusd.org

Dear Members of the Richmond Selectboard,

Thank you for the invitation to join you on Monday. Unfortunately, I have a prior commitment that prevents me from attending in person, but I want to provide a clear written explanation of the Pre-K exploration underway and address the question that has been raised.

What We're Doing and Why

MMUUSD is exploring changes to how we deliver Pre-K programming to better serve working families across our district. Currently, only about 40% of district families can access our Pre-K program. The remaining 60% must look outside the district, not because they don't want public Pre-K, but mainly because our schedule doesn't work for their households. A program that requires parent availability one to three days per week, or outside wrap-around care, creates barriers for many working families. Additionally, we've received feedback from local wrap-around providers that providing Wednesday-only-wrap-around care is not sustainable for them any longer.

Our exploration has three goals:

1. Expand access so more families can participate in public Pre-K
2. Create schedule consistency (5 days/week) that works for working families
3. Ensure families can access state childcare subsidies (CCFAP) for wrap-around care

To understand what's possible, we issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify potential partners who could provide wrap-around care at our school sites. The RFP is a tool to gather information; it is not a commitment to a particular outcome.

Why This Is Not a "Cut"

When I spoke to selectboards earlier this year about the FY27 budget, I stated there would be no cuts to existing school-based programs. That statement was about the budget, specifically, that we were not eliminating programs to close our funding gap.

The Pre-K exploration is not a budget or program cut. It is a restructuring of how we deliver programming to expand access. Consider:

- **No positions are being eliminated.** Every current Pre-K teacher will remain employed.
- **No funding is being reduced.** We continue to invest in Pre-K.
- **No child currently enrolled loses access.** Families in the program will continue to have access to Pre-K.

What we are exploring is whether we can restructure the *delivery model* so we can extend the opportunity for participation to the 60% of our community we cannot currently support, while maintaining quality for families already served.

I understand that for families well-served by the current model, any *change* feels like a *loss*. That concern is legitimate, and we're taking it seriously. An additional consideration I would ask of our community is that of the families who have never been able to access our Pre-K program because of its current structure.

What's Actually Being Proposed

The example model we've shared includes 12.5 hours per week of district-delivered instruction, embedded within a full-day program. Families would still have the option for children to be in a full day of developmentally appropriate care; the framework still to be laid is how that day is structured, and who delivers which components.

Quality early childhood education happens throughout the day, not just during a designated "instruction" block. The partners we would ally ourselves with would be licensed providers, delivering developmentally appropriate programming during wrap-around hours.

On Process and Pace

Additionally, we are not pursuing a single model; differentiated approaches and piloting are very much on the table. The reality is that demand, capacity, and community preferences vary across our schools. Richmond looks different from Huntington. A one-size-fits-all mandate is not and has never been the plan.

The RFP process helps us understand the partnership options that exist. Once we know what each potential partner could offer and at what cost, we can make informed decisions, including whether to proceed with different options at each school, what makes sense to run internally vs. with a partner, or to pilot at willing sites before broader implementation.

Moving Forward

We are committed to continued engagement with families, staff, and community members as we develop the next iteration of Early Childhood Education in our community. The goal is not to diminish what we offer but to expand access to quality Pre-K to more families and, most importantly, more children.

I'm happy to return to the Selectboard at a future meeting to discuss this further, or to meet individually with board members who have questions.

Thank you for your continued partnership on behalf of Richmond's children and families.

Respectfully,

John Muldoon

Superintendent, MMUUSD