

JCPS, archdiocese expand kindergarten camps



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(Photo: JCPS)

Jefferson County Public Schools is partnering with the Archdiocese of Louisville as part of its [push to expand its kindergarten readiness camps \(/story/news/education/education-blog/2016/01/08/jcps-expand-kindergarten-readiness-camps/78411698/\)](#) to 1,200 students this summer.

The district announced Wednesday morning that, thanks to the partnership with the archdiocese, the Catholic Education Foundation, the C.E. & S. Foundation and several other community partners, it has reached its goal of \$1.2 million to fund the camps this summer.

"School readiness for all of our children is an important goal for the common good of our community,"

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz said in a news release. "Our Catholic schools and parishes are excited to collaborate with our community partners to make this goal a reality."

Six camps will be held at JCPS sites and four others will be held at archdiocese locations.

Data in recent years has shown that many youngsters show up to school behind their peers, without some of the basic skills needed to be successful in kindergarten.

Last fall, [only 47.9 percent of JCPS kindergartners were deemed kindergarten-ready \(/story/news/education/2015/12/09/jcps-kindergarten-readiness-falling-state-says/76793698/\)](#) at the beginning of this school year, according to a screener used across the state.

The push to expand the readiness camps follows promising early results last summer when JCPS and C. E. & S. Foundation - a private, nonprofit family foundation that has JCPS board Chairman David Jones Jr. as one of its officers - brought the camps to about 300 students.

Results from students in those camps last summer showed dramatic improvements, according to JCPS data. At the beginning of the camp, 51 percent of the students scored as kindergarten-ready. By the end of the four-week camp, 73 percent tested at that level, JCPS said.

Attendance appeared to have a huge impact on kindergarten readiness, with 47 percent of students with the poorest attendance in the readiness camp (an attendance rate of 0 to 25 percent) achieving kindergarten readiness scores, compared to 74 percent of those with the highest attendance rates.

JCPS Superintendent Donna Hargens said in a statement that expanding the camp program this summer could help bring up the district's overall kindergarten readiness rate.

"With this expansion, our data analysts predict we could see a districtwide increase in the overall readiness of incoming kindergarten students of more than five percentage points. This would move the district above the current state average," Hargens said in a statement.

JCPS said the majority of students expected to attend the camps this summer will qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, meaning their families are lower in income.

In addition to academic support, all campers will receive breakfast and lunch, as well as transportation to and from camp, JCPS said in a news release.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer lauded the partnership, saying in a statement that "bringing together both school systems will help us strengthen our kindergarten-readiness efforts to support children and families across the entire community. This will ensure our young people get a strong start in school and in life."

Here are the locations of the four-week camps this summer:

JCPS camp sites

- DuValle Education Center
- McFerran Preparatory Academy
- Dawson Orman Education Center

- George Unseld Early Childhood Learning Center
- Jaeger Education Center
- Academy @ Shawnee Early Childhood Center

Catholic school sites

- St. Stephen Martyr School
- St. Nicholas Academy
- St. Rita School
- St. Bernard School

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