



CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 2004 AGENDA

General Waiver

<p>SUBJECT</p> <p>Request by Simi Valley Unified School District for a renewal to waive <i>Education Code</i> (EC) Section 37202, the equity length of time requirement to allow a full day kindergarten program at eleven of the district's twenty-one elementary schools, Berylwood, Crestview, Justin, Katherine, Knolls, Madera, Park View, Santa Susana, Sycamore, Township and White Oak Elementary Schools.</p> <p>Waiver Number: 9-6-2004</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consent</p>
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RECOMMENDATION

Approval Approval with conditions Denial

That EC 33051(c) will apply and the district will not be required to reapply annually if information contained on the request remains the same.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The State Board of Education has approved similar waivers in the past.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The Simi Valley Unified School District requests to renew a waiver of EC Section 37202 in order to establish full day kindergartens at eleven out of twenty-one schools within the district, Berylwood, Crestview, Justin, Katherine, Knolls, Madera, Park View, Santa Susana, Sycamore, Township and White Oak Elementary Schools. Instructional minutes at these schools vary from 250 to 295 daily. The previous waiver, number 4-7-2003-W-8, only included seven schools. The current waiver requests the addition of Crestview, Madera and White Oak Elementary schools to the program.

As a requirement of the first waiver, the district has submitted an evaluation of the pilot program. All of the district's kindergarten students were assessed on reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the 2003-2004 school year. The evaluation shows good results for the students at the extended day kindergarten schools, especially for the English language learners compared to other schools. In fact the report states, "On some of the [reading] assessments students in the extended day kindergarten classes exceed the performance of the district average." During the 2002-2003 school year the retention rates were lowered in the extended day kindergarten schools, which the teachers attest is the direct result of longer instructional days. Parents and teachers responded to a survey about the benefits of the extended day program and any negative aspects of such a program. Overall, the benefits offered by the pilot program outweighed any negative aspects. Comments ranged from teachers being more relaxed to students demonstrating more confidence and independence.

The district used a bottom up approach to address the concept of full day kindergarten. This issue first went before all the kindergarten teachers at all twenty-one elementary schools in the district for a majority vote; then at those sites that approved, the issue was presented to all of the school staff for a majority vote and finally for those school sites that voted for the full day kindergarten, the issue was presented to the school site councils and parents at those schools. This was an effective way to get all interested staff and then parents to share the same vision, from the bottom up, and resulted in the participation of just over half of the existing school sites in the district.

In addition, the district's board has adopted the Early Primary Program, EC sections 8970-8974, and has a "school of choice" open enrollment policy for parents in place. The district's method of site selection was done by considering space availability as well as the willingness of teachers to provide longer instructional days for kindergarten students. The purpose of the increased instructional day is to improve the academic performance of those students.

This waiver is requested for two years and one day. Therefore, the department recommends approval, EC 33051(c) will apply and the district will not be required to reapply annually if information contained on the request remains the same.

Authority for Waiver: *Education Code (EC) Section 33050*

Period of request: September 7, 2004 to September 7, 2006

Local board approval date(s): June 1, 2004 and June 29, 2004

Public hearing held on date(s): June 1, 2004

Bargaining unit(s) consulted on date(s): April 21, 2004

Name of bargaining unit/representative(s) consulted: Arleigh Kidd, Simi Educators Association

Position of bargaining unit(s) (choose only one):

Neutral Support Oppose

Comments (if appropriate):

Public hearing advertised by (choose one or more):

posting in a newspaper posting at each school other (specify)

Advisory committee(s) consulted: Issue first went before all the kindergarten teachers at all twenty-one elementary schools in the district for a majority vote; then at those sites that approved, the issue was presented to all of the school staff for a majority vote and finally for those school sites that voted for the full day kindergarten, the issue was presented to the school site councils and parents at those schools.

Objections raised (choose one): None Objections are as follows:

Date(s) consulted: Various – listed on waiver by individual school

FISCAL ANALYSIS (AS APPROPRIATE)

The district will absorb any fiscal costs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Action Item: Some documentation is available for web viewing. Waiver forms and other hard copy documents are available for viewing at the Waiver Office or State Board Office.