



**Amador County Unified School District  
Educational Services**

**Transitional Kindergarten & Kindergarten  
2020-2021**

**General Information**

The Kindergarten Readiness Act gives California an opportunity to ensure that children are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The new law created Transitional Kindergarten (TK), the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students whose fifth birthday falls between September 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The Amador County Unified School District provides a full academic year of TK instruction to eligible children, building a stronger bridge between early learning and kindergarten and preparing students for success in the years ahead. The intent behind providing children an extra year of kindergarten is to give students two years to develop the important skills that will help them excel academically and socially in elementary school. Research suggests that starting kindergarten at an older age can boost children's test scores, and such students are less likely to be retained or placed in special education. This became especially important during the 2014-15 school year, when the new, more rigorous Common Core State Standards were fully implemented in California.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

**1. What is the overall goal of the TK instructional program?**

The goal is to prepare students to be successful in kindergarten including knowing and doing all that is called out in the kindergarten Common Core State Standards (CCSS). By the end of the TK school year, the goal is for TK students to know and be able to do all of the Preschool Learning Foundations (PLF) at or around 60 months of age, and to be fully prepared for success with the kindergarten CCSS. The PLF (or state standards for preschool) can be found at this link: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>.

**2. What is the instructional focus of the TK program?**

Instruction is based on the Preschool Learning Foundations (PLF) with an emphasis on social/emotional development and developmentally appropriate practices. To ensure preparation for a successful kindergarten experience, the focus is comprehensive literacy integrated across the content areas and aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

**3. What instructional resources are used in TK and K?**

The kindergarten Benchmark *Ready to Advance* English Language Arts and the kindergarten McGraw Hill My Math Programs are the State Board of Education approved and ACUSD Board adopted core curriculum accessible by all TK and K students, and adapted by the teacher to meet students' individual learning needs.

**4. What are the recommended assessment tools for TK?**

Assessment of student progress for TK students is somewhat different than for kindergarten students. TK students are building kindergarten readiness and are expected to demonstrate proficiency in all of the CA Preschool Learning Foundations by the end of the school year. The TK-K Alignment document measures how students are

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developing along the instructional continuum from the CA Preschool Learning Foundations toward beginning Kindergarten content standards. This document aligns the expectations for children 48 month, 60 months, and the end of kindergarten goals.

**5. Is there a science and social studies program for TK?**

The Benchmark *Ready to Advance* resources provide an integrated approach including science and social studies units with listening, speaking, reading and writing work interwoven.

**6. What supports are planned for TK and K teachers to assist them with implementation of a full-day instructional program?**

Professional learning and collaborative planning opportunities are scheduled to support TK and K teachers. The focus of this work is on strategies to support quality first instruction through comprehensive literacy in alignment with the PLF and CCSS. An instructional assistant is also provided for each TK, TK/K and K classroom.

**7. Is there a TK report card?**

A Common Core aligned report card has been developed through the work of a collaborative committee. In addition to the aforementioned assessment tools, teachers are encouraged to use observation records, check lists, and anecdotal notes to support their marks on the report card. All assessment information is used to inform and support report card marks.

**8. How many minutes does the TK program offer?**

The minimum number of required instructional minutes is 36,000 minutes per year.

## **Grade Adjustments**

**9. What is the process for accelerating a student from TK to grade one?**

TK is part of a two-year kindergarten program; therefore, very few students will be approved for acceleration from TK to grade one. If a school team (teacher, principal, parent, etc.) believes a student is ready for first grade after completing TK, a thorough Student Study Team process must be followed with supporting data submitted to the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services for approval. In the event additional information is needed, the elementary Teacher on Special Assignment may be asked to assess the student.

**10. Can a student change grade levels midyear?**

Students are not promoted or demoted during the school year. Teachers are responsible to provide differentiated instruction and personalized learning experiences for students in order to ensure all students' learning needs are addressed.

**11. What is the Kindergarten Continuance Form?**

The kindergarten continuance form is used when a parent, with the school's Student Study Team, decides that a student would benefit from additional time in kindergarten; usually this means a second year in kindergarten.

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## Enrollment

### 12. How do families enroll a child in TK?

Families should contact their residence school office for information.

### 13. What is the process for enrolling a child upon his/her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday?

The law provides for local school districts to enroll children in TK or kindergarten on or after their fifth birthday, on a case by case basis: *EC 48000(b)*, "The governing board of a school district maintaining one or more kindergartens may, on a case-by-case basis, admit to kindergarten a child having attained the age of five years at any time during the school year with the approval of the parent or guardian, subject to the following conditions: (1) The governing board determines that the admittance is in the best interests of the child. (2) The parent or guardian is given information regarding the advantages and disadvantages and any other explanatory information about the effect of this early admittance."

The process in ACUSD is as follows:

- The parent of a child turning 5 years old after the kindergarten cut-off date or after the TK cut-off date makes contact with their child's school office who schedules an appointment with the school principal.
- The principal meets with the parent(s) to understand their interests and desires for their child, then the principal contacts the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services to consult.
- If the parent would like to enroll his/her child in TK and if space is available, the child may be enrolled in TK upon their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- If the parent(s) requests placement in kindergarten, the principal refers the parents to the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. (see next bullet)
- The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, with support from a Teacher on Special Assignment, assesses the child's school readiness strengths and areas for growth, and makes a recommendation to the parent(s) regarding placement in kindergarten upon their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The child is enrolled in the most appropriate class based on what is in the best interests of the child, according to law.

### 14. What if a child's birthday falls after December 2<sup>nd</sup> but prior to the end of the school year?

As of the student's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, the student may be enrolled in TK if space is available. If space is not available, the parent may have the student placed on a wait list for the requested TK school site and the principal will contact the parent if space becomes available. Our intent is to enroll students with birthdays between December 3-January 31 in TK from the beginning of the school year, space permitting. It is recommended that students who turn 5 between February 1 and June 7 enroll in kindergarten the following year. For parents still wishing to enroll their child upon their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, please refer to number 13.

### 15. Is TK mandatory?

No, like kindergarten, it is voluntary for parents to enroll their child in TK. Compulsory education begins with first grade. However, when parents bring their child to enroll him/her in TK, school districts must enroll and serve eligible students.

### 16. Can TK and kindergarten students be enrolled in the same classroom?

Although the intent of the law is to provide separate and unique experiences for TK students, districts have the flexibility to determine how best to meet the curricular needs of each student. TK/K combination classes may be formed in order to meet the needs of all students considering enrollment numbers, facility usage, staffing, and regional needs. TK/K combination classes, when approached as a multi-age class using a workshop approach, are developmentally appropriate and beneficial for students.

## General Questions

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**17. How is TK funded?**

Districts receive the same California average daily attendance (ADA) rate of funding that is provided for kindergarten, because TK is considered the first year of a two-year kindergarten program.

**18. Is the length of the TK school day different than kindergarten?**

In some cases, the length of the TK day mirrors the length of the kindergarten day and in some cases it does not. This may be the traditional three hour and 20 minute day, or an extended day of approximately four hours, or a full day.

**19. Do TK teachers need to meet different credential requirements?**

TK teachers must meet the same credential requirements as kindergarten teachers. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing provides a Credential Information Alert that specifies the credentials that authorize instruction in a TK classroom. TK teachers who are hired or assigned to a TK class on or after July 1, 2015 are required to have at least one credential by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and by August 2020 have one of the following:

- 24 units in early childhood education or child development or both
- Professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool-aged children that is comparable to the 24 units of education (as determined by the school district)
- A child development permit issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Teachers assigned to TK prior to July 1, 2015 are grandfathered in with regard to the aforementioned requirements, and TK teachers assigned to TK after July 1, 2015 will have five years to meet the education requirements.

**20. Are there instructional aides in TK or K classrooms?**

Yes, when the position was first added as an LCAP expense in 2017-18, the staffing formula was and continues to be one part-time aide per each TK, TK/K and K class. In the case of a K/1 combo, a part-time aide will be staffed if the class consists of more than 50% K students.

**21. Which schools offer Transitional Kindergarten?**

As of the 2019-2020 School year TK will be offered at Pine Grove, Jackson, Sutter Creek, and Ione Elementary Schools.

**22. Where can I get more information?**

- [California Department of Education](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp)
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