



WASHINGTON STATE
Charter School Commission
STUDENTS • INNOVATION • TRANSPARENCY

CHARTER SCHOOL TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN APPLICATION

Issue Date: November 8, 2024

Due Date: December 9, 2024

Transition To Kindergarten Expectations

Transition to Kindergarten (TK) is for students who will be age 4 by August 31 of the year in which they enroll, and who have been determined through an approved screening process to be in need of additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year.

The Commission adopted a TK policy in October of 2024. The policy adopted by the Commission summarizes some of the key requirements that OSPI has established for TK, and the OSPI rules (WAC 392-425) and guidance ([Transition to Kindergarten \(ospi.k12.wa.us\)](https://ospi.k12.wa.us)), following the Legislature's adoption of Transition to Kindergarten in RCW 28A.300.072 (RCW 28A.300.072: Transition to kindergarten program. (wa.gov)).

Charter public schools should review the Commission's Transition to Kindergarten Policy [[TransitionToKindergartenPolicy2024.pdf | Powered by Box](#)] and the OSPI requirements for TK. Charter public schools that wish to implement TK must meet the Transition to Kindergarten: Minimum Standards and Requirements established by OSPI ([Transition to Kindergarten \(ospi.k12.wa.us\)](https://ospi.k12.wa.us)). OSPI may update the Minimum Standards and Requirements and TK guidance, so it is important to be familiar with any change in TK requirements established by OSPI. OSPI has also indicated that it intends to update the Full-Day Kindergarten Guide to become the TK/Kindergarten Best Practices Guide. Please review this updated document when it becomes available.

In addition, because TK represents a change to the educational program in the charter contract, and because there are issues specific to charter public schools that need to be addressed before a charter public school may offer TK, charter public schools must first obtain approval from the Commission to offer TK. This application is the process by which charter public schools obtain approval from the Commission to offer TK.

Some of the key differences/additions for charter public schools wanting to offer TK are the following:

- Charter public schools must first obtain approval from the Commission to offer TK.
 - Once TK has been approved for a school:
 - The Commission will notify OSPI of the school's intent to offer TK the following school year;
 - The charter contract will need to have a contract amendment;
 - The enrollment policy will need to be modified or a new TK specific enrollment policy created subject to the approval of the Commission.
- If a charter public school adopts a TK screening tool that OSPI has identified as an appropriate screening tool, the Commission will presume that the tool is an appropriate screening process.
- TK students are able to matriculate to Kindergarten from TK, however, the charter public school will not be held to the same recurrent enrollment standards for TK to Kindergarten matriculation. Given the availability and unique offering that TK provides, the Commission does

not believe a charter public school should be penalized regarding recurrent enrollment if a family chose to unenroll their student for Kindergarten.

Important deadlines for schools wanting to offer TK for the 2025-26 school year:

- Deadline to submit application for TK: **December 9, 2025 (Commission deadline).**
- Deadline for the Commission to provide notice to OSPI of a school’s intent to offer TK for the 2025-26 school year: **June 1, 2025 (OSPI deadline)**
- **Charter public schools encounter specific financial challenges. Therefore, it's important for these schools to understand how TK is funded. The Commission will assess funding issues when reviewing applications and may restrict the number of authorized TK classes.**

Application and Formatting Directions

- Typed, 11-pt font, one-inch margins, no more than 1.2 line spacing
- Include page numbers
- Clearly label each section (ex: Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population)
- PDF or Word Document (unless otherwise specified)
- Where appropriate, work must be cited and attributed properly
- **Complete any and all Commission and OSPI requirements**
- Applicants may use their original charter school application in the submission of this application. If applicants choose to include information from their original application, the text of the TK application narrative must be linked to the narrative in the original application. Citing page numbers of the original application in the TK application narrative is not sufficient.
- 100-page limit including attachments (cover page, table of contents, and the original charter school application as an attachment are not included in the total)

Application Requirements

1. Local Needs Assessment

- a. **Early-Learning and Childcare Outreach and Coordinated Recruitment and Enrollment Planning:** Outline the applicant’s collaboration with and outreach to the local school district/s and/or Educational Service Districts (ESD), community-based organizations, and other early childhood education providers. Explain how the school’s TK program will support the community’s high-quality early childhood education offerings overall without negatively impacting enrollment in already established programs (Head Start, ECEAP, privately operated pre-school programs). Explain how the school will collaborate on recruitment efforts other early learning Public charter public schools must meet the requirement that a local childcare and early learning needs assessment is conducted before beginning or expanding a transition to kindergarten program that considers the existing

availability and affordability of early learning providers, such as the early childhood education and assistance programs, head start programs, and licensed childcare centers and family home providers in the region. Data available through the regionalized data dashboard maintained by the department of children, youth, and families or any other appropriate sources may be used to inform the needs assessment required by this subsection.

b. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Attachments:

- Complete Coordinated and Recruitment worksheet ([LINK HERE](#))
- Evidence of support from community partners, such as letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding (MOU), Please indicate if contracts/MOUs documents are draft or final.
- Complete Comprehensive Needs Assessment ([LINK HERE](#))
- Reference all materials needed per OSPI/TK requirements found in pages 11-14([HERE](#))

Student Recruitment, Eligibility and Enrollment: Provide the strategy for marketing and student recruitment for TK. Explain how the plans will provide equitable access to interested students and families and will meet the eligibility requirements established by OSPI in WAC 392-425-040 and OSPI's Transition to Kindergarten Minimum Standards and Requirements. Because TK has different eligibility and funding requirements WAC 392-425-040 takes precedence over RCW 28A.710.050(3) (and over any weighted enrollment preferences that have been approved by the Commission for K-12). If there is a conflict, the proposed enrollment must follow WAC 392-425-040. If the school is proposing a weighted enrollment preference for TK, include the proposed weighted preference in the proposed Enrollment Policy.

Attachments:

- Updated Enrollment Policy or TK Specific Enrollment Policy.
- Proposed Screening Tool
- Proposed timeline for screening and preopening minimum enrollment

2. Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population: Describe the proposed TK student population and its anticipated educational needs. Include a discussion of any significant differences from the student population that is currently served by the school.

- 3. Family/Community Demand & Engagement:** Describe and provide evidence of how the school has assessed family and community demand for TK. Share the specific methods, tools, data, etc., that were used to assess demand. Identify the ways in which families have demonstrated their intent to enroll students in TK, if authorized.

Discuss how the assessment of community and family demand has influenced the projected enrollment. Provide the rationale for the number of students in the first year of the TK program and the plans for growth over time (if applicable). Discuss how TK enrollment will impact overall kindergarten enrollment going forward.

Attachment: Evidence of support, demand, and engagement from intended students such as letters of intent/commitment, enrollment commitment documentation, or survey results.

- 4. Education Program:** Describe how the educational program will be implemented for TK students specifically. What aspects will be like that of traditional Kindergarten? What will be different?

Specify the ways in which the families of TK students will be fully integrated into the school's culture and engaged by school leadership and classroom staff throughout the school year in preparation for kindergarten.

- 5. Curriculum:** Identify the curriculum choices for TK and provide the rationale for each. TK programs must have an established TK curriculum programs must be able to describe how the chosen curriculum will be modified to meet the developmental needs of students while still ensuring it meets the Washington State K-12 Learning Standards.
- 6.** Describe how the chosen curriculum will be modified to meet the developmental needs of students while still ensuring it meets the Washington State K-12 Learning Standards.
- 7. Student Assessments:** TK programs must ensure that trained staff administer the WAKids assessment every year. Explain how and when staff members will receive training and identify the funds that will be used to provide the training. In addition to all mandatory state assessments, identify the primary interim and/or formative assessments the school will use to assess student learning and progress throughout the year.

Outline how and when WaKIDS will be administered, the data will be collected and with whom it will be shared.

TK students who may be eligible for English language development (ELD) must be screened for ELD

Services. Using the OSPI Transition to Kindergarten Minimum Standards and Requirements, outline how and when ELD screening will be done.

8. **Special Education** – Describe how the current Special Education program and supports for diverse learners will be expanded to include TK students. The plan should include information regarding screening and assessment and how the school will avoid the overidentification of students who qualify for special education services.
9. **School Calendar and Daily Schedule** – Identify how the school calendar and daily schedule will differ for the TK program (if applicable). Include the dates (or range of dates) when the WAKids assessment will be administered.

Attachment: School Calendar and Daily Schedule

10. **School Leadership & Program Development:** Identify the key members of the school’s leadership team and teaching staff who will play a substantial and ongoing role in the TK program. Articulate their respective responsibilities in relation to the TK program’s development, governance, and/or management. These individuals may include current or proposed governing board members, school leadership/management, teachers, and any essential partners who will play an important ongoing role in the TK program’s development and operation. Addressing the above individual’s capacity in areas such as, but not limited to:

- School leadership and administration;
- Early childhood education;
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- Professional development;
- Cultural competence/inclusiveness;
- Increasing educational equity and closing the opportunity gap;
- Experience working with diverse learners and students defined as “at-risk”; and
- Family and community engagement.

Attachment: An updated organization chart, if applicable.

11. **Staff Recruitment & Professional Development:**

Identify the strategies the school will use to attract and recruit certificated teaching staff with early childhood education experience or credentials. Address the challenges, if any, that the school anticipates in recruiting, hiring, and retaining individuals with this level/type of experience.

Describe how the core components of teacher and staff professional development for TK teachers/staff will support effective implementation of:

- The proposed educational program including the educational program terms in TK, and best practices for transitioning TK students to kindergarten;
- Educational equity, inclusion, and student agency;
- Instructional practices proven to be effective with the proposed student population, including all diverse learners and at-risk student populations; and
- Performance data collection, analysis, and use to improve student learning and evaluate the school's culture and climate.

Attachment: Provide a schedule and description of specific professional development for TK teachers that will take place prior to the start of the TK program, including a description of what will be addressed during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.

12. Contractual Relationships: Describe any existing and/or anticipated partnerships or contractual relationships the school has or will have with community-based organizations (including those that serve specific populations), businesses, or other educational institutions that will support the academic program during the development of a TK program and/or once it is implemented. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student learning opportunities.

Attachment: Copies of the proposed contract(s) for any organizational partner. At minimum, contracts should include:

- Proposed duration of the service contract;
- Roles and responsibilities of the governing board, school staff, and contractor;
- Scope of services and resources to be provided; and
- Cost and compensation structure.

13. Board Involvement and Approval: Provide a summarization, including a timeline, of the Board of Director's role in approving the addition of a TK program. Describe the Board's understanding of TK, including funding eligibility, and how the Board has assessed the school's capacity and readiness to include a TK program.

Attachment: Board agendas and minutes that reflect a discussion(s) regarding TK.

Attachment: A signed assurance from the Board that the school is prepared implement a high-quality TK program, including an understanding of TK funding eligibility.

14. Financial Plan & Budget: Provide a detailed budget narrative for TK, including a description of revenue and expenditure estimates and assumptions. The narrative response should specifically address the degree to which the budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations,

fundraising). Outline the specific TK expenses, both one-time and ongoing. The budget narrative should include the following:

- Anticipated funding sources- Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through the State of Washington, banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc.
- Any restrictions on access to, or use of, any identified funding sources. Include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends.
- Contingencies for the duration (remainder) of the current charter contract in the event that revenue projections are not met or are lower than expected. This contingency should outline how the school will fund any enrolled TK students who are deemed ineligible for TK funding.
- Expenditures related to the start-up and ongoing operation of TK including staffing, professional development, equipment and materials, facilities, contractual services, meals, transportation. etc.
- Yearly cash flow projections, including contingencies, for the remainder of the current charter contract.
- Any significant changes from the budget that was submitted with the original charter school application.

While the narrative should focus on the TK program, the applicant should also articulate how the addition of a TK program will affect the school's financial planning, overall budget, and ability to meet performance framework metrics.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COMMISSION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REQUEST A COMPLETED BUDGET WORKBOOK TEMPLATE IF THE NARRATIVE DOES NOT PROVIDE ENOUGH DETAIL TO DETERMINE THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM FINANCIAL HEALTH AND VIABILITY OF THE SCHOOL.

NOTE: APPLICANTS MAY SUBMIT ADDITIONAL BUDGET DOCUMENTATION WITH THIS APPLICATION IF THEY SO CHOOSE.

Attachment: A fundraising plan, specific to TK, if applicable. Evidence of any philanthropic funding commitments.

Optional Attachment: See above note.

15. REFLECTIONS: *(Only applicable to networks that previously implemented **Transition to Kindergarten**, before the Legislature adopted **Transition to Kindergarten** (codified at RCW 28A.300.072))* Please provide clear and specific examples of strengths and lessons learned from TK already implemented at other school sites. Additionally, please provide action steps the school will take in response to these learnings. Reflections should include the following:

- What has the charter network learned from the TK experience at the other school sites?
- What went well and how will that be replicated?
- What were the challenges and how might those challenges be addressed if TK is approved to launch at this school site?
- Please reference as many data points as possible. Examples: WAKids, family experience/survey data, teacher input, student assessment data for kindergartners who attended TK vs. those who did not)

Attachments: Data to support strengths and/or challenges from TK already implemented at other school sites. (Examples: WAKids, family experience/survey data, teacher input, student assessment data for kindergartners who attended TK vs. those who did not)