

Azusa Unified School District

Universal Prekindergarten Implementation Plan



California Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation

Research demonstrates that an early and strong foundation for learning has a direct impact on student school success. Children who attend quality preschool programs are more prepared for school in the areas of early literacy, language, math skills, executive function, and social-emotional development as they enter kindergarten.

Azusa Unified School District has developed this plan as mandated by and in support of the state's objective of providing universal prekindergarten (UPK) for all four-year-old children by analyzing the District's early education and extended care to meet the needs of the whole child in enhanced educational experiences across an aligned preschool to the third-grade system.

Under the provisions of the California Education Code (EC) Section 8281.5, grant funds are allocated to school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education (COEs) with kindergarten enrollment in specific years, according to a specified formula. In addition, funds are allocated to COEs to support countywide planning and capacity building around UPK.

Grant funds may be used for costs associated with creating or expanding CSPP or Transitional Kindergarten (TK) programs, or to establish or strengthen partnerships with other providers of prekindergarten education within the Local Education Agency (LEA), to ensure that high-quality options for prekindergarten education are available for four-year-old children. Allowable costs include, but are not limited to: (1) planning costs, (2) hiring and recruitment costs, (3) staff training and professional development, (4) classroom materials, and (5) supplies.

As a condition of receiving grant funds, state law requires each LEA to create a plan articulating, how all children in the attendance area of the LEA will have access to full-day learning programs the year before kindergarten that meet the needs of parents, including through partnerships with the LEA's expanded learning offerings, the After-School Education and Safety Program, the California state preschool program, Head Start programs, and other community-based early learning and care programs (EC Section 8281.5).

Under state law, the plan must be developed for consideration by the LEA's governing board or body on or before June 30, 2022, after which the LEA must provide data, as specified by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to the CDE. The CDE must encumber funds by June 30, 2024. LEAs will have until June 30, 2025, to use the funds.

The UPK Plan must be organized into five focus areas with consideration of TK eligibility, ratio, and class size requirements:

- a. Vision and Coherence
- b. Community Engagement and Partnerships

- c. Workforce Recruitment and Professional Learning
- d. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- e. LEA Facilities, Services, and Operations

Table: TK Eligibility, Ratio, and Class Size Requirements by Fiscal Year

| Type of Requirement | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eligibility | Turn five between September 2 and December 2; at district discretion, turn five between December 3 and the end of the school year | Turn five between September 2 and February 2; at district discretion, turn five between February 3 and the end of the school year | Turn five between September 2 and April 2; at district discretion, turn five between April 3 and the end of the school year | Turn five between September 2 and June 2; at district discretion, turn five between June 3 and the end of the school year | Turn four by September 1 |
| Ratios | Not specified | 1:12 | 1:10** | 1:10** | 1:10** |
| Class Size | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 |

* average class size across the school site** Subject to future legislative appropriation

The CDE recently launched a Preschool through Third Grade (P–3) Alignment Initiative rooted in research that suggests the gaps in children’s opportunities and learning outcomes demand system-level reform at the state, county, district, school, and community level. The UPK implementation plan is developed with P–3 alignment in mind to sustain and accelerate the improved child outcomes associated with high-quality, early learning experiences.

Area A: Vision and Coherence

In order to provide equity of access for all students and their families, it is vital for AUSD to develop a partnership with early learning and care programs, to develop a coherent educational system that begins with UPK, includes access to TK and other options for all four-year-old children, and provides nine hours of programming per day through a combination of instructional time and extended learning and care opportunities for those families who choose this option.

It is Azusa Unified School District’s (AUSD) Vision that each student will be a: problem-solver, critical thinker, effective communicator, and a positive contributor to the community. The District provides high-quality early education opportunities to all eligible

preschool and Transitional Kindergarten students to support this vision. The District is committed to: offering at least one full day TK classroom at each elementary school site, operating an inclusive program in which children's similarities and differences in abilities are celebrated, operating TK Special Day Classes, providing high-quality, developmentally informed, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional practices, and utilizing supplemental curriculum to promote the importance and appreciation of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and offering Expanded Learning Opportunities Programs

The minimum length of instructional time that must be offered to constitute a school day is 180 minutes (EC sections 46117 and 46201). AUSD will continue to offer a Full Day Transitional Kindergarten program across the elementary school sites. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, hours will be from 8:15 a.m. to 1:10 p.m. or 9:15 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. On Thursday, the hours are from 8:15 a.m. to 1:10 p.m.

The District plans to continue to serve students eligible for early admittance TK or Early Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) for children whose fifth birthday occurs after the enrollment date for the year of implementation (see implementation timeline above). Early admittance TK or ETK will be accepted into the TK program based on their birthdate. Spaces in TK for ETK will be filled as space permits after the 10th day. Prioritization will be given to older ETK children.

In addition to TK, the District will also continue to offer California State Preschool Program (CSPP) at elementary school sites. Expansion to the Full Day / Full Year CSPP is AUSD's expansion objective. The CSPP program serves three-year-old to five-year-old children who will not be enrolled in TK based on age or early admittance / ETK in the current school year. Per District's protocol, when space opens up in a TK class, parents have the option to transfer their child from CSPP to the TK program. Between TK, ETK, and CSPP, AUSD has been successfully serving all 4-year-old children.

The District will also offer before school and after school programs to extend the learning and care of children beyond 9 hours. Morning Care will be provided by Think Together at each elementary school site. Hours will be from 6:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m., to accommodate Early Birds and Late Birds. After school care will begin after school and ends at 6:30 p.m. The offer of TK at each school site as well as the optional extended learning and care program will provide convenience, options, and choices for AUSD's families.

The District's administrative structure is set up to fully support the UPK program and facilitate connection with the ELO-P as well as non-LEA administered early learning and care program that will support extended learning components for UPK. Under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent, the Educational Services teams of Directors: Director of Educational Services, Multilingual and Categorical, Special Education, Early Childhood Education, Student Support Services, College & Career Pathways, Technology, and Adult Education, meets at least once a week to track, plan and determine strategies that support student learning and safety in preschool through adult

education programs in AUSD. In addition to the Education Services team, the District's UPK team whose members include teachers, site and district administrators, and personnel who provide direct instructional support and coaching, will continue to support P-3 alignment and UPK implementation.

Focus Area B: Community Engagement and Partnerships

To successfully implement UPK and create a P–3 continuum, AUSD has and will continue to cultivate relationships and collaborate with both internal and external partners.

AUSD used parent surveys, Youth Truth, and DRDP Parent Survey, to determine parent needs and choices. Parent input was solicited at Parent Coffee with Director, English Language Advisory Committee, and the District Preschool Advisory Committee meetings.

The District collaborated with Think Together to ensure the partnership will be able to provide extended learning and care services for ETK/TK children. Through our collaboration with Think Together, AUSD will be able to add to the TK instructional day and offer a minimum of nine hours per day of programming for children whose families opt-in for extended learning and care. Think Together participated in the AUSD extended learning conversation and in the development of the program schedules that describe how the District will meet the minimum hour of service requirement for TK children.

Conversation of the UPK Implementation plan is led by the District Universal Prekindergarten Implementation Plan Team. This team includes the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Director of Early Childhood Education, Site Principal, Resource Teacher, Teacher on Special Assignment, and teachers from the CSPP and kindergarten program. The UPK Implementation Plan Team provided information and led discussions and solicited input on the UPK Implementation Plan through meetings that were open District-wide to teachers, Teachers on Special Assignment, and Site Administrators.

AUSD will continue to partner with local universities, California Polytechnic University, Pomona, and Azusa Pacific University to support the organizations' teaching credential programs. This collaboration provides AUSD the opportunity to support teacher candidates in their student teaching assignments and allows the District to gain staff that supports the District's programs. It also provides AUSD the opportunity to access potential teachers for the District's programs.

The District will continue to work with Regional Center and host transitional meetings to learn about children who receive Special Education services before age three. As appropriate, AUSD will assess children and determine eligibility, and placement.

Focus Area C: Workforce Recruitment and Professional Learning

Based on the projected enrollment and needs as described in Focus Area A, AUSD created a plan to recruit, train, and support the new TK, preschool, early learning, and care, and expanded learning staff needed to support full-day early education options for all children the year before kindergarten.

EC Section 48000(g)(4) specifies that credentialed teachers who are first assigned to a TK classroom after July 1, 2015, have, by August 1, 2023, one of the following:

- a. At least 24 units in early childhood education, childhood development, or both.
- b. As determined by the LEA employing the teacher, professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool-age children that is comparable to the 24 units of education described in subparagraph (a).
- c. A Child Development Teacher Permit issued by the CTC.

EC Section 8295 specifies that teachers in CSPP shall either possess a permit issued by the CTC authorizing service in the care, development, and instruction of children in a child care and development program; or meet the following criteria:

- a. Possess a current credential issued by the CTC authorizing teaching service in elementary school or a single subject credential in home economics; and
- b. Possess twelve units in early childhood education or child development, or both, or two years of experience in early childhood education or a child care and development program.

AUSD's TK and CSPP teachers identified to teach CSPP and TK in 2022-2023 have all met the criteria outlined in EC Section 48000(g)(4) and EC Section 8295. Some AUSD teachers hold credentials beyond the minimum expectations. The District is in the process of hiring Assistant Teachers for the TK program.

The Educational Services team has developed a plan for providing professional learning for educators across the AUSD P-3 continuum for 2022-2023. P-3 teachers, lead teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators, will continue to receive professional development in Counting Collections, a math instruction program that promotes student development in math skills, critical thinking, oral and written expression and is in alignment with the California Preschool Learning Foundations and the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks. Counting Collections will be implemented district-wide beginning 2022-2023. Professional development in Counting Collection is provided and will be provided by California Education Partners. Counting Collection is part of the work in AUSD's collaboration with California Education Partners in the Preschool through Third Grade Coherence Collaboration (P3CC). This learning collaborative involves nine other school districts throughout California whose main objective is to align instructional practices, assessments, and professional development in preschool through third grade.

Preschool and TK teachers who have not participated in the Sobrato Early Academic Language Model (SEAL) training will have an opportunity to be trained during the 2022-2024 school years. The use of SEAL teaching strategies will help educators to support multilingual learners, including home language development and strategies for supporting an effective multilingual classroom. SEAL also addresses children's literacy and language development that is in alignment with the Preschool Learning Foundations and Frameworks.

Training that is specific to early childhood education, Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS) which focuses on measuring and improving classroom interactions and defines teaching quality through the lens of interactions, and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale known as the ECERS-R. ECERS-R is a rating scale tool designed to assess the quality of early childhood programs to determine their effectiveness and is used as a guide in setting up classrooms and identifying materials and furnishings that are developmentally appropriate. The purpose of using ECERS-R to assess the classroom environment is to improve and strengthen students' learning experiences. This staff development will allow all CSPP and TK teachers to be able to create developmentally-informed environments and interactions.

AUSD intends to support diverse and effective prospective CSPP and TK teachers, including multilingual educators, to earn a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential by exploring pathways for high school students interested in a career in CSPP or in P-3 teaching and providing information on scholarship and grant opportunities

AUSD will provide additional training on the preschool Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), a child observational assessment to TK, CSPP, and other early education teachers and site administrators during the 2022-23 school year; AUSD's TK report card mirrors the Preschool DRDP.

Focus Area D: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

It is critical for AUSD's prekindergarten programs to partner and plan how we will develop and select curriculum or curricula that are developmentally informed and aligned with the strengths of all students, including multilingual students and students with disabilities, as well as how the District will ensure curricula are implemented with fidelity to support intentional, quality instruction. The District and its partners should consider how to provide coherent, culturally and linguistically responsive UPK curriculum or curricula anchored in the California Preschool Learning Foundations (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>) and the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psframework.asp>) to support the development of skills across the domains outlined in those documents.

AUSD will continue to provide the following language model(s) for TK students: A dual language program with a language allotment of 50/50 in Spanish and English and an

English-only program with home-language support. The CSPP offers an English-only program with home language support. However, the District does offer two sections of the Dual Language preschool program with a language allotment of 50/50 in Spanish and English.

The District supports the development of social-emotional learning and executive function skills through specific instruction by embedding and reinforcing these instructional practices in all curriculum areas. The curricula are designed to support developmentally appropriate learning environments that allow for individual and group activities that promote social-emotional learning and executive function skills. Children's social-emotional development is an ongoing focus in our programs and is aligned with the California Preschool Learning Foundations and the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks.

AUSD promotes learning through play as a context for social and emotional development, including social play with teachers and peers in small and large group settings. Teachers use developmental observations to identify children's emerging skills and support their development through daily interactions.

Lesson plans are developed using the curriculum that includes specific and targeted skills using SEAL, California Early Math Initiative (CAEMI), Counting Collections, the California Learning Framework, District curriculum, World of Wonders, and Everyday Math, and AMAZEWorks, a literature-based supplemental program, and social-emotional dolls to address the needs of the children. Lesson designs provide open-ended, self-directed learning opportunities that foster individual interests and curiosity, and new learning.

AUSD will continue to use the preschool DRDP for assessment in preschool and TK. Through the DRDP developmental observations, teachers are able to identify children's emerging skills and support their development through daily interactions. Dual language learners are identified through a home survey in the enrollment process. These children's language development is accessed through the Preschool DRDP 2015.

The TK program is inclusive in serving children with disabilities in the general education program. Special Day classes are also provided for children who require support and services that cannot be accommodated within the general education setting. Teachers are trained to support children with disabilities in preschool and TK by adapting instructional materials to meet children's specific needs. Accommodations are also made as needed to help children access instructional programs. Education Specialists participate in the same training in curriculum and instruction as general education teachers. All AUSD's preschool and TK programs use the same curriculum program.

Teachers provide adaptations to instructional materials to meet the needs of every child. Specialized services (for example, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, and language therapy) may be implemented in the classroom with peer models as appropriate to students' Individual Education Plan (IEP). All children are included in all

provisions of Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) and, when necessary, special education instruction, with an emphasis on early intervention and inclusion practices are implemented to address supports and least restrictive environments.

Area E: LEA Facilities, Services, and Operations

AUSD's facilities, services, and operations are thoughtfully aligned to support UPK and the P-3 continuum. Space for early education programs including CSPP, Special Day preschool, Dual Immersion preschool, TK, and Think Together, which are all part of AUSD's mixed-delivery system, share spaces within the District.

The District uses projected enrollment and needs assessment, and AUSD's Facilities Master Plan to identify the availability of space for UPK, and the adequacy of available space to meet the kindergarten facilities standards for meeting the needs of young children. As needed, the Facility Master Plan will be updated to address any unmet needs for developmentally-appropriate space for UPK programs.

AUSD continues to integrate younger children and older children on the same campus with careful considerations of schedule and facility use to ensure safety and appropriate commingling within specific program guidelines.

Based on the current TK schedule, school sites are able to ensure TK students have access to meals and adequate time to eat. Children are provided additional time in the cafeteria to eat as needed. The District's Nutritional Services department complies with all health and safety guidelines, as well as, state and federal Child Nutrition Program regulations while providing meal services.

In planning for an overall increase in UPK access, AUSD considers all existing programs and projected future needs for expansion to prevent the displacement of early education programs on the District campuses. Currently, AUSD has adequate classroom space to meet the projected enrollment of TK students.

In planning space, the District takes into consideration and ensures that facilities contain necessary adaptive equipment, assistive technology, or other accommodations to ensure children with disabilities have access to education in the least restrictive environment.

Conclusion

AUSD will have fully implemented the UPK Plan in 2022-2023 as outlined by the California Department of Education by providing a Full-Day UPK program through the offering of ETK, TK, or CSPP to all four-year-old children as well as extended before and after school care through Think Together. As TK eligibility, ratio, and class size requirements change each fiscal year, the District will be prepared to meet these mandates.

The District's organizational structure allows for the plan to be maintained and facilitated through ongoing the District's leadership teams who focus on effective P–3 articulation and coordination throughout the AUSD and transitions for all P–3 students as they move through grade levels.

AUSD will continue to provide ongoing professional development to classroom staff, support staff, and administrators to strengthen understanding of early childhood development and facilitate communication between preschool and elementary school teachers, principals, and administrators to support P–3 alignment.

AUSD will recruit multilingual educators to ensure there will be classroom support for multilingual learners. Six-hour Bilingual Instructional Aides will be hired for all TK classrooms.

When selecting core curriculum and support curriculum and when providing professional development, AUSD will continue to maintain a coherent, culturally- and linguistically responsive P–3 continuum to provide a strong integrated curriculum anchored in the California Preschool Learning Foundations, the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks, the California Common Core State Standards.

Program Descriptions

- **Preschool through Third Grade (P–3):** P–3 is a continuum of learning from preschool through third grade that can be supported by intentional practices at the classroom, school, and leadership levels that align curricula, assessment, and professional learning opportunities to ensure instruction builds on the knowledge and skills that children acquire as they transition across grades and settings.
- **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK):** UPK refers to universal TK as well as the expanded CSPP, Head Start, and early childhood special education services that families can choose from to create rich early learning opportunities for all three- and four-year-old children during the year or two years before kindergarten. In high-needs neighborhoods, the CDE strongly encourages LEAs to consider pairing TK programs with access to Head Start and CSPP for age- and income-eligible three- and four-year-old children to further bolster program quality either through the LEA's own Head Start or CSPP program or via a contract partnership with a CBO that administers a Head Start or CSPP.
- **Transitional kindergarten (TK):** TK means the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, serving four-year-old children regardless of income that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age- and developmentally appropriate (*EC Section 48000 [d]*).
- **Universal transitional kindergarten (UTK):** UTK refers to the expansion of TK by 2025–26 to serve all four-year-old children by September 1 of each year, regardless of income, providing a year of rich learning opportunities the year before kindergarten that families can choose from as part of California's public education system.
- **California State Preschool Program (CSPP):** CSPP is the largest state-funded preschool program in the nation. CSPP includes both part-day and full-day services to eligible three- and four-year-old children. CSPP provides a core class curriculum that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the children served. The program also provides meals and snacks to children, parent education, referrals to health and social services for families, and staff development opportunities to employees. The program is administered through LEAs, colleges, community-action agencies, local government entities, and private, nonprofit agencies.
- **Expanded learning:** This includes before-school, after-school, summer, or intersession learning programs that focus on developing the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and interests of pupils through hands-on, engaging learning experiences. It is the intent of the Legislature that expanded learning programs are pupil-centered, results-driven, include community partners, and complement, but do not replicate, learning activities in the regular school day and school year.

- **Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P):** ELO-P provides funding for after-school and summer school enrichment programs for TK through sixth grade. The ELO-P is defined as services provided in addition to the normal school day and school year operations, to provide full-day and full-year expanded learning programs to meet the needs of working families whose children are enrolled in TK through sixth grade and also provide expanded learning enrichment programming for students. A full day is defined as in-person before school or after-school expanded learning opportunities that, when added to daily instructional minutes, are no fewer than nine hours of combined instructional time and expanded learning opportunities per instructional day. A full year includes a minimum of 30 days of programming in the summer and intersession for no fewer than nine hours of in-person expanded learning opportunities per day.
- **Early learning and care:** This refers to the continuum of programs serving children from birth to preschool or school entry, as well as extended care to support school-age children with before school and after-school care as well as vacation schedules. This includes general child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, community-based early learning and care programs, family child care providers, and family, friend, and neighbor care.
- **Extended learning and care:** This refers to the continuum of programs and services (early learning and care options and expanded learning options) available in addition to the normal school day and school year operations, to provide full-day and full-year care to meet the needs of working families whose children are enrolled in TK or kindergarten. A full day is defined as in-person before school or after-school programming or care that, when added to daily instructional minutes, provides no fewer than nine hours of combined instructional time and expanded learning opportunities per instructional day. A full year includes a minimum of 30 days of programming in the summer and intersession for no fewer than nine hours of in-person expanded learning opportunities per day. Funding to support extended learning and care for children enrolled in TK includes the ELO-P and the CSPP, as specified in the guidance provided by the CDE's Early Education Division. Additional subsidized care opportunities may be available to families who qualify, such as child care vouchers and the General Child Care School Age program.