

As we continue to bridge the achievement gap by investing in early childhood education, it is crucial that all children have an opportunity to attend full-day kindergarten to build upon the academic and social gains made in early learning programs. According to a study by the Clark County School District, "Children who attend full-day kindergarten end up with slightly more than one month of extra literacy learning and slightly less than one month of extra math learning compared with children who attend half-day programs."¹

The extra instruction time promotes "more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness"² causing full-day attendees to "outperform half-day students on various end of the year achievement tests."³ These benefits continue through the third grade, in which full-day participants had "better attendance records, higher grade point averages and were more likely to be on grade level."³

Since 2005, the State has funded full-day kindergarten programs at 128 at-risk schools throughout Nevada. While there are 337 elementary schools in the state, the current funding levels can only support a handful of spots for full-day programs; only those students considered most at-risk (minority, poverty, ELL) are selected. Families that do not fall into the "most at-risk" category may choose to have their children attend a half-day program available at all public schools, or they may send their child to full-day kindergarten programs at a cost of \$3,100 per school year.³ Half-day programs do not provide the same educational nor experiential benefits that full-day programs provide, which contributes to the achievement gap. Also of note, state-funded full-day kindergarten provides an opportunity for working parents to maintain full-time employment while saving on the cost of child care and after school programs.

Full-Day vs. Half-Day

- Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than their half-day counterparts.
- Full-day attendees outperform half-day students on various end of the year achievement tests.
- Researchers found that students who attended full-day kindergarten had better attendance records, higher grade point averages and were more likely to be on grade level by third grade.

¹ <http://www.ccsd.net/resources/assessment-accountability-research-school-improvement-division/full-day-kindergarten-review-of-literature.pdf>

² <http://static.ccsd.net/ccsd/content/ccsd-press/pdf/tuition-based-kindergarten-2013-2014.pdf>

³ <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Organizing-a-school/Starting-Out-Right-Pre-K-and-Kindergarten/Starting-Out-Right-Pre-K-and-Kindergarten-full-report.htm>

“School districts enrolling large numbers of children from low income families would be advised to provide access to full-day kindergarten programs that are designed to reduce –or eliminate –wide, socially stratified achievement gaps in literacy and in other curricular by the time children enter first grade. If these gaps are not closed by the end of first grade, these districts not only will find it increasing difficult to close the gaps in later grades but also will face increasingly higher costs in attempting to do so.”

- *Report from the Clark County School District entitled, Full/Extended-Day Kindergarten Study (FEDS)*

Recommendations:

Develop and expand full-day kindergarten programs by establishing public-private partnerships between the school district and private kindergarten programs. This will allow the state to enhance capacity and increase slots without a substantial investment in infrastructure.

Emphasize funding to schools with large at-risk population; low-income, minority, and English Language Learner students.

Require districts to have full alignment of preschool and kindergarten standards, curricula and services.

Fund full-day kindergarten programs at the same rate as first through twelfth grade by revising Nevada Revised Statute 38.1233. Currently, kindergarten is funded at Six-tenths the count of pupils.⁴ This causes school districts to have a disincentive to provide full-day programs as they are funded the same as half-day.



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⁴ <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-387.html#NRS387Sec1233>