

From: **Sherry Kerr** <kerrs@hbschools.org>

Date: Wed, Aug 16, 2023, 5:55 PM

Subject: Removal of Kindergarten Summer Assessments

To: Cindy Sharkey <csharkey@hbschools.org>, Emma Alparone <alparonee@hbschools.org>, Greg Hobaugh <hobaughg@hbschools.org>, Lisa Kerr <kerrl@hbschools.org>

Greg, Emma and Cindy,

I just wanted to write this letter so that my views and concerns are in writing from our meeting last Wednesday August 9th with Emma. We have not heard from Greg so I am hoping that Emma was able to relay our views, concerns and questions from the meeting.

Thank you Emma for meeting with us and listening to our concerns and views regarding the removal of our summer assessments. Also thank you for talking to us a little about the new Kindergarten assessment options. We hope that one can be chosen soon and we can move forward with the training and the plan on how this assessment will work and be implemented within the first six-eight weeks of school - especially with the number of students we currently have. Lisa and I have followed up on Emma's last email and are trying to have a meeting with one of the presenters this week.

As discussed at last week's meeting and many emails prior to both Emma and Greg, we were extremely surprised and disappointed that the decision was made in July, with no discussion, to no longer have these summer assessments. It was also disappointing and embarrassing for us as just in June we informed the upcoming Kindergarten parents that these would be taking place in early August just as they have been in my time in this district since 1994 (even modified/adapted and completed during COVID).

Unfortunately we were told in May that we would need to administer a new Kindergarten assessment (KEA) since we now have the PEA program in place. We were never told that we would be losing our summer Kindergarten assessment time nor was there any follow up from

the May 12th email until late this summer regarding the assessment materials/options, training or plan for implementation of this new KEA.

At our meeting last week we were told that the Kindergarten assessments were no longer going to happen because we have to implement this new assessment (KEA) in the first six to eight weeks of school and not before and also because we have the PEA program, Kindergarten is no longer their first experience to our school district.

My view and questions on the above two reasons were (are) - wouldn't it be great for us to have had some additional information on these incoming students on a 1:1 meeting prior to this new KEA being implemented (especially again with the current number of students we each have)? This additional information could only benefit us when assessing them those first six-eight weeks of school. Do we only have our current preschool students coming into Kindergarten program or are there more moving into the district that would also benefit from this 1:1 meeting prior to school beginning? We currently have 6 of those students. Lastly, Kindergarten may not be their first (for some) experience in High Bridge but it is their first academic experience- our current preschool has a play-based curriculum which looks very different (developmentally appropriate or not) than our current Kindergarten program. Again this additional information gathered would have been beneficial.

I am extremely disappointed that this summer assessment was taken away without any discussion. I unfortunately can not attend the next board meeting to explain my view and the importance of the summer assessment to the board so I am hoping my below views can be shared and discussed.

This is why we do the summer "assessments": first it allows us to get a good baseline on many key teaching standards (detailed information we do not currently receive from our preschool) - that helps in driving our instruction, developing groups, getting to know our new students and using the data collected for what type of teaching methods and materials to use. This "summer moment" ALSO gives us another opportunity in a 1:1 relaxed atmosphere to have that 1st impression. An everlasting first impression to benefit us as teachers and more importantly our upcoming Kindergarten students and parents. In this "summer moment" we are able to convey - we are excited for the school year, we are excited about having their child and wanting to get to know a little bit more about them, that we are a team player and want to be a team player with them to make their child successful AND to be proactive (both with parent and child concerns).

This “summer moment” first impression establishes a rapport, a relationship and a connection that is well beyond the worth of the 600 dollars that it costs the district.

I would be happy to discuss more of the benefits this “summer moment” has given us as teachers and past students and parents of this district. The benefits of this “summer moment” has made each beginning of the school year a successful one for so many.

Unfortunately this “summer moment” time was taken from us as teachers, but more importantly from these upcoming Kindergarten parents and students. I hope (especially if this was a board decision) this “summer moment” time is put back on the board agenda for next summer and for the future Kindergartners of this district.

Sincerely ,

Sherry Kerr

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