

**TO: Patty Page, Superintendent**

**FROM: Brenda Ward, Director of Elementary Education & Technology**

**DATE: 6-19-15**

**SUBJECT: WaKIDS Information & Family Engagement Waiver Days**

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**Background Information:**

With the anticipation of state funding for full-day Kindergarten for some/most of our elementary schools, we are moving forward with plans to implement the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) in all of our schools for the 2015-16 school year.

WaKIDS is a requirement for districts accepting state funding for Full Day Kindergarten. It has 3 key components, which consist of family connections, whole-child assessment and early learning collaboration.

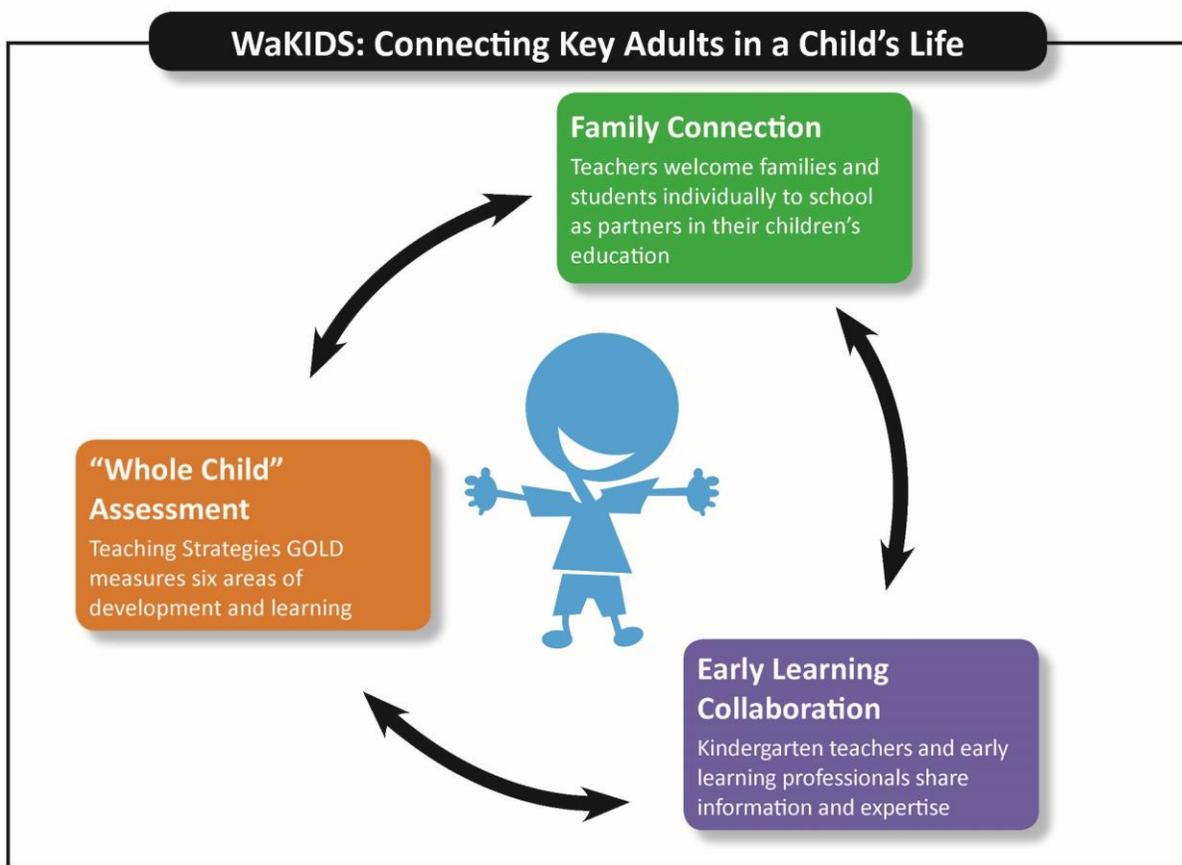
The family connection component requires parent-teacher meetings either prior to, or near the start of school. Within the state-funded full day K legislation, there are 3 attendance waiver days granted (without any application process) for teachers to conduct the family connection meetings.

The following report contains an overview of the key components and purpose of WaKIDS. At the conclusion of the report I have included a recommendation to the board regarding the family engagement waiver days.

**The Purpose of WaKIDS:**

- Smoothing transitions to kindergarten
- Informing instruction
- Building collaboration across early learning and K–12 sectors
- Informing local and state policy

**The 3 Key Components of WaKIDS:**



## **More About the 3 Key Components:**

### **1. Family Connection:**

#### **Purpose**

An opportunity for families to:

- get to know the teacher,
- share information about their child, and
- ask questions.

An opportunity for teachers to:

- understand the student as a whole person,
- learn about the student's interests and culture, and
- learn about the family.

### **2. Early Learning Collaboration:**

#### **Purpose**

An opportunity for schools and early learning community providers to:

- promote a shared understanding of Kindergarten readiness,
- strengthen Kindergarten transitions and planning.
- engage families in their children's education and school, and
- improve the readiness of children, families, schools and communities through the use of data.

### **3. Whole Child Assessment:**

#### **Purpose**

- An opportunity for teachers and other school staff to:
- Measure student knowledge, skills and behaviors,
- Assess six areas of development and learning, including social, emotional, physical, language, pre-literacy and mathematics skills.

**Conclusion and Recommendation:**

After discussing this with elementary principals, and considering the ways we might utilize the waiver days, I would recommend that the first three days of the school calendar be designated for family connection meetings prior to Kindergarten students attending their first day of school. These meetings are not a traditional 20 or 30-minute parent-teacher conference, but rather an extended meeting where parents have the opportunity to share information about their child's pre-K experiences, strengths and needs. The extended conference duration (45 minutes per family) would provide the parent ample opportunity to ask questions about the Kindergarten program, and for teachers to share more information about WaKIDS. As soon as a decision is made regarding the waiver days, I will be sending a letter out to every family of registered Kindergartners.

**Recommendation:** I would like to move forward with designating September 2-4, 2015 as Kindergarten non-attendance days for the purpose of conducting family connection meetings. The first attendance day for NKSD Kindergartners would be Tuesday, September 8, 2015.