

01 OKEEP and Preschool Fee Update

Apr
2020

Dear Families,

Thank you for your patience and support as we navigate the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the situation moving so rapidly, our first priority has been to protect the health and safety of our students and community, while complying with all local, state and federal directives.

With District 58 schools closed until at least April 30, some families may have questions regarding future fees for two of our programs: the Optional Kindergarten Enrichment and Enhancement Program (OKEEP) and the Grove Children's Preschool Program. We appreciate this opportunity to address the questions you may have.

District 58 determines OKEEP and Preschool fees each year by analyzing the anticipated costs of the programs, based on the number of teachers and supplies needed. Staff salaries and benefits comprise the majority of these costs, and the number of positions we hire is based entirely on anticipated enrollment.

District 58 opens preschool registration in January and holds kindergarten roundup events in March/April, which helps us determine enrollment numbers — and therefore make hiring decisions — in a timely manner. **For this school year, OKEEP costs over \$900,000, and Grove Children's Preschool costs over \$1.6 million.** The State has required school districts to continue paying its teachers and staff throughout this mandated closure. While District 58 is committed to these programs and finds them to be invaluable, we cannot fund them without the tuition payments from our parents. As you may know, District 58 is taxpayer-funded, and our community has the lowest tax rate among large DuPage County elementary school districts. In addition, 76% of all DuPage County school districts spend more money per student than District 58. I'm sharing these facts because District 58 relies on tuition payments to run the OKEEP and Preschool programs. **We simply do not have another revenue source.**

Many parents pay the entire fee at the beginning of the school year. However, for convenience, the District permits parents to make monthly payments throughout the school year. We feel deeply the tremendous stress that this situation has placed on our families and staff, and we understand the financial implications of the state-wide order for people to stay home. However, if the District were to suspend the final two installments for these programs and refund the parents that already paid these two installments, it would total a loss in revenue of nearly \$232,000.

After much careful thought and consideration, we determined that District 58 cannot refund the fees for these programs. We hired staff at the beginning of the school year, and those salaries and benefits are required to be paid through the end of the year. Additionally, all of our Kindergarten and Preschool teachers have been working diligently to provide e-learning opportunities for all of our students for the duration of this closure. Given our current financial restraints, we would not be able to absorb such a loss in revenue without a similar reduction in expenses.

We appreciate your understanding and support as we work to maintain our programming through the end of this year and for many more years to come.

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